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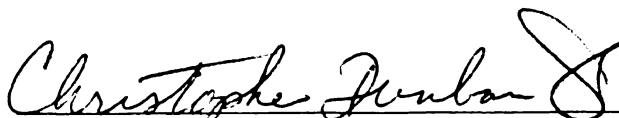THEIR ROLE AS EDUCATORS

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Carol R. Baker

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WHITE MYOPIA IN EDUCATION:
WHITE URBAN TEACHERS UNDERSTANDING THEIR WHITENESS
AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR ROLE AS EDUCATORS

By

Carol R. Baker

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

WHITE MYOPIA IN EDUCATION: WHITE URBAN TEACHERS
UNDERSTANDING THEIR WHITENESS AND ITS IMPACT
ON THEIR ROLE AS EDUCATORS

By

Carol R. Baker

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

initiated educational reform through school racial desegregation. However, current

social trends demonstrate that public education has reverted to a resegregated status.

Demographic information indicates that urban schools are primarily attended by

students of color and that nationally approximately 85% of all elementary and

secondary teachers are white. Simultaneously, a racial academic achievement gap, as

indicated partially by standardized test scores, reading and math scores, graduation

rates and drop-out rates, has been widely documented. This achievement gap

indicates that whites and some Asians are prominent in the higher achievement

arenas, whereas Blacks, Hispanics and Native American students are prominent in the

lower achievement arenas.

Several areas have been identified that contribute to this racial academic

achievement gap, including: low public school financial support in urban areas, low

social economic status of students and their families, low parental involvement and

lack of pre-school opportunities. Additionally, racially based dissonance between

white teachers and students of color has been cited as a contributing factor in the

racial academic achievement gap.

This study looked at the impact of white privilege (whiteness), on white teachers teaching capacity including relationships with students and parents of color, behavior management and classroom practices. The study participants were practicing white teachers in an urban setting. They were simultaneously involved in a broader research initiative looking at aspects of academic achievement of boys of color, and served as presenters and facilitators with colleagues in this capacity.

The five study participants were interviewed individually and in a group setting. A cross case thematic analysis process was utilized to identify common themes highlighting how the white teachers understood their whiteness and its impact on their teaching capacity.

A primary theme that emerged from this data collection and analysis was that the white teachers, although involved in multicultural training for over two years, continued to struggle with identifying themselves as white and maintained a non-raced self-perception. When confronted by race, they often felt shocked and defensive. The study participants typically did not see themselves as racially privileged and reflected beliefs in color-blindness, individualism and meritocracy. They often did not acknowledge societal white privilege or a belief that they had benefited from it. While they maintained an overt anti-racist ideology, they often demonstrated racially privileged positioning within areas of their teaching practice.

This study underscores the impact that whiteness has on teaching capacity of white teachers. This study indicates that multicultural training must be extended over time and include a primary focus on whites understanding white societal positioning and acknowledging societal and individual white privilege.

This dissertation is dedicated:

To the memory of my mother, Patricia R. Baker
Whose loving encouragement, direction and support brought me here

And

To the memory of my friend Annette Abrams
Whose brilliant intelligence, analysis, love and challenge brought me here

And

To my children, Hannah and Jesse
You are the future; and my hope for you, and that future, brought me here

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my family. In memory of my Mom; she was such a supportive, understanding and generous person. In gratitude for my Dad; for his encouragement to actually finish the process when it could have been quite simple to not do so. Thank you to my brothers, Bill and Brian, for being there on my life journey. Thank you especially to my sister Susie. She has always been a steady source of encouragement and inspiration and a living example of strength and fortitude.

I am grateful for my kids. They have endured many of my monologues with grace and respect and I appreciate it. Also, their insight and support and encouragement has meant so much to me. I hope that I can make a small contribution to bringing social justice, and racial equity closer to their future reality. I think they are amazing, intelligent, insightful and simply wonderful!

I cannot begin to put words to my gratitude for being alive and for the privilege of knowing God, my Higher Power, Divine Intelligence, Divine Wisdom and Inspiration. I sense direction and love. I am overwhelmingly blessed and grateful.

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CHAPTER I

WHITE MYOPIA IN EDUCATION:
WHITE URBAN TEACHERS UNDERSTANDING THEIR WHITENESS
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To establish a new framework, we need to begin with a frank acknowledgement of
the basic humanness and Americanness of each of us. And we must acknowledge
that as a people-E. Pluribus Unum-we are on a slippery slope toward economic
strife, social turmoil, and cultural chaos. If we go down, we go down together.
(West, 2001, p. 8)

The presidential election of 2008 was historically pivoting as the first ever African

American, Barack Obama, was elected, by a virtual electoral mandate, to the

presidency of the United States. Race was frequently featured in the full gamut of

media coverage as a hotly contested topic during his candidacy. In one instance, the

press featured snippets of a sermon given by Reverend Jeremiah Wright, President

Obama's long-term pastor. The sermon gave searing examples of racism in the U.S.

as perpetrated by whites and the government as well (Martin, 2008). The controversy

surrounding Reverend Wright's sermon was the precursor to President Obama's now

famous speech on race entitled "A More Perfect Union" given at Constitution Center

in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on March 18, 2008 (Wall Street Journal, 2008).

In his speech, President Obama emphasized that race issues in the United States

are multi-layered and complicated, historical and current. As the President stated:

> We do not need to recite here the history of racial injustice in this country. But
> we do need to remind ourselves that so many of the disparities that exist in the
> African-American community today can be directly traced to inequalities passed
> on from an earlier generation that suffered under the brutal legacy of slavery and
> Jim Crow. (Wall Street Journal, 2008)

Obama continued by describing that past and present lack of economic opportunity and legalized racial discrimination are under girded by an inadequate school system that works against children of color. Obama stated that:

> Segregated schools were, and are, inferior schools; we still haven't fixed them, Fifty years after Brown v. Board of Education, and the inferior education they provided, then and now, helps explain the pervasive achievement gap between today's black and white students. (Wall Street Journal, 2008)

As President Obama reflects, today's racial academic achievement gap is a byproduct of generations of racial inequalities in our country, perpetrated primarily by social institutions developed to favor whites over people of color (Wall Street Journal, 2008). Additionally, many urban students of color are currently taught by white teachers (Howard, 2010; Kunjufu, 2002). This study looks at questions surrounding practicing white urban teachers and their understanding of their personal racial identity and racially based privilege, and how this has impacted their role and capacity as educators with students of color. The term 'whiteness' is used within this study, and within the broader research community, to describe an intricate overt and covert system that provides unearned privilege and advantage to individuals perceived as white (Howard, 1999; Kivel, 2002; Lewis, 2003; Singleton & Linton, 2006; Wise, 2005).

The racial academic achievement gap is a multifaceted educational and societal issue that has been studied and hotly contested and ultimately acknowledged by a wide variety of scholars, academic and civic groups (Anyon, 2005; Kozol, 2005; Noguera & Wing, 2006; Ogbu, 2003; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). The National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], (2009b) reports that SAT scores are 100 points lower for African Americans in critical reading, mathematics and

writing as compared to whites on a scale ranging from 200 - 800 points. Hispanics including Mexican American, Puerto Rican and other Hispanics, and Native Americans scored from 72 to 78 points behind whites in critical reading, mathematics and writing. According to NCES (2009c), drop-out rates for students of color continue to be dramatically higher as compared to whites. NCES (2009c) reports that in examining 15-24 year olds who dropped out of high school between grade levels 10 to12 in 2007, 2.2 % of white students enrolled dropped out as compared to 4.5% of Black students enrolled and 6.0% of Hispanic students enrolled. According to Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003):

> The racial gap in academic achievement is an educational crisis, but it is also the main source of ongoing racial inequality. And racial inequality is America's great unfinished business, the wound that remains unhealed. Thus, this is a book about education, but it also addresses the central civil rights issue of our time: our failure to provide first-class education for Black and Hispanic students, in both cities and suburbs." (p. 1)

The Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 initiated the beginning of an era of attempted racial desegregation of schools. However, racial resegregation within our school systems represents our current schooling trends (Tatum, 2007; Kozol, 2005). According to the NCES (2006), in the 100 largest school districts in the United States, 70% of the students are students of color. Racial segregation in urban city centers is often coupled with increased urban decay and urban economic decline (Anyon, 2005).

The U.S. trend of suburban growth populated with whites and increased economic status is juxtaposed with higher numbers of people of color struggling economically in urban areas (Anyon, 2005). Urban deterioration has resulted in an increase in high poverty schools within urban areas (Kozol, 1991). These high poverty schools are

attended primarily by students of color (Anyon, 2005). According to the NCES (2007c), 72% of African American students in cities attended a moderate to high poverty school as compared to 27% of white students. Additionally, the NCES (2007c) reports that 72% of Hispanic students, 52% of Native American students and 39% of Asian/Pacific Islander students attended moderate to high poverty schools in cities. Not surprisingly, high poverty schools face challenges that well endowed schools do not (Kozol, 1991). High poverty schools house run down facilities, lack modern technology, have higher teacher turn over rates and pose multiple health hazards for students (Kozol, 2005).

Economic disparity is often cited as the source of educational disparity leading to the racial academic achievement gap (Howard, 2010). Clearly, high poverty school systems struggle to offer educational opportunities similar to those found in well financed school systems. However, researchers have determined that within similar socioeconomic groupings, white students continue to academically outperform students of color (Noguera & Wing, 2006; Ogbu, 2003; Tatum, 2007). If not based solely on economic disparity, how, then, can the racial academic achievement gap be explained, understood and ultimately addressed?

Statement of the Problem

Many white citizens believe that our society has reached a racially 'equal' plateau and that racism is largely a thing that existed in the pre-civil rights era and has now been primarily eradicated (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 2006). In the current so called post-civil rights era, many whites believe that opportunities within various arenas of society, such as employment and education, are equally available to everyone

regardless of race (Brown et al., 2003). This paradigm then leads to the belief that the racial academic achievement gap is the result of a racially based cultural deficit (Brown et al., 2003; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Howard, 2010) This sociopathological model says that because the Civil Rights Movement removed legal barriers to minority advancement, various social pathologies within the minority communities must be responsible for the continued academic achievement gap (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Howard, 2010; Louie, 2008). Lack of a strong work ethic has been cited as a reason students do not matriculate from high school (Ogbu, 2003). Lack of parental concern about academics is cited as a cultural deficit and justified by low numbers of parents participating in school related activities. (Thernstrom & Thernstom, 2003; Ogbu, 2003). These justifications reflect a lack of understanding or acceptance of how racist institutional structures continue to undergird poverty and make graduation a distant goal for many students (Anyon, 2005).

The paradigm of a post-civil rights eradication of racism is commonly held by white teachers and is expressed through a belief in a color-blind philosophy (Tatum, 1997; Singleton & Linton, 2006). "I don't see the color of my students", "I am color-blind" and "I don't see race" are frequently stated personal beliefs of white teachers (Tatum, 1997, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1994). White belief in the eradication of societal and institutional racism embeds an unspoken discounting of any relevance of long-term impacts of societal and institutional racism existing today (Singleton and Linton, 2006). This belief makes authentic understanding of the struggles facing students of color difficult by white teachers (Sleeter, 2008). This belief, in actuality,

is discounting of the student's experience (Tatum, 1997). Singleton and Linton (2006) describe the color-blind philosophy within education by stating that:

> Educational leaders collectively view themselves and the schooling enterprise to be inherently non-racist. In fact, their tightly held beliefs and understandings regarding the significance of race make it difficult for teachers to comprehend, examine, and rectify the very ways in which race dramatically impacts achievement. (p. 15)

Unexplored white personal prejudice and unacknowledged institutional racism impact the education of children of color by white teachers in a multitude of ways (Kohl, 1994). Language differences of students of color may be seen as language deficits by their white teachers (Baugh, 2008). Poverty levels and free lunch designations may increase white teachers' assumptions that the student comes from a broken home or is uncared for (Kunjufu, 2002; Howard, 1999). Lack of telephones, computers or transportation available to a poor family may increase the white teacher's stereotypic thoughts that the parents of the student of color don't value education (Tatum, 1997). White teachers may assume in an unconscious way that children of color are not as smart, motivated or gifted as their white counterparts (Sullivan, 2006). Research suggests that teacher expectations can predict changes in student achievement and behavior.

The Pygmalion effect describes the impact that expectations can have on subsequent behavior and achievement (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1993). Expectations can eventually lead to behavior and achievement that conform to those expectations (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1993). When a teacher believes that a student will not be able to achieve academically due to language differences, socio-economic status, lack of parental involvement or race, chances are increased that the teacher will treat the

student in ways that facilitate these negative expectations becoming reality (Green, 2000; Kuykendall, 2004). According to Delpit (1995) "The key here is not the kind of instruction but the attitude underlying it. When teachers do not understand the potential of the students they teach, they will under teach them no matter what the methodology." (p.175)

The white paradigm of post-civil rights eradication of racism coupled with a belief in a sociopathological model that blames minorities' cultures for the racial academic achievement gap coexist along side the resegregation of schools and the lack of teachers of color (Anyon, 2005; Kozol, 2005). Since 1954 there has been a 66% decline in African Americans pursuing teaching (Kunjufu, 2002). In the public schools servicing our city centers, the teachers are primarily white. 83% of all elementary school teachers are white females (Kunjufu, 2002). African American teachers represent only 7.9% of public school teachers, whereas more than 83% are white (NCES, 2004). The number of students of color continues to increase while the number of teachers of color is actually dropping (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

The post-civil rights era color-blind paradigm that purports believing in the non-existence of racism is one that many white teachers subscribe to. However, race is a topic that is discussed in multiple settings in schools, often guised in safe and race neutral types of discourse (Pollock, 2004). Whites talk differently with whites than when talking with a colleague of color, and professional development sessions dealing with racially explicit topics are often degraded and dismissed (Pollock, 2004).

How then are these white held paradigms, situated within the so-called post-civil rights era and education, implicated, if at all, in the racial achievement gap? The

majority of students of color are being taught by white teachers (NCES, 2004). These same teachers live, work and educate students using the unspoken and perhaps unconscious concepts of color-blindness and racial cultural deficit (Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997). White teachers do not want to be labeled racist, are hesitant to discuss race and naively believe a color-blind philosophy is appropriate to express this (Pollack, 2004). Singleton and Linton (2006) state that:

> If White people are the primary guardians and recipients of racial privilege, they also bear significant responsibility for the perpetuation of racial inequality or racism. This is no insignificant prognosis for public education, given that the overwhelming majority of teachers, principals, superintendents, and board members are White. Despite the extraordinary and groundbreaking efforts of civil rights leaders to bring about racial equality, sustainable reform will occur only when White people individually and collectively embrace and encourage change. At the very least, White educators must allow change to happen. Without their active participation in this way, racial injustices will continue to be viewed by White people as a primary concern only for people of color. (pp. 27-28)

Purpose of the Study

The broad purpose of this study is to examine how practicing white urban teachers understand their race and whiteness and how they understand their race and whiteness impacting their role as educators. Within the broader question of how practicing white urban teachers understand their race and whiteness and their understanding of how it impacts their role as educators are the sub questions of whiteness and its impact on:

- developing and maintaining relationships with students of color;

- academic expectations of their students of color;

- behavioral expectations of their students of color;

- developing and maintaining relationships with parents of color;

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- developing and maintaining a positive school climate;

- developing a culturally relevant curriculum;

- developing a culturally relevant lesson plan base;

- developing and maintaining relationships with colleagues of color;

- developing and maintaining relationships with administrators of color

The question examined in this study, then, is "How do white teachers understand their racial identity and whiteness and how do they understand their racial identity and whiteness impacting their role as educators?"

Theoretical Framework

Tatum (2007) has postulated that there is considerable need for whites to explore and study whiteness and add to the anti-racist white on white research base. As a current practicing white teacher myself, I have a unique position to operate from. I not only approach the topic as a researcher, but also as a current participant and as an insider. Working as a complete member of the organizational system being studied, as an insider, offers many positive possibilities (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007).

A sense of professional autonomy has been traditional with classroom teachers. Additionally, white teachers discuss classroom practices concerning students of color differently with other white teachers than with colleagues of color, or those outside the school system. Therefore, my insider status as both a classroom teacher and a white teacher, coupled with my role as researcher, will enhance the data collection process (Pollock, 2004).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Whiteness and Education

An all white jury hides the executioner's face,
See how we are, me and you?
Everyone here needs to know their place
Let's keep this blackbird
Hidden in the flue.
Oh oh oh Jena
Take your nooses down
John Mellencamp © 2007

In September, 2007, over 20,000 individuals converged on Jena, Louisiana, in

protest of a series of racially based conflicts leading to six African American students

sustaining felony criminal charges up to murder (Jones, 2007). In a high school of

just over 500 students, the 50 African American Jena High School students had been

the brunt of a series of racially based slurs, insults and threats escalating to the point

where nooses were found swinging from a school yard tree (Nossiter, 2007). When

the high school principal attempted to expel the white students responsible, the

superintendent would not allow it and referred to the nooses as a prank. Six African

American students subsequently assaulted a white student and ended up in jail facing

criminal charges of up to life in prison (Jones, 2007). White students involved in

previous fighting with African American students were issued misdemeanor charges

or not charged at all (Jones, 2007).

Jena has come to be a modern representation of how racism in the United States

continues to be embedded in our criminal justice system, our educational system and

our society as a whole. Jena's Mayor McMillin, while publicly sympathizing with the negative and possibly threatening impact of the symbolism of a noose, only issued his first public statement in response to a song written by John Mellencamp about Jena, referring to the song as inflammatory and derogatory (Louisiana Mayor Balks, 2007). Indeed, many white residents of Jena were quoted as being anxious for their town to not be portrayed as racist, insisting that racism is not a problem there.

As Jena has played itself out in the courts and media, nooses have been sighted swinging on other school campuses throughout the U.S.(Potok, Visconti, Frankel & Nigel, 2007). Nooses have been hung publicly outside of the Nyumburu Cultural Center at the University of Maryland, on an African American professor's door at Columbia University, and at Andrews High School in North Carolina (Vitello, 2007). The noose, a commonly recognized racial hate symbol, is indicative of current underlying racism in our culture and especially in our educational system (Myers, 2008). Although hotly denied by white Jena residents, does the astonishing number of people involved in protesting this situation point to the degree of racism still felt in the U.S.? Jena, Louisiana, illustrates a variety of continued and current issues involving racism and its impact on multiple levels of our society. Examination of issues related to race, racism and white domination and their subsequent impact on our society, specifically within educational systems, is the focus of this literature review.

This literature review begins with an examination of how race, racism and white domination have shaped education in the United States historically and how they continue to be a pivotal influence on education today. This historical overview will

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progress through the civil rights era to our presently understood post-civil rights era. The development of the concept of whiteness as defined and understood currently will be reviewed as well as how whiteness is entwined and embedded in our educational system, particularly in our elementary and secondary educational systems. How whites working within the educational system understand the continued impact of whiteness on education today, and their individual level of involvement, will be the final area reviewed and discussed.

I have used Tatum's (1997) clarification of how she chose to identify groups while writing about race to assist in my own definitions: When referring to European-Americans I use the term white; I use the terms African-American and Black interchangeably; when referring to groups in the U.S. that have been historically targeted and impacted by racism, I use the term people of color. Whenever possible, when referring to people of color, I attempt to use the term that the group itself uses.

Summary of Historical White Impact on African American Education

They heard about the gold, the teachings and everything sacred,
Africa was almost robbed naked.
Slavery was money, so they began making slave ships...
Still goes on today, you see?
Nas © 2004

White Justification of Slavery

The institution of slavery in the United States met a need for the intense labor necessary to make southern land profitable with cotton production and other crops. In order to justify the practice of slavery, white slave owners, and white society in general, had to maintain an overarching and deeply entrenched belief in the 'rightness' of whiteness and the concept of the evil of 'others' (Bell, 1992; Franklin

& Moss, 2006). This belief had to be such that African slaves were literally viewed, and treated, as animals. This justified brutality, which has been broadly documented, was a primary means of control (Akbar, 1984). In addition to brutality through physical violence, starvation, etc, restricting the acquisition of literacy by slaves was another primary way to contain and manage slaves (Bell, 1992).

White Control of Slave Literacy Acquisition.

Prohibiting literacy acquisition for slaves decreased their ability to understand their owners and to communicate with each other. The education of African slaves was strictly prohibited and illegal. Not only could the slave student be brutally beaten, virtually to death, but the teacher could be shunned, beaten and maimed and imprisoned as well (Douglass, 1855).

In his life narrative, originally published in 1855, Frederick Douglass relates a conversation he overheard between his brutal master and his mistress. His mistress had been teaching him to read. Douglass's master said that teaching any slave to read would spoil the slave – the slave would become unmanageable and 'there would be no keeping him – it would forever unfit him to be a slave, it would make him disconsolate and unhappy'(p. 146). Douglass (1855) stated:

> From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty – to wit, the white man's power to enslave the black man. The very decided manner with which he spoke, and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering. The argument which he so warmly urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. (p. 147)

Literacy and formal education were viewed as a means to liberation and freedom and, although the penalty for learning to read and write was severe, many slaves did

learn. This desire to learn resulted in a largely historically undocumented network of underground slave schools.

Ex-slave Sabbath Schools

Due to these severe punishments slave schools were carefully hidden. There is minimal documentation of slave schools that existed before the end of the Civil War. However, during Reconstruction ex-slave schools became so prevalent, so quickly, that there is a current assumption that an entire slave schooling system existed before the war, but remains largely undocumented (Anderson, 1988).

Due to the coveted nature of formal education, after the Civil War ex-slaves quickly developed a network of public Sabbath Schools and other organized public schools that were highly attended (America's reconstruction, 2003). Ex-slaves put high priority on formal education and literacy. John Alvord, the national superintendent of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau, was appointed inspector of schools for the bureau in 1865 and documented the volume and range of 'native schools' (Anderson, 1988). Alvord found that in 1866 there were at least 500 schools of this description already in operation in the South. Alvord's field representatives reported in 1869 that there were over 1500 Sabbath schools with over 6,000 teachers and over 100,000 students (Anderson, 1988). Historical documentation now shows that the seed for our current publicly funded universal education system was planted and nourished in the south by ex-slaves (Anderson, 1988). However, many whites remained opposed to ex-slave education and developed methods to derail this educational movement (DuBois, 1901).

White Suppression of Ex-slave Education

Ex-slave's demand for universal education and for formal education for themselves and their children ran counter to the white land-owners continued desire for cheap labor and control of the economy (Franklin & Moss, 2006). Many tactics were used to keep ex-slaves tied to the land under the labor-repressive system run by whites that had existed before the Civil War (Anderson, 1988). White planters needed child labor, and as they regained control of the state governments, they kept universal schooling weak through the use of low taxes, no compulsory education laws and the refusal to pass laws that would support universal education. Anderson (1988) states that:

> the South's slow rate of educational development and the planters
> opposition to black education sprang from their clear
> economic and ideological interests in preserving the racially qualified
> system of coercive agricultural labor. Both race and class conflict
> existed between white planters and their black agricultural laborers. (p. 25)

Traditional white planters viewed the education of ex-slaves as detrimental to their economy and culture and worked to stall universal education. Simultaneously, there were white planters who understood that, with the right curriculum, universal schooling could be a way to produce an efficient labor force and a way to instill an acceptance of the southern racial caste hierarchy (Anderson, 1988). Historically whites used education as a method of forced assimilation and repression of other groups in addition to African Americans. Whites used education as an intentional and historically documented method of also obliterating Native American societies.

Summary of Historical White Impact on Native American's Education

Jesus tells me and I believe it's true
The Red Man is in the sunset too
Took all his land, now they won't give it back
And they sent Geronimo a Cadillac
Michael M. Murphy © 2000

Native Americans teaching white settler's survival skills ending with a thanksgiving feast is a story elementary students are very familiar with. The Trail of Tears and other forced relocations of Native Americans coupled with countless treaties between Native American tribes and the U.S. government subsequently broken by the U.S. government are historical events less known to elementary students (Adams, 1995). Typical current school curriculum that includes Native American cultures focuses on those cultures as they were *before* white settlers and the U.S. government violently diminished and virtually exterminated them (Bigelow, 1998; Fletcher, 2008).

White Puritan Values and Colonialism

The Puritans brought European ideas about education with them as settlers. In Europe the wealthy were typically educated with tutors, and that practice developed in the U.S. over time as well. A few schools were founded by religious groups as charity for the poor. These schools taught lessons based on Puritan values including a belief in land ownership, property ownership, individualism and competition. These values were unknown to Native Americans who lived communally and cooperatively and had for unknown thousands of years (Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Horse, 2001). White settlers viewed themselves egocentrically as the correct and best and Native Americans as 'heathens' and 'pagans'. An entrenched belief in white superiority and

'rightness' allowed white settlers to dominate, through force and coercion, the Native Americans and to attempt to alleviate their culture. This domination was facilitated by establishing educational structures that supported the white culture and attempted to eliminate the Native American culture (Klug & Whitfield, 2003).

White Values and Assimilation Methods Using Education

Many land treaties that were signed by the U.S. government included a clause for free public education for Native American children. The education provided was structured by the European belief system and included the belief that Native Americans needed to be 'civilized' (Szasz, 1994). Gradually this education encompassed policies to eliminate Native American languages and customs, and came to include removal of Native American children from their families to be 'educated' in mission and boarding schools. Schooling curriculum was developed with the goal of total assimilation of Native Americans into white culture (Szasz, 1994).

Boarding school staff members were often abusive to their students. Students who spoke their mother language were harshly punished. Students were housed and schooled far away from their families and were taught that their culture was inferior to the white culture and language (Szasz, 1999).

> Steve was sent to a mission school around Mt. Pleasant (Michigan) when he was about 8 years old (in 1967). If he would say anything in Anishobewin they would beat him on his back with a broom handle. He ran away so many times they just let him stay home eventually. It kills me – the place was owned by a church.
> -Susie Petoskey, nurse, firefighter, mother of 3, in reference to her deceased husband and father of her children, Steven Petoskey, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (Personal Communication, January, 2000).

The right of U.S. citizenship was granted to Native Americans in 1924. This citizenship, however, was not sufficient for Native Americans to become 'Americanized' or blended into the so-called melting pot of ethnicities (Banks, 1996). In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* opened the door for Native American children to attend predominately white schools near their communities. White educators at these schools viewed Native children as 'others' who had lower intellectual and academic capabilities. Public education, with reliance on standardized testing, and riddled with cultural bias, continued to underscore a so-called intellectual deficiency in Native American students (Klug & Whitfield, 2003).

The civil rights era coupled with the birth of the American Indian Movement, began to challenge the educational perspectives of Native students as deficient and began to open doors to view Native American students as capable and intelligent (Wittstock & Salinas, n.d.). This societal movement was facilitated by legislation including The National Advisory Council on Indian Education, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, The Tribally controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 and Executive Order 13096 in 1998 that supported research into effective educational practices for Native students (Reyhner, 2006). However, currently, Native Americans continue to have the highest high school and post-secondary drop out rates in the United States and many continue to live in extreme poverty on white established reservations (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010).

Whites attempted forced acculturation of Native Americans has been virtually genocidal. Noguera (2003) summarizes by stating that:

It should be remembered that the presumption that non-Whites generally –
and Blacks, Native Americans, Hawaiians, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans
specifically - were inferior peoples, served as the primary means through
which slavery, colonization, and more contemporary forms of
subordination and exploitation have been justified. While the influence
of the ideology of White supremacy may seem less relevant today in
post-civil rights America, there is considerable evidence that its legacy and
concomitant presumption of non-White inferiority are still very much
a part of the present. (p. 43)

Whites used education as a method to force acculturation and assimilation of

Native Americans. In addition to this white dominant view of superiority concerning

Native Americans, whites viewed Hispanics as 'inferior others' in need of civilizing

and controlling and used these values to justify western expansion.

Summary of Historical White Impact on Hispanic Education

That famed General Cortinas is quite sovereign and free,
The honor due him is greater for he saved a Mexican's life.

The American's made merry, they get drunk in the saloons,
Out of joy over the death of the famed General Cortinas.

Traditional ballad (corridor), written in the late 1850's

Juan Nepomuceno Cortina was a Mexican from the Brownsville-Matamorous

area, who, according to Paredes (1976), "was the first man to organize a Texas-

Mexican protest against abuses on the part of the Anglos who controlled the border

power structure after 1848" (p. 22). As a member of one of the old landholding

families on the Rio Grande, Cortina became resentful of the white newcomers and

defended a poor worker from the abuses of a white town marshal. This led to a war

of protest on his part, and his untimely death (Paredes, 1976).

Education Used to Force Acculturation and Subordination

White egocentric values of individualism and land ownership undergirded an era

of western expansion. This led to the conquering of Mexico and annexing of land

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now known as Texas, Arizona, California and Colorado. The residents of these lands suddenly found themselves part of a country that considered them foreigners and inferior. Schools were established by whites with a pedagogy of white superiority of language and culture to educate the residents of the new southwest – mainly Mexicans and Native Americans – in white language and ways (Kloosterman, 2003).

White controlled Catholic, Protestant and public schools were established in the early to mid 1800s with the focus of converting and obtaining conformity from the 'foreigners'. According to San Miguel (2003), schools for Hispanics were instruments of cultural conformity that tried to eliminate non-English languages, cultures and communities. The purpose of white education for the Mexicans living in the newly expanding United States was similar to the purpose of schools for Native Americans – acculturation and domination. White ego-centric and non-inclusive pedagogy reinforced the deficit model that was used to educate Hispanics (San Miguel, 2003).

