THE COGNITION OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY: NEO COLLECTIVE NARRATIVES FOR BLACK STUDENTS AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION

by

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(Under the Direction of Diane L. Cooper)

ABSTRACT

While previous research exist concerning the racial identity development of Black student within various environments, the perceptions of Black current students participating in a predominantly White institution (PWI) environment on their racial development may have adjusted over time. As students evolve, it becomes increasingly important for student affairs professionals to gain a better awareness of current students' understanding of their racial identity through the students' stories. This study sought to address the exploratory question: how are Black students making sense of their racial identity development within a PWI? The theoretical framework for this study incorporated the intersection of social constructionism and intersubjectivity with an underlying awareness of the racial identity stages outlined in Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's (1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity.

Using narrative inquiry and drawing on discourse analysis and the recursive nature of the constant comparative method, the data gleaned eight themes that help to describe the collective story of the 10 participants through their neo collective narrative of Blackness layered with their

college experience at a PWI. These themes are labeled: family ties, ancestry, social construction, Blackness, navigating multiple identities, developing own racial identity, socialization, and regeneration. Some implications from this study included focusing on the cultural climate of the institution, supporting academic success centers for Black students, fostering family/parent partner programs, developing first year experience programs focused on Black student engagement, and promoting a campus wide initiative and culture that fosters communication in an out of the classroom on the topic of race. In sum, student affairs professionals should continue to provide the campus with strategies that build inclusive communities through utilizing their sound multicultural competencies.

INDEX WORDS: Narrative Inquiry, Black Students, Predominantly White Institution, Intersubjectivity, Social Constructionism, Performativity

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BA, University of Georgia, 2002

M.Ed., University of Georgia, 2004

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2011

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DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my village of support. "This is my story, this is my song…"

My journey to completing my dissertation and subsequently receiving my Ph.D. began with the determination and vision of my maternal and paternal grandparents. From my maternal grandfather (Mr. William Wellons, Sr., deceased) and grandmother (Mrs. Della Mapp Wellons deceased), with a third grade education and eighth grade education respectively working in Cordele, GA as farmers progressing from sharecropping to owning their farmland, they taught me importance of perseverance. Despite their limited formal education, they had a vision of supporting the educational pursuits of their ten children via a four-year college or technical college. Their vision spawned a passion for education that has transcended generations. In tandem, my paternal grandfather (Rev. Charlie J. Maddox, Sr.) and grandmother (Mrs. Margaret Cobb Maddox, deceased), as high school graduates, worked tirelessly in Atlanta, GA as a railroad engineer and domestic worker respectively. They encouraged their children's and grandchildren's formal educational pursuits. My grandparents' value in education has inspired me over the years to persist through my own educational development. To them, I say…"This is my story, this is my song…"

All of my efforts have been supported, guided, and encouraged by my mother (Mrs. Evelyn W. Maddox) and father (Rev. Calvin E. Maddox). As first generation college students who graduated from Albany State College, at the time, and as civil rights activists, they paved the way for my brother (Mr. Ezra E. Maddox) and me to transition smoothly through the public

school systems of Georgia and ultimately continue our development in higher education. Through their sacrifice and efforts, they have set forth a path toward success that has been informed by love, prayer, access, and patience. This is not a statement that I make lightly…without their diligent guidance, I would not be where I am today. Additionally, my brother's commitment to advocating for the successful completion of my dissertation is unmatched. He is the most confident individual I know and it is with the projection of his confidence onto my educational process, I felt assured that I could continue with this journey. To them, I say…"This is my story, this is my song…"

My extended family has strengthened my resolve to persevere through this Ph.D. journey. My aunts (Ms. Ollie Foston, Mrs. Carolyn Gates, Ms. Beverly Wellons, Mrs. Margaret Henderson, and Mrs. Michelle Maddox-David) have consistently supported my educational goals. Without their individual inspiration and collective enthusiasm during my educational experiences, I would have lacked the drive necessary to complete my tasks. These women have served as role models for what positive, accomplished, and nurturing Black women truly represent. Moreover, my uncles (Mr. Calvin Henderson, Mr. Charlie J. Maddox, Jr., and Mr. Gary Maddox) have provided me with an informed perspective on what successful and hardworking Black men represent. In addition to my aunts and uncles, my cousins (Mr. John Wellons, Jr., Mr. Jeremy Wellons, Dr. Marcus Foston, Mr. Reginald Henderson, Ms. Chelsea Henderson, Mr. Jourdain Henderson, Miss Dominique David, and Rev. Gailand Maddox) who have served a dual role as siblings throughout my development, I sincerely thank them for being my support network and champions. They are my coping mechanism and I have appreciated all of their sacrifice, support, and prayers they have given me over the years. To them, I say…"This is my story, this is my song…"

I would be remised if I did not express my appreciation for my friends (Mr. Ahmed Holt, Ms. Ramona Lovett and Family, Ms. Sarah Chatman, Mr. T. W. Cauthen, III, Dr. Jamie Riley, Dr. Gail Cole-Avant, Ms. Mildreda Utley, Dr. Willie Banks, Ms. Marian Higgins, Mr. Hamilton Bledsoe, Dr. Khrystal Smith, Ms. Kayla Hamilton, Mrs. Natalie Raines, Drs. Quentin and Natalie Florence, Mr. Shaun Banks, Ms. Jillian Martin, Dr. Samantha Murfee, Ms. Kathryn Hall, Mrs. Sheree Gibson, Ms. Jawaan Wallace, Dr. Ralphel Smith, Mr. Shamont Johnson, Dr. Regina Sargent, Mrs. Joy Cater, Mr. John Lynch and Family, Mr. Jason Overton (deceased), Mr. Corey Moon, and Ms. Andrea Cordy and Family) during this educational journey. As a collective of successful, motivated, and accomplished people, I value my relationships with each of them, and I truly have appreciated their continuous friendship and kindness shown to me over the years. In particular, I am thankful for Ms. Andrea Cordy's steadfast support and faithful endurance throughout my Ph.D. journey. Moreover, I have been blessed to have the prayers, encouragement, and abiding dedication of Mr. Corey Moon during my journey. To them, I say…"This is my story, this is my song…"

Without question, the entity that has encompassed this entire experience has been God. He deserves the praise for all that He has done for me throughout my life. I am undoubtedly aware that through His divine plan I am able to see my dream realized, as I have completed the Ph.D. journey and plan to embark on my next path…Lord please continue to guide my steps and allow me to fulfill my purpose. To Him, I say…"This is my story, this is my song! I'm praising my Savior all the day long" (*Blessed Assurance*, F. J. Crosby & P. P. Knapp, 1873).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. (John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 1961)

My Ph.D. experience has been enriched through the academic rigor and learning centered focus of the College Student Affairs Administration's doctoral program over the past four years. I have been very fortunate to share in the co-construction of knowledge with such a talented group of scholars and faculty within my department. Namely, the faculty of the College Student Affairs Administration program has served as the shinning exemplar of scholarship, research, and teaching. My sincerest appreciation to Dr. Merrily Dunn, Dr. Laura Dean, Dr. Michelle Espino, Dr. Richard Mullendore, and Dr. Diane Cooper for their incredible support and guidance during my tenure at UGA. I have received small aspects of preparation for professionalism and scholarship from each of you, while gaining a lasting collective appreciation for the profession of Student Affairs. My experience with each of you has truly been a gift.

I would like to directly address my committee chair, Dr. Diane Cooper to whom I am eternally grateful for her leadership, talents, scholarly generativity, and golf expertise. Thank you for your tireless efforts given for the purpose of shaping me as scholar. My words cannot encompass the value I have placed on our relationship; thank you Dr. Cooper.

In addition to my relationship with my program faculty, I have been afforded the opportunity to work with an outstanding dissertation committee. Dr. Kecia M. Thomas, Dr.

Rosemary Phelps, and Dr. Melissa Freeman, I appreciate all of your feedback and input that has helped to strengthen my dissertation. I truly enjoyed working with you all.

I would like to sincerely thank the participants that volunteered to share their narratives with me during the development of this document. Certainly, without their contribution, this dissertation would not exist. Again, thank you for all of your time and consideration.

Lastly, I have been honored to work alongside some of the most exceptional student affairs scholars and practitioners in our profession. I have appreciated the feedback and support given to me over the years from my fellow classmates. Thank you for assisting in my development as researcher and scholar.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> When we think about our multiple identities, most of us will find that we are both dominant and targeted at the same time. But it is the targeted identities that hold our attention and the dominant identities that often go unexamined. (Tatum, 1997, p. 22)

The Black students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) have unique college experiences and their lived stories are worth exploring to further document their perspectives, and ultimately, to inform the multicultural competence needs of student affairs practitioners and scholars. Black students attending PWIs are regularly a part of pluralistic environments. However, their existence in this type of environment leads to the question of whether or not they are actually engaged or actually participating in a PWI, pluralistic environment (Harper & Quaye, 2009). In last twenty years, PWIs within the Southeastern region of the United States have seen a noticeable increase in their Black student enrollment. From 1976 to 2005, the United States witnessed an increase in Black student enrollment at PWIs mature from 9.4% to 12.7%, an increase of 3.3% (National Center for Education Statistics, August 2007). This increase is attributed to a number of factors, ranging from the landmark court decision of 1954, *Oliver L. Brown et.al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS) et. al.* (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2006), recognizing the constitutionality of integration in schools to the implementation of affirmative action legislation in most institutional

admissions offices to federal legislation like the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964 (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2006) and the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act* of 1974 (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 2006).

Despite the increase in enrollment, Black students attending Southeastern PWIs are not successfully matriculating through the curriculum at the same rate as their White counterparts and they are not reporting high levels of satisfaction with their educational experiences as their White counterparts (Beauboeuf-Lafontant & Augustine, 1996; Harper & Quaye, 2009). This dilemma presents a necessary and timely focus for student affairs professionals to employ more effective interventions that concentrate on the skill development of Black students in the areas of self-efficacy and coping based on their racial identity.

Best Practices for Student Affairs Professionals

The seminal documents for the profession like the *Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937, 1949) and the *Student Learning Imperative* (American College Personnel Association, 1996) help to inform the more student-centered and inclusive community philosophy held by most student affairs professionals. Moreover, the primary professional organizations within the field outline specific best practices for student affairs professionals regarding diverse student populations, highlighting the American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) *Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education,* (American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators,1997) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' (NASPA) *Reasonable Expectations* (Kuh, Lyons, Miller, & Trow, 1995).

In tandem, student affairs professionals' employment of best practices for serving diverse populations should exercise their multicultural competency skill set. Most notably, Pope and

Reynolds (1997) discussed seven core student affairs competencies (1) administrative and management, (2) theory and translation, (3) helping and interpersonal, (4) ethical and legal, (5) teaching and training, (6) assessment and evaluation, and (7) multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. They noted that a professional is competent in the area of multiculturalism once they have acquired awareness, knowledge and skills necessary for effective student affairs practice that lead to the creation of inclusive campus environments. In a later document, Pope and Reynolds (2004), detailed characteristics that define a multiculturally competent student affairs practitioner. As student affairs professionals prepare to face the changing pluralistic landscape of higher education, their ability to positively inform inclusive communities is directly linked to their multicultural competence (Pope & Reynolds).

Additional Resources

As professionals continue to improve the service and programs offered to their Black student populations, there are additional resources available to enrich their professional development. These resources include: Clemson University's "Best Practices in Black Student Achievement", NASPA's "Knowledge Communities on special populations", and ACPA's "Commissions on special populations".

Operationalization

For the purpose of this study, Black students are defined as persons who self-select to identify themselves as African American or people of the African Diaspora (University of Georgia, African American Cultural Center, September 2008). Additionally, maintaining an inclusive perspective of Blackness only enriches the research study.

Previous Exploration

In a previous research study, I sought to gain an understanding of Black students' social networks and the role their network played in their persistence in a PWI environment. The study incorporated research on the interaction of psychosocial development and racial identity development of Black students has provided interesting insight into this phenomenon.

The theoretical framework for this study incorporated the racial identity stages outlined in Cross' (1995) revised Black identity development model and the psychosocial developmental elements related to the developing mature interpersonal relationships vector discussed by Chickering and Reisser (1993). The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the perceptions Black students on social networks and their influence on Black students' persistence within a predominantly White institution (PWI) in the Southeastern United States.

Drawing on the recursive nature of the constant comparative method, the data distilled six themes that help to describe the collective perceptions of the eight participants of their social networks and the networks' effect on their college experience. These themes are labeled: management of social networks, cultivating relationships with Black students versus White students, shared culture within social networks, social networks as coping strategy, racial consciousness, and satisfaction with overall college experience (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009).

The first theme I titled *'Management of social networks.'* The students shared that their social networks consist of family members, close friends, cursory relationships, faculty and staff, and career or discipline related friendships. They have chosen to segment their networks and prefer to manage or balance these relationships within their overall social network. The students have organized their friends into a hierarchal organizational chart, with the participant in the

study as the leader or labeled as self and their close friends, associates, faculty and staff and family as the direct reports to the leader or self (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009).

An organizational chart is a great example of their perspective on the construction of their social network because an organizational chat is flexible; people can be demoted and/or promoted, and the job responsibilities can be adjusted as needed by the leader. It is important to note that although the students were clear in their descriptions of their social networks; their explanations offered a contradiction to previous research (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009). These participants did label their families as members of their social networks, yet they did not give their families prominent roles, which is contrary to previous research that indicated Black students were strongly connected to their families, therefore their families would play a vital role in their life, college experiences (Duncan & Pryzwansky, 1993; Sedlacek, 1999).

Theme II was titled *'Cultivating relationships with Black students versus with students from other ethnic groups'*. The participants noted that while they were comfortable developing relationships with persons from different backgrounds, they recognized that the connections were made conversely to their linkages with other Black students. Particularly, they offered that upon their arrival at college they were socialized with Black students. They would have preferred to engage with fellow students in more multicultural settings. Many of the participants also noted that they developed their social connections in the residence halls on campus (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009). In sum, Jamie explained that "I feel like it is important to make a connection with people because if you make a connection to others you learn a lot about yourself as well". These collective perspectives support the elements of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vector labeled "developing mature interpersonal relationships." This vector allows students within the early year of their undergraduate studies to learn tolerance for a wider

range of persons and their beliefs, developing mature interpersonal relationships with their peers, and establishing the capacity for intimacy (Chickering & Reisser).

Theme III, was titled *'Shared culture within social networks.*' The participants identified that within their social networks, the individuals and the participants had common core values that permeated throughout their relationship experiences. Jamie reflected that "Definitely, a *strong work ethic* in terms of school, I value my *education* a lot. I feel like it is a gift and I thank God every day for it. I like to surround myself with people who are *passionate about something* and know that this is an opportunity to really learn as much as they can about something that interests them. Also, a strong faith, a *strong religious faith*, I mean that is something that is really important too. I really value *positivity*, like people who aren't going to bring me down. Its people who are positive, who are excited about life, and people who are really anxious about *taking advantage of what college has to offer*…that is something that attracts me, that is a value that I really hold dear." Moreover, Black explained that "*personal accountability* [is important], [we] want to achieve so much more than we came from like we want so much more than others limit [us] too, *we all want to do what people don't expect of us*…, and we still have the same *Christian beliefs*…" This theme was directly noted in each interview and obviously played a significant in the vitality of the participants' social networks (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009).

Theme IV was titled *'Social networks as coping strategy.'* While the participants expressed a learned sense of comfort within the overall campus community, they have encountered instances that have made them feel marginalized. They noted that their primarily Black social networks serve as a place of refuge and rejuvenation. As previous research has highlighted, the network offers them a place to process their experiences and develop appropriate

resolutions to cope with the environment (Nagasawa & Wong, 1999; Willie & McCord, 1972). Jamie described, "[Therefore,] whenever I would see somebody I was like, okay, *we are Black, so we are going to make it together*. So, I *seek out* those people for a *sense of comfort and a sense of understanding*, because they [are] essentially dealing with the same things that I am dealing with, in regards to *going to a predominantly White institution*" (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009).

Next, theme V titled '*Satisfaction with overall college experience.'* The participants offered the reasoning for their resounding overall satisfaction with college was significantly attributed to their social networks. They shared that their social network played an integral part in their decisions to remain at the PWI. For instance, Alexandria discussed that from her perspective her social network consisting of faculty, staff (related to her work experiences), friends, and God have completely aided in her overall satisfaction with college. Additionally, Jamie recognized that "…just knowing that you know, there is somebody, or there are people that have my back, you know, and know that you know, we can make it together, that is really you know, something that is fulfilling to me as well and it has definitely contributed to my satisfaction here, is knowing that I have people that have my back, throughout whatever" (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009). This theme directly aligns with previous research related to Black students' sense of connectedness correlating with their overall satisfaction with their college experience (Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999).

My previous study revealed important thematic concepts, in particular the final theme titled: '*Racial consciousness'*, which has informed the impetus for this study. During the analysis of the data, the participants revealed their internal struggles with their racial identity concurrent with their experiences at a PWI. While they did not specifically address this topic, it

was quite present. Interpretatively, each of the participants were at different levels of progression and regression within Cross' (1995) Nigresence Model. However, none of the participants clearly articulated that they were experiencing their racial identity development. This finding presents an evident connection to the levels of Black identity development that inform the Nigresence Model.

In tandem to their racial identity development, the participants shared that they believe themselves to have found a way to integrate their multiple levels of Blackness into a predominantly White environment. DuBois (1903), a researcher of the Enlightenment period, discussed the notion of dual consciousness, where he explained that Black people experience life with a "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (DuBois, p. 3). He went on to reference the ongoing struggle of the Black person when he noted that "One ever feels his two-ness,--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" (DuBois, p. 3). He later offered the idea that "This history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,--this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better truer self" (DuBois, p. 3). In his quest for a transcendental concept of truth and knowledge, DuBois highlighted the internal struggle with the aforementioned level of consciousness, self (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009).

However, the participants are not dealing with a duality of consciousness alone; they are operating on multiple levels of consciousness. Gates & West (1996), with a pragmatic perspective, offered that the condition of the Black person, "requires more profound interpretation…one that goes far beyond the dichotomies of expert knowledge versus mass ignorance, individual autonomy versus dogmatic authority and self-mastery versus intolerant

tradition" (p. 93). The condition of Black people must be viewed through multiple levels of consciousness that have "more democratic concepts of knowledge and leadership that highlight human fallibility and mutual accountability, notions of individuality and contested authority that stress dynamic traditions and ideals of self-realization within participatory communities" (Gates & West, p. 93). It is important to recognize that the participants' racial identity is not defined by one instance. To gain an understanding of the participants' racial identity development, one needs to incorporate the full context of their experiences that have informed their perspectives on race. The perspectives of these Black participants are informed by multiple levels of consciousnesses, including self-actualization, roles in the Black community, roles in the larger society, development of racial identity, to name a few (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009).

In sum, while they still feel a sense of living with unrecognized consciousnesses, they believe that they feel comfortable balancing their commitment to their Black culture and affiliations coupled with their existence in a PWIs campus culture (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009). They must become aware that their comfort is informed by a White American ideal that dominates the campus culture (Maddox). Using a collective of their consciousnesses and the literal campus environment, they can begin to uncover their understandings of their concepts of truth and knowledge that are not solely based on the culture of a PWI campus environment. This perspective lends itself to a more cultural relativistic approach to developing their racial consciousness (Gates & West, 1996; Lamothe, 2008).

The theoretical framework for this study incorporates the intersection of social constructionism and intersubjectivity with an underlying awareness of the racial identity stages outlined in Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's (1998) Multidimensional

Model of Racial Identity. This study posses the exploratory question, how are Black students making sense of their racial identity development within a PWI?

Statement of the Problem

As mentioned previously, the theoretical framework for this study incorporated the intersection of social constructionism and intersubjectivity with an underlying awareness of the racial identity stages outlined in Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's (1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity. Constructionism is best explained by the most notable authors of modernity like Goffman (1959), Austin (1962), and Rorty (1999) who addressed a strong need to employ the personal knowledge of people as a representation of truth. In other words, as people speak of truth, their truth is completely informed by their experiences or knowledge. In tandem, the idea of intersubjectivity refers to the multiple subjects within a given framework. Moreover, intersubjectivity emphasizes the shared cognition and consensus between individuals to co-construct reality (Husserl, 1969). The greater discourse of the meaning of Blackness for Black students provides the researcher with an opportunity to examine language in search of the topics, themes, and motivations that inform the use of that language in a set structure (Foucault, 1978; Peräkylä, 2008). Recognizing that constructs like language, subjects, objects, knowledge, and truth are manifested in viewpoints held by people or structures, a discursive narrative research designed will be employed to gather students' understandings of Blackness and what that constructed concept means for them.

While previous research exists concerning the racial identity development of Black student within various environments, the perceptions of Black current students participating in a PWI environment on their racial development may have adjusted over time. As students evolve, it becomes increasingly important for student affairs professionals to gain a better awareness of

current students' understanding of their racial identity through the students' stories. This study sought to gain the narratives of Black students with the exploratory question, how are Black students making sense of their racial identity development within a PWI?

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions.

1. What informs Black students' understanding of their identity?
2. How do Black students make meaning (interpreting) of their racial identity development?
3. How are Black students negotiating their racial identity within a PWI environment?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> A wholesale critical inventory of ourselves and our communities of struggle is neither self-indulgent autobiography nor self-righteous reminiscence. Rather, it is a historical situating and locating of our choices, sufferings, anxieties and efforts in light of the circumscribed options and alternatives available to us. We are all born into and build on circumstances, traditions and situations not of our own choosing; yet we do make choices that constitute who we are and how we live in light of these fluid circumstances, traditions and situations (West, 1991, p. p. 3).

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides a premise for a researcher's discourse. The framework helps to shape the discourse, language, knowledge, truth, perceptions of power, understanding of freedom, identifying the subject, ability to effect objectivity, determination of reality, method, and the type of science used (Lather, 1991). Moreover, Denzin & Lincoln (2008) addressed how the concepts of truth, knowledge, subject, rationality, structure, power, and language can be explored through a variety of theoretical frameworks that yield varying outcomes for a researcher's study. For instance, a social constructionism narrative produces a different set of implications for research than an enlightened ethnography. Moreover, the authors highlighted the notion that qualitative research coupled with its theoretical frameworks is identified through

a series of tensions, contradictions, and hesitations. These circumstances have helped qualitative perspectives to progress. The theoretical framework for this study incorporates the intersection of social constructionism and intersubjectivity with an underlying awareness of the racial identity stages outlined in Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's (1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity. This study posses the exploratory question, how are Black students making sense of their racial identity development within a PWI?

A theoretical framework provides perspective for a researcher's agenda. This outline will examine some thoughts on theoretical positioning, discuss the broader elements of qualitative research, explore the theoretical implications for qualitative research, and examine a philosophical journey through particular theoretical frames.

It is imperative that qualitative researchers acknowledge and label their own subjectivity to reduce the amount of researcher bias within the research design (Peshkin, 1988). Particularly, my subjectivity is shaped through my personal and professional exposure related to the research topic dealing with the perceptions of Black students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) on the extent to which their racial identity influences their persistence throughout the institution. Having both attended and professionally worked at a PWI, I have a certain perspective of Black student persistence and success within this type of campus environment. Recognizing my apparent subjectivity in relation to my research topic, one way to ensure the constructed knowledge collected from my participants' stories is clear, I needed to choose a theoretical framework that would allow me to hear their stories and represent the discourse through their lived and constructed narratives.

Paradigm Shifts and Theoretical Perspectives

Over time, theoretical frameworks have been informed by various paradigm shifts. Each paradigm shift is a critique of the previous perspective. A series of historical movements have resulted in the shifts. In response to the historical movements that created the paradigmatic formations, various theoretical frameworks emerged (Lather, 1991). Ultimately, these frameworks have served as a conduit for exploring ontological, epistemological, and methodological concepts including truth, knowledge, power, language, discourse, the subject, science, reality, objectivity, reason, freedom, and method.

Early hard and social science researchers such as Plato (about 380 B.C.) and Descartes (1993) were concerned with proving a transcendental truth using a positivist paradigm. This approach to research seeks to predict knowledge through controlled experiential procedures. Following World War I, researchers like Kant (1995) and DuBois (1903) became enlightened and sought to understand natural phenomena with this approach to their research. This more modernist, structural, and humanist paradigm has informed various frameworks including: Marxism, pragmatism, interpretivism, naturalism, constructionism, phenomenology, ethnographic work, and symbolic interactionism. Following the social movements of the 1930's thru 1970's throughout the world a more emancipatory approach was employed by researchers like Habermas (1975) and Horkheimer & Adono (1972) to address issues concerning social justice. Within this paradigm, frameworks including neo-Marxism, critical theory, feminism, critical race theory, Freirian participatory action research, gay and lesbian theory, critical ethnographic work, and praxis oriented research. In tandem, a major paradigm shift took place after World War II with a focus on post modernism, post structural, post critical, and post humanist theories. Researchers such as Foucault (1978) and Derrida (1978) introduced a

deconstructionist perspective to the field of social research. Some frameworks used within this approach include queer theory, feminist theory, postparadigmatic research, discursive formations, postcolonial theory, and discourse analysis. Later, researchers have turned their attention to perspectives that attend to such theoretical perspectives like neopositivism, neopragmatism, citizen inquiry research, post theory, and participatory dialogue policy analysis.

It is important to note that each paradigm is informed by its predecessor and the researchers situated in particular framework are readily aware of the assumptions and limitations that have informed those preceding approaches to research (Lather, 1991). As ontological, epistemological, and methodological concepts expand and progress with time and place, more complex perspectives on theoretical frameworks for research will continue to evolve. The question remains, how does one conceptualize and operationalize various paradigms and theoretical frameworks?

Multidisciplinary Perspective on Social Constructionism

In brief, social constructionism explores the idea of using the social and natural world to explain varying subjects and objects (Burr, 2003). This form of research can explore the interactions between the subjects and objects, the interactions within subjects and/or objects, and the influences on subjects with/without objects. The juxtaposition of subject and object gives room for the introduction of the concept of intersubjectivity on multiple levels of consciousness (Gallagher, 2008). Intersubjectivity refers to the multiple subjects within a given framework. Moreover, intersubjectivity emphasizes the shared cognition and consensus between individuals to co-construct reality (Husserl, 1969; Peräkylä, 2008).

As described by Burr (2003), social constructionism's "multidisciplinary background means that it has drawn its ideas from a number of sources, and where it has drawn on work in

the humanities and literary criticism,"…"its cultural backdrop is postmodernism, but it has its own intellectual roots in earlier sociological writing and in the concerns of the crisis in social psychology" (p. 15). Therefore social constructionism is a "movement which has risen from and is influenced by a variety of disciplines and intellectual traditions" (p. 15).

Recognizing the multidisciplinary background of social constructionism, it behooves me to explain how other theoretical frames help to situate the selected theoretical framework for this study. The specific frameworks include Marxism, pragmatism, feminism, critical race theory, discourse theory, and rhizomatic thinking. As previously mentioned, the frames offer insight into the concepts of truth, knowledge, subject, rationality, structure, power, and language.

Initially, the humanist construct of Marxism has informed the social constructionism frame. Its developer, Karl Marx (1977), presented *The Communist Manifesto* to detail this theoretical framework. The theory posits that once a people are liberated from the capitalist exploitation of the bourgeoisie and accept an altruistic approach to equalizing social class within a structure, the overall progress of the society will advance (Marx, 1977; 1991) Marxist theory has historic, economic, political, social, educational, implications for a wide range of societal structures.

The shear nature of Marxist theory represents a resistance to the dominant ideology of capitalism. In societies where there is a large disparity between those that have and those that do not have, the room for resistance to the current structure will exist. From a historical perspective, in the United States, the Black Panther Party adopted a social conscience due to the racially based inequities of numerous structures within the society throughout the 1960's and 1970's. They presented an overt form of resistance to the capitalist ideologies of the United States using many of the tenets that inform Marxist theory. On the other hand, the resistance lost

its social conscience as the individual aspirations of various leaders and some followers began to prevail over the organizations intended purpose.

Moreover, Marxist theory is concerned with socioeconomic structures and the commission of power due to wealth distribution. Marxists would argue that really the 'lower class' has power. Additionally, with a higher consciousness informed by Marxism, the masses will enact their power and overthrow the wealthy to have more economic equity within a society (Marx, 1977; 1991). This frame represents the sociological nature of social constructionism.

Eventually, the concepts presented in feminist theory offer insights into the concept of knowledge for the social constructionism frame. As paradigms shifted within qualitative research, it became apparent that the particular concepts of knowledge, discourse, and language should be explored through a feminist lens. While the feminist theoretical framework initially emerged as a part of the humanist discourse, uniquely over time it has found this framework has become a viable area of focus in the other discursive theories such as postmodern, poststructuralism, and posthumanism. In reference to the concept of knowledge, Haraway (1991) presented a timely discussion on the importance of recognizing the significance of people's life experiences across a spectrum of knowledge. She labeled this notion "situated knowledges" (Haraway, p. 581). Moreover, she indicated that feminist researchers have "A commitment to mobile positioning and passionate detachment is dependent on the impossibility of entertaining innocent 'identity' politics and epistemologies as strategies for seeing from the standpoints of the subjugated in order to see well" (Haraway, p. 585). In other words, it is important for researchers to use the multiple understandings of individual knowledge that all persons bring to the boundless discussion a particular epistemology.

