EXPLORING FACTORS THAT INFORM EDUCATORS' EXPRESSED BELIEFS AND REACTIONS TO INCIDENTS RELATED TO RACE

by

DIONNE WRIGHT POULTON

(Under the Direction of Janette R. Hill)

ABSTRACT

Racism is rife in American society (Tate, 1997) and is ―embedded in the social, cultural, and biological collective consciousness of human experience‖ (Utsey, Ponterotto & Porter, 2008, p. 340). However, despite its pervasiveness, racism continues to be an issue that is not readily or easily discussed in our society—especially not in the education system or in conjunction with educators' beliefs about race and their reactions to incidents related to race. Social Desirability Theory teaches us that people are not usually willing to report their negative attitudes toward others, even when they are aware they make assumptions based on race because it is not socially acceptable. Therefore, much learning can occur about the automatic unspoken beliefs and assumptions that drive our behavior in racial situations (Collins & Pieterse, 2007).

The purpose of this study was to explore educator's expressed beliefs and reactions to race using critical incident scenarios. The qualitative study employed Gordon Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis and used two key data sources to explore the research questions:

(a) Two written experiences with race created by participants on cue cards, and (b) the use of two focus groups consisting of 3 and 4 educators (respectively) from diverse racial backgrounds. The principal data collection activity included three core activities associated with the critical analysis of real-life critical incidents used to facilitate discussions around the expressed beliefs and reactions of educators to incidents related to race. These were: (a) reactions to scenarios, (b) discussions of scenarios, and (c) reflections on discussion. The resulting data was analyzed using the constant comparative method of data analysis and major themes were determined.

An analysis of the data yielded four themes in response to Research Question One, which asked, ─What expressed beliefs and reactions to scenarios about race were revealed by educators of color? There were also two themes associated with Research Question Two: ─What expressed beliefs and reactions to scenarios about race were revealed by White educators? And there were two major themes/factors in relation to Research Question Three: ─What factors inform expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race? Results showed very different beliefs between the educators of color and the White educators. However, the two groups of educators shared common factors that informed their expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios.

INDEX WORDS: Adult Education, Professional Development, Contact Hypothesis,
                 Critical Race Theory, Race, Racism, Prejudice, Dialogue
                 Unconscious & Conscious Racial Beliefs and Assumptions
                 Critical Reflection, Critical Incidents, Focus Groups,
                 Critical Discourse Analysis, Reactions to Scenarios

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my loving and supportive father, Wilbur Theophilus Wright (August 3, 1941 to May 24, 2008). I still cannot believe you are not physically here to see me achieve this degree. You have been and will always remain with me in spirit and in love. Losing you, especially during this process, has been the most devastating event I have ever endured in my life. It was some of your last words ever spoken to me that made me keep my head up and persevere. Even in the face of ugliness, I stood with grace and dignity— just as you and mom taught me!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Racism in Society

Racism is an influential force in our society that has led individuals to horrible acts that result in dire consequences for people of color. For example, individuals may have seen the race riots that took place in Los Angeles, others may recall the Rodney King beating, and it is difficult to forget the horrific and heinous murder of James Bird who was dragged by a pick-up truck driven by racists in Texas who targeted him because he was Black. Further, another example of racism that although less violent but equally disturbing, was the blatantly racist and ―derogatory remarks of radio ‗shock jock' Don Imus about a group of young female Black student athletes in the spring of 2007" (Utsey, Ponterotto & Porter, 2008, p. 339) in which he called the women ―nappy-headed hoes." In addition, most recently we also saw the preeminence and influence of racism during the 2008 US Presidential Elections, in which for the first time in US history, a presidential candidate was provided around-the-clock security by the Secret Service due to the large number of racial death threats made against our now President, Barack Obama.

Yes, the aforementioned examples of racist events are on the extreme end of the continuum and therefore, individuals may feel they can easily dismiss the culprits involved as having nothing in common with them. However, according to *Critical Race Theory (CRT)* this is not necessarily true because racism is ―normal, not aberrant in American Society" (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv). Bell (1992) also echoes this point *in his work, Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism,* in which he argues that racism is a permanent fixture in this society and thus, is very much a part of *all* of our daily interactions.

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Therefore, since racism is very much a part of our lives, we cannot dismiss race as a subject or entity that impacts our beliefs about how we see others, how we see ourselves, or how we react in and to different situations related to race. Not even in the realm of education can we excuse race as a possible influence on the perceptions and behaviors of educators. In fact, it has been shown that race can lead adult educators to underestimate the academic achievement of students of color, including having lowered expectations of them (Johnson-Bailey, Cervero, Valentine, & Bowles, 2006; Lund, 2005); and these lower expectations can also lead to lower evaluations of students of color in comparison to their White peers (Lund, 2005). Therefore, there is a need to explore the impact of race in educational institutions; and in particular, there is a need for educators to not only explore and examine their beliefs about race, but to also explore their reactions to incidents related to race in order to better understand how to change the environment.

As we explore the possibilities, setting a foundation with terminology is important. As a key concept in this study, when I make reference to the word Race, it refers to the "skin color" or nationality of an individual to which a person identifies and/or how our society perceives such a person. As a result, categories of persons in this study that arise, such as White, Black, East Indian and Asian are all superficially related to the physical features and "looks" of a person and how he/she is categorized or perceived by society. Additionally, in this study, race, and its influence on our perceptions and behaviors as individuals in the United States is regarded as the most salient factor above all other possible social factors like gender, class, age, etc., that could impact how we react to situations related to race. An explanation for this focus on race is further described in the next section.

Race: Its Impact on Our Beliefs and Behaviors

Race is an invisible presence that plays a major role in determining how our society functions (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000) but as an *intangible influence,* its presence, namely the assumptions we have about different people because of race is not always acknowledged or recognized as a possible factor influencing how we perceive and behave towards ―Others‖ (Kumashiro, 2002). In fact, the negative assumptions we have about different racial groups are not always obvious and overt, are sometimes masked, disguised and camouflaged by jokes or other word usage, and our negative beliefs and assumptions are not always manifested at the conscious level—thus, making it hard for individuals and especially the most innocuous and reticent individuals with good intentions to admit that they could be influenced by race (Poulton, 2003; 2007; Poulton, Johnson-Bailey & Guy, 2008)

Therefore, unfortunately, for the reasons just mentioned, despite the fact that racial prejudice is ―embedded in the social, cultural, and biological collective consciousness of human experience‖ (Utsey, Ponterotto, & Porter, 2008, p. 340), it is hard for people of color to prove its existence despite the reality of dealing with it every day. Even when a person of color is convinced that an incident occurred because of race, he/she has the responsibility of convincing others—without a shadow of a doubt, that the situation was related to race. Regardless of the situation, when individuals of any race find themselves in negative situations related to race, it often ―evokes emotions such as fear, distrust, anger, denial, guilt, ignorance, naiveté and the wish for simple solutions‖ (Wijeyesinghe, Griffin & Love, 1997, p. 82) within the individuals involved. For example, a situation in which a person of color is unfairly treated because of race by a White person may evoke an emotion of anger in the person of color; while at the same time

evoke emotions of denial and guilt in the White person. This denial of the influence of race among some White individuals is the key element in Colorblind Ideology that serves to "dodge, suppress, and ignore matters related to race altogether (Gordon, 2005). Colorblindness is not blindness or an inability to see color (Gordon, 2005); it is what Jervis (1996) defines as "White resistance to seeing" (p. 553) because when White people are pressed, they reveal their awareness of the advantages and privileges afforded to them simply because of skin color (Thompson, 1999). This concept of colorblindness is further explored in Chapter 2 but it is important to note here that "the self-infliction of blindness to race [and] resistance to seeing, suggests that there is an ongoing series of decision points for White people when it comes to race" (Gordon, 2005, p. 139). Another decision point or option that is afforded to White people is the ability to remain silent with respect to incidents related to race. This silence is indicative of colorblind ideology because it reflects the position of privilege that White people have to ignore race when they so choose (McIntosh, 1989; Thompson, 1998).

Therefore, it is clear that we are not necessarily open to the idea that our beliefs and reactions to others or to different situations could be influenced by race. It is for this reason that much learning can occur about the automatic unspoken assumptions that drive behavior in racial situations (Collins & Pieterse, 2007). From a psychosocial perspective, Senge (1990) refers to these assumptions as "mental models," defining them as the

> Deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures of images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action. Very often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behavior. (p. 487)

Therefore, we can all benefit from the opportunity to openly discuss our unspoken assumptions or our mental models when it comes to understanding why we interact with others as we do and

why we react to situations related race in the manner that we do. This is especially important since ―the world of everyday life is as real to others as it is to ourselves; and thus, we cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

This continuous interacting and communicating with other racial groups, according to preeminent social psychologist, Gordon Allport‗s (1954), Contact Hypothesis, can be very fruitful. The premise of The Contact Hypothesis is ―that the best way to reduce tension and hostility [and misunderstandings]…between groups is to bring them into contact with each other in various ways" (Brown, 1995, p. 236). However, Allport stipulated in his pivotal book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, that certain conditions or factors must be in place in order for the Contact Hypothesis to work because mere ―contact" is not enough. Allport (1954) therefore concluded that the following factors contribute to prejudice reduction: a) the creation of equal status among persons from different groups, b) the identification of common group goals, c) an emphasis on the need to promote cooperation among members of the two groups to meet their shared goals; and d) overt sanction and support by persons in authority positions. Allport solidified this point when he cited unpublished work that looked at ―residential proximity between Whites and Blacks in Chicago…[and found that] the nearer the respondents lived to the Black community the more prejudiced they were" (In Brown, 1995, p. 237). Allport‗s Contact Hypothesis served as the theoretical framework for this study and will be further discussed in the Methodology Section (Chapter 3).

Therefore, using Allport‗s Contact Hypothesis, as well as the work of adult educator‗s Brookfield (1995) and Mezirow (2003), this study takes a psychosocial approach to the subject of race. Specifically, these authors emphasize the value and importance for all adults—not just

educators, to engage in ―critical reflection" in order to learn more about the assumptions, or mental models we have about race that continue to impact what we believe and how we react to different situations related to race. This topic of critical reflection is described in more detail in the next section.

Critical Reflection Among Educators: The Need

The critically reflective process occurs when educators explore and examine their assumptions by viewing their practice through what Brookfield (1995) calls four distinct, though interconnecting lenses. These include

(a) Their autobiographical experiences as learners and teachers to which much can be learned.

(b) the lens represented by their students' eyes that tells teachers how their actions are perceived and whether those actions are affirming or inhibiting.

(c) the lens provided by teacher colleagues who can serve as mirrors, mentors, or critical friends with whom teachers can engage in critical conversations about practice; and

(d) the lens provided by the literature which when reading inside and outside of their areas of practice, will offer alternative theoretical frameworks with which to practice.

However, despite the proposed benefits of critical reflection, many educators choose not to examine how they react to different situations related to race, and many also fail to reflect on their practice—thus having unquestioned assumptions about the attitudes and abilities of students of color and their families (Singleton & Linton, 2006). In fact, educators can consciously or unconsciously discriminate against their students (Entwisle & Webster, 1974) and

Many educators struggle to take personal and professional responsibility when it comes to meeting the needs of students of color who are not succeeding. Instead, they tend to

focus on factors external to the school for explaining students' low achievement rather than examining their own instructional practices. (p. 38)

This lack of introspection among educators and continued struggle to examine pedagogy and mental models that influence our actions and reactions (Senge, 1990) is in sharp contrast to those practitioners in the professional field of counseling who seem to be further ahead in advancing this issue. For example, Utsey, Ponterotto and Porter (2008) stress that "awareness of racial attitudes is essential in working with clients of diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds" (p. 339). This point is also true for educators who work with their clients—students. Teachers need to recognize the haze of their own cultural lenses (Delpit, 1995a) because "when teachers do not understand the potential of the students they teach, they will underteach them no matter what the methodology" (p. 175). Even "the very best practitioner will fail without the right attitude" (Singleton & Linton, p. 11). This is why hooks (1994) makes a "call for a recognition of cultural diversity, rethinking of ways of knowing [and] a deconstruction of old epistemologies" (p. 29) among educators.