Education not only worked toward the elimination of language and culture, but aided in reinforcing the subordinate role that Mexicans and Hispanics would have in relationship to whites. Limon (1983) describes this subordination process as:

> Between 1848 and 1890, an Anglo ranching society established itself
> among the native (also ranching) Mexican population, living with them
> in a rough equality. However, beginning in the 1890's, a clear racial-
> cultural stratification and subordination began to emerge, as a new
> wave of Anglo-American entrepreneurs and farming interests
> established a political and economic hegemony over the native population
> as well as the thousands of Mexican immigrants entering the area after
> 1910...With few exceptions, this total population...became the victim
> of class-racial exploitation and mistreatment. (pp.216-17)

During the late 1800s and the 1900s the Hispanic population in the United States was diversifying with an increase in Puerto Rican residents and the increased immigration of Cubans and Mexicans (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001). Most Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans continued to live in extreme poverty. Highly segregated communities provided a cheap labor source for white owned American industry. Education that was available continued to reinforce dominant white values and societal position (Kloosterman, 2003).

Current Educational Impact of Historical Subordination of Hispanics

Although the civil rights era opened the door for Hispanics for increased justice in areas of employment and education, to date the record continues to be bleak. According to the NESC (2009c) the Hispanic drop out rate in the year 2007 hovered at three times that of whites. Hispanics have the highest dropout rate of any major segment of the U.S. population (Flores-Gonzalez, 2002). Historic values of white privilege and dominance expressed through colonialism and expansionism have resulted in a deeply failed educational system for Hispanics and other students of color (Noguera, 2003).

White Ideology Subordinating People of Color.

African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics have all been suppressed by white ideology, values and pedagogy in education. These three broad groups have been highlighted here in an effort to illustrate in more detail the depth of the impact of whiteness on the history of the U.S. and education. Highlighting African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics in no way discounts the suffering incurred by all groups of people of color who have been exploited and suppressed by whiteness. The

Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Laotian Americans, Cuban Americans, Pacific Islanders, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Puerto Ricans and many, many more have experienced exploitation and injustice. The examples presented are sample representations of the impact of whiteness on the history of the U.S. and education. The white dominant practices that historically defined Native Americans, Hispanics and African Americans as second class citizens also negatively impacted scores of other groups of people of color during U.S. history. This review will now turn from examining the impact of white ideology expressed through the 'white is right' mindset on specific groups of people of color to a historic review of the progression of whiteness through historical eras including the Jim Crow era, the civil rights era and into the present day post-civil rights era.

Whiteness and Education in the Jim Crow Era

From Reconstruction to Jim Crow

Federal law provided civil rights protection for the freed slaves during the Reconstruction. At the end of Reconstruction each Southern state passed laws that enforced the separation of the races. They mandated 'separate but equal' facilities for African Americans and others determined to be non-white. These facilities included all public schools, places and transportation. These 'separate but equal' facilities and practices were referred to as Jim Crow laws. (Franklin & Moss, 2006; Wormser, n.d.)

Jim Crow laws criminalized mixed race relationships, governed who restaurants could serve, who could play on baseball teams, who could go to what school, who could rent which apartment, who could ride in which train car and who could use the library (Pilgrim, 2000). Oklahoma had a law for separate telephone booths by race

and Georgia had legislation that determined a distance of two city blocks had to be kept between the white and the Negro baseball diamonds (Pilgrim, 2000). Texas had twenty-seven separate Jim Crow laws enacted between 1866 and 1958. The separate but equal status of the Jim Crow laws only enforced the 'separate' piece – the 'equal' piece was typically unenforced and farcical. Personal, institutional and cultural white racism led to the Jim Crow laws, which in turn immensely impacted education for people of color. The repressive and unequal nature of the Jim Crow era for people of color was enforced through threats, physical violence and fear (Schwartz & Disch, 1970).

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1868) provided citizenship to all people born in the U.S. or previously held in slavery, and forbade denial of due legal process to anyone in pursuit of life, liberty or happiness. In 1870, the 15th Amendment gave African American men the right to vote. With the abrupt end of Reconstruction in 1877, the actualization of the 15th amendment gave way to state based Jim Crow laws that allowed 'literacy tests' and poll taxes to discourage African American men from voting. The African American men who were literate were discouraged from voting through intimidation and violence (Davis, 1998; Franklin & Moss, 2006). As in slavery, literacy was a valued societal skill used to deny African Americans access to the civil and human rights represented in voting.

Jim Crow Method of Oppression

Jim Crow was an accepted way of life for whites that relegated African Americans and other people of color to a second class status. People of color continued to be seen as intellectually and spiritually inferior, and this was uncontested and supported

in virtually all aspects of white society (Davis, 1998). White privilege and dominance initiated and supported the cultural, legal, religious and educational practices that enabled colonialism, expansionism and slavery to flourish (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Unequal education based on racial status was supported by a legally sanctioned 'separate but equal' stance. The Jim Crow era was challenged and began to be legally dismantled with the 1954 Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka that outlawed school segregation, leading into the civil rights era.

Whiteness and Education during the Civil Rights Era

The class action suit brought forward by the NAACP of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* resulted in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) which had, until then, been the legal support for racially segregated schools (NAACP, n.d.). As a result of this decision, de jure racial segregation was ruled a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* was a pinnacle of other lawsuits and was an organized effort spearheaded by the NAACP to address racial segregation (NAACP, n.d.). This unanimous Supreme Court decision is typically looked at as a pivotal portal for racial integration and the civil rights movement in the United States.

Racial Integration Legalized but Resisted

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka laid the legal path for racial integration in education. This court decision did not produce integration overnight, and Jim Crow practices continued to be prevalent (Schwartz & Disch, 1970). There were many

white officials who simply refused to comply and this noncompliance was represented by officials throughout the legal and educational systems. For example, in 1957, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus called out the Arkansas National Guard to block African American students from entering Little Rock High School. President Dwight Eisenhower deployed federal troops and federalized the Arkansas National Guard to protect and allow the students entry (We Shall Overcome, n.d.). In New Orleans, federal marshals were called in to protect the safety of Ruby Bridges as she began kindergarten in a totally empty elementary school that was being boycotted by white families (Coles, 1995).

Alabama Governor George Wallace personally physically blocked the entry of two African American students to the University of Alabama and moved only when confronted by federal marshals and the U.S. Deputy Attorney General (Elliott, 2003). Later during his political career Wallace apologized for his actions and speeches during this time. However, he was representative of white privilege and dominance at that time. In his now infamous inaugural speech as Governor of Alabama (1963), Wallace stated that:

> it is very appropriate that from this cradle of the Confederacy, this very heart of the great Anglo-Saxon Southland, that today we sound the drum for freedom as have our generations of forebearers before us time and again down through history. Let us rise to the call for freedom-loving blood that is in us and send our answer to the tyranny that clanks its chains upon the South. In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever. (Alabama Department of Archives and History, n.d.)

Federal Legislation Enacted to Facilitate Civil Rights

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka outlawed racial segregation in public

schools. Federal money funneled to cooperative state school districts through Title

money and bussing were governmental methods used that attempted to dismantle

school segregation (Graham, 1971). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed

segregation in public places and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 addressed the ways

individual states had prevented African Americans from voting by outlawing literacy

tests, poll taxes and allowing Federal registration of voters in areas with less than 50

% of the eligible minority voters registered to vote (United States Department of

Justice, n.d.). This era was a tumultuous time during U.S. history with strides toward

dismantling the far reaching tentacles of whiteness that had been planted by slavery,

colonialism and expansionism.

From Civil Rights Era to Post-Civil Rights Era

Federal legislation legislated the end of legal segregation. The Voting Rights Act

accompanied by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 are

often heralded as the beginning of the end of the civil rights era (Simon, 2002). As

legislation has been reinforced through court decisions and societal practices have

changed to align with the Civil Rights Act of 1968, many whites believe that the

goals of the civil rights era have been accomplished and that our society is free of

racially based discrimination (Ditomaso, Parks-Yancy & Post, 2003; Wellman,

1993). How then, does education continue to be impacted by whiteness in the so

called post-civil rights era?

Post-Civil Rights Whiteness in Education

Resegregation of Schools

The social and civil rights movements that have brought the U.S. culture to the present have been unsuccessful in equalizing educational opportunities and in dismantling white dominance. Schools have not necessarily become racially integrated. Many are, in fact, resegregated (Anyon, 1997; Kozol, 1991; Kohl, 1994; Kuykendall, 2004). Over fifty years after the Supreme Court declared school segregation illegal, most children of color, in reality, attend unequal and segregated schools (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Kunjufu, 2002). Metropolitan areas are characterized by extensive inequality and segregation, which is reflected not only in the poverty level but also in the school systems (Kozol, 2005). According to the United States Department of Education's *The Condition of Education 2007* report, 69% of students who are in a low poverty category are enrolled in suburban schools while only 10% of students who are in a low poverty category are enrolled in a city schools. At the same time, 69% of students who are in a high poverty category are enrolled in city schools, and 6 % of students who are in a high poverty category are enrolled in suburban schools (p. 77). Additionally, there were as many people officially poor in 1993 (39.2 million) as there were in 1959 (39.4 million) before the national 'war on poverty', and most of this poverty is localized in urban areas (Anyon, 2005).

Poverty, Race and Schools

In 2005 the percentage of African American and Hispanic families with children living in poverty were double to triple that of the percentage of white families with

children living in poverty (NCES, 2007b). In 2005, African American, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native students were more likely to be eligible for free and reduced lunch programs than white and Asian/Pacific Islander students. African American and Hispanic students were also the most likely to attend high poverty schools while Asian/Pacific Islander students were most likely to attend low poverty schools (NCES, 2007c).

Socioeconomic status is highly correlated with academic achievement and poverty has numerous negative effects on academic achievement (Rusk, 1999; Kahlenberg, 2003). In an in-depth look at five urban school districts, Jonathon Kozol (1991) compared urban education in the U.S. to S. African apartheid and designated our present educational era as 'pre-Plessey' and savagely unequal.

Poverty is a major social issue in the United States today, a major impact on negating educational and academic achievement for poor children, and continues to be stratified according to race in our post-civil rights era. Segregation by race is strongly related to segregation by class and income. Racially segregated schools for all groups except whites are consistently schools with high concentrations of poverty (Anyon, 2005; Kozol, 2003).

Educational Disparities Reflected by Race

Students of color are disproportionately placed in special education classes, have higher rates of disciplinary action and higher drop-out rates (Kunjufu, 2002; NCES, 2009c). Additionally, students of color lag behind their white counterparts in achievement in terms of standardized test scores and graduation rates (NCES, 2009a). Of all the teachers in public schools in the United States in 2004, 8% were African

American, 6% were Hispanic and 83% were white. White teachers make up the
majority of teachers in large (61%), midsize (73%), and small cities (84%) (NCES,
2007c). How, then, do the white teachers prominently teaching children of color
understand and explain the academic achievement differences for students of color
versus white students within our current educational system?

Deficit and Difference Models Used to Explain Educational Disparities

One model that white teachers use to explain the disparity in academic
achievement is that of deficit. This deficit model revolves around the white teacher's
belief that the culture and language of students of color is inherently less than that of
white students. The deficit model also addresses the often existing differences in
class and wealth between the white teacher and the student of color in urban schools
(Thomas, 1983).

A difference model describes the disparity resulting from differences between the
student of color's language and culture and the white teacher's language and culture.
Both the deficit model and the difference model incorporate covert whiteness by
'othering' students of color (Ladson-Billings, 1994). These ways of perceiving and
believing negatively impact the white teachers' perspectives of their diverse students'
abilities. Negative beliefs and lowered expectations then lead to lowered academic
performance (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

White Teacher's Ideology Reflects White Privilege

Few white teachers would use the word 'racist' to describe these negative beliefs.
However, the beliefs themselves originate in white racist ideology. As Tatum (1997)
describes, just as one cannot live in Los Angeles and escape being a 'smog breather',

a white person cannot live in the U.S. and escape being influenced by white privilege and racist ideologies produced by white privilege. These embedded beliefs, then, subtly, covertly and perhaps unconsciously support the continuation of practices that lead to educational underachievement (Berlak, 2008; Sullivan, 2006). Relevant multi-cultural curriculum and lessons, high expectations and parental involvement are all practical areas that are negatively impacted by white teacher's unexamined ideologies (Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997). How, then, is whiteness and racist ideology embedded in the post-civil rights era, especially in education?

Racist Ideology in the Post-Civil Rights Era

Belief That Racial Differences are Scientifically Proven

Historically, race was considered a scientific and biologically known fact. This 'knowledge' led to the belief that non-white students would be less intelligent, and that this was an inherited racial trait (Goodman, 2008). IQ scores were historically used to support the idea that non-whites were less intelligent than whites. However, standardized tests are embedded with biases that favor whites over people of color (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Currently, race as a biological fact is a scientifically unsupported concept, and is, rather, a socially and historically constructed category. Bonilla-Silva (2001) states that:

> Races, as most social scientists acknowledge, are not biologically but socially determined categories of identity and group association. In this regard, they are analogous to class and gender. Actors in racial positions do not occupy those positions because they are of X or Y race, but because X or Y has been socially defined as a race. Actors' phenotypic (i.e., biologically inherited) characteristics, such as skin tone and hair color and texture, are usually, although not always used to denote racial distinctions ... because races are socially constructed, both the meaning and the position assigned to races in the racial structure are always contested. Who is to be considered black or white or

Indian reflects and affects the social, political, ideological, and
economic struggles among the races. (p. 41)

Concept of Race is Socially Constructed

An individual's race is not biologically determined but is rather socially

constructed based on history, politics and economics (Bonilla-Silva, 2001;

Mukhopadhyay, 2008). Historical research suggests that race has been constructed as

a way to develop an in-group, or dominant group, and an out-group, or subordinate

group. These social groupings, then, act as a way for the dominant group to maintain

dominance (Mukhopadhyay, 2008). Noel Ignatiev (1998) states that if privileges

associated with white skin did not exist, then the so called white race would not exist

and skin color would have no meaning. Ignatiev (1997) details that:

> Race has meant various things in history. We use the term to mean a group
> that includes all social classes, in a situation where the most degraded member
> of a dominant group is exalted over any member of a subordinate group...
> That formation was first successfully established in the 17th century. The
> white race meant not only that no European-Americans were slaves,
> but that all European-Americans, even laborers, were by definition
> enforcers of slavery...That was the birth of "race" as we use the term. (p. 607)

The subordinate out-groups have been configured in different ways throughout

U.S. history, but have always included people of African decent (Ignatiev, 1997;

Roediger, 1994). The construction of racial categories has played an especially

significant role in the United States as demonstrated through expansionism,

colonialism and slavery.

Commonly Accepted Definition of Racism

Systems that perpetuate the continued concept of race coupled with white

dominance are racist systems. These systems exist in our culture on institutional,

societal and cultural levels (Scheurich & Young, 1997, Tatum, 1997, 2007; Kunjufu, 2002). However, whites often recognize racism only in terms of overt personal prejudice. On this level, racism is recognized only in terms of individuals that are blatantly and overtly prejudiced against people of another race based primarily on the race of the 'other'.

Overt Versus Covert Racism

A stereotype of another person or group based on a preconceived judgment or opinion is a personal prejudice and may be expressed through overt racist acts and language (Tatum, 1997). The mental picture of Police Chief Bull Connors ordering peaceful civil rights demonstrators to be attacked by guard dogs or using fire hoses on protesting African American teens are powerful examples of overt personal racism (Baggett, n.d.). By using examples such as these, that are historically situated and overt, many whites today are convinced that they themselves are not racist, but other whites may be. Within this definition, the terms racist and racism are used by 'good' whites as labels to describe 'bad' whites that are personally overtly or covertly prejudice based on racialized notions (Sullivan, 2006).

In the post-civil rights era, it has become generally socially unacceptable to many whites to be considered overtly racist or to be referred to as racist. White racists, within this description, are considered unintelligent and likely part of a reactionary type of fringe group in our culture. For example, racists are considered to be right wing reactionaries such as Ku Klux Klan members. This understanding of racism, within the parameters of overt racism, is one that many whites cling to. It is a surface

level understanding that takes them off the hook of any deeper look at racism in our culture, and in this way supports white dominance (Kivel, 2002).

Covert prejudice is the underground version of overt prejudice. The reaction is the same – it is personal prejudice from an individual directed toward another individual or group based on a racialized stereotypic belief system. Pollock (2003) discusses this in her ethnographic look at high school conversations between white teachers. In a staff meeting where there are African American teachers and white teachers, there will be silence about many topics that reference African American students, such as the proportion of African Americans that are skipping class and in the halls during class time. In a private setting where there are only white teachers and staff, the teachers will talk about such issues by discussing 'them', in reference to African American students. It is a coded, covert language and method used to discuss racialized issues. Coded phrases and language used to discuss issues that include race and racism allow the white teacher to avoid using overt racist language and see themselves as free of racial stereotyping. At the same time, coded language allows white teachers to continue to engage in, and reinforce, racially prejudiced dialogue (Pollock, 2008).

Overt and covert prejudices are the most obvious and commonly held understandings by whites of racism in our culture. These practices only address individual racism and actions. Tatum (1997) defines racism as "prejudice plus power" (p. 7). Defining racism only in terms of overt and covert personal racism ignores the broader, deeper impact of institutional, societal and cultural racism on our culture and education (Wellman, 1977; Tatum, 1997).

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Institutional Racism

Scheurich and Young (1997) define institutional racism as existing when:

> institutions, including educational ones, have standard operating procedures (intended or unintended) that hurt members of one or more races in relation to members of the dominant race…If a schools' standard pedagogical method is culturally congruent with the culture of white students but not with the cultures of students of color, this is institutional racism. (p. 5)

Institutional racism has been demonstrated in school systems by examining the disproportionately high number of children of color who are referred for special education services, labeled learning disabled, suspended and expelled as compared to white students (Kunjufu, 2002).

Societal Racism

Scheurich (1997) describes societal racism as existing when "prevailing societal or cultural assumptions, norms, concepts, habits, expectations, etc. favor one race over one or more other races" (p. 6). These cultural beliefs, then, are considered 'right' and societal systems develop to favor them over the cultural beliefs of the oppressed group. Jim Crow segregation laws and practices and the 'separate but equal' beliefs encompassed in Plessy v. Ferguson are examples of societal racism in our culture.

Civilizational Racism

Scheurich (1997) describes a form of racism broader than societal racism that he refers to as civilizational racism. Civilizational racism is the broadest and deepest form of racism that exists over time and is foundational in supporting racist societal, institutional and individual ideologies. Civilizational racism is deeply embedded in a society's belief system. This civilizational racism can be viewed through the concepts of expansionism, colonialism and slavery. The white Europeans viewed their

civilization as superior, and anyone not in their group was 'othered' into such groups as 'heathens' and 'slaves'. It was this civilizational racism that enabled white Europeans to engage in the inhumane practices involved in territorial expansionism and slavery (Frankenberg, 1993; West, 1993). Whites justified their genocidal practices toward Native Americans by viewing Native Americans as 'heathens', and inhuman. African slaves were also deemed inhuman. This viewpoint, understood through civilizational racism, allowed the structure of slavery to blossom (Franklin & Moss, 2006). Whites, over centuries, have made themselves the central and dominant group. In referring to civilizational racism, Feagin (2000) writes that it is:

> not just about the construction of racial images, attitudes, and identities. It is even more centrally about the creation, development, and maintenance of white privilege, economic wealth, and sociopolitical power over nearly four centuries. (p. 21)

This dominance, then, leads to white dominance and privilege as being deeply seen as the right and natural way of things. This deeply held sense of the 'rightness of whiteness' is justified by the ideals of individualism and meritocracy.

Whiteness Embodied in the Concepts of Individualism and Meritocracy

People of color speak of racism as a "double consciousness" wherein they see themselves through the eyes of whites. According to DuBois (1903/1989):

> The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (p. 3).

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Although written almost 100 years ago, this sentiment is still relevant for people of color in the U.S. Because of collective mistreatment, based on skin color, people of color are forced to learn to see themselves as a racialized group defined by that skin color (Scheurich, 1993).

Whiteness reinforced by the ideology of individualism.

Whites, on the other hand, experience themselves as non-racialized individuals. They do not have a more dominant group forcing their grouping based on skin color, and typically do not view themselves as part of a racialized group (Landsman, 2001). This sense of individualism is a privilege of whiteness in our culture and is the foundation for a sense of individual meritocracy (McIntosh, 1989). Whites view their accomplishments as strictly individual accomplishments separate from a racial group or supportive cultural and societal structures. This perspective, then, focuses only on individual will and intention, and does not acknowledge the impact of existing structural inequities based on race (Scheurich, 1993).

Many white people refuse to acknowledge the existence of white dominance or of white privilege. The concept that white people are given advantage based simply on skin color threatens the strongly held belief that white people achieved their superior societal status because they earned it through hard work (Giroux, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994). The beliefs of meritocracy and individualism are deeply embedded in white racial culture and perspective (Singleton & Linton, 2006; Tatum, 1997).

Whiteness reinforced by the ideology of meritocracy.

The societal concept of meritocracy includes the belief that an individual achieves based on how hard he or she works, their determination and their work ethic. If you

work hard, you merit what you get. This traditionally held white value is often referred to as a 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps' mentality – that here in the United States all advantages and possibilities are available for everyone; you just have to try, try again to get what you want. If you don't achieve, it is perceived as your own fault (Barry, 2010).

The belief in individual meritocracy is an expression of societal racism. It does not take into account the increased opportunities whites have over non-whites based simply on whiteness. Wealth in the United States is typically related to land ownership, home ownership, education and inheritance (Anyon, 1997). People of color have been, through white oppression, historically hindered in attaining education, land and home ownership. Amassed wealth for people of color historically has been, therefore, significantly less than that of whites, and has lessened the opportunity for material gain through generational inheritance. There has never been a time in the history of the U.S. when the majority of African Americans were middle-class but whites generally often believe that the playing field of material increase and opportunity has been made equal among races (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

Another expression of whiteness embedded in the concept of meritocracy is found in "ethnicity theory" described by Omi and Winant (1994). The ethnicity theory, according to Omi and Winant (1994) holds that "with hard work, patience, delayed gratification, etc. Blacks could carve out their own rightful place in American society" (p. 19). Whites espousing this theory remain color-blind to the historical experiences of discrimination and to the current institutional and structural barriers that make assimilation difficult for people of color.

DiTomaso, Parks-Yancy and Post (2003) point out that whites have access to social and cultural capital and economic resources that insulate them from having to face true "equal opportunity" – the forces that they so quickly see as the solution to the disadvantage of people of color. Brown et al. (2003) state that:

> Historically, white Americans have accumulated advantages in housing, work, education and security based solely on the color of their skin. Being white, as a consequence, literally has value. Though race may be a cultural and biological fiction, whiteness, like blackness, is a very real social and economic status.(p. 31)

"The belief that White people are accorded advantage just based on skin color is foreign and threatening to their strongly held notion that White people achieved their superior status because they 'earned it' exclusively through hard work" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 202).

Peggy McIntosh (1988) states that "…in facing [White privilege] I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own" (p. 9).

Color-Blind Ideology in the Post-Civil Rights Era

Racism has played a pivotal part in the establishment and economic growth of the United States, as discussed previously, throughout history with expansionism, colonialism and slavery. Civilizational, societal, institutional racism along with individual covert and overt racism are all parts of U.S. history, linked throughout the legal, religious and educational systems and are easily pinpointed historically. Understanding that these civilizational beliefs have undergirded our entire U.S. society for centuries, that slavery itself was only ended about 150 years ago and that Governor Wallace was personally blocking the doors to the Alabama University to

African American students only 40 years ago, the question must be asked: What is the position of racism *now* in the United States?

Color-Blind Ideology Viewed as Non-Racist by Whites

The Civil Rights Era spotlighted racism in its various forms. Through this increased public acknowledgement of negative aspects of racism, the expression of overt personal racism began to be shunned by whites in the U.S. It became unpopular and shameful to be considered overtly racist in many white circles, whereas virtually only a few years earlier it was considered normal and average. Whites gradually grew to disassociate themselves from forms of overt racism, and it became culturally accepted and preferred to be considered non-racist (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). This non-racist position by whites is often expressed through a professed position of color-blindness.

In the post-civil rights era, including the present, whites often refer to themselves as color-blind. This concept goes hand-in-hand with the spoken belief that racism was eradicated during the Civil Rights era and is no longer a societal issue. Those who profess this position claim that racism is only seen now in our society in incidences of individual discrimination and racism, not in wider societal systems. These acts of individual's overt racism are not perceived within the context of U.S. history or politics (Frankenberg, 1993).

Presently, many whites believe that racism is currently only perpetuated by 'bad whites'. A profession of belief in 'color-blindness' is common in education. Many white teachers believe that professing blindness to race, ending race-thinking and race-talking will demonstrate that racism has been eliminated (Fine, 1997; Ladson-

Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1996). Color-blind ideology also undergirds arguments against practical approaches to redress racism such as affirmative action.

Color-Blind Ideology Undergirds Belief in Reverse Discrimination

One tenant of color-blindness is the use of abstract liberalism by whites to build arguments against practical approaches to end racism. Using abstract liberalism, whites argue that affirmative action is 'wrong' because it gives preferential treatment to some groups based on skin color and therefore is not aligned with the liberal concept of 'equal opportunity'. This argument denies the fact that people of color are underrepresented in good jobs, schools and universities and ignores the historical impact of discriminatory policies against people of color (Howard, 1999).

The use of abstract liberalism leads to a description of 'reverse discrimination' as an explanation to favor the dismantling of affirmative action. In this way white privilege is maintained under the guise of believing in the value of equality. Most whites who use these arguments will claim to know a white person who has been discriminated against due to affirmative action policies (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Many whites, although claiming to believe in the concept of equal opportunity, report that they received special privilege such as a job interview, placement in a training program, etc. because of 'connections' through family or friends (DiTomaso, Parks-Yancy & Post, 2003; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Anderson, 2003; Doane, 2003; Derman-Sparks, Ramsey & Edwards, 2006).

Color-Blind Ideology Used to Justify Segregation

A second tenant of color-blindness is a belief in the truth of naturalization. This is a belief that racialized groups of people want to be with their 'own kind'

because it is biologically natural. Therefore, according to this piece of color-blind thinking, people of color want to live in neighborhoods with people like them, attend schools with people like them, etc. because it is natural. If people of color live in segregated neighborhoods, even if the neighborhood is poverty stricken, it is because they choose to. This then becomes an underlying argument for white segregated neighborhoods and schools (Brown et al., 2003).

Belief in Historical Elimination of Racism Part of Color-Blind Ideology

An additional tenant of color-blindness is that discrimination is no longer a central factor impacting non-white's life opportunities. Tatum (1997) states that in every audience she addresses, there is inevitably one person who will insist that racism is a thing of the past. This embodies a belief that the civil rights movement was a success, that racial inequality has been ended and that racism has been eradicated. (Brown et al., 2003). Using this color-blind tenant, whites can filter the many racially based occurrences in our society and still claim that people of color are being too sensitive, are using race as an excuse or are 'playing the race card'(Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Color-blind rhetoric typically includes statement openers such as "I don't see race with my students, I just see kids, but...", "I have a lot of black friends..." or "I am not a racist, but..." or "My sister dated a Mexican last year, but...", or "I am not being racial about this, but..." etc. The rhetoric actually makes quite clear that race is very apparent to the speaker. However, using such openers, the white speaker can couch their comment in an 'acceptable' color-blind comment (Kivel, 2002).

Using color-blind talk, overt and covert racism can be attributed to other abstract people rather than the speaker. The speaker can comment that those who deserve to be rewarded are rewarded and that those who are qualified to be hired should be hired without 'sounding racist'. This directs the focus away from the larger picture of societal racism and puts the responsibility for life outcomes on the people of color themselves (DiTomaso, Parks-Yancy & Post, 2003).

As color-blind ideology illustrates, many in our society have come to believe that overt racial prejudice is unacceptable. However, through analyzing societal outcomes such as academic achievement, poverty levels and employment statistics, it is apparent that racism and white dominance continue to exist in our post-civil rights era. How, then, is whiteness understood, described and defined?

What is Whiteness?

> There ain't no white man in this room that will change places with me – and I'm rich! That's how good it is to be white. There's a one-legged busboy in here right now that's going: "I don't want to change. I'm gonna ride this white thing out and see where it takes me. (Chris Rock, 1999)

Peggy McIntosh (1989) described her process of beginning to conceptualize whiteness as the process of unpacking an invisible knapsack:

> I think Whites are carefully taught not to recognize White privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have White privilege. I have come to see White privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks. (p. 10)

White people need not worry if their achievements or failures will be seen as happening because of their race, or used as a way to judge their race. Whiteness just is; no individual white person is seen as representing white people as a group. Most

white people do not even think of themselves as raced. (McIntosh, 1989; Anderson, 2003).

White Privilege

Whiteness encapsulates and perpetuates the concepts of white privilege and dominance as expressed in U.S. society through individual overt and covert racism and institutional and societal racism. Whiteness is the powerful white lens that 'others' people of color (Dyer, 2005).

The body of literature in the area of white studies has grown substantially over the past decade. Until the past two decades of increased study in the area of whiteness, whiteness was nearly invisible and was unacknowledged. White was a non-race; just normal. Whiteness stood alone as "the unnamed, universal moral referent" (Giroux, 1997, p. 286), and was the standard by which all others were measured. White was synonymous with "American" and stood for intelligence, morality and beauty (Giroux, 1997; Fine, 1997; Scheurich, 1993; Winant, 1997). As a socially constructed concept, the concept and characteristics of whiteness continue to change as it encounters new contexts (Omi & Winant, 1994). These differing representations continue to produce material outcomes that benefit the white race (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998).

Frankenberg (1993), in her study of how white middle class women construct the meaning of race, observed that the invisible whiteness became visible when the experience of privilege was seen as being threatened. When the status quo was questioned, whiteness worked to protect and re-establish itself while remaining on the unconscious level of thinking of the participants.

Whiteness Supports Personal Irresponsibility

The topic of race is most often omitted at those times and places where it is most relevant. White people use many techniques including humor, tears, or verbal denial to take the spotlight off themselves and any implication they may have in responsibility for furthering a racist system. These techniques serve to block further dialogue (McIntyre, 1997; Pollock, 2004; Sleeter, 1996).