Additionally, feminist theory draws on the understating of knowledge to inform the concept of discourse. Butler (1990) focused her efforts in feminist theory on the deconstruction of discourses on gender and sex. Her exploration of how discourse on gender can construct and/or co-construct an entire group of people revealed a needed perspective on the damaging effects of these constructs that inform gender. Over time, feminist theory, having incorporated the discussion on knowledge and discourse, offers awareness on the concept of language. While daily new words are developed, in particularly the English language, the words are often informed by various ideologies or shared standards. De Beauvoir (1952) and Rubin (1975) highlighted the socio, political, and economic implications that discursive language helps to perpetuate. Specifically, Rubin's tracking of the uses of language to dominate women gave light to the overall discourse on women issues. Additionally, her work calls for most women to take an introspective at how they participate in the reconstruction of knowledge and discourse through their language use as well.

The elements of critical race theory are weaved into the discourse of social constructionism. Since its inception within the legal field, this theoretical framework served to emancipate the underrepresented ethnic groups from the oppressive and divisive construction of the American justice system (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). The tenets of critical race theory promote an impending need for researchers and decision makers to recognize the systemic racial prejudices that exist in a social, political, economic, educational, etc. structure through the voices of the oppressed party and reconcile the polices or laws to create more accessibility for the party within the aforementioned structures (Crenshaw et.al., Goldberg, 1993, Omni & Winant, 1994).

In addition, the concept of the subject in Critical Race Theory offers entrée for the notion of intersubjectivity on multiple levels of consciousness. Intersubjectivity refers to the multiple subjects within this framework. The original subject was the injustice within the law, yet the intersubjective nature of this theory allows for multiple subjects including but not limited to, systems, curricula, polices, structures, and intracultural relations. In tandem, the concept of knowledge supports the notion of intersubjectivity within the Critical Race Theoretical framework. Collins (1990) discussed the significance of highlighting specifically Black women's situated knowledge for the purpose of developing an epistemological approach that does not reflect a "way of knowing" projected through a White American perspective. Her proposal for this uniquely applied epistemological approach is completely informed through an intersubjective critical race theory viewpoint. In other words, in order to capture fully this new theory of knowledge that is situated within a particular culture, a multidimensional perspective should be garnered.

After being exposed to the aforementioned theoretical frameworks, I recognized that ultimately social constructionism filters into the discussion of discourse theory. A discourse theory has impactful implications for the researcher's focus as well as the constructs the theory aims to deconstruct. It is important to note that this approach has a dual purpose. It can inform a specific research questions as well as inform a broader research theoretical framework (Bakhtin, 1981). More specifically, discourse theory provides the researcher with an opportunity to examine concepts including power, truth, knowledge, structures, freedom, and language for the purpose of revealing the topics, themes, and motivations that inform the use of language in a set of data (Butler, 1990, 1992; Foucault, 1978; Peräkylä, 2008). Discourse theory targets

constructed ways of thinking or viewpoints that are informed through other concepts like language, subjects, objects, knowledge, and truth (Foucault).

In relation to discourse theory, I was led to revisit the notion of rhizomatic thinking to provide an interrelated perspective of social constructionism. The rhizome is philosophical way of understanding the interconnectedness between thoughts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). For example, while language can operationalize a form of discourse, equally discourse informs the evolution of language. Deleuze and Guattari offered a timely submission to the concept of discourse with the rhizome theory. For instance, the authors explored the discourse of the rhizome. Recognizing the intersections and layers of ideas with respect to the rhizome indicates a discourse and social construction that is neither linear nor hierarchical in nature (Deleuze & Guattari). The theoretical frame of social constructionism is rhizomatic and multidisciplinary in nature. There is not a linear connection between theories informing this frame. Rhizomatically speaking, the entrances and exits within a social constructionist frame are intersecting and it is at the intersections where I will find the meaning Black students use to inform their understanding of being Black while attending a predominantly White institution.

Social Constructionism

To gain an appreciation for this theoretical perspective, an exploration of preceding paradigms will help to strengthen the use of a constructionist framework for this study. While social constructionism examines structures, its focus is on the processes (Burr, 2003). In particular, "The aim of social enquiry is removed from questions about the nature of people or society towards a consideration of how certain phenomena or forms of knowledge are achieved by people in interaction" (Burr, p. 9). The common thread shared between the aforementioned theoretical frames and social constructionism is that they represent what are often referred to as

'metanarratives' or grand theories. These metanarratives offer a way of making meaning for the entire social world (Burr). It is important to note that even the literature I share is constructed through a master or metanarrative.

Moreover, this theoretical framework has traditionally focused on challenging discriminatory and oppressive constructs found in areas of race, sexuality and gender, and disability (Burr, 2003). In relation to the concept of truth, "social constructionists argue that, since there can never be any objectivity defined truth about people – something which remains true regardless of the time or culture in which they live – that all claims to have discovered such truths must be regarded as political acts" (Burr, 2003, p. 153). Moreover, these acts "are attempts to validate some representations of the world and to invalidate others, and therefore to validate some forms of human life and to invalidate others" (Burr, p. 153).

Social constructionism is directly related to the concept of language as a social source for understanding how people can construct different accounts of the world and events using their collective knowledge and words (Burr, 2003). It informs the perpetuated intersubjective knowledge of the meaning of Blackness shared between most Black people. Therefore, Burr described knowledge as a collective act perceived as something that people do not do in isolation, rather as a group. The key element of a social constructionist framework highlights the notion that "all the objects of our consciousness, every 'thing' we think talk about, including our identities, our selves, is constructed through language, manufactured out of discourses" (Burr, p. 105).

Varying perspectives on the concepts of knowledge, truth, and reality help to inform the meaning behind social constructionism. For instance, sociologists Berger & Luckmann (1966) postulated that individuals and society are interrelated. In essence, "human beings continually

construct the social world, which then becomes a reality to which they must respond" (Burr, 2003, p. 185). More importantly, humans do not have the ability to construct the world as they choose. The basis for this study is informed by the social constructionist frame which clearly articulates that "at birth [humans] enter the world already constructed by their predecessors and this world assumes the status of an 'objective' reality for them and for later generations" (Burr, p. 185). This discussion is an entrée to the intersubjective nature of social constructionism.

Intersubjectivity

Qualitative research offers researchers the opportunity to advance an idea using the social and natural world to explain varying subjects and objects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This form of research can explore the interactions between the subjects and objects, the interactions within subjects and/or objects, and the influences on subjects with/without objects. The juxtaposition of subject and object gives room for the introduction of the concept of intersubjectivity on multiple levels of consciousness (Gallagher, 2008). Intersubjectivity refers to the multiple subjects within a given framework. Moreover, intersubjectivity emphasizes the shared cognition and consensus between individuals to co-construct reality (Husserl, 1969; Peräkylä, 2008).

Philosophically, intersubjectivity is introduced in the theoretical framework of social constructionism. The framework of social constructionism is the study of structures or discourse of consciousnesses that are systematically reflected in a given social construct to reveal the intentional relations between people and the world (Donohoe, 2009; Husserl, 1969). Additionally, the intentionality within the relation uncovers the meaning that informs the experiences of the people involved in the interaction (Atkinson & Delamont, 2008; Gallagher, 2008). Such reflection was initially believed to only involve the viewpoint of self, yet the constructs that inform people's consciousness are a collective of multiple perspectives, and they

are essential in the shaping of a society's ideas and relations. As a people gain new insights into a particular circumstance, they co-construct their lived reality and develop a new concept of truth and knowledge. The intersubjectivity within their relations and experiences allows researchers to engage in social constructionism to reveal the meaning and constructs that inform their shared ideologies.

What Does it Mean to be Black

In an effort to gain an understanding of how Black students make meaning of their Blackness, it is important to address the third branch of my theoretical framework, racial identity development. Racial identity development is offered as a disciplinary focused theory used in the field of student affairs to, in particular, give depth to the development of Black students. While racial identity development has its roots in the research perspectives of Erickson (1968) and Marcia (1966, 2002) describing development as a process of self-efficacy, ego identity, and psychological commitment that all adults experience throughout their lifespan, for the purpose of this study I will explore racial identity development beginning with the research agenda outlined by Cross' (1995) Black Racial Identity Development Model, also known as the Nigrescence Model. The model maintains a progressive and regressive approach to five levels of racial identity development for Black individuals. The levels include the pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization commitment developmental areas. Cross (1995) described Black individuals' racial maturation beginning with a pre-encounter stage as the timeframe that Black individuals absorb many of the beliefs and values of the dominant White culture. Furthermore, individuals are unaware of stereotype threat and its effects on their self-efficacy, and actively or passively distance themselves from other Black individuals.

Next, the encounter stage forces Black individuals to focus on their identity as members of a group targeted by racism and are usually triggered by a circumstance that force them to acknowledge the impact of racism in their lives. After that, the immersion/emersion level initially begins with the notion that "…everything of value in life must be Black or relevant to Blackness. This stage is also characterized by a tendency to denigrate White people, [while] simultaneously glorifying Black people…" (Parham, 1989, p. 190) and eventually, Black individuals' self-exploration results in an emerging security of a newly defined and affirmed sense of self.

Later, during the internalization stage, their willingness to establish meaningful relationships with Whites who acknowledge and are respectful of their self-definition increases. Finally, the internalization commitment stage, as described by Cross, means individuals have translated their personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or an overall sense of commitment to a healthy Black racial identity that transcends racial division. In essence, Black individuals at this stage are living with a more integrated sense of their racial identity.

While the stage model of identity development has informed our knowledge base of Black identity maturation, developmental theorists have discussed the importance of identity development across the life span and its implications for understanding how Black people make meaning of being Black (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001; Phinney, 1989). It has also been theorized that ethnic identity changes over the course of one's life with particular attention to the notion that identity exploration begins during childhood and concludes in adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966, 2002). In recent research, Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2001) have provide insight into the concept of racial identity development across a life span. Their approach explores the impetus for the process, adolescence, of identity exploration where one can have a

less well-developed sense of one's self. Later in a life span, adults form an identity and presumably have a clearer and more complex sense of self. Moreover, their research found that adults are more likely to report an exploration of and commitment to a sense of ethnic identity (Cross & Fhagen-Smith). It is important to recognize that as people mature, they experience changes in social and identity roles which, through their development, can lead to more complex ethnic identities over time (Cross & Fhagen-Smith).

As an intersection of the theoretical frame for this study, Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith (1998) have offered a perspective on the significance and meaning of racial identity through the dimensions of salience, centrality, private regard, and public regard, titled the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI). As described by Sellers, et.al., the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI), "provides a conceptual framework for understanding both the significance of race in the self-concepts of African Americans and the qualitative meanings they attribute to being members of that racial category. Along with this conceptual framework, we propose a mechanism by which racial identity influences individuals' situational appraisals and behaviors" (p.19).

The authors (Sellers, et.al., 1998) divided research developed over the years on ethnic identity into two frames, the mainstream and the underground perspectives. They offered that the mainstream approach to racial/ethnic identity focused on the significance of race or ethnicity for the individual and that the underground perspective emphasized the specificity of Black racial identity with a focus on providing an explanation of what it means to be Black (Sellers, et. al.). The authors also noted that the underground approach towards ethnic identity research has provided, "identity profiles regarding individuals' attitudes and beliefs associated with their membership in the Black race. These profiles may differ as a function of identity development

or exposure to a nurturing sociocultural environment" (Sellers, et.al., p. 21). In other words, the meaning of being Black for Black people incorporates experiences of racism and the historical and contemporary cultural experiences for Black people in America and Africa (Sellers, et.al.).

Using both the mainstream and underground perspectives on racial/ethnic identity, the MMRI defines racial identity as a construct that is informed by Black people as a collective and individual with a qualitative focus (Sellers, et.al.). The model is informed by four assumptions, firstly assuming,

> that identities are situationally influenced as well as being stable properties of the person. A second assumption of the MMRI is that individuals have a number of different identities and that these identities are hierarchically ordered. A third assumption of the MMRI is that individuals' perception of their racial identity is the most valid indicator of their identity. The MMRI also emphasizes the individual's perception of what it means to be Black. Finally, the MMRI is primarily concerned with the status of an individual's racial identity as opposed to its development (Sellers, et.al., p. 23-24).

There are four elements of the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity consisting of "racial salience, the centrality of the identity, the regard in which the person holds the group associated with the identity, and the ideology associated with the identity. Racial salience and centrality refer to the significance that individuals attach to race in defining themselves; while racial regard and ideology refer to the individuals' perceptions of what it means to be Black" (Sellers, et.al., 1998, p. 24). With this theoretical perspective informing the constructed and intersubjective nature of racial identity, researchers have a semi-common language to use when exploring the

meaning of Blackness for Black people. While this form of exploration can lead to a variety of necessary questions, the most notable of question really is: can we talk about race in education?

For the purpose of this study, particular attention was given to the tenets of the MMRI, including racial salience, the centrality of the identity, the regard in which the person holds the group associated with the identity, and the ideology associated with the identity (Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith, 1998). As the participants for this study shared their narratives, they expressed various aspects of their racial identity development that supported the elements of the MMRI. Later in the study, portions of their narratives directly reflected the theory and literature that helped to support the development of the MMRI.

Blackness as a Discussion

The field of education has explored the need for conversations around race and racial identity both in and out of the classroom. Through her timely writings on this topic, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum (1997; 2007), President of Spelman College in Atlanta, GA, discussed the resistance to conversations about race, the implications for such avoidance, and the regression of our educational system as an outcome.

The Tatum (1997) *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* text offers an interesting perspective on the aspects of American culture that interfere with people's ability to have progressive conversations about race and racism. She addressed a variety of contributing factors to the resistance towards conversations related to race and identity that ultimately yield unproductive identities and relationships within American society.

First, as a contributing factor to people's resistance to conversing on issues of racism, Tatum (1997) discussed how the majority of American's would rather view each other as individuals that lack skin color and perpetuate a culture of *colorblind-ness*. While the intention

is good, to not use race as the only way of categorizing people, is this society norm helpful or hurtful to Americans? If a person has a level of discomfort with labeling another person's skin color in a conversation where mentioning his skin color is warranted, due to a fear of not being politically correct, then the access to future conversation about racism and race are being missed.

Another resistor to conversations on race and racism is the cultural norm of avoiding conversations or discussions about race and racism during a person's formative years. As Tatum (1997) noted this type of behavior creates a cultural taboo around the idea of racial or ethnic identity. Her example of the mother that silences her daughter after she makes an innocent observation about a person's skin color adds real depth to this argument. Once children learn that they should not ask particular questions or make certain observations as it relates to race and racism, their voices are silenced. The child learns from her mother that it is taboo to address race and takes that level of understanding with her to adulthood where she will eventually pass this norm on to her offspring. Therefore, a community of people is carrying around various unanswered questions and the compilation of these questions can create resistance to conversations about racial identity.

Moreover, Tatum (1997) recognized that this social norm of silencing young voices lends itself to yet another question. If those silenced adults become educators, will they find it difficult to educate their students about the complexities around the concept of racial identity? This question alone is critical to understanding the difficulties Americans face when participating in conversation about race and racism.

Additionally, Tatum (1997) addressed the social construct of *the haves and the have nots*—those that have the advantage verses those that are at a disadvantage as a resistor to conversations about racial identity. It is difficult to confront the notion that you have been

afforded advantages over others. The acceptance of this concept can lead to feelings of guilt and may make the person feel like he needs to be on the defensive in conversations about privilege. On the other hand, Tatum (1997) presented a different perspective to the idea of privilege by asking, why a person who has the advantage would want to share that access with those that are at a disadvantage?

In addition, Tatum (1997) raised the point that author Audre Lorde highlighted in one of her writings. She sheds light on the idea that everyone has the capacity to oppress others. At the root of this concept is an unconscious resistor to conversations about race and identity.

In a later discussion, Tatum (2007) revisited the conversation of racial identity in *Can we talk about race?: And other conversations in a era of school resegregtion.* The first subtopic, race discussions in education, primarily is informed through the introduction in the Tatum (2007) text. She posed the necessary questions that educators and community leaders should take into consideration. The introduction of her book outlined the path that our educatoinal system has taken over time, while noting the complexities associated incorporating discussions of race into the classroom and in policy development. Tatum (2007) left the reader, particualy educators, wondering, have they allowed the evolution of the educational structure in the U.S. to truly stifle the development of all American childen? In other words, by not discussing racial issues in classroom and during policy development seminars, are educators unconsciously supporting the resegregation of American schools? These are tough question to answer.

In response, some institutions of higher education have made advancements in the area of understanding the role that racial identity development has for Black students. Instead of perpetuating a color-blind approach racial identity, some institutions have incorporated cultural differences into their student development scheme (Hamrick, Evans, Schuh, 2002; Torres,

Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). Focusing on students' level of cultural awareness and incorporating an institutional change in the racial climate rather than focusing on changing Black students will reflect a more proactive approach to student development for the institution's student population (Tatum, 2007).

Lastly, it is challenging to discuss issues of race and identity. However, the American culture cannot continue ignoring the issue or, more importantly, the outcomes that develop from this cultural norm. Tatum (1997; 2007) explained the challenges and ultimately the implications preventing Americans from having such educational and social conversations. This lack of discourse has directly affected the racial identity development of persons of all ages.

As a social construct, the lack a discussion concerning race and racial identity has perpetuated the elements of a Black master or metanarrative (Lamothe, 2008). Furthermore, through this impeding intersubjective, collective narrative derived from societal messages, Black students are having difficulty negotiating their consciousnesses in and out of the classroom (Tatum, 2007). What can be done to address this dilemma? – An exploration of new or neo collective narratives from Blacks attending PWIs concerning their perceptions of Blackness. However, we must first gain an understanding of what the literature tells us about the Black student experience at PWIs.

Black Student Experience at Predominantly White Institutions

The previous research has revealed three focal areas addressing Black student experiences at PWIs: the psychosocial development of Black students, the effects of racial identity development on Black students' achievement, and Black students' persistence at PWIs.

The dimensions of the psychosocial development predicating the Black student experience primarily incorporate the roles of self-efficacy and social interactions on their

development. Self-efficacy encompasses self-esteem and self-image as it is shaped through an individual's unique experiences within an interactive system that includes family, a primary social network of friends, and meaningful organizations (Phinney, Cantu & Kurtz, 1997). Additionally, this core self-concept, which is informed by perceptions and responses of the individual, emerges and influences an individual's performance in school and in life. If Black students have racially and ethnically strong mentors and peers who have successfully negotiated the academic environment in their educational experience, they may create a more concrete sense of self-efficacy and further develop a belief in their ability to complete certain tasks to obtain a specific outcome (Bandura, 1989; Cervantes, 1988). In other words, they depend on the network of people who are academically successful to help confirm their beliefs that they too can successfully persist (Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996; Hackett & Byars, 1996). Moreover, a social network of peers that effectively manage similar challenges offers Black students an example of coping and persistence behaviors (Rollock, Westman, & Johnson, 1992). Particularly for Black students, their college experiences can reinforce the desirable socialization, development, and self-concept formation that begins at home, or it can have an adverse effect on it (Cokley, 2007; Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine & Broadnax, 1994).

The expansion of social interactions for Black students has a dual perspective. The health of such relationships for this population includes their racial identity developmental level and psychosocial development (Cokley, 2001). For instance, Taub and McEwen (1992) reported after studying Black and White women's racial identity and psychosocial development, Black women's level of intimacy with interpersonal relationships correlated directly to their racial identity level. Moreover, Pope's (2000) recent study of Black, Asian, and Latino traditional college-aged students revealed that students of color showed psychosocial maturation related

closely to their racial identity formation. Additionally, in relation to psychosocial development of Blacks, Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, and Thomas (1999) constructed a descriptive model from their research that identifies four areas of Black student social adjustment to PWIs. They included how: Black students were experiencing a sense of feeling underrepresented, direct perceptions of racism, difficulty of approaching faculty, and ultimately, the effects of faculty engagement. In general, racial identity is a fundamental part of student development for Black students (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine & Broadnax, 1994). In essence, a Black student must have healthy perspective of his/her racial identity to find growth in his/her academic success and personal development (Cokley). With a positive racial identity, Black students are more likely to persist through their higher education experience (Tatum, 2007).

In addition, the literature reflects similar viewpoints pertaining to the success of Black students attending PWIs. Researchers have linked Black students' level of satisfaction and engagement with the institution to their racial identity development, in contrast to their White counterparts' disconnection between their White racial identity with their satisfaction and engagement with the institution and the faculty (Grantham & Ford, 2003; Harper & Quaye, 2009). Furthermore, when Black students have participated in the educational process at PWIs, they have experienced disengagement from the educational enterprise because their perspectives were not an active or visible part of the enacted mission of the institution (Easley, 1993). Most importantly, Black students traditionally incorporate their cultural values and beliefs into their educational experiences (Tatum, 2007). It has been noted far too often that Black students who attend PWIs are accused of self-segregating (Stewart, Russell, & Wright, 1997). Moreover, research suggested that Black students' assured perception of the institution's environment was attributed to the students' sense of connectedness, social support network, and self-confidence

(Gloria, Kurpius, Hamilton, & Willson, 1999). Therefore, when Black students enter a PWI which they perceive to have an invalidating and hostile environment, some Black students resort to their social values and seek out other Black students to create allies amidst opposition (Fleming, 1984).

Ultimately, if Black students are feeling alienated, marginalized, and isolated from the overall environment at PWIs, institutions should expect that they would find it necessary to establish their own social networks (Allen, 1992; Duncan & Pryzwansky, 1993). Often, the experiences of Black students attending PWIs undergird the institution's ambivalence toward their educational and cultural needs. Their participation or membership within such networks provides them with the support they require to feel successful in a PWI environment (Nagasawa & Wong, 1999; Willie & McCord, 1972).

There are several theories related to Black student trends in satisfaction and persistence trends in PWI environments. Hauser (1993) has attributed the decline of Black student college participation rates to changes in high-school completion and college aspirations and goals. Tinto (1993) speculated that Black students experienced a different elementary and secondary educational experience which preferred a White student level of achievement may have contributed to the unfavorable persistence statics for Black students. Other researchers contend that the trends in Black student persistence could be attributed to the composition of federal financial aid packets and financial patterns presented by Black families in relation to financing their educations (Hu & St. John, 2001; Mortenson & Wu, 1990; St. John, Cabrera, Nora, & Asker, 2000). Conversely, other researchers have argued that the differences in persistence rates between Black students and White students were primarily due to their differences in academic preparedness instead of their differences in socioeconomic backgrounds (Tinto, 1993).

One of the most challenging areas for PWIs is meeting the needs of its Black student population: specifically, developing racial identity, addressing cultural affiliations, developing cultural awareness and appreciation both within and between groups, increasing sense of citizenship, developing interdependence, managing mature interpersonal relationships with other cultures, and navigating academic life (Harper & Quaye, 2009; Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). Lack of attention to the cultural challenges of Black students at PWIs will lead to problems of persistence and overall satisfaction with their college experience (Grantham & Ford, 2003). As more institutions recognize the benefits of including racial and cultural identity models in the process and application of student development to better address the needs of Black students, this practice will expand higher education's understanding of new student populations and enhance student affairs' ability to exercise leadership in developing a more culturally appreciative and aware educational community (Harper & Quaye).

Having gained this constructed perspective or metanarrative of the Black student experience at PWIs, this study will use narrative inquiry to inform our knowledge base of this population with students' own stories, forming neo collective narrative of Blackness for the participating students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,--
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be overwise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!

Paul Lawrence Dunbar, 1896

Qualitative Research

The field of qualitative research is multidimensional and quite complex. Denzin and Lincoln (2008), defined qualitative research as, "… a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world" (p. 4). In addition, they outlined the prominent eight historical movements with apparent overlapping for the field labeled as traditional (1900-1950); the modernist (1986-1990); blurred genres (1970-1986); the crisis of representation (1986-1990); postmodern (1990-1995); postexperimental inquiry (1995-2000); methodologically contested

present (2000-2004); and fractured future (2005). Each period has its own historical perspective and political influences.

On the other hand, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) conceded that there is not an essential definition of qualitative research without an analysis of the circumstances that have informed the very definition it sought to operationalize. While their definition attempted to provide a lens to view qualitative research, they later reveal the multidimensional and involved elements of the field. The authors have chronicled the development this type of research while attending to the ontological, epistemological, and methodological shifts through various paradigms such as positivism, interpretivism, emancipatory, deconstructionism, and postdeconstructionism.

Ultimately, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) presented an entrée to qualitative research and the multiple theoretical perspectives that seek to help the researcher gain better insight into particular phenomena. Qualitative research as a field is just as diverse as the research agendas that use its elements to reveal new understandings and advance modern knowledge.

Research Design

The methodological frame for this study is informed through narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry "can be characterized as an amalgam of interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods—all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them" (Chase, 2008, p. 58). A narrative can be categorized as "…(a) a short topical story about a particular event and specific characters such as an encounter with a friend, boss, or doctor; (b) an extended story about a significant aspect of one's life such as schooling, work, marriage, divorce, childbirth, an illness, a trauma, or participation in a war or social movement; or (c) a narrative of one's entire life, from birth to the present" (Chase, p. 59). It is important to recognize that

“Narrative research is retrospective meaning making—the shaping or ordering of past experiences. Narrative is a way of understanding one’s own and other’s actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, and of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time” (Chase, p. 64).

Bruner (1991) asserted that there are ten characteristics of a cultural narrative which are filtered through the mind’s structured sense of reality using "cultural products, like language and other symbolic systems describe narrative and the reality constructed and posited by narrative, which in turn teaches us about the nature of reality as constructed by the human mind via narrative” (p. 3). A narrative as defined by Brunner includes:

1. Narrative diachronicity: The notion that narratives take place over time.
2. Particularity: Narrative takes as their imitative reference particular happenings. The idea that narratives deal with particular events, although some events may be left vague and general.
3. Intentional state entailment: The concept that characters within a narrative have "beliefs, desires, theories, values, and so on" (p. 7) that are relevant to their intentional states. Narratives are about people acting in a situation.
4. Hermeneutic composability: The theory that narratives are that which can be interpreted in the “telling of a story and its comprehension as a story depends on the human capacity to process knowledge in this interpretive way” (p. 8).
5. Canonicity and breach: The claim that stories are about something unusual happening that breaches the normal state. In the recounting of a story and narrative, there are some deviations from the canonical.

6. Referentiality: The principle that a story in some way references reality, although not in a direct way; narrative truth can offer the appearance of truth but may not be verifiable.
7. Genericness: In tandem, writer and reader narrate themselves in stories as well as the ones they hear others tell. The flip side to particularity, this is the characteristic of narrative whereby the story can be classified as a genre.
8. Normativeness: The narrative in some way supposes a claim about how one ought to act. This follows from canonicity and breach.
9. Context sensitivity and negotiability: Related to hermeneutic composability, whereas people digest narrative into their own terms because the story teller's objectives are taken into account in terms of our own background knowledge.
10. Narrative accrual: The notion that stories are cumulative, that is, stories build upon the stories previously told.

There are a couple of assumptions to consider when using narrative inquiry, (a) narratives can be considered as verbal action—as doing something, (b) narratives are constrained by social capital and circumstances, (c) narratives are socially situated—presenting aspects of performativity (Chase, 2008). In essence, a narrative researcher should "…go about the business of hearing, collecting, interpreting, and representing narratives, they are well aware of the interconnectedness of the lenses" (Chase, p. 66). This methodological frame allowed the researcher the opportunity to take the participants' life stories, using their biographical narratives as a form of bounding the stories and as a method of separating the participants from their limited perspective on their racial identity, to reach the goal of reconnecting the narratives and their identity through the stories (Riessman, 2008).

Ultimately, to understand the participants' meaning-making, this study used narrative inquiry methodology. Narrative inquiry allows the researcher to collect stories as data to understand the holistic human experience (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). Lieblich et. al., (1998) noted that in particular stories related to identity are "told, revised, and retold throughout life. We know or discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others, by the stories we tell" (p. 7). Stories offer revealing lens into an individual's internal self (Riessman, 2008).

Sampling

This study incorporated a sample of ten individuals who self-identify as being a part of the African Diaspora, including but not limited to students from Caribbean, Afro-Latin, African American, Afro-American, and/or African decent (University of Georgia, African American Cultural Center, September 2008). The selection of participants for the study was convenient and purposeful. Purposeful sampling is a form of sampling used in qualitative research to help gain a more complete picture of what the researcher is intending to study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Convenient purposeful sampling is the most conducive to identifying participants based on specific criteria (Mertens, 1998). Participant criteria focused on currently enrolled students with 90 or more credit hours identifying with the Black Diaspora. The researcher utilized a convenient purposeful sampling procedure by contacting students meeting the research criteria enrolled at a particular Southeastern, land-grant, research institution. Any Black student who was willing to participate in the interview sessions and artifact exploration process was asked to complete an informed consent letter officially confirming his/her participation in the study.