Kumashiro's (2002) work which looks at multiple oppressions can help give insight. Kumashiro postulates that oppression is not always easy to recognize among educators but it still affects their "assumptions and expectations for the Other…[including]…how the Other is treated" (p. 33). Therefore, since "educational contexts are dynamic and contested spaces characterized by power differentials and historical scars related to race, gender, and class, as educators, we have a responsibility to know our own values, biases, and positionalities" (Bierema, 2008, p. 1). This is especially true today when one third of American schoolchildren are of color and it is estimated that this number will increase to 50% by the year 2025 (Tyler, 1999). Educators must raise their cultural awareness and become more cognizant of how their

thoughts and behaviors toward ―Others‖ (Kumashiro, 2002), in this case, students of color, may be influenced by unconscious and conscious racial assumptions or prejudices. Milner (2003) insists that ―students of color are *not* the problem at all. Race and the historical legacy of racism, and what these issues have meant for our schools and students in the United States, are essentially the problems‖ (p. 176). Moreover, to dismiss a person‗s race is to misunderstand who that person is in the world as society often mistreats and misunderstands individuals based on their heritage‖ (Milner, 2003, p. 175). Yes, there are other social factors or ―positionalities‖ that could impact our beliefs and our reactions to different situations—like gender, class, age, etc.—a topic that I will further discuss in Chapter 2. However, I will reiterate that this study‗s focus is on race—specifically, the exploration of the factors that inform educators‗ beliefs and reactions to incidents related to race because racist beliefs and practices are at the heart of our dominant ideology in this society (Brookfield, 2005). Further, race is considered a core part of our identity and it is regarded as the most important, enduring, inflammatory and recognizable feature of a person (Helms, 1994).

However, this exploration of educator‗s beliefs and reactions to incidents related to race is easier said than done. Singleton and Linton (2006) offer words of encouragement when they say

> We are all learners, to some degree, in this examination of race. It matters not where you are on the continuum of racial understanding. What is important is your willingness to deeply explore your own racial identity and better empathize with the corresponding perspectives and experiences of the racial other. (p. 9)

Another key component in this exploration of our reactions to incidents related to race is our willingness to speak openly about race; a topic that is further explored in the next section.

Race Discourse in Adult Education

I approach this study by exalting race as the preeminent issue that influences our experiences—thus, addressing the call ‖to name the racial barriers that cause some learners to be over-privileged and others to be under-privileged (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000, p. 155) in adult education classrooms. I am also answering the call by Smith and Colin (2001) who stress that in the field of adult education, educators who advocate critical reflection should also understand the presence and impact of racist practices in adult education. Moreover, it is important to incorporate explicit discussions on race (Johnson-Bailey, 2002) since ‖racist ideology is made manifest in daily conversations, gestures, rituals, and interactions" (Brookfield, 2003, p. 161). In other words, I approach this study from a ‖racialized" observation—viewing it through the distinguishing lens of a racial group's experience of the world (Brookfield, 2003; Outlaw, 1996). ‖Racialism (to be distinguished from *racism*) is the positive recognition of how one's lifeworld, positionality, and sense of cultural identity compose a set of preconscious filters and assumptions that frame how one's life is felt and lived" (Brookfield, 2003, p. 154). Taking such an approach is important because Cornel West (2001) asserts that

> We confine discussions about race in America to the ‗problems' Black people pose for
> Whites rather than consider what this way of viewing Black people reveals about us as a
> nation. This paralyzing framework encourages liberals to relieve their guilty consciences
> by supporting public funds directed at ‗the problems'….[while] conservatives blame
> the ‗problems' on Black people themselves—and thereby render Black social misery
> invisible or unworthy of public attention….Both [liberals and conservatives] fail to see
> that the presence and predicaments of Black people are neither additions to nor defections
> from American life, but rather constitutive elements of that life. (p. 2)

Cornel West's statement speaks to how Hollway and Jefferson (2000) view individuals as ―defended subjects‖ who invest in discourses when these offer positions which provide protection against anxiety and therefore supports to identity‖ (p. 23). However, the authors also say that when ambivalent feelings about the same subject can be acknowledged, investment in a discourse is moderated.

Therefore, a big issue related to race discussions in schools may be that ―educators typically have not examined and discussed race in their schools because they have feared not knowing how to go about this process correctly‖ (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 21). This speaks to the magnitude of race as a sensitive subject because ―human conversation is the most ancient and easiest way to cultivate the conditions for change—personal change, community, and organizational change‖ (Wheatley, 2002, p. 3.). However, ―in order to create a cohesive community and a consensus on how to proceed, school people must have the occasion to engage in democratic discourse about the real stuff of teaching and learning‖ (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 336). Therefore, in this study, through dialogue and discourse, the educators replaced

> the natural avoidance or denial of racial reality with an active understanding and
> acceptance of one's participation in creating racial reality. This necessarily
> involves the capacity to consistently engage with others in an exploration of the
> automatic assumptions that guides one's everyday thoughts, feelings, and
> behaviors… [it is] the ongoing choice to engage in a process of grappling
> honestly and openly with the racial/cultural realities of daily life experiences,
> intentionally bringing to consciousness thoughts and feelings that were previously
> denied, ignored, or unseen. (Collins & Pieterse, 2007, p.16)

This honest and open grappling of racial realities of daily life experiences, including the exploration of personal assumptions and beliefs was necessary because educator assumptions and expectations of students of color can have very dire consequences for those students. This topic is further elucidated in the next section.

Educator Assumptions & Expectations in Education

Despite the presence of racism in the education system, Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2000) assert that ―nearly all discussions of teaching in adult education simply avoid the racial dynamics that are omnipresent in the real world…and present the domain of ivory towers, where all students are equal and all teachers are unbiased" (p. 154). Brigham (2007) echoes this point when she offers her explanation for why Africentricity is not included in Adult Education curriculum. ―Africentricity reminds people of race and in adult education classrooms there is often uneasiness in speaking about race" (p. 1). Similalrly, Smith and Colin (2001) note the struggle of African American adult education scholars to bring Africentric perspectives into the discussions of adult education, while Colin and Guy (1998) argue that adult education programs be ―designed to counteract the sociocultural and the socio-psychological effects of racism" (p. 47).

One such manifestation of sociocultural or socio-psychological racism from educators is ―microaggressions" that are defined as ―subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously" (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000, p. 60). Educators have also been found to be influenced by Self-fulfilling Prophecy theory. In his work, Brown (1995) discusses the first studies in education related to the self-fulfilling prophecy in which Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and Crano and Mellon (1978) concluded that the phenomenon occurs—when one person with inaccurate expectations and perceptions or

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stereotypes about others causes the others to act in ways consistent with those perceptions and expectations.

Another example of evidence related to the self-fulfilling prophecy is Epstein (1985) who looked ―at a large number of American schools [and] found that teachers with more negative ethnic attitudes were also more likely to use some kind of ‗tracking system' in their classrooms'‖ (Cited in Brown, 1995, p. 110). In addition, Singleton and Linton (2006) are explicit with their opinions when they say:

> It is our belief that the most devastating factor contributing to the lowered achievement of students of color is institutionalized racism, which is recognized as the unexamined and unchallenged system of racial biases and residual White advantage that persist in our institutions of learning. (p. 33)

However, is it only White educators who have unexamined and unchallenged assumptions about race? Are educators of color also influenced by race?

Racial Assumptions Among Educators of Color

When Brookfield (1995) asserts that ―forces in the wider society [like racism] always intrude into the classroom‖ (p. 9), he did not specify the classrooms of White educators distinctly. Even though it has been reported that ―most adult educators are…white and middle class, have had little interaction with minorities of any kind, and have failed to examine their own beliefs, assumptions, prejudices, and biases‖ (Amstutz, 1994, cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 343), other authors have noted that the harboring of racial assumptions and prejudices also exist within educators of color. Nieto (2006) says, ―Due to the influence of parents, peers, and mass media images, many Whites have a profound fear of people of color and particularly, of African Americans‖ (p. 80); but he also insists that people of color themselves, are also not

exempt from these fears. Negative media ―representations of…African Americans…and other persons of non-European descent serves to reinforce stereotypes" (Guy, 2006, p. 74). Moreover, Jay and Jones (2005) reiterate the teachings from Allan Johnson's book, *Privilege, Power and Difference* when they say

> Lessons are not just for white students [because] when returning to other forms of privilege based on gender bias, class discrimination, and homophobia, students of Color find themselves implicated as well in complex ways they will have to sort through, analyze, and overcome. (p. 108)

The reality is that we all learn the same lies and so we all may tend to have the same assumptions about people that are different than us (Nieto, 2006); and thus, react to them accordingly. Additionally, ―it is almost impossible to ignore the messages we receive on a daily basis" (Lund, 2005, p. 16); and furthermore, in order ―to respond without prejudice toward out-group members, an individual must overcome years of exposure to biased and stereotypical information that is likely to influence responses towards out-group members" (Devine, 1989 in Devine, Plant, Amodio, et al., 2002, p. 835).

Even while discussing the development of a positive sense of racial and ethnic identity, Tatum (2001) says, ―The development of this positive identity is a lifelong process that often requires unlearning the misinformation and stereotypes we have internalized not only about others, but also about ourselves" (p. 53). It is these stereotypes, according to Brown (1995), that are at the core of the study of prejudice because whether done consciously or unconsciously, ―to stereotype someone is to attribute to that person some characteristics which are seen to be shared by all or most of his or her fellow group members" (p. 82). Understanding how these stereotypes,

i.e. racial assumptions arise among educators is imperative if we are to reduce the influence of race on our perceptions and ultimately, our practice.

Brown's assertion supports the idea that, "the persistence of prejudice, even among those who renounce prejudice, may simply be that responding without prejudice is sometimes difficult" (Devine, Plant, Amodio, et al., 2002, p. 835). Moreover, in light of this possibility for all of us to have beliefs about people because of race, educators of color cannot be exempt from this possibility because they too, often operate through oppressive misconceptions (Milner, 2003). In addition, it has been shown that "racial and ethnic prejudices and stereotypes influence how teachers treat their students of color" (Miller, 1995; Kumashiro, 2002), and teacher candidates typically, are not comfortable acknowledging differences among students, and particularly, racial differences (King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002). Therefore, all educators, regardless of race, can greatly benefit from the opportunity to speak candidly about race and also explore their beliefs and reactions to incidents related to race in order to learn how these beliefs and reactions could negatively impact their pedagogy and approach to students of color.

Approaches to racism

Recognizing this need for educators to address how race impacts their pedagogy and their perceptions and reactions to race, The Anti-Defamation League, through their World of Difference Institute, offers diversity workshops and other educational opportunities for educators to openly address and discuss racism and anti-Semitism. Other approaches to addressing this issue is the encouraging of educators to take a "cultural plunge" (Nieto, 2006), or to perform a case study analysis of a minority student (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002). In addition, other methods have included measuring implicit biases through the utilization of the Implicit Attitudes

Test (IAT) and the Modern Racism Scale (MRS: McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981). Regardless of the approach, educators should have the courage to recognize, address, and critically reflect on their racial beliefs and their reactions to incidents related to race. Otherwise, schools will continue to have teachers who have "harmful dispositions" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 35) and schools will remain spaces where the 'Other' is treated in harmful ways. Furthermore, all educators can benefit from practicing self-reflection and working towards becoming critically reflective practitioners (Brookfield, 1995).

In this respect, the word *critical* is not to be understood in the common sense of the word like criticizing or being negative. In fact, "critical" means being skeptical, proposing alternatives, opening up complexity, not taking things for granted, and being self-reflective (Kendall, 2007). Similarly, according to Brookfield (2000),

> Critical reflection describes the process by which we become more skillful in argument analysis. In this tradition we act critically when we recognize logical fallacies, when we distinguish between bias and fact, opinion and evidence, judgment and valid inference, and when we become skilled at using different forms of reasoning (inductive, deductive, analogical, and so forth). (p. 37)

Therefore, inherent to critical reflection is discourse which "leads to a best tentative judgment that is always subject to new insights, perspectives, evidence, or arguments" (Mezirow, 2003, p. 2). However, critical reflection is not an easy thing to do—especially with respect to opening up about beliefs and sharing our reactions to incidents that are related to race. For example, let us return to the scenario I shared earlier where the person of color was unfairly judged because of race by a White person. The incident evoked very different feelings in the individuals involved. However, what if this same situation were analyzed by two other individuals—another White

person and another person of color—but with the races of the individuals omitted from the scenario; would those two individuals react to the incident in the same manner? Would the two individuals react in the same manner as their racial counterparts in the actual scenario? These questions are the premise of this study which explores the reactions of different educators who analyze, critically reflect, and engage in discussions around scenarios or critical incidents related to race.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore educator's beliefs and reactions to race using critical incident scenarios. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by educators of color?

2. What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by White educators?

3. What factors inform beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race?

Significance of this Study

As a result of their extensive review of prejudice studies, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) concluded that there was a need to expand research methodologies related to measuring implicit biases. The researchers arrived at this conclusion because nearly 607 of the independent prejudice and racism studies they analyzed relied on self-report measures of prejudice. However, relying on self-reporting is problematic since ―stereotyping and prejudice are difficult to measure because people are often unwilling to admit negative attitudes and beliefs about social groups" (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton & Williams, 1995, cited in Sekaquaptewa, Espinoza, et al., 2002, p. 75).