White distancing from racism is another hallmark of whiteness. While acknowledging the realities of racism, whites can position themselves as personally uninvolved. This is undergirded by linking inequity to socio-economic class rather than race (Chubbuck, 2002). Another method of distancing can be achieved by continuing to define racism as strictly overt or covert actions by individuals without acknowledging the existence of an entire institutionalized system (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). By relying on this definition of racism, individual whites can point out that they are not guilty of personally oppressing others and continue to deny the white privilege they benefit from.

When facing threats of being disrupted, whiteness may re-establish a level of solidarity with other whites. Sleeter (1996) described this strategy for building white solidarity by the use of code words by whites to express racist comments without appearing to do so. Color-blind rhetoric, as described previously, is useful here. This practice assumes that all whites will be accepting of such conversation and comments. This strategy reinforces an "us-them" mentality and a sense of belonging on the part of whites when whiteness is threatened. Omi & Winant (1994) describe

whiteness as a continually constructed racial category which is seldom the same thing

twice, but is never destroyed.

Whiteness Centers Whites as 'Normal'

At its' most basic level, whiteness has meaning through a process of negation.

Frankenberg (1996) describes that:

> whiteness comes to self-name, invents itself, by means of its declaration that it is
> *not* that which it projects as Other. And there is thus a level at which whiteness
> has its own inbuilt complacency, a self-naming that functions simply through a
> triumphant 'I am not that.' (p.7)

This negation includes a process of projecting fears and negative emotions onto

people of color. This is shown in the tendency of whites to view problems only

within groups of people of color and make these groups the site of needed change.

When the failure of people of color is scrutinized, whites don't have to examine their

own failures in societal, educational or economic areas (Powell, 1997; Roediger,

1991). However, many scholars have expressed concern that the study of whiteness

may have negative and unexpected outcomes.

Possible Problems Resulting from Study of Whiteness

Study of whiteness may reinforce white privilege.

There are several proposed possible negative consequences that may arise with the

increase in the study of whiteness. One possible negative impact of furthering white

studies is that it will enable whites to feel overtly justified in their privilege and

power. Noel Ignatiev (1997) discusses the possibility of white conferences attracting

fringe white supremacists and warns of this happening, which it subsequently has.

Ignatiev (1998) does not believe that whiteness can be 'reconstructed' as other

authors have suggested, and therefore supports the idea of eliminating the concept of 'white' and disassociating the tie between white culture and privilege and dominance.

Another danger of white studies is the possibility that whites may become progressively more situated in the center. In other words, instead of lessening institutional and societal racism with whites construed as the central and most privileged group, that the concept of 'white' as a dominant cultural group will actually be fortified through these studies (Ignatiev, 1998). There is also concern that the increased study of whiteness will reinforce a continued belief of whiteness in our culture as a fixed racial category (Fine, 1997; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998).

Study of whiteness may increase white guilt.

Increased white guilt is a possible outcome of articulating and acknowledging the power and oppression of whiteness. If a white remains in a stage of guilt, this guilt can then lead to hostility and anger toward 'others' (Carter, 1995; Helms, 1990; Howard, 1999). This white guilt can be understood through use of white identity development models.

White Identity Development

There are several models of white identity development that have been articulated in attempts to understand ways whites developmentally progress from color blind naiveté to a broader understanding of white privilege and racism in our society and how they, in turn, are able to own these privileges of racism.

Helms' Model of White Racial Identity Development

Helms' model of white racial identity development is frequently discussed and referenced in the literature (Helms, 1990). Other authors rename, consolidate or overlap stages, or statuses, but the general progression is similar to the developmental stages Helms presents. Helms utilizes seven ego statuses as a framework to understand and categorize white identity development. Characteristics of different statuses can exist simultaneously but one status may be more dominant than another at that time.

Helms Identifies Seven Ego Statuses

With the *contact status* Helms suggests that whites perceive themselves as totally free of all racial prejudice and with race considered as insignificant, they perceive themselves as "just normal" and color blind. When this status is dominant in a white person, she or he will react to racially based experiences with avoidance, denial or total obliviousness.

In the second status of *disintegration*, as suggested by Helms, there is growing awareness of the existence of racism and white privilege and a growing discomfort with this knowledge. Guilt and anxiety appear as the white person begins to understand the conflict between being unaware while treating or thinking of people of color as inferior. The white person will resolve the anxiety displayed in the disintegration status by entering the reintegration status, or will progress to the pseudoindependence status.

The third status, *reintegration,* involves resolving the feelings of shame and guilt initiated in the disintegration status by feeling anger and resentment toward people of

color. This individual will protect the concept of white privilege and the white racial status quo. Negative conditions that may be associated with people of color, such as poverty or the racial academic achievement gap, will be thought to be reflective, or the fault of, the people of color's own lack of effort and failings. Societal racism will not be considered in this evaluation.

The fourth status of *pseudo-independence* is an intellectual understanding of racism on an individual and societal level, often coupled with a frustration of not knowing how to proceed with this knowledge. This white individual will tend to point the finger at other 'bad whites' and not operate from a sense of personal responsibility based on their own racism.

The fifth status of *immersion* is marked by a search for more information about race and racism and their own socialization as a white person in a racist society. This individual, for example, might be involved in social action to fight racism.

The sixth status of *emersion* is a status where the white individual reflects more comfort with the difficult progressions of racial identity and has found a community of relationships with reeducated whites for continued anti-racist development.

The seventh and final status of *autonomy* is the most advanced status of racial identity development for whites. This person will reflect openness and rely on thoughtful and critical assessments of racism and oppression, and will experience increased comfort and effectiveness in multiracial settings. This person is humanistic and is involved in activism regarding various forms of oppression.

Tasks in Racial Identity Development

Helm's model indicates that there are two main developmental tasks for whites throughout the process. The first is to abandon individual racism and the second is to recognize and oppose institutional and societal racism (Tatum, 1997). The ultimate positive goal for whites is to develop a positive white identity based in reality, not on assumed superiority. Whites must work through the process of their own racial identity formation if they are to reach a point of rearticulation that includes an identity as a white ally in the fight against racism (Tatum, 1997; 2007).

The preceding discussion has summarized how white dominance ideology has undergirded the development of the U.S. society, specifically through colonialism, expansionism and slavery. The historical eras of Jim Crow, civil rights and post-civil rights have been discussed in addition to how whites navigate our present post-civil rights era while maintaining white privilege. As described previously, racism and white privilege continue to impact outcomes for children of color in our societal systems, including education. I now move to further discussion of whiteness in education and the relationship of white teachers to the educational system.

Pre-Service Teachers and Whiteness in Schools

Our educational system, our "great societal equalizer", is fraught with racial segregation and inequity. Our current era has been referred to as one of racial resegregation of our schools and is a reflection, in part, of our racially segregated urban and suburban neighborhoods (Kozol, 2005; Tatum, 2007). These systems of racial inequity reflect our continued centering of whiteness in our society. The majority of urban teachers are white and the majority of urban students are students of

color and there are a plethora of problems (Kunjufu, 2002). Whiteness as reflected in both overt and covert personal racism and institutional and societal racism continues to exact a heavy toll. How, then, are these issues addressed with pre-service teachers, and how do pre-service teachers integrate such information and subsequently use it to increase their efficacy in teaching students of color?

Results of Cognitive Examination of Whiteness

Many white teachers and white teacher educators have never considered the extent that racism is embedded in our school systems (Cochran-Smith, 1995). This, then, continues to perpetuate systems that are not critically examined for racist ideology, including teacher education programs and the school systems themselves. Cochran-Smith (1995) worked with a homogeneous group of white pre-service students in an attempt to prompt change in white racist beliefs. She provided support for her students to facilitate them looking at issues related to systemic racism and encouraged their critical analysis of their placement schools. However, the pre-service teachers experienced conflict between her encouragement of their critical perspectives and understandings and wanting to fit in and survive in their placement school. They were unable to resolve this tension effectively. The student's neophyte understanding of systemic racism and racist ideology was no match for the entrenched system of whiteness that they were being introduced to at their placement school.

In another study of white pre-service teachers involved in their student teaching, Marx (2004) found similar difficulty. The pre-service teachers he studied articulated good intentions of promoting equity with students of color within their placement school, but were unable to follow through on these intentions. Again, the whiteness

they faced was too entrenched for them to confront as a student teacher, and their racist ideology became more pronounced as they stayed within the system.

Working to address whiteness with pre-service teachers using a cognitive approach was limited in its success. The pre-service teachers were not sufficiently invested in an alternate ideology to confront the status quo of their placement school. How useful, then, has a more affective approach been in impacting the decentering of whiteness?

Results of Affective Examination of Whiteness

McIntyre (1997) worked with upper middle class white pre-service teachers in consciousness raising group work focusing on their whiteness. McIntyre hoped to facilitate an increase in their awareness of their own racial experience and identity that would increase their white anti-racist teaching pedagogy and practices. McIntyre reported that the pre-service teachers used white talk to insulate themselves from examining their individual and group participation in racist systems. Over the course of a semester, McIntyre reported that there was the appearance of minimal change with the pre-service teacher participants.

Cognitive and affective approaches to facilitate decentering whiteness with pre-service teachers have not been fully effective. Researchers have cited the difficulty pre-service teachers have in maintaining an ideology that clashes with the system they are entering. They have little support, and more is needed to develop and maintain a non-racist ideology. What, then, is the impact of an approach that combines cognitive study in addition to personal reflection to address racist ideology and whiteness with pre-service teachers?

Results of Combined Affective and Cognitive Examination of Whiteness

Using the medium of a multicultural education course, Picower (2007) conducted a qualitative study of pre-service teachers examining the ways in which their biographies, identities and life experiences influenced and defined their understandings of race, difference and equity, and how they negotiated these understandings. Picower found that the participants used, what she referred to as, tools of whiteness to insulate themselves and their beliefs during a critical multicultural course designed to address white privilege, racism and social justice education. These tools of whiteness included defensiveness, denial and silence and silencing. Picower concluded that more research is needed to understand how pre-service teacher education can impact the understandings of white teachers that perpetuate whiteness in education.

Utilizing both an affective and cognitive approach, Lawrence and Tatum (1997) worked with white pre-service and practicing teachers using Helms' theory of white racial identity formation to help the teachers recognize and alter their personal participation in racist beliefs and systems. Lawrence and Tatum used both racial identity development work and critical analysis of social structures to facilitate this process. Lawrence and Tatum combined affective and cognitive work including journal writing and self-interviewing along with readings, films and discussions. This combined effort of academic and experiential processes was successful in supporting change.

Decentering Whiteness with Pre-Service Teachers

White pre-service teachers used whiteness strategies such as defensiveness, denial and silence to insulate themselves from difficult conversations that challenged their beliefs embedded in whiteness (Picower, 2007). Good intentions were demonstrated to not be sufficient to off-set racism in education. A format of racial identity awareness coupled with a critical analysis of structural racism seemed to illicit the most change and increase the decentering of whiteness (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). Combining academic approaches with experiential approaches was helpful and the need for long term work was noted. Academic and experiential long term education is needed to facilitate ideological change with pre-service teachers (Picower, 2007). What is known, then, about decentering whiteness with practicing teachers?

Practicing Teachers and Whiteness in Schools.

Teachers as White Saviors

An ethnographic approach was used by Hyland (2005) to gather data concerning embedded whiteness with four practicing teachers. This study gathered data before the teachers participated in an anti-racist multicultural seminar, and after, in their respective classrooms. All of these teachers self-identified as a 'good teacher', both before and after the multicultural seminar, but their embedded racist ideology continued to be perpetuated after their completion of the multicultural seminar. Whiteness allowed the white teachers to view themselves as good people while simultaneously situating themselves in a superior position and seeing students in an inferior position.

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White practicing teachers continue to undergird whiteness by assuming a position of compassionate superiority based on an underlying belief in the superiority of the white culture and their merit as a white individual. Titone (1998) described her own responses as an educator continuing to center whiteness as that of "White Savior". This position is described as a focus on helping 'disadvantaged' students of color assimilate into white norms to assist in facilitating them to gaining a better life. The "White Savior" teacher position is braided with the deficit model of assuming a deficiency in the culture of students of color, and seeks to rescue them from this culture (Blais, 2006).

Deficit Model Used to Perceive Students

In a year long qualitative study Marx (2008) gathered data on four white teachers that students of color identified as popular. Marx identified that the teachers could relate to the students based on personal experiences, but not on cultural or racial experiences. The teacher's views of the student's family, culture and home life were highly deficit, exhibiting an underlying white racist ideology.

The deficit model used to support whiteness in schools by practicing white teachers was also identified by Kailin (1999) while using an open-ended survey with over 200 white practicing teachers assessing how the teachers perceived racism in their school. The survey data was reviewed and coded into the areas where racism was attributed: whites; blacks; or institutional/cultural systems. The majority of white teachers blamed the victims and attributed the cause of racism in their school to black students. Kailin also documented that white teachers who witnessed an overtly

racist action on the part of a colleague remained silent and did not confront the racist actions.

White Educational Discourse Reinforces Whiteness

Haviland (2008) gathered data from a year long qualitative case study that included observing the subject within a professional self-selected course on multicultural teaching and within the subject's classroom as she or he taught. Haviland used the data gathered to explain how whiteness was activated and displayed through a way of speaking, interacting and thinking that she labeled "white educational discourse". This white educational discourse was a method utilized to gloss over the teacher's stated desire of addressing and decreasing racism. White educational discourse actually facilitated reinforcing the status quo of whiteness in the system.

White educational discourse also includes the use of silence to evade discussion concerning race. Banks (2002) found that white practicing teachers, and educational systems, utilized silencing when evading the issues of power and race. This evasion was also evident with the types of multicultural education that focused exclusively on accepting and increasing knowledge of 'others' and avoided increasing knowledge of how whiteness is centered in educational systems and in U.S. society (Banks, 2002).

In her two year ethnography entitled *Colormute: Race Talk Dilemmas in an American School,* Pollock (2004) has aptly captured how the color-blind notions of the post-civil rights era display themselves in schools, and how whiteness dominates in the ways educators talk, and don't talk, about race:

Schools are key institutions where Americans make each other racial: not only are schools central places for forming racial 'identities', but they are key places where we rank, sort, order, and differently equip our children along "racial" lines even as we hope for schooling to be the great societal equalizer. School race talk is thus one key version of American race talk: for the way we talk in school both reflects and helps shape our most basic racial orders." (p. 4)

Pollock illustrates repeatedly the racial underpinning of how students of color are viewed and discussed by white teachers, how racial talk is coded and used in whites only circles and how colleagues of color are silenced. However, talking about race is difficult. Pollock concludes that "school and district leaders need to be particularly good, not only at making time to talk about race and racial orders, but also at leading compassionate conversations about race in various kinds of settings" (pp.220-221). Pollock also suggests in her conclusions that educators should be prepared to "ask provocative questions, navigate predictable debates and talk more about talking" (p. 221).

Necessity of White Racial Identity Development

The ideology of individualism facilitates white people not thinking of themselves in racial terms. White people tend to understand little about what it means to be white, as understood in our society. However, based on a collective history and experience of racism, people of color can describe many characteristics of white culture quite easily. What is the result when the culture of students of color is different from that of the white teacher, and the teacher is unaware of the distinct differences and ways that these differences impact instruction, assessment and relationships? "Racial conflict among educators and between educators and students cannot be resolved when white educators are unaware of their racial culture and

people of color feel unsafe to reveal the characteristics of whiteness" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p 190).

Even when white teachers have a compassionate desire to address racism within their schools, whiteness is difficult to disrupt. Chubbuck (2002) gathered data from a qualitative case study that included two white literacy teachers who had the stated goal of addressing racism within their instructional arenas. Chubbuck concluded from her data that, although white teachers had the goal of disrupting whiteness, they continued to enact whiteness within their classrooms. Chubbuck summarized that there is needed a more complex psychological framework to address the white interplay of personal identity, personal congruence and the cultural constraints of whiteness that exist in educational institutions. "Educators cannot truly understand the challenges faced by students of color-challenges that result in lowered achievement-until we all develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be White" (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Schneidewind (2005) looked at five teachers over a long-term professional development course on diversity in education. She gathered data concerning development of racial consciousness, racism and whiteness and its impact on the teacher's work. The subjects looked at their own whiteness and its impact on their relationships with students of color, addressing racial stereotypes and institutional racism. Schneidewind concluded that her data supported an understanding that whiteness can be changed over time and with support. She supports long-term professional development that includes cognitive and affective methods as a way to address these issues.

Conclusion

In this post-civil rights era, our society continues to be plagued by overt and covert personal racism and institutional, cultural and societal racism. There has been increased study of whiteness with increased understanding of particular ways whiteness continues to show itself in our so called post-civil rights color-blind society. Within our educational institutions are multiple ways whiteness has been shown to be operating. Many scholars, researchers and theorists point to this whiteness as a cause of the racial academic achievement gap.

Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The racial academic achievement gap continues to plague our educational system and negatively impact our society at large. Vestiges of societal, institutional and individual racism have been identified as contributing to this racial academic achievement gap. Educational researchers have approached this multifaceted problem in a number of ways, including developing a body of theoretical and research literature detailing ways whiteness and white privilege impact academic achievement (Delpit, 1995; Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997; Howard, 1999; Howard, 2010; Kunjufu, 2002; Kuykendall, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; McIntyre, 1997; Pollock, 2004). Research has been conducted looking at pre-service white teachers and their understanding of how their whiteness impacts their learning, and potentially their teaching (McIntyre, 1997; Picower, 2007). Research has been conducted examining whiteness with practicing teachers (Chubbuck, 2002; Pollock, 2004). However, to date, little research has been done with white urban teachers currently working within the educational arena articulating their perception of their own whiteness and how it impacts their role as educators, which is the focus of this study.

Paradigm Assumptions

A basic belief system that encompasses the primary worldviews of the holder is that individual's paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), "a paradigm is a basic belief system based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions ... accepted on faith (no matter how well argued)"(p. 107). The

ontological assumption contains beliefs about the form of reality and what can be known about it. The epistemological assumption encompasses beliefs about the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. The methodological assumption contains beliefs about how the researcher will go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known (Creswell, 1994; 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Ponterotto, 2005).

I believe that an individual's life experiences, coupled with their thoughts and feelings, shape their unique belief system. Their culture and family weave together with their own individual thoughts, feelings, personality and experiences to form the way they understand their world. I believe that the individual's belief system may be consciously known to the individual, or may be unknown to them (Sullivan, 2006). This particular way of understanding is best contained within a constructivist paradigm. According to Glesne (2006):

> Most qualitative researchers adhere to social contructivism or a constructivist paradigm ... This paradigm maintains that human beings construct their perceptions of the world, that no one perception is "right" or more "real" than another, and that these realities must be seen as wholes rather than divided into discrete variables that are analyzed separately. (p. 7)

Rationale for Qualitative Case Studies Research Design

This study was conducted using a qualitative case studies research design. Qualitative research approaches knowledge acquisition with the assumption that all people construct their own individual subjective perspective of each life experience. According to Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2000), "Those subjective constructions are accepted as the realities of the social world. Thus, what is real is regarded as invariably multiple and immutably relative to person and context" (p. 96). The social

construction of knowledge is assumed within the qualitative perspective and is always changing (Glesne, 1999). Understanding what meanings people attach to life events and experiences and their individual understandings constructed from their personal and cultural perspectives are primary areas of research within the qualitative research design (Creswell, 1998).

The qualitative research design approach provides the researcher the venue to explore, deeply, questions that have not been explored previously, seeking answers and information concerning the how and what of a given experience (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne, 1999). This approach is fitting to explore whiteness and its impact on instructional capacity as perceived by white educators. Whiteness is an arena that must be explored deeply to uncover, and discover, relevance (Sullivan, 2006). Additionally, the understanding of whiteness is situated within each individual, and a qualitative approach is appropriate to uncover this.

Conversations about race and whiteness with whites are often difficult conversations that may engender defensiveness (Howard, 1999). Working with an insider rather than an outsider assists in easing this defensiveness. This insider position includes the researcher being a member of the organizational system being studied (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). Working with a white researcher who is also a current practicing teacher, as in this study, assisted in facilitating trust and openness and rapport, essential pieces of critically looking at whiteness (Mercer, 2007). Developing a critical understanding of whiteness and the depth of its embedded nature in educational structure is an essential first step in impacting whiteness.

Significance of Study

The racial achievement gap is an on-going educational and societal crisis of deep repercussions and grave consequences (Kozol, 2005). Studies have been conducted focusing on a variety of possible factors impacting the racial academic achievement gap such as SES, low school funding, low parental involvement and lack of pre-school interventions. Researchers of color have written about the enormous negative impact of societal racism and negative racial stereotyping on academic achievement. Additionally, scholars of color have issued a call for white researchers to study the impact of whiteness on academic achievement in relationship to the academic achievement gap (Tatum, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Studies have been conducted with pre-service teachers focusing on the issues of whiteness and the impact on instructional capacity (McIntyre, 1997; Lawrence and Tatum, 1998; Marx, 2004; Picower, 2007). Additionally, researchers have conducted studies as outsiders observing and interviewing the practicing white teacher and the intersection of whiteness on teaching practices (Banks, 2002; Pollock, 2004; Titone, 1998; Haviland, 2008; Marx, 2008).

As mentioned previously, situating the study focus within the white teacher's perceptions makes this study particularly significant. This study looks at the issue of whiteness and its impact on the role of the educator, as viewed by the practicing teacher. This study's particular significance increased in part due to the fact that the researcher is an 'insider' who is white and currently a practicing teacher. An 'insider' researcher may facilitate a sense of trust and openness approaching the topic of

whiteness and its impact on instructional capacity which will in turn uncover data not accessible to a researcher approaching from the 'outside'(Mercer, 2007).

Site Selection

This study focused on 5 white elementary teachers in a mid-size urban school district located in the mid-west. These white elementary classroom teachers also were serving as lead teachers within their individual schools for a research project studying academic success for boys of color. This broader research project was being conducted by an out of state university   The lead teacher's preparation responsibilities included attending professional development seminars and conferences focusing on educational issues related to boys, and specifically boys of color. The lead teachers were given curriculum modules from the university to present to their colleagues at their local elementary schools. The lead teachers met monthly with each other and the program coordinators to review progress and process issues. The lead teachers had been working in this capacity for approximately two years, with potentially two years to go until completion of the study initiative.

The lead teachers had a dual role of presenting professional development modules to their colleagues focusing both on gender and race, in addition to continuing their practice as classroom teachers. The professional development modules were focused on themes related to classroom practices, improving teacher and family relationships, and other issues of school partnerships and climate. The professional development modules included information on increasing cultural sensitivity, increasing positive role models in the classroom through literature and mentors and increasing knowledge base concerning the racial academic achievement gap.

These particular teachers brought a unique perspective to this study which enhanced the findings of this study. Uniquely, they were white lead teachers working with primarily students of color. They were working within a research initiative that facilitated their learning about the racial academic achievement gap and the multi-faceted factors influencing this gap. The professional development modules touched on cultural relevance and pedagogy and its impact on instructional capacity. These white lead teachers also were in the position of working with colleagues of color on the topic of cultural competency and its impact on academic achievement.

The white lead teachers had been working within this research project for approximately two years. They had all attended various professional development meetings and conferences and had read a variety of professional development modules that directed their subsequent professional development presentations with their respective colleagues at their respective schools. The lead teachers had, then, a retrospective understanding of where they had been as compared to where they were at the time of this study in terms of their perception of whiteness and its impact on their role as educators. However, it is significant to note that the modules did not significantly address the issue of the teacher's race or their understanding of how their race situates them in their personal history or their culture, the privilege and advantage it affords them and its impact on their role as educators. This study incorporated looking at their perception of how whiteness is embedded in this process, how they now perceived their past beliefs before the initiation of their role as lead teacher and what their current perceptions and beliefs are.

Data Collection Procedures

Creswell (1998) identifies four types of data collection methods: observations, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials (p. 120). For this study I utilized interviews and focus group discussions, coupled with audio taping, transcribing and reviewing as the main data collection processes.

Interviews

Qualitative study interviews are conducted with the purpose of gathering data, not necessarily changing people (Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 1999). According to Gubrium and Holstein (2002), the interviewing process is a social encounter in which knowledge is constructed and the interviewer attempts to create a climate of mutual disclosure. I conducted a semi-structured in-depth interview with each lead teacher to gather data and to establish a relationship with the lead teachers. The in-depth face-to-face interview was essential in this study because lead teachers were asked to reflect on their personal process of being white lead teachers.

As a currently employed teacher myself, in addition to being the researcher, I was able to approach the interview process as an 'insider' (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Mercer, 2007). I approached these interviews as an 'insider' in order to clarify and probe the sensitive areas of racial understanding, white advantage, whiteness and how they understood it impacting their role as educators, both as classroom teachers and as lead teachers in a project looking at the racial academic achievement gap.

Focus Group Discussion

I used focus group discussion to gain further understanding of the lead teachers

and their shared perceptions of the process they had undergone from the beginning of

their training as lead teachers up until their current teaching practice. Additionally,

the focus group assisted in potentially deepening their awareness of whiteness, how

they perceived whiteness as embedded in their lead teacher roles and how they

perceived its impact on both their role as classroom educator and as lead teacher.

I audio taped all of the interviews conducted after obtaining the participants

consent. This process facilitated maintaining the accuracy of the data gathered. As

Patton (2002) describes, "No matter what style of interviewing you use and no matter

how carefully you word your questions, it all comes to naught if you fail to capture

the actual words of the person being interviewed" (p. 380).

Data Analysis Procedure

In order to begin the data analysis procedure, I first transcribed, verbatim, all of

the interviews and focus group transactions. The analysis then began with a process

of coding the information for related categories of information. Creswell (2007)

refers to the process as one of coding and recoding until the information is 'saturated'

or until no new categories of information present within the coding process. After this

saturation process, the coded information was sorted into relevant themes and

analyzed according to the themes that emerged (Glesne, 2006).

The emerging themes, or bins, were identified through the process of cross-case

analysis. According to Glesne,

> When the instrumental case study involves looking at several cases ... it becomes
> a 'collective case study' ... if several cases are studied, each is written up into a

context-situated case study and then a cross-case analysis is carried out to look for patterns across cases. (p. 13)

This emerging data was compared to data collected through artifacts and documents the lead teachers have used in their instructional training process being lead teachers. This comparing of data and data sources, or triangulation of data sources, enhanced the accuracy of the data (Glesne, 2006). Glesne (2006) clarifies that triangulation of data includes both the multiple data-collection methods but also that "triangulation, in order to increase confidence in research findings, may also involve the incorporation of multiple kinds of data sources (p. 36).

Comparing and contrasting the data obtained from the lead teacher's case studies also lent credence and accuracy to the findings. Herriot and Firestone (1983) assert that "evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust" (cited in Yin, 2003, p. 46).

"Qualitative researchers use many techniques (such as coding, data displays, and computer programs) to help organize, classify, and find themes in their data, but they still must find ways to make connections that are ultimately meaningful to themselves and the reader."(Glesne, 2006, p.164). This analysis identified those meaningful connections and factors within the data. The analysis of data led to deeper understanding of the issues of whiteness and how white teachers understand its impact on their instructional capacity.

Role of Researcher

Tatum (2007), Ladson-Billings (1994), and Pollock (2004) emphasize the importance of white researchers working with white participants on issues of race and racism and how it impacts students of color and academic achievement. As a white researcher I bring this perspective and belief to the research setting.

Freire (1993) emphasizes the importance of critical reflection; personally and collectively. In terms of my own personal critical reflection, I was raised and educated in a middle class and highly racially segregated mid-west town and later was educated and trained as a social worker. Concern about social justice issues has always been a driving force for me. The realization of social inequities took on meaning for me during my high school years, especially when I began to develop a spiritual outlook of myself and life. This understanding was grounded in a social justice, simplicity of life and a peace orientation. I read voraciously about civil conscientious objection, civil rights and simple living. The Catholic Workers movement and teachers from it such as Phil Berrigan, Daniel Berrigan, Liz McAlister and Dorothy Day were instrumental in my developing life philosophy. I studied Dr. King and his philosophy of non-violence and the civil rights movement in the U.S. Civil rights workers, both locally and internationally, were prominent in my development. We hosted Philip Berrigan, Cesar Chavez, Laura Bonaparte from Argentina and many Central American refugees fleeing to Canada in our home. However, looking back, I see myself approaching social justice issues partially from the perspective McIntyre (1997) refers to as "liberating the marginalized."(p. 23)

At this time I was involved in a Gandhian study group that met for a weekend each month over a period of years. Through this group I formed strong and enduring relationships with many people who would become my support group over time. We purchased our first home, a duplex, with another family involved in this study group, and lived in intentional simplicity and community for many years. This included forming a house church that met in our home, and many acts of civil disobedience at Williams International which was manufacturing components of high tech weaponry.

Looking back on it now, although I knew that I was privileged, and was active in what I saw as social justice issues, I saw my privilege more in terms of socio-economic privilege than specifically racial privilege. Additionally, looking back on it now, the local peace and social justice movement was prominently, although not exclusively, racially segregated. Although I knew intellectually of my racial privilege and saw how racial injustice permeated our society, I somehow still did not fully own my white race or whiteness. My personal white self-identity was unformed and removed from how I saw myself.

An opportunity to live for a few months in Liberia, West Africa jump started my internalization of my white racial identity development and my acknowledgement of white privilege. Living in 'the bush' in a tiny village, I fulfilled the duties of a traditional mother with my 16 month old daughter while my then husband did medical training. Being one of only a handful of whites put me in an accentuated outsider role. At the time I believed that this was due primarily to my race interspersed with the fact that I was comparatively rich and from the US. The uncomfortable anxiety I experienced daily, feeling on the spot, highlighted and

hugely visible, was a new one for me. As a white woman used to the privilege afforded white people in the U.S. of not having to think about race daily, I was shocked that being an outsider made me think about race and my wealth and social standing constantly. This insight led me to ponder, with deeper awareness, the daily lives of people of color in my own culture. I began to develop a deeper appreciation and speculation about the amount of anxiety and energy likely spent, daily, navigating race in the U.S. by people of color. Simultaneously, I understood, with relief, that I would eventually be returning to an environment of relative racial ease. Even then, I recognized the injustice and irony of the relief this gave me. I realized my relief existed in knowing I'd be going back to a white centered culture where I was seen as non-raced; the standard and norm. I also began to realize that people of color in the U.S. are *already* 'home' and must live daily with the pain and anxiety that racial oppression and injustice bring. I was beginning to more fully perceive, feel and own the reality of white privilege and white advantage in the U.S. This experience was the beginning of a paradigm shift for me.