Participants indentifying as Black students with 90 or more credit hours currently enrolled at a particular Southeastern, land-grant, research institution were recruited through

gatekeepers within the Department of University Housing and through the Department of Intercultural Affairs at this institution.

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of gathering the narratives or stories of the participants through an initial semi-structured interview and an artifact exploration process, with the option of a follow-up interview in order to gain an understanding of the common themes among their individual narratives.

The process began by contacting specific students that were enrolled at a particular Southeastern, land-grant, research institution through gatekeepers within the Department of University Housing and the Department of Intercultural Affairs. The identified participants received an email requesting their participation in the study. Within one week of the initial email, the researcher followed-up with the participants via electronic email communication to arrange an interview date. Students who expressed interest in contributing to the study were asked to complete an informed consent letter to confirm their official participation. The researcher collected data from a sample of ten students based on their level of interest in the study and availability.

Individual 90 minute interviews were held with the participants addressing a list of open-ended questions that guided the process, while collecting observational data during the interview session. During the initial session, standard confidentiality procedures were employed in the collection and analysis of the data. Specifically, the researcher used pseudonyms as identifiers for the participants and informed the participants that the interviews would be transcribed. Forms completed by students who did not participate in the interviews were destroyed upon completion of the final interview.

The researcher employed an interview protocol of open-ended questions to guide the process (Appendix A). The primary purpose of the interview protocol is to ensure that the same topics are addressed in all of the interviews (Mertens, 1998). Because of this aspect, it is important to note that the interview protocol will serve only as a guide. The researcher had the liberty to deviate from the protocol questions in an effort to follow-up or probe for clarification, while gaining a full understanding of the student's experiences (Maxwell, 2005).

Prior to the initial interview, the participants were asked to bring with them any images, symbols, and/or artifacts that would help them tell their narrative of what it means to be Black for them. Norman (2008) noted that "artifacts become data through the questions posed about them and the meanings assigned to them by the researcher" (p. 23). In addition, "artifacts are a unique source of data that often are right in front of us. They shed light on important aspects of a person, society, or culture enriching any study" (Norman, p. 25). The participants were instructed to avoid providing pictures of people's faces, including their own face, as a means of preserving the confidentiality of others. During the interview, the researcher requested of the participant to create digital files of the images, symbols, and/or artifacts. It is important to note that "artifacts can provide historical, demographic, and (sometimes) personal information about a culture, society, or people. Insights into how people lived, what they valued & believed, their ideas and assumptions, and their knowledge and opinions are revealed in artifacts" (Norman, p. 25).

If needed, the researcher reserved the opportunity to communicate via electronic email with the participants to arrange a thirty minute follow-up interview to address any additional researcher questions. The interview sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. All digital files, including recordings and digital files, and notes taken during the process to inform

the research were maintained under the Institutional Review Board policy for a particular Southeastern, land-grant research institution. Lastly, a final electronic email was sent to the participants thanking them for their participation in the study. In sum, this data collection process offered the researcher a multiperspective approach to the gaining the narratives of Black students' understanding of their racial and cultural identity while attending a PWI.

Data Analysis

Data analysis procedures consisted of different coding techniques in order to gain an understanding of the common themes among the participants through interview transcripts and photographs (Creswell, 2008). Maxwell (2005) articulated steps for qualitative data analysis. This study incorporated two analytical lenses from which to view the data including, discourse theory and the application of the constant comparative method. Each analytic form enhanced the researchers overall interpretations of the linkages between the individual narratives to ultimately gain insight into the participants' neo collective narrative of the concept of Blackness for these students while attending a PWI.

In an effort to interpret meaning making through linkages between the participants' narratives, the researcher must recognize that the participants' stories are situated in an intersubjective world and the implications for this situated knowledge in the overall discourse (Burr, 2003; Foucault, 1978). A form of discursive analysis was used to enhance the researcher's understating of commonalities between narratives and interpret the neo collective voice between participants. Discourse theory provides the researcher with an opportunity to examine language for the purpose of revealing the topics, themes, and motivations that inform the use of language in a set of data (Peräkylä, 2008). It is important to note that this approach has a dual purpose. It can inform a specific research questions as well as inform a broader

research theoretical framework (Bakhtin, 1981). This analytic form for the study included viewing the narratives through a socially constructed intersubjective lens. In other words, as the researcher looks through the socially constructed lenses (discourse) using the participants' stories to see how they are negotiating and renegotiating their conceptualization of truth, knowledge, subject in the larger intersubjective story (neo-master narrative) (Burr, 2003). Analytically, intersubjectivity incorporates the multiple voices and perspectives of the subjects and/or objects for the study (Donohoe, 2009; Peräkylä, 2008). In particular, this analytic form is found in most forms of analysis in qualitative research; for instance, it has utility in discourse analysis, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, performativity, critical theory analysis, and the list continues.

To operationalize the concept of discourse, it is a constructed way of thinking or viewpoints that are informed through other concepts like language, subjects, objects, knowledge, and truth (Foucault, 1978). A discursive analysis lends itself to research questions that are concerned with the constructs of language, truth, knowledge, etc. and how these constructs are manifested in viewpoints held by people or structures.

Discursive formation (Foucault, 1978) and the methodological approach of discourse analysis have great utility in qualitative research. Discourse analysis is viable means for gathering topical and thematic connections to the larger constructs within a structure. It systematically highlights the fragments like language, truth, and knowledge within a constructs and seeks to continuously analyze those fragments with the goal of deconstructing the overall structure or discourse. Discourse analysis can at least offer another perspective to help organizations or institutions of thought to take into consideration the impact of their decisions on the subjects or objects involved in the process. Additionally, discourse analysis provides the

researcher with an opportunity to examine language in search of the topics, themes, and motivations that inform the use of that language in a set structure (Foucault, 1978; Peräkylä, 2008). Discourse theory targets constructed ways of thinking or viewpoints that are informed through other concepts like language, subjects, objects, knowledge, and truth (Foucault).

In particular, Butler (1990, 1992) employed discourse theory in her work on the deconstruction of gender in American society through the concepts of language and truth. For example, she used the detailed method of reviewing ethnographic data to explore how language was used to construct meaning for the participants within the study. Later, she was able to connect her data to themes that revealed the powerful nature of language to create ideologies on human behavior, inform bases of knowledge, and ultimately promote messages of truth for a society around the construct of gender. Butler's use of a discursive theoretical framework had strong implications for the discourse of gender in America. The duality of this approach related to its analytic use and its theoretical modeling has meaningful implications for this qualitative research agendas.

Additionally, artifact analysis can inform qualitative and ethnographic research. Artifacts represent any object or subject that individuals use or produce. The researcher collected artifacts produced or used by members of the group, identified how these artifacts function for the individual and the group, and explored how members talk about and name these artifacts. Some artifacts, such as photographs, are examined for links to other events or artifacts (Norman, 2008). This form of analysis builds on the understanding that the past and future are present constructs in these artifacts and that intertextual links between and among the constructs (Norman). Artifacts or materials constructed, the patterned ways in which the texts are

constructed, and how the choices of focus or discourse influence the views that members have of self and others as well as what is possible in their worlds.

Next, the analysis focused on utilizing the constant comparative method derived from the tenets for grounded theory development as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987). Since this study sought to understand the neo collective narrative of Blackness for these participants, the content within the individual narratives was compared among narratives, consistent with the categorical content approach to narrative data analysis. This process is most closely related to the constant comparative analysis method. These procedures associated with the constant comparative method are grounded in the recursive nature of qualitative methods and include the development of common themes from the data (Creswell, 2008; Maxwell, 2005). After interviewing the participants, the researcher analyzed data for these commonalities, differences, patterns, and themes. This comparison of data to data analysis allowed for continual co-construction of knowledge around the emerging themes.

The data was coded using an independent content analysis that focused on identifiers, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data (Maxwell, 2005). A three-stage approach found in the constant comparative method was employed (a) open coding to name and categorize phenomena, (b) axial coding to make connections between phenomena, and (c) selective coding to identify a main category and relate the subcategories and/or other main categories to it (Mertens, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). This coding method allowed the researcher to outline the, "…respective properties through comparing data with data of the same kind of experience or event" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 61).

Once the independent content analysis was complete, the researcher examined the data for congruence and incongruence through a reiterative process similar to the independent content

analysis. Upon completing the data analysis, the researcher should able to identify themes to help her make meaning of the participants' narratives (Appendix B).

Ultimately, conducting interviews, incorporating the participants' artifacts, and peer review contributed to the triangulation of the data analysis to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings (Maxwell, 2005). The use of the peer review method, combining the researcher and advising professor, to both independently and collectively review the findings helped to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell, 2008). The use of these processes aided in the triangulation of the analytic forms outlined for this study while strengthening the trustworthiness and reliability of the overall data analysis (Maxwell, 2005).

Limitations of Study

The analysis of this study is bound by two primary limitations. Firstly, the findings from this study were based the life experiences of self-identified junior and seniors on the college level. According to the psychosocial developmental vectors of Chickering and Reisser's research (1993), persons at later stages in life have a better appreciation for their sense of purpose and identity. Therefore, the findings from this study were limited to the clearer perspectives of these older college aged students and lacked the perspectives of younger college aged students. This limitation may affect the external validity of the study (Maxwell, 2005; Mertens, 1998). In addition, the researcher considered the role that extraneous variables may have played in the data collected for this study. These variables included, but are not limited to socioeconomic levels, backgrounds, life experiences, and familial influences. Some researchers may posit that this limitation could threaten the internal validity of the study due to the stratified life experiences affecting the participants within this study (Creswell, 2007).

Researcher Positionality

As the researcher embarks on gathering data to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the participants, the researcher must address the concept of the researcher as the instrument (Schuh, 2009). In addition, the researcher serves as the main source for data collection and analysis (Maxwell, 2005). These hallmarks for the qualitative research process provide a unique set of advantages and disadvantage for this particular research design. It is imperative that qualitative researchers recognize and label their own subjectivity to reduce the amount of researcher bias within the research design (Maxwell, 2005; Peshkin, 1988).

Particularly, my subjectivity is shaped through my personal and professional exposure related to the research topic dealing with the stories of Black students attending PWIs that incorporates the extent to which these students make sense of their racial identity throughout their college experiences.

> "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you *not* to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others." (Williamson, 1992, p. 190-191)

Identity development is informed through all aspects of our lives. This quote serves as the inspiration for my own identity development. It informs how I view the multiple aspects of my identity, including my role in my family, my spiritual journey, ethnic group membership, professional and educational pursuits, and my role in my friendships. More specifically pertaining to my subjectivity, I would like to address the elements of my positionality that have informed my racial identity development.

The notion of race should be recognized as a social construct, rather than an empirically proven ideology. However, many Americans view race as an informative descriptor of the behaviors, beliefs, and values of various cultural or ethnic groups. This interpretation of race has hurt the evolution of American society. The racial divide that still plagues the South, serves as the primary exemplar of the aforementioned concept. Since I have spent my entire life in the region, I can attest to how Southerners feel a need to define a person by his/her race before they can begin interacting effectively, whether resulting in a positive or negative outcome, with the individual. While employing this level of division, people are using their preconceived notions and stereotypes to guide their involvement with others. Once I understood how regularly Southerners used this way of reasoning, I began to explore my own racial identity development and tried to determine my perspective on this topic.

In a timeless quote, W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) explained the past struggles of my ancestors, while addressing the present-day obstacles that I face as I negotiate my place in the American society by noting that

> "One ever feels his two-ness,--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."… "This history of the American

> Negro is the history of this strife,--this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better truer self" (p.3).

Du Bois' (1903) message reigns true over my life experiences as a Black woman. I often feel the pressures of balancing a dual consciousness. Despite this challenge, I have maintained a belief that was instilled in me by my father and is best described by Du Bois, when he notes the aspirational focus for a Black individual "…to merge his double self into a better and truer self" (p. 4). Moreover, Du Bois explains, "He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face" (p. 4). Throughout my own development, I have chosen to incorporate a better understanding of my own cultural community, while gaining an appreciation for the contributions and difficulties faced by other cultural or ethnic groups. There have been a variety of events, individuals, and messages that have helped to shape my Black identity development and my philosophy on ethnic group relations in America.

The events in my life that have informed my Black identity development directly correspond with Cross' (1995) Black Racial Identity Development Model, also known as, the Nigrescence Model. My journey began with my introduction to primary school; I attended a predominantly White school and I was one of very few faces of color. I was actively participating in Cross' pre-encounter stage, whereas I recognized that I did not have the same skin color as my classmates because I gave my parents a yearly update of the number of Black individuals that were in my class, but I stilled viewed everyone a simply human beings.

Once I reached the age of 11 years old, I had developed an interested in Black authors, television shows with all Black casts, music that was performed by Black musicians, and documentaries and/or films that discussed people of the African Diaspora. During that time, I

learned about slavery and oppression. These topics upset me greatly; I entered Cross' encounter stage and merged into the emersion/immersion stage.

Eventually transitioned a predominantly Black middle school, where I was teased for sounding, behaving, and dressing differently from the rest of the population. I reentered the encounter and emersion/immersion stages because my Blackness was being tested and questioned. Once I discovered my niche for class leadership and explored leadership roles within the classroom and within the school system, I gained a newfound appreciation for abilities and skills and rejected previous criticism related to my Blackness. I entered Cross' internalization stage once I accepted myself, celebrated the differences within my own ethnic group, and recognized the contributions of other ethnic groups.

Additionally, I exercised my awareness of larger society when I intentionally made the decision to attend a large, public, predominantly White institution; I wanted to participate in an educational environment that resembled American society. My goal was to interact with and learn from persons who were different from me because I saw the benefit in gaining this life skill. My migration onto Cross' final stage, internalization commitment, became apparent during my undergraduate experiences as a resident assistant in the residence halls. I appreciated those persons that were different from me, while advocating for advancement of all of my residents.

The societal events that helped to shape my Black identity development remain very clear in my mind. There are three primary events. I recall watching ice skater, Debbie Thomas compete in the 1988 Olympic games. I was extremely proud to watch, not just a Black individual but, a woman achieve a bronze medal in the Winter Games' singles ice skating competition. In addition, I remember watching the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and becoming emotionally attached to his life story. Viewing people of all colors rejoicing in his

celebration of freedom made me very happy. The last societal event that has affected me was the 2008 Presidential Election Day. I was so overjoyed to see America live out its promise of equality for all men.

Throughout my life, there have been individuals that have informed my understanding of my Black identity development. My great-grand mothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles and parents have served as shining examples of Black success for women, men and familial relations. They have taught me how to value myself, my Blackness, others, while acknowledging how I can serve the greater good with in society. I have a strong admiration for great and transcendent thinkers like Fredrick Douglas, W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, A. Phillip Randolph, Mary McLeod Bethune, Shirley Chisholm, and Dorothy Height. They have all influenced me and I truly appreciate their contributions to American society. Moreover, they have helped my write my narrative of Blackness.

The connections between my experiences and research interest have been influenced over a lifespan with a particular attention to my experiences at a PWI, attending undergraduate and graduate school as a Black woman. I have a particular lens that I use to view the educational experiences for a Black student participating in that type of learning environment. Moreover, during my college experience, I saw other Black students either graduate from or leave the institution. Over the years, I have collected a variety of assumptions related to Black student persistence within PWIs due to my direct exposure during my educational experiences. From a professional aspect, my subjectivity is shaped by my engagement with Black students in a previous administrative position at a PWI. Specifically related to the institution, the Black students were retained at a higher rate than other comparative institutions. That experience adds another layer to my assumptions about Black student persistence within PWIs.

As a qualitative researcher, I have identified my own subjectivity. I know that my biases have helped to inform my research interests. However, my biases can become a limitation of my research. By addressing my subjectivity and how it can potentially influence my research methods, I have made my biases transparent to the reader and, ultimately, reduced its influence on my research (Maxwell, 2005).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH UNDERSTANDINGS

Lift every voice and sing,
till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the
dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
let us march on till victory is won.

James Weldon Johnson, 1920, stanza 1

This chapter serves as a representation of research understandings in the form of a performative prose presentation. Acknowledging that previous research exists concerning the racial identity development of Black student within various environments, the perceptions of Black current students participating in a predominantly White institution (PWI) environment on their racial development may have adjusted over time. As students evolve, it becomes increasingly important for student affairs professionals to gain a better awareness of current students' understanding of their racial identity through the students' stories. The theoretical framework for this study incorporated the intersection of social constructionism and intersubjectivity with an underlying awareness of the racial identity stages outlined in Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's (1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial

Identity. This study addressed the exploratory question: how are Black students making sense of their racial identity development within a PWI?

The understandings from this study have been organized into a play. After conducting the data analysis, the individual narratives have become one collective narrative. The performative presentation outlined in this chapter will help to facilitate the validity of the individual narratives, while attending to the research design of revealing collective themes from the participants' stories. The play is based on the discursive theory of performativity. Offering a pragmatic base for her work, Judith Butler (1988, 1999) theorized performativity as a concept that explores how something (object) comes to being. In other words, the theory postulates that identities are informed by various discoursive frameworks. The performativity (what is being done) that a person offers it then becomes a performance (what they do) (Butler, 1999; Diamond, 1996). There is a dramatic performative utterance that takes place in the face-to-face interactions (as the subject) of people that provides the researcher with a sense of understanding (Austin, 1962; Goffman, 1959). Ultimately, through the person's use of language, they are actually doing; that is where a researcher will find the performance.

This performance piece is formatted similarly to the play titled *The Colored Museum*, which was directed and written by George Wolfe (1985). *The Colored Museum* is a satirical comedy exaggerating images of black life. Moreover, it satirizes the black experience in America in the 1980's and was considered controversial during that time. *The Colored Museum* articulates the stereotypes of blacks by presenting eleven vignettes or museum exhibits. The exhibits include: Git on Board, Cookin' with Aunt Ethel, The Photo Session, A Soldier with a Secret, The Gospel According to Miss Roj, The Hairpiece, The Last Mama-on the- Couch Play, Symbiosis, Lala's Opening, Permutations and The Party. Using the strong satirical nature of *The*

Colored Museum, I have chosen to write the understandings from this study in the same format with vignettes (exhibits), using the themes as titles to the vignettes. For this study the play titled, *The Cognition of Intersubjectivity: Neo Collective Narratives for Black Students at a Predominantly White Institution* by Candace Maddox has eight vignettes that are narrated by the researcher employing the thematic interpretations from the narratives. Additionally, the narration includes the researcher's discussion about the interpretations from the study. The vignettes use the participants' voices to tell the story, while offering a satirical tone to demonstrate some of the underlying meanings revealed in the data analysis.

Drawing on discourse analysis and the recursive nature of the constant comparative method, the data gleaned eight themes that help to describe the collective story of the 10 participants through their neo collective narrative of Blackness layered with their college experience at a PWI. These themes are labeled: family ties, ancestry, social construction, Blackness, navigating multiple identities, developing own racial identity, socialization, and regeneration. The themes serve as vignettes within this play. Moreover, the participants' voices led to the development of a play using their words to inform the script. The various lines for the students in the play were pulled directly from the transcripts for the research study. As a note, the bracketed portions of the play script serve as transitions in the participants' narratives to maintain a logical flow for the progression of each collective narrative. They also serve as a method for protecting the identity of the sample and the institution used in the research study.

The participants' narratives are organized into themes that have informed the outline for the play. The derived themes and collected artifacts are organized in direct response to the research questions for the study.

The Play: ***The Cognition of Intersubjectivity: Neo Collective Narratives for Black Students at a Predominantly White Institution***

Candace Maddox presents, *The Cognition of Intersubjectivity: Neo Collective Narratives for Black Students at a Predominantly White Institution*. The characters in this play are the participants from the study (see Appendix C). Additionally, the researcher voice is presented as both the narrator and the part of Candace. In those parts, the researcher provides the interpretative voice for the study and ultimately the play. The interpretations include the collective thematic elements of the research with connections to literature as support for the neo collective narratives of the participants.

Director's note: The parentheses detail the characters' directions and some scene directions.

Research Question 1: What informs Black students' understanding of their identity?

Vignette 1: Family Ties

Narrator: During the individual narratives, the participants expressed how frequently their family, guardians, and mentors influenced their perspectives on the concept of Blackness. They spoke of family gatherings, meals, and reunions as examples of their strong familial connections. During these gatherings, the participants mentioned that their family members would discuss family stories that have impacted their familial view on Blackness or teach the participants lessons about how to navigate life as a Black person through folk stories and/or societal instances that have informed the need for a lesson. The participants' accounts of family influences on their understanding of Blackness are consistent with the literature. Previous research suggests that Black students rely on their family structures, including parents, grandparents, mentors, cousins, siblings, aunts, uncles, and family friends as a source of support, copying and support for the development of their self efficacy. The dimensions of the psychosocial development predicating

the Black student experience primarily incorporate the roles of self-efficacy and social interactions on their development. Self-efficacy encompasses self-esteem and self-image as it is shaped through an individual's unique experiences within an interactive system that includes family, a primary social network of friends, and meaningful organizations (Phinney, Cantu & Kurtz, 1997). Additionally, this core self-concept, which is informed by perceptions and responses of the individual, emerges and influences an individual's performance in school and in life.

This vignette covers some pictures of the artifacts and an interpretive discussion had between participants concerning their stories on how family values and influences have informed their understanding of being Black. Some of the artifacts used are directly associated with the characters presented in this vignette, while other artifacts are included in this vignette for artistic value. The vignette features the narratives of five participants, Alana, Gina, Kalel, Jordan, and Deanna, with the researcher as Candace.

Scene: A group of six Black students are gathered the lobby of their campus residence hall. Some are sitting on a couple of chairs and the couch, some are on the floor in front of the couch and others are standing surrounding the group. On the set are framed pictures along the walls. At points during the vignette, the pictures will be illuminated with a special light behind the picture. There are pictures around the group on stage. The stage lights come up and they began their discussion…

Candace: (stands with the students opening in a conversational one) You guys know that I graduated from this school twice and now I'm back for my third and final degree. I've always been one of few Black students in class, at events, in the dining hall, in the dorms…it's always been a different experience. I'm curious, since I'm in grad school, I'm not really in touch with

what's going on with Black students on the undergraduate level. I'm curious about how Black students are making meaning of their racial identity. More specifically, how did you learn about being Black? How have others in your life shaped your understanding of being Black?

Gina: (the picture of food on the wall is illuminated)

Food in my family represents a time of getting together and celebrating random things. One of the things that I actually miss about being home is that we actually have family gatherings once a month. The whole family gets together…and it is like 40 people that are there…, and we have a big feast so that is a cultural family thing within my family. I am more family-oriented so I like to see the family all together, and they are filled with memories. We sit around and talk about different stories like "remember when such and such happened" things like that and that is always fun. [We discuss things like] women issues and things like that. Going home for Thanksgiving is one of the times I actually see my family within that first semester in fall semester. I don't really see them often until Thanksgiving so we talk about things like "how is school going," different things in school and different things that may be my transitioning stage like right now as I am transitioning into life after graduation, so we talk about things like that and things that have happened since I have been in school—it is always good to catch up on things like that, like additional family members and we have conversations from one end of the spectrum to the next… having your family around, for dinners and things like that, it brings me to connect with my family because being away for periods of time you don't get to connect with them. Having them back around is connecting and it is almost hard to leave again; there is tears

Figure 1: Artifact A, Picture representing food from participant named Gina. She shared that many of her family messages about race stemmed from her conversations with family over meals.

shed almost every time it's time for me to leave again but it's like "I have to do this and I will be back" it is not pausing it but its holding on to that last moment until you return so it is refreshing and it is one of those things I look forward to.

Alana: (the picture of a crocheted blanket is illuminated)

[I agree!] My aunt taught me how to crochet, so in my family dynamic it's been three women who have been the council of my family so, it's my mom, my aunt, and my grandmother, so each of them have their own influence on me and my aunt taught me how to crochet. When I think of that, I think of traditions being taught down things like crocheting, cooking, our faith, things have just been through the council down to us as kids and my cousins so, this is one thing I think really stood out. I would have brought my Bible because I think that transferred down. I don't know how to sew, but people do know how to sew in my family so I think that is a big part—passing down different traditions and customs so crocheting is one of them. With my aunt, she used to just make them a lot and she used to sew because I used to live with my grandmother and my aunt so she would sew and I always wanted to learn it because it looked cool so she taught me how to do it or she would start off with a blanket and I would finish it off…[The women's council] They basically raised me we call it a generational curse of a no-fathers thing. My grandmother had three kids and their father wasn't exactly present in his life, my aunt has a son who is a big brother to me because we all kind of lived together, his father wasn't as present and so my father is not as present so it is just us to kind of like fend for ourselves. That is the experience when I think "you have to meet these people in my life" those are the main people you would meet or

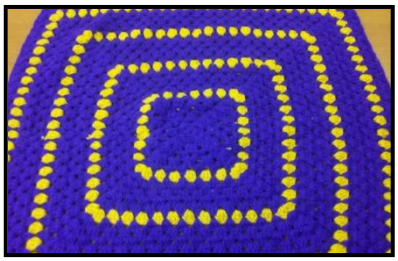

Figure 2: Artifact B, Picture of a crocheted blanket, a skill set she learned from her grandmother from participant named Alana. She recounted that this artifact represented the act of passing down traditions through generations.

you will hear me talk about my aunt was the one who gave me the sex talk, my grandmother is the one I modeled certain things of my life…[and] I learned about that culture, my aunt writes poetry so I kind of took on writing poetry. Certain things I do in my life were influenced by what they have done. I think it is the values that I have now I tailor it to not just being a woman but being a Black person so the importance of traditions and things that are passed down there is just certain things like the old-wives tales for New Year's like don't wash your hair on New Year's day; you got to cook collard greens, you got to cook black eyed peas, you can't have dirty clothes in the house. That is just the things that we do and it is a part of Black culture because then you talk to friends and that is stuff that they do. It is just the passing of traditions, the importance of family the things that we have gone through we would never leave each other. Often times my mother would say "your family is all you have or your siblings are all you have even if you can't go to your friends." That is something they always instilled in me and I think what has made the Black family stronger is because they kind of feel like "this is all you have and you cherish them" and the strong mother. I think my grandmother is a strong person and my aunt is a strong mother and my mom is a strong person so you always see images of the Black strong women but I think it is evident not in the stereotypical way but in a positive way of my mom and those other people are. [I would also add that] going to church every Sunday or being involved within the church. I remember my mom used to work at night so it was my grandmother or my aunt who would take me to church, or I would go to my grandmother's church while my mom wasn't there. So, just the importance of family going to church together or praying for one another if one person can't be in the present there. I think that is something I hope to hold firm to, that my faith is pretty big and how I navigate as a person and how I lead my life.

Jordan: [While I identify as Black, my ideal Census box would say Jamaican American. We have some similarities; however, there are some distinct differences.] I have so many stories because my family is crazy…[For instance,] I think I've been to an American type of funeral before but I had never been to a Jamaican type of funeral—Jamaican type of funeral is not your typical let's have a wake and a funeral and that's it it's a weekend, everybody comes from the community there is food everywhere, there is liquor everywhere, and people that you may not even know that well will come in and celebrate since the communities are so small. I didn't understand what was going on but I was just like "this is where I am supposed to be right now," and I think that was when I was like "I love being Jamaican I love my family and I love everything about them." Even in that moment I was able to see my family for who they were and really feel that love for them maybe because it was a funeral weekend, but I really loved that about my culture and now I can picture a funeral without lots of food. I think about food every time somebody passes away which probably isn't normal but I think that is definitely something that came as a result of seeing culture in action and not just hearing about it but being in the environment at that time. [A difference is] my parents never felt like they had to be like "this is the Jamaican way to do it" it's just how I was raised and the ways and means of the Jamaican household were never identified because that's how I was raised. They didn't need to say "this is how a Jamaican family does this." "It's just this is Jordan," because that identity was never forced on me but when I went to school teachers are never going to say "well" they say a group of Black students and they treat them all the same so the two are very different and I realize that a lot more now, but I was treated the same as other students that had different identity.

Kalel: (the picture of a Vu-Vu-Zela is illuminated)

[Jordan, I agree with you because I identify as Black, but my ideal Census box would read, biracial-Black and White. Therefore, my cultural background is similar, yet there are some differences.] I know my mother always tried to do her best to make us feel that nobody else was better than us and that we weren't any different. We had a whole portion of my mother's side of the family who kind of disowned my mother and cut off contact whenever she married my father and it is something I didn't know about until I was in probably like middle school or so. I never understood because my grandfather, actually my mom's step father, was racist and never came to my parents wedding we would see him but only because of my grandma and she didn't care. It was kind of I guess…she pushed really hard early on for us to feel like we are normal and not be ashamed of being biracial. My father obviously is an African American male, and he never really went out of his way to make it seem like it was normal but never treated us like we were any different or wanted us to think that we are any different. I can't recall them going out of their way and sitting us down and having a conversation about skin color and things like that, but they always raised us to feel like we were no better than anybody else and nobody was better than us, and that we were just the same and nothing is wrong with what we were and we should be ourselves.