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Similarly, Utsey, Ponterotto and Porter (2008) also state that with reference to research methodology

> nearly all research on counseling trainees and professionals related to topics of
> prejudice and racism has only used self-report measures….[and] ….it would be
> useful for…researchers to direct attention to…new investigative strategies as a
> way of broadening understanding of the complex problems of prejudice and racism
> in US society. (p. 345)

In addition, Paluck and Green (2009) analyzed ―985 published and unpublished reports written by academics and nonacademics involved in research, practice, or both‖ (p. 341), and concluded that ―in quantitative terms, the literature on prejudice reduction is vast, but a survey of this literature reveals a paucity of research that supports internally valid inferences and externally valid generalization‖ (p. 357).

This study, therefore, is unique because as previously mentioned, it both proposes and utilizes a new approach/methodology of uncovering implicit and explicit racial beliefs and assumptions of individuals without having to rely solely on self-reporting. The omission of the races of individuals in the scenarios coupled with the participants‗ challenge to guess the races, makes the participants acknowledge any beliefs that are unknown or even share information that they ordinarily would have difficulty sharing.

The use of critical incidents in adult education research is also significant. While ―critical incidents have been used widely in educational research‖ (Brookfield, 1995, p. 179), my review of the literature yielded not one article or research endeavor in the field of adult education or education for that matter, that used critical incidents to explore the expressed beliefs and reactions of educators to incidents related to race. In fact, regardless of any discipline, my review

of the literature revealed only one article by Collins and Pieterse (2007) who combined *Critical Incident Analysis Based Training (CIABT)* and the subject of race. Collins and Pieterse (2007) proudly state in their piece entitled, *Critical Incident Analysis Based Training (CIABT): An Approach for Developing Active Racial/Cultural Awareness*, that their "article proposes a unique approach to training for multicultural awareness" (p. 14).

Although *Critical Incident Analysis Based Training (CIABT)* and *Racially Ambiguous Critical Incident Analysis Learning (RACIAL)* are similar in that they both utilize racially salient critical incidents (Collins & Pieterse, 2007), these two methodologies are different for two reasons: (a) The *RACIAL* methodology omits the race(s) of the individuals in the scenarios and (b) Collins and Pieterse's (2007) proposed methodology is used to increase multicultural awareness whereas the goal of *Racially Ambiguous Critical Incident Analysis Learning (RACIAL)* is to help facilitate the process of individuals exploring and critically reflecting on their belief, assumptions and reactions to incidents related to race without relying solely on self-reporting. Therefore, *RACIAL*, as a new methodology, directly addresses not only the gap in adult education but that of other disciplines, as was highlighted by the reports made by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) as well as Paluck and Green (2009).

This study is also significant because it provides insight into the types of experiences individuals can anticipate when they decide to engage in critical reflections around racial beliefs and reactions to incidents related to race. Further, transformative learning literature, particularly, that of Jack Mezirow (2003), provides a clear understanding as to the personal benefits afforded to individuals who engage in the act of what he calls "assumption hunting." He describes it as a "metacognitive process of transformative learning by which we critically assess taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations that support our beliefs, feelings, and judgments and

validate new meaning perspectives" (p. 1). In addition, Mezirow (2003) says during the process when adults explore their assumptions or ―habits of mind," they

> may transform their taken-for-granted frames of reference—when they become
>
> problematic—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally
>
> able to change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that
>
> will prove more true or justified to guide action. (p. 3)

Finally, this study has significance for scholar-practitioners, educators, and facilitators of professional development workshops in terms of the utility of critical incidents as a tool to ―assist learners to understand why they think, feel, and believe as they do by:

1. critically assessing the validity of their own assumptions and those of others;

2. analyzing and assessing the source, nature, and consequences of assumptions;

3. empathizing and providing emotional support for others to engage in transformative learning;

4. learning to participate more fully and effectively in reflective discourse to assess the reasons for a belief or perspective;

5. anticipating the consequences of acting upon a transformed perspective and planning effective action; and

6. developing the disposition to think critically, assess one's own assumptions, and those of others, participate fully and freely in reflective discourse, and engage in cultural or social action to improve the conditions necessary to encourage adult learners to share these insights" (Mezirow, 2003, p. 4).

In summary, this Chapter introduced the reader to this study by highlighting the existence of racism and Whiteness in this society that greatly and negatively impacts people of color. Also,

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by approaching race in this study from a psychosocial perspective, emphasis is placed on the mindsets of educators and how their beliefs and actions can negatively impact students of color if educators do not develop an awareness of their preconceived notions and assumptions they have about students of color. All of these topics, and others, are explored in depth in Chapter 2, the Review of the Literature.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant literature related to the psychosocial

approach to race in this study. By relying heavily on the work of Jack Mezirow, Stephen

Brookfield and Gordon Allport, this section is divided into four major sections.

The first major section introduces the subject of race and addresses why, even though

race is considered a social construction, it is still a dominant force and the key ingredient in the

system and practice of racism in this society. Additionally, several definitions of racism are

offered, as well as a discussion about Whiteness and White Privilege that is considered the ―other

side of racism" (Rothenberg, 2002). Moreover, this discussion also includes colorblind

racism/colorblind ideology, which highlights how some Whites in our society choose not to see

color/race.

Additionally, once these systems of racism and Whiteness/White privilege are discussed,

including how much race impacts our beliefs and actions, I then ―problematize" the idea of race

as the exclusive factor influencing our beliefs and behaviors by including a subsection on

positionality theory which asserts that race does not stand on its own but is intimately connected

to gender and class (Andersen & Collins, 2007). However, because this study looks at the factors

that influence the expressed beliefs and reactions of educators to incidents related to race, the

second major section of this literature review focuses specifically on the field of adult education.

The second major section of this literature review looks at the state of our institutions—

addressing adult education literature and studies that highlight how students of color (in

particular) are treated in the classroom and by educational institutions. This section will discuss

topics such as Critical Race Theory in Education, race and racism in schools in the past and

present; as well as the harmful dispositions (Kumashiro, 2002) of some educators who consciously or unconsciously, negatively influence the educational experiences of students of color.

In the third major section of the literature review, this idea of conscious or unconscious behavior is addressed as part of this section's focus on the cognitive aspects of the psychosocial approach to race in this study. Specifically, in this section, key topics like situated cognition, context, transformative learning, critical reflection and the concept of stereotyping are all explored. Moreover, in this section we learn about adult learning. How do we learn? What is contextual awareness? Also, how do we know what we have learned is right or true? This section also describes the idea of questioning what we know and the benefits of (a) exploring our assumptions, beliefs and actions with others through dialogue; and (b) learning how to consider the beliefs of others as well.

Finally, in the fourth major section of the literature review, racial identity theories related to White, Black and Asian people are explored since race is a core part of our identity (Helms, 1994). Racial identity impacts how we see the world, what we believe and how we react to different situations. However, I begin this literature review by discussing race as a social construction through use of a foundational piece of literature that has its roots in sociology—*The Social Construction of Reality.*

<center>Race as a Social Construction</center>

Berger and Luckmann's (1966) work, *The Social Construction of Reality,* is critical to the understanding of this study because they ―were fundamentally interested in ways that knowledge was shaped by social processes" (Best, 2008, p. 42) and defined knowledge as ―the sum total of what everyone knows…an assemblage of maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values

and beliefs [and] myths" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 65). Moreover, the authors also suggest that all individuals learn through what they call, primary socialization and secondary socialization. Primary socialization is the "first socialization an individual undergoes in childhood, through, which he becomes a member of society" (p. 130). This "first world is constructed" (p. 135) with "every individual…born into an objective social structure, within which he encounters the significant others who are in charge of his socialization" (p. 131). According to Berger and Luckmann, these significant others are imposed upon the person and are usually the mother and father who in essence, socialize the child according to how they view and move through the world. Berger and Luckmann say:

> The significant others who mediate this world to him [the individual] modify it in the course of mediating it. They select the aspects of it in accordance with their own location in the social structure, and also by virtue of their individual, biographically rooted idiosyncrasies. The social world is "filtered" to the individual through this double selectivity. Thus, the lower-class child not only absorbs a lower-class perspective on the social world, he absorbs it in the idiosyncratic coloration given it by his parents (or whatever other individuals are in charge of his primary socialization). (p. 131)

In the context of race, there are some people who are raised being exposed to people from different racial and cultural backgrounds, while there are some who do not get this exposure. For example, according to Forman (2004), it is not unusual for Americans to live in segregated communities and Whites are the most racially segregated group in the country. However, as adults, these same people who grew up segregated may seek new opportunities to construct new racial meanings. This is an example of what Berger and Luckmann (1966) call *secondary socialization*.

Secondary socialization is "any subsequent process [beyond primary socialization], that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society" (p. 130). One key characteristic of secondary socialization is that it deals with "the acquisition of role-specific knowledge…[and] the acquisition of role-specific vocabularies" (p. 138). It also includes the internalization of "sub worlds" that are "general partial realities in contrast to the *base world* acquired in primary socialization" (p. 138). Therefore, taking a trip to a foreign land, inviting a racially diverse individual for dinner, or participation in a study like this one are all examples of secondary socialization.

Just as Berger and Luckmann (1966) are concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, Critical Race Theory (CRT) argues that race is also a part of our knowledge; it exists in our minds and influences our judgments and behavior. However, there are scholars who object to Berger and Luckmann's work or even the epistemology of "constructionism" to explain how race is a social construction. For example, in Holstein and Gubrium's (2008) *Handbook of Constructionist Research,* Berbrier (2008) mentions that "constructionism is hot in racial and ethnic studies" (p. 583) and uninhibitedly, declares that "many published works that invoke the term constructionism have little to do with constructionism…and seem to operate with only a very general sense of the theoretical work evincing very little commitment to constructionism as an approach to scholarship" (p. 583). However, the reality is that people of color experience racism on a daily basis so to suggest that illuminating this issue is indicative of a "false consciousness" and is quite arguably an example of "vulgar constructionism" which Best (2008) defines as "flawed knowledge with ideas that are mistaken or self-serving or arbitrary" (p. 45) and that constitute "careless talk" (p. 48). It is also curious that Berbrier (2008) says "we are interested in truth" because "truth" is also socially constructed (Best, 2008). Therefore, those

who read Berbrier's piece and especially those who have not personally experienced racism could potentially be misled since according to Nietzsche, the sociology of knowledge is "the art of mistrust" (Cited in Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 7). The inference is: what we think we know is not necessarily true; and according to Nietzsche, "there are no facts, only interpretations" (Cited in Best, p. 54).

This point is applicable to all of us even though "many critical theorists do not wish to view their own positions as constructions" (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 175). For example, I have disputed Berbrier's argument with respect to his articulation and stance about race but I am also aware that my "knowledge" could be flawed. In Holstein and Gubrium, Best (2008) stressed this point when he referenced the term "ontological gerrymandering," that was coined by Woolgar and Pawluch who say

> Just as sociologists recognize that the language and concepts of their subjects are social constructions, so too are the language and concepts used by the sociologists themselves. In their view, analysts should not—must not—privilege their own assumptions; rather, they should apply simultaneously the same sort of constructionist critique to their own ideas as to those of their subjects. (p. 47)

In questioning the theory proposed by Berbrier (2008), I also question my approach and the "knowledge" I draw from to critique his work because "constructionism argues that all ideas are equally valuable…and that neither of these truths is "truer" than the other because reality is socially constructed, not objectively discernable" (Best, 2008, p. 55). However, we are not speculating as to whether there are Martians on Mars or debating whether "the moon orbits the earth…versus a tribe of aborigines [who] may decide the moon is a goddess who comes out at night" (p. 55), we are discussing the lived experiences of people of color who unfortunately, are

not treated fairly simply because of skin color. ―People of color face an enormous challenge as they attempt to find a foothold in a nation that has never fully respected them or granted them equality" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 26).

It really is not a stretch to view race as a social construction since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s led to the *History from the Bottom Up* approach which necessitated the borrowing of ―methodological techniques and concepts [like Berger and Luckmann's social constructionism] from sociologists" (Best, 2008, p. 52). *History from the Bottom Up* refers to the shift in focus by historians from the elite ruling class to that of the disenfranchised. Their ―work challenged the basis of social stratification, and the idea that races, classes and genders were social constructions became a way of expressing that there was nothing inevitable about social hierarchies" (p. 53). However, one such hierarchy that exists in our society is racism. Shirley Chisholm, America's first Black congresswoman, says ―racism is so universal in this country, so widespread and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal" (Quoted in Weissglass, 2001, p. 49). Racism is further described in the next section.