While in West Africa, we traveled for several weeks as well. During this time I contracted malaria. I had been taking the appropriate preventative medication, but chloroquine-resistant mosquito strands were beginning to emerge in this location. Although my then husband was a physician, we did not speak French or the local language, and securing any medical assistance or medication was impossible. This was the sickest I had ever been in my entire life. It is memorable to me that I was *shocked* that nothing could be done to help me. I could hardly fathom that I could not, in some way, get assistance and care. I was totally out of control of the situation.

No amount of money or white privilege could change it. Over time I was able to process my reaction; that I simply had very rarely in my life encountered a situation that I could not, through my white privilege, family connections, money and education, change to my advantage. This situation, and my reaction, exemplified to me the depth of my life's reliance on my social positioning and racial privilege and my *sense of entitlement.*

I have continued to be active in social justice issues over time. I have worked with Central American refugees and have been closely involved in the workings of a local homeless shelter over a few decades. My church communities - Church of the Brethren and Quaker Friends Meeting - both traditional peace and justice communities - have facilitated many peace and justice activities that I have been active in. Through all of this, then, it continues to surprise me that *I can still so easily forget about my racial privilege* and racial societal positioning.

The issue of whites working with whites on issues related to white privilege is one that I have begun to understand and acknowledge over these years. Two years ago I attended two weekend-long seminars entitled 'Doing Our Own Work' put on by a group called Allies for Change (www.alliesforchange.org). These process oriented seminars involved study, coupled with individual and group processing, with other whites who wanted to consider themselves anti-racist; and I do want to be able to consider myself anti-racist.

Dr. Tatum (1997) uses the metaphor of an airport's moving sidewalk to describe racism in the U.S. She describes that if you walk on the belt in the direction the belt is moving, you will get to the societal destination of racism quickly. If you stop

walking, the moving sidewalk will continue to propel you forward to racism; without your conscious effort you will eventually end up in the same place as if you had walked quickly along with the belt. "Because racism is so ingrained in the fabric of American institutions, it is easily self-perpetuating. All that is required to maintain it is business as usual (Tatum, 1997, p. 11).

In order to work and live against racism in the U.S., I believe that I have to turn and run against traffic, working against the tide. I have to be relentless because if I stop I will be propelled in the direction toward racism. "Unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt - unless they are actively antiracist - they will find themselves carried along with the others" (Tatum, 1997, p. 11).

As a researcher, I bring the fact that I am white to this research. Whites studying other whites is needed. White teachers studying white teachers is needed. I want to be able to consider myself an antiracist, and to do so I have to act. Dr. Tatum (1997) states that:

> The relevant question is not whether all whites are racist, but how we can move more white people from a position of active or passive racism to one of active antiracism? The task of interrupting racism is obviously not the task of whites alone. But the fact of white privilege means that whites have greater access to the societal institutions in need of transformation. To whom much is given, much is required. (p. 12)

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Introduction

My purpose in this study was to better understand how white teachers understand their racial identity and its privileged positioning in the U.S. culture (whiteness) and how white teachers understand this whiteness impacting their role as educators. In this study I use the term whiteness to refer to the societal privileges given whites based solely on their cultural identity as a white person. The role of educators encompasses all aspects of the teaching profession including relationships with students, parents, colleagues and administrators, the development of lessons and curriculum and the development and maintenance of classroom climate and student behavior management.

I used one grand tour question to guide this study: How do white teachers understand their whiteness and its impact on their role as educators? I used semi-structured individual interviews and a focus group to gather data for this study. My question protocol focused on the participants' understanding of whiteness within their family of origin; their educational experiences from elementary through university and their understanding of whiteness woven through their life within their education; and their understanding of whiteness and its impact on their professional life.

The study participants, referred to as lead teachers, were already trained and presented with a significant amount of information concerning racism through The Anding Study. The academic achievement gap, cultural competency, how an individual's worldview and values impacts their perceptions and their actions,

individual overt and covert racism and how these negatively impact people of color

were all concepts that were woven into the professional development modules of The

Anding Study. This study, then, is a 'middle of the middle' look at how the white

lead teachers understood their whiteness and its impact on their role as educators both

before the training, and now.

As I have discussed previously, I am personally interested in a socially significant

and emancipatory process in this study; both for the lead teachers and for myself.

According to Herr and Anderson (2005):

> An emancipatory interest orients the researcher toward the release of human
> potential and the investigation of ideology and power within the organization and
> society. The ultimate goal of this kind of research is that of the "emancipation
> of participants from the dictates or compulsions of tradition, precedent, habit,
> coercion or self-deception" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). These are thought to be
> subtle and deeply embedded into the belief structure of the organization and,
> through the process of critical self-reflection, they can be acceses and surfaced
> for examination ultimately leading to transformation." (p. 27)

Setting

March 24, 1961, in Jackson, Mississippi, 9 African American college students

from Tougaloo, Mississippi attempted to use the 'whites only' Jackson Public

Library. They entered the library and sat quietly reading books that were unavailable

in the 'colored' library until they were arrested for 'disturbing the peace'. White

students in the neighboring segregated Jackson State College organized a prayer vigil

for the Tougaloo Nine and were subsequently beaten by local police and the

organizers were expelled. Myrlie Evers said later of the Tougaloo Nine "The change

of tide in Mississippi began with the Tougaloo Nine and the library sit-in"

(www.crmvet.org/timhisbl.htm#1961t9). Honoring their courage in striving for equal

educational opportunities for all races, the names of the Tougaloo Nine have been

intentionally utilized for this study to provide the pseudonyms of the city, the school district, the broader study that the lead teachers worked within and the five elementary schools represented in this study. The names of the Tougaloo Nine are: Albert Lassiter, Meredith Anding, Jamie Jackson, Samuel Bradford, Evelyn Pierce, Alfred Cook, Ethel Sawyer, Geraldine Edwards and Joseph Jackson.

Federal law requires universities and other organizations that conduct research to meet specific stringent standards to protect research study participants. The anonymity of human research subjects is strictly protected. The use of pseudonyms is required by the IRB (Internal Review Board) to guard research subject's anonymity. Pseudonyms are used in this study for all specific names in order to guard research subject's anonymity including names of individuals, school buildings, the school district, city and state.

Lassiter School District

This study takes place in a public school district, in a mid-sized town in the mid-west. Historically, Lassiter relied on the auto industry as its main employer. Lassiter is a town hard hit by the 2009 recession and the related struggles of the auto industry. The town's population is approximately 120,000 with an unemployment rate of 12% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, July, 2009). As of June, 2009, the number of homes in foreclosure in Lassiter was 1,725, a stark reflection of how the auto industry's decline has impacted so many urban areas. As families have left the Lassiter area, either through transfer or in search of employment elsewhere, the Lassiter school district has steadily declined and downsized. This is reflected in the 2009 closure of two elementary schools in Lassiter.

The Lassiter School District currently has 14,482 students. The district has 2 alternative schools, 3 high schools, 4 middle schools and 24 elementary schools. The school district reports that of their students: 33% are Caucasian; 45% are African American; 16% are Hispanic/Latino; 5% are Asian and 1% are Native American (personal communication, Office of Research and Technology, Lassiter School District, 2009).

The teachers employed in the Lassiter School District are members of a teachers union. The 2009 membership in the Lassiter School Education Association Union was 1,090. Of this total: 2 are Native American; 15 are Asian/Asian Pacific; 43 are Hispanic/Latino; 138 are African American and 892 are Caucasian. The racial categories of the teachers in Lassiter in terms of a percentage breakdown are: Native American - .0018%; Asian/Asian Pacific – 1%; Hispanic – 4%; African American – 13%; Caucasian – 82% (personal communication, Lassiter School District Human Resources Department, 2009).

The Lassiter School District is the recipient of Federal Magnet Schools monies. The school district has been receiving the multi-million dollar magnet grant annually for 9 years. The U. S. Department of Education threatened to sanction the Lassiter School District in the late 1980s by withholding substantial Title Educational grant monies due to racial segregation within the school district. At that time the NAACP filed a motion requesting that the proposed sanctions be postponed in order to allow the Lassiter School District to address the segregation issue within the district. The magnet grants were applied for as a possible method of alleviating segregation within the district. The undergirding theme of the magnet grants is to improve the identified

schools, using a specified theme, by increasing specialized staff and equipment and in turn attract 'majority students' (white) to the school, thereby decreasing racial isolation and segregation. Of the five teachers involved in this study, two of them teach at magnet schools in the Lassiter School District.

The Broader Study: The Anding Study

> This time we want to talk about the crumbling schools that are stealing the future of Black children and White children and Asian children and Hispanic children and Native American children. This time we want to reject the cynicis that tells us that these kids can't learn; that those kids who don't look like us are somebody else's problem. The children of American are not those kids, they are our kids, and we will not let them fall behind in a 21st century economy. Not this time. (President Obama, March 18, 2008)

The five teachers interviewed for this study were involved in a broader research project organized by an out-of-state university. This out-of-state university received a multi million dollar grant to study boys of color, academic achievement and the academic achievement gap. I have given this study a pseudonym, The Anding Study, in order to guard the anonymity of the teachers and the study. The Anding Study selected several urban school districts nationwide to work with over a four year period. Each individual school district participating in The Anding Study identified six elementary schools for intervention and six elementary schools to act as study controls.

The purpose of The Anding Study is to help families, schools, and communities promote the academic, social and emotional development of boys of color between 3- and 8-years-old. The three major goals of The Anding Study are to 1) mobilize and support families, schools and communities to create partnerships that improve the academic, emotional, and social development of boys of color, 2) implement

programs that have been successful or that may be successful with boys of color, and

3) test to see if The Anding Study is effective in helping boys of color succeed

academically, socially, and emotionally (The Anding Study Teacher Training

Manual, 2008).

The intervention schools in The Anding Study are provided interventions focusing

on participating kindergarten and first grade boys of color. The interventions include

a summer school enrichment program, an after school mentoring and tutoring

program using primarily males of color to work with the boys of color, teacher

professional development and activities to increase parental involvement. These

interventions are organized by a local affiliated university working with The Anding

Study.

The Anding Study Teacher Training Manual states that:

there are currently gaps in the preparation of teachers to work with diverse
populations, especially boys of color. Too often teachers do not get a lot of
supervision and training to deal with active boys of color. Some behaviors of boys
of color (e.g. playing around or pretending to be tough and cold) may be
misinterpreted as signs of aggression and hostility. Also, there is often a lack of fit
between boys and the way schools are designed and organized. For example,
many boys excel at things that are not highly valued by elementary schools (e.g.,
running, jumping, strength moves) and lag behind in areas that these schools tend
to value (e.g., telling or writing long, logical stories). The goal of The Anding
Study teacher professional development is to help better prepare teachers to handle
the challenges of teaching boys of color. The Anding Study seeks to increase
preschool and elementary teachers' knowledge and understanding of the
circumstances of boys of color, enhance teachers' capacities to handle related
challenges and improve academic achievement of boys of
color through more effective teaching (The Anding Study Teacher Training
Manual, 2008).

The Anding Study's objectives for teachers include: providing specific strategies

to enhance teachers capacities to "1) develop supportive and trusting relationships

with boys of color; 2) develop effective partnerships with families of boys of color; 3)

create a positive and inclusive classroom environment that promotes success of all students, 4) improve academic and social functioning of boys of color at school" (The Anding Study Teacher Training Manual, 2008).

The classroom teacher professional development modules in the intervention schools are being presented, led and facilitated primarily by the lead teachers. The lead teachers have used modules developed by The Anding Study, contained in The Anding Study Teacher Training Manual, when directing the professional development with the classroom teachers. In preparation for leading the intervention school classroom teacher professional development, the lead teachers have attended two weekend seminars and a two day professional development session during the school year. During these training times, the lead teachers were familiarized with the training modules and have practiced modules from the teacher training manual.

The Anding Study Teacher Training Manual includes basic information on group process and group facilitation. It suggests that the lead teachers meet monthly or bi-monthly with the building teachers to cover the module information and activities. Each module begins with a background and purpose, the goals of the module and the learning objectives. The module then contains several activities to do with the teachers participating in the group.

The Anding Study's Professional Development Handbook for Teachers of Boys of Color lists areas of focus that need to be enhanced in order to increase academic achievement for boys of color. This introduction to the handbook has areas focusing on teachers, parents and mentors. The areas listed as The Anding Study outcomes for teachers include: acknowledge the challenges and possibilities for boys of color;

support positive emotional development for boys in boys of color; develop strong positive relationship with the families of boys of color; use instructional approaches that motivate and engage boys of color; manage challenging behavior in the classroom; help boys of color to affirm their identities as boys and as young men of color; and, teach boys of color to be caring, responsible and ethical (The Anding Study Professional Development Handbook for Teachers of Boys of Color/Facilitators Guide, 2008).

The lead teachers in each elementary building used the Professional Development Handbook for Teachers of Boys of Color and did activities within each module with the classroom teachers. The first module in the handbook includes several ice breakers and team building activities and activities to increase personal awareness of personal racial identity and personal culture. For example, one activity suggests that participants draw a family tree and share it with a partner. One optional activity is entitled "How can I resist stereotyping and examine my teaching for bias?" and involves naming two students the teacher feels warmly about and two that the teacher feels tense about. The teacher then identifies each of the student's strengths and weaknesses and studies the responses looking for patterns. In addition to the introductory activities in module 1 is an article of information concerning the academic achievement gap, an article concerning cultural identity and teaching and an article on understanding culture.

Module 2 of the Professional Development Handbook for Teachers of Boys of Color for The Anding Study focuses on supporting positive emotional development in boys of color. It includes activities dealing with the importance of a positive

relationship with students, how that impacts academic achievement, and an article detailing the importance of relational engagement, insistence and warmth.

Module 3 of the training materials for The Anding Study centers on developing strong positive relationships with families of boys of color. The activities focus on ways to increase conveying positive regard for families, communicating warmth and respect to parents and how to deal with conflict with parents.

The training materials and activities in Module 4 of the Professional Development Handbook for Teachers of Boys of Color Facilitator's Guide center on altering and improving instructional approaches to motivate and engage boys of color. The activities include using brain based research to better understand how boys think, increasing movement in the classroom, reading topics and genres that attract boys and many web sites that contain lesson materials interesting to boys.

Module 5 focuses on the topic of how to manage challenging behavior in the classroom. This module leads the teachers through the process of identifying the challenging behavior in their classroom, sharing methods that have worked in the past and brainstorming ways that could be effective to deal with the behavior. The module learning objectives are to develop planned behavior management techniques and to evaluate behavior management techniques in light of what is known about behaviors of boys of color.

The last module in the Professional Development Handbook for Teachers of Boys of Color is titled "Help Boys of Color to Affirm Their Identities as Boys and Men of Color". The goals of this module are listed as 1) exploring the teachers personal beliefs about ethnic and gender differences and about boys of color; 2) identifying the

qualities needed to be a positive, competent man of color; 3) discussing some approaches to teaching and classroom interactions that might promote the adoption of a positive male role, and; 4) identifying and sharing strategies that teachers can use to negate negative stereotypes about boys of color and to facilitate boys of color identifying with competent men of color. This module also includes articles on personal covert prejudice and racism.

The purpose of including the above detailed information included in the training manual for The Anding Study is to illustrate the depth and type of information and training that the lead teachers have experienced concerning personal racial identity development and the impact of racism on expectations and academic achievement. The detailed information about the handbook used in the broader study, The Anding Study, also illustrates the depth of information the lead teachers have been expected to lead their colleagues through.

Demographic information about the Lassiter School District, its students and teachers, and information about The Anding Study that the Lassiter School District is participating in are important to give a deeper understanding of the setting that the five lead teachers, the participants in this study, work in. In addition, demographic information about the five elementary schools where the five lead teachers work is a part of understanding the setting for this study. The schools are referred to by pseudonyms to guard anonymity, as previously mentioned.

Intervention/Study Elementary Schools

Two of the Lassiter School District elementary schools involved in The Anding Study as intervention schools are magnet schools. One of the magnet schools, Bradford, is a Montessori school – the only one in the Lassiter School District. Through special grants and magnet monies, all of the teaching staff at Bradford Montessori School have been able to obtain their master's degrees in Montessori education. The teachers have developed much of their own teaching materials, especially in kindergarten and 1st grade, which are the focus of The Anding Study. Bradford Montessori School contains classrooms through the 6th level and has 322 students. The student's ethnicity at Bradford Montessori are as follows: Native American, 2%; Asian, 3%; Hispanic, 11%; Caucasian, 41%; African American, 43% (Personal Interview, Lassiter School District, 2008). The principal is Middle Eastern and has worked in the Lassiter School District for over 15 years, and at Bradford since the magnet funding was given to it as a Montessori school 5 years ago. Of a teaching staff of 15, Bradford Montessori has 2 African American teachers, 1 Middle Eastern teacher, 1 Asian teacher and 11 white teachers.

Cook Elementary School was slated to be closed 4 years ago. The school closure was decided by the Lassiter School Board in closed session and disclosed only one month before the scheduled closure. The neighborhood came together and organized a grassroots response to keep it open. Lassiter School District decided to honor the neighborhood's request on a trial basis, and kept it open. It was designated a magnet school the following year and additional staff and monies have been added to improve the quality of Cook Elementary Magnet School. The district then added a 6th

grade to Cook and changed the name to Cook Magnet School. The principal of Cook Magnet School is African American. She has been working in the Lassiter School District for over 20 years, the first 10 as a teacher and the last 10 as a principal. Of the 265 students at Cook, the student's ethnicities are as follows: Asian, 2%; Hispanic, 7%; Caucasian, 13%; African American, 77% (Personal Interview, Lassiter School District, 2008). There is one African American kindergarten teacher and 1 white kindergarten teacher along with 1 African American 1st grade teacher and 1 white 1st grade teacher at Cook Magnet School.

Pierce Elementary has a total of 229 students. Of these students 7% are Asian, 17% are Hispanic; 33% are Caucasian and 43% are African American (Personal Interview, Lassiter School District, 2008). The principal of Pierce Elementary has worked in the Lassiter School District for over 20 years as a teacher and a principal and is white. Pierce Elementary has classrooms for K-5th grade and additional classrooms for pre-school students. This pre-school program has been widely popular in the Lassiter School District and has an extensive waiting list as other schools are waiting for pre-school designation and funding. The pre-school program services children who meet 2 or more of 25 designated potential risk categories that put the children potentially at risk of being behind academically when they enter kindergarten. Some of the risk categories include: a parent in the military, low birth weight, low economic status or an incarcerated parent. At Pierce Elementary there is one African American teacher and the rest of the staff, including the principal, are white.

Sawyer Elementary School has a total of 270 students whose ethnicity is as follows: Native American, 1%; Asian, 3%; Hispanic, 13%; Caucasian, 36%; African American, 47% (Personal Interview, Lassiter School District, 2008). The principal is white and has been a principal in the school district for 5 years, all at Sawyer. Of the teaching staff, two are African American and the rest of the teaching staff is white.

The fifth elementary school participating in The Anding Study as an intervention school is Jackson Elementary. Jackson elementary has 273 students in K-5 grade classrooms. The students' ethnicities at Jackson Elementary are: Native American, 2%; Asian, 7%; Caucasian, 16%; Hispanic, 23% and African American, 52%. The principal of Jackson has been both a teacher and a principal in the Lassiter School District for over 20 years and is African American. The staff at Jackson Elementary is primarily white, with three African American teachers (Personal Interview, Lassiter School District, 2008).

CHAPTER V

CASE STUDIES

Introduction

This study focuses on five lead teachers and their understanding of their own whiteness, as described previously, and how this understanding impacts their role as educators. The five lead teachers are classroom teachers working in five different elementary schools. Each of these schools is participating in a broader study, The Anding Study, which is focusing on the academic achievement gap of boys of color. The lead teachers are in charge of professional development with their respective colleagues that looks at aspects of the academic achievement gap of boys of color.

All of the teachers interviewed for this study are white. Of the lead teachers participating in The Anding Study in the Lassiter School District, five are white and one is African American. The participating African American teacher was displaced to a 4th grade assignment for the 2008/2009 school year, and has been displaced again due to his school closing at the end of the 2009 school year. Additionally, one of the white lead teachers was displaced and has not been reassigned to another school. A third lead teacher was displaced and laid off, meaning her continued employment in the Lassiter School District is uncertain. These shifts in classroom assignments, displacements and lay-offs are a continued and on-going sign of the down-sizing being experienced in the Lassiter School District. As mentioned previously, the pseudonyms for the teachers were drawn from the Tougaloo Civil Rights movement.

Ms. Wright

> My dad, looking back, was what I would call really racist. Very, like, white power. And I was always uncomfortable with that...I have a younger brother and

sister and they would start to saying those things and that was unacceptable. And

I would always tell them, 'No, don't say that'. It was just more that it was known that people who weren't white were not as important, they weren't as smart, you didn't need to listen to them...It's strange that in that environment I've always felt like 'this is not right'. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Raised in a highly racially segregated town in the mid west, Ms. Wright was not aware of other races until she accompanied her parents to their favorite bowling alley and was told to stay away from the Black bar across the street. "That's what it was called, people still call it that. But I was always just wondering, like, 'Why? What's wrong with those people?' Because in my mind they were people, and I was confused." Ms. Wright's elementary school had no students or teachers of color and her middle school had a few Mexican American students. High school was a bit more racially diverse within the student population, and Ms. Wright interacted with African Americans at parties and sports events.

As a sophomore in high school, Ms. Wright was elected to the homecoming court. As is customary, Ms. Wright was paired with the same grade level male who was elected by the student body, and this male was African American. Ms. Wright was highly anxious about the prospects of being with her African American escort in public at the parade and football game – she was afraid that her father or relatives would say something racist to her escort.

> Going into that public setting of having to walk and knowing that my family was going to be there to see, I was really uncomfortable the whole time, thinking 'Gosh, I hope they don't say anything to embarrass me.' But I did talk to my dad and say that I would be uncomfortable if he did say something like that. And I am sure my mother had that conversation, too. It had to have come from her to have made a difference, for him not to do something like that. He did make comments in the home all the way up until then. And my uncles had made comments also. I feel anxious just remembering it. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Wright graduated from high school and attended the local community college in her town. She remembers that the community college student body was a reflection of her high school and was racially segregated. Leaving the community college to attend an area university that was known as an agricultural school, Ms. Wright also remembers that the student body was highly segregated. She has no memories of any person of color at her university.

Ms. Wright had one teacher of color during her university education. This professor started the first class addressing race in a direct manner. Ms. Wright felt it was done in a stark and aggressive manner. "You guys are all white people from the Midwest...and if you are here thinking I am going to tell you how great America is and how great you white people are then this isn't the class for you." Ms. Wright recalls that she felt put off by this, and that she was never able to really connect to the class. She completed it and passed it, but "I never really embraced that class after that. For I don't know what reason, it was just like off putting to have that thrown right at you. But I'm sure that he had to have had experiences that got him to the point where he was saying that."

After graduating with her teaching certification, Ms. Wright taught for two years in schools near her hometown. She then made the decision to move to Lassiter and took a position at a Lassiter Elementary School, Beech Elementary.

> Definitely moving to Lassiter was the biggest culture shock of my whole life. Because before then it was just very random experiences with race and then all of a sudden it was like 'Wow, I'm a teacher of a lot of children and there isn't even a white kid in the whole room.' When I was thrown in front of a class at Beech with no white kids, that's when it occurred to me 'Whoa this is different.' I don't know, I still struggle with that, but not as much. It's not right in the forefront for me anymore. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Wright considers herself a very dedicated and professional teacher. She does not hesitate to involve the parents of her kindergarten students when the students have behavioral issues. Insisting, repeatedly, that a father come in to talk with her directly about his son's behavior in class led to a major new understanding for Ms. Wright. After four insistent phone messages left for this particular father, he came to the school and threw fistfuls of bills and money on the table in front of Ms. Wright. Ms. Wright stated that:

> And he said, 'No, Ms. Wright, this is what's important. It's important that I make money to feed my family, to pay my bills. Your job is to make sure Joe is behaving at school and learning at school. I don't have the energy to do your job and my job.' I was like – that's big. It was something that hadn't occurred to me, mostly because I hadn't worked with poor children before. And then, on top of it, I didn't understand the culture…that experience opened my eyes. I have been a lot more understanding and I guess what changed from that is that I now make sure I get to know each family. Had I known Joe's dad, would I have talked differently to him and maybe not sounded so high and mighty on the phone? If I had realized the reason he was blowing me off was because he was working and trying to make a living for his family? (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Wright has vowed to be certain to get to know the parents at the first of the school year, in addition to the student, and has a new found appreciation for how vital this relationship with the parent is.

Ms Wright took the assignment as the lead teacher for The Anding Study and the first year of the program went really well. Ms. Wright was pleased with the progress made with the staff.

> It was great that first year, amazing! I just thought 'Wow! I am so glad this came along because we were able to have conversation and were able to get that whole race issue out on the table and acknowledge that we're not all the same. And everyone was able to share and I learned a lot about people that I would have never known. (Personal Interview, 2009)

The second year did not go as smoothly for Ms. Wright as the lead teacher. There were many conflicts with staff that occurred. Ms. Wright notes that, unfortunately, the conflicts occurred between white staff and Black staff. The staff at Cook Elementary is racially diverse and the principal is African American. Ms. Wright believes that the principal tends to protect and favor the African American staff. For example, the principal will not correct an African American teacher who does not come prepared for a meeting, but, Ms. Wright notes, will correct a white teacher. Many conflicts have arisen during Black History Month and the negative feelings have not been resolved. The principal refused to mediate a direct face-to-face interaction between two teachers, and instead advised Ms. Wright to 'let it go'.

The anxiety associated with the staff conflicts has been quite difficult for Ms. Wright. In addition to the staff conflict, Ms. Wright's students had many difficulties this past year. Five of her students were living in foster homes and three of them were homeless. Ms. Wright had to make numerous referrals to Child Protective Services and always received notification back that there was insufficient evidence to proceed with a case. Ms. Wright found this very emotionally draining. She found herself repeatedly wondering how many more years she would be able to continue to do her job.

> Feeling weird about my dad being the way he is, I probably didn't talk about it. I'd be interested to know more things I could do. I don't know what they are, though. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Durr

> You have to better understand yourself before you can even begin to understand others…I think what we have to do is, we have to stop being know-it-alls. That's our defense. (Personal Interview, 2009)

As a freshman in the Department of International Affairs at a large mid-west university, Ms. Durr took a basic required course on culture and racial awareness. The professor of the course and many of her fellow students were African Americans. During her high school years, Ms. Durr's mother married an African American man. Ms. Durr felt that having an African American step-father made her aware of race and racial issues and made her feel competent to speak about race in her course. She picked up on the fact that the African American professor used the term 'people of color' during dialogue in the class and realized that this was the most proper and least offensive way to frame her conversation when referring to African Americans. Ms. Durr found herself trying to express a point during class and inadvertently said 'colored people' instead of 'people of color'. This mistake made a huge and lasting impression on her as she related,

> Every single Black person jumped up and I thought…they were so livid at me…I mean every African American person in the class jumped up and wanted to hurt me because I think of the way I came off and everything. And I was like – 'Oh, my God!'…I didn't even realize what I had said…I didn't want to talk anymore in that class because I was afraid….I don't come from that perspective anymore. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Raised as an only child, Ms. Durr first had an Italian step-dad and then later an African-American step-dad. This interaction with diverse ethnic males has been the impetus for Ms. Durr's belief that she is an open and non-judgmental person towards others concerning race and culture. She credits her appreciation of other cultures to her upbringing and to her mother. Ms. Durr's Italian step-dad introduced her to a cultural appreciation of Italian foods and practices. Ms. Durr's African American step-dad gave her an opportunity to experience being 'the minority' herself by taking her to her first all African American family event.

At her African American uncle's wedding, Ms. Durr experienced her first feeling of being the 'other' as one of only two whites at the wedding: her mother, and herself. Although she does not remember any overt conversations about race, mixed race marriages or racism concerning her mother's interracial marriage, she does remember that many of her African American aunts were 'cool' toward her mother, at first. Now, after several years, according to Ms. Durr, she is close to her extended African American family.

Raised in an upscale suburb on the outskirts of the Lassiter School District, Ms. Durr laments that she had very little interaction with people of color throughout her schooling during her early years. Her elementary school, to her memory, was highly segregated. She does recall fond memories of her only African American teacher in first grade – the only teacher of color she had until she went to college.

Ms. Durr credits her upbringing as the impetus for her desire to know more about other cultures, and her willingness to travel. As a high school student she traveled to Europe and as a sophomore at her university she spent a summer abroad as well working as a teacher's aid in a kindergarten classroom. Immediately after graduation with a bachelor's degree in education, and her teaching certification, Ms. Durr had an opportunity to go overseas as a preschool teacher for two years, and she accepted. This was another extended and memorable experience in being the 'other'.

As a preschool teacher overseas, Ms. Durr worked with many international children who were interracial and bi- or tri-lingual. She had the students for one half of the day, and spoke to them exclusively in English. During their second half of the day her students were in a classroom speaking their home language. Ms. Durr's

traveling and working overseas concretized one of her primary internal understandings about race and culture: everyone is different and we need to appreciate differences. She states:

> I used to think it was better to be color-blind in a sense. Now I'm to the perspective where I've grown and it's more, it's not really good to be color-blind. You need to see people's cultures and who they are, and we're not all the same. When I was overseas, I wouldn't want them to say 'I don't even see you as a white person'. I want them to see my culture and who I am. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Upon returning to the U.S., Ms. Durr started working as a preschool teacher in the Lassiter School District. The Lassiter School District has a federally funded preschool program and has instituted 7 all-day preschools throughout the district. Eligibility requirements are that the family meets a minimum of two criteria out of a possible 25 including such factors as 1 parent in the military, a single parent household, low SES, 1 parent incarcerated, low birth weight, or other health issues. Ms. Durr enjoys her job, is dedicated to working with kids 'who need me' and considers herself a hard worker.