Figure 3: Artifact E, Picture of a Vu-Vu-Zela from participant named Denzel E. He shared that this represented his trip to South Africa where he learned about the communal aspects of cultural and it applicability to the Black American community.

Deanna: (the picture of a mobile phone application for the *Holy Bible* is illuminated)

[I've learned some valuable lessons over the years.] The one that immediately jumps into my mind is that my Dad used to tell me to be proud of whom we are, and I am very proud to be a

Black woman, I'll change the world if I can (laughter). I think one of the number one things that have always stuck out to me, I remember my dad told us "it's a harsh reality but you need to learn this early, you are Black and you are a woman, and in the world we live in you are going to have to be 10 times as good to get the things you deserve you are going to have to be 10 times as good and you're going to have to not only be the best person, but you are going to have to be the person that they can't help but choose you. You are not going to leave them any room to question" I think it's something that has made a difference for me and I can't do status quo, I can't do average, I can't do just enough to get by. (Laughter) Yeah, and it's been a good thing. I will say that the conversation in my house is more based around not necessarily the race side of that but I don't know how to say it but it's not connected to race it's kind of like who you are—you need to conduct yourself a certain way whether you are Black or whatever. My dad has always been really big on character qualities and taking us to…what is it called…my dad likes to take us out to, I can't remember what it's called but there are Christian-based leadership kind of things and our parents have always been really big in instilling those things in us and my dad with the whole race thing is "realize you're Black and realize you're going to have to work harder" but other than that you need to develop as a person. More than anything in our house it's been you need to realize that you're Black, appreciate that you're Black, but realize that you're living in a world of people who don't look like you. As much as you need to be aware of whom you are as an African American individual,

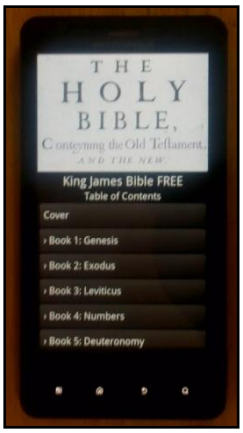

Figure 4: Artifact J, Picture of a mobile phone application for the *Holy Bible* from participant named Holly Wilson. This artifact represented a place where she learned lessons about how to treat people fairly, and where she learned lessons about perseverance particularly during her college experience. This artifact and the lesson it represented helped to inform her understanding of Blackness.

you also need to be able to function in a mainly white society. Not that you need to give up the things that you think are…I don't know they've never made me feel as though I need to play down the fact that I'm black or anything like that but they taught me that I need to know how to function in a white society. (Long Pause) Race is just a very interesting thing for me I think because our family is so different. My mom's mom is Japanese and her Dad is Black and some percentage Native American. My dad's dad probably looks like he's white to be completely honest and he has Irish in his family pretty strong and so to me since I feel like I personally am so mixed I feel like people are people which has been nice. I think that explains a lot of my views on things and I think what makes people different than race or cultural background is more of where you come from.

Director's Note: Vignette ends with the lights going dark around the characters. The stage scene should be changed during the next narration.

Narrator: This vignette discussed the Black students' incorporation of their families into their understanding of Blackness. They also shared how their families are used as a method of coping and strengthening their level of self efficacy while they participate in a PWI environment. This vignette has implications for practice within the field of student affairs because it addressed the importance of family for these Black students. The field of student affairs should find more programmatic ways of including the families of Black students in their college experience.

Vignette 2: Ancestry

Narrator: While the participants noted their family structures as a source of knowing related to their racial identity, they also discussed historical references, instances of sacrifice, and not taking the past for granted. Their discussion about the aforementioned areas parallels the literature. Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith (1998) explained that the

meaning of being Black for Black people incorporates experiences of racism and the historical and contemporary cultural experiences for Black people in America and Africa.

While social constructionism examines structures, its focus is on the processes (Burr, 2003). In particular, "The aim of social enquiry is removed from questions about the nature of people or society towards a consideration of how certain phenomena or forms of knowledge are achieved by people in interaction" (Burr, p. 9). The common thread shared between the aforementioned theoretical frames and social constructionism is that they represent what are often referred to as 'metanarratives' or grand theories. These metanarratives offer a way of making meaning for the entire social world (Burr). It is important to note that even the literature I share is constructed through a master or metanarrative. The participants shared their stories related to the metanarrative of Blackness and incorporated their individual family history and ancestry as a collective narrative.

The following vignette includes an interpretive discussion between participants concerning their stories on how historical references, instances of sacrifice, and not taking the past for granted have informed their understanding of being Black. The vignette features the narratives of six participants, Henry, Gina, Denzel E., Mackenzie Jackson, Deanna, and Brittany, with the researcher as Candace.

Scene: The stage is setup to resemble a church, complete with 3 stained glass windows hanging from above behind a lectern which is situated in front of 4 pews. The stage arrangement should not block the audience's view of the characters on stage. The scene should open with a gospel song. The stage lights come up…

Candace: (behind the lectern with a loud preacher like voice) There is a story here to be told in this campus chapel…What is the history and what are the sacrifices? What will be your testimony? Speak! Now!

Henry: (immediately he jumps from his seat in the pew) Yes. I am a member of a historically black fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha, and in the fraternity it is a lot of heavy imagery and symbolism with Egyptian mythology and African heritage, and in the process when we were becoming members we studied a lot of African heritage and a lot of the connections between those rites of passages that men go through in Africa and what we go through joining the fraternity so that was the first time in my life that I ever made a connection with my African heritage was in that process of learning about that. This is something that means a lot to me; it has my number on the back, and I used to wear it around my neck all the time. Studying it and looking at pictures and hearing about the traditions and rituals was the first time that I really realized how elaborate the culture was and I think a lot of times growing up you imagine Africa being primitive out in the huts not really being a developed culture and hearing how the hierarchy and sophisticated in some ways it was it was something I could connect with cause I was like "ok that sounds like something that I came from." I would say I walked into the experience with an image of what it is to be African American, and I didn't spend a lot of time thinking about it and going through and having that label, but after that experience really owning what it means to be African American. I internalized it more, and I drew connections; the pride and the culture and I drew relevance from that to my day to day and how coming from a proud people and coming from a strong people and being able to identify with that really helped me to find my way and find what it means to be African American for myself. (he takes an abrupt seat with his hands waving in the air)

Gina: (begins speaking in a melancholy tone from her seat on the pew) When we think about history in general and I think about slavery, it is one of those things where it is not necessary a struggle (I don't like to call it a struggle), but they had obstacles and there were numerous obstacles. One of those pieces that I take is "they paved the way and gotten us this far, I don't want to take it all for granted" it's sort of like they did all of this work for no reason, so I think we should uphold the fact that they worked hard to get us to where we are now. So one of the things that I like to think about is "imagine myself in their shoes, would I be a strong enough woman to handle the things that they've had to deal with in order to get the next generation to where I am now" and even thousands of generations after that. When I think about that, I don't think personally I could have been a strong enough woman to get us where we are now; I think I might have cracked but it also depends on how close-knit they were because they were very close knit and they always stuck together. Now, when I see, even in random family gatherings, that they are arguing or there are disagreements it's like our ancestors didn't pave the way for us to argue disagree and not get along at all. Especially in particular instance when I see killings among the African American race—we are killing each other but somebody died just to get us here and now we are killing each other as if it's a hobby, and they were dying just to make it just for us to walk these same steps that we are walking every day. I feel like now we are taking it for granted; at first the generations right after slavery, they didn't take it for granted they took it for "I got to keep this going" but now as a race we have basically taken on a lot of the things for granted that has been handed down to us, we are taking for granted what somebody worked hard to get us where we are now, and I don't like that idea.

Denzel E.: (stands slowly to his feet from his pew seat and speaks in a more deliberate tone, not as excited. He paces during his speech in front of the lectern) Well, I feel like my family, ever

since I can remember, we like to tell stories and it's a lot of people congregated together in a tiny house and so it's just back and forth. Especially hearing stories from my grandmother about the things that she had to deal with in Tennessee growing up: how there was not enough money for everybody, and she had 12 kids and the struggle to get by from the lack of resources and then to have people go out of their way to make life difficult for you. One story that I will never forget is my grandmother was pregnant with it wasn't my dad but it was one of the two either ten or twelve around him. She wanted to vote, and she went to the courthouse in small town Tennessee to register to vote and the Black people had to stand in line at the courthouse on Wednesdays, and she said she would get there in the morning and wait all day long to register to vote. And I think she was 8 months pregnant when this was all happening, 6-8 months pregnant, and she would literally go every Wednesday for 2 months to try and register to vote. Her husband really didn't want her registering to vote because the white people in the town were really adamant about the Blacks not voting. When she did finally two months later after she was waiting in the heat pregnant for hour's everyday to vote, their landlord evicted them from their house because she registered to vote, and they got evicted from 2 different houses. She is pregnant she has all these kids and she's getting evicted for it but she's saying "I'm going to do this and I'm going into utilize my right to vote". For me in 2010, 2011, 2008 for me to say I'm not going to vote when there are no barriers for me, no one is physically trying to stop me from voting, I could say I'm busy but there's no way I'm more busy than she was in the 50's and 60's trying to vote. Having knowledge, respect and having an understanding of where you come from and the things that your family has dealt with like the voting situation… Respecting your heritage and respecting what your family has gone through and has sacrificed for me to be where I am sitting

today is kind of the biggest over-arching theme I would say. (He walks in a regular pace to the side of the lectern near Candace)

Mackenzie Jackson: (stands from her seat on the pew, holding a fan and waving it in the air) [My grandmother] was the one who told us the stories of way back in the day and how her father had his own…I'm not gone say a plantation but he had a field and he grew different crops on it and they were one of the only families in the city to have their crop and they weren't sharecroppers or anything. My grandmother, her brothers and sisters would have to work on the field to help with the crops, and basically, I feel like I identify myself through my family because I feel that family is the one who can tell us who we are…not who we are but our history, background, and our make up because they've been through things and all the little genes that we are made of came from our ancestors and I just feel like without my family I would probably not know as much of who I think I am if I didn't have them. [She's told the stories] about how the other Black children were jealous of them and making fun of them because their father owned their own land, they had to work, and the children thought my grandmother and her sisters thought they were better than them because they had a white house and it was on a hill. One of my aunts told us that down the road from them there was a white family and…let me get this straight. It's crazy, I realized my grandma and her sisters were really bad…and they used to throw rocks at the white family because the white family used to do the same thing to them. The story was, all the mailboxes for that entire row of houses were on my grandmothers side of the road, so when they would come down to get their mail they used to throw rocks at them because when they would walk to school they would tease them or what not so they got a little pay back by that and that was basically racism in [this state] in the 40's maybe…I'm not sure though. My dad, he said the White family used to have dogs and they would let the dogs go running after

them when they were walking home from school off the school bus, and I guess it was like a road to where their house was, and it was a white woman who lived towards the front and their house was a couple of yards back. He said that those dogs used to come after them and they wouldn't stop them so, they would throw rocks and get revenge basically. I couldn't imagine living at that time when they had to go through more extensive racism. It was kind of sad also because some people back then were evil and they just really didn't care. [Even during the desegregation of this institution, the Black community member that housed one of the first Black students had people in the surrounding community threatening to burn down his house for letting him [the Black student] stay there and how [when the first Black students to integrate this institution were] integrat[ing] the school and there were people outside chanting "2/4/6/8 we don't want to integrate." It's hard to imagine because I feel like if I was in that position I would be scared and they put up with a lot of stuff that I don't think I would have been able to put up with like, if someone were to spit up in my face, I would be ready to fight and they weren't—they just kept walking and kept moving forward and I just do not believe I could have made it back then. [I've learned from their experiences and the experiences of my family that] I should do better and I should appreciate more of the chances and opportunities I have been given, and that if ever I was to unfortunately have to face any racism like that that I would be the better person and walk away. That is what they taught me and my family always taught me: "don't retaliate and turn the other cheek." And I've tried and I've never been in a fight so I've done well with that. (She takes her seat, waving her fan in one hand and the waves the other hand in the air, while Brittany consoles her.)

Brittany: (begins her speech in her seat and releases Mackenzie) [As a Jamaican American, who identifies as Black primarily, my family history and sacrifices have influenced my understanding

of my racial identity.] If somebody finds out that I am Jamaican, [and asks me] why did I move here or what was my motivation for moving here or my family's motivation for moving here? [I just say to myself that] I do love where I come from, but there are other opportunities here as well. In general moving here is more opportunity as far as educational opportunities and just being able to develop a good lifestyle. As far as moving to Atlanta, that's where a lot of my father's family [is] so we had a connection and we had people who could help us adapt to the new environment so those are probably the major factors to why they moved here. As far as us, I think a lot of it was sacrificed for my sister and I to move here; as I said there is violence and problems in Jamaica because it's such a small country can impact you faster than a bigger span. Moving here in a safer environment and taking advantage of the opportunities here given that you have a more stable economy and government as well. I think for me my parents, particularly my mom, has always taught me that what I do is for me but in the wider span in doing thinking things more generally; I also feel that my success is their success because I did make that sacrifice. In some ways, it is not only my own self-esteem or motivation to do well but in the long run being able to be accomplished so I can give back and help them [and to let them] know that it wasn't a complete mistake to move here and that we didn't let them down.

Gina: (from her seats interjects) It is one of those things when I think about things like that where it's "I am not fulfilling my role" going back on my ancestry would they be proud of what I am doing now? …some of the other decisions I may make in life where it's like "this is a bad decision" or even looking back on your family "how would your family look at you if they knew that you did this" before I make a decision I think about "is this going to really help me, am I going to get any benefits out of it." Sometimes if I have this gut feeling, I just won't do it so I have to take into account whether or not it allows my…because I feel like we are judged more

critically than any other person so you have to set standards. Sometimes, we have to set standards above what we have already set in order to make it; in order to be average to the next person, our standards sometimes have to be incredibly high in order to be average to the next race.

Deanna: (stands from her seat on the pew and begins walking slowly toward the front of the set using a sarcastic tone) I think it's in everything that you do, down to the way you dress, the way you carry yourself, the way you speak, and what you are doing seriously. A lot of people of the Black community in our high school were just kind of hanging out after school; they weren't really doing anything, weren't really going to class, always in detention and they let that become the definition of what it means to be a Black student. It's like "I'm here to hang out and have fun with my friends and I am too cool for this". For me, what was aggravating was that I was the polar opposite of that and people were like, "Danielle, you are the most un-black person I know" and I'm like "no (Laughter) I am not". I think a lot of it, which is funny, is just being in Alpharetta in general and it's like, if you go to this school you must go to the school district and I am looking around Alpharetta, and I really don't see a ghetto of Alpharetta you know? I think I was very fortunate to have parents that even though I've grown up upper-middle class in good schools and never wanted for anything and have been blessed; both of my parents grew up pretty much poor. My Dad is from the Southside of Chicago; my mom is from the west side, and they kind of were in the same situation. And my mom has always told me that for where she was living in the community she was in, the expectation for her life was for her to maybe finish high school and probably have a kid or two by then. Both my parents were, I think, the first ones in their family to go to college, and both of them did very well. My dad ended up at the Naval Academy and they made something of themselves and they made it a point to prove people

wrong and that they could accomplish things, "that might be your expectation for me but my expectation from myself is much higher". I think because I've seen…and I think a lot of these kids in Alpharetta their idea of what… I hate to keep saying ghetto but…what they see is on the music videos and what they see on TV. A lot of them have never been there, and it's like "I would love to take you to go visit my grandmother's house because I guarantee you, you would not get out of the car. You want to sit here and tell me I don't know what it is to be Black? If you were there when you got back here to this high school, you would have your head in a book because you would not want to end up over there, you are the one who has no idea. If you had even inkling or if you really took the time to appreciate what the people before you have done, you would feel so bad for taking for granted the opportunities that you have right now. There is no reason for you not to be doing well." Even in college, "you are sitting gin college at a university where 50 years ago you couldn't get into the door, and you are sitting here not taking it seriously when people would have killed to have been here and have that opportunity" for me it…

Candace: Some people were killed to be here.

Deanna: Yeah. For me I had the opportunity to see that a little bit sooner with my parents. For me it has always been one of those things where if my parents started where they did, and they've gotten to where they are given to where they got me starting off on this launching pad, there is no limit to what I could do. To me, I feel like I owe that to them; they could have easily graduated from college and gone back to Chicago, but they said "no we do not want you guys to grow up here even though both sides of our family are there we want something better for you guys and we want to give you every opportunity in the world." I feel like it is sort of my responsibility because I know they made so many sacrifices for us. For me, when I think about

being Black I don't think about it as a personal thing I think of it as a community thing to make it mean something. (She walks back toward her seat in a regular pace.)

Director's note: The stage lights go dark around the set and a gospel song is played in the background. While the stage is dark, the transition to the next scene should begin.

Narrator: This vignette covered the students' recognition and appreciation for their ancestry. Through their narratives, they offered their perspective on the master narrative of Blackness. Their account has implications for racial identity development. As Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith (1998), discussed in the MMRI, Black students can have a public and private regard for Blackness. The public regard includes positive and negative reflections that others have related to Black culture and the private regard includes the positive and negative reflections that the individual has related to Black culture. As these students gain a sense of how persons of their past have influenced their understanding of Blackness, they are cycling through aspects of their racial identity development. Within their educational environment, they need safe spaces to discuss their perspectives and they need multicultural competent student affairs professionals to help facilitate their racial identity development in a constructed safe space.

Research Question 2: How do Black students make meaning (interpreting) of their racial identity development?

Vignette 3: Social Construction

Narrator: The participants during the interviews discussed a consistent message about the social construction of race. They expressed an understanding of how the construction of race can help and harm a group of people. Related to the literature, the participants intersubjectively addressed the topic of constructionism. Social constructionism is directly related to the concept of language as a social source for understanding how people can construct different accounts of the

world and events using their collective knowledge and words (Burr, 2003). It informs the perpetuated intersubjective knowledge of the meaning of Blackness shared between most Black people. Therefore, Burr described knowledge as a collective act perceived as something that people do not do in isolation, rather as a group.

This vignette incorporates an interpretative discussion of constructionism into the greater discourse of Blackness for these participants. The vignette features the narratives of five participants, Kalel, Jordan, Denzel E., Deanna, and Mackenzie Jackson.

Scene: The stage has a black background. In front of the background is a large outline for a picture of a sphinx head. The characters are standing in a line across the stage in front of the picture outline. As each person speaks they touch a different part of the sphinx head a portion of the picture illuminates until the entire picture becomes apparent to the audience. There are black lights covering the characters and a mid-level light over the picture outline. An African drumming beat is playing softly in the background throughout the scene. The first person begins to speak and a spot light highlights the speaker…

Kalel: (hold his head up, walks toward the front of the stage, and begins speaking) Everybody wants to be accepted by the culture; human beings naturally have a want to be accepted by people who are like them and gravitate towards people who are like them, but at the same time, I feel like we are so caught up as a race and not only as a race but as a country in how our country views that race, and what they expect of that race and all these things that don't matter at all and have nothing to do with our true culture and our concrete culture, things that really matter like the musical roots and things like that and we get caught up in "keeping it real". (He walks towards the picture outline, he touches it and a portion of the picture is illuminated.) At the end of the day, I look back, and it's such a big deal to the community in the south, but at the end of

the day it doesn't really matter if we have moved on beyond that. Black people were admitted just like any other white person is admitted now we need to focus on rising above all of that and continuing to educate and have more people educated so that we cannot just take what anybody hands them on a silver platter and say "oh this is what it is like." It is not what you see on Jersey Shore that defines Italian Americans, it is not what you see on BET that defines Black culture in American and it's not what you see on Telemundo that defines all Mexicans. It's really sad, and it's something that I've had a better understanding beyond Black culture in an Asian American and Latino American, and things like that. Everybody struggles to have, in their opinion, their true identity portrayed through the media, and it's going to take a lot and a long time in my opinion to overcome that. I don't feel like people are ever going to completely overcome stereotypes because that is how we make sense of the world we don't have any information to go on but just to change the negative trend that the media portrays and how they get perpetuated even though it might not be in the best interest of our social development as a country or any specific subculture there is nothing we can really do it about it until we get up and start making the changes ourselves and continuing down the line and through your family making sure people have a better understanding of race. (He has walked back to his spot in front of the stage.)

I think that your speaking to an important aspect which not only deals with the Master narrative so the big narrative that we tell about being Black that is constructed by the dominate culture but we are constructing a narrative as well, as a Black culture that we would want others to tell about us. So, we are continuing to perpetuate a story or a way in which we have even socialized ourselves but it is all based on this master narrative that was constructed by the dominant culture. What point do we separate ourselves and say "this is my new story" or "this is the way in which I view being Black," and as a community, we embrace whatever that may be

instead of pulling on aspects of previously determined ways in which we are supposed to live our lives or messages we've been given on what it is supposed to look like. It's not just the dominant culture; we are doing ourselves a disservice as well because we continue to share this story. As bad as it sounds, we perpetuate it because we want to be a part of our own culture, but [we are the ones who get to write it]. (He goes into a resting position, as the light darkens around him.) *Jordan:* (she raises her head, she is spot lighted, walks toward the front of the stage, and speaks.) Race in terms of the social construction is something that we've allowed, and basically, humans like to compartmentalize, and I think that it's a quality that we have and race gives us a way to put people in different compartments so I am trying to from being so compartmentalized to being more fluid with things and to really look at people. And because I appreciate my culture so much, and I have a friend that might be Egyptian or might be Italian or might have a mix of different races and not seeing them as "oh this person is Italian so they like pasta." I think that's something that I've always kind of thought because I know different things. But really appreciating people for who they are and being more fluid with that and really looking at individual people, and at the end of the day saying I have an Italian or an Egyptian or Iranian or Black or White friend. Because I'm at the stage of my life where I just need a great friend and somebody that is going to be honest and if you can introduce me to some great food. I would love that I can introduce you to some great food but pass that I think that I am really looking at the person not necessarily the race now. (She walks towards the picture, touches the outline, and a portion of the picture is illuminated.) I will say that I have a friend who was raised in Singapore because of where his father was, and he has such a love for that culture, and I think he might have been very socialized by that culture. So he is very structured in terms of school work, and he does things very methodically. And I think that is one way that I was able to see that it's more

so a cultural thing than it is a racial thing. (She begins walking toward her original position at the front of the stage.) He's White, he will identify racially as White but you can see walking into his house there are influences of it. I remember the first time I walked into his house we had this Asian bread type of thing it is kind of like a tortilla, but it's not, and it was great and I was like, "What are you doing?" And he said "I went to the Asian market; I had to go get something-" (laughter) - before I actually knew him. But then I realized he did spend a lot of time in Singapore and really did that. He said the first few years of his life until he got a lot older he smiled with his eyes closed, and I said "do you think it's because you grew up around Asian people and that was a physical characteristic that you saw a lot." And he was like "I don't know I just did it." I've always thought about that I can never stop thinking about that whenever I see him smiling. I always wonder if he learned to smile because he was with other Asians and sometimes and I know sometimes that's a characteristic. It's a physical characteristic. So, I've always wondered that and I guess that's a way that I've started looking at the culture more so than the race. (She goes into a resting position, as the light darkens around her.)

Deanna: (she raises her head, she is spot lighted, walks toward the front of the stage, and speaks.) I think what makes people different than race or cultural background is more of where you come from. (She walks toward the picture, touches the outline, and a portion of the picture is illuminated. Then she begins walking toward her original position at the front of the stage.) For me, I am much more comfortable being in a setting where I am in the minority than in the majority because that's what I'm used to. I would any day feel much more comfortable sitting in a room with people who are a little more diverse but majority where I am one of three of four faces there. When you put me into a room where it's solely African American students it makes me feel a little uneasy because I don't relate to them as well. I just don't the same experiences as

you and I can't draw on the same things. (She goes into a resting position, as the light darkens around her.)

Denzel E.: (he raises his head, he is spot lighted, walks toward the front of the stage, and speaks.) I think it's just the change in the mentality of the whole country almost where race isn't as polarizing of an issue as it might have been 30 years ago, and that the awareness that just because someone like my roommate - example - just because someone looks different than you and sounds different and you think they may act different realizing that they really aren't that different. (He walks towards the picture, touches the outline, and a portion of the picture is illuminated.) I think that it's just something that needed time to develop and more relationships needed to be created and more time. (He begins walking towards his original position at the front of the stage.) After the civil rights when everyone had a more equal playing field and having people realize and older generations realize that people aren't that different in the long run that most people have similar goals and similar viewpoints and they want their family to be a certain way and they may have different backgrounds but they have the same beliefs and as an American you have more similar values and relationships and viewpoints together than are conflicting. (He goes into a resting position, as the light darkens around him.)

Mackenzie Jackson: (she raises her head, she is spot lighted, walks toward the front of the stage, and speaks.) I think I would say that it has been some things that Black people have not done, there have been some unsuccessful moments and truthfully for me that doesn't really affect me (I would say). I just think "you made a mistake and that is you." I am not thinking "you messed it up for the Black people." I don't think of it like that. (She walks toward the picture, touches the outline, and the last portion of the picture is illuminated. Then she begins walking towards her original position at the front of the stage.) [I] probably [don't think of it like that] because I think some of it has to do with how they were raised, maybe, and most likely you were raised by a Black family but I don't see anything in common. But I do understand that people just make bad decisions. I feel like that is a personal bad decision I guess truthfully if I account for the accomplishments I should account for the failures but who wants to account for the failures because they are failures or unsuccessful, I should say, but, I feel like it's also "you messed up," but now you will have your chance to prove yourself again. I guess I'm kind of rooting for them to do better to be like their ancestors and don't give up, try to be their best I guess. I look at it more as not a disappointment, but as an opportunity to rise up if that makes sense. (she goes into a resting position, as the light darkens around her)

Figure 5: Artifact F, Picture of a sphinx head from participant named Henry. It represented his fraternity, a place where he discovered his connection to his African American heritage.

Director's note: The stage lights go dark around the set, the sphinx head is still illuminated, and the African drumming is played louder in the background. While the stage is dark, the transition to the next scene should begin.

Narrator: This vignette incorporated the participants' understanding of social constructionism. They expressed their understanding of this concept through their narratives on the constructed realities of Blackness. The findings expressed in this vignette have implications for the student affairs profession and higher education in general. The discussion of race should permeate throughout the educational enterprise; conversations on race and its implications are needed in and out of the classroom.

Vignette 4: Blackness

Narrator: The participants defined what being Black means. There definitions covered a variety of the Black perspective. Their neo collective definition encompassed a love for being Black, elements of celebration, dispelling stereotypes, and sharing a cultural bond. The definition also addressed ideals of equality and citizenship. Lastly, the definition included the question itself: "What does it mean to be a Black person?" Their collective voice spoke to challenging interactions within the Black community related to the perspective of *who really is Black enough*? Their narratives incorporated stories of not relating to the stereotypical Black community, and often times unconsciously managing a balance of multiple consciousness. Their descriptions that helped to inform this neo collective definition of Blackness is grounded in the literature. Firstly, on some levels they are navigating through Cross' (1995) Nigrescence model, cycling through the pre-encounter, encounter, emersion/immersion, internalization, and internalization commitment stages at varying points of their development. Moreover, they are experiencing Blackness using the tenets of Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's

(1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI). The participants' narratives on Blackness directly related to the MMRI's assertion that for Black people there is "…both the significance of race in the self-concepts of African Americans and the qualitative meanings they attribute to being members of that racial category" (p.19). Furthermore, for these participants their "racial identity influences [their] situational appraisals and behaviors" (Sellers, et. al., p.19). While the participants searched for a definition, through their language and narratives, they shared their internal and external struggles with their racial consciousness. DuBois (1903) referenced the ongoing struggle of the Black person when he noted that, "One ever feels his two-ness,--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" (DuBois, p. 3). He later offered the idea that "This history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,--this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better truer self" (DuBois, p. 3). In his quest for a transcendental concept of truth and knowledge, DuBois highlighted the internal struggle with the aforementioned level of consciousness, self (Maddox, unpublished manuscript, 2009). The individual narratives of the participants yielded a collective voice of determining what being Black means in a constructed reality and recognizing that even that definition has challenges within the Black community. Their multiple consciousnesses include their reflection of the dominant culture and the Black community.

This vignette incorporates some pictures of the artifacts and an interpretative discussion of constructionism into the greater discourse of Blackness for these participants. The vignette features the narratives of all ten participants, with the researcher as Candace.