Racism Theories

Banks' (1995) asserts that upon examination of US history, it is apparent that race is a socially constructed category that was created to show the superiority or dominance of one race (Whites) over others. Similarly, Pine and Hilliard (1990) say:

Racism describes the combination of individual prejudice and individual

discrimination, on the one hand, and institutional policies and practices, on the

other, that result in the unjustified negative treatment and subordination of

members of a racial or ethnic group. By convention, the term racism has been

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reserved to describe the mistreatment of members of racial and ethnic groups that

have experienced a history of discrimination. (p. 595)

Also positing that prejudice is a prerequisite to racism, Singleton and Linton (2006), described racism as ―the conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional enactment of racial power, grounded in racial prejudice, by an individual or group against another individual or group perceived to have lower racial status" (p. 40). Similarly, Bell (1997) says ―racism functions not only through overt, conscious prejudice and discrimination but also through the unconscious attitudes and behaviors of a society that presumes an unacknowledged but pervasive white cultural norm" (p. 7). These definitions offered by Singleton and Linton and Bell are likened to the concept of racial microaggressions that I described in Chapter One which again, refer to the unconscious or subtle behaviors exhibited by individuals in an attempt to mistreat or insult people of color.

Jones (1997) also describes racism as ―resulting from the transformation of race prejudice and/or ethnocentrism through the exercise of power against a racial group defined as inferior, by individuals and institutions with the intentional or unintentional support of the entire culture" (p. 280). This definition of racism is likened to that of Weissglass (2001) who defines racism as

The systemic mistreatment of certain groups of people (often referred to as people of color) on the basis of skin color or other physical characteristics. This mistreatment is carried out by societal institutions, or by people who have been conditioned by the society to act, consciously or unconsciously, in harmful ways toward people of color.

Jones (1997) identified three forms of racism that include

(a) individual racism which refers to individuals discriminating against others

because they believe their own group is superior; for example, explicitly stated racial

slurs like those of Don Imus and the James Byrd incident mentioned earlier

(b) institutional racism or systemic racism which refers to social systems and

organizations like educational segregation or racial profiling that leads to perpetual

unequal treatment among racial groups; and

(c) cultural racism which occurs when White culture or whiteness is considered the norm

and superior to other racial groups.

An example of cultural racism is the promotion of Eurocentric standards of beauty while

denigrating other racial groups' physical characteristics (Utsey, Ponterotto & Porter, 2008) such

as

Skin and eye color, hair texture, and bone structures of people in the United States

and elsewhere. Thus, racism generically speaking, can be defined as beliefs and

an enactment of beliefs that one set of characteristics is superior to another (e.g.

white skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes are more beautiful than brown skin, brown

eyes, and brown hair). (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 39)

Likewise, Casas (2005) says ―racism is based on beliefs and reflected in behaviors that accept

race as a biological entity and maintain that racial groups, other than one's own, are

intellectually, psychologically, and/or physically inferior" (p. 502). As a result, Singleton and

Linton (2006) define a ―racist" as ―any person who subscribes to these beliefs of [white

superiority] and perpetuates them intentionally or unconsciously" (p. 39).

It is important to note, however, that ―racism is different from prejudice. A person of

color can hurt a White person because of prejudice [but] the difference is that in this country,

people of color face systemic and ongoing personal and institutionalized biases every day"
(Weissglass, 2001, p. 49). Therefore, Critical Race Theory (CRT) gives us our best explanation
as to why we harbor racial biases and prejudices in this society and social psychology helps us
analyze how and why we interact with one another in the manner that we do. According to
Brown (1995), social psychology has the "potential to contribute significantly to both the
dissection and the dissolution of prejudice" (p. 14) and he defines prejudice as "negative
attitudes, emotion, or behavior towards members of a group on account of their membership of
that group" (p. 14). Therefore, the reality is that "people of color have to deal with racism
whether they want to or not" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 28). However, this conversation is
not complete unless we acknowledge what Rothenberg (2002) calls, "the other side of racism"—
Whiteness/White Privilege.

Whiteness and White Privilege in Adult Education

As described in Chapter One, the study of Whiteness and White Privilege is equally
important and equally sensitive to the topic of racism because of its pervasiveness and influence.
The consensus among race scholars is that the modern meaning of whiteness emerged in the
centuries of European colonialism and imperialism that followed the renaissance. Specifically, it
was a way of merging a variety of European ethnic populations into a single race, especially to
distinguish themselves from Africans, Asians and American Indians with whom they had very
different and unequal legal and political relations (Jay, 1998). Also, before these populations
merged, the word "race' referred loosely to a population group that had a shared language,
custom, and social behaviors as in the French race or the Russian race. Today, Jay (1998)
stresses that even though whiteness functions as a cultural artifact that is made real through law
and our society's mores, whiteness is a delusion.

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Peggy McIntosh (1989) explicitly details this concept of Whiteness in her ground breaking work in which she listed 50 privileges afforded to Whites simply because of skin color. For example, there is comfort in knowing that White individuals can ask to speak to a manager and trust that that person would look like them. Frankenberg's (1993) study also looked critically at Whiteness, exploring the range of possible meanings of whiteness and race and racism in contemporary US society. She defines whiteness as: (a) a location of structural advantage and of race privilege, (b) a standpoint from within which white people look at ourselves, at others, and society, and (c) a set of structural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. Helfand (2002) also defines whiteness as

> a constellation of knowledge, ideologies, norms, values, identities, and particular social practices that maintain a race and class hierarchy in which white people disproportionately control power and resources. Whiteness is shaped and maintained by the full array of social institutions, legal, economic, political, educational, religious, and cultural. (p. 7)

Additionally, as previously mentioned, in her book, *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism,* Rothenberg (2002) insists that ―although talking about ‗whiteness and white privilege' can make some people uncomfortable, this discomfort is a sure sign that we need to continue the conversation" (p. 1).

> ‗Whiteness Studies' is not an attack on people, whatever their skin color. Instead, ‗Whiteness Studies' thinks critically about how white skin preference has operated systematically, structurally, and sometimes unconsciously as a dominant force in American—and indeed in global—society and culture. This includes how white skin

preference insinuates itself into the culture of communities of color as well. (Jay & Jones, 2005, p. 100).

Manglitz (2003) does acknowledge that there has been an increase in the number of research endeavors examining the factors related to racism and whiteness in adult education, but her review of the literature led her to echo the opinion expressed some years ago by Colin and Preciphs (1991) who stated, "almost nowhere in adult education literature and research is racism recognized as an integral and influential part of American life that requires our immediate attention" (p. 61). The authors looked at the impact of racism on the development of perceptual patterns among practitioners and how they were played out in the adult education classroom. They found that many adult educators were not aware of the extent to which research endeavors and theory reinforced racist attitudes and assumptions among Whites—thus, perpetuating patterns of inequity. Manglitz (2003) calls their statement "a powerful indictment and call to action, requiring a steadfast and continuous critique of adult education research and practice in light of White privilege and racism" (p. 121). This is particularly important since Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) argue that there are structural dimensions to our social context like race, racism and Whiteness that are often unseen and acknowledged but subtly affect learning. Moreover, Manglitz's critical review of White privilege literature revealed that "race relations and the problem of racism have focused almost exclusively on various aspects of the experiences of Blacks and other people of color, revealing almost nothing about the motivations of Whites" (p. 119); this ultimately, results in "a view of the "other" as inferior, at risk, or somehow deficient" (p. 121).

This call to action to look at the impact of both White privilege and racism has been addressed by adult educators like Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2000) and Shore (2000), for

example, who specifically look at ―how Whiteness and its resultant power and privilege undergird and perpetuate systems of domination and opportunities within adult education practices‖ (Manglitz, 2003, p. 120). Also, Manglitz, Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2005) focus on ―White adult educators who challenge racism.‖ Further, as previously mentioned, Frankenberg‗s (1993) groundbreaking research in which she looked critically at Whiteness by interviewing white women revealed, among other things, that one common response to Whiteness by white people was ―color-evasiveness/power-evasiveness;‖ or in other words, colorblindness. This notion of colorblindness is further discussed in the next section.

Colorblind Ideology / Colorblind Racism

I begin this section on colorblindness or color blind racism with an incident that occurred during my graduate studies. In this situation, a graduate assistant attempted to lead an activity that dealt explicitly with issues of white privilege and race but unfortunately, the nature of the activity resulted in the hurt, disappointment, and embarrassment of the three students of color in the class who felt singled out. Many of the white students in the class were also deeply hurt by the lesson. As a result, another professor was asked to come in the class and facilitate a discussion on race because we were all so broken by the unfortunate incident. The graduate assistant eventually apologized to the class and insisted that she was ―color blind‖ and did not mean to hurt anyone.

While I believed it was true that the graduate assistant did not intend to hurt anyone, I think her declaration of being ―color blind‖ was part of the reason why she made such a costly mistake. When people say they are ―color blind‖ they assert that they ―don‗t see race‖ (Forman, 2007, p. 45) or that race isn‗t really important. According to Forman, there are four beliefs associated with color-blind racism: a) racial groups receive privileges based on merit, b) the

majority of people don't care about or pay attention to race, c) people don't succeed not because of social inequality but because of cultural deficits of individuals or racial/ethnic groups; and d) because of the first three beliefs, no serious attention is needed to address any existing inequalities that affect people of color. Clearly, the idea of color-blindness is in sharp contrast to the teachings of CRT because critical race theorists say —color-blind racism…in the final analysis, performs the same function as biologically rationalized forms of racism—separating people in order to perpetuate a system of racialized stratification" (Berbrier, 2008, p. 571). Gordon (2005) echoes this point by asserting that colorblindness reproduces existing power relations and re-inscribes White privilege. White privilege means the benefit of not having to think about or consider race (McIntosh, 1989) and choosing the safer path by keeping the blinders on (Gordon, 2005). In fact, Gordon further states that in color blind logic, not noticing is a way to —guarantee" a lack of prejudice. However, Thompson (1998) insists that —there is no such thing as racial innocence; there is only racial responsibility or irresponsibility…By claiming innocence, we reconcile ourselves to racial irresponsibility" (p. 524). Also, in the context of teaching, Gordon (2005) says,

> Resistance to acknowledging the power differentials of skin color is strong.…teacher candidates, practicing teachers, and some education faculty tend to make comments to indicate that they don't see color; they see children. While at face value they seem to be a reasonable if unrealistic stance, in reality, it denies important aspects of children's experience. (p. 139)

Further, Lawrence and Tatum (1997) talk about the need for White teachers to acknowledge their own race and to work on their own racial identities. The authors insist that

When White teaches fail to acknowledge their own racial identity, this lack of

acknowledgment becomes a barrier for understanding and connecting with the

developmental needs of children of color. It is the teacher who does not acknowledge her

or his own racial or ethnic identity, for example, who will not recognize the need for

children of color to affirm their own. Similarly, they cannot be role models for White

students who are struggling to understand and change the racial realities of the world in

which they live (Tatum, 1994). One might predict then that the preparation of White

teachers for working effectively in multiracial environments must attend to issues of

White racial identity development. (163)

This topic of White racial identity development will be discussed later in this chapter but the

implication of this aforementioned quote is that identity work among White educators helps

themselves, Whites students and Students of Color. This is not to suggest however, that White

educators in general, are a monolithic group and that they all have not addressed their racial

identities. However, Gordon describes her experience by saying,

I do believe that there is a tendency for some who are thoughtful about race to cling to the

notion that they have done ―this work‖ and may be exempt from the implications of

Whiteness. There is a tendency to say, ―This is not about me.‖ I strongly maintain that we

all have work to do in understanding the ways that our White skin continues to furnish us

with advantages…. Engagement in Whiteness is an ongoing, lifelong commitment.

(p. 138)

It is also difficult, as a White educator, to ―grapple (sometimes blindly) with the tension,

contradictions, difficulty, pain, and failure inherent in unlearning racism‖ (Cochran-Smith, 2000,

p. 165). Gordon (2005) echoes this point when she says, "each semester I continue to struggle to confront students whose ignorance exposes my own" (p. 141).

However, overcoming ignorance and becoming more "aware" is not enough. Connelly (2002) stresses that there is work to do beyond "awareness" because White educators must also find ways to address the "inequalities of life opportunities" (p. 3) by acting in ways that counteract them. This is necessary because "racial inequality results from a system of power and exclusion in which whites accumulate economic opportunities and advantages" (Brown and others, 2003, p. 228). Examples of these inequalities of life opportunities are wonderfully addressed by Lund (2010) who compiled a "list of privileges realized by white educators and learners in adult and continuing education, along with the impact of that privilege on others" (p. 20). This list was created as a result of Lund's 2005 research that looked at how White professors of adult education perpetuate racism.