The Anding Study has been a positive process for Ms. Durr in that it has provided a platform to continue to be self-reflective about her race, culture and racial identity. Ms. Durr appreciates the opportunity to continue to process and learn and grow in the area of racial awareness and reflects that "I enjoy talking about this sort of thing, and I feel like when I talk about this sort of thing it helps me to process my thoughts and helps me to grow." This attitude of appreciation for personal reflection and increasing racial awareness is something that Ms. Durr believes has assisted her in working with her students. Ms. Durr stated that she attempts in concrete ways to blend racial and cultural appreciation into her curriculum and lessons like making

sure that there are authentic African American hair care products represented in her play area for her preschoolers.

Ms. Durr applied to graduate school upon her return from China to pursue a Masters in Education degree. The capstone project of her educational program was to develop a portfolio of past teaching work highlighting a main theme that was embedded within her teaching. As Ms. Durr reflected on her past lessons and what her continued underlying theme was, she realized that cultural competency and appreciation was truly her heartfelt theme. As she reviewed her past work, the theme continued to present itself: cultural competency and appreciation. Her upbringing and her family experiences, her traveling and her teaching experience in China all contributed to her passion for this as a theme in her professional life.

Ms. Durr took, as her last elective class in her masters program, a course entitled "African American Families". As the only white person in the class, Ms. Durr was proud of her change in perspective as compared to her freshman year in college.

> I felt comfortable having discussions in that class because I took down that guard and I came from that 'I don't know everything – teach me' perspective. And I think it really shows how I have grown in being able to talk about race. Now I know how to approach things better, I have a better understanding of where people of color are coming from. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Durr's school has one African American teacher and one African American teacher's aid. The rest of the staff is white. Ms. Durr is the lead teacher for The Anding Study, primarily because none of the senior teachers would take the assignment, and Ms. Durr really wanted The Anding Study interventions provided at her school. So, she volunteered.

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The sole African American teaching colleague at her school encouraged Ms. Durr to take the lead teacher assignment – "cause I think she didn't want anyone else to do it. So I felt better since she suggested that I be the lead teacher...I kinda ask her questions and go to her for help." Ms. Durr, the youngest and least senior teacher on staff, approaches the white teachers by saying "you guys have to help me out. I'm learning with you guys". However, Ms. Durr felt the white teachers' negativity and resentment about The Anding Study. "The teachers seem to think 'we don't really need that'. They are like 'well, this is stuff we've already heard before; we don't need this. But, no, you need to dig deeper than that! They think that they got it all, but that's just something that you never fully get – you have to continuously learn." Ms. Durr's observations are that the white teachers in her school are defensive about The Anding Study, and she frames this attitude as "it's because they aren't taking the time to deep down self-reflect".

> I hate it when people say – and I used to be like this:'Well, I can't be racist, I have friends that are Black or some of my best friends are Black'. And me, just because my step-family is African American, doesn't mean that I understand African American people. I'm not African American, I haven't lived that. I don't know that. So, I think we need to first, we need to get rid of that whole...your guard, the whole 'I can't be racist because...we've got to get rid of that. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith

> When I was 16 or 17 my Dad sat us down and was like 'Well, I've got something to tell you kids. I'm an Indian', and we were like 'OK – like you thought you were fooling us?'...then, we figured 'Great! School will be free! And he said 'I'm not taking no government handout', and he wouldn't register. He's a very proud man and he liked passing. He did not want to trade on being Indian...he wouldn't register, he was too proud to take a government handout, plus he was very proud just to be an American. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith's upbringing was interwoven with many contradictions springing from race and social class. Her mother's grandparents were Irish, and her mother was raised in a southern state. Ms. Smith's mother worked all her life to rid herself of her southern accent, thinking that it identified her as a 'hillbilly'. A 'country hillbilly' was something that Ms. Smith's mother did not want to be associated with. So much so that she took on an affected accent that subsequently made Ms. Smith's childhood friends questions if her mother was 'Canadian or English'. "I learned very early to be sensitive to the 'dumb hillbilly'…if it was the Beverly Hillbillies, my parents would turn that off. They were real sensitive because they weren't just hillbillies."

Ms. Smith's father was full Cherokee Indian. At age 16 he had his sister sign consent forms for him and he joined the army. Put into a sharp-shooter group of all Native Americans, he was considered a scout and was sent ahead of his company in many missions. Ms. Smith's father was very proud of his service to his country and frequently repeated war stories to Ms. Smith and her brother. He was raised in a small 'holler' down south, and came north to the mid west to work. It was at that time that he met and married Ms. Smith's mother.

Ms. Smith was raised in a lower middle class neighborhood in the mid west that was primarily supported by the auto industry. Her neighborhood and town were red-lined and there were no African Americans living in their town at all. In terms of her father living in an all white, red-lined neighborhood and town she says "I didn't really know that we were passing or that my dad was anything other than what he was, and nobody every questioned him." As a child she spent all of her summers with her grandparents down south, in the 'holler'. She was aware at that time of accent and

language differences because she had difficulty being understood by the locals due to her mid western accent. She loved the culture and the foods that typically were part of her summers down south and is proud of this part of her heritage. "I'm very proud of being southern and that's not easy. Cause whether it's the food or the people, they're being made fun of. They have a pride there that's very hard to explain to other people."

Elementary school for Ms. Smith was racially segregated, but she moved to a large middle school that was somewhat racially diverse, and had a best friend who was African American. Ms. Smith's friend, Janet, was from down south and they shared a lot in common. "I became very good friends with her, and looking back now, she was southern, and we had the same sense of humor, told the same stories, talked the same way – she seemed and looked familiar, her parents were very nice to me and I liked the food they cooked." Ms. Smith's mother was very angry that Janet was Ms. Smith's chosen best friend and gave her a very hard time for it. Ms. Smith recalls that "I think looking back that's why I liked Janet, cause she was southern…my mom didn't like her for the same reason – it reminded her of her poor country life."

Ms. Smith went to university to become a librarian, and left with a teaching certification. She moved to Florida for two years to live near her mother, who had divorced her father and remarried. In Florida, Ms. Smith remembers the segregated neighborhoods as "there were the African Americans living pretty tough lives south of 22nd Avenue. And that still is there. You wouldn't see them downtown. I didn't know what restaurants they went to or where they shopped. But it wasn't where we were."

Ms. Smith moved to Lassiter, married, had two children and began teaching once her youngest was in school. Her first principal was a white woman who was dedicated to diversity and celebrating culture. The principal encouraged the celebration of all cultures but not, necessarily, the dominant white culture. Her philosophy was that the dominant culture was already on TV and being celebrated everywhere else, and at Kent, they were doing something different. "At Kent Elementary we did not do the traditional American; we did Kwanzaa, but we didn't do Christmas. How many kids at that school, whether they were Hispanic or African American or Native American or even Vietnamese, for whatever reason their families had chosen to celebrate Christmas. I am not saying we should or we shouldn't, but to leave that one out I think is ridiculous. And I saw such pretense in that."

Ms. Smith has worked in the Lassiter School District for 15 years as a kindergarten and first grade teacher. Two years ago she was offered The Anding Study lead teacher position. Working as the lead teacher has created stress and conflict for Ms. Smith, primarily from her principal. Ms. Smith's principal, Ms. Craig, is African American and considers herself a tough disciplinarian, particularly with African American boys. In Ms. Smith's opinion, this toughness is more like bullying. Ms. Craig's philosophy is that the boys 'don't need to be coddled – that's not what they need." In Ms. Smith's opinion, Ms. Craig sees the interventions provided by The Anding Study as being a form of coddling.

Ms. Smith reported that her white colleagues have been resistant to doing even the most basic of The Anding Study modules. The white teachers responded defensively

with comments such as 'I already know this', and questions about why they have to review materials that they already know.

> But, you talked about race; it was a hard conversation at my school. They didn't want to do any of the encounter things where you write down how you identify your ethnicity; five things that are important about yourself. They didn't want to do any of the practices to get in touch with racial things." Although the teachers have found the information on gender and ways to alter lessons to accommodate more movement and hands on learning for boys, the information on racial identity and cultural competency has not been well received. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith has found The Anding Study to be useful for her personally, in increasing awareness of cultural issues and potential areas of conflict. The on-going conversations with other lead teachers has allowed Ms. Smith to reflect on cultural and racial issues and has changed some of her practices and literature choices based on this. For example, Ms. Smith is constantly looking for age appropriate literature that portrays the moral hero of a book as an African American boy. Additionally, Ms. Smith has weeded out her literature to exclude stereotypic racial representations. "If we really are going to address how African American boys wind up feeling so devalued, then messages have to start coming about how they *are* valued and I don't see them yet."

Ms. Smith is dismissive of white people who are judgmental or negative concerning their own heritage, race and culture. She is suspicious of whites who try to take on a new culture or alter their racial identity because it seems 'cool'. Although Ms. Smith knows that in some circles she could claim her Cherokee heritage and 'be considered better than white', she 'won't play that game'.

But the person in that culture, whether it is Christian, or Cherokee, or whatever, is going to say 'Wait a minute, it's not that it's cool or not cool, it's just my identity, my customs, my heritage'. It's just as valid or invalid as any other. There are expectations that you run into and you kind of feel like 'I'm letting you down because I've just told you I'm Cherokee.' And so you want me to be a certain way, but I'm not, I'm just a person getting along. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden

There were some crazy white people in my neighborhood. It wasn't like it was always this race or this race that was acting crazy or running down the street shooting a gun, it was everybody… but I always felt a certain amount of safety, but then it got to the point where I did not feel safe anymore. And I was like, I don't know these people who are standing on the corner anymore, these are like somebody else's little brothers and sisters that are grown, and I had to go. I couldn't drive through the neighborhood and feel safe anymore and was like, I can't live like that, and I left. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden was raised in Lassiter, in a lower class, racially diverse neighborhood that has a reputation of being 'rough' with a high crime rate. Ms. Braden refers to her home neighborhood as 'a little bit seedy and ghetto'. Her older brother, and only sibling, struggled in school, and was labeled 'special ed' before federal legislation was established to enhance the rights of students receiving special education services. Ms. Braden's mom and dad struggled financially to the point where the electricity would have frequently been shut off if the church members hadn't paid it. Their Pentecostal church community would frequently assist them with food and some cash, as well.

Ms. Braden comes from a large extended family that reflects the racial diversity of her home neighborhood. "I have cousins that are mixed – both Hispanic and white, and Black and white." It was through the close relationship with one of her interracial cousins that Ms. Braden had her first memorable experience of white privilege and racial discrimination.

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Ms. Braden was close in age to her cousin, LeeAnn, and their mothers were close and spent a lot of time together. At age 8, Ms. Braden was aware that LeeAnn was biracial, and that felt normal and unremarkable to her, having grown up with LeeAnn. Ms. Braden's mother and aunt were in the habit of dressing the girls like twins. On a shopping excursion to K-Mart, Ms. Braden and LeeAnn had a cart full of clothing to try on, and went ahead of the adults to the dressing rooms.

> The [sales clerk] lady said, looking at me, 'Oh, are you going to try some clothes on?' and I was like, 'yea'. And she opened the door and said to go ahead but she wouldn't let my cousin come in, and she was like 'you're going to have to wait for an adult'. I was so mad and felt so flushed. I was like 'come on, we'll just wait together'. It always stood out to me, and it enraged me and I was only like 7 or 8. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Although there were many interracial couples and biracial children within Ms. Braden's extended family, many members were overtly racist. Several of Ms. Braden's uncles would refer to other races using racist slurs and Ms. Braden recounts that she always felt shame about that. These family conversations were so overtly racist that Ms. Braden was afraid to bring friends of color to her house for fear of which family members would be there and what types of conversations would be taking place. She felt disloyal to her friends of color even being within earshot of these conversations.

Ms. Braden's mother was fearful of her dating outside of her race, and told her frequently that she would have children 'with spots'. Ms. Braden would counter with 'but he's funny; and polite!" Ms. Braden would argue with her mom, pointing out the biracial children in the extended family – but her mom was adamant. When Ms. Braden did bring boyfriends home who were of color, her mom was friendly and welcoming and the boyfriends often continued to come over even after they had

broken up with Ms. Braden. Within a family interwoven with many interracial marriages and biracial children, Ms. Braden discovered early on that she was white and also that she was fiercely opposed to overt racism.

Educationally, Ms. Braden's experience from kindergarten through university level was racially diverse, as well. Ms. Braden believes that her racially diverse life experiences helped her excel in her university classes and assisted in bringing a realistic perspective to her education classes. Ms. Braden went to the local community college, and graduated from the local university with a bachelor's degree in education and a teaching certification. Several years after graduation, Ms. Braden obtained her first teaching position in Lassiter and has been working in the Lassiter School District since then.

Ms. Braden currently teaches in a Montessori magnet school within the Lassiter School District. Ms. Braden and the rest of the 15 teaching staff all received grant monies to pay their expenses to complete a Masters degree in Montessori education. Ms. Braden is proud of her accomplishment and reflects that "I am the only one in my family with a Masters degree. They are like…wow…how did that happen?"

Ms. Braden's classroom at Bradford Montessori School is racially diverse and she feels a strong comfort level with this. Ms. Braden loves the Montessori philosophy and curriculum materials. She states that Montessori education places a high value on respecting all races and cultures. Her preschool students have 'continental folders' as part of their classroom materials that contain pictures representing the wants and needs and religion, dance and transportation methods of that particular continent. "So, it's very broad and open, but it gives the child a taste of like everything in the

world around them. In the concept of Montessori you start from the whole and go down to the smaller parts as the student gets older."

Ms. Braden has used her upbringing and appreciation of diversity to assist her in understanding and addressing issues with students. "I don't know, I guess I grew up with a lot of Black children so it was always normal to me, but this little kid was sitting next to her and he was like 'I don't want to sit by her, she smells funny.' And I told him that sometimes moms put stuff in our hair to make it be soft. But I started to notice that it was all of the little girls of color that he was like 'I don't want to sit by her'. So I did say something to the mom." Her conversation with this mother, Mrs. Troy, focused on identifying exactly what Jack was saying, and Mrs. Troy responded that she had heard him say something similar, and she was embarrassed by it. Mrs. Troy said that their family is a 'biker family' and that Jack has heard many racist comments, but that she did not want him to be racist. "So, I think she genuinely doesn't want her son to be racist, she wants him to be respectful of everyone." Ms. Braden's appreciation of diversity prompted her to address this situation with Mrs. Troy. Ms. Braden worked with Jack on the issue of accepting differences in others, as well. "We worked on it and we talked a lot about how everybody's different and he was fine after that. I think it will help him in his life."

Ms. Braden was asked by her principal to be the lead teacher for The Anding Study. Ms. Braden was enthusiastic about the study and welcomed this opportunity. She identifies the teaching staff as "one African American, one mixed, we have a Middle Eastern teacher and an Asian teacher. We have a staff of 15 and it's a pretty young staff." There have been two teachers that have been particularly resistant and

negative about the modules in The Anding Study: one white teacher and the African American teacher. The African American teacher attended the first meeting and has not returned, stating that she does not like the materials. The white teacher is very stressed out and negative about the modules, and simply does not believe in the content.

The highlight this past year of working with the teachers on the modules for The Anding Study was the very positive change Ms. Braden saw in one of the instructional specialists. The principal sent the specialist to Ms. Braden, saying "She needs you. She needs the program". Ms. Braden initially did not think it was appropriate that she was "put in charge of this senior teacher's diversity training". However, the results were worth it. The specialist came to Ms. Braden at the end of the year saying that "her relationship with one of her troubling Black kids was really improved and that they were getting along better. "And she was like 'I am really learning about him and respecting where he comes from. It's really been helpful for me, thank you."

Ms. Braden believes the challenge for white teachers lies in being self reflective and analytical, and being passionate about improving themselves for the sake of the students.

> I think it's more important for the teachers to learn how to deal with their own Issues and the issues of cultural diversity and all of these things. It's not just about the kid and his poor behavior; you have to figure out what you are going to need to do yourself to be able to provide for this child. It always seems like it comes back to that relationship between you and the child. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Tilly

> I've had more exposure to minorities, in a way, than I did with other [white] men besides my father. Because I didn't have any real relationships with his family; my mom didn't have any brothers or sisters. I don't know, then it just kinda continued. I dated Black men, my children are Black, my husband was Black, so I've never had a relationship with a white man except for my father. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Born in Lassiter in a lower class white neighborhood, Ms. Tilly was the youngest of three daughters. Her father was Polish and the first generation in his family born a U.S. citizen. Her mother was Irish. They were devout Catholics, and the church played an important role in Ms. Tilly's upbringing. Her family assisted many people through the church, including a Mexican American family whose house had burned down. Ms. Tilly's family stayed close to this Mexican American family and she has fond memories of many family get-togethers. "I always liked their traditions that they had, I liked seeing that. Probably just the big family and the closeness that they had. Cause we lived here in Lassiter but my Dad's family all lived in the Westing area, and my Dad was the only one who lived here."

Geographical distance was not the only thing separating Ms. Tilly from her extended family. Through the church they took in an African American foster child. Ms. Tilly's extended family refused to let the foster child visit in their home and used very derogatory racial slurs to describe the child. Ms. Tilly's father was furious, and cut off all connections with his extended family over this situation.

> I wonder if because of the way that my extended family acted, did that turn me off to white people, too? I have two children that they have never seen, and I have cousins and such that my children have never seen. I would have never taken my children over to family things. I just never went. I stopped going. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Tilly's mother was an only child, so this break with her paternal side of the family caused almost total extended family isolation for Ms. Tilly. "So, I wasn't around a lot of white people."

Ms. Tilly attended Catholic schools through the 9th grade. During this time Ms. Tilly remembers a few children of color as classmates, and she remembers being friends with them. Her years at Catholic school were uneventful until her parents divorced when she was around 10. At that time, for financial reasons, her mother started to take in more foster children, and these foster children were African American. Ms. Tilly remembers four African American foster daughters who lived with her mother until her mother passed away at age 62. The foster children were cognitively impaired, and Ms. Tilly played a big hand in helping her mother care for them.

10th and 11th grade were tumultuous times for Ms. Tilly. Her mother transferred her to a local high school, Central High School. Racial unrest was prominent in the news, and there were race riots in major cities throughout the mid-west. Ms. Tilly recalls herself as a quiet and shy teenager, and was frightened of the Black girls going to Central High School.

> I was afraid of the Black girls and of being in a bathroom alone with them. I did get my purse stolen from them. My mom signed me up in such a way that I didn't have a lunch period. I went through all my classes and left school an hour early and came home. So somewhere in there Black people became not the same as the Black people who were in the Catholic Church and the ones that we knew. There was a different set of Black people that I was afraid of. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Tilly remembers everything within the halls of Central High School being very tense and racially segregated. "It was just a really bad time where the whites and Blacks, it was just a time of conflict there." One of Ms. Tilly's favorite teachers

at Central was an African American English teacher; one of the few African American teachers Ms. Tilly remembers working at Central at the time. Ms. Tilly recalls that this particular teacher was her favorite because "she was real young and I felt really comfortable in her class; I wasn't afraid to talk, because, of course, I was very quiet. I just remember being comfortable with her."

Ms. Tilly worked in an elementary school during her senior high school year. It was there that she determined to be a teacher. At that school she made a close friend, who was African American, and she states that "I never had any close white friends, but as a teacher I have." She dated and began living with an African American man, whom she later married, had two children with, and then divorced. During this time she was attending Lassiter Community College and gradually began attending the local university, working towards her bachelors in education with a teaching certification.

Ms Tilly was the only one in her family to attend college. Because she was working and putting herself through school, Ms. Tilly was typically older than her classmates. "So I was older, the young women that I went through the program with were predominately white, usually more upper middle class. That was my first, really, exposure to being around white girls of a different economic status than me." Ms. Tilly remembers being in an interracial relationship was "not an oddity, I don't want to say that, but I was different: I had a Black boyfriend. I mean it was common to be in a racially mixed couple, but not as common as it is now. It set me apart."

After graduating, Ms. Tilly eventually got a job in the Lassiter School District. She worked as a first and second grade teacher in the same elementary building for

over 15 years. During this time her administrator was an African American man, whom she found to be extremely fair and wonderful with the parents. This neighborhood school was located in a lower class, racially diverse neighborhood not to far from Ms. Tilly's childhood home. Ms. Tilly had collegial friends and a busy life, and was enjoying her work there until the school was closed 5 years ago. At that time Ms. Tilly transferred to Sawyer Elementary School, first as a reading teacher, then as a first grade teacher. The white principal asked Ms. Tilly to be the lead teacher for The Anding Study and Ms. Tilly accepted "because this issue is near and dear to my heart."

Sawyer Elementary School is in a middle and upper middle class neighborhood and Ms. Tilly states that she does observe several differences. Ms. Tilly has observed that the school is more racially diverse than her previous neighborhood school, and that the children segregate themselves by race during recess and at lunch. She finds this surprising and something that she did not see at her previous school.

As the lead teacher for The Anding Study, Ms. Tilly has encountered a few set-backs with one teacher in particular. This teacher was a colleague, and friend, of Ms. Tilly's at her former school. She presented a storm of criticism about The Anding Study and the interventions for boys of color. This colleague could not understand why boys of color should be getting things that other students were not getting.

> There was one teacher in particular who just did not want to participate, did not think it was right to have something separate for boys of color. Somebody who grew up in a suburb of Lassiter, and who is very racist. So that first year I dealt with a lot of things of just what is best for boys, I just had to drop the whole 'of color' thing. (Personal Interview, 2009)

The other teachers at Sawyer Elementary were more open to working through the modules presented in The Anding Study. However, for the first year, Ms. Tilly observed that they continuously came back to blaming the parents. "We kept trying to get back to 'we aren't going to be able to change that. We have to get beyond that, so what do we do?' We had good discussions that year." The year following Ms. Tilly was out of school for 3 months due to a health issue, and the teachers did not meet. When she returned later that year, Ms. Tilly observed that "we really aren't addressing the real issue of 'we have to change'. The other teachers still just aren't there. They are still just going to do their own thing. Because you have to be consciously aware of what it is you need to do different."

> I want to learn more about myself. I want to know, what do I bring to the classroom that might hinder relationships with parents? My kids really do love me because they know I care about them…This study has just brought a lot of awareness. And I am always willing to change and do what needs to be done to help the kids and to build relationships with the parents. And that might not ever happen in my time, I might just have to be able to do what I can with the kids while I'm there and be grateful for some of the relationships I do build with the parents. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Chapter VI

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The ways of white folks,
I mean some white folks…
<div align="right">Berry, from Langston Hughes (1933)</div>

In this chapter I present a thematic cross case analysis of the case studies of

five white lead teachers involved in The Anding Study. The Anding Study is a multi-

faceted university based study looking at the academic achievement gap of boys of

color. One facet of The Anding Study includes training lead teachers to work within

their respective schools with other teacher educators on issues related to the racial

academic achievement gap. The lead teacher training includes the topics of race,

personal racial identity of teachers, systemic and institutional racism, and how boys

of color and their academic achievement are impacted by these issues. The analysis

presented here focuses on the white lead teachers, how they understand their own

racial identity and whiteness, and how they understand this whiteness impacting their

role as educators.

This chapter describes the analysis and findings gathered from the data. The

analysis process was completed using thematic cross case analysis and triangulation

of data. Thematic cross case analysis was conducted by coding data within the case

studies, refining the emerging themes and comparing data and themes between case

studies and the focus group data. Triangulation was completed using the thematic

cross case analysis process (Glesne, 2006, p. 36).

The question framing this study is "How do practicing white teachers understand their whiteness and its impact on their role as educators?" This study includes five teachers who are currently practicing teachers with teaching experience ranging from three years to over thirty years. The term white includes European Americans (Tatum, 1997). Whiteness refers to the intricate and vast system of generational and institutionalized unearned privilege existing in the United States for those positioned as white (Teel & Obidah, 2008). For this study, the role of educators encompasses a variety of aspects of professional teaching such as relationship building with students, parents, colleagues and administrators, overt and covert teacher expectations, capacity to develop curriculum and lesson plans, classroom management and student discipline.

The data that emerged from this study was sorted into four bins, or themes, for the purpose of analysis. These bins were pervasively represented within all of the data sources. The bins include:

- Seeing White: Awareness of white racial identity

- Living White: White privilege

- Relating White: White impacting relationships with parents and colleagues

- Teaching White: White impacting classroom lessons, student relationships and behavior management

The following discussion will present the analysis and findings emerging from the main study question of 'How do white teachers understand their whiteness and its impact on their role as educators'.

In review of the literature related to how white teachers experience whiteness and understand its impact on their teaching capacity, studies have been completed looking at how whiteness is situated in relationship to preservice white students (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Lawrence & Tatum, 1998; Marx, 2004; McIntyre, 1997; Picower, 2007). Studies have also been completed looking at how aspects of whiteness are shown with practicing teachers (Chubbuck, 2004; Haviland, 2008; Hyland, 2005; Kailin, 1999; Marx, 2008; Pollock, 2004). How white practicing teachers understand their own whiteness and how they understand its impact on their instructional capacity is an area less specifically studied and is the focus of this study.

The racial academic achievement gap is one that has been widely studied over many years. The racial academic achievement gap refers to differences in educational outcomes between various groups typically referred to as racial groups. For the purposes of this study, the term race is used to designate groups of people that are typically referenced as racial groups within the United States, using a cultural, sociological and historical lens, and is not intended as a biological or scientific term (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). The notion that 'race' describes human biological variation has been officially rejected by the American Anthropological Association (Mukhopadhyay, 2008). Additionally, The Human Genome Project has stated:

> DNA studies do not indicate that separate classifiable subspecies (races) exist within modern humans. While different genes for physical traits such as skin and hair color can be identified between individuals, no consistent patterns of genes across the human genome exist to distinguish one race from the other. There is also no genetic basis for divisions of human ethnicity.(n.d.)

The term race, then, is referring to a sociohistorical, rather than biological, meaning.

In describing the racial academic achievement gap, on the low end of the academic performance scale, using standardized test scores and matriculation rates, are primarily African American, Native American, some Asian American and Latino students (Howard, 2010). On the higher end of the academic performance scale are primarily white and some Asian American students (Howard, 2010). Factors affiliated with social class, including parental education, family income, home resources, school quality, teacher experience and preschool preparation, are cited as impacting academic achievement. However, when these are taken into account and held constant, there continues to be gaps between racial groups (Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Ogbu, 2003).

Most teachers now in classrooms, including both urban and suburban, are likely to have students from diverse ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious groups (Banks, 2009). At the same time, in 2000, approximately 84% of U.S. public school teachers were white and almost exclusively middle class (NCES, 2006). Many educators and researchers link issues related solely to race with the racial academic achievement gap. "There are certain areas that remain largely under theorized and frequently overlooked in analyses of student's school performance - namely, the importance of race and culture in the schooling experiences of today's youth." (Howard, 2010, p.1) How, then, do white teachers understand their whiteness and its impact on their instructional capacity? Specifically, how do white teachers understand their white racial identity?

Seeing White: Awareness of White Racial Identity

Ms. Wright

"I looked up and saw all Black faces and realized I was the only white person in the room!" (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Wright was raised in a highly segregated white community and attended totally segregated schools until high school. Her post high school education at a community college and university were, again, almost exclusively white. Although raised by a strongly racially prejudiced father, even as a child, Ms. Wright always felt uncomfortable with racial slurs and comments. "It was just known that people who weren't white were not as important, they weren't as smart, you didn't need to listen to them. I've always felt like this was not right." However, within her segregated upbringing, there was little need for her to spend time reflecting on her own race. A few years after graduating with her degree in education and working as a teacher, Ms. Wright took a teaching assignment in Lassiter. She describes her shock in realizing, upon beginning teaching in Lassiter, that she was the only white person in the room. Ms. Wright is a highly intelligent woman, a hard worker and resourceful. How could it be that she took a job in Lassiter, a highly diverse community, without realizing that she would be working with children of color and might be the only white person in the room? How could it be that this thought did not cross her mind? In this moment of surprise, Ms. Wright really felt her whiteness.

Helms (1994) white identity development paradigm describes the initial stage whites go through in developing a racial identity as the contact stage. Through encounter with the 'other', white people are initiated into the process of racial identity development. Not being overtly cognizant of our own individual race is commonly

associated with being white in our society (Sullivan, 2006). The analysis of what it means to be white has traditionally been done only in contrast to what it means to be 'of color' (Singleton & Linton, 2006). Ms. Wright stated that "definitely moving to Lassiter was the biggest culture shock of my whole life. Because before then it was just like very random experiences with race, then all of a sudden it was like "Wow! I'm a teacher of a lot of children and there isn't even a white kid in the whole room." According to Parma and Steinberg (2008)

> Educators are often afraid of racial differences and fearful of naming them. Because Whiteness is so often treated as invisible, as if only non-Whites are racially and ethnically positioned. White teachers often are particularly afraid to name their own positionality. (p. 285)

Dr. Beverly Tatum (1997) likens this invisibility of whiteness to being a resident of Los Angeles and daily breathing smog. As an L.A. resident you are so used to the smog, and it is such a common experience, that it is not even consciously noticeable. However, the smog is still there. Likewise, if white teachers are not consciously thinking about their race and its impact on their teaching, it does not mean that it is simply not there and impacting their teaching. Ms. Wright comments on the shock and continued stress of beginning to recognize her white racial identity by stating:

> A whole lot of my years were different than this. Like my family and my school were, and where I taught to begin with, it was just white; and I understood that, and I embraced that. I didn't have to do a lot of thinking, I guess. You just are. It may not be easier, teaching there, it just seems like if I could just go and be me and not have to be always proving myself, as the white teacher. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Through participation in The Anding Study and working in the Lassiter School District, Ms. Wright has had some of her previously unexplored beliefs about her own race uncovered. What she has known and felt comfortable with in terms of her white

racial identity has been uprooted. According to Howard (1999) using Helm's (1990; 1994) white identity development model, this is referred to as disintegration. This disintegration process produces "considerable dissonance regarding our whiteness" (p. 90). Without support and encouragement facilitating further growth in constructive white racial identity development, whites may consciously return to earlier beliefs, termed reintegration. Ms. Wright expresses this anxiety and also leans toward a possible racial reintegration by wishing she could return to a time 'I didn't have to do a lot of thinking'. This reintegration stage is one "wherein individuals consciously embrace the notion of white superiority" (Howard, 1999, p. 91).