Scene: The vignette opens with all the characters entering a chemistry laboratory on campus. They have book bags on and some are carrying books in their hands. The stage should have five lab tables with two stools behind each table, equipped with general laboratory equipment. At the front of the room is a white board with these words written on it "Today's Lesson: Creating a Molecule of Blackness—What does being Black mean?" The characters are conversing quietly and placing their lab coats on as they await the start of class. Enters the lab instructor in her white lab coat…

Candace: (in a stern tone) Students, take your seats at the lab tables. (Tone becomes more instructional.) Each table has a lab kit detailing a different chemical element of what it means to be Black. During today's lab we are going to construct a molecule of Blackness from the different elements at your respective tables. Ok, you there, (pointing to the character to her right) what element would you like to add…what does being Black mean to you?

Alana: When I say defining being Black it is about celebrating the wonderful things that being Black entails. I went to America IM last year and it was an eye opening exhibit knowing that the lineage I come from are people who helped the American commerce, so I think in celebration of those things and at some points being in celebration of some things that are tragic the lynchings, fathers who left out but women who have come up and done things. Being in celebration of triumph and victory; I think there will never be a downfall of being Black even if you are multicultural and you might have one inch of whoever Black, it is nothing wrong with being able to celebrate that and it's unfortunate sometimes when people who don't see that there is celebration in that.

Holly Wilson: [Exactly, my element is pride], I'm proud to be Black. I mean, I don't like…I remember one point in time when I think I was younger…I think I was younger; I don't

remember the exact time. But I remember thinking one time where, "Hmm, maybe I should've been white" because of the fact that, you know, it's so…no, it was in college actually; I think it was my freshman year and I think it was, focused on, the fact that you know I would come and you know, I'm a science major, and it's very difficult. So, I was seeing you know some of my white friends, just some people in my class you know they'd go out and party every single night and they make A's on the test, and I would be in my room studying my little tail off, and I would still only make that B or that C+, and I'm like "What's the difference?" But you come to an understanding that you know; it's different schooling, and I mean if you went to a private school you're going to have better resources than a person that went to a public school in maybe a low income area. So I think once I got that understanding, I'm like "You know, I don't want to be white. I love who I am. I like being Black." I mean, I feel like if everything was given to me easy, I wouldn't value it as much as I do, so I like being Black. (Denzel E. raises his hand to be recognized.)

Candace: (recognizing him) Yes, you Sir…what is your element?

Denzel E.: [Well], Being Black to me means that you (I feel like I've used this a lot) but your culturally aware of your past, history and heritage and you have to kind of realize how to use that in the future and realize that your maybe different from other people in the crowd but you can't let that stop you and you can't let that inhibit you from doing what you want to do and you may have to work harder to accomplish the goals that you have. If I am a Black student and I have *xyz* criteria and there is a White student with *xyz* criteria, they might get it before me but if I have *xyzbqw*, you can't turn me down if I'm better and smarter, brighter, and work harder than the average student. It's understanding that this is America and there's equal opportunity but this is still [the south], and this is still the south and there is still some people, especially in older

generations, that are less accepting. The only way to get where you need to go is to make sure that you are the most qualified and you're the best person.

Candace: Thank you. Who is next? (Mackenzie raises her hand with an attitude. Candace recognizes Mackenzie Jackson with a nod.)

Mackenzie Jackson: (pulls out a handkerchief to wipe her brow)

[Candace, I have an issue…my element is not quite as celebratory as the others'.] [My] perception of Black is I feel like people think that Black people are loud. I am not the loudest person in the world my family is loud but me, I am not just one to just scream out and talk out loud just to talk loud, I feel like that's not me. Some people are…like I said my family is loud…I feel like some Caucasians are loud, and I felt like that was something random. This going to be stupid but I don't like Watermelon, I don't like Fried Fish, and I feel like people say "you're Black you like watermelon." I do like chicken, but I feel like that has nothing to do with me being Black; it's about me being from the south. (There are some groans from the room and Mackenzie pauses.)

Figure 6: Artifact H, Picture of a handkerchief from participant named Mackenzie. The artifact is a gift from her grandmother and it represents the lessons her grandmother and other family member taught her about being Black.

Candace: Hold on class…let's hear her out. She isn't finished contributing her element to the molecule.

Mackenzie: [Thank you. As I was saying…] some people think that Black people are ignorant, and I feel like if you think Black people are ignorant you are ignorant for thinking that so, like I said before I feel like I am a smart person, I know some things, I have a lot more to learn, and I don't even know where else to go… I've never been told this to my face but I've heard that

some people would say "you're at [this university] because you are Black." And I would have to tell them, "No."If someone ever told me that because I am at [this institution] because I had a 3.9 GPA in high school, I was in the Arts society I did extracurricular activities and I'm [at the school] for the same reason you are at [this school]—because I was qualified. I feel like some people think that…well I should say other races, the majority of the Caucasian race may believe that me being African American gives me automatic in to some things so I would say no and that Black people are just as qualified as other races…I don't know what else [to say]?

Henry: [You've said enough…] (standing from his stool). [Candace, my element is citizenship.] It means being an American it means all the same rights responsibilities as any other citizen of this country while at the same time around that is the context of a very rich heritage culturally rich heritage, a very family based heritage, a very tight-knit community context. Being able to identify as being…American is a very individualist identity so being an individualistic American following the American Dream doing my own thing while at the same time the African aspect community building on that, relying on that, pulling on that, and reconciling those two things of independence and community…

Candace: Henry, then it sounds like there is somewhat of a multiple level of consciousness: you are American in one sense but African in another whereas you are drawing on kind of the values that each culture holds dear. It sounds like through your definition there is room for some tension occasionally between being individual, being American and being more community oriented, being African.

Henry: Oh yeah, I mean on campus a lot and in general, yeah… It's that community piece of it that African Americans fill in the drive for the richer history and culture I mean, that is still here. Being a Black student or African American student you are almost expected to find the African

American community join it…whatever that means…find out what programs people are going to what people are doing what fraternity and sororities are out there that you can join and get more into the community, what parties are people going to. I've seen on this campus a lot of students struggle because I know I struggled for a while even on a subconscious level with wanting to really fully be immersed in the African American community on this campus, but at the same time wanting to try something else, do your own thing, hangout with your hall mates join Miracle, philanthropy, SGA or whatever to really get the full [university] experience as well as an African American communal experience. From a time standpoint that is an issue and I think a lot of students struggle with trying to balance that and some students don't and say "I'm going to be Black and hang out with Black folks" and other students say "this might be the color of my skin but I'm not going to identify with that community I am just going to be a student at [this institution]".

Kalel: (he's holding a book in his hand and standing from his stool to look at Henry. Henry looks at Kalel) [Henry this consciousness that you speak of…I understand]. A book off my bookshelf that I've read for a couple different classes is *W.E.B. Dubois' The Souls of Black Folks*. He is one of my favorite African American writers…intellectuals and he talks in there a lot about double consciousness but the tragic mulatto is something he talked about a lot and I guess it's something I identify with more so than some of the other things he talks about because he talks about the idea that you are kind of caught in between two races and you are never going to be all the way or all

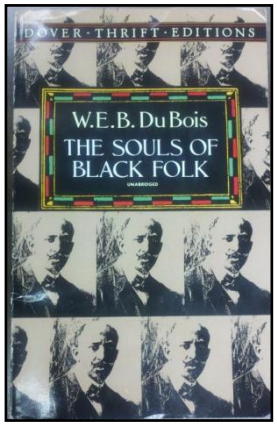

Figure 7: Artifact C, Picture of *Souls of Black Folks* by W.E.B. DuBois (1903) from participant named Kalel. This artifact represented how he understood himself as a Black man, recognizing his dual consciousness.

the way of the other so you kind of are almost more isolated than the minority, than being Black. That is something I always identified with growing up, you can never be all the way on one side or all the way on the other you are never going to be white enough to hang out with white people or black enough to hang out with black people and truly fit in and feel like you're a part of the culture and it's not something you have to try to be, you can never just be yourself and be a part of that culture it is kind of you are something different but you have some of that racial group in you. (He pauses.) [For me], I guess the whole idea of double consciousness is that society says that I'm one thing even though I might feel another thing or be something else and it kind of reassured in the fact that I am more than what everybody else is going to say and that race is something that in my opinion is self defined. Nobody can tell you what you are you might belong to this culture or group of people but at the end of the day, race is something that you can self-define yourself… (Henry nods in affirmation, and then Kalel and Henry take their seats)

Candace: Thank you both for your elements. I think that we are getting closer to creating our molecule of Blackness. Yet, I haven't heard from some others in the class. (Jordan raising her hand reluctantly) Yes, please tell us your element.

Jordan: (she pulls a picture frame her book bag) [Being Black]… I would say definitely. I feel like everybody changes in what environment they are but since it was something that was presented to me when I was younger, that people were like "when you are with White people you talk White but when your with black people your talk Black and what's that about" that has always been something that has stuck with me so I don't know if that

Figure 8: Artifact D, Picture of a picture frame from participant named Jordan. The artifact represented how she compartmentalized her relationships with the Black community and the non-Black community during her college experience.

was something that I've amplified because I've identified in me earlier or if it's a regular characteristic that everybody has but I would definitely say that was something.

Deanna: (interjecting) He's Black, and I think it's funny that we all feel this need to act a certain way and to feel accepted by a certain group of our peers because we feel like "these are the people I should feel comfortable with these are the people I should feel at home with." That is something that really tore me apart in college and feeling like people won't accept me in this group when the simple fact is that I belong in this group. I've had very few racial problems here, but I feel more racial tension in the Black community than I have ever had with other white students here.

Candace: Thank you for sharing; that's an interesting element to add. (She points to Brittany.) What are your thoughts; what does being Black mean to you?

Brittany: (waves a Jamaican flag lightly in the air)

Figure 9: Artifact I, Picture of Jamaican flag from participant named Brittany. The artifact represented her Jamaican heritage regardless of the fact that she identifies as Black.

[As a Black person who identifies as Jamaican American, when you said this was our lab lesson for today], I was just stumped, I guess I really don't. I know why because I don't have a problem with being Black. I guess as I said, my parents really did…I don't know if it was a good job necessarily but I certainly thought of myself as equal and maybe because a lot of people make it sound like being Black is an oppression or disadvantage and I don't think of it as being a disadvantage I think of it as being equal so I think in terms of trying to define it, Black is equality. I don't see why we should think of ourselves any different because we are Black. I think it's just a part of you. (pause) I think people allow it to but I mean, it's more of an

environment thing and it depends on the environment you grew up in because you could be Black, and you could grow up in Asia and have that Asian cultural background. It's not necessarily I don't think…as I said in Jamaica you have a culture and a certain type of music and food and you can't say all Black people have the same type of music and same type of food so I think it's just a part of who you are, it's not "because you are Black you are going to do this" or "because you are White you're going to do this" because there are white people who grew up in Jamaica, and they might have my culture but they happen to be White.

Gina: [I think she makes a good point. In general,] I feel like we won't ever be equal until we are integrated. (There are some affirming voices from the class.)

Kalel: [I have something more to add to my element].

Candace: Please share…we're getting so close to a complete molecule…

Kalel: To me personally being Black is really your descendents—it is really not so much about putting up a front or fulfilling this stereotype or being true to your people. To me it's like…if you come from a family that has Black people in it, if you marry into a Black family, if you're a biracial person, if you grew up in a Black culture that is being Black. It depends on how you look at it because if you look at it as somebody of African American descent or if somebody comes from Africa that is Black there are a lot of ways that you could look at it. To me when I say Black I'm not talking about "oh he plays basketball" or "oh he's from that neighborhood or that" is skin color is darker than an average Anglo-Saxon, and that is because his family came from Caribbean descent or Jamaica or whatever you want to call it and I think a lot of times it gets taken away from that and people identify Black as being, you know, "you have to represent this about African American culture." People think that you have to buy into all these different things to be authentic. I feel like I have a better understanding of it than most people just because I am

an African American studies minor and I've always been interested in African American history even since I was younger. I remember my brother would bring home books and I remember I read the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* when I was in the 6ht grade because I just loved and I've always loved Black history. I think part of that stemmed from the fact that I was one of the only Black kids at my school and February would roll around and it would be like "bam, something I could identify" and everybody expected me to know it and it was like when PE came around and everybody expected me to go run and do that. And I felt like "this is my in I got this!". I guess I've just always been really interested. (Laughter). I guess it's something I am fairly knowledgeable on more so than the average person this age because I have been able to experience it as well as be able to put some formal education into it. To me being Black is just a racial…even though it is socially constructed and race is socially constructed it is more your descendants to me and where you come from. I wasn't raised in an all Black household my parents divorced when I was a year old, and I lived with a White mother until I was 16. My dad was around, and I'd go visit my Dad and everything like that but at the same time, I guess you could say I grew up in a White household if that is the way you want to look at it, and I don't feel like I need to be from a Ghetto or something to be Black. A lot of people, especially since I've come down here I feel be like…if you're not from that area say "you're not really Black" and you get back into the whole idea of the tragic mulatto if you want to I feel like it is even more predominant down here [in the South].

Deanna: (holds up an advertisement for a play)

[Candace, I think the final element to add]… I feel like culturally [being Black is] a bond and it's a common…I feel like as Black people we are all bonded by our history and where we all came from and how we all got here and I think that's what ties us together. I don't think it defines us, but I think that's what brings us together as a group, and that's what makes you African American or Black as opposed to something else. You have that common ancestry of people who went through so much and for that I think it's why it blows my mind when we tear each other down. How did we get from here to here when all we were about was building each other up and helping the person next to you and loving your brothers and sisters and wanting to do better not just for yourselves but for generations that you knew where going to come behind you…(pausing) [I have a challenge for the Black community]. I'm sure when Black history month first started, I am sure that was a very exciting month and everyone was very invested in it and excited and wanted to…and we still observe it but I feel like as individuals I have other things going on, I have other things that are important and we don't stop and appreciate it and that's why I think why we are slowly getting away from it and why we lost the idea of what it really means to be African American. It's not about you it's about us.

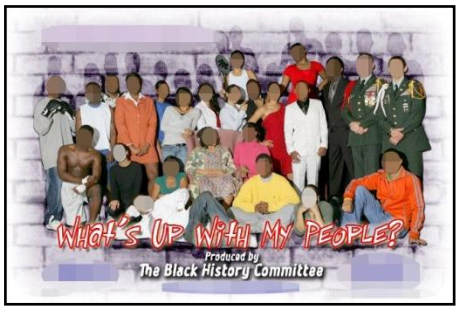

Figure 10: Artifact G, Picture of a play advertisement for participant named Deanna. This artifact represented the play directed and written by the participant during high school to celebrate Black History Month and address positive aspects of Black cultural for all represented ethnicities at her school. The play was a direct response to easing racial tensions within her school environment.

Candace: (with an excited tone) Wow! We've reached the pinnacle…the molecule is complete! (She pulls a canvas down in front of the board with a collage of pictures representing Black people. A loud boom noise is made.) It's done!

Director's note: The stage lights go dark around the set. While the stage is dark, the transition to the next scene should begin.

Narrator: This vignette addressed the participants' definition of Blackness and how they reached their understanding. Since participants indirectly and directly questioned the notion of *being Black enough*, they were expressing their level of dissonance with their own self concept and the concept of Blackness. Additionally, their self identifiers gave insight into their self exploration of what being a member of the African Diaspora means for them personally. Their narratives have implications for practice within the field of student affairs particularly rooted in the multicultural competence of the professionals planning, implementing, and evaluating programs geared toward assisting Black students with their adjustments to the college experience within a PWI environment. For instance based on the narratives of these participants, as professionals program for this population, they should consider the variations of Blackness within the Black culture and recognize the importance of attending to the development of Black students individually verses as a collective.

Vignette 5: Multiple Identities

Narrator: While the focus for the study was on the racial identity development of the participants, they were asked to share their other identity areas to determine centrality and salience of their identity. They labeled a variety of identities. Most notably, their connection to their gender, religion, and role on campus was apparent. Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith (1997) described racial salience as "the extent to which a person's race is a relevant part of her or his self-concept at a particular moment in time. Salience is dependent on the context of the situation as well as the person's proclivity to define her or himself in terms of race (i.e., centrality)" (p. 806). In addition, centrality "refers to the extent to which a person

normatively defines her or himself with regard to race. It is a measure of whether race is a core part of an individual's self-concept" (Sellers, et. al., 1997, p. 806). This particular aspect of the MMRI has utility for this theme, multiple identities because the participants through their narratives about their identity areas addressed just how central their racial identity was to their overall self concept. They regularly placed their racial identity less central to their self concept as the other identity areas they labeled. The literature supports this thematic finding because "implicit in the conceptualization of centrality is that there is a hierarchical ranking of different identities, such as gender and occupation, with regard to their proximity to the individual's core definition of self" (Sellers, et. al., 1997, p. 806-807).

This vignette incorporates an interpretative portrayal of the salience and centrality of race for these participants. The vignette features the narratives nine participants, Henry, Alana, Brittany, Deanna, Gina, Holly Wilson, Mackenzie, Kalel, and Denzel E.

Scene: There is a black backdrop. The stage lights highlight a grid-like board with illuminating white dramatic masks (i.e., sad, happy, mad.etc.). The board (3 by 3 grid) should have nine squares with a mask as the illuminating front, behind the square mask are the nine characters; they are hidden. As each character speaks, the mask in front of him/her fades away and the character's face is revealed. The scene begins with a contemporary jazz song playing in the background…(the music should play softly during the scene). A random mask fades and a face is revealed…

Henry: I identify as a man, I identify as someone who is pretty politically minded and motivated and more towards a liberal political ideology, so I identify with that - and with that community because there is a community of those students on campus as well. I identify with being a Christian student not a denomination specifically, but I identify as a student with faith. I place a

certain level of identity on my circle of friends and involvement and things like that so there is kind of a community of students who I've known since Freshman year because we've been involved in the same thins and now we are seniors and in leadership positions so that is something that I identify myself with…[However], there [is] an identity I lead with. I guess there is and I think being a Black male student on this campus is an identity that I lead with subtly, not to the ump degree, but one of the organizations I am most involved in. I am involved in because I am black male and that is my fraternity. In student government when I'm meeting someone new for the first time I know that that's the first thing they see about me so I have that awareness. I'm meeting the governor or whomever and they see that I'm a Black male and so however they project or see think that I'm going to be because of how I look, it's good for me to have that awareness and be aware of that and know that "ok I need to be my best self, I don't know if it was a good or bad image of what they thought I was going to be but either way I want them to come away with what I am and who I am" so yeah… I guess being a Black male…(The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears.)

Alana: "I am Black, I am a woman, I am a Christian"…[I identify most with] I'd say [being a] leader, Christian Black because those are things I deal with everyday like being a student leader on campus but I am student leader in primarily African American organizations so I am always in the African American cultures center, having interactions with African Americans students and African American alumni so I think they kind of intersect with one another. Then Christian, I am always trying to apply my faith with anything that I do so I think those are the strongest ones. [When I think about my identities], (long pause) I think all together having to always defend why I am an African American student leader on campus, people don't understand "why did you get part in this what is the need," so that is always a challenge I am always faced with or writing on

your resume and you put down “dang, I am in a lot of Black organizations what is that going to say.” You’re feeling self-conscious about that because you don’t want people to judge but it is truly like, just because they have Black doesn’t mean that I am not being with a diverse group of people or that I am not getting the necessary skills I need to be in the real world. I am not saying that those that are in HERO or Relay for Life are more qualified than me because I just have Black, I think that is a conflict and it is kind of irritating at times because you always feel like you are defense as to why you are a part of those things. Being a Christian of course is always going to have its challenges because everyone doesn’t believe in that particular aspect. When you put together Black and Christian—when people on the news talk about the Black church you’re like “that’s annoying”. I think that is a challenge because I believe that people rely too much on those labels. (The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears.)

Brittany: Oh, I identify with being Black, and I know I’m Black. [And I’m a woman.] Being a woman means being loving, nurturing, being able to (I guess) embrace the people around you. Being a woman is a gift because you are able to continue life and you can complete another person, you can have a partner and you are able to identify with someone based on the fact that you are a woman, and I guess because you have the gift of giving life and I think that’s important. (Pause) Being Jamaican means to me…I guess…probably just embracing a unique culture and perspective and a different way of growing up or embracing the fact that we have our own food, drink, clothing and making us distinct from another culture in the world. (The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears.)

Deanna: [I indentify with being a] Christian—I feel like every year it becomes a lot bigger of something that I identify with, and I’ve always been a Christian but I feel like I own a little more

every year and what that means and how it affects how I live my life, how I interact with people and how I make decisions. I think that has a huge part for me. My sister and I always joke about this but I like to identify with the strong Black woman…you're going to laugh at me…but maybe not your real life heroes. Even now my TV hero is Clare Huxtable oh my goodness—classy. It's one of those things where it's like "you represent everything that I want to be" successful, a great mother, a great wife, you're just awesome! Those are things that I want people to see in me. I feel like Michelle Obama is a real life example of her. I think that is something that I'm always constantly striving for and I guess if I could choose the way that people perceive me, that's the way that it would be. I want to do things with a high level of Class and I want to be known as that person who always tries to do the right thing and that was never a question and did it well. Someone who is successful not because of ever being handed anything but I worked for it. [You know], I think definitely especially around here [at this institution]. I feel like I am a little more aware of [being a Black woman] because, like I said, I think of it more of in a community sense and I know that whenever I walk out the door I am representing all of us. (Long pause) I feel like I personally have too much to lose and we have too much to lose on something like that and I feel so bad for Barack Obama "it doesn't matter what you do the first time you do something slightly wrong even if you didn't mean to do it, they are going to grill you." People love to see other people fall, and it's terrible, especially when they can go back and say "I knew it, it's just like we've seen before". I try to watch my step on that and he's been a great role model in how he's dealt with some many things…it's been really great to watch. I've learned a lot from watching him and his wife. (The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears)

Gina: I am a woman, and as of right now I am a student, and that is the biggest thing for me. I think of being a woman more than any of the others because I have my own personal opinions of being a woman. I feel like women, we do the same work as men in general but we will never have the same acknowledgement for doing those jobs. No matter how hard I work to be a Sr. Accounting Specialist, I will never reach the same pay as a man because it will always be something distinguished between the two. Being a woman is just that one more thing to give you a reason to be happy with yourself because it was a process, we could always walk in and say "I want this job" we were more likely housewives a long time ago but being a woman and seeing where we are now, we have made some progress. Yes, we have progress to make in order to be considered equal to a man but at the same time I feel like more people can identify with being a woman versus just race. (With a sassy tone) Yes, I love being a woman and that is one of the things growing up that I just loved, I looked forward to so many things as just being a woman… (The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears.)

Holly Wilson: Religion is really big for me, the fact that I'm a Christian. The fact that I'm a female; I identify with that, obviously. I think in my family I feel like I'm the, I don't know, maybe the prodigy kid, maybe like the kid…like I'm the first generation that goes to college. I'll be in medical school soon, hopefully. So I'm going to be a doctor someday, first doctor in the family. So I feel like in my family, I'm kinda looked at as the person that's going to bring the family out of this whatever, so I identify with that; something I kinda took on, not on purpose, but it just kinda came with me excelling in life I guess. What else do I identify with? I'm in a sorority so I identify with that, and that's (slight pause) for service and giving back to the Black community so, I identify with that. I identify with being a student, definitely, the struggles of a college student. I think that'd probably be it…[You see], I don't think [my identities have] ever

clashed cause they all make me like the person I am as a whole – that's just everything that embodies me, so I don't think they clash. They go pretty well together; I make them go well together, so I don't think they clash at all. Like, I feel like all of my identities are equal because I feel like there's a little piece of each in every category. Cause I'm a student, but I'm still a Christian. I'm in a sorority but it's basically a Christian-based sorority; it's not Christian based, but it was made off of Christian foundations. I'm a first generation college student; I'm a student; I'm still a Christian, so I don't think one leads more than the other. Like, it's just, they're all at the same little line and going at moving at the same time. [In my opinion], I think different identities would come up more so than others, because as far as like being African American I would definitely think about, "Why is that white guy looking at me like that?," or if they knew I was a first generation college student, will they be thinking like, "Is her family dumb?" or whatever. Since I'm in an African American sorority I guess I would be thinking like, are they thinking "What is that?" You know, stuff like that. I guess with that question it will be, I would like think about different identities more so, some more so than others. (The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears)

Mackenzie Jackson: [I identify as an African American, a student, and a Christian]. [Also], I guess I identify with liking sports, I identify with wanting to help the kids in the city so I guess kind of be like a mentor/tutor middle schoolers and lately that tutoring I have been doing has made me feel better as a Black person to try to go out into this community in [the] County, where it's hard to believe that [this instituoin] is here, but it's so poor around it and the education that the children get is not that great. I feel bad as a Black person being able to sit and help these Black children around me become so much more than what their surroundings dictate them to be…(pause) [My identities work together because] Yes, I feel like when I tutor it all comes into

one because I am giving the hope and the, what is the word I am looking for, encouragement that they need and encouraging them because "you do look like me and look at where I am at, you can do it. I am a student so I can help you because I already learned this stuff, I am Christian so I know that you can do whatever you want to through God, don't give up" that is a very good time when they all do come together. [At the end of the day], I probably feel like I lead more so with the student than with the Black or the Christian. (The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears)

Kalel: Something I've always struggled with is people stereotyping me as being an Athlete. It is something that I probably over-analyze about, and I am paranoid about but it something that I think about before someone else did it without thinking about it and people assuming that you can't be an intellectual and it goes against being athletic and you're going to be dumb or you will get "you only got in because you played sports" I carried a very respectful GPA throughout high school and I didn't get quite as high of one here but I still carried decent grades and was involved but at the end of the day if somebody types in my name it's going to pull me up in a uniform catching a ball. It's something that's a blessing and a curse because I love playing sports and I love the opportunities it has afforded me it has opened a lot of doors that probably wouldn't have been open if I was just a normal student here and I think probably down the line it is going to pay off in the connections that I made because of it but at the same time, I'm always going to be the athlete. I've always strived to take steps out of my way to push and be involved in something else and be known as something other than that. I never took the excuse "I'm going to play ball so I don't need to take this test." In my household growing up if we had a C on our report card we didn't do anything until the next report card came. It was something that was so important in my household that when people would dismiss me and say "you got what? How did you beat me

on this test" "what do you mean how did I beat you, I'm smarter than you" it's something that I am defensive about and it is always a uphill battle" you can draw similarities between that and the racial disparities that you have to overcome as far as being stereotyped and people having preconceived notions about you because of your race. That's just always something in my life that I've always tried to overcome and tried to go above and beyond to not only change that idea of people about me but about other athletes. [So], You look across the board and you look at the entry requirements for student athletes and non-student athletes their average ACT scores and average GPAS and its different but then again, you look at people who got scholarships based on student involvements, student activities, class president and their grades aren't as high as people who came in just off grades. People don't realize that there is a trade off and people don't realize the amount of time people have to put into the weight room or in the practice field or doing whatever to reach this level to where you are that valuable to a university and they say "hey you can come on because you are going to bring us in some money and we are going to give you this education". I'm going to have my diploma but when I go and turn in that resume but when it's got 4 years Varsity Football at [this university] they are going to say "oh he skated through this class and he probably got straight C's and his teachers just gave him that grade." That is something I am always going to have to battle against at no fault to myself even though I have gone completely against that stereotype it is something that is always going to be put on me as a stigma and as part of being an athlete. (Long pause) It's tough but at the same time I stand out even more because it does go against what people perceive as the norm so it separates me from that athlete crowd as somebody who has gone above and beyond but at the same time they are not like "oh he just went above and beyond as a student" they are saying "he went above and beyond what a normal student-athlete would have done he's not as smart as other students". I've

done a lot of things that I feel like I can be really proud of. I try to be humble but at the same time I'm like don't sell me short, don't tell me that "he's still an athlete and he still done this and that". When I've achieved things in my life that you can never accomplish in yours, but still you label me and belittle me in my achievements. It's something that's always really got to me and it's something that I've always tried to defend other student athletes on... (The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears.)

Denzel E.: I definitely identify as a man, I would identify as a student but I would also identify myself as a [journalism] student. I feel like [my journalism college] is almost more of a family than certain other colleges are. I've known my professors this semester, all of my professors in Grady, I've known since August of 2007. I feel like I've grown in that college and I've kind of risen up to certain standards in four years. I've definitely [see] myself as a Grady student , I'm a brother, I probably have upwards of 50 cousins at last count with my family being so big so cousin definitely. I identify myself as an American but also a global citizen which I feel like I wish more people would identify themselves as that and in the long run I definitely want to live abroad and I want to gain more of a global citizenship than I think people from other nations have that I think Americans don't always share. Someone from Europe has strong relationships, and if you're from France you spend a lot of time in England and you have relations with a lot of people from different countries and viewpoints from you, and I feel like people in South America you have more of a cultural understanding of people who are not from your country but have similar beliefs and viewpoints from you. I feel like in the U.S. you're an American, and you're not necessarily a world citizen you are an American first and foremost. I think in 2011 you're more of a global citizen I wouldn't say first but they're equal with the e communication that is available throughout the world, you have to consider yourself as a global citizen and things that

are happening abroad can affect you directly. (The mask reappears. The next random mask fades from the board and a face appears.)