Among this extensive list of privileges for white educators include the following: (a) White educators can intellectually acknowledge racism without experiencing or confronting racism and they also have no responsibility for educating themselves about white privilege or racism, (b) White educators are not required to address racism in the classroom and can still maintain a nonracist image; (c) White educators have the power to maintain the status quo and also distrust and ignore those who bring up racism without recourse; (d) White educators have the power to view charges levied by peoples of color as unfair and ignore them; and (e) White educators and learners set the standard for all others in educational expectations and are rewarded for what they know, giving them a feeling of superiority.

Conversely, according to Lund (2010): (a) there are penalties in place for educators and learners of color for being assertive and attempting to challenge the status quo; (b) Learners of

color are viewed as able to speak, but challenged in writing and synthesizing information while educators anticipate white learners will succeed in the learning environment; (c) in higher education, white learners are not limited in admission to graduate schools; there is no quota for their race; and (d) educators and learners of color are expected to adjust their thinking, values, and behavior to comply with the majority in educational settings—and if they do not comply, the majority do not view them as successful.

Lund also concluded her work by quoting herself—"once an educator acknowledges racism and their participation, it is much easier to see the impact racism has on interpersonal relationships with learners, the curricula, program planning, research, and relationships with colleagues" (Lund, 2005, p. 81). Moreover, "when one group feels marginalized, everybody is affected including those who are in positions of power and privilege, who often perceive themselves to be unaffected by the experiences of the underserved" (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 29). Furthermore,

> For White educators to claim rightfully that they are not racist, they must take
> action in bringing about true racial equality and insist on racial justice always and
> everywhere. Racial inequality is not just a "Black problem" or a "Brown
> problem," it is a problem that impacts all of us. (p. 27)

Therefore, to echo Singleton and Linton's (2006) point, the goal to achieve racial justice and equality and basic respect for each other is largely predicated on our individual ability to recognize, understand, and accept how we are positioned in this society because of race, whether privileged or not. The next section will increase our understanding of race.

Understanding Race

Given the aforementioned discussion on racism and Whiteness/White privilege, it is obvious just how much race affects how we interact with one another; it is not an arbitrary phenomenon. For example, in Helms's (1994) discussion about race, she offers two definitions of race that pertain specifically to how race is used in the United States; they are (1) quasi-biological and (2) sociopolitical-historical. The quasi-biological refers to visible aspects of a person that are assumed to be racial in nature, i.e. skin color or hair texture which distinguishes members of one group from another. However, ―in the United States, White people specify the relevant racial traits and use themselves as the standard or comparison group" (Helms, 1994, p. 297). The sociopolitical-historical definition of race refers to the quasi-biologically defined individuals' sociopolitical history and experiences of domination and/or subjugation. Spickard (1992) says differentiating groups into mutually exclusive categories implies a hierarchy with respect to psychological characteristics like intelligence, morality, gradations in skin color or other characteristics that determine where a group is located in the hierarchy.

Also, ―on virtually every socially desirable dimension, the descending order of superiority has been Whites, Asians, Native Americans, and Africans" (Helms, 1994, p. 299), with some exceptions in which the order of Whites and Asians is reversed (Rushton, 1988). However, ―like Native Americans and Blacks before them, Asian Americans were originally stereotyped as ―immoral, ―oversexed," ―unclean," and with ―low standards of living" (Takaki, 1989 in Helms, 1994, p. 299). But it is the ―Native Americans, followed by African Americans [that] have had the longest and most consistently negative sociopolitical histories of oppression under a White-dominant ―racial group." (p. 299). Nonetheless, race has a clear relationship to

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hierarchy, inequality, injustice and power relations (Bonilla-Silva, 1999). Race is really about power and advantage (Berbrier).

However, even though I have highlighted how much race impacts our society and how we view, stereotype and categorize people based on race, humans are not necessarily one-dimensional beings—we have multiple identities that make us who they are. Therefore, even though race is the focus of this study, I would be remiss if I did not also talk about other identities or positionalities that can influence our beliefs about people and also our reactions to different events in our lives. This topic of positionality and its impact on our perceptions and reactions to others is discussed in the next section.

Positionality: Confusing What We ―Know‖ About Race Influence

In their piece, *The Invisible Politics of Race,* Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2000) discuss the notion of positionality when they state that ―people of color are viewed as ‗the other‘ and are seen through a lens that places ‗the other‘ in a deficit position‖ (p. 150). Also, speaking about the ―racial character of stratification,‖ Berbrier (2008) posits that we are all ―assigned racial status with the clear purpose of creating or maintaining hierarchies of power and wealth‖ (p. 569). Also, in her book, *Diversity Dynamics in the Workplace*, Thomas (2005) offers an explanation as to why people of color, especially Blacks, are *positioned* so low in society. Thomas says race inevitably influences any situation where humans are present and can cause conflict because of our history or what Cox (1994) calls *legacy effects*. This notion of ―legacy effects‖ is elucidated in the following text:

> Black and White employees may experience conflict due to their shared history of
> the enslavement of Africans in the United States. Perhaps a White employee
> doubts the competence of a Black coworker, given that the legacy of slavery does

not place Blacks in roles of competence and authority. Black employees may

likewise use the legacy of slavery as justification for their distrust or dislike of

White colleagues. (p. 118)

Therefore, it is evident that history plays a significant part in how we come to construe the

world in terms of different social categories" (Brown, 1995, p. 11).

Is It Always About Race?

Does race stand on its own as the single factor that can influence the beliefs and reactions

of individuals in different situations? Of course it is difficult to "quantify" the percentage or

amount of "race influence" in any given situation versus other factors like gender or class, but

the work of Andersen and Collins (1995) helps us understand that race does not necessarily exist

on its own. In fact, the authors consider race, class and gender as interlocking categories of

experience that affect all aspects of human life and simultaneously, structure the experiences of

all people in this society (Anderson & Collins, 1995). This intersection of race, class and gender,

or "positionality," is "a concept that acknowledges that we are all raced, classed and gendered,

and these identities are relational, complex and fluid positions rather than essential qualities"

(Martine & Gunten, 2002, p. 46).

Andersen and Collins (1997, 2009) also discuss the complexities of categorizing people

by use of an "additive model" that they say places people in either/or categories. The authors do

not believe people can be dichotomized so easily as "Black or White," "oppressed or oppressor,"

or "powerful or powerless" "because race is socially constructed and cannot be considered as a

fixed category—its meaning changes over time. A perfect example is "the confusion that exists

with respect to the definition of race" (Helms, 1994, p. 291). Interestingly, Helms (1994)

discusses the ancestry of blacks who were descendents of Africa in the United States during the

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slavery era. Helms reports (among other stats) that "the majority (72 to 83 percent) [of blacks] have at least one known White ancestor" (p. 296)….[and] "the average American black is about as far removed from the pure Negroid type as he is form the pure Caucasian type" (Samuda, 1975, p. 53, as quoted by Helms, 1994).

Additionally, another example illustrating the difficulty of categorizing people is with respect to racial ambiguity of racial classifications. In the past or even today, some Blacks escaped racial oppression because their physical appearance permitted them to "pass" into White groups. Also, although not appearing in relevant literature, "passing" may also occur among Asians and Native Americans. Further, Andersen and Collins (1997) stress that not even White Americans can be placed in either/or categories like oppressor or oppressed. Lastly, the authors suggest that race, class, and gender should be seen as interactive systems and not just as separate features of experience. For example, a person can be privileged by race but at the same time, disempowered by virtue of gender—for example White women. Andersen & Collins (2007) also suggest that one could say that Black men are privileged because they are men, but this becomes a nonsensical thought when you consider their race, gender and class collectively. Therefore, even when we say that power exists everywhere in society and that "there is a power disparity between racial minorities and the white majority, between the poor and the wealthy, the uneducated and the educated, and women and men" (Tisdell, 1993, p. 203), these categories are not so clear cut. For example, Oprah Winfrey is Black, has no formal education, is a woman, and yet, is one of the most powerful people in the world.

The lesson here is that all people have the capability to exhibit "behavioral patterns that perpetuate relations of domination" (Adair, Howell, & Adair, 1988, p. 11). However, general characteristics of a dominant group include having a self-image of superiority, competence, in

control, entitled, correct, and unaware of hypocrisy and contradictions; while the oppressed group is described as having a self image of inferiority, incompetence, being controlled, not entitled, and low self-esteem—but with the ability to see contradictions, irony and hypocrisy (Adair, Howell, & Adair, 1988). Regardless, however, of where we find ourselves along the spectrum of dominance and power and

> In whatever ways we have access to privilege, we have been carefully socialized to accept, protect and maintain it. In whatever ways we are likely to be oppressed, we are socialized to accept it, protect ourselves and one another. This patterning is why we duplicate the very relations we are trying to transform. As we become aware of the impact of domination on ourselves and others, we are appalled by how we have somehow participated in its persistence. (p. 13)

Moreover, the implication of this quote is that even as Adult Educators with the ethical role to create environments where individuals learn and understand how their lives have been socially constructed in a society with unequal power relationships based on race, class and gender (Cunningham, 1988), we still need to realize that patterns of power dictate and that "socialized behavior does not instantly die when our intentions are to equalize intentions" (Adair, Howell, & Adair, 1988, p. 10). This is probably why, "to some extent…power relations are reproduced and maintained through the educational process" (Tisdell, 1993, p. 203).

Furthermore, it is evident that while analyzing race, class and gender, we have to also consider issues of power, privilege and equity, as they shape different group experiences (Andersen & Collins, 1997). We have to acknowledge our positionalites because even those who have lived with enforced submission can find themselves capable of dominating others (Adair, Howell, & Adair, 1988). It is also important to recognize that,

Oppression does not make us immune from hurting others. All too often, it serves

as a lesson in how to behave once we get whatever power we can. The hierarchal and

competitive nature of our society gives everyone plenty of opportunities to experience

both sides (p. 10)

This idea that the experience of oppression does not make us immune from hurting or

mistreating others is an interesting topic to explore since I have witnessed many times in my life,

"oppressed" people hurting others. For example, my family was recently out for dinner at a

restaurant and we were waiting for a table. I was already seated in the waiting area but my

husband, a Black man, was standing in front of me until a space became available for him to sit

down beside me. However, when the seat beside me became available, it also happened to be

adjacent to a 30-something year old White woman who quickly glanced at my husband and

swiftly moved her purse. Her purse seemed to be fine on the couch beside her when the White

male before my husband was seated beside her. This is an example of how a White woman, who

more than likely, has faced her own gender oppression in her life, was so influenced by my

husband's skin color that she acted as though he was a criminal—ready to steal her purse.

When we consider positionality theory while analyzing this scenario just mentioned,

depending upon who one talks to, the possible explanations (other than race) for why the White

woman moved her purse are many. Maybe she was being courteous and wanted to give him

more room? Maybe she was reacting to him as a male figure? Maybe, despite dining in the same

restaurant—she considered him to be of a lower class and therefore, desperate enough to

potentially steal her purse? Or maybe she wanted to look at her purse at that very moment he was

sitting down? There could be several explanations but my husband and I believed unequivocally,

that the incident was related to race. Because of the glance she gave, the immediacy of her purse

movement, and the fact that she had her purse sitting comfortably on the couch beside her when a White man was seated before my husband tells us that this situation is race-related.

From a psychosocial perspective, of course we will never know what prompted the White woman to move her purse so swiftly because "the self cannot be adequately understood apart from the particular social context in which they were shaped" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 50). We also do not know what "mental models" (Senge, 1990) or taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations she had that supported her beliefs and actions (Mezirow, 2003) in the situation. However, there is no disputing the anger that I felt and conversely, the surprisingly apathetic attitude of my husband when the incident occurred. My husband later shared during our "critically reflective" (Brookfield, 2000) conversation at dinner that that particular scenario has happened to him so many times in his life that he no longer reacts to it.

By sharing this scenario, I illustrate the point that for any given incident that a person of color believes is related to race, there are others who may not necessarily believe it is also about race. However, it is important to validate the feelings of people of color whenever they believe they have experienced racism or discrimination because "people of color have a more sophisticated sense of race and racial politics" (Manglitz, Johnson-Bailey, & Cervero, 2005, p. 1256) simply because they face personal and institutional biases every day (Weissglass, 2001).

It is also interesting to note the very different reactions to the scenario that my husband and I had—one of anger and one of apathy. This tells us that we cannot necessarily predict that members of the same racial group will respond to the same situation in the same manner—hence positionality theory. Other than race, there are many factors like age (he is 9 years older), his gender, his experience, or even his personality—being less "reactive," that could have made my husband's reaction to the situation so different than mine. Nonetheless, positionality theory

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certainly blurs our lines and upsets our categories when we are trying to understand our beliefs and reactions to different situations.