Although being raised in a segregated home and community, and being exposed early on to racially prejudiced adults, the thought of being white was only on Ms. Wright's mind when she encountered someone of another race. Dyer (2005) states that "Other people are raced, we are just people"(p. 10). He continues that:

> Research repeatedly shows that in Western representation whites are overwhelmingly and disproportionately predominant, have the central and elaborated roles, and above all are placed as the norm, the ordinary, the standard. Whites are everywhere in representation. Yet precisely because of this and their placing as norm they seem not to be represented to themselves *as* whites but as people who are variously gendered, classed, sexualized and abled. At the level of racial representation, in other words, whites are not of a certain race, they're just the human race. (p.11)

Ms. Durr

"I don't remember the first time that I realized I was white, you know, I just don't!" (Personal Interview, 2009)

Like Ms. Wright, Ms. Durr was raised in a racially segregated city and attended racially segregated schools. Although she speaks fondly of an African American teacher she had in lower elementary, other people of color were rare. During her high

school years Ms. Durr's mother dated and married an African American man and Ms. Durr inherited, through this marriage, an extended African American step-family. She states that she is close to her step-family now, but at the time it was a 'culture shock'.

During college Ms. Durr took an African American vernacular course that helped to refine her understanding of her own race as well. During the course discussion she inadvertently refered to African Americans as 'colored people' instead of 'people of color'. She was confused by the reaction of the African American students and instructor, and horrified.

A few years later, during another college course looking at African American genealogy, Ms. Durr vacillated between doing her final course project, a family genealogy, on her white biological family or her African American step-family. Ms. Durr ultimately chose to do her research project on her white biological family. She felt that her African American classmates were appreciative of her choice and she recollects telling the class:

> I don't feel Irish, I'm not Irish. Even though I'm trying to identify with that Irish ethnicity. I'm not Irish, I'm American. Why is it that Caucasian people feel that they have to or want to identify with a different ethnicity? I don't really feel connected, that's just what my family blood is. But I am really American. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Durr is proud of the progress she has made in understanding whiteness. She identifies personal progress occurring between the two college classes she took over the course of her studies: from the inadvertent misspeak of 'colored people' to owning that she is not 'less white' because of her African American step-family. At

the same time, it is still difficult to voice that she *is* white, and to articulate exactly what that means. Dyer (2005) writes that:

> In studying whiteness attention is sometimes paid to 'white ethnicity' (e.g. Alba 1990), but this always means an identity based on cultural origins such as British, Italian or Polish, or Catholic or Jewish, or Polish-American, Irish-American, Catholic-American and so on. These, however, are variations on white ethnicity (though some are more securely white than others), and the examination of them tends to lead away from a consideration of whiteness itself. John Ibson (1981), in a discussion of research on white U.S. ethnicity, concludes that being, say, Polish, Catholic or Irish may not be as important to white Americans as some might wish. But being white is. (p. 12)

Although attempting to consciously acknowledge and disclose her genealogy and race, her conclusion was not that she was white, but rather 'American'. Singleton and Linton (2006) describe the phenomenon that once a group of people has become white in the U.S. culture, they are seen as being white regardless of what their national or ethnic origin might be. They are then identified as white before they are acknowledged as Jewish, Italian, Irish or Scandinavian. "In terms of nationality, white Americans often feel a unique sense of entitlement to "Americanism" (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Ms. Durr's early schooling and community were comparable to Ms. Wrights - racially segregated. However, Ms. Durr's mother raised her with an appreciation of racial difference, whereas Ms. Wright's family raised her with a suspicion and dislike of racial difference. Ms. Durr sees progress within her personal growth in developing an authentic racial identity for herself and is happy with that growth. Ms. Wright is beginning to see her race and how it is situated in our culture, and is overwhelmed and feels like retreating. However, after two years working as lead teachers with The Anding Study, neither teacher is able to easily articulate what white means to them

and to feel comfortable owning it: Ms. Wright's white racial identity has been exposed and jarred off-center through contact with people of color; Ms. Durr is not yet fully able to own being white, and does not see the white privilege associated with claiming to be 'American'.

Ms. Smith

> "I didn't really know that we were passing or that my dad was anything other than what he was and nobody ever questioned him" (Personal Interview, 2009).

Ms. Smith was born into a southern family living in the north. Her father was Cherokee and her mother was white. Her mother worked very hard not to have a southern accent and to avoid being stereotyped as a 'hillbilly'. Her parents strove to remove themselves from the poor and country way of life they had left behind down south.

Her father was a sharp shooter in WWII, and was extremely proud to be a medal decorated American veteran. He had 'the long wavy black hair, like Elvis Presley' but as far as Ms. Smith recalls the family experienced no overtly racist repercussions for him passing. He was very proud of his Americanness and refused to register on the tribal roles. "He's a very proud man and he liked passing. He did not want to trade on being Indian ...He worked very hard to fit into the culture and *just be an American*."

Ms. Smith has no patience for friends who are 'wowed' by her Native American heritage. She explains that:

> there are expectations that you run into and you kind of feel like 'I'm letting you down because I've just told you I'm Cherokee'. And so you want me to be a certain way, but I'm not. I'm just a person getting along ...My father's wishes are *just that I'm an American*. (Personal Interview, 2009)

The Trail of Tears, a U.S. government forced 'relocation' of the Cherokee nation to

Oklahoma in 1839, in which thousands of Cherokee Indians died, was a point when

many Cherokee decided to attempt to pass in order to avoid relocation (Jenkins,

1996). Those that survived the Trail of Tears and made it to the reservation in

Oklahoma were 'offered land ownership' but only those who were officially listed on

the tribal roles could qualify. Many Cherokees refused to participate in signing the

tribal roles to consciously object to the U.S. government's regulations. Many others

refused to sign in order to avoid being identified or designated as Cherokee. Of those

Cherokees refusing to sign the tribal roles, many made their way off the reservation

and attempted to pass as white (Moore, R.E., n.d..). Passing, then, became a matter of

life and death to many Cherokees. Working hard to fit in, and become American, or

white, was a matter of survival to many (Moore, n.d.). It is not surprising, then, that

Ms. Smith's father was adamant about himself, and her, passing.

Wander, Martin and Nakayama describe that:

> the law, pressured by the leaky nature of racial categories, devised a "one drop" theory - if you had one drop of "non-white blood" in your veins, you could not qualify as white. Not qualifying as white had, as the history of slavery and the exploitation of Indians shows, tremendous implications for the ways people lived and even in for their right to earn a living. (p. 33)

Courts, laws and social opinions shifted over time defining who was white and

who was 'non-white'. Rothenberg (2005) explains that whiteness is socially

constructed, and that "who counts as white and what it means to be white changes

over time and from place to place"(p. 3). Historically to present day, an individual

who appeared 'white' could opt to 'pass' or 'jump the colored line'. Living as white

could garner multiple benefits of whiteness including increased job, housing and educational opportunities (Gaudin, n.d.).

For Ms. Smith, her father's wish for her to be 'just American' equated to being 'just white'. Ms. Smith sums up her thoughts on 'passing as white' by saying:

> Well, I was raised - you're not! It means more to me than just learning a language Or putting on the beads or burning tobacco. The beads don't make you in the group. You can't just learn the language and know the life. My father really *is* and wants me to be like this! (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith and Ms. Durr both stake a claim to being 'just American'. Ms. Durr claims her Americanness because she seems unable to articulate her racial identity any other way, and thereby, perhaps unwittingly, stakes a claim to whiteness. Ms. Smith claims her Americanness in order to cling to that same whiteness and thereby, at her Cherokee father's request, overshadow her Indian heritage.

Ms. Braden

> I think people look at me and they see somebody that's white. I never really felt like I fit, though. I was picked on and teased a lot. I always felt like I was a little bit different. (Personal Communication, 2009)

Ms. Braden was raised in a poor neighborhood that was racially diverse. She remembers race often being a topic of conversation within her extended family, which was racially diverse as well. Some family members were overtly racist and not shy about voicing it while other members were supportive of racial integration and racial diversity. Ms. Braden recalls that she has always felt angry when other family members would express racial prejudices. Because she was raised poor and in a racially diverse environment, Ms. Braden believes that she has never really identified with being white or with the privilege accompanying being seen as white.

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Ms. Braden prides herself on being able to 'code switch' and go from being "very prim and proper, and then I can be very ghetto if I need to be." She described a visit she took during her teacher training to a suburban school that was middle class with primarily white students. She told her classmates:

> I could not do this. And they were like, "what's wrong?" And I was like, "I can't breathe in here, all these white people. And they were like, Ms. Braden, *you're* white ...it was just really uncomfortable for me, I felt really out of my element. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden's 'element', or comfort level, is in a more diverse setting and perhaps a lower socioeconomic setting as well. She affiliates being white with being prim and proper, and oppressive. Howard (1999) describes the problem with equating whiteness solely with oppression as:

> No matter how unbecoming my whiteness may be made to appear, I cannot 'un-become' white. Given the common use of language and the real politics of race, I am both white and European American. I cannot separate 'whiteness' from 'being white' from 'being of European ancestry'. Any attempt to do so is merely a word game. (p. 111)

Being associated with the negative aspects of whiteness and racism are a strong motivator for some whites to want to distance themselves from whiteness and 'bad whites'. This 'less-white-than-thou' attitude can be viewed as being situated typically in the pseudo-independence racial identity stage (Helms, 1990). According to Sullivan, (2006)

> White people cannot and should not attempt to think of themselves as ceasing to be white and the realization that this insistence does not have to mean that acknowledging oneself as white dooms one to total complicity with racism ... White people can and need to find ways of transacting with the world as white that undermine white racism. (p. 161)

Ms. Braden feels uncomfortable with the oppression and racism often associated with being white. In order to distance herself from that, she focuses on being

'different' from other whites, as someone who has never fit in, and stresses her poor

'ghetto' background. Kivel (2002) explains that "some of us are quick to disavow our

whiteness or to claim some other identity that will give us legitimate victim status.

We certainly don't want to be seen as somehow responsible for or complicit in

racism" (p. 9).

Ms. Tilly

> Race, it doesn't seem like it was...it wasn't ever an issue. I don't remember seeing like black people or whatever. My parents were the type of people that really would reach out and help others. And so I was exposed to different minorities ... There was a Mexican family whose house burned down and my parents were very instrumental in helping them and we became very, very close ... And then my parents took in a foster child, a Black child, a girl...and my dad was a gardener and one of his assistants was a black man. So I was exposed to different races. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Tilly's family of origin were second generation Catholic immigrants from

Poland and Ireland. Ms. Tilly attended a primarily segregated Catholic school through

middle school, although she remembers that there were some Black kids in the

neighborhood and at her school. "At school I had Black friends, and that wasn't

anything odd to me. They were just people - like all people."

When her family took in an African American foster child, it caused a permanent

break in relations with her extended family. Her grandparents refused to allow the

foster child into their home, so Ms. Tilly's parents stopped communicating with them.

Ms. Tilly saw, first hand, the social positioning of the 'almost white' Polish and Irish

immigrants distancing themselves from the 'non-whites' (Rothenberg, 2005). Ms.

Tilly's parents continued to care for the Black foster child, and took in other Black

foster children over time.

After completing Catholic middle school, Ms. Tilly transferred to the local high school. According to Ms. Tilly it was a scary experience.

> I was afraid of the Black girls and of being in the bathroom alone with them. I did get my purse stolen from them ... That was during the time where there were more riots going on, so I am sure I heard that in the news. The Black people would all congregate outside in front of the high school ... so somewhere in there Black people became not the same as the Black people who were in the Catholic Church and the ones that we knew. There was a different set of Black people that I was afraid of... It's not that I just had a fear, it really would happen, you would be harassed. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Because of this, Ms. Tilly's mother scheduled Ms. Tilly's classes straight through the day so that she could skip the lunch period and leave school early. She started a work-study program at a racially diverse neighborhood elementary school and was befriended by a woman working there who was African American. Ms. Tilly socialized outside of work with her and they became personal friends. The woman's son was Ms. Tilly's first boyfriend.

Ms. Tilly went on to marry an African American man and to have two children with him. Ms. Tilly says that during her life she "wasn't around a lot of white people ...from there it's always been, I've been around minorities. So I never had any close white friends; as a teacher I have."

Ms. Tilly's life is an example of racial extremes that exist in the U.S. culture and in U.S. recent past. Although she remembers 'being around minorities' all her life, her examples are few: her father's African American assistant, her family's African American foster daughters and a Mexican family from the church. She remembers students of color from her school and neighborhood, but recollects them in a color-blind way: 'they were just like all people'. She was harassed by African American

girls at the high school and scared to the point that her mother put her on an alternate class schedule to be able to avoid them. At the same time, she dated African American men, whom she met through a trusted and esteemed African American co-worker, and ultimately married an African American man and had two children with him.

Ms. Tilly's family of origin, immigrants just two generations back, had likely been the brunt of racism themselves. Rothenberg (2005) points out that:

> At one time in the not too distant past in the United States, Italians, Greeks, Jews, the Irish, and other "white" ethnic groups were not considered to be white. Over time and through an identifiable process ... the category of "white" was reshaped to include them. The changing meanings of whiteness and who was allowed to claim it, are at the heart of the claim that whiteness is a social construct. (p. 3)

This same extended family was so overtly racist that they chose to break all ties with Ms. Tilly's family rather than welcome Ms. Tilly's African American foster sister into their home, a person they considered 'non-white'. At the same time, they were probably considered 'non-white' when coming to the U.S. as first generation Polish and Irish immigrants and experienced similar overt racism.

Ms. Tilly is aware of her whiteness, primarily in juxtaposition to 'others'. Like Ms. Braden, those 'others' include not only people of color, but also overtly racist whites. Ms. Tilly continued to maintain the distance from her extended family, even after both her parents passed away. Her children have never met their first cousins, and Ms. Tilly wants to maintain that distance due to the racism she witnessed as a child with her extended family. She positions herself as 'less-white-than-thou' (Howard, 1999) when speaking of her extended family.

Like Ms. Braden, Ms. Tilly sees herself as 'different' than most whites. This difference, then, provides distance and the ability to say "I'm not racist". Kivel (2002) states that:

> White people, individually and collectively, have done and continue to do some very brutal things in the name of whiteness. We may want to separate ourselves from the white people who commit these acts by claiming that they are racist and we are not. But because racism operates institutionally, to the benefit of all white people, we are connected to the acts of other white people. (p. 13)

Conclusion

After over two years of participation in The Anding Study, how do the lead teachers understand their white racial identity? The lead teachers vary widely in their life experiences and how they understand their race. However, there are several common threads within their stories. Distancing themselves from whites they consider overtly racist is a common thread (Howard, 1999; Howard, 2010; Kivel, 2002; Singleton & Linton, 2006). Their white identity continues to be known and recognized primarily when compared to people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Kivel, 2002; Rothenberg, 2005). When struggling to articulate their whiteness, they rely on the concept of rugged individualism, and the title 'American' (Dalton, 2005; Kivel, 2002). Finally, the struggle to articulate what their white racial identity actually *is* continues to be illusive and difficult. Dalton (2005) states that "for most whites, race - or more precisely their own race - is simply part of the unseen, unproblematic background" (p. 17).

Living White: White Privilege

The absence of a fully developed and conscious white racial identity, as demonstrated with the lead teachers, is common for whites in the U.S., in part due to

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the privilege of not *having* to develop a conscious racial identity (Kivel, 2002).

Without a racial consciousness, whites see themselves as "just normal", not as

belonging to a race (Rothenberg, 2005). It is possible to live as a white in the U.S.

without seeing ones own race (Howard, 1999). As part of the dominant culture, the

invisibility whites have is a privilege that allows them to choose if and when to focus

on race (Rothenberg, 2005). Whites can choose to attend to racism as a priority, or

not (McIntyre, 1997).

The privilege of the invisibility of white as a race is part of the white culture of

power (Rothenberg, 2005). Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997) state that this

privilege of not consciously seeing white as a race allows whites to believe that white

is 'normal, natural and universal' and to juxtapose 'others' in comparison to 'the norm'.

(p. 52) This invisible white ethnocentrism leads whites to refuse to acknowledge that

their white privilege of being seen and known as white impacts how they live and

their perspectives on the world. "Most consider it racist for someone to consider their

whiteness as having any impact on their perceptions of others." (Derman-Sparks &

Phillips, 1997, p. 53)

Not seeing themselves as raced, then, promotes and underscores the sense of white

individualism (Howard, 1999). Whites continue to believe that they are solely and

individually responsible for their success and do not consciously acknowledge the

racially based uneven playing field that exists throughout the U.S. favoring whites.

This belief in individualism discounts the existence of institutionalized racism

(Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Kivel, 2002). However, whites continue to be treated

preferentially. Preferential treatment for whites occurs in the criminal justice system,

with employment, earning power, housing opportunities, mortgage loans, auto loans, educational options and predominant media portrayal (Anyon, 1997; 2005). These are only a few of the concrete ways that whites are allocated privilege due to their race in the U.S. (Anyon, 1997; 2005).

Seeing oneself as 'non-raced', not recognizing institutionalized and systemic white privilege, and a belief in individualism are aspects of white privilege. These ideologies also undergird the belief in meritocracy (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Howard, 1999). By not recognizing white privilege, whites can cling to the concept that they have earned, on their own, their life benefits.

The concepts individualism and meritocracy, of being non-raced and disavowal of institutionalized and systemic white privilege are core normative beliefs for many whites in the U.S. today (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Kivel, 2002; Rothenberg, 2005; Sullivan, 2006). How, then, do the lead white teachers conceptualize and understand *their* whiteness and the privilege it embodies?

Ms. Wright

> I only know white farmers. I am sure that there are other ones, you know, other races that farm, I just don't know of any. And at the time it didn't occur to me that there would be any. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Wright was raised in a racially segregated city in the mid- west that included almost exclusively racially segregated neighborhoods and schools. In addition, Ms. Wright's post secondary education was racially segregated as well. She attended a university in the mid-west that was an agricultural university, and had very little diversity with students or professors. This seemed quite normal to Ms. Wright. "It was pretty segregated. Everybody was just the same." This educational experience

reflects the white dominant culture in the U.S., reinforcing for Ms. Wright the sense that an all white environment is the standard; the norm (Howard, 1999; Kivel, 2002; Tatum, 2007).

While attending university Ms. Wright did have one professor who was not white. Ms. Wright recalled him vividly, but struggled to identify his race. "Another time that I was introduced to another race I guess would be the...what are *they* called?" With prompting she was able to identify, and say, 'Middle Eastern'. Through this lapse in memory Ms. Wright demonstrates the lack of importance 'others' have in her mental processing and the privilege of the centering of her own norm of whiteness (Bell, 1992; Howard, 1999).

Ms. Wright recalls the professor's introduction to the course containing his personal introduction as well. Her memory of his introduction included him saying "You guys are all white people from the Midwest and if you are here thinking I am going to tell you how great America is and how great you white people are then this isn't the class for you."

Ms. Wright was surprised and offended by this statement highlighting whiteness in a negative manner. "It was just like off putting to have that thrown right at you. But I'm sure that he had to have had experiences that got him to the point where he was saying that." Ms. Wright is able to distance herself from appearing to be overtly racist by adding a minimizing statement that indicates her understanding of and empathizing with the professor's statement. Bonilla-Silva, (2006) refers to this as a "New Racism" practice, or racism lite, where whites "otherize softly ('these people

are human, too')" (p. 3). In this way Ms. Wright, and whites, are able to express their

raced sentiments without appearing racist.

When questioned about other students in the class and their possible reactions, Ms.

Wright responded "I don't remember. It was just a huge auditorium class. And I guess

I just assumed that we were all white because he said that. And the people around me

were all white."

Ms. Durr

"All of us have a different background, and we have different challenges and I
realize that...because of my appearance in this society, I am privileged, *to an extent*."
(Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Durr's mother raised her to value inclusion, justice and openness. Ms. Durr

attributes much of her world outlook of attempting to embrace non-racist ideology on

this upbringing. Her mother's husband is African American and her previous husband

was Italian American. Ms. Durr was initially exposed to, and grew comfortable with,

other cultures through these close family ties. Simultaneously, Ms. Durr's

educational experience and community were highly racially segregated. The

philosophy and practice of Ms. Durr's upbringing embodied the white privilege of

being able to choose whether or not to attend to racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Howard,

1999; McIntyre, 1997). Whites in the U.S., as part of the dominant and privileged

culture, can choose if and when to attend to race. As whites, they continue to see

themselves, typically, as non-raced. As Ms. Durr exemplifies, whites become raced

in comparison to non-whites (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Sullivan, 2006).

Ms. Durr was raised to be respectful of all cultures and races, and stated that she

embraces that ideology as her own. However, Ms. Durr continued to be surprised

when her whiteness was exemplified. Ms. Durr was surprised, shocked, offended and

fearful when African Americans saw her as raced, and racist, in an African American

Vernacular English class. After she had inadvertently referred to African Americans

as 'colored people' Ms. Durr stated that:

> every single Black person jumped up and I thought…they were so livid at me.
> And I was like, 'Oh, my God! I didn't even realize what I had said … that really
> opened my eyes. I mean, *I actually got pretty offended in that class … even the*
> *teacher seemed to be racist.* I mean, she was African American, but *being racist*
> *towards me.* But looking back I'm glad I had that experience because it's helped
> change me and I can see why *maybe* I was offending them *without even knowing*
> *it.* (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Durr is surprised and affronted to be suddenly visible as a raced, and racist,

person, by the 'others' in her class. This visibility, in contrast to the white privilege of

racial invisibility within the dominant cultural group, is distressing and interpreted as

racial discrimination against her (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Howard, 1999; Kivel, 2002).

In addition to her reaction of distress with becoming visibly white, including the

sense that she is being racially discriminated against, is her need to justify and

minimize her racially offensive comment by saying that "*maybe* I was offending them

without even knowing it." This minimization of her comment provides distance

between the racially offensive comment and her seeing herself as a 'racist white'

(Kivel, 2002). This justification is typical in the post civil-rights era of covert racist

talk. This "New Racism" uses subtle, covert and coded language to keep whites

centered, as the norm (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Ms. Wright and Ms. Durr both are

surprised and offended when their whiteness is highlighted. The white privilege of

being the normative standard has allowed them to not see themselves as raced.

When, in comparison to 'others', they become raced, they both react with

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defensiveness and shock. They distance themselves from their reaction by using an understanding statement that demonstrates empathy for the 'other', and allows them to see themselves as non-racist (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

Ms Smith

"I think down south there was an attitude about Indians." (Personal Communication, 2009)

Ms. Smith's father, who was Cherokee, entered the army at age 16, and was classified as an 'Indian sharp-shooter'. When he returned home after the war, he decided to 'pass' and wanted his children to do the same. Ms. Smith refers to her father as 'dark, with thick black hair' but she herself does not carry these outer phenotypes. According to her father's wishes, Ms. Smith has proceeded in her life with minimal social emphasis on her Cherokee ancestry. Her 'white' phenotypes allow her to be viewed as white and to view her life through a 'white' lens. "In our U.S. racial landscape skin color is the inescapable marker ...the 'floating signifier' that we utilize to reduce individuals to racial/ethnic categories" (Fergus, 2008, p. 33).

When Ms. Smith was a child, her family moved north to a mid-sized city, Westdale, that Ms. Smith described as 'redlined'. Redlining is a racially discriminatory practice that maintains racial segregation by denying or increasing the cost of home mortgages, small business loans, banking and insurance to those seen as non-white (Anyon, 1997, p. 63). Ms. Smith was quite aware of the redline policies and the resulting racial segregation of those times, and spoke knowledgeably about them. She was aware that her neighborhood, city and schools were virtually totally white. At the same time, she was only conscious of 'seeing race' when she visited her mother's relatives down south. "I only saw African Americans when we went down

south. And they worked at the gas stations ... Then there was nobody [African Americans] living in Westdale. That was because they had those redlines."

Simultaneously, from her white lens, Ms. Smith does not consciously remember any racial discrimination that resulted in the exclusion of Native Americans. She does not personally associate or acknowledge growing up in a redlined city - with her Cherokee father having to choose to 'pass' in order to live there - as racial discrimination. However, if her father had been unable to pass, and was seen as 'non-white', she could not have been raised in an 'all white' city that was redlined to keep out people of color. He, and his wife and children, would have been excluded. His choice and ability to pass made it possible for Ms. Smith to assume the position of 'white' and live in a segregated white city and access the privileges of being white. According to Brown, et al. (2003),

> Exclusion, as is evident in the case of residential segregation, is a cardinal principle of white identity. Those who possess whiteness have, until recently, been granted the legal right to exclude others from the advantages inherent in whiteness; they have accumulated wealth, power and opportunity at the expense of the people who have been designated as *not* white. (p. 44)

Ms. Smith related that at Thanksgiving her father would state that his family (of origin) didn't have anything to be thankful for. "So he had kind of a grudge." But, again through her white lens, she did not believe that there was any racial discrimination against Native Americans, at least in the north. "I guess there is prejudice down south against Native Americans - but I don't think there was up north. *I never ran into it.*"

Ms. Braden

> "I think over time it's gotten better ... I feel like it's regional, it's not like that everywhere." (Personal Communication, 2009)

Ms. Braden was raised in a poor and racially diverse neighborhood, and sees herself as not succumbing to whiteness, and not feeling white, due to this. Although she acknowledges that others likely see her as white, she believes that this is because they don't know how she was raised, or who she really is. This personal conclusion of distancing herself from 'being white' is, at the same time, a reflection of white privilege. It is undergirded by the belief in individualism; that she should be judged based on her own individual merits, not that of a group. "For those who embrace the rugged individualist ideal with a vengeance and who have no countervailing experience of community, the idea that a person's sense of self could be tied to that of a group is well-nigh incomprehensible." (Dalton, 2005, p. 15)

During her childhood, Ms. Braden came to the conclusion that she did not want to live in poverty as her parents did:

> Growing up we went to church a lot so I had my religion and I knew right from wrong and I could see what people in my neighborhood were doing, and I could see what my own family was doing and I learned that life is about making choices ... We all make choices ... I saw both sides of the fence. I had a lot of friends that lived in the nicer neighborhoods and I had friends from the neighborhood. My mom always said "you can do anything you want; you just have to do it." (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden did not believe that she had to stay in poverty, but believed that she could leave simply by making the right choices. As a member of the dominant racial group, Ms. Braden did not perceive that she might be held back solely by being a member of a racial group. Being part of the privileged dominant group provides an invisible backdrop for advancement for whites (Bell, 1992; Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Ms. Braden has advanced economically and educationally out of the 'ghetto' neighborhood of her childhood. She laments that, unfortunately, her only sibling, her brother, has not. She traces this partially to the consequences of him enduring a rough school year with a teacher who constantly belittled him. Due to this teacher, he was ultimately put in special education, during an era when that was an especially negative label. Ms. Braden says that to this day he will never ask for help with reading or understanding something. This is very difficult for Ms. Braden. She stated that "he was labeled 'special ed' in like third or fourth grade by a *Black* teacher who did not like him."

Although adamantly anti-racist in her conscious ideology, Ms. Braden reverts to a primary tenant of whiteness in this statement; that of 'othering', and perceiving "the-Other-as deficient"(McIntyre, 1997, p. 87). Throughout her interviews, Ms. Braden did not refer to people with a racial descriptor unless the interview question specifically requested it. However, she did here - easily and perhaps unconsciously (Sullivan, 2006).

Ms. Braden is very proud that she had the vision and courage to get her education and move away from her childhood neighborhood. She has received an advanced degree; the first person in her family to do so. Ms. Braden is especially proud "cause I got here on my own. I didn't have help from anyone." Although she did not have monetary assistance from her immediate family, she did have her dominant racial position to facilitate her advancement. According to Wildman and Davis (2005):

The economic power system is not invisible - everyone knows that money brings privilege. But the myth persists that all have access to that power through individual resourcefulness. This myth of potential economic equality supports the invisibility of the other power systems that prevent fulfillment of that ideal. (p. 97)

Ms. Tilly

"Being white doesn't necessarily mean you've grown up privileged" (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Tilly attended Catholic schools for her elementary and middle school years. She describes her schooling experiences as somewhat racially diverse. She remembers playing with all of the students, regardless of race, and states "that wasn't anything odd to me." She transferred to a public high school, where race relations were turbulent. Ms. Tilly attributes that to the era - the 1970's. She recalls hearing about race riots, and civil rights issues, and believes the high school climate of racial unrest was due to that. After graduating from high school Ms. Tilly worked in a racially diverse school as an aid, attended a community college and eventually was able to transfer to an intern teacher education program at the local university. "I ended up getting into the university intern program for education ... I ended up getting in because somebody knew somebody and made phone calls and I got in."

One privilege of whiteness is that of increased educational and employment opportunities for whites due to the systemic favoring of whiteness. Positions of power within the educational systems and the work force are often held by whites. The established word-of-mouth referral system is based on white privilege and is dominated by whites (Anyon, 2005). Often opportunities are obtained in this manner, instead of through a level and equal playing field (Bonilla-Silva, 2001).

Ms. Tilly married an African American man and eventually had two children with him. Her husband would occasionally relay a negative incident that he felt happened to him based on race, but they did not have conversations about how race affected their relationship. She did feel that he was resistant to be out in public with her due to the racial stigma. Ms. Tilly was aware that being part of an interracial couple was different, but she did not perceive any negative consequences. "I mean, it was common to be a racially mixed couple, but not as common as it is now. Not an oddity, I don't want to say that, but I was different ... but I don't remember having any confrontations with anybody or anything over race."