Director's note: The stage lights go dark around the grid, and the softly playing jazz music gets louder. Then the stage lights go completely black. While the stage is dark, the transition to the next scene should begin.

Narrator: This vignette covered the multiple identities of the participants. The participants' narratives have implications for student affairs research related to identity development and the intersection of identities for students. Students' identity development can impact their ability or inability to be an effective participant in the educational experience (Chikering & Reisser, 1993). The more attention given to students' identity development, the more the expectation of achieving the positive outcomes traditionally associated with the college experience becomes their reality.

Research Question 3: How are Black students negotiating their racial identity within a PWI environment?

Vignette 6: Developing Own Racial Identity

Narrator: The participants were clearly trying to make sense of their racial identity through their own lens. They primarily shared that they did not start asking questions about or exploring their racial identity until they reached college. It was during that time that they began to develop their own perspective on race and its influences on their lives. Much of their development incorporated an evident challenge of what society or even what the Black community promotes as a representation of Blackness. This point is displayed through their opposition to the phrase, *are you Black enough*? Through their experiences in college, all of the participants were depicting their cycle through their racial identity development. It is important to note that their

development is cyclical, based on their varying life experiences. The participants' levels of development are directly affected by context and viewpoint. In tandem, Cross' (1995) Nigrescence Model, Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's (1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI), and more directly related, Cross and Fhagen-Smith's (2001) concept of racial identity development over life span, all help to undergird the participants, contextual, identity maturation, cyclical, constructed, intersubjective knowledge of their racial self concept.

In addition, as each participant provided their self-identified labels for their racial identity i.e., Black, African American, etc.), they offered reasoning for the label. Their reasoning for choosing a particular label was based on their constructed knowledge on the topic of race and how a label can inform a person's perspective on what that particular race represents. For instance, some participants were more comfortable with the label of Black, while others gravitated toward the label of African American (Burr, 2003). Through the participants' interactions with the topic of Blackness and self-identification their intersubjectivity yielded a shared cognition and consensus to co-construct reality (Husserl, 1969; Peräkylä, 2008). Ultimately, their narratives are informing the overall discourse of Blackness for these college students attending this particular university (Foucault, 1978).

This vignette incorporates an interpretative portrayal of the development of the participants' own racial identity. The vignette features the narratives of all ten participants. *Scene:* There are two half residence hall room sets connected by a wall. In each room, a student is lying across the bed with a male in one room and a female in the other room. As they are lying across the bed, they are journaling in a notebook. As a backdrop behind the residence hall room set is a screen. The screen is projecting a notebook piece of paper in a handwritten font.

At the top of the page is the phrase "Developing my own racial identity…Am I Black enough?", following the phrase are series of questions, "where do I begin?, what should I call myself?, how have my college experiences affected my racial identity development?" When each narrative is read aloud by the character's voices behind the stage, the actors on the stage should readjust themselves (i.e., sit up and write, lie down and write, walk toward the symbolic window, pace the floor, etc.). Only one actor at a time should be highlighted depending on the gender of the voice reading the narrative with a diming light on the other actor on the stage. As the set is uncovered for audience, the song "Strength, Courage, and Wisdom*"* by India.Arie (See Appendix D) is playing the background. During the vignette, the instrumentals for the song play on a loop in the background.

Kalel: (A spotlight is placed on the male writing in his journal while sitting up in the bed. Kalel reads his narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. He is not visible to the audience.) [Journal entry 1: Kalel's Journal, if asked what is my racial identity,] I do choose Black because I feel like that is what I identify as socially and if somebody else had to ask and they had to pick that is what society would tell me what I am but, I am biracial half black and half white. Ideally biracial and if there was an option to pick which two races…I don't want to be one or the other but somebody is always going to view you as one or the other and that is the tune and that double consciousness thing that is so hard that W. E. B. DuBois talks about to deal with in Black society because no matter what we do it is always going to be the stereotype that defines us. If we go so hard to battle that we are not going to stay true to our roots and "keeping it real"… (long pause) It's such a big topic in the African American society. It is tough and I've given a lot of thought to things like that and it's always been a struggle trying to manage both heads of the serpent so it is something that is hard to deal with, and it is something I try to devote a good amount of my

efforts in keeping this well balanced machine that doesn't get along on one end or the other but is round and keeps the equivalent on both sides. (The spotlight fades on the male.)

Gina: (A spotlight is placed on the female writing in her journal sitting up in the bed. Gina reads her narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. She is not visible to the audience.)

[Journal entry 1: Gina's Journal, if asked what is my racial identity,] The use of African I get from my descendants and my ancestry; that is why I use African to relate to our ancestry and not forget where we have come from, and then Americans because we were brought to America and we have been here for a while so, I feel like African American takes on both parts where is Black is just a color…One of the things I learned from [my grandma] is that it is never a point in time when she treated the grand kids different because of their races, she always treated us the same. That was an identity thing going home and I would hear my grandma talking about it and she would try to keep it from us that she had an issue with it, but the older you get the more you are relating on "this is how I view things" once I saw that it was like "hmm" but actually seeing her accept the fact that we were African American, and they were Caucasian American or Colombian it was like "ok so we don't have to always have to have a guard up". Having her accept the fact that my uncles had different preferences was just great, and it helped me accept the fact that I was just African American and that I would never have the better grade of hair, and it helps me realize that I had to be comfortable with who I am as a person. I feel like if I am not comfortable with who I am as a person than I would try to be a duplicate of someone else's image and that is not what I want it to be because I wanted to be an original. (the spotlight fades on the female)

Holly Wilson: (A spotlight is placed on the female writing in her journal lying on the bed. Holly reads her narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. She is not visible to the audience.)

[Journal entry 1: Holly's Journal, if asked what my racial identity is, I would choose] African American. Because that's what I am. I feel like if they had Black, I would choose Black and anything that identifies with Black or African American, that's what I would choose, just because growing up, that's what I've been told that I am, and that's what my family identifies with, so that's the identity that I've taken for myself. (pause) OK, *racially*. I feel like my experiences here [at this university] have really helped me because, just having to interact with other races. So I wouldn't say I have it down pat because nobody is perfect, and I'm definitely nowhere near perfect, but I feel like I interact pretty fine with people; I don't really hate anybody or any other race. And I've come to learn that it's not – just because one person or a couple people is discriminating or prejudice or whatever, you can't, you know put that on the whole race because that's basically what they do to us, so I would be just like them. So I mean if - I've never experienced any form of racial slurs toward me here, which I'm very blessed, but some of my friends have and, I don't know. I don't think I have it down pat, but I think I'm OK with it. Yeah, unless you know, I guess if there was a situation that I've been in that kinda, you know what was race – well, actually now that I'm thinking about it, I mean there *was* one instance where a couple of my friends, we were all Black, we were at Waffle House and I think it was a Black kid that was, that walked out on his check. It was a guy, and I guess the owner whatever called the police, and we didn't know the guy but we were speaking to him because he was drunk and he was complimenting us on our attire, so we were like, "Oh thank you" and he was (...) we come took our seats and that was the end of the conversation, but when the police came they questioned us and were asking for our IDs and all this type of stuff. So we were kinda confused why were you, you know questioning only us when he was sitting at the bar all the way far from where we were and we kinda felt like that kinda was, you know "Oh, he's a Black guy

and these Black girls were talking to him earlier," but there were White people talking to him earlier too that were *at* the bar that didn't get questioned. So I think in that situation, that would be an instance where I was like "OK, y'all getting on my nerves." But like I said, you know, that's just one person out of millions of White people, so I mean I can't let that one little experience, you know ruin all the positive experiences that I've had with White people. (The spotlight fades on the female.)

Alana: (A spotlight is placed on the female standing and looking out of the window, holding her journal. Alana reads her narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. She is not visible to the audience.) [Journal entry 1: Alana's Journal, if asked what my racial identity is, I would choose] Black. [Well], I guess it just depends on whatever it was but usually I've seen Black more so than African American when I check different things but I don't really have a reasoning I just make it simple. [Really], I kind of see them as the same way. It might also depend on the setting—I think African American is more of a politically correct term so it depends on organizations that I may talk about to older people (not saying their old), I might say African American "this organization is African Americans" or something like that. [Reflecting on my college experience], I did Leadershape, [a leadership development program for undergraduate students], after my sophomore year so then just being exposed at the most common level that people want to all be understood and want their passions to be influenced so, I think that was where I kind of just didn't care about labels and if you talk about the developmental, what is that dude's name, Cross, (a racial identity theorist)? (pause) I got out of my immersion stage and kind of just was accepting whatever during that particular period but that was also when I became a [mentor] my junior year because I felt that I could help first year African American students find that balance and navigate around there. Also my first year, I won the Miss Black University

(…)Pageant, and my platform was increasing unity in my African American students because also my freshman year what I found was that yeah, we are only 1000 here but I feel like we should be able to walk past each other and say Hello, and we should be able to support these organizational events. I did a survey and documentary to try to see what is keeping us from at least having a common ground. I did a big program where we broke the barriers that are keeping us from uniting with one another so that was heavy my sophomore year and I was just trying to make this unified effort. (pause) Now I am still very passionate about who I am as a Black person, the organizations I am in, but also aware that everyone is diverse and everyone has their own experience and everyone has their own story to tell and there is nothing wrong with me celebrating my stories as a Black person and celebrating others and at least getting to know other peoples stories. I think I am getting more adjusted to being able to observe and appreciate other identities, so I think that is how I finally been able to address it to a certain extent because there are still certain things about being in Black organizations I feel is unfair opposed to predominately white organizations. (The spotlight fades on the female.)

Brittany: (A spotlight is placed on the female writing in her journal at her desk. Brittany reads her narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. She is not visible to the audience.)

[Journal entry 1: Brittany's Journal, if asked what my racial identity is, I] would put Black Jamaican. I think in general a lot of people associate…especially living in America Black is associated with African American so I feel like I should identify that I am Jamaican just to distinguish myself in that way. As far as being Jamaican, I think I appreciate the fact that I am Jamaican because there are certain things that are different like I said as far as not having to really with or linger on the fact that there was slavery. In Jamaica, you don't really hear people talking about it so much but here, I realized that it's changed somewhat the fact that I have to

have those conversations because I am Black. As I said earlier, not all people know I am Jamaican so on the outside I look like an average African American so I find that I tend to have those conversations with my friends who are American and remember the past as far as slavery and what happened to their ancestors and how that has impacted us in the civil rights movement so, I find myself more engaged in those conversations and more engaged in finding out the history because I should be at least educated about what happened even if I didn't grow up here or my parents or ancestors didn't grow up here… (long pause). I guess for me, the circle of people I hang around, which is mostly Black I think …as I said my parents brought me up as being equal so I was completely oblivious that people might think of me as less because I am Black so, in some instance when I am in a situation when I am speaking to someone who is White or in situation where it is predominately White I feel the need to represent myself in the highest esteem so I can sure that they know that I am not just a regular old person who doesn't know what I'm about. Interacting with Americans or Black Americans helped me to realize that even though you might think of yourself as just being as equal as they are not everybody else thinks of themselves in that way so you want to remain aware of your surroundings and aware of the people you are with and make sure you are representing yourself well and that you are not completely going out there blind sighted because I could get hurt if I think that way all the time. I think that is probably the biggest thing as well as the fact that I learned how to interact with those people as well…(The spotlight fades on the female.)

Denzel E. : (A spotlight is placed on the male writing in his journal while sitting at his desk. Denzel E. reads his narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. He is not visible to the audience.) [Journal entry 1: Denzel E.'s Journal, if asked what my racial identity is, I] would probably just say Black. I feel like the term Black kind of lumps in different groups because

African American is a pretty popular term, but then I have friends who are truly African who live in America and I then I have friends who are just from America and I feel like the African American, personally I feel like if you are from Africa than your African American but I mean most people here, your more Black than your African American and it's the culture. From an American standpoint it's more correct because I have friends who are White who are from Africa; one of my best friends is South African and he's white but he's African, and he identifies himself as African because he lived there for seventeen years. So for me to say that I'm African, and for him to say that he's African, there's a little bit of a gap there. Going to Africa last year I met a lot of white Africans, so the Black I feel like represents the category better. [Since I've been in college], I would say that being able to see the similarities and differences between looking at White students and looking at Black students and with me being in a predominately White institution and being able to have best friends who are Black and best friends who are White and some of my Black friends don't have that many White friends and some of my white friends don't have as many Black friends. Being able to go between the groups has been helpful for me and kind of figuring out who I am almost. Being able to take the different pieces from different groups has influenced me and taking the good from this and the good from that and leaving the bad from there has almost shaped me more so than if I went to an HBCU. (pause) [Really, as I think about who I am…] I don't know that I could express in words who I am. I think it really changes what time of day you talk to me who I am around when you ask me the question, what I am doing when you ask me the question what I'm thinking about when you ask me the question. Today, if you ask me who I am it's more of the global citizen and I'm going to be speaking to, tonight, about probably 400 White females about going to Africa this summer so that is one aspect of me and then tomorrow if you ask me who I am you'll get a completely

different answer because I will have class tomorrow from 9am-6pm in the Jones School producing a TV show and news show. So if you ask me tomorrow I'm going to be in reporter mode, I'm going to be sports broadcaster tomorrow. If you ask me this weekend you are going to get a whole different answer so it really depends on when you ask me because I feel like I'm not a static individual, who I am is very fluid with my surroundings and I feel like I am more so than the normal person, who I am changes and its very wide and very differing. (the spotlight fades on the male)

Jordan: (A spotlight is placed on the female writing in her journal sitting up in the bed. Jordan reads her narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. She is not visible to the audience.) [Journal entry 1: Jordan's Journal, if asked what my racial identity is,] I would say it depends but it would either be Black or Jamaican American. This is interesting... My family for forever has been from Jamaica and it wasn't until my parents were really young that they came to the United States so that's a really big part of my ethnicity, and even when I was growing up when I would talk to my parents about African American or Black my parents would say "you are black." It was never, "you need to be this or that," but if I ever said that I identify with African American, my parents would say "no you are Jamaican American." So that was a big thing for them to make sure that I knew that my heritage is more Jamaican than it is African American. [Like] when I went to school, [before college], teachers are never going to say, "well," they say a group of Black students and they treat them all the same so the two are very different, and I realize that a lot more now, but I was treated the same as other students that had different identity. Civil rights when you come to Black history month and talking about civil rights I think I interpreted things in a southern mentality. But as I got older I realized "this isn't my history this is another history that is equally important but it's not something that is where my family is from." It

wasn't until recently when I started to get more into Jamaican history and how that has affected my family, and I found out so many things just from having conversations with family members. This past year for our history paper we were supposed to take one year in English History and write about it and I decided to do the year that Jamaica gained its independence from England. I am 21 years old…mind you…I am having a conversation with my grandmother and I found out that in 1962 England banned Jamaican immigrants from coming into the country because they had just gained their freedom and they didn't want a huge influx of minorities coming in. I found out my grandmother was on the last flight into England when that happened and she spent lots of years there and worked for the consulate in England and did a lot of great things that I've never known about. Then I found out that my family was instrumental in gaining the freedom because they had a lot of guerrilla armies. I've taken African history so I hear about this all the time but I didn't know that my family was a part of the guerrilla warfare that helped to gain independence from England and why did no one tell me this before, I was so upset when I found that out because I feel like I would have taken more pride in my culture had I known some of the great things we had done because up until then I just knew that we were from a small rural community in Jamaica but knowing more details and knowing more people in my family helped me to identify more with it myself and feel that pride that people feel when they talk about slavery ending in the united states or the civil rights movement because there really wasn't a civil rights movement in Jamaica, but I think that was something I really enjoyed learning about. In terms of race, there have been many times when I've been with friends that have made comments or generalizations about the Black population whether they were black or white, and I felt the need to say "well I actually I'm Jamaican American" to try to say "don't put me in this whole or put this characteristic on me". (Long pause) [For me], I would definitely say self-discovery and I

think that coming to college was a very big part of that and I know that in high school it was kind of like "ok I am in the gifted class with all of these White people and one Indian person as well" we were very immature in high school and race was big thing that was made fun of probably because we felt so uncomfortable that we were a big minority, but coming to college I would say probably was [my orientation leadership, two day experience] because we do this activity and it's called stand up/sit down and different prompts are read out and you stand up if you see something that identifies with you and I think actually seeing it acted out instead of…this is weird…actually seeing people have different things in common that even though there race or ethnicity has nothing to do with it but then getting to know people and seeing how their culture actually affects who they are so I guess it's a twofold thing, I see how what we all have in common across the board, but as I get to know you and I know that even though we have all these things in common. And like I said I have come to really appreciate my culture so I enjoy seeing people that enjoy their culture as well so I think meeting people that are really comfortable with themselves and comfortable with their ethnicities and families and seeing how we really experience the same things really shaped that for me, I would say that. (The spotlight fades on the female.)

Deanna: (A spotlight is placed on the female walking in the room the middle of the set, appearing to pace while holding her journal. Deanna reads her narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. She is not visible to the audience.) [Journal entry 1: Deanna's Journal, if asked what my racial identity is, I would choose] African American, [well], I am actually a quarter Japanese and my mother is half Japanese so my ideal race box would have a combination of both… I think that even though it's not a part of my culture that I am exposed to a lot my mom didn't grow up with her parents and we are kind of very distanced from them I have no real

Japanese culture in my house or anything like that but, it's one of those things where I have never been able to…in no way shape or form…identify with that or claim that; my mom is half and her mom is completely Japanese and speaks Japanese but it's something I don't personally connect to too much but it's a part of me and I don't like to ignore that and it's something that always does cross my mind like 25% is quite a bit. (pause) It's kind of interesting my sister came to [this institution] three years before I did and we are very different people—we look like twins but could not be more different. She's more…what people would consider…(holding her hands in the air making air quotation marks) Black than I am… She is more accepted in the Black community than I am. Because she…I don't know she's more…I guess I've always been really into marching band and I've always been busy on that side of campus and she had a bit more time to be social and she had a little bit more of an opportunity with that. I was talking to her about it and I said "I always thought I'd come to college and I'd find that really close group of Black girls that I could really relate to and they would become my closest friends and it just didn't happen." It was supposed to be like a different world and that is what everyone's college experience is supposed to be like, you are supposed to go to Hillman and find the girls you are going to hang out with for the rest of your life. That is what I was expecting and that is what it was supposed to be like! My sister was like, "you know that I hang out with more black people than you do, but I still don't have that." She was a senior at the time and she was telling me after the fact but she said it took her to her senior year to really find those girls that she was really close with. It's kind of funny; now that I am getting to my last semester I feel like I've somewhat kind of found those women for me and they are all women who feel the same way I do and that makes me really happy that I didn't try to change who I was to find a certain group, it just took me a little bit longer to find those people who were in the same place that I was. I am really

happy with the way things have turned out and I feel like I've made the contribution I've wanted to make and I may not have personally felt accepted but I don't harbor any hard feelings about that, I understand that it's hard and I get that. I might be a little bit more of an accepting person than the average person but it's been interesting. (long pause) I think more than anything the common theme for me or what I am typically thinking is "I know what I think it means to be African American and I know what I want other people to think that is and I am going to do my best to be an example of that"… (The spotlight fades on the female.)

MacKenzie Jackson: (A spotlight is placed on the female sitting in the middle of the bed, holding her head with her hands folded under her chin for support. Her journal is sitting in her lap. Mackenzie reads her narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. She is not visible to the audience.) [Journal entry 1: Mackenzie's Journal, if asked what my racial identity is, I would choose] African American. I would choose it because I don't feel like I'm Black because my skin isn't Black it is brown. I've been told that my ancestors are from Africa and I was born in America so therefore I should be called African American. [Also], I feel like it would be towards Africa as a continent also because truthfully I am a Christian and from the Bible I've learned that ruefully everyone came from Africa and so I am guessing that I say African more as that's the place that I'm from not more of cultural because I do not have any direct relatives that I have known that have came from the motherland basically. So, I think that's what I would say, and then just because my skin is a darker tone than a Caucasian so I go with African American. [At the end of the day], I'm thankful for the changes that were made in the past to allow me to be where I am right now basically. I feel like as an African American I can do anything that I want, nothing can stop me as long as it's legal of course. The sky is the limit and all possibilities can

happen and I should never let my race tell me that I cannot do something. (The spotlight fades on the female.)

Henry: (A spotlight is placed on the male writing in his journal while lying across the bed. Henry reads his narrative from behind the stage into a microphone. He is not visible to the audience.) [Journal entry 1: Henry's Journal, if asked what my racial identity is, I would choose] African American. As long as I've been alive that's been the politically correct term for what I am and I kind of like it because its American and then it has the African Diaspora aspect in it so I've always identified with that phrase I know a lot of African Americans don't like it but I do like and I prefer it to Black. [Truthfully], I prefer it to Black because I think when most cultures define themselves by a geographic location and even though my family, we are very [repeats three times] far removed from Africa. It gives us as a people more (I don't know) substance to identify with a geographic region and a culture than just saying "Black the color" white people, but Caucasian-white people do it a lot and say "I'm German, Polish, I'm whatever" so…(pause) I honestly can't say that I really had that realization [of what it means to be African American] before college. In high school my group of friends was a very (repeats twice) mixed and integrated group of friends, a couple Black students a couple white students, a couple Hispanic students, we had a Native American student so it wasn't something in high school that was on my mind. Once you get to college in this environment where people are from all over the state, having a roommate who was not used to being around Black people and when I got here, one of the first things that I did was I reached out to a friend that went to my high school that was already here, and she took me to an African American cultural center and that was my first group of friends in that environment and kind of learning that "ok there is more to it than different there is this context of struggle." At the [this] southern predominately white institution there is a

history of racial struggle here, not so much anymore but there is lingering stuff so recognizing there is more to it than just the skin color or just the different meals, there is a different history. Billy who lives in my hall his father's, father's, father's, father came to [this university], and he came remotely after that whereas I am first generation [student at this type of university] and most Black students are first generation [students at this type of institution] still. (long pause) I guess going back to where we started the conversation being African American now having almost finished an experience at a predominately white institution to me. Now I understand and appreciate more that I am Black, that someone like me who looks like me would not have been able to go here to this university 60 years ago and that someone who looks like me even 30 years ago faced a lot more challenges because of how they looked than I face today and that someone who looks like me 30 years from now will hopefully face fewer challenges than I have faced now. It has connected me to this greater timeline of what it means to look like me at a place like this and how that changes but you can still see similarities and you can still see things that are a derivative—it might not be the original but you can see that effects… [When] I think being African American, [I think that] is a responsibility and in an environment like this, of course there's the feeling of "am I representing myself or am I representing my race right now who am I representing in this context and circumstance" but then at the same time I think I've realized that being African American here you really have the responsibility (I believe) to understand what it meant to be African American here 10/20/30/40/50 years ago and being able to understand where we've come from. And understanding your place in the greater journey of where we are going and how you can contribute to that and how you can help advance that in leadership or environments or just a conversation with that roommate who has never been around Black

people before. I understand the responsibility whereas coming in as a freshman I didn't quite get that. (The spotlight fades on the male.)

Director's note: The stage lights go dark around the set, and the music gets louder, with the lyrics to the chorus of the song playing. Then the stage lights go completely black. While the stage is dark, the transition to the next scene should begin.

Narrator: This vignette offered participants' perspectives on developing their own racial identity. Their narratives addressed the questions they developed over time through various experiences that caused them to question their own definition of Blackness. Their questioning was sparked by people within the Black community and by other entities outside of the Black community, including the media, the dominant culture, and campus organizations. Nonetheless, they recognized the need to commit themselves to a personal perspective on their racial identity. The participants also shared that they did not truly examine their self concept until they reached their college experiences. They highlighted various instances whereas through their intersubjective interactions with others, they began to understand more about their self concept and its applicability in their life instances.

The experiences of these students have implications for practice within the field of student affairs and racial identity theory development. As expressed by these students, their racial identity development became more apparent to them during their college experience; therefore, student affairs professionals and scholars have a more important role in providing educational opportunities for Black students to explore and process through their racial identity development during their college expereince.

Vignette 7: Socialization

Narrator: Central to the narratives of the ten participants was their college experiences. They expressed how their attendance of a PWI has impacted their understanding of what it means to be Black. In their narratives, they shared their perspectives on how they were socialized in the university community, their in-group experiences with the Black community, their membership in certain organizations, their residence hall experiences, as well as their in-class experiences. While many of them did not explicitly address the role that student affairs plays in their racial identity development, they indirectly discussed many of the implications for student affairs related to certain programmatic interventions. For example, they noted that their racial identity development was impacted by their social interactions and how they were socialized into the campus culture which are all areas directly associated with the focus for student affairs profession. More importantly, these participants were experiencing their racial identity development in all areas of the co-curricular sector of campus. Therefore, it is imperative that student affairs professionals working in every functional area have well developed competencies in multiculturalism. As student affairs professionals prepare to face the changing pluralistic landscape of higher education, their ability to positively inform inclusive communities is directly linked to their multicultural competence (Pope & Reynolds, 2004).

The participants wanted to talk about their how their college experiences have impacted their racial identity development in a meaningful way which supports Tatum's (2007) assertion that the conversations about race must expand beyond the co-curricular interactions, it must reach the academic classroom as well. Of course, student affairs has a skill set and knowledge base to contribute to the development of this effort on any campus (American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators,1997).

Furthermore, the outcomes of the participants' college experiences align with the literature on Black students' persistence in a PWI educational environment. More specifically, previous research has linked Black students' level of satisfaction and engagement with the institution to their racial identity development, in contrast to their White counterparts' disconnection between their White racial identity with their satisfaction and engagement with the institution and the faculty (Grantham & Ford, 2003; Harper & Quaye, 2009). When Black students have participated in the educational process at PWIs, they have experienced disengagement from the educational enterprise because their perspectives were not an active or visible part of the enacted mission of the institution (Easley, 1993). Most importantly, Black students traditionally incorporate their cultural values and beliefs into their educational experiences (Tatum, 2007). It has been noted far too often that Black students who attend PWIs are accused of self-segregating (Stewart, Russell, & Wright, 1997). Moreover, research suggested that Black students' assured perception of the institution's environment was attributed to the students' sense of connectedness, social support network, and self-confidence (Gloria, Kurpius, Hamilton, & Willson, 1999).

This vignette incorporates an interpretative discussion had between the participants which covers the impact that socialization had on their racial identity development and their understanding of the campus climate. The vignette features the narratives of nine participants, Henry, Alana, Brittany, Deanna, Jordan, Holly Wilson, Mackenzie, Kalel, and Denzel E.

Scene: This vignette takes place on a campus bus, complete with bus-like seats, railing at the top of the bus with handles, a bus driver seat, bus driver, and a door that adjusts to open and close allowing the characters entry onto and departure from the bus. There are White extras moving on and off the bus occasionally throughout the vignette. The characters may indirectly interact

with the White extras, by acknowledging them as they may walk pass them on the bus. As the scene opens, on the bus are Brittany (seated), Holly (seated), Mackenzie (seated), and Henry (standing above them holding onto the railing).

Brittany: (in conversation with the Black characters) Like I said in general, I tend not to limit myself as thinking I am Black because I think when a lot of people think of being they think of oppression and when I think of being Black I think of being a person. I think a lot of people join those organizations and I did it because a lot of people tend to not realize the opportunities out there and I am not only a part of organizations that are predominately Black but I am also a part of organizations that have a diverse culture or diverse background. The reason for joining those was because I do identify with those people most and it's a comfortable place to air my opinions or talk about things but also I believe that given that I think of myself as a role model, those are the people I can connect to and I can help them to grow as individuals by teaching them "you want to be involved you want to put yourself in new experiences and grow develop and know what's there. Given that those are the people I feel comfortable with I can do that freely without having to think about "well why should I listen to you" or something like that. I feel comfortable within that environment but at the same time I want to also pull them out with me and go to other organizations and take advantage of other things out there as well.

Holly: I feel like the fact that I'm a psychology major helps me understand different people and how they think because that's basically what we learn about. And I feel like, I don't know, I guess just being an open minded person, so I think it just depends on the person, but for me I feel like I'm kinda, I'm kinda open minded, so I kinda like not generalize people. So, as far as you wanting to know anything else, I feel like I'm kinda open to whatever experiences come my way. So I don't know, I mean something that I would hope to see in the future I know is, I guess here

at [this institution] like I know me and my friends coming to [this university] always said, "Oh, we're going to get a white boyfriend, da da da," and you know cause I'm open to dating anybody; I don't discriminate against any race. But I feel like when we came here we didn't know that, you know, white guys don't date Black girls here. And I mean, there's some but there's a very slim, slim, slim number. So, I mean, you know they party with us, dance with us, buy us drinks at the bar and at the clubs, but after they sober up, "No, I don't know her." So I mean, and like going back to being open minded and understanding people's experiences I feel like a lot of times it's not necessarily the person. I feel like, you know maybe it's their family that you know isn't accepting because like I said like our parents and grandparents grew up in a different time so they're not as open minded as we are, and if your parent is funding you while you're in college, you don't want to go against their will and they cut you off. So, I kinda understand that, and I mean, maybe it's the fact that they don't know how to approach us, and I mean, I don't know. So I guess I just look at things from different perspectives and try to, you know, understand it.