Moreover, in the arena of education, antiracist education is congruent with these types of discussions related to positionality since it ―supports explorations of race, class and gender as sources of socially constructed differences and as sites of power relations, calling for an understanding of how these processes are produced, reproduced, and contested in the everyday practices of schools ―(Dei, 1996 in Manglitz, Johnson-Bailey, & Cervero, 2005, p. 1247). An example of the complexities of positionality theory in adult education was highlighted by Manglitz, Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2005) who reported that even though the White, antiracist adult educators in their study had a strong antiracist stance to ―confront and challenge racism‖ (p. 1249), they still were not fully accepted by the people of color they were interacting with. The findings of the study illustrate that ―the positionality of White adult educators both enables them and constrains their ability to challenge racism‖ (p. 1265). For example, even though the educators were able to make small strides in their purposes, because of the educators' positionalities as White people, it was concluded that (a) the educators will always be seen and judged as White, which ultimately affects the amount of trust they can build with communities and People of Color; (b) people will always assume they are complicit with the system; (c) even if their positionality changes or varies due to aspects of oppression or privilege such as class or physical ability, they will still be seen as part of the system because they are White; and (d) they are always regarded as having ―blind spots‖ related to their whiteness, constraining their ability to ―see‖ the system (Manglitz, Johnson-Bailey, & Cervero, 2005).

The findings of the aforementioned study are congruent with Brookfield's (2003) declarations made in his piece entitled, *Racializing Criticality in Adult Education*. Brookfield said,

> I cannot be an Africentric theorist whose being, identity, and practice spring from African values, sensibilities, and traditions…I can have no real understanding of what this means. As a White person I have no experiential knowledge, visceral access to the philosophy born of struggle that comprises the central dimension of African American thought. My skin pigmentation, White privilege, and collusion in racism places me irrevocably and irretrievably outside the Africentric paradigm. (p. 157)

While I agree with all of the author's sentiments described above regarding the inherent ―limitations‖ of being White while trying to practice anti-racist work, I also believe the work of workshop facilitator, Jane Elliot, has managed to give White people a glimpse of firsthand experience into the discrimination and poor treatment that people of color experience on a daily basis (Weissglass, 2001). Jane Elliot is the creator of the famous "blue-eyed/brown eyed" experiment that was first done with elementary school students in the 1960s. Jay (2005) perfectly describes the experiment's procedures and also the reactions of individuals who participate. He writes:

> As Elliott arbitrarily divides up her workshop participants, putting collars on some to humiliate them, keeping them in hot crowded rooms without explanation, making them sit on the floor so they have to look up to her, giving them tests designed to cause them to fail, changing the rules at a whim—we watch the process of social construction before our eyes. People who came in strong and self-confident and accustomed to privilege are reduced to angry, confused, tearful, helpless individuals who lose much of their self-

esteem and seem de-centered by workshop's end. Elliott notes this change and asks her blue-eyeds something like this: "If you have so much trouble accepting this kind of treatment for only a few hours, when you know it isn't even real, how do you think people of color feel during a lifetime of such treatment?" (p. 106)

The inclusion of Jane Elliott's work is very important to this discussion because it is a lesson on how easy it is for an arbitrary attribute like race in this society, to be regarded as inherently superior or inferior—good or bad—or worthy of reward or punishment (Helms, 1994) simply because of its shade. Also, in the words of Jay (2005) who summed up the experience of the White individuals who were ―positioned‖ differently for a short period of time during Elliott's experiments, ―Instead of that homily of celebratory multiculturalism, we get a lesson in critical multiculturalism where white identity has the experience of living without empathy in a structure of oppression (p. 107). This topic of White identity will be further explored later in this chapter but it is also important to recognize that White identity is closely linked to the system of Whiteness or White Privilege in this society. This topic is discussed in detail in the next section.

However, despite the importance of considering the positionalities of people, the underlying assumption of this study is that race is the most salient and influential factor that impacts our beliefs and our reactions to situations. Therefore, because of this study's focus on race—including the beliefs and reactions of educators to incidents, it is only fitting that we explore Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education in order to begin the process of elucidating race as an important factor influencing the dynamic of classrooms and the education system. This discussion on Critical Race Theory in Education will begin the second section of the literature review.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Education

As noted in Chapter One, there are five tents of Critical Race Theory (CRT) that offer insight and understanding as to the degree to which race and racism affect us all in this society. CRT has its origins in the legal system and evolved in the 1970s as a result of civil rights litigation that failed to address racial disparities and in essence, ‗racism‘ that adversely affected African Americans (Tate, 1997) in the US. However, CRT is widely used in the field of education as a powerful theoretical and analytical framework within educational research" (Iverson, 2007, p. 588). Ladson-Billings (1998) says CRT is ―an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power" (p. 9). Similarly, Yosso (2007) defines ―CRT in education as a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses" (p. 74). In addition, Daniel Solorzano (1997, 1998) identified five tenets of CRT in relation to the field of education that he believes should inform theory, research pedagogy, curriculum and policy. These five tenets were wonderfully paraphrased by Yosso (2007) and include:

1. The *intercentricity of race and racism* with other forms of subordination. This refers to the centrality and permanence of race and racism as a fundamental part of defining and explaining how US society functions; but also acknowledges the inextricable layers of racialized subordination based on gender, class, immigration status, surname, phenotype, accent and sexuality.

2. The *challenge to dominant ideology* which confronts White privilege and refutes the claims of educational institutions operating as meritocracies that are free of

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oppression and supposedly, inherently objective, race neutral and colorblind. CRT challenges notions of ‚neutral' research or ‚objective' researchers and exposes deficit-informed research that silences, ignores and distorts epistemologies of People of Color (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2000).

3. The *commitment to social justice* which offers a liberatory or transformative response to racial, gender and class oppression.

4. The *centrality of experiential knowledge* that recognizes that the experiential knowledge of People of Color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing and teaching about racial subordination (Delgado Bernal, 2002); Therefore, methods such as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonios, chronicles and narratives are used to draw explicitly from the lived experiences of People of Color; and

5. The *transdisciplinary perspective* which analyzes race and racism within both historical and contemporary contexts, drawing on scholarship from ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, psychology, film theatre and other fields. (pp. 73-74)

Ultimately, Critical Race Theory (CRT) ―is a framework that can be used to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact on social structures, practices and discourses" (Yosso, 2007, p. 70). Therefore, in this study, CRT is a powerful lens that helps with the analysis and comprehension of the data collected. However, in order to fully comprehend the necessity for the existence of CRT in Education's existence, the next section discusses race and racism in schools in the past and in the present.

Race and Racism in Schools: Past & Present

Racial prejudice or "invisibility bias" as described by Gollnick and Chin (1998),

continues to be exhibited by teachers in schools but yet, these biases, racial microaggressions, or

unconscious and subtle forms of racism are seldom investigated (Delgado & Stefanic, 1992;

Johnson, 1998, Lawrence, 1987, Solorzano, 1998, in Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 200). In his

book, *Troubling Education*, Kumashiro (2002) describes the plight of the "Other" in schools who

he says are treated poorly and unfairly by teachers. Kumashiro defines these "Others" as

"traditionally marginalized, denigrated, or violated segments of the population" (p. 33) that

includes students of color, poor students, female students, male students not typically

"masculine," and students who are or are perceived to be queer. Therefore, in response to this

recognized mistreatment of "Others" by teachers, Kumashiro

> Calls on educators to recognize that there is great diversity among the student
>
> population, and more importantly, that the majority of students—namely, all those
>
> who are not White American, male, hegemonically masculine, heterosexual, and
>
> middle-class or wealthy—are marginalized and harmed by various forms of
>
> oppressions in schools. (p. 36-37)

This point is echoed in *Teaching to Transgress* in which bell hooks (1994) says:

> if we critically examine the traditional role of the university in the pursuit of truth and
>
> the sharing of knowledge and information, it is painfully clear that biases that uphold and
>
> maintain white supremacy, imperialism, sexism, and racism, have distorted education so
>
> that it is no longer about the practice of freedom. (p. 29)

Additionally, in their book, *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving*

Equity in Schools, Singleton and Linton (2006) posit that since the majority of school

administrators and school board members, past and present, are White, White educators experience a sense of racial superiority—whether consciously or unconsciously and this is ―manifested in their assumption that they uniquely possess certain skills and knowledge necessary for ‗appropriately' dealing with all students, parents, or even administrators and other teachers" (p. 43). Also, since most educators—even those of color—are supervised and evaluated by a White person, this also leads to racial inferiority for students of color and racial superiority among White students.

Further, Tisdell (1993) also addresses the presence of oppressive teaching and the reinforcement of the status quo when she talks about

> the hidden curriculum [that] is operative at every level of the formal education system from nursery school to graduate school, even in higher educational settings where critical thinking skills are promulgated and valued, and emancipatory educational settings are developed and discussed. (p. 203)

Therefore, consistent with these theories, Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather and Walker (2002) summarize and illustrate their beliefs about racism through use of the following equation:

$$\text{Racism} = \text{racial prejudice} + \text{institutional power}$$

With reference to the above equation, it is not unusual for assumptions like ―Asian students are better at math, Latino parents don't support their kids in school, or advanced placement classes are too difficult for Black students" (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather & Walker, 2002, p. 42) to exist. Institutionalized racism allows these negative assumptions and stereotypes to persist unchallenged by those having positional power. However, with respect to assumptions about race, Goodwin (1994) says it cannot be assumed that teachers of color do not harbor any racial, prejudicial or stereotypical beliefs about culturally and racially diverse students. Even

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when teachers have acknowledged having racist attitudes toward people of color in the wider society, but have denied having those same attitudes about their students (Alquist, 1991), Critical Race Theory (CRT) insists that racism is everywhere and stereotypes, racism and prejudice do occur in classrooms (Tettegah, 1996). Tettegah's point is instructive because in one sentence it simplifies why there is a need for this present study. Racism, stereotypes, and negative assumptions about race do exist in the classroom. However, prejudice and bias are not free-floating forces that function independently of teachers. In fact, they have been documented to exist in the minds of some teachers as ―deficit thinking."

<center>Deficit Thinking and Teaching</center>

One of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism in US schools is *deficit thinking* that in essence, blames minority students and their families for poor academic performance because minority students do not have the knowledge or skills to succeed and their parents do not support or value education (Yosso, 2007). However, the reality is that minority students enter institutions where racism operates to limit their participation and influences their success (James, 1997). For example, Lund's (2005) research looked at the attitudes of European descent faculty members and addressed the following questions: ―How and in what ways are the attitudes and behaviors in the field of adult education associated with the perpetuation of racism?"; and ―In what manner or ways do people of European descent in the adult education professoriate perpetuate racism" (p. 2)? In order to learn the answers to these questions, Lund performed in depth interviews with ten, white, tenured track adult education faculty members of European descent, in order to determine how racism is perpetuated personally and professionally in the field of adult education, and what behaviors perpetuated racism. The findings from the study included two major areas: a) attitudes perpetuating racism and b) behaviors perpetuating racism.

<center>51</center>

Under Lund's (2005) first category, *attitudes perpetuating racism and Behaviors*, it was revealed that the professors who were interviewed, held positions of superiority in their views. These included, ―patronizing attitudes, ignorance of the deprivations, and use of stereotypes like…the word ‗hybrid' to describe people who were unable to define themselves due to being products of interracial marriages" (p. 3). Another example of stereotypical thinking stated by one professor in interview was noted by Lund who wrote:

> the deficiencies of people of color, particularly, African Americans, who [they said], compared to the standards of the majority, were unable to complete their dissertations [and] were perceived to have good oral skills but generally, poor writing skills…No matter how society had tried to change the status of African Americans, only a few have been successful. (p. 3)

These statements made by the professors exemplify the fourth tenet of Critical Race Theory that talks about the false notions of a ―meritocracy" that perpetuates racism and that ―only justifies the exclusion of people of color (Taylor, 1998). In addition, the characterization of students of color as not ―smart enough" and who did not work hard enough to compete with the ―standards of the majority" is evidence of Johnson-Bailey and Cervero's (2000) point when they say, ―whiteness is the unseen perfect entity against which all other groups are measured" (p. 149).

For the second category of Lund's (2005) study, Behaviors Perpetuating Racism, the competence of students of color was mentioned a number of times. For example, ―students of color were not given appropriate credit or grades for work they did…[and a faculty member had not given an African American an ―A" in 30 years" (p. 5).