Ms. Tilly has had numerous long-term relationships with African Americans. Her family of origin broke ties with the extended family due to overt racism and maintained a close relationship with a Mexican-American family Ms. Tilly remembers during her childhood that she "wasn't around a lot of white people. I didn't have a white friend until I was a teacher." Although her neighborhood and elementary schooling was primarily racially segregated, her early adult employment and post-secondary education training was racially diverse. She maintained personal and long-term friendships with African American colleagues. She married an African American man and had children with him.

Simultaneously, Ms. Tilly continues to not acknowledge broader institutional and systemic white privilege. She continues to associate white privilege only with economic status; therefore if you are white, but of a lower economic status, you are not accessing white privilege. Ms. Tilly stated that:

> Even though I'm white, I've lived a hard life and I had to go through a lot. And where there could be a Black teacher, just because she's Black she might not be

able to identify with anything the way that ... if she grew up very privileged. *Being white doesn't necessarily mean you've grown up privileged.* (Personal Interview, 2009)

Jensen (2005) states that "in a white supremacist culture, all white people have privilege, whether or not they are overtly racist themselves." (p. 115)

Conclusion

White privilege can be seen, then, embedded in how the lead teachers view themselves and their world, how they have lived their lives and continue to live. Woven into each of the white teacher's stories is the theme of increased life opportunities and advantages due to being white, juxtaposed with the personal denial of the existence of these advantages (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Sullivan, 2006). The lead teachers each present examples of times when their race was made visible, when compared to 'others'. Consistently, their response was one of shock and defensiveness when confronted with this removal of invisibility (Singleton & Linton, 2006). The lead teachers all subscribe to a covert anti-racist ideology. They all present examples within their stories that attempt to distance themselves from whites they perceive to be overtly racist (Howard, 1999). Simultaneously, they exhibit belief in the privileged personal concepts of individualism and meritocracy, and struggle with perceiving themselves as raced (Doane, 2003). "Far and away the most troublesome consequence of race obliviousness is the failure of many to recognize the privileges our society confers on them because they have white skin" (Dalton, 2005. p. 18).

A primary privilege of whiteness is being situated within what society considers the 'racial norm'. Being part of the 'racial norm' perpetuates a personal lens of being non-raced. From this non-raced position, whites often only identify their own

whiteness when compared to non-whites. Although the white teachers in this study

have been addressing issues related to race through their participation in The Anding

Study, they continue to struggle with seeing themselves as white and the privileges

this entails. How then do they understand their whiteness impacting their

relationships with parents and colleagues?

Relating White:
Whiteness Impacting Relationships with Parents and Colleagues

The relationship between home and school has emerged as an important

contributor to children's academic achievement. Research supports that parental

involvement increases academic achievement. For example, a stipulation of receiving

federal Title 1 funds is a parent/school compact that promotes parental involvement

and communication. According to Title 1 Parental Involvement, Part A "A synthesis

of the research concluded that the evidence is consistent, positive and convincing:

Families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and

through life" (p. 3).

The National Education Association (NEA), the National Parent Teacher

Association (PTA), the U.S. federal government through No Child Left Behind

legislation and Title 1 requirements and various state governments all promote

parental involvement as one critical route to higher academic success. Parental

involvement is facilitated by positive communication between families and schools.

According to the State Department of Education of one mid-west state that has

schools participating in The Anding Study, the three major factors of parental

involvement in the education of children include: 1) Parents beliefs about what is

important, necessary and permissible for them to do with and on behalf of their children; 2) Extent to which parents believe that they can have a positive influence on the children's education and 3) Parents perception that their children and school want them to be involved.

Embedded within all of these prominent organization's mission statements for parental involvement is the emphasis on positive communication between the home and the school. For the purposes of this study I use the term parent and family to include any guardian participating in raising the student. The home and school relationship often refers to the parent/teacher relationship. How then do the white lead teachers understand whiteness and its impact on this component of academic achievement - relationship with families of color and with parents of color?

Collegial relationships are a second area where whiteness may be visible within school environments. Staff cooperation, communication and support may be negatively impacted by vestiges of whiteness that result in staff tension, anxiety and uncooperativeness. This may be reflected between white staff and staff of color, and within white staff relationships as well. This unease and tension negatively impacts a positive school climate (Kunjufu, 2002; Howard, 1999; Pollock, 2004; Tatum, 2007). How, then, do the white lead teachers understand their whiteness and its impact on relationships with colleagues in addition to their relationship with parents of color?

Ms. Wright

> Had I known the student's dad, would I have talked differently to him and maybe not sounded so high and mighty on the phone? If had realized the reason he was blowing me off was because he was working and trying to make a living for his family? (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Wright had an experience with a parent that she believes shifted some of her preconceived notions about parents of color. She had telephoned a student's father, insisting that he come to the school to meet with her due to his son's misbehavior in class. The father had already missed one scheduled appointment, and Ms. Wright remembers that she was quite insistent in the telephone messages she left. The father came into the school that afternoon and threw a stack of bills and cash on the table in front of Ms. Wright. He told her in no uncertain terms that it was important for him to make money to feed his family and *that* was his job. And that *her* job was to teach his son. She recalls him saying "I don't have enough energy to do your job and my job, too."

Ms. Wright stated that:

I was like - that's big! It was something that hadn't occurred to me, mostly because I hadn't worked with poor children before. And then, on top of it, I didn't understand the culture. I don't know, that experience was frightening, but yet, it opened my eyes. I have been more understanding and I guess what changed from that is that I now make sure I get to know each family. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Wright was able to apologize and communicate with this father and improve her relationship with him. She was able to understand and appreciate his effort to provide for his family. His work ethic was something she could relate to and this is what they connected on.

At the same time, Ms. Wright states that her initial lack of empathy was because "It was something that *hadn't occurred to me*, mostly because *I hadn't worked with poor children before*. And then, on top of it, *I didn't understand the culture*." However, she *has* worked with poor children before. This teaching year was her fourth in the Lassiter District, and each year she had taught primarily students who

met the federal qualifications of poverty by qualifying for free or reduced fee meals. Additionally, the majority of her students have been students of color since working in Lassiter. Being situated as a white person *within* the white majority societal norm allows white teachers the privilege of not seeing and not knowing. The white privilege of this position allows the individual the choice to decide if seeing race and understanding 'others' is important or not (Dalton, 2005).

Ms. Wright's teaching assignment for the past two years has been in an elementary school in Lassiter whose teaching staff was racially diverse. One fourth of the teaching staff were African American, there was one Latina classroom teacher and the principal was African American. According to Ms. Wright, "This is the first time I've worked in a racially diverse school. Like, most teachers were just white where I taught before." Ms. Wright believes that there are many staff issues and conflict that are divided along race lines, and that the principal favors the African American staff. "It seems like, and I don't know why it is, any disagreement seems to be white teachers versus Black teachers. That's uncomfortable for me and I don't know how to change it." Upon closer analysis, Ms. Wright is uncomfortable with the conflict that she sees arising *based on racial differences*. This uncomfortable anxiety results from conflict that highlights her racial positioning and makes her visible in her whiteness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Ms. Wright believes that the African American staff "are being protected by her [African American principal] because of the racial issue." The literature on the subject of whiteness underscores the propensity of whites to cite 'reverse discrimination' when their whiteness is exposed. Adhering to a color-blind position

allows whites to maintain racial invisibility and to not acknowledge white privilege. However, in a situation where the white power base is shifted, even slightly, reverse discrimination is often cited as a cause (Bonilla Silva, 2006; Howard, 1999; Kivel, 2002).

Ms. Durr

> "They are like, well, this is stuff we've already heard before, we don't need this...Just give me some answers; what do you want us to do? What you want them to do is self-reflect, but they're stuck in their ways." (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Durr appreciates the opportunity being a lead teacher for The Anding Study gives her to self-reflect and challenge herself and her colleagues. She works in a school with a primarily white teaching staff; a classroom teacher and a teaching assistant are the only two collegial adults of color in the building. Ms. Durr appreciates The Anding Study modules, and is excited about being able to apply some of the information in her teaching practice.

One example Ms. Durr related of applying the Anding Study module lessons in her teaching practice concerned a boy in her class who was having behavior issues. Ms. Durr described these issues as 'acting tough'. Ms. Durr believed this behavior was the result of low self-esteem due to the student's lack of African American role models and relationships. The student's father is African American and living out of state; the student's mother is white. Ms. Durr had noticed that the student was particularly attached to an African American male classroom aide who worked in a different classroom. The student knew this classroom aide as a sports coach for an older sibling. However, Ms. Durr believed the attachment was due to race and gender. Ms. Durr believed that the student needed more contact with African

American males. She made a plan to discuss this with the student's mother, and did so. Ms. Durr was satisfied with the conversation and believed that the mother understood her. However, at the conclusion of the conversation, the mother was only able to voice comprehension of her son needing more *male* input, not more *African American male* input. Ms. Durr *realized the gap at the time*, but, for some reason, felt unable to address it further. Ms. Durr stated:

> And she was saying 'Well, my dad...', but he's a white man! But he needs a Black man in his life, he needed it so bad. *But there is only so much you can do,* but I should have given her maybe more resources or maybe I could have found someone. (Personal Interview, 2009)

In looking more closely at Ms. Durr's statement to this mother, within this scenario, Ms. Durr exhibited two examples of whiteness. When confronted with a situation where she believed race was a critical component, but it was not being accepted as such, she lapsed into silence. This silence, then, negated an opportunity to address the needs of the student. Ms. Durr felt strongly about the student's need but the mother did not immediately understand Ms. Durr's perception. Instead of pursuing the conversation with the mother when she realized the gap in communication and understanding, Ms. Durr fell silent. Silence is an easy position for whites to retreat to when confronted with an uncomfortable situation that involves race. Whites are able to make a choice to not dialogue about race or confront covert racism, even when they are aware of it, by remaining silent. The ability to choose to pay attention to race or not in any given situation, and the response of silence, are reflections of white privilege (Kivel, 2002; McIntyre, 1997; Pollock, 2004).

Within Ms. Durr's school building there was only one African American male working in classrooms; a teaching assistant in a self-contained special education

classroom. This teaching assistant's position was specialized and focused on working with the students in that program. However, Ms. Durr stated that many of the teachers, herself included, used him to deal with behavior problems with the boys of color. She stated that "he actually does, a lot of the teachers will be like 'Hey - can you help me with this behavior problem?' because he's really a better fit with *those* students." Conversely, if he is a "better fit with *those* students" it would seem that Ms. Durr is implying that she and other white teachers are *not* such a good fit with the boys of color. White teachers may rely on colleagues of color to deal with behavior issues if the opportunity presents itself, instead of thinking more broadly about ways they can deal with the issues (Tatum, 2007). According to Moyenda (2008):

> The only time most white people want my advice is when they can't deal with faithless children ... the other teachers consider these students to be 'the defiant Black children." They want me to be the 'overseer' of our children ...of course, they foolishly believe that I get this kind of cooperation because I am Black. They want to avoid taking on any of the responsibility for the poor relationship they have with the students. They aren't interested in getting their hands dirty, so they want me to "fix" the kid and make him "act" right so *they* can remain the friendly, kind and benevolent teachers. (p. 157)

Ms. Smith

> Yea, I have real snippy mothers over there ...They have their kids at 13, 14, 15 ...All the moms over there are very young. Grandma, Great-Grandma coming to get the kids and the moms come in in their pajamas to pick up the kids, on their cell phones.(Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith had concerns about a student's behavior, an African American boy named Ja'shaw. She approached the mother and asked her if they could talk and stated that she was having a difficult time getting the student to talk or to sit down. Ms. Smith stated that the mother responded with "My sons' name is not ... (and at

that time I was saying Jay-Shawn) ... My son's name is Ja'shaw. You white people

don't seem to know how to pronounce it." Ms. Smith continued by explaining:

> It's not that I'm white; you just tell the teacher how to pronounce your child's
> name. But instead of just telling me and explaining his behavior, she just latches
> onto this 'you white people'. It is so disrespectful to be talked to like that by these
> recently out of school young women ... they will be disrespectful, very aggressive,
> very challenging in front of their African American sons ... it sure isn't the way to
> treat your sons teacher. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith's concerns about this students behavior issues were overshadowed in

this exchange by the mother's reaction to the mispronunciation of her son's name.

Ms. Smith felt defensive, surprised, shocked and angered at the mother's response.

Seeing herself as part of the centered norm, Ms. Smith was jarred off center by this

mother's response to her whiteness and responded defensively. Later in the interview,

Ms. Smith expressed understanding of some of the racial based power issues

contained within white dominant institutions. "[It is] disrespect, and it's to have power

in a place where, if it wasn't racial, I don't think the parents would be needing to have

that kind of power." Ms. Smith is aware that many of the mothers of her students are

very young, one way to be seen as less powerful, and that being 'non-white' in a white

based educational institution could also make them feel less powerful. However, at

the same time, she was unable to carry this understanding into her analysis of and

feelings in response to her personal interactions with some of the mothers of her

students.

Tatum (2008) states that:

> Black parent's distrust of white-run schools is rooted in generations of
> institutionalized policies and practices that have denied equal access to quality
> education, and resulted in the over-referral of black children for special education
> and the under-identification of black children as gifted and talented. The distrust

must be acknowledged and then countered with explicit efforts to build trust. Before a teacher can help a child, she must gain the parents' trust. Parents must be partners with teachers in developing and implementing an appropriate educational plan. Otherwise, an overt or covert battle between parents and teachers is likely to ensue. Parental distrust can easily degenerate into disrespect, which inevitably contaminates the relationship between teacher and student. (p. 311)

Previous to her current teaching assignment, Ms. Smith worked with a white principal who was dedicated to affirming multi-cultural diversity. Ms. Smith thought that this principal:

took it to far. She was very differential to the point where she had a Hessian teacher there that didn't have a teaching certificate. But she just thought it was so cool to have someone from Haiti or somebody from Dominican Republic, like just because they were from the Dominican Republic that put them higher. So I have kind of felt that I was *just* white. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith felt offended by this stance; as if she was devalued, being *just white*. "I saw such pre-tense in that." While working at this school, the winter and religious holidays of many cultures were celebrated, but not Christmas. Ms. Smith reflected that the principal felt that:

every other holiday is cool but the American ones are not. Every religion except for Christian is cool and fascinating and interesting and beautiful, but Christian is not, we aren't going to touch that one. And in a way I think that is just as racist and just as judgmental. I'm not saying 'what about mine?' I'm just saying it's one of them, because you really are not being diverse when you exclude.(Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith stated that she was not saying 'what about mine?' At the same time, she felt while working there that she *was* 'just white'; that her status had been lowered because she was white. This sense of being discriminated against, due to race, for whites, occurs when non-whites are perceived to have taken an elevated status. Ms. Smith referred to this as "just because they were from the Dominican Republic, that put them higher." She believed this is 'just as racist', or is actually reverse

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discrimination. When whites perceive their privileged position is being challenged

and that they are being moved away from the privileged position, the norm, the

response is often a defensive stance that is framed as 'reverse discrimination'. (Doane

& Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Pollock, 2004; Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Ms. Braden

"I try not to speculate like that on the race line, because I saw so much of it
growing up." (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden was surprised when an African American parent approached her

principal and requested a classroom change for her son. The parent told the principal

she would feel more comfortable with a teacher who 'looked more like the teachers

when she was in school'. 'Too young and too cute' was how the parent described Ms.

Braden to a teacher colleague. Ms. Braden was taken aback and stated "I'm ten years

older than most of the teachers at the school and I don't dress crazy at school; I wear a

lot of turtlenecks." When asked if she thought race could play a part in the parent's

anxiety, Ms. Braden responded with "I never know cause *I never think about stuff like*

that."

Ms. Braden indicated in her interviews for this study that she values her anti-racist

ideology highly. At the same time, she slipped into post-civil rights color-blind

verbiage easily. This color-blind stance distanced her from analyzing this situation

from a broader perspective. Her statement that she 'never thinks about stuff like that'

reflects the white privilege of not having to think about race or analyze situations

from that lens due to the centered white position. White privilege allows whites to

decide if and when to recognize race (Rothenberg, 2005). Singleton & Linton (2006)

state that:

given that so many white people have trouble seeing themselves as part of a dominating racial group endowed with privilege and power, they also tend not to see how this context of Whiteness has connections to events and outcomes at home and abroad. (p. 195)

Ms. Braden volunteered to be the lead teacher for The Anding Study at her elementary school because it felt like a natural fit for her. She believed the teaching staff at her school were supportive of the study and she had support from the principal and most of the teachers. Ms. Braden described one teacher having difficulty with student's behavior in her classroom sympathetically by saying "I think it's just, she's from like Maryland and she's very inexperienced. I think that's her problem, she doesn't know what she's doing. And I don't think she expected *what she's been up against*."

When questioned during the interview for clarity and further details about how race was possibly woven into this and what exactly this entailed, Ms. Braden responded that:

> I think the whole thing in general just frustrates her. I don't know. And I am trying to think of the kids that she sends to me when she is having a hard time. *Now that I think about it, I think they all are, (kids of color) except for one;* there is one little white boy. But there are some days when I have three of her kids in my class. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden again reflected the privilege of a color-blind lens as she grappled to remember if the students this particular teacher was sending to her classroom were kids of color (Howard, 1999). Additionally, Ms. Braden alluded to the possibility that this teacher, in addition to being inexperienced in general, was inexperienced in being around people of color. She expressed these beliefs without ever mentioning race. Maintaining 'non-raced' conversations concerning race reflects the white privilege of attending to race only when choosing to (Rothenberg, 2005). This also exemplified

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ways whites can talk about race euphemistically, in a coded fashion, without really talking about race directly (Pollock, 2004).

Ms. Tilly

> "I would always laugh when they would say I was racist. Like, I wasn't picking on their child because they were Black!" (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Tilly sees herself as a teacher who does not mince words with parents. If she believes a parent needs to be spoken to concerning their child, she does not hesitate to contact the parent. In reflecting on the parental responses she has received she stated:

> I still had Black parents, when they would get mad at me, would say I was racist, that I was picking on their child because of their color. Then there would be other parents that I just had such a close relationship with. (Personal Interview, 2009)

One particular African American mother believed Ms. Tilly was picking on her son, and wanted him moved out of Ms. Tilly's classroom. Even though there were only two months left in the school year, the principal was going to place the student in another classroom. Ms. Tilly was strongly opposed to this move. "Cause to me you don't just pull a kid out, you don't do that to a child at the end of the school year."

Ms. Tilly had a conference with the mother who eventually agreed that it was in the student's best interest to not be moved. Ms. Tilly believed that it was because she was able to connect with the mother about the possible difficulties and disruption for her son, that she agreed to not move him. Although Ms. Tilly denied that she picks on kids due to their race, she understands that parents of color may perceive this to be the case. Tatum (2008) describes that:

> a trusting relationship between the teacher and the parents will certainly strengthen her effectiveness with the child and increase the possibility of a successful educational intervention ... Working proactively to cultivate a trusting relationship before such a situation arises is essential...some white teachers are nervous about

sharing critical feedback about a black student's performance with the student's parents for fear that they may be accused of racial bias. (p. 311)

Ms. Tilly believes that some African American parents will choose a teacher simply because that teacher is also African American. Ms. Tilly expressed defensiveness that Black parents may accept behavior from a Black teacher that they will not accept from her. "I know that the Black parents will accept her speaking to their kids a certain way, but they won't take it from me ... if I said that exact same thing, they'd be down in the office." Delpit (1995) questions:

> Does the liberal perspective of the negatively authoritarian Black teacher really hold up? I suggest that although all "explicit" Black teachers are not also good teachers, there are different attitudes in different cultural groups about which characteristics make for a good teacher. Thus, it is impossible to create a model for the good teacher without taking issues of culture and community context into account. (p. 37)

Implied within Ms. Tilly's reaction is a sense of injustice - that it is not fair or reasonable that an African American parent would want a teacher based on race and would "request her because she's Black." Although Ms. Tilly understands that "the Black parents just have that comfort with the Black teacher" at the same time she perceived it as unfair that *she* was being judged simply because she is white. This highlights the white privilege of racial invisibility that results in defensiveness when the invisible is made visible (Howard, 1999; Kivel, 2002).

Conclusion

The Anding Study white lead teachers continue to exhibit whiteness in several ways that are repeatedly demonstrated in their interviews for this study. As white teachers, this whiteness then continues to impact their teaching capacity, in overt and covert ways, and impact their relationships with parents and colleagues.

The white lead teachers continue to be shocked and surprised, and then defensive, when they are 'raced' (Pollock, 2004). Whites have the privilege of living as racially invisible, or non-raced (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Howard, 1999; McIntyre, 1997). When this non-raced position is challenged, or shifts, surprise and defensiveness result (Singleton & Linton, 2006). This presents itself when a parent believes and accuses them in some way of being racist, when parents exhibit more comfort with colleagues of color than with them, and when parents request a classroom taught by a non-white teacher, seemingly based solely on race. This feeling of defensiveness causes a breech in trust and communication with parents and colleagues.

The privilege of a non-raced societal position also includes the privilege to choose to think about and analyze events and situations through a lens of race, *or not* (Rothenberg, 2005). Not analyzing events through a lens of race leaves the white lead teachers surprised and short-sighted in their analysis of situations when addressing race. This, then, results in a propensity to feel defensive and take situations personally, instead of seeing them through a broader sociohistorical and political lens (Tatum, 2008).

Teaching White:
White Impacting Classroom Lessons, Behavior Management and Student Relationships

The Anding Study, with a focus on studying the academic achievement gap for boys of color, has several modules that address classroom lessons, student discipline and behavior management, and relationships with students. The Anding Study teacher's manual states that "classroom instruction and routines as well as the

relationship of the teacher to the child are critical in how boys [of color] come to evaluate and involve themselves in schooling" (p. 37).

The broader literature base concerning the racial academic achievement gap contains many well-known writings addressing the importance of the 'cultural competence' of the teacher within the classroom (Banks, 1996 & 2002; Davis, 2007; Delpit, 1995; Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997; Howard, 1999; Howard, 2010; Kohl, 1994; Kunjufu, 2002; Kuykendall, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Landsman, 2001; Lewis, 2006; Nieto, 1996; Noguera, 2003; Noguera & Wing, 2006; Sleeter, 1996 & 2001; Tatum, 1997 & 2007). Teel and Obidah (2008) address the importance of cultural competence and its ramifications by stating that:

> the way of being that manifests itself in what we are calling racial and cultural competence is at the heart of successful teaching in urban settings. From this perspective, as individual teachers transform their own racial and cultural understanding and attitudes, becoming racially and culturally competent, their teaching strategies will become more effective, their students' performance will improve, the institutions of schooling themselves will change, and the achievement gap will close. (p.7)

How then, do the white lead teachers understand their whiteness as it impacts their classroom lessons, behavior management and relationships with their students?

Ms. Wright

> These are the kids who deserve to have someone who wants to do right by them. And not just want to show up and get a paycheck. So I feel really dedicated for that reason, but I do think it could be easier. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Wright has taught in the Lassiter School District for four years. She reflected that working in a racially diverse environment had been an adjustment for her that was difficult at times. Situations that have highlighted her whiteness continued to provoke stress and anxiety and she often felt inadequate to work through the issues

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related to race, both with students and parents and with colleagues. She commented that she perceived The Anding Study was addressing the issues related to student's gender differences more completely and adequately than those issues related to racial differences. She reflected that:

> Based on my own experience, I might not have said a lot of the things I felt. Feeling weird about my dad being the say that he is, I probably didn't talk about it. I'd be interested to know more things I could do. I don't know what they are, though. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Upon closer inspection of Ms. Wright's thoughts and reflections, the white privilege of not having to deal with racial issues unless choosing to is prominent. Ms. Wright perceives herself as a dedicated teacher. She has been a lead teacher in The Anding Study, and through this is consciously aware that race plays a role in education. She has had numerous conversations with the other lead teachers about race and its impact on education. Additionally, she is aware that her personal upbringing has been one that has taught personal racism and she has feelings of embarrassment about that. She consistently states that she wishes she knew more about race.

However, at the same time, she never mentioned within the scope of her interviews any steps she has taken to resolve her lack of knowledge about race. She did not mention any literature she was studying, any courses she was taking or had taken or any conversations she was having with colleagues on this topic of concern. She appears to have taken no steps to resolve her feelings of confusion and anxiety. As part of the dominant racial group, *she can choose to address these issues, or not.* This privilege of whiteness is reflected in Peggy McIntyre's (1988) reflections of her own process as she worked on listing, daily, areas in her life that reflected racial

privilege. "I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy." (p. 3)

Ms. Wright's continued feelings of anxiety and confusion about issues related to race are left unattended to and unresolved until a situation in her classroom or school reminds her, again, of her whiteness. When her white racial invisibility is jarred or confronted, Ms. Wright repeatedly feels anxiety and confusion, but *she continues to choose to not resolve these feelings.* She states:

> It seems like...*do you acknowledge it?* We do, sort of do that with the 'All About Me' Unit. Like, how are we different, how are we the same, so skin color does come up. But because the kids, they probably know more than they can say. Like, *race doesn't come up* other than the color of their skin. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Durr

> And a lot of the parents of color wanted their child in the more stern teacher's classroom. And they wanted it because she yelled, they were like 'yea, I like that; that teacher's on those kids, she doesn't let them get away with anything.' ...So, I've had parents of color specifically tell me I'm just too tolerant and they want me to be more stern. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Durr states that she has had parents of color specifically say to her that she is too tolerant of student's misbehavior. She equates this with the parents not understanding the classroom dynamics, or individual student's needs. She feels strongly that she will not yell at her students and equates being stern with yelling. "I understand that maybe it's different, culturally, but, um, I think that I have high expectations for their students. It just might come across differently ... *I'm not gonna change how I am.*"

Ms. Durr believes that many parents misjudge her discipline and behavior

management based on only a small window of classroom observation and she

discounts their comments, in part, due to this. However, she did have one regular

parent volunteer, whom she highly valued, also tell her she was too tolerant. "I had

an African American dad, who was great, he's awesome. And he was really involved

in the classroom, and he knows what he's doing when he's in there, he's a great

volunteer." This father would direct a student to 'straighten up' or 'stop it' and they

immediately would. The father brought this specifically to Ms. Durr's attention: that

the students did not listen to her in this way. Ms. Durr interpreted what the father was

saying as "almost like he was saying I was incompetent." She attributed his impact

on student's behavior to him being male.

Ms. Durr stated that "my discipline is completely different." She talked about

giving her students choices and if they then misbehaved they received a consequence.

She went on to describe her method of discipline as "being respectful" in comparison

to "other" methods that parents may use at home:

> But parents see that ... but it's hard if parents, I know it's different cultures and
> How you raise your kids in different cultures. But *if parents talk to their students
> at home in a more respectful manner and listen to them* then their kids would learn
> from modeling how to talk that way. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Upon closer inspection, Ms. Durr's comments about discipline reflect an

assumption of a white positioning of rightness and negative assumptions about the

home life of her student's of color. She repeatedly stated that she believed the

parent's comments about her being too tolerant were based in 'cultural differences'

and equated parent's comments about being stern with yelling and being disrespectful.

"So we have these kids in the class that have not had those experiences at home.

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They've just had parents yelling at them. So then it's really deep down instilled. You can't...it's really hard to change that." Through this positioning of the blame for misbehavior on the parents and students Ms. Durr was able to justify not thinking more broadly about altering any of her methods for discipline (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moyenda, 2008).

Ms. Durr discounts parent feedback because they are not in the classroom enough. She discounts the feedback of a parent who *is* a respected regular classroom volunteer because of his gender. She equates that the remedy for 'being too tolerant' as 'yelling'. Through her lens, undergirded by whiteness, Ms. Durr sees herself as right with no need to change or revise. Ms. Durr believes that:

> teachers sometimes resort to that because the kids seem to listen more when you do that, *because that's how people talk to them at home. I guess it is a cultural thing and maybe I should respect it more or think about it more.* (Personal Interview, 2009)

According to Lewis (2006) "When white, middle-class styles of interaction are considered *the* acceptable mode of school interaction, many students lose out." (p. 69)

Ms. Smith

> I worry about the agenda of saying white female teachers, middle class teachers, are letting these boys down. I think that probably white middle class female teachers, let's say at least 50 percent, their hearts are completely in the right place and they are caring, sensitive and respectful. I think, with the parents, with the culture, how others are making these boys feel like they are disenfranchised or they don't matter or they aren't valuable in our culture. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Based on The Anding Study's emphasis on the positive academic results of increased student movement in the classroom, Ms. Smith has increased the movement within her lessons in her kindergarten class. One example is a hip hop music CD she

purchased that contains many songs the students love to dance to. One of these songs Ms. Smith referred to as 'The Cowboy Song'.

At the end of the school year the students were working with Ms. Smith on deciding what to include in the end of the year class program for the parents. When Ms. Smith suggested 'The Cowboy Song', some of the students yelled out 'No!'

> And I said - why? And he said 'My mom would be mad if she saw me do that cowboy dance.' And I said - why? And the music teacher was in the room at the time, and he [the student] said 'Because my mom don't want me to dance like no cowboy.' And I was like, ' there it is right there - the parent.' So, I said 'OK; we won't do the cowboy dance', but they loved it. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith went to considerable effort to plan the class program. She personally invited as many parents and guardians as she could, and stated that there were about 80 adults in attendance that evening. Although some of the students had expressed directly to her that they did not want to perform 'The Cowboy Song', and were able to articulate why, Ms. Smith thought it best to include it on the program regardless. When it came time in the program for the students to perform 'The Cowboy Song', Ms. Smith prefaced the student's performance by asking them if they still wanted to perform it, and then by addressing the audience with:

> The kids were a little nervous about doing this one. But it's a song they absolutely love, and love to dance to, but it is about cowboys. We've all got something about cowboys. And that's all I said. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Smith described that she understood that 'The Cowboy Song' could be racially offensive. She believed that in her earlier years of teaching she would have simply gone ahead with the song, *without understanding* that there could be issues. "But I did, I backed off it and let them choose". However, how much choice did her students actually have? She gave her kindergarten students 'the choice' to voice their

negative opinion about performing something already on the program while they were standing in front of 80 adults. This seems like a precarious option for a kindergartener.