Mackenzie Jackson: (while she is speaking, the bus door opens Jordan and Deanna get onto the bus. They take a seat near the Black characters) Before, I came from a predominately White high school and so it really wasn't a big change for me but there are some little things that you can tell. Usually if I am in a class or lecture hall I can sit in the middle and then usually those two chairs beside me are going to be the last chairs to be filled in the class and I've noticed that. I've noticed on the bus and that other Black people…I should say…the seat beside us may be the last chair to fill up and that is just fine with me because I don't want to sit next to anybody anyway so I kind of see that one as positive. I told my dad that one day and actually I was talking on the phone to one of my friends here, and we started talking about that and my dad was in the car and

he said “for real” and I said “yeah daddy.” And he said “well that’s them” and I said “you’re right; you’re helping me. I don’t want to sit beside; you it’s ok”. I have noticed little things like that and I have never encountered anyone be flat out racists towards me and I had an incident downtown but the boy was drunk, and I’m pretty sure he said the N-word but I just let it go because I wanted to turn around. And I said “I’m going to keep walking because he is drunk and some things just come out”. I am trying to think…at [this university] being Black…you’re a spec in a crowd basically. I guess you get noticed more because you don’t look like almost everyone else here but then again I would say for me, I am MacKenzie and not an athlete who I son that TV screen so I know for sure that being Black for them is different than being black for me because I am just another student and they are someone being looked up to, but that is off the subject. I am involved in organizations that are with predominately White people and I am involved with organizations that are for the minority. I will say that I haven’t been a member of some of the predominately Black organizations because it’s not as good as the White ones because they don’t be “on their stuff” or as organized as the other ones I would say but that is just little stuff.

Brittany: Somehow, even though I do identify as Black, at the end of the day not everybody else thinks like that so, for instance if I am around mostly white people I might feel at that point like I am different within that environment. Being around them I don’t have to think about that in that moment that I am Black and that they might be thinking of me as a representation of somebody else—in that environment I can be who I want to be as a person and not based on the color of my skin or worry about the fact that I am Black only. [In my non-Black organizations] I feel like I have to prove something that I guess for some reason I still have this mindset that some people think because your Black there is something different about you so I feel good that I can prove

them wrong and I can represent people who are Black and say I am successful and equal to you. In the same light, people who might think less of us can see that "well I was wrong" so it gives m e an opportunity to learn more about them and their perspectives as well and help them to grow and probably look at life in a different way and look at Black people in a different way as well. In general in terms of a social connection, it might take a longer time to tap into those social circles but it is definitely something I think is worth it because I think in the long run it will benefit us as a people or in general, me as well and them as well.

Henry: It's that community piece of it that African Americans fill in the drive for the richer history and culture I mean, that is still here. Being a Black student or African American student you are almost expected to find the African American community join it (whatever that means) find out what programs people are going to what people are doing what fraternity and sororities are out there that you can join and get more into the community, what parties are people going to. I've seen on this campus a lot of students struggle because I know I struggled for a while even on a subconscious level with wanting to really fully be immersed in the African American community on this campus but at the same time wanting to try something else, do your own thing, hangout with your hall mates join Miracle, philanthropy, SGA or whatever to really get the full [this university] experience as well as an African American communal experience. From a time standpoint that is an issue and I think a lot of students struggle with trying to balance that and some students don't and say "I'm going to be Black and hang out with Black folks" and other students say "this might be the color of my skin but I'm not going to identify with that community I am just going to be a student at [this institution]".

Mackenzie Jackson: Personally, I still feel like I'm smart, I've achieved a lot to be here, and [this school] has given me the opportunity to achieve even more to better myself and that is as a

African American and as a student in general—I feel like we have had an opportunities that I may not have had if I went to different schools…I would say. I am guessing that [this institution] had made me…maybe Black [university] I should say—it has allowed me to feel stronger about being African American and feel better, I guess, for being African American because we are all here and when I say all I mean all the students here at [this university] and we are here to do great things, accomplish things and help others. I guess if anything, it has just helped me be a better person in general and also be more in tune with my African American Black self, I guess.

Deanna: [You know], I think it's funny that we all feel this need to act a certain way and to feel accepted by a certain group of our peers because we feel like "these are the people I should feel comfortable with these are the people I should feel at home with" that is something that really tore me a apart in college and feeling like people won't accept me in this group when the simple fact is that I belong in this group. I've had very few racial problems here [at this university], but I feel more racial tension in the Black community than I have ever had with other White students here. [You see], Freshman year I lived in [Bryn] Hall and there were [White] girls in my hall who would not even look at me, they wouldn't make eye contact with me and I am the kind of person, I say hi to everybody and they would not speak to me, I know they heard me. That was a big one for me; I wasn't used to being around White people who didn't accept me because I grew up in a White community and we had all known each other since we were in 2nd grade so it's kind of before you see color so that was new for me and that hurt a little bit. [At that time], I [could] see now how after you have one experience like that at [this university] you go running for a Black organization and that was my initial "oh they were serious. Maybe, I do need that Black educational support team and maybe I really do need to find a group like that"? But then, I get there and I had the same problem. You are from [an upper middle class neighborhood], they

automatically assume that you are some stuck up rich girl who doesn't understand anything or knows what it means to be Black, and I'm like "no just because I am from [an upper middle class neighborhood] doesn't mean anything you don't know what my family is like and we moved to Alpharetta 15 years ago. (with a sassy tone) You don't know my family history. My entire family…no. I do get it I very much get it" but I think it was kind of like getting a cold shoulder there that hurt so much more than anything any white person could ever say to me on this campus, and just the past couple of years. It is funny to me because after feeling rejected from the Black community for a while I went off and I was like "well I can't let this deter me I am going to go do what I need to do" I am not the type of person to let stuff bog me down like that and I went on my own little path of being focused and made drum major as a sophomore and all of a sudden I hear that all these other Black groups are talking about it now. I'm like "oh ok" then homecoming happens and [Bill] and I won homecoming and all of a sudden people want to accept you but they still don't want to tell you there Black, but they're willing to claim you know. I'm not good enough to hang out with but when it comes to bragging about Black people on campus, slap our names on top of everything yet, you still don't want to accept me as a Black person at [at this institution]. Nothing is ever going to be good enough. I kind of made [myself] learn to not worry about what other peoples' definition of what Black is, I know I'm Black and I don't need you to tell me that. I am doing my part to make that mean something and if you don't want to support me in that and you don't want to allow me to be a part of this community to help our community that is fine, you are doing but holding yourself back.

Jordan: (while she is speaking, the bus door opens Kalel and Alana get onto the bus. They take a seat near the Black characters) [Wow, Deanna…I didn't know…] I would say that coming to [this university]…and this is maybe a very strong statement…the only time that I felt

uncomfortable about my race and my ethnicity was when I was with other Black students and that comes from, like I said, I grew up in [a racially diverse] county people said I talk White and people said I had too many White friends and I felt like I was put back in that position when I was really little when people said that same thing to me so I am trying to make new friends now "I really like you and I think your great" and in high school I had White friends, Black friends, Indian friends, it didn't matter because our school is so ethnically diverse so I was used to liking people because they were nice or because they were smart and they had something great to say and I felt like I had to choose between Black [university] and being with everybody else. I came in, and I said "I want to get involved in something that has to do with ethnicity," so I joined an organization that was purely based on Race and it wasn't even ethnicity it was just based on race and I would be there and meet a lot of really cool people but I would get to know them and I would see that they had qualities I didn't really want in a friend or I think that every time somebody makes a comment about me talking white or hanging out with too many white people I start distancing myself form that person and I was distancing myself from a lot of different people and that made me really uncomfortable. Because of that I felt like I didn't really have a place in [this campus community] and its funny because it was pretty much the same thing I went through when I was really little but finding [my orientation and leadership] organization helped me to appreciate who I was and to get to know people for more than what their race or ethnicity is and being in an environment where that was ok, now I know I am never going to settle for doing anything less. I feel like I can be 100% [Jordan] and no one is going to say anything about me in terms of Race and Ethnicity beyond the scope of "how do you think your experience as a Black girl has shaped your opinions?" But it's not in terms of "who are you [Jordan]" its "how are you going to help a 1sty year student ease themselves into." I think that

uncomfortable feeling made me say I don't want any other Black students to come in and feel that way. I think that is something that once I experienced I said "I'm not going to join an organization just because there are a lot of Black people in it or just because I feel like I have a duty to Black [university] as it's called. It was more so "what's going to help me develop" and "what's going to help me grow at [this institution]" I don't want to make it sound like I don't have any Black friends because I also have a problem with people that will cut off an entire race or ethnicity without knowing everybody but I want you to understand that it's more of an individual basis for me now than it is a racial thing.

Henry: (as he is speaking, Brittany, Holly and Mackenzie exit the bus) [Bye guys…(looking at the remaining Black characters) You know], It becomes easier the more self-aware you become and the older you become and the more you advance through your collegiate experience; freshman year yeah its hard, sophomore year you are sort of figuring it out, junior year you got it, and by senior year your mind is not even at college it's about what's coming (slight laughter)…but yeah. (pause) Going back to my experiences joining my fraternity that was really the first time, well not the first time but it was really a substantial moment of me realizing that this had been happening and I hadn't even realized it was happening. Being able to come out of that experience and have that really tight community of brothers and sisters who are Black on this campus going through similar things but being able to embody the fraternities value of leadership and service and things like that outside of the community and I really came out of that experience being able to harness [those connections]… I will never forget my freshman year I came here and there was an NAACP meeting and I in high school I knew what the NAACP was just from seeing CNN and Jesse Jackson would be on TV but I never thought that what they were fighting for and arguing for would be something that I would identify with or would be able to

participate in. I went to a NAACP meeting and some friends I met at the cultural center said "oh are you going to the NAACP meeting this afternoon," and I said, "I wasn't planning on it but I guess sure why not I will meet some new people." And I remember I went and everybody was fired up and proud to be Black and proud to be Black students and they were protesting something happening downtown and some racial discrimination and I was like "oh my gosh there is still this stuff happening there is still black students fighting these things and taking a stand" and I was like "whoa this is a whole different thing for me" and I thought "I agree with them and this is something I can join" it's not a radical thing that I felt, it was a reality.

Kalel: (speaking to Henry) [It's interesting that you bring up our fraternity…my membership has significance for my college experience and my overall racial identity]. I guess after that first semester I was really more immersed in to the Black culture in [this university] and it was a lot more fun, but it's definitely different. I feel like you kind of have to have you're in at [this university] you can't just be a "guy." I feel like if you are a guy most the time you hang out with some other subculture at [this school] either you're a science major or your performing arts and you kind of either have to be friends with somebody whose into that or, I don't know. I definitely had an in as an athlete and we stayed at [Wade Hall] ever since freshman year so all the Black people who stayed at [Wade Hall] would all congregate and we'd all hangout. Plus, my older teammates were friends and I'd meet people through them but [my fraternity], Alpha, really was the time where I felt most connected to the Black culture at [this institution]. Obviously, my teammates would give me the "Hey, what man." [Yet], you can never be Black enough you can never be White enough, but if you're an Alpha you are an Alpha. You can't be just until you are tired and this and that so it definitely helped to solidify…in my opinion…to other people that I was a part of this Black culture, and I'm not just "oh he's the light skin guy over there." It was,

"oh he's an Alpha," and as part of being an Alpha, "he's in the Black community now!" It really makes me think a lot being here like why it is so important to define yourself as this; in the past when I was younger and when I didn't have as good an understanding I strived so hard to be something that I wanted to be but because other people wanted and said "this is what you do need to be, this is what's cool and this is what people think being Black is all about". [Ultimately], Everybody wants to be accepted by the culture human beings naturally have a want to be accepted by people who are like them and gravitate towards people who are like them but at the same time, I feel like we are so caught up as a race and not only as a race but as a country in how our country views that race and what they expect of that race and all these things that don't matter at all and have nothing to do with our true culture and our concrete culture, things that really matter like the musical roots and things like that and we get caught up in "keeping it real"…

Henry: (while he is speaking, the bus door opens Denzel E. gets onto the bus. He takes a seat near the Black characters. Henry addresses Kalel) [You bring up an interesting point] because there's always been this debate forever [here] of "do cultural organizations", I don't want to say Black organizations, but all cultural student organizations, "do they do more to compartmentalize [people]…"separate and segregate into pockets of students of different races and cultures than they do to mix in and promote greater cultural understanding".

Alana: (jumping into the conversation] I think it's harder for one because you have Black attached to your organizational name and people already assume that its only limited African American people. It is a celebration of those things but at the Black Council Meeting we don't sit up and plot and say "the man is doing this." We have Teach for America coming, we have Workshops, we have upcoming meetings, we plan Bnity ball, all of the things I have done with

Housing as a RA and now as a [Black student mentor] have been through the skills I've gained at Black Affairs Council planning programs, promoting programs and stuff like that. Often times when we are planning programs and stuff like that, we are in competition and trying to promote to African American students because we know guaranteed they are going to be the ones to come, but other people are scared to come if they see Black they say "I don't know if I can come to that event" I think the budgets of certain organizations; I haven't been into the allocations meetings but we always have to really justify our reasons for having our money so some people may ask "because you are a Black organization is it because you have student allocated fees will that adhere to the whole student body." I think that is unfair to say sometimes and really we have to justify ourselves so much more because we have Black attached to our name whereas other organizations I don't think have to work as hard or have these intense meetings about student allocations and have to be questioned "because you're Black do you think you can cater to the whole organization." A lot of times I don't think the other student groups would have to do that as much. I think those are some frustrations or annoyance but that doesn't stop my organization we just keep going and I kept moving even though that is something that annoys me. I think also I have gotten too old and hopefully the freshman and sophomores share that passion I hope I am sharing that passion enough with them so that they will want to work harder to have more discussions and dialogues and still be proud of the organization. I hope it didn't become this new attitude of "we don't need these organizations anymore" and they get rid of them I would hate to come back to [this university] and African American culture center is gone or Multicultural services is gone or consolidated into this one thing because they felt that we didn't need it. I think they are going to find that people are going to drop out eventually because they are not

understanding how important those organizations are and they are helping people branch out into [this campus environment].

Henry: [Exactly]! Yes—there is a separation that happens and that some I argue is encouraged from these organizations that can prevent some students …if they let it…from interacting outside of class and really truly interacting and having a sharing moment with someone that's different from them. At the same time, there are those students who may be African American but don't want to join those communities so then it has the effect of, I think from my experiences, they can be kind of ostracized from the community: "she don't talk to Black folks we don't know her." But, I think one of the positive things it's done is it allows students who are Black or are from whatever cultural background to immediately have something comfortable that they can connect with immediately to help ease the transition into when it can be a very shocking environment of a predominately white institution. I know students who came here and went straight to the African American culture center because this can be an overwhelming environment and they say, "ok this is familiar and I may not know them yet but this is a welcoming culture and group of people," and then getting comfortable at [this university] through that and a lot of people get comfortable [in this campus environment] in other ways and branch out from there. I would say that is my experience, a little bit. I think there's a lot of different effects and of course [this institution] and any institution particularly southern institutions with such a history of racial tension that stuff lingers a little bit. We all celebrate diversity and exchange stuff like that but at the end of the day if my grandfather was in this fraternity chances are if he came back there would be some changes but not a whole lot of changes in the fraternity house so you don't see a lot of black students on [Saber Blvd.] in those fraternities or sororities you don't see hardly any white students in Black fraternities and sororities so there are still areas of really sharp

segregation that I think are kind of derivates of all that. [On the other hand, my college experience] It has helped me to fully understand…well not fully understand but understand more that there's a greater timeline in history and context to being Black than I think I would have ever thought or really fully considered had I not come to a predominately white institution and it's the context and history of struggle, the present context of meeting and interacting with people who maybe have in their minds what it means to be Black and having interacted a whole lot with Black people or have their own negative stereotype of what it means to be Black in their head and having those interactions. Latching on to that community aspect really tightly and taking pride in that. When I look in the paper and see that we have a Fulbright scholar, and she's Black [that excites me] when I see that I'm saying "oh good for her." I feel proud for the community. When I see the homecoming king and queen being Black students I say, "oh I am excited for them and they have figured out their piece in their corner of the environment." I hope people felt the similar feelings about me when I was elected into my position [as a campus leader] and I got that, a lot of people were proud and I got messages from people who I didn't even know, Black professors, faculty, staff members, students saying "we are proud of you keep up the good work and call me if you need anything." So being in this environment helped me latch on to that community.

Alana: (with intentionality in her voice) It goes back to sharing that celebration aspect that I was talking about. Here, I have really had to spread knowledge about my culture to others and spread knowledge about me that yes, I am Black and I have this identity as Black but my identity as being Black does not represent everyone's identity as being Black. You know when you say "don't make a generalization if you meet one black person that is not representative of all Black people." So I think when I get an opportunity to talk to different races being at a PWI in general

provides the opportunity to talk to different people of different races or ethnicities so you get to share. I think this environment influences some form of dialogue or perceptions gained and knowledge, and then it gets to foster and you get to see it. I know that people come from really small towns in [this state] and don't get to see the same things so; at least you get exposed to it. There is programs like Leadership, Study Abroad, sustain dialogue and you get to have an opportunity to have dialogues about those things. As far as me and how it is influenced my identity being Black, it has helped me to have more dialogue and discussions about it. If I would have been at an HBCU, I would have always been talking about it but I think you are really secure in yourself and identity when your being amongst everyone else and you find your own uniqueness in that. Sometimes, I don't think HBCU…I am making a generalization, maybe not…I don't think at all times you get to develop your own uniqueness within your identity.

Denzel E.: (excitedly) [I feel that same…] For me, I have definitely had a more diverse understanding of personal relationship and I have friends of every creed and color or whatever. I think the personal relationships viewpoint is kind of one that is way different from them to me and the university that I choose and the personal relationships that I have. Freshman year I had a random roommate and the university sends you an email and says "this is going to be your roommate" so I Facebook-ed him, and he is from way south [in the state] (repeats twice), as south as you can get in a little town in [the most southern part of the state] and honestly I was a little nervous that we would have any kind of similarities at all really. When I found out who he was and I stalked him a little online—sometimes your mind goes to the craziest things and I was imagining almost *Remember the Titans* and he's putting up a rebel flag in the room. And I was like, "this is probably not going to be good for me." From Atlanta, I wouldn't have a problem with a white roommate but a white roommate from Atlanta might be better than a white

roommate from the boonies. We met the first day and we ended up having…I mean…for every view point that was different we had ten viewpoints that were the same and we came from similar families had similar values and principles and we just became best friends almost from the start, and we are still roommates today four years later. And we are going to be 5th year seniors as roommates; so we started together and are going to finish together. (pause) … just getting to know him and getting to see that we were pretty similar individuals; on paper we looked pretty different but in reality seeing ok he's from here I'm from here but we really have kind of the same story almost. [Here at this institution], it is definitely not as diverse and the different groups, there is almost less interaction between different groups and the Indian kids have their own kind of cliques, Black kids have their own little cliques, Asian students have their little cliques, but for me coming from that background I knew how to intermingle with all the different groups and I had best friends who were Asian, black, white, Hispanic, so leveraging my experiences in the past with building relationships with different groups of people I think helped me from the start with developing as a leader and developing in different organizations and going what I wanted to do from the start because I was able to talk to anyone. I didn't feel uncomfortable talking to someone of a different background than me which I had friends who went to all black high schools and never interacted with White students, and I had white students friends who came from small private white schools and didn't really have any Black friends before. Both those groups of people had to learn to adjust to make new friends and expand diversity but for me it was easier because growing up I knew how to talk to people from different backgrounds so I think that played a really big role early on with me branching out and making relationships with people.

Deanna: (addressing all of the Black characters on the bus) I think that [this university] does a great job of being "oh yeah we want more Black students we are working on our minority numbers," but when you turn around and ask them what they are doing and it's like, "what are you doing?"… I think is a [related to how] they go about recruiting and how those students feel about if they are even desired as a student at the university. [From my personal experience], If it weren't for programs outside of admissions and the actual core of the university, like [minority student recruitment days] where they bring in the Black students to have a day in class, [the university's] summer [band] camps, Jam Feast, stuff like that or [even] having a sister here. I would not have come because I would have felt…I would have been so turned off to this university that there is no way in the world this would have even been on my list. I think a lot of us have had this experience in class where we are talking about something and it has to do with black people and they turn around and there like "What do you think, your Black what do you think, how do you feel about this" as far as being at a university I think your African American student wants to be appreciated for being unique but not singled out as in "your unique your over here you don't relate to anything over here" I think we would like to be seen as equals and "yes I have a different perspective but it's not my only perspective, yes I can relate to but it's not the only thing I relate to. While I might not directly be in your situation I understand it and I appreciate it" I think that general idea flows through all aspects of campus and for student affairs going back to what I was saying about not crippling each other I think that whatever programming it is it's not just "oh your Black in a white world I am sorry let's sit here and sing Kumbaya and feel happy about each other" or this fake sense of making it seem like it's ok when it's not. The role that student affairs can really play is opening up those discussions and letting people really talk about how they really feel and encouraging people to not embrace the rinky-

dink definition of diversity. Diversity is not just having people who look different sit in a room together and be like "great we are diverse now." That doesn't help anybody at all. I think getting in there and really having the hard conversations. I was talking to the president of the Black Affairs Council the other day and we were having this conversation because we both feel the same way about being uncomfortable in our own Black community and opening that conversation up for everybody because it's one of those things I feel like a lot of people feel…even those people who are in the Black crowd some of them feel like they are having to work to stay there. I have plenty of white friends who would love to hang out with them but they feel intimidated and they feel the same way I do which is funny. I don't think they even realize it "as much as you feel alienated from this group so do I." I think it's more of a fear thing and people are afraid of opening up and not being accepted. It's one of those things where there needs to be a lot more open conversations especially on this campus about things like that because there is so many different people here. I appreciate it if I go to a probate and there is someone in redcoats who says, "hey can I come with you," and I'm like, "yes, you can. I am so happy that you're coming. And please be that one white face in the crowd and I know everybody is going to see you and appreciate that you are there". If something like that were to happen there is always that person that is like "what is that white person doing here?" and stuff like that has got to stop and it needs to happen in a open forum where at some point we have to stand up and be like "this isn't good enough anymore." And realize that as much as you want to complain about white people not accepting you we are part of the problem as well. Everyone is in their little club "I won't let you into my club if you won't let me into your club" at some point someone has got to be the person who waves the white [surrender] flag on that and say "we are willing to try if you are" I think it really does come down to fear of not being accepted and I

understand that better than anybody. [This is our stop guys…] (All of the Black characters exit the bus.)

Director's note: The stage lights go dark around the set. Then the stage lights go completely black. While the stage is dark, the transition to the next scene should begin.

Narrator: This vignette covered the students' narratives on how their exposure and socialization into the PWI culture impacted their understanding of Blackness. As noted in the vignette, the participants had various encounters with students that were either in the Black community or not in the Black community that helped to shape their understating of what it means to a Black person operating in a PWI environment.

The points discussed in the vignette on socialization of these Black students have implications for practice in the field of student affairs. As previously discussed, student affairs professionals' ability to positively inform inclusive communities is directly linked to their multicultural competence (Pope & Reynolds, 2004). Additionally, since Black students' level of engagement within a PWI is directly associated with their sense of belonging, it becomes increasingly imperative for student affairs professionals to support campus wide initiatives that promote inclusive learning environments for this population both in and out of the classroom.

Vignette 8: Regeneration

Narrator: The participants shared that as they matured in their racial identity development, they wanted to strengthen their self-concept, using their education successes to help advance the Black community, and giving back in the form of service to the Black community. The participants' narratives were addressing the regard which they hold for group associated with their identity (Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith, 1998). Their narratives were directly informed by their public and private regard dimension of Black identity development

found in the MMRI (Sellers, et.al., 1997). As described by Sellers, et.al., (1997), their "Private regard refers to the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively toward African Americans and their membership in that group" (p. 807). Additionally, their Public regard is based on the "extent to which individuals feel that others view African Americans positively or negatively" (Sellers, et.al., p. 807).

This vignette incorporates an interpretative portrayal of the participants' narrative on regeneration in their Black identity development. The vignette features the narratives of all seven participants, Brittany, Mackenzie, Jordan, Alana, Gina, Denzel E., and Henry.

Scene: The characters are gathered in behind the stage like set. On the screen behind them should be an image of a crowded auditorium with a speaker at the podium in front of the audience. The image should reveal graduates dressed in caps and gowns in the front of the audience and other people in regular attire. The image portrays a graduation ceremony in the middle of the program. The characters are gathered behind the image (from the stage audience's perspective they should see in the image the back of the presenter and the front of crowd with graduates and others). With a dim stage light on, the characters appear dressed in similar caps and gowns as the graduates in the image are discussing the collimation of their college experience and what they are planning to do in the future. Before the stage lights completely come up on the characters, there should be pomp and circumstance music playing in the background. The music plays a softer volume, the stage light come up completely…

Brittany: [It's graduation day and I am leaving here with thoughts of the future]… I think it's more as I grow just not growing out of those things and not forgetting those things that make me who I am because I think a lot of people might try to work towards a certain identity and try to forget where they are from so, I think the challenge for me especially not being in Jamaica is to

preserve that and to ensure that as I grow I am still remaining or tapping into where I grew up for 17 years, or that I am Black, or just remaining aware of that fact so, making sure that as I grow I don't forget it at all but that I still embrace it as a part of who I am.

Mackenzie: [I couldn't agree more. For me], I would like to grow to be more appreciated maybe. I want to be a person that no matter what your race is you can come talk to me I should be able to help you out with something maybe. I would like to be a strong Black woman which is what my family has always instilled in me—that you can be that. I would like to be a doctor, I would like to be an even more educated than what I am now, more caring , more loving and way down in the days have that wisdom that my elders have I would say. That is all I can think of right now.

Jordan: [As I leave here today, I'm thinking]… I have gone into situations just to prove that I could do it even if it did make me uncomfortable which isn't great when your in a relationship with someone but that's something (I've told you) I don't ever want to have is having someone put a label on me and that being who I am; seeing something and being like "well that is something that someone would never would do" or "if somebody can't handle that then I want to go forth and do that just to prove that I could do it." Even if I failed I still tried so I think that's something—I never want to feel uncomfortable because somebody is a different race than me because in my mind I would be like, "well I can prove that I am better than them," and not better than them as a person but better in some type of way it doesn't matter what kind of venue it is I need to prove that I am better in this avenue and it has nothing to do with race or IQ it is just because I am Jordan…

Alana: [I can say that I have enjoyed my time here and I don't want to lose my connections. I want to build] a network. I already talk to friends now and say "I need to stay in contact with you

once we graduate because you need to be in my circle of people". I participated in another study for a graduate student and he was talking about Black student leaders and their identity and I remember mentioning that for us here, there is a certain group of Black student leaders that were always together and I think that is a beautiful thing so I would like to continue that—being around a group of Black professionals that are successful on the cover of Black Enterprise, Forbes, doing what we truly love and being noticed for that. I probably won't be in corporate I don't like it, I don't know where I am going to be at but I want to be happy and have a big network of people who are all bringing each other up and celebrating each other's accomplishments. I think that's the ultimate goal wherever that may be…

Gina: [Truthfully], I want to see myself become more involved in an African American community but, more involved not just in the African American community but in the integration process. Although we are desegregated I want to see us actually being integrated into where we can sit…we can sit now in a classroom with other races but now it is "I am going to hang out with you because you are African American and you look like me" where it's like "I want to hang out with you because I want to or because I can identify with some of your interest" versus at first I have to choose somebody that is racially like me, then I have to choose somebody that I like with my same interest. One of the things (getting back into my future) is I want to do more for the African American community because sometimes I think being in an African American community and coming from where the community socio-economic status isn't that high (it is very low sometimes) it gives the students and people in general…I feel like it has the biggest impact on children and it gives them a little confidence in themselves in knowing what they can become. Also, coming from an African American community now we have a lot of single mothers and having a lot of single mothers has a great disadvantage on the students and

children in general. Because the mom has to work and find a way to feed the kids and things like that so sometimes, things might get hard. I want to open up my own center and have it to be where it's a non-profit and they don't pay to come, come to the center and get help whether it is academic help or staying till their mom is off work and things like that, or just getting benefits out of just coming. I want to move towards a integration process because we don't have one of those truly set in place we are never going to truly make what our ancestors fought for to be equal. (long pause) I want to see a grey not necessarily a Black or white but a gray: a good mix. If I am a professor, one day, I want to look in the class and go and see that not only do I have my African American section here and the rest is Caucasian American but, it's a mix. Even if there isn't as many African American students in the class as Caucasian students threes a mix and students are just sitting next to each other because they can. We can now, but now it has a stigma on it "I am sitting by her" I want to see it where we walk in and sit down and not only do we sit down next to our friends but we get to know the other people outside of just our friends, so I want to see that process change.