Like Lund's study, such discrimination was also determined by a study conducted by Johnson-Bailey, Cervero, Valentine, and Bowles (2006) whose research addressed the following

question, ―What types of social problems did Black graduate students experience during their tenure at the University?" (p. 190). The longitudinal study revealed that among the five factors determined to be ―social issues" experienced by Black graduate students, one was the ―Underestimation of Academic Ability" which

Describes racist assumptions about academic limitations of Black graduate

students by both White faculty members and White students. Few White scholars could

imagine the psychological and motivational impact of having people assume you are

academically deficient until you prove them wrong. (p. 192)

The results of this research (Lund, 2005; Johnson-Bailey, Cervero, Valentine & Bowles, 2006), illuminates the racist behaviors students of color can experience from educators while they attend academic institutions; and echoes the point

that these disparities based on race also exist in the practice of adult education is no

surprise…Most adult educators are themselves White and middle class, have had little

interaction with minorities of any kind, and have failed to examine their own beliefs,

assumptions, prejudices and biases. (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 244)

Further, the results of these studies also supports Singleton and Linton's (2006) assertion that during the years, students of color must negotiate the psychological turmoil prompted by oppression and different status, while simultaneously being viewed by the school system and the larger society as a problem. It is evident that the psychological turmoil endured by students of color and the poor treatment they receive in the school system and beyond, are largely influenced by negative stereotypes and other cognitive processes among educators that puts them at a disadvantage. However, in order to fully understand how stereotyping and other cognitive processes like ―mental models" (Senge, 1990) for example, influences what we think and how

we behave, requires an in depth examination. Therefore, the third major section of this literature review focuses on the cognitive aspect of this psychosocial approach to this study about race—beginning with a discussion on Situated Cognition.

Situated Cognition: Learning Within and From the Environment

Congruent with Berger and Luckmann's (1966) opinion that ―the self cannot be adequately understood apart from the particular social context in which they are shaped" (p. 50), Merriam and Brockett (2007) suggest that ―situated cognition is based on the idea that what we know and the meanings we attach to what we know are socially constructed (p. 156). In other words, situated cognition means ―one cannot separate the learning process from the situation in which the learning takes place" (Caffarella & Merriam, 2000, p. 59). Similarly, Wilson (1993) says situated cognition is based on three key ideas: (a) learning and thinking are generally social activities; (b) thinking and the ability to learn ―are profoundly structured by the availability of situationally provided _tools"; and (c) our thinking is influenced by our interaction with the setting where learning takes place (p. 72). Similarly, Merriam and Brockett (2007) say ―learning and knowing are intimately linked to real-life situations" (p. 156). Or in other words, what is called the context.

Context

According to Caffarella and Merriam (2000), there are two important dimensions to the contextual approach to learning—the ―interactive" and the ―structural." First,

the interactive dimension acknowledges that learning is a product of the individual

interacting with the context; and that the most effective learning is that which takes place

in authentic, real-life situations such as role-playing and simulations… [and second], the

structural dimension of context takes into consideration the social and cultural factors that

affect learning such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, and power and oppression. (p. 55)

Clearly, this study acknowledges the structural dimension of context—namely race; and utilizes

scenarios like how Stake (2004) describes the complexities of the learning process as ‑episodic

thinking." He says,

> Educational phenomena come to be known through episodes, happenings, activities,
>
> events. The phenomena have a time period and a context. They are populated with people
>
> having personalities, histories, aspiration, frailty. We sometimes talk about personality
>
> and frailty, contexts and episodes, in terms of variables. The more the episode is
>
> important as a life event, the more the criteria remain in the background. (p. 16)

Evidently ‑learning is not just a psychological process that happens in splendid isolation from

the world in which the learner lives, but that it is intimately related to that world and affected by

it" (Jarvis, 1987, p. 11). Therefore, ‑to understand the central place of context in thinking and

learning, we have to recognize that cognition is a social activity that incorporates the mind, the

body, the activity, and the ingredients of the setting in a complex interactive and recursive

manner" (Wilson, 1993, p. 72). Moreover, paying close attention to both the individual learner

and the context of learning affords us the opportunity to gain a richer understanding of adults as

learners (Caffarella & Merriam, 2000).

It is important to note however, that this belief in the importance of acknowledging the

‑context" in which individuals learn was not always the prevailing thought. For example, with

respect to Mezirow's (1978) original research on transformative learning in which he looked at

women returning to school after a long period of time, Clark and Wilson (1991) noted that their

‑experiences were studied as if they stood apart from their historical and sociocultural context,

thereby limiting our understanding of the full meaning of those experiences" (p. 78). Caffarella and Merriam (2000) agree that viewing learning as a process internal to the individual is too limiting in addressing the complex array of issues and problems faced when working with adults. Moreover, Tisdell (1995) also stresses the importance of understanding and acknowledgement of both "the specific learning context of the classroom or learning activity and the organizational context in which one is working" (p. 83).

Another "contextual" criticism of Mezirow's study is with respect to his description of a disorienting dilemma. Taylor (1997, p. 46) says

> Mezirow's description of a disorienting dilemma has been criticized as being decontexualized, as though all life crises would lead to a perspective transformation. As we know, this is not the case. Whether a disorienting dilemma results in a perspective transformation can possibly be explained to a large extent by the immediate and historical context surrounding the life crisis. (See also Taylor, 1993)

Additionally, Taylor (1997) offers examples of different types of "contexts" that influence perspective transformation—readiness for change, prior stressful events, personal goals, and also family and social history influencing how an individual grows up. However, Taylor still notes that "despite the research on context in transformative learning, many questions about the role of context are still left unanswered" (p. 46). Similarly, Cafarella and Merriam (2000) stress that "we need more in-depth exploration of the interactive and structural dimensions of the contextual perspective of learning, including such areas as reflective practice, and the influence of race, gender, class, and ethnicity on how and what adults learn" (p. 65). Moreover, another question asked is whether or not we automatically learn from, or make meaning from our experiences simply by having the experience? Merriam and Brockett (1997, 2007) say "it is not the mere

accumulation of experience that matters; instead, the way in which individuals make meaning of their experiences facilitates growth and learning" (p. 140). This is what Mezirow (1978, 1995) described in his research—illustrating his findings using a *Perspective Transformation Model*. Mezirow (2003) says the transformative process occurs across the following phases in the clarification of meaning:

1. a disorienting dilemma;

2. self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame;

3. a critical assessment of assumptions

4. recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared;

5. exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions;

6. planning a course of action;

7. acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans;

8. provisional trying of new roles;

9. building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and

10. a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (p. 4)

However, as reported by Taylor (1997), later studies following Mezirow's (1978) original research confirmed that the process of perspective transformation is not always a linear one. Mezirow (1995) later agreed when he said ―that the process does not always follow the exact sequence of phases" (in Taylor, 1997, p. 44). Nonetheless, Mezirow's (1991) definition of a perspective transformation is instructive. He defines it as

The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these

structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and

integrative perspective; and finally making choices or otherwise acting on these new

understandings. (p. 167)

It is important to note however, that even though there are benefits to perspective transformation,

as is intimated by the definition above, this was not the goal of this study. The only goal of this

study was to engage educators in the exploration of their beliefs and reactions to incidents related

to race —without any specified or intended outcome, change in behavior, or transformation.

Again, to reiterate the wisdom shared with me in a conversation with Dr. Kevin Kumashiro who

facilitates workshops related to anti-oppression, it is not a good idea but a mistake for a

facilitator to try and change the minds of individuals who participate in anti-oppression work.

Mezirow (1989) concurs with this point and likens the mission of trying to change the

minds of individuals to indoctrination. Furthermore, it has been noted by academic scholars that

substantive change is unlikely to be achieved in a single diversity training workshop or endeavor

(Roberson, Kulilk & Pepper, 2001; Rynes & Rosen, 1995). Therefore, since ―teaching is

inherently moral and must be concerned with ultimate values" (Daloz, 1988, p. 241), the goal is

to allow educators to engage in an exploration of their beliefs and reactions thereby enabling

them to develop ―contextual awareness" (Brookfield, 1987). However, how do we know when

we have achieved contextual awareness? Brookfield says contextual awareness

Is evident when the assumptions undergirding our ideas and behaviors are seen to be

culturally and historically specific. When people realize that actions, values, beliefs,

and moral codes can be fully understood only when the context in which they are framed

is appreciated, they become much more contextually aware. Assumptions of what are

considered ―moral" behaviors toward others, or of what we believe to be ―just" and

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―equitable" social structures, are considered in the context within which they originate.

(pp. 16-17)

This point is akin to Daloz's (1998) opinion that students should see the limitations of what he calls, *tribal thinking*—The assumption that others have myths but we have the Truth. He says ―even facts are artifacts of a particular historical period or a historian's bias… [therefore] the key recognition here is that there is no such thing as pure objectivity (p. 240); and ―there are any number of tribes, each believing its own truth to be paramount" (p. 236).

Nonetheless, even though the goal of this study was only to engage educators in their exploration of their beliefs and reactions to incidents related to race—the antithesis to transformative learning theory which focuses on change, transformative learning theory is still relevant here as I have already touched on two of its salient elements—a disorienting dilemma and perspective transformation. However, I have yet to discuss in detail, critical reflection which is also significant to transformative learning theory (Taylor, 1997) and to this study. Therefore, in the coming section, I further explore this concept of critical reflection; but first, I offer more insight into the concept of transformative learning theory.

<div align="center">Transformative Learning Theory</div>

Mezirow (1994) defines transformative learning as ―the social process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experiences as a guide o action" (p. 222-3). It is ―a metacognitive process.. by which we critically assess taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations that support our beliefs, feelings, and judgments and validate new meaning perspectives" (Mezirow, 2003, p. 1). Also, it can ―be understood as the epistemology of how adults learn how to think for themselves rather than act upon the assimilated beliefs, values, feelings and judgments of others" (p. 1).

Further, Mezirow (1995) also says transformational learning, in reference to the importance of communication —involves identifying problematic ideas, values, beliefs, and feelings, critically examining the assumptions upon which they are based, testing their justification through rational discourse and making decisions predicated upon the resulting consensus" (p. 58). These aforementioned definitions of transformational learning are congruent with Senge's (1990) theory of —mental models" which again, are deeply ingrained assumptions, stereotypes, or pictures we have in our heads that although are often unconscious, influence how we understand the world and how we act. Moreover, transformative learning

> Involves a search for more dependable beliefs and understandings—those producing interpretations and opinions that are more true and justified—by assessing the intentions, experience and character of others communicating with us, and by becoming critically reflective about the assumptions supporting the beliefs, values, feelings, and judgments of those others, as well as about our own. (Mezirow, 2003, p. 2)

However, as previously articulated, the primary purpose of transformative learning is to evoke change, which was not the aim of this study. —Transformative learning is aimed at helping the individual become more aware and critical of assumptions in order to actively engage in changing those that are not adaptive or are inadequate for effective problem solving" (Kitchener & King, 1990, p. 159). Nevertheless, even though transformative learning theory is not entirely congruent with this study's purpose, one key element of transformative learning is the importance of individuals becoming —critically reflective" about their assumptions and actions. This topic is further explored in the coming section.

Critical Reflection

According to Mezirow (1990) ―by far the most significant learning experiences in adulthood involve critical reflection, reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling and acting" (p. 13). It is like the discipline of working with mental models which ―starts with turning the mirror inward; learning to unearth our internal pictures of the world, to bring them to the surface and hold them rigorously to scrutiny" (Senge, 1990, p. 487). Similarly, Daloz (1988) says critical thinking is not a ―tribal value" because ―it threatens existing authority and elevates the individual above the group" (p. 238). Daloz says it is important for educators to address *tribal thinking* in their students' *tribal worlds*, which is characterized by outward conformity to an unspoken set of expectations, and where outer similarities are more important than inner difference. Moreover, congruent with Daloz's philosophy, Mezirow (2003) says ―the goal of adult education is to assist learners to more fully realize their capability for autonomous thought while pursuing their own learning objectives" (p. 4). According to Mezirow, this is achieved by

1. assisting learners to understand why they think, feel, believe as they do by critically assessing the validity of their own assumptions and those of others;

2. analyzing and assessing the source, nature and consequences of assumptions;

3. empathizing and providing emotional support for others to engage in transformational learning; and….

4. developing the disposition to think critically, assess one's own assumptions, and those of others, [and] participate fully and freely in reflective discourse. (p. 4)

Similarly, Argyris (1991) makes the distinction between ―single loop learning" and ―double loop learning" among professionals during the leaning process. Argyris insists that in

order for learning to take place that is meaningful, individuals must look inward and not only rely on "single loop learning" which he analogizes to a thermostat that is set to automatically turn on whenever the temperature in the room falls below 68 degrees. Instead, Argyris asserts that professionals should look beyond the automatic and become "double loop learners" asking the question, "Why am I set at 68 degrees? And then explore whether or not some other temperature might more economically achieve the goal of heating the room" (p. 4). Put simply and brilliantly, learning involves both the detection and correction of error (Argyris & Shon, 1978, p. 2).