Upon closer analysis of this classroom lesson and situation, the white privilege of perceiving oneself as being centered and right and the white privilege of choosing to attend to race, *or not*, continues to be demonstrated by Ms. Smith (Bonilla-Silva,2006; Howard, 1999; Kivel, 2002; McIntyre, 1997). The students previously expressed concern about this particular song; Ms. Smith stated that she understood their concern; but she put it on the program anyway. She choose to put it on the program knowing that some parents might find it racially offensive and then justified her choice by acknowledging to the parents that it might be offensive. "And so, when they did it, the kids were real happy. *Maybe they paid for it later*, I don't know."

Ms. Braden

> "You have to learn to roll with the punches or they will eat you up."
> (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden's first teaching assignment in the Lassiter School District began in October of her first year instead of September. The class had been with a long-term substitute teacher throughout the first part of the school year, and they were misbehaving. Ms. Braden went in and described that she immediately began to take control of the class. She remembers that:

> I was like 'Excuse me! You sit down!', and he was like 'Who are you?' and I was like, 'I'm your new teacher and I said sit down!' I rearranged that classroom and put them in rows. I was like 'There will be no groups until you can show me that you know how to sit down and be quiet. Don't talk to me like that!' And right there, was me going back to my upbringing. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden used a strongly authoritarian approach with this particular teaching

assignment to get the class organized and to regain control of the students. She does not hesitate to be authoritarian when she believes the situation calls for it. Having control of a class, and being authoritative, is one way to begin to form a relationship with the students. Delpit (1995) states that "in many African-American communities, teachers are expected to show that they care about their students by controlling the class and exhibiting personal power." (p. 142)

In addition to controlling a class, Ms. Braden believes that establishing a trusting bond with the students is critically important for academic achievement. The topics of classroom management and developing trusting relationships with students are topics that have been highlighted within The Anding Study professional development modules. The area of student trust and relationships is an area where Ms. Braden has seen both success and struggle with her white colleagues.

A white colleague was asked to attend The Anding Study professional development modules by Ms. Braden's principal. The principal specifically requested Ms. Braden to allow her to participate in the trainings, even though she was not part of The Anding Study. Ms. Braden recalled that she questioned the principal, who responded with "No, she needs to come to the program; she needs to learn how to work with children of color." After attending the teacher trainings, this colleague was very positive in her feedback to Ms. Braden concerning her relationship with an African American student she had had behavioral difficulties with. The colleague told Ms. Braden that "I am really learning about him and respecting where he comes from. It's really been helpful for me."

Ms. Braden related a response from another white colleague wherein the colleague seemed unable to integrate The Anding Study module information about relationships with students of color. Ms. Braden stated that:

> Some people just don't get it. I had one teacher, she was like 'I just don't know how you do that.' And I was just like, 'You need to be patient with them and talk to them' and she said 'Well, I just can't do that'. I just got so irritated. I was like, 'Well, then, you are going to have a really rough year ... I'm telling you what you need to do and you're just choosing not to build a relationship with these kids. You are just perpetuating your negativity on them. It's so frustrating. (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Braden was unable to work with this teacher to get through the defensiveness that was engendered around the topic of white teachers establishing trusting relationships with students of color. According to Teel and Obidah (2008):

> ... teachers' unconscious biases often undermine our consciously espoused intentions. Thus, good intentions are not enough to counter the racism and racial and cultural inequities in American society. Because of their powerful potential to influence students' lives, all teachers, especially the largest group - middle-class White teachers - need to learn how to recognize the subtle biases in their own behavior, such as decisions they might make based on white privilege. They also need to help their students recognize their own racial and cultural biases (p. 7)

Ms. Tilly

> "It was the socio-economic thing; I mean all of those kids were poor and needy regardless of what color they were. We didn't have a lot of race issues."
> (Personal Interview, 2009)

Ms. Tilly worked her first 20 plus years as a teacher in an urban elementary school located in an economically depressed area of Lassiter. The majority of students were students of color. Ms. Tilly does not remember there being many 'race issues'. Ms. Tilly has been the lead teacher for The Anding Study for two years. However, she still does not perceive the issue of her, as a white teacher, teaching primarily students of color as a 'race issue'. Singleton and Linton (2006) state that:

Given that so many white people have trouble seeing themselves as part of a dominating racial group endowed with privilege and power, they also tend not to see how this context of whiteness has connections to events and outcomes at home and abroad. The moment-to-moment impact and influence that white thinking has on the lives of people of color create a web of racial cause and effect that is invisible to many white people. Because of this virtual invisibility, white people tend to focus on only one part of the event and forgo analysis of a larger historical racial dimension or its present impact and future implications.(p. 195)

As the lead teacher, Ms. Tilly is responsible for facilitating her colleague's movement through The Anding Study modules concerning academic achievement and boys of color. Ms. Tilly says the issue is "so dear to my heart, and I was really excited when this all came about." However, according to Ms. Tilly, the movement has been impeded by a few teachers, one in particular "who is very racist and I don't know if she realizes it, but is." This white colleague, who Ms. Tilly has been quite close friends with over the years, "just did not want to participate; did not think it was right to have something separate for boys of color".

Ms. Tilly believes that, through The Anding Study, she has become more aware of the importance of 'building self-esteem' within her students. "Starting at that young age so they do feel good about themselves so that they have something to hold onto when they go on into the further grades." She is knowledgeable about the racial academic achievement gap, believes white teachers have to change themselves in order to address the gap and increase student's self-esteem, and, at the same time, personally believes that her teaching colleague is overtly racist. Taking all of these factors into account, it is notable that Ms. Tilly avoided covering The Anding Study's modules on race due to her colleague's resistance. Given the objections her white colleague voiced to The Anding Study, Ms. Tilly stated that "and so that first year I dealt with a lot of things of just what is best for boys. *I just had to drop the whole 'of*

color' thing". This lack of action and silence concerning "the whole 'of color' thing" illustrates the white privilege of *the choice of attending to race, or not* (Bonilla-Silva, 2001 & 2006). According to Wildman and Davis (2005) "when there is silence, no criticism is expressed. What we do not say, what we do not talk about, allows the status quo to continue" (p. 95).

Personal Reflections and Conclusion

The analysis of the data gathered from this study project has deeply underscored for me the depth and breadth of white privilege *still* in place in our culture and exhibiting itself in our schools. As a white teacher studying whiteness and its impact on education I am surprised that I am still surprised. I resonate with Peggy McIntosh's (1989) personal reflection that she perpetually 'forgot' items she thought of to include on her 'white privilege list' until she actually wrote them down. It is so easy to slip into forgetfulness as a white person and a white teacher.

This privilege of forgetting, of paying attention to race only when I, and we, choose to, of living in the zone that we see as non-raced and standard in our culture, is tenacious. I believe this privilege of not seeing race and its implications, and of forgetting even after I *do* see, especially when it is uncomfortable or difficult or tiring, is the deepest and most insidious of white privileges. Living in this perceived non-raced zone, then, allows me to believe in individualism and meritocracy and puts the issue of race, and racial injustice, and its multiple tendrils, out of sight and out of mind.

How often it is comfortable and easy for me to not think about race and racial injustice. As a white person, and a white educator, this is what I have always known

in our culture, to one degree or another. Of course, there are variations on the degree

of not thinking and not seeing, but it is still the general place where I, and many white

folks, grew up and are beckoned by our culture to continue to reside. I actually have

the privilege of setting aside my concerns about racial injustice and how white

privilege impacts children and students of color in arenas where I work, *if I choose to*

do so. I can do this for a few hours, days or months or longer, *if I choose to*. Without

conscious thought and analysis, entropy will propel me back to where I started; in the

'non-raced and not seeing zone' of whiteness.

The white lead teachers of The Anding Study volunteered to participate in the

study for a variety of reasons but were all interested in the topic of race and its impact

on academic achievement and were willing to work on it. However, in my opinion,

they all displayed whiteness and its impact on education in a variety of ways. Even

though these attitudes and behaviors were not necessarily consciously known to them,

they continue to persist.

Although they were involved in The Anding Study looking at academic

achievement of boys of color, in my opinion within this study there was insufficient

time and professional development dedicated to actually addressing whiteness and

how white privilege and white ways of knowing impacts academic achievement. For

example, professional development segments within the study identified that parental

involvement is essential for academic achievement for students of color.

Additionally, the study's professional development and training identified that a

'culturally responsive' [white] teacher would welcome parents and guardians of color

and make them feel at home in the classroom and school environment. However, in

my opinion, white teachers can attempt to welcome parents, and believe that they are being welcoming, but still exude attitudes that are unwelcoming and infer negative judgment. These attitudes may be unknown to the white teacher, but still perceived by the parent of color. Without a broadly developed and personally incorporated understanding of how whiteness has excluded parents and people of color from education in the past, *and continues to exclude them*, a white teacher may express judgmental attitudes or respond to a parent with defensiveness that excludes parents without the teacher even realizing it. Without a conscious and committed and on-going dedication to unearthing and perceiving our own white racial identity and whiteness and challenging it, we can so easily and *comfortably forget about it.*

In my opinion, this study highlights the factor that a major part of working on the racial academic achievement gap must be that of increasing white teachers personal understanding and acknowledgement of their white racial identity and broad understanding and acknowledgement of white privilege and its impact on education and how it impacts their personal teaching practice. Additionally, I believe that this study highlights that without addressing whiteness with white teachers, professional development focusing on 'cultural competence' may be ineffective. What, then, might be the implications of this study and possible recommendations for further professional development and studies?

Chapter VII

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Words like 'freedom', 'justice' and 'democracy' are not common concepts; on the contrary, they are rare. People are not born knowing what these are. It takes enormous, and above all, individual effort to arrive at the respect for other people that these words imply. (Baldwin, 1956)

But the other teachers still just aren't there. They are still just going to do their own thing. Because you have to be consciously aware of what it is you need to do different. We really aren't addressing the real issue of 'we have to change'. (Ms. Durr, Personal Interview, 2009)

Implications

In this study I sought to understand how white teachers view their own white racial identity and whiteness, and its impact on their role as educators. Continued evidence of a racial academic achievement gap has been widely documented. Many researchers have attempted to deconstruct the issue and identify various factors impacting the continuing racial academic achievement gap. One factor theorists and researchers continue to identify is a racially based dissonance occurring within educational systems originating with white teachers and between white teachers and their students and parents of color.

Educators and researchers have identified factors that are reported to address and lessen the racial academic achievement gap. Depending on the researcher and study, these factors tend to be similar and overlapping. For example, Howard (2010) recently conducted an extensive study of effective educational programs that showed success in decreasing the racial academic achievement gap. This study was conducted over two academic years and included individual interviews with teachers

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and administrators, group interviews, classroom observations and staff meeting observations.

Howard's study results indicated that there were five primary criteria or elements existing in the academic programs that were achieving increased academic achievement for their students of color. Howard (2010) reported that:

> these characteristics, which do not offer new or radically different approaches to school success, are: (1) visionary leadership, (2) teachers' effective practices, (3) intensive academic intervention, (4) the explicit acknowledgement of race, and (5) engagement of parents and community. (p. 134)

As Howard states, these five characteristics are not radically new or different, and have been previously discussed in the literature. In my opinion, Howard's findings are relevant to this study in that at least three of the five characteristics he cites I believe are intrinsically and overtly related to the racial identity development of white teachers and the teacher's acknowledgement of whiteness and white privilege. Those characteristics are: teachers' effective practices; explicit acknowledgement of race; and, engagement of parents and community. I believe that white teachers will be unable to provide truly effective teaching practices; will be unable to explicitly acknowledge race; and will be unable to effectively engage parents and community partners of color without first acknowledging their own white race and developing a broad and personal understanding and acknowledgement of whiteness and white privilege.

Howard's study illustrates elements of what has been defined over time as the importance of *culturally relevant educational practices* for decreasing the racial academic achievement gap. Other authors and researchers have coined and used different phrases to describe a similar philosophy and practice. Ladson-Billings

(1994) refers to practices needed to reduce the racial academic achievement gap as *culturally relevant teaching*. Ladson-Billings includes within her paradigm an emphasis on the positive relationship with the student and parents and use of a structured and positive discipline model. Paley's (1979) paradigm of *culturally relevant teaching* emphasizes the necessity of acknowledging race and white teachers not using a color-blind lens. Delpit (1995) discusses a *cultural clash* and emphasizes the vital importance of the positive relationship between the teacher and the student. Kivel (2002) uses the term *multicultural competence* and emphasizes the necessity of positive relationships. Teel and Obidah (2008) use the term *cultural competence* and emphasize the relationship between teacher and student in decreasing the academic achievement gap. The authors and models cited above are not intended to be exhaustive. However, these examples do illustrate that many researchers and authors believe the teacher's relationships with students and parents and culturally relevant teaching are imperative elements in closing the racial academic achievement gap.

The Anding Study refers to these practices as *cultural responsivity*. According to the professional development modules within The Anding Study, the primary factors white teachers need to attend to in order to develop *cultural responsivity* include: develop cultural self-awareness; appreciate the value of diverse views; avoid imposing self values; resist stereotyping; self-examine teaching bias; build on student strengths; discover student's primary cultural roles and incorporate culture into teaching and learn about other cultures (p. 69).

This listing from The Anding Study teacher training modules incorporates the concepts of white racial identity development and acknowledgement of white

privilege and whiteness. However, in my opinion, one module skimming over such broad issues is hardly sufficient to begin to address the issues. Additionally, I believe that not attending to these issues in an in-depth manner will hinder progress in incorporating other culturally competent practices. The data and analysis gleaned from this study of white lead teachers I believe indicates that white racial identity development and acknowledgement of whiteness and white privilege by white teachers is an issue that is essential in progressing toward authentic multicultural competency.

Recommendations

I believe this study highlights the need for continued multi-cultural professional development and training for white teachers, particularly when it emphasizes and incorporates time for and emphasis on continuing conversation about white racial identity and whiteness and white privilege. Traditional one-day teacher trainings are not sufficient to address this issue. I believe we need to look toward teacher professional development opportunities that are on-going, structured and process oriented.

Mica Pollock, in her book *Colormute* (2004) states that:

> Given our racialized society and the mutually harmful consequences of colormuteness, it seems we actually have no choice but to rally the strength to keep talking. Race talk will continue to be full of pitfalls both social and analytic; but armed with a knowledge of these pitfalls and with compassion for those who traverse them with us, we can together muddle through the project of figuring out when and how to talk as if race matters. As we struggle through this joint analysis, finally, we must remember one thing above all; together, we are already making race matter every day. (p. 219)

Talking about race is essential. However, it must be made clear that white teachers need to talk about their own white racial identity, whiteness and white privilege, not simply 'other' races and cultures.

There are concrete models and resources available currently to offer just such structure. One possible model for structured group dialogue that could incorporate extended multi-cultural training along with processing about white racial identity development and whiteness is recommended by Dr. Tatum, in her book *Can We Talk About Race?* (2007). She discusses the availability of Study Circles Resource Center and the staff and materials available to structure and facilitate conversations about race, white racial identity and whiteness. This non-partisan organization offers neutral, trained facilitators to facilitate small groups in democratic and collaborative ways in a non-debate deliberative process (www.studycircles.org).

A second possible model for white teacher professional development that addresses the issue of white racial identity development, whiteness and white privilege was researched and developed by Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton. This guide, entitled *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* (2006) contains multiple short chapters and practices designed to facilitate a detailed and in-depth on-going conversation about race and the racial academic achievement gap. This guide includes agreements participants make that will help manage the conversation, and is focused on discussing race in education; including significant information and process about white race, privilege and whiteness.

Doing Our Own Work (www.alliesforchange.org/) is an intensive two weekend seminar that focuses exclusively on whites developing their white racial identity, acknowledging white privilege and recognizing whiteness, and developing a personal accountability and anti-racist action plan. This is achieved through reading, discussion and personal processing through writing and reflecting. The DOOW model also includes pairing up with another participant for on-going conversation and accountability.

These models are examples of resources available that educators can access to assist in facilitating a dialogue about the racial academic achievement gap, race, white racial identity and white privilege and whiteness. I personally have attended several 'diversity workshops' within my school district. These have occurred typically as either a presentation by a speaker lasting perhaps an hour, up to a half day workshop with presenters and discussion. Although compelling at the time, there is no follow through, no personal accountability and certainly not enough time allotted to even begin to process the information and make the information personally meaningful. White teachers need structured opportunities to facilitate our white racial identity and acknowledgement of whiteness and white privilege; I believe that if this is not provided and encouraged, other 'diversity training' will be ineffective in producing increased academic achievement for students of color.

In closing, I support and fully agree with Teel and Obidah (2008) in their theoretical underpinnings for their book *Building Racial and Cultural Competence in the Classroom: Strategies from Urban Educators* when they state:

> We believe that the way of being that manifests itself in what we are calling racial and cultural competence is at the heart of successful teaching in urban settings ...

from this perspective, as individual teachers transform their own racial and cultural understanding and attitudes, becoming racially and culturally competent, their teaching strategies will become more effective, their students' performance will improve, the institutions of schooling themselves will change, and the achievement gap will close.

EPILOGUE

I was challenged to take my implications and conclusions to a deeper level. One way to do so is to include an epilogue to my writing to address my feelings and reactions in a perhaps less academically formal way. And the personal feelings and reactions I have had to this study have been overwhelming to me so often. In particular, the questions embedded in my own personal lapses and white forgetfulness and of the question "What now?"

First, I feel compelled to say that I really liked the study participants. My need to say so is related to my concern that anyone would imagine that I have sat in judgment of the study participants. That I am pointing the finger and saying, in essence "those bad white teachers". I know that I can't judge because I can see myself in so much of what they shared about themselves. And I continue to see myself there, even after spending over two intense years working on this dissertation. Of course, that is a typical white response - to distance whites that we don't want to be affiliated with; as 'those bad white people; those racists!' At the same time, I admit to discouragement and disappointment.

The lead teachers perceived themselves as anti-racist. Most good whites do. However, the disappointment I had while deconstructing their interviews was overwhelming and shocking. Some things that were discussed were apparent and surface obvious - however, some things only made themselves clearly apparent

during the deconstructing and sorting process. Once they were apparent, I was surprised that I hadn't seen them as obvious in the first place. This is a reflection of my own process of understand, or lack of understanding, of how whiteness is displayed daily in schools. Of how devious and underhanded it is because *it is so normal and ingrained* it is often difficult for a white person to identify.

Another disappointing piece for me was the lack of motivation shown by the lead teachers. Although they were all participating in The Anding Study, and said they wanted to know more, none of them mentioned anything specific and concrete that they were doing, outside of the Anding Study, to further their understanding of white privilege. Or of cultural competency. This just seemed to me to point to a lack of interest - yet another hidden white privilege: 'don't have to (pay attention to race or make it a priority) if I don't want to'.

Another piece of my reaction to my own writing, and the challenge to reveal more of myself in the implications, is that of *silence*. That is a place where I find myself, often, both as a white person and as a woman, residing. The silence is easier than the uncomfortable feeling of confronting someone and receiving, in turn, their surprise, hurt and anger. But, I know that the *silence is not a place where a white anti-racist can reside*. So much of our time, as teachers and educators working with kids and parents, is in trying to 'find the peace', so to speak. However, silence really cannot be tolerated in anti-racist work. In order for me to combat my polite white upbringing, I have believe I have to work and fight against silence, with other whites in particular - that is an implication for me.

A major disappointment for me was in the structure of the broader Anding Study. I was disappointed with the training modules; with the lack of time spent in focusing on 'whiteness' and white privilege impacting instruction and teaching capacity of white teachers. Perhaps the study originators did not realize how many of the lead teachers would actually be white. However, why wouldn't they, as most teachers *are* white. The Anding Study seems like such a wonderful opportunity to really address the issues at hand. Although it is addressing many 'cultural issues', to me, whiteness and white privilege is such a huge area, this study could have been a perfect moment to delve into that and see some results. But I believe it has missed much of its mark by not doing so.

I realized through this study that the majority of focus on addressing the racial academic achievement gap is in white teachers learning 'cultural competency'. I understand that this is essential. It is vital for white teachers to have working knowledge and love of ways that many people, different from themselves, live At the same time, isn't this simply continuing to put the mirror on 'others'? The cultural competency piece can so easily lead to 'parental involvement' and 'socio-economic status' discussions among white teachers. There is virtually no conversation about white privilege and how that skews perceptions and social opportunities, both currently and generationally. I believe we white teachers have to turn the mirrors on ourselves and look at how we approach our role as educators *due to our history of white privilege.*

A broader implication is contained in the conundrum of preservice teachers and their training. How can it be that we *still have not figure out a way to address racism*

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with preservice teachers? How is it that the racial academic achievement gap continues to persist, that most graduating teachers are white, but whiteness is not resoundingly addressed on the post-secondary level? The tenacity of whiteness, institutionally and generationally, shows itself again.

In my personal work as an educator for nine years I have experienced two mandated professional development 'episodes' - both keynote addresses presented to an audience. First, absolutely not 'best practice' style given in a totally lecture format. Secondly, no discussion or follow-up. Thirdly, the entire lens of both professional development sessions was that of white teachers developing a 'cultural competency' with 'others'. This type of professional development, in my opinion, has little to no value whatsoever. I am convinced, in part by my study, that this is the case.

The multitude of 'programs' to address the racial academic achievement gap, in my opinion, will be minimally effective until the issue of whiteness and white privilege with white educators is addressed. This cannot be addressed in a one-time keynote address. It has to be addressed in small groups with discussion and information; both informal but structured. I believe it can be done - Dr. Tatum discussed Lemon Grove School District in California using such a format and significantly decreasing their academic achievement gap. But, it was initiated by several like-minded district leaders who worked together to build a coalition of white teachers who were on board; and they carried the rest of their colleagues. It can be done with strong willed leadership that is educated and informed and has the will to do so.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

CONSENT FORM

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research project. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have.

Study Title: White Teachers: Racial Identity, Advantages and Impacts
Researcher and Title: Dr. Christopher Dunbar, Associate Professor
Department and Institution: Education Administration, Michigan State University
Address and Contact Information: 404 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824: 517-353-9017

1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:

* ❖ You are being asked to participate in a research study of practicing white classroom teachers and their perceptions of their racial identity, their perceptions of how this identity lends them social advantage and privilege and their perceptions of impacts this may have on their classroom and instructional capacity.
* ❖ You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because of your training during and your participation
  * o in the Promoting Academic Success research study.
* ❖ From this study, the researchers hope to learn how white teachers perceive their racial positioning and advantage and how they perceive this as impacting their instructional capacity
* ❖ In the entire study, 5 to 8 people are being asked to participate.
* ❖ Your participation in this study will take about 4 hours: 2 hours in individual interviews and 2 hours in focus
* ❖ groups.

2. WHAT YOU WILL DO:

* ❖ You will be asked to participate in 1-2 individual interviews that will last approximately 1 to 2 hours each.
* ❖ You will be asked to participate in 1-2 focus groups with the other study participants. Each focus group
  * o Will last 1 to 2 hours. These interviews and focus groups will occur in Erickson Hall, Kellogg Center or a local library depending on convenience to the participant.
* ❖ You will be offered the option to review the transcripts from the interviews and focus groups and offer
  * o Input into the analysis of these interviews and focus groups.
* ❖ You will receive a full electronic copy of the final manuscript.

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3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

- ❖ The potential benefits to you for taking part in this study are increased awareness of your perceptions of
    - o Your racial identity and its advantages and privileges and how that may impact your classroom
    - o Practices and instructional capacity.
- ❖ Participation in this study may contribute to the understanding of how white teacher's racial identity and
    - o Perceptions impact academic achievement for students of color. This study may inform future development of professional development in related research studies

4. POTENTIAL RISKS:

- ❖ A feeling of exposure concerning your feelings about your racial group membership and its impact on your classroom and potential embarrassment regarding this.
- ❖ Potential breach of confidentiality by others failing to keep the confidence of the focus groups. Focus group members will sign a confidentiality clause to maintain confidentiality of the group to minimize such a potential breach.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:

- ❖ The data for this project will be kept confidential. Data, including audio, electronic and hard copies, will be stored in room 407 Erickson Hall, MSU, in a locked file drawer for 3 years after the initial interviews and focus groups. Only the investigators and the IRB will have access to this locked file drawer. After 3 years the audio, electronic and hard copies of the data will be shredded and placed in the trash. Only fully deidentified copies of data will be taken off campus.
- ❖ All data collected during individual interviews will be confidential. Information about you will be kept confidential
- ❖ to the maximum extent allowable by law unless there is a danger to yourself or others.
- ❖ All data collected during focus groups will be kept confidential and as a focus group participant you agree to
- ❖ maintain confidentiality of all focus group members ___ Yes ___No Initials_____
- ❖ Only researchers will have access to the research data.
- ❖ The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research
- ❖ participants will remain anonymous.
- ❖ I agree to allow audiotaping of the interviews.
    - ☐ Yes ☐ No Initials_____

6. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

- ❖ Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no.
- ❖ You may change your mind at any time and withdraw.
- ❖ You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

- ❖ Choosing not to participate or withdrawing from this study will have no known consequences.
- ❖ You will be told of any significant findings that develop during the course of the study that may influence your willingness to continue to participate in the research.

7. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:
- ❖ There is no cost for participation in this study.
- ❖ All materials will be provided without cost.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researcher Dr. Christopher Dunbar, Associate Professor, Education Administration, MSU, 404 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824, 517-353-9017.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

12. DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT.

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

_____

Signature   Date

Appendix B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Questions for Individual Interview(s):

Describe for me your childhood and teenage background:
    Tell me about your earliest memory of the existence of race
      Describe the situation. What were you feeling?
    Tell me about your earliest memory of knowing you were white, and
      someone else wasn't. How was that communicated to you? How
      did you feel about it?
    Tell me how race was discussed or 'known' in your family of origin
    Tell me about your neighborhood – how did it reflect race?
    Tell me about your town – how did it reflect race?
    Tell me about your ethnicity and the ethnicity of your family. Did
      Your Family have customs/beliefs/rituals/religious practices that
      Were different from your neighbors or that you viewed as
      'different'?

Describe for me your childhood/teenage educational background:
    How do you remember race in terms of your elementary education?
      What were your relationships like with your classmates of color?
      What were your relationships like with your teachers of color?
    How do you remember race in terms of your middle and high school
      education?
      What were your relationships like with your classmates of color?
      What were your relationships like with your teachers of color?
      What memories do you have of race being communicated as an
        issue? How was it communicated? How did you feel about it?

Describe for me your post high school education:
    Tell me about your decision to go into education as a profession-what
      eere your dreams/aspirations/goals
    Tell me about your earliest memory of race in college-how was race
      'known' in your living situation? In your classes? How did you
      feel about it?
    Tell me about your classwork in relationship to race – what is your
      memory of race being a topic in class in relationship to teaching/
      education? What is your memory of cultural competence being
      a topic in any classwork?
    Tell me about any other situations that you remember that evoked

issues related to race – employment/living situations/classmates/
professors

Employment History in Education:
Tell me about the type of school you dreamed of working in as a
college student. How does that compare to where you work now?
Were issues related to race embedded in your dream job?
Tell me about your employment history as an educator and related
jobs
How is your current job different from your dream job?
If you could work somewhere else, and wanted to, what would that
other job look like?

Current Educational Position
Describe your current position in education
What is the racial composition of the group of students you work
with?
What is the racial composition of your colleagues?
What is the racial composition of your administrators?

Race in the classroom
Describe situations in your classroom when race has been an issue
between students/brought up as a topic by a student – how did
you respond to the situation? How did you feel about the
situation and your response?
Describe how your students of color relate to you as a white teacher
Has the issue of your race been brought up directly by students?
How did you feel about that? How did you respond?

Race and Parents
Describe any situations where you were cognizant of race being an
issue with parents.
How do you feel about your parents of color? What differences do
you notice, if any, between the parents of color and their
relationship with you in comparison to the white parents and their
relationship with you
Has a parent of color ever mentioned race, or your race, or a related
issue? How did you feel about that? How did you respond? How
did you feel about your response?

Race and Curriculum
   Describe any curriculum or curriculum materials that you were aware
       Of that had racial bias
   Describe any curriculum/lessons that you were uncomfortable
       working with due to embedded racial content
   Tell me about any lessons that you have developed/used purposefully
       due to the racially related content

Race and Colleagues
   Tell me about your relationships with colleagues of color
   Tell me about your relationships with administrators of color
   Describe how your relationships with colleagues of color differ from
       your relationships with white colleagues
   Describe how your relationships with administrators of color
       differ from your relationships with white administrators
   Tell me about ways you understand your race impacts these
       relationships

Focus Group Lead Questions

You have all been involved in a lengthy process increasing your capacity around the issues of boys of color and academic achievement. Prior to your involvement in PAS, how do you recall whiteness, white privilege, your knowledge of race or racially related issues being involved in your teaching practice? Reflect and share on:

Times that race was mentioned as a topic/issue between students? What were your thoughts? How did it make you feel? How was it resolved?

Times that race was brought up as an issue between you and parents? What were your thoughts? How did it make you feel? How was it resolved?

Times that race was an issue between you and colleagues? What were your thoughts? How did it make you feel? How was it resolved?

During the past year you have been involved in teaching others about issues related to whiteness. In reflecting on how this process was, what were some of your experiences and how did they change the way you think about whiteness?

During your most recent teaching experience these past few months and this past year, how has your increased knowledge about whiteness and cultural competency changed your teaching practice?

Relate times that whiteness was an issue and your felt competent to deal with it

Relate times that whiteness was an issue and you felt inadequate to deal with the situation.

Times that you felt lessons/curriculum bias needed to be challenged

Times that race was an issue in the classroom and you felt competent to address/or inadequate to address it

Where do you see your practice in relationship to whiteness and racial issues? Are there areas that you want to increase your capacity in? Are you willing to work on this? What types of projects would increase your capacity?

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