Denzel E.: [My thoughts lead me to think about] the Black community but the American community in general too but specifically the Black community and the issues that a lot of young Black high school students are facing and Black males in general are facing not being able to graduate from high school and if you can't graduate from high school you can't get a real job and you can't get a career and there is no longevity in that. Enabling a younger generation of Black students and Black males in particular to know that they have options and they can graduate from high school and go to whatever high school they want to and they can have a success really would be the best way to develop as a Black male. I think the biggest way over the long run is kind of giving back to the community and helping the next group of students and helping the

next group of kids that are going to transition into high school students and college students—giving back to them is probably the biggest way to grow and develop in the long run.

Henry: To me progressing as a Black person means progressing as an African American and those two different things I talked about earlier and those two half's. So, progressing as an American being successful in whatever I want to be successful in and being able to make a difference and impact the world in some way as an individual on that path while always learning more and having more self-awareness of that community and that greater community that I am a part of and what that means for my actions and how that is going to dictate my actions and interactions with people in the community and people outside the community and are never forgetting the history and the background context and things that happened before in every situation so growing and developing in both directions together is what it means to develop as a Black person. I would definitely say that being Black at a predominately white institution if I could sum it up in three things I've gotten from it is greater self awareness, a greater cultural awareness, and a greater sense of responsibility. [It's time for us to go…] (the pomp and circumstance music gets louder and the students line up in two lines. One line exits stage right and the other stage left)

Director's note: The stage lights go dark around the set. Then the stage lights go completely black.

Narrator: This vignette encompassed the participants' narratives on their role related to regeneration within the Black community. They expressed their interest in giving back to the Black community as well as being positive examples of Blackness to project toward the Black community and the dominant culture. Their narratives were directly correlated with Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's (1998) explanation of public and private regard

for positive and negative perceptions of Blackness. They were using their understanding of Blackness, gathered through their interest in regeneration, to construct their own reality of Blackness for the Black community and the dominant culture.

There are implications for the topic covered in this vignette for student affairs practice. Black students have a desire to give back; therefore, there should be opportunities for Black students serve as mentors to students on campus and community members off campus.

In sum, a constant theme throughout this play is the exploration of concepts related to subject, rationality, structure, power, language, truth, and knowledge. Of the concepts within in a discourse, an exploration of the concept of truth became the focus for this study. In the context of this study, the concept of truth is represented by the neo collective narrative of Blackness for the Black students in a PWI environment.

The end.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

> Narrative psychology, its aim was to discover and to describe formally the meanings that human beings created out of their encounters with the word, and then to propose hypotheses about what meaning-making processes were implicated. It focused on the symbolic activities that human beings employed in constructing and making sense not only of the world, but of themselves (Bruner, 1990, p.2)

Discussion

This study sought to understand how Black students were making meaning of being Black a PWI environment. The study posits that Black students' meaning making is based on a social construct that they intersubjectively weave into a master narrative of Blackness. Therefore, if the aforementioned idea has viability, then the concepts of subject, rationality, structure, power, language, truth, and knowledge must be explored. Of the concepts within in a discourse, an exploration of the concept of truth became the focus for this study.

In the end, the study challenged the notion of truth for Black students' sense of meaning related to their Blackness in a PWI environment. The quest for truth continued with questions like, where does truth exist, who determines truth, how is truth conceived, how is truth used…and the questions continued. In the context of this study, the concept of truth is represented by the neo collective narrative of Blackness for the Black students in a PWI

environment. Therefore, the purpose of this study asked how are Black students making sense of their racial identity development within a PWI? Recalling the theoretical framework for this study, it incorporated the intersection of social constructionism and intersubjectivity with an underlying awareness of the racial identity stages outlined in Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith's (1998) Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity.

Discourse theory provides the researcher with an opportunity to examine language for the purpose of revealing the topics, themes, and motivations that inform the use of language in a set of data (Peräkylä, 2008). It can inform a specific set of research questions, as well as inform a broader research theoretical framework (Bakhtin, 1981). In other words, the researcher looks through the socially constructed lenses (discourse) using the participants' stories to see how they are negotiating and renegotiating their conceptualization of truth, knowledge, subject in the larger intersubjective story (neo-master narrative) (Burr, 2003).

Recalling from the literature that the key element of a social constructionist framework highlights the notion that "all the objects of our consciousness, every 'thing' we think talk about, including our identities, our selves, is constructed through language, manufactured out of discourses" (Burr, p. 105). Varying perspectives on the concepts of knowledge, truth, and reality help to inform the meaning behind social constructionism. For instance, sociologists Berger & Luckmann (1966) postulated that individuals and society are interrelated. In essence, "human beings continually construct the social world, which then becomes a reality to which they must respond" (Burr, 2003, p. 185). More importantly, humans do not have the ability to construct the world as they choose. The basis for this study is informed by the social constructionist frame which clearly articulates that "at birth [humans] enter the world already constructed by their

predecessors and this world assumes the status of an 'objective' reality for them and for later generations" (Burr, p. 185).

Referencing what has previously been noted, the framework of social constructionism is the study of structures or discourse of consciousnesses that are systematically reflected in a given social construct to reveal the intentional relations between people and the world (Donohoe, 2009; Husserl, 1969). Additionally, the intentionality within the relation uncovers the meaning that informs the experiences of the people involved in the interaction (Atkinson & Delamont, 2008; Gallagher, 2008). Such reflection was initially believed to only involve the viewpoint of self, yet the constructs that inform people's consciousness are a collective of multiple perspectives, and they are essential in the shaping of a society's ideas and relations. For instance, the participants for this study expressed that history, religion, faith, and family were still structures that have remained constants in the Black narrative. These structures were measures for assisting them in coping and survival throughout life and particularly within context of their college experience at a PWI. The intersubjectivity within their relations and experiences allows researchers to engage in social constructionism to reveal the meaning and constructs that inform their shared ideologies.

Knowledge is a concept that can be presented in the form of a situated construction or co-construction of knowledge (Collins, 1990). Related to the findings from this study, the researcher deduced that , situated knowledge can best be described as a core self concept which is informed by firsthand knowledge, better described as perceptions and responses of the individual. The self concept supports an individual's identity and sense of self efficacy. On the other hand, co-constructed knowledge can best be described as hearsay. This form of knowledge is filtered through what one has heard…they heard it said about a concept, hearsay. Inherent to

knowledge based on hearsay is the notion of detachment from the master narrative of Blackness. For the participants in this study, either they shared a healthy self concept through firsthand situated knowledge or they presented knowledge based on hearsay. Conclusive of this study is the ideology that Black students should create their own situated construction of knowledge on their racial identity. Additionally, the students and student affairs educators should be accepting of the developmental process of racial identity development. Both entities should remain as learners and be open to the continuous cycle of development.

As a social construct, the of lack a discussion concerning race and racial identity has perpetuated the elements of a Black master or metanarrative (Lamothe, 2008). Furthermore, through this impeding intersubjective, collective narrative derived from societal messages, Black students are having difficulty negotiating their consciousnesses in and out of the classroom (Tatum, 2007). Thus the aforesaid process impacts their development of their self concept informed by a situated knowledge on their own racial identity.

Employing racial identity development theory can help promote a clearer understanding of how Black students are making meaning of their perspective on what it means to be Black in a PWI environment. As noted earlier, serving as an intersection of the theoretical frame for this study, Sellers, Shelton, Cooke, Chavous, Rowley, & Smith (1998) have offered a perspective on the significance and meaning of racial identity through the dimensions of salience, centrality, private regard, and public regard, titled the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI). As described by Sellers, et.al., the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI), "provides a conceptual framework for understanding both the significance of race in the self-concepts of African Americans and the qualitative meanings they attribute to being members of

that racial category. Along with this conceptual framework, we propose a mechanism by which racial identity influences individuals' situational appraisals and behaviors" (p.19).

The figure below is used as a tool to visually represent the conclusions from this study. It should provide clarity related to the elements discussed in the aforementioned section. The figure illustrates the overall discourse that is society's constant discussion on a particular truth, for the purpose of this study; truth is the meaning of Blackness. Next, the discourse is filtered through the master narrative or social construction of Blackness developed by the dominant culture. In this space, realities of Blackness are constructed through limited lens of truth associated with Black culture. Following, the concept of truth is further formulated through the intersubjective interactions on the meaning of Blackness. These interactions can happen, as detailed in the narratives for this study, in schools, communities, churches, with family members, friends, etc. to help create a neo collective narrative of Blackness. Then, the neo collective narrative is used along with, as displayed in the narratives for these participants, their own situated constructed knowledge on Blackness, they are developing their own, firsthand understanding of racial identity. In turn, their firsthand knowledge informed by personal experiences with Blackness and their own racial identity development determines their self concept on Blackness. The participants self concept then is intersubjectively shared with others, who add their neo collective narrative to the master narrative, which informs the overall truth or discourse on Blackness for society. The quest for truth is a cyclical process that is rooted in the notion of developing a healthy self concept that will transcend the varying levels of knowledge to impact the overall discourse.

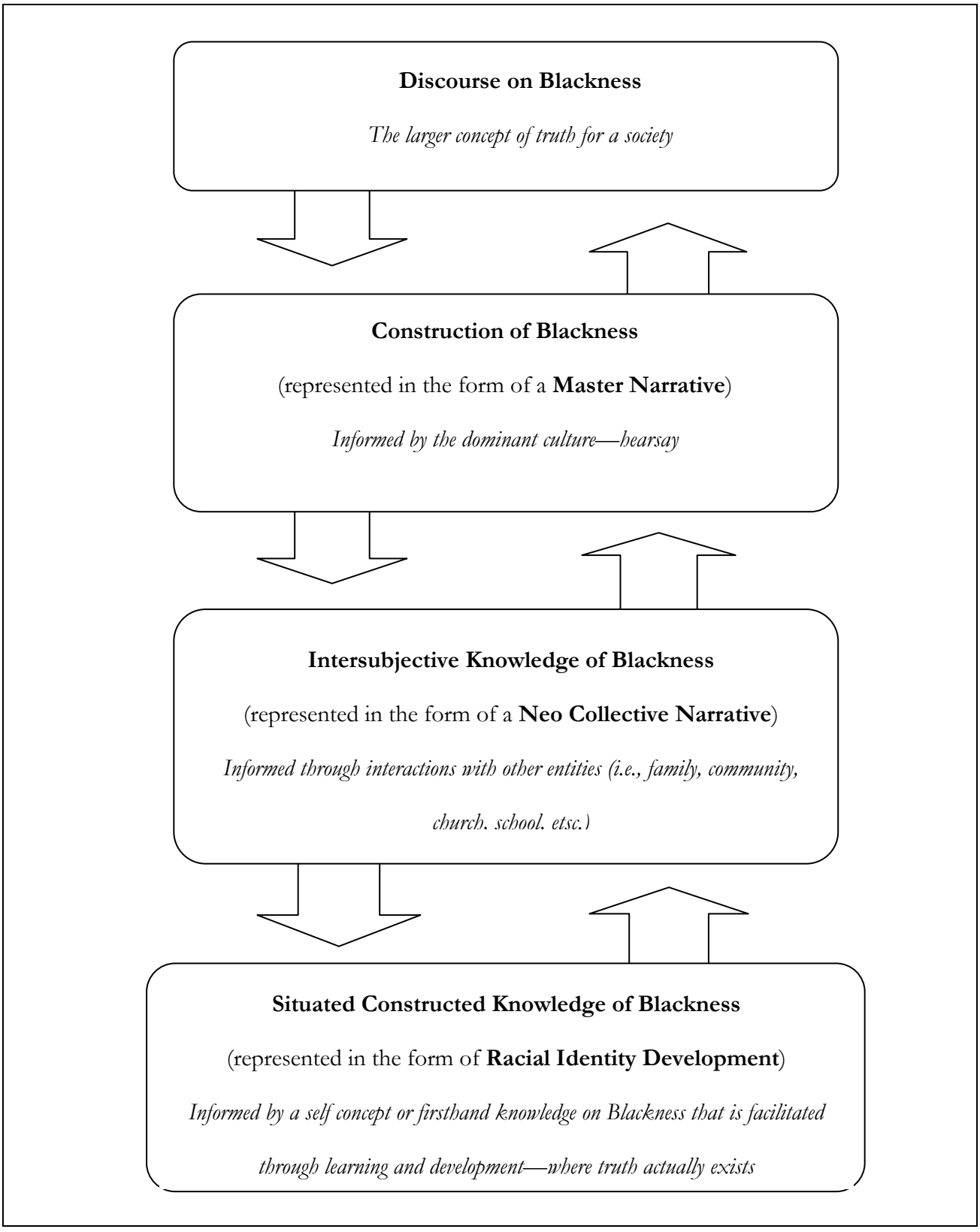

Figure 11., Neo Collective Narratives of Black Students at a PWI: Visual Representation of Study Conclusions

As the Black students in this study revealed, if you do not have a well developed self concept that has been informed by your own situated construction of knowledge, then you are more susceptible to be uncomfortable with your own identity area, in particular your racial identity development. Black identity development is a dynamic concept for the Black students in this study; their racial identity is constantly changing and developing. Their collective narratives addressed the areas of dissonance in their development that either led to a healthy self concept or a less assured co-constructed perspective on their identity. Particularly, their dissonance was expressed through their narratives on their level of comfort with the Black community. They shared that they questioned notions of Blackness because other Blacks brought into question whether the participants in this study were Black enough. These inner-community conversations created dissonance for them or a detachment from the master narrative of Blackness because their messages about Blackness were being filtered through a hearsay level of knowledge on the construct.

This is an example of intersubjectivity represented by the co-construction of knowledge through their interactions with others on the construct of Blackness. Their questioning was generated through their response to the construction of race and the dominant culture's personification of being Black. The participants' dissonance led to their challenge of the master narrative created by the dominant culture by their recognition of multiple identities which offer varying depictions of Blackness for society. Moreover, they challenged the master narrative with notion that being Black is more than physical ability, cultural references, or societal struggles of the past. The salience of what it means to be Black becomes apparent for these participants in context, yet the centrality of Blackness is not always at the core of their self concept. Therefore, these participants, at times, were left questioning their Blackness and

clinging ways of challenging the social construct, rather than internally focusing on the own racial identity development.

In the end, the Black students for this study were engaging in the performativity of Blackness. As addressed earlier, Judith Butler (1988, 1999) theorized performativity as a concept that explores how something (object) comes to being. In other words, the theory postulates that identities are informed by various discoursive frameworks. The performativity (what is being done) that a person offers it then becomes a performance (what they do) (Butler, 1999; Diamond, 1996). There is a dramatic performative utterance that takes place in the face-to-face interactions (as the subject) of people that provides the researcher with a sense of understanding (Austin, 1962; Goffman, 1959). Ultimately, through the person's use of language, they are in essence doing or performing the object and that is where a researcher can find the performance in the subject. The Black students in this study were displaying their performative interactions of Blackness in their narratives. It is important to note that even with their own situated constructed knowledge of Blackness, they were still performing and through those interactions a new intersubjective narrative of Blackness was developed; hence, the creation of the play as avenue for expressing the neo collective narratives of Blackness for these ten participants.

Ultimately, their neo collective narrative has helped to outline some implications for practice that directly impact the work of student affairs professionals and inform an overall campus approach to racial identity development for Black students on PWI campuses.

Implications

As mentioned previously, the seminal documents for the profession like the *Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937, 1949) and the *Student Learning*

Imperative (American College Personnel Association, 1996) help to inform the more student-centered and inclusive community philosophy held by most student affairs professionals.

Student affairs interventions

Campus administrators should implement more intentional measures that regularly assess the cultural climate within their educational environments (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996; Schuh, 2009). Black students use their social networks regularly. In addition, the varying levels within their social networks play a vital role in the psychosocial and racial identity development for Black students. For instance, strategies like promoting counseling services that focus on Black student issues and offering a Center for Academic Success that primarily concentrates on academic initiatives for Black students are two approaches to understanding the cultural and educational climate for Black students.

Moreover, student affairs professionals at PWI's should collaborate with various campus entities for the purpose of increasing Black student exposure to the campus culture during students' first year in college (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005). The impact of the racial identity development for Black students serves a significant role in their overall persistence within this particular institutional type. For example, interventions addressing this particular implication that included providing First Year Programs that focus on Black student engagement, offering early registration and advisement, and implementing early alert programs to identify students who are having academic difficulties as strategies to address first year student concerns.

Furthermore, for the Black students in this study, their families and their faith still play an important role in their overall lives. As student affairs professionals continue to develop their multicultural competency related to working with Black student, the student affairs professional

should attend to the those aspects of Black students' lives. As an example, developing Parent Partner Programs that incorporated parental and/or guardian feedback and support will help student affairs address this implication for practice.

The educational enterprise of today is facilitated through a commitment to collaborative partnerships for the purpose of advancing a holistic approach to the development and learning of students. For Black students and any cultural group in an educational environment, the transformative educational experiences that institution seek to create can only be achieved through a campus wide initiative and culture that fosters communication in and out of the classroom on race (Tatum, 2007). In her book *Can we talk about race?,* Tatum outlined the path that our educational system has taken over time, while noting the complexities associated with incorporating discussions of race into the classroom and in policy development. It is important to recognize that it is challenging to discuss issues of race and identity. However, the college campuses cannot continue ignoring the issue or, more importantly, the outcomes that develop from this cultural norm. Tatum (1997; 2007) explained the challenges and ultimately the implications preventing Americans and, indirectly, students from having such educational and social conversations. This lack of discourse has directly affected the racial identity development of persons of all ages.

In addition, this study addressed the notion that Black students believe that they are navigating their self-concept in relation to their Black identity through their formal and informal affiliations, while balancing their role in overall campus culture. Campus administrators and faculty should recognize the implications of this finding on linkages between social adjustment, racial identity development, and academic success for Black students in a PWI environment. Close attention to developing initiatives that support and advance their racial identity

development, while increasing their exposure to diverse social settings will help them further explore conversation related to construct and co-constructed realities. Once Black students are able to advance this intentionally informed self-concept, they can make greater meaning of their curricula and co-curricular experiences. These recommendations will help to improve student affairs practice.

Multicultural competency development

Currently, many institutional missions recognize the concept of pluralism and exposing students to a diverse educational experience in and out of the classroom (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2009). Colleges and universities can exhibit their dedication to diversity education in a variety of ways. Particularly, the work of student affairs professionals in the area of multicultural education can have a lasting effect on students' college experience. Student affairs divisions use programs and services that focus on the advancement of diversity education, and expose the campus community to pluralistic environments.

Based on the literature, more research is needed to assess the impact of diversity, inclusion, and equity standards on educational outcomes (Cokley, 2001; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999; Taub & McEwen, 1992). Obtaining a better understanding of this linkage will help the profession gauge whether or not its programs and services are actually fostering inclusiveness, diversity, and equity throughout the student population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Ultimately, the employment of this paradigm will positively influence the effectiveness of student affairs programming and services with a focus on student development and learning through participation in pluralistic environments.

Moreover, the further development of multicultural competencies for student affairs professionals offer will help to guide research, assessment and evaluation initiatives for the

profession centered on advance learning in this area. As campuses incorporate various inclusion and equity related programs and services to students, administrators and faculty should integrate the suggested advancements into their implementation plan (Schuh & Associates, 2009). The results can add value to the practice of developing inclusive community that support the learning and development of all students.

Supervision applications

There are many models for supervision that offer positive outcomes for student affairs practice. Any student affairs division, department, unit, area, office, etc. can incorporate multicultural competency into their supervision model. For instance, in a synergistic supervisory model the competencies can be infused into the co-constructed decision making practices for a supervisor and the reporting staff (Winston & Creamer, 1997). Furthermore, an integrated staffing model that reflects the incorporation of the competencies into its recruitment, orientation, staff development, performance appraisal, and separation practices of a unit stands to produce capable and well skilled professionals (Creamer & Winston, 2002).

Student affairs professionals must consider furthering the learning and development of students through the use of programmatic interventions that promote multicultural competency and ultimately support the success of students. Student affairs professionals can continue to inform building inclusive communities on college campuses by implementing their sound multicultural competencies. In addition, higher education has a responsibility to advance the knowledge base of inclusive and diverse learning environments through the exploration of research agendas, assessment, and evaluation practices. Lastly, modeling these competencies in various supervisory and staff paradigms can lead to a more seamless approach to programs and services, while implementing proven practical applications for all student affairs divisions.

Areas for future research

The research needed in this area is extensive. Black identity development is a constantly emergent concept. While research has progressed in this area, there are many directions for areas of future research in this construct. Most related to this study is the significance of generational influences on racial perspectives for students' racial identity development. For instance, do Black students raised by persons of a different generation within the American racial climate, like the Civil Rights Movement, have different perspective on Blackness than students raised by persons of a more recent American racial climate, like integration? This aspect of the research agenda may provide insight into the impact of generational influences on Black students' perspectives on their racial identity prior to their college experiences. Moreover, their informed perspectives may give entry for student affairs professionals into the effectiveness of services and programs offered to this population.

Another area of research to consider is the intersectionality of identities for Black students. For it is at the intersection of their identities where their truth and situated knowledge exists (Collins, 2000). Recognizing the impact that the intersection of identities has for Black students has implications for practice with the field of student affairs. As described by Shields (2008), "An intersectionality perspective requires that identity categories be studied in relation to one other—the facts of intersectionality at the individual, interpersonal, and structural level compel us to. At the same time, however, we must be mindful of the specific historical and contextual features of individual identity categories" (p.307). The literature within the field of student affairs should reflect a more contemporary approach to racial identity development for Black students.

In addition, research in the intersection of racial identity development theory and the person environment theory can help to inform how campus communities can create more inclusive environments for Black students. The application of racial identity development theory and Schlossberg's (1989) theory on marginality and mattering with racial identity development theory can have lasting effects on how education is delivered in a particular educational environment. This conceptual framework discusses the idea that people need to feel a sense of belonging and value within an organization, particularly related to an educational community. If the level of marginality decreases and the level of mattering increase, a person is more likely to succeed as a member of their community. As research becomes more advanced in this area, the more beneficial the learning outcomes will manifest for all students within a particular educational community.

Lastly, advancement in the research agenda for this area can be realized through a more focused effort on social justice ally identity development. In particular, Edwards (2006) illustrated three areas of social justice ally identity development, aspiring ally for self-interest, aspiring ally for alturism, and aspring ally for social justice. These areas of development represent the various levels that a student affairs professional may experience when working with students, other staff, faculty, etc.

More information and research is needed on the topic of social justice allies. While more advance levels of identity development can help student gain an appreciation for themselves and others, the necessary component of becoming social justice minded and ultimately allies should be explored and offered to the greater educational community.

Summative thought

Overall, student affairs professionals must consider the racial identity development for Black students when creating programmatic interventions that promote their persistence in PWI environments and ultimately support the success of this special population. Noting particular attention to the situated knowledge that informs self-efficacy and a healthy self concept for Black students, student affairs can have a more intentional influence on the student learning and development of this student population. Student affairs professionals should continue to provide the campus with strategies that build inclusive communities through utilizing their sound multicultural competencies. Lastly, employing practical applications of the aforementioned interventions can offer some positive strategies for approaching programs and services, while increasing the effectiveness of proven interventions for all student affairs divisions. The area of student affairs continues to make impactful changes in diversity education, and continues to improve the educational environment for all students as time advances.

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APPENDIX A

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research Problem: This study seeks to gain the narratives of Black students with the exploratory question, how are Black students making sense of their racial identity development within a PWI?

RQ3. What informs Black students' understanding of their identity?

1. Let's discuss your artifacts, pictures, symbols.

    (a) How did you learn about being Black?

    (b) How have others in your life shaped your understanding of being Black?

RQ2. How do Black students make meaning (interpreting) of their racial identity development?

2. What does being Black mean to you?

    (a) How would you define your Blackness?

    (b) Tell me about a time in your life that has impacted your definition of being Black?

    (c) What identity area do you connect with the most (i.e., gender, race, class, familial position, religion, education, affiliations, etc.) ? Why?

RQ1. How are Black students negotiating their racial identity within a PWI environment?

3. How has your time at a PWI influenced your meaning of being Black?

    (a) How would you like to grow as a Black person?

Additional Question:

1) How do you identify racially? Why?

APPENDIX B

Table 1., Neo Collective Narratives of Black Students at a PWI: Axial Coding

Codes		
1. Campus Culture	2. Diverse Environment	3. Family Values
4. Skin Color	5. Learning about Blackness prior to college	6. Residence Hall
7. Church-lesson learned	8. Belonging	9. Campus Organizations
10. Woman, Man, Athlete, Leader	11. Family Influences	12. Integration
13. Community Building	14. People, Places, Things that informed understanding	15. Working harder than Whites to succeed
16. Learning about Blackness during college	17. Christian	18. Role of Student Affairs
19. Multiculturalism	20. Competing in a PWI Environment	21. Who says what being Black means
22. Ethnic Diversity	23. Giving Back	24. Recognizing Blackness
25. Challenging the Status Quo	26. Racism in and out of the classroom	27. Being told you aren't Black enough
Axial Codes		
A. Multiple Identities	B. Segregated culture within the Black community	C. Taking values throughout life
D. Dual Consciousness	E. Salience	F. Challenging Concepts of Blackness
G. Campus Climate	H. High School Vs College Ethnic Diversity	I. Student Affairs
J. Black Intellectual	K. Conflicting connections to Black community	L. Sense of Community
M. How to define Blackness for yourself	N. Making ancestors proud	

Themes		
(1) Family Ties	(2) Ancestry	(3) Social Construction
(4) Blackness	(5) Multiple Identities	(6) Developing Own Racial Identity
(7) Socialization	(8) Regeneration	

APPENDIX C

Table 2., Neo Collective Narratives of Black Students at a PWI: Participant Demographics

Participant	Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity (Self Identified)	Gender	Hometown	Classification	Major	GPA	Housing
#1	Gina	21	African American	F	Columbus, GA	3rd yr.	Math/Math Education	3.71	On
# 2	Alana	21	Black	F	Stone Mountain, GA	4th yr.	Theatre/Public Relations	3.64	On
# 3	Kalel	22	Black/ Biracial- Black & White	M	Columbia, MO	4th yr.	Business Management	3.1	Off
# 4	Jordan	21	Black/ Jamaican American	F	Gwinnett County, GA	3rd yr.	History/Sociology	3.64	Off
# 5	Denzel E.	21	Black	M	Snellville, GA	4th yr.	Digital Broadcast Journalism	3.3	Off
# 6	Henry	21	African American	M	Fayetteville, GA	4th yr.	Advertising/Theatre	3.83	On

# 7	Deanna	22	African American/ Japanese American	F	Alpharetta, GA	5th yr.	Microbiology	3.58	On
# 8	Mackenzie Jackson	21	African American	F	Cartersville, GA	4th yr.	Biology	3.2	On
# 9	Brittany	21	Black/ Jamaican American	F	Mandeville, Jamaica & Atlanta, GA	3rd yr.	Accounting	3.85	On
# 10	Holly Wilson	21	African American	F	Decatur, GA	4th yr.	Psychology/Biology , Pre-Med	3.29	On

APPENDIX D

India.Arie (2001). Strength, Courage, and Wisdom, Producers India.Arie & Mark Batson, *Acoustic Soul*. Motown.

Song Lyrics

Inside my head there lives a dream that I want to see in the sun
Behind my eyes there lives a me that I`ve been hiding for much too long
'˜Cause I`ve been, too afraid to let it show
'˜Cause I`m scared of the judgment that may follow
Always putting off my living for tomorrow

It`s time to step out on faith, I`ve gotta show my face
It`s been elusive for so long, but freedom is mine today
I`ve gotta step out on faith, It`s time to show my face
Procrastination had me down but look what I have found, I found

Chorus
Strength, courage, and wisdom
And it`s been inside of me all along,
Strength, courage, and wisdom
Inside of me

Behind my pride there lives a me, that knows humility
Inside my voice there is a soul, and in my soul there is a voice
But I`ve been, too afraid to make a choice
'˜Cause I`m scared of the things that I might be missing
Running too fast to stop and listen

It`s time to step out on faith, I`ve gotta show my face
It`s been elusive for so long but freedom is mine today
I`ve gotta step out on faith it`s time to show my face
Procrastination had me down but look what I have found, I found

Chorus
Strength, courage, and wisdom
And it`s been inside of me all along,
Strength, courage, and wisdom

Inside of me

Bridge
I close my eyes and I think of all the things that I want to see
'˜Cause I know, now that I`ve opened up my heart I know that
Anything I want can be, so let it be, so let it be'¦.

Chorus
Strength, courage, and wisdom
It`s been inside of me all along,
Strength, courage, wisdom
It`s been inside of me all along, everyday I`m praying for'¦

Chorus
Strength, courage, and wisdom
To find me, yeah,
Strength, courage, and wisdom
Inside of me

Vamp
I found it in me, I found it finally
I`m sure to keep it` cause I like it, I say thank you