Moreover, one other element Senge (1990) mentions that is involved in working with mental models is the inclusion of "the ability to carry on _learningful' conversations that balance inquiry and advocacy, where people expose their own thinking effectively and make that thinking open to the influence of others" (p. 487). However, the operative word here is "expose." According to Argyris and Shon (1974) people have "mental maps" that help them act in different situations and it is these maps that govern the actions of people rather than the theories people say or explicitly "espouse" in order to get others to think what they would like. Put simply, there is a theory for what people say and there is a theory for what people do (Anderson, 1994). Unfortunately, Argyris and Shon (1974) also assert that few people are aware that the maps they use to take action are not the ones they explicitly espouse. Furthermore, Argyris (1980) also argues that an even fewer number of people are aware of the maps or theories they do use. Therefore, the ultimate goal is for people to learn how make what they do and what say more congruent. This is accomplished by engaging in "learningful" conversations, as suggested by Senge; and it is especially useful if coupled with Brookfield's (1995) suggestion that educators

view themselves as learners—critically reflecting on their individual practice and by viewing practice through the eyes of their students, colleagues and literature.

Additionally, Brookfield (1987) says, the act of ‖thinking critically is a dynamic and ongoing process so that the dividing lines between problem identification, diagnosis, exploration, action and reflection are frequently difficult to discern‖ (p. 78). Furthermore, according to Hart (2000), critical reflection can also be described as *consciousness raising*. She says ‖the simultaneity of remembering and understanding that occurs in consciousness raising always constitutes *critical (self) reflection*‖ (p. 55, italics in original). For example, Ruth (1975, p. 299) says,

> If in the course of consciousness-raising…a woman responds strongly, it is not because she has found something new to bitch about, but rather she has found something old to bitch about, because she perceives something old in a new way. (In Hart, 2000, p. 55)

Ruth‗s (1975) quote is also consistent with Taylor‗s (1997) insistence that ‖critical reflection and feelings should no longer be viewed as separate, but instead as operating in an interdependent relationship, with each relying upon the other in the search for clarity and understanding‖ (Taylor 1997, p. 52). Nonetheless, regardless of how critical reflection is viewed, there is another cognitive process that we all do that can get us into trouble unless we become critically reflective of our assumptions and beliefs. This cognitive process is stereotyping and it is discussed in the next section.

Background and Origin of Stereotypes

The word ‖stereotype‖ is derived from an aspect of the printing process in which a mould is made in order to duplicate patterns of pictures on the page. However, it was a Pulitzer Prize winning political journalist named Walter Lippman, who ‖saw the suitability for the term to be

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used in reference to people. He believed people used cognitive moulds to reproduce images of

people or events in their minds that he called ―pictures in our heads" (Brown, 1995). In other

words, Lippman (1922) believed that we respond to the perceptions we have about the world

rather than the world itself. Similarly, Brown (1995) says there are various ways that stereotypes

influence our judgments or recollections of social situations and in any context in which social

categories are psychologically available, stereotypes will come into play more or less

automatically. Further, in his book, *Prejudice,* that is coined as an up-to-date alternative to

Gordon Allport's (1954) classic, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Brown (1995, p. 116) defines

stereotypes as the following:

1. Stereotypes are the perception that most members of a category share some attribute
   and that stereotyping arises directly out of the categorization process.

2. Stereotypes can originate from the culture in which people are socialized, from real
   cultural or socioeconomic difference between groups, and also cognitive bias which
   seems to result in an *illusory correlation* between minority groups and infrequently
   occurring attributes. Put simply, illusory correlations describe the natural inclination
   for people to assign positive attributes to people who appear to be within their ―in-
   group" status while those who appear to be in the out-group are more likely to be
   ascribed negative attributes/stereotypes.

3. Stereotypes can influence people's judgments of individuals…A useful way of
   viewing stereotypes is as hypotheses in search of confirmatory information. Much
   evidence exists for this confirmation-seeking nature of stereotypic expectancies.

4. Stereotypes also influence attributional judgments about the causes of in-group and
   out-group actions. A typical finding is that positive and negative behaviors by the in-

group are attributed internally and externally respectively; for out-group behaviors the reverse applies.

5. Stereotypes may be used more if people are cognitively or emotionally preoccupied with other concerns. The reason is that distractions are thought to consume cognitive attention, thus, paving the way for the labor-saving afforded by stereotyping.

6. Stereotypes can have self-fulfilling properties (as previously described), creating in the targets of their focus the very attributes hypothesized to exist. These self-fulfilling prophecies have been observed in educational contexts.

7. Stereotypes change in response to disconfirming information, but the patterning of that information (concentrated in a few exemplars or dispersed across many) and the valence of the stereotype undergoing revision are important factors determining the extent of change.

Therefore, if we relate these definitions of stereotypes back to the subject of race and racism, it is clear that racism, at the overarching systemic level, can cause us to have either conscious or unconscious stereotypical thinking that ultimately biases us to others at the social level. Also, conversely, our prejudices can lead us to rely on our stereotypes when judging people. Either way,

> a stereotype, whether prejudiced or not, is a cognitive association of a social category with certain characteristics…When we meet a real person we have at our disposal not just our preconceptions about their group membership but also information about the way they actually appear, dress, and behave which may not be consistent with the group stereotype. (Brown, 1995, p. 89-90)

Therefore, another possible definition for stereotypes is

> The set of traits that is used to explain and predict the behavior of members of a
> socially defined group. Under this definition, stereotypes may include positive,
> negative, and neutral attributes and characteristics, some of which may be largely
> accurate and some completely inaccurate. (Miller, 1995, p. 178)

However, with respect to the aforementioned concept of "legacy effects" (Cox, 1994; Thomas, 2005) or when we place others in a deficit position based on race (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000) are these inevitable decisions? Are racial stereotypes always at play in our interactions with one another? CRT recognizes the existence of racism and investigates deficit-based beliefs about people of color (Iverson, 2007). According to CRT, these negative perceptions or stereotypes about people of color are not random or happenstance, but represent inevitable thinking that is a result of us living in a racist society. Also, from a social psychological perspective, there has been evidence that shows that our biases are almost automatic in their operation (Brown, 1995) and that people recall stereotype-consistent information better (Stangor & McMillan, 1992; Brown, 1995). This is why Brown (1995) uniquely suggests that stereotypes be viewed as "hypotheses in search of confirmatory information" (p. 117). He suggests that "instead of attempting to falsify their hypotheses it seems that people usually seek out information that will confirm them" (p. 94). Therefore, a key component in most of prejudice, discrimination, and racism is that they do not require intention (Pine & Hilliard, 1990) but happen automatically. This is also an explanation as to why "overt prejudice is strongly condemned, yet acts of blatant racism still frequently occur" (Kawakami, Dunn, Karmali & Dovidio, 2009, p. 276).

Studies Related to Racial Stereotypes

One of the earliest studies of ethnic and national stereotypes was done by Katz and Braly (1933) at Princeton University in which they asked their students to look at a long list of attributes and then indicate which attributes were most ―typical‖ of 10 specific groups in question. Results showed that for each group, ―there were three or four adjectives which were ticked by a quarter or more of their respondents. In some cases there was a remarkable consensus, for example, with 78 percent believing that Germans were scientifically minded and 84 percent and 75 percent respectively, believed that Negroes were ―superstitious‖ and ―lazy.‖ However, when this study was replicated twenty years (Gilbert, 1951) and forty years later (Karlins et al., 1969) the results showed evidence of change and stability in terms of the endorsement of stereotypes; in particular, there was greatly reduced consensus with respect to the most blatantly negative stereotypes (Brown, 1995, p. 83). For example, the German traits were consistent over the three studies but with respect to the traits related to ―Negroes‖ as ―superstitious‖ and ―lazy,‖ they declined to 13 percent and 26 percent by 1967. This change over time as hypothesized by Brown (1995) was

> what might have been socially acceptable to express publicly in the pre-war years
> – for example, ‗Negroes being lazy‗- became progressively less acceptable in the
> decades after the war which were marked by anti-discrimination legislation and
> desegregation social policies. (p. 84).

In fact, the mere use of the word ―Negroes‖ today in 2011 is considered an offensive word to Black people and therefore, is not used because it is socially unacceptable.

In his book, *An American Imperative*, Miller (1995) also reported that since the 1930s, there have been a number of studies and analyses of stereotypes conducted that have looked at

the beliefs and perceptions that Whites and Blacks have about each other. For example, Walter Stephan and David Rosenfield found that based on their review of these studies, "blacks listed only two traits of whites that most people would regard as generally positive—intelligent and industrious. However, they had a long list of negative traits that included "deceitful, sly, treacherous, dirty, lazy, cruel, selfish, nervous, and conceited" (As cited in Miller, 1995, p. 178).

In contrast, Stephan and Rosenfield, reported that white perceptions of blacks followed the same pattern with whites listing only a few positive attributes of blacks like musical, peace-loving, and very religious. However, the list of negative traits was much longer and included lazy, superstitious, ignorant, loud, materialistic, stupid, dirty, and militant. In addition, Miller (1995) said

> What is particularly important about the negative attributes that whites ascribe to blacks is that several are consistent with both the innate and cultural theories of black inferiority. Stupidity can be regarded as an innate trait, while laziness, superstitiousness, ignorance, loudness, and dirtiness can be thought of as culturally derived. (p. 178)

In addition, not surprisingly, Miller also stated that "black and whites alike have generally positive images of themselves. For example, blacks view themselves as intelligent and sportsmanlike, while whites see themselves as intelligent and progressive" (p. 178). The reality, according to Brown (1995), is that stereotypes and racial assumptions

> Are embedded in the culture in which we are raised and live, and that they are conveyed and reproduced in all the usual socio-cultural ways—through socialization in the family and at school [and] through repeated exposure to images in books, television and newspapers. (p. 83)

Through this discussion it is clear that we learn how to stereotype people; and we also learn what stereotypes are associated with what groups. However, the beliefs and stereotypes we harbor and learn are not always fixed—but may shift over time or even lose their relevance—for example, as mentioned earlier, Black people are no longer called "Negroes." Why is that? Was there a memo sent out to society telling everyone to stop using that term? The explanation for this shift relates to the context in which the term "Negro" was used and what we believe it connotes today. However, this term "Negro" is associated with a Black Racial Identity Model created by Cross (1971) who describes the struggles and challenges Black people have living and surviving in a racist society. This identity model is described in the next section and it also begins the final major section of this literature review.

<center>Black Racial Identity Development</center>

Regardless of a person's racial classification, racial group membership is considered a core aspect of identity development in the United States "because of the country's emphasis on racial markers as preliminary credentials for access to reward or punishment" (Helms, 1994, p. 286). Race "is the most salient, enduring, recognizable, and inflammatory" (p. 287) feature of a person. However, as previously noted, Black people have a unique experience in this society because they are continuously ranked at the bottom of the "racial hierarchy" (See Helms, 1994); and in history

> various legal and governmental procedures have been used to differentiate Blacks from members of other racial groups, including last names and percentages of African ancestry. In many Southern states, registries of "black" last names were kept to identify Black people even if they did not look Black. (p. 296)

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Therefore, it is not a surprise that for many years, psychologists have long been interested in the experiences of Blacks /African Americans, and this also explains why there has been an explosion of literature on racial identity, particularly over the last 20 years (Cokely & Chapman, 2009). For example, in the 1980s and 90s, psychologists looked closely at the relationship between racial identity and preferences for counselor race (Parham & Helms, 1981); and over the years, other studies have looked at the association of racial identity with Afrocentric values (Brookins, 1994), self-esteem (Speight, Vera, & Derrickson, 1996), and academic self-efficacy and school achievement (Witherspoon, Speight, & Thomas, 1997), to name a few. The definition of racial identity is conceptualized and is evaluated generally, as the racial awareness, attitudes, preferences, and socialization among individuals (Katz & Kofin, 1997).

Further, Cross's (1971) Nigrescence model —has been proven to be a useful system of which to base counseling interventions" (Parham & Helms, 1985, p. 431). In general it describes —the five stages of psychological *Nigrescence*, or the process of becoming Black" (Cokely & Chapman, 2009, p. 284); or the —developmental stages that Blacks in America go through to obtain a psychologically healthy identity" (Cokely, 2002, p. 476). Even in the arena of education and schooling, —according to Cross, African American students must go through a process of growth and discovery in order to regain a positive African American racial identity" (Bakari, 1997, p. 2).

However, according to Cokely and Chapman (2009), further discussion of Cross's contributions to racial identity theory would be —incomplete" and out of —proper historical context" unless W. E. B. Dubois' seminal book written in 1903, *Souls of Black Folks*, was not added to the conversation. In his book, —W.E.B. Dubois introduced the concept of *double consciousness*, a psychological state in which African Americans struggle to balance the tensions

between their American (i.e. White) and African (i.e. Black) ―souls.‖ This can be considered a precursor to the modern idea of racial identity‖ (Cokely & Chapman, 2009, p. 283).

The intellectual foundation of racial identity theories can also be traced back to the 1930s‗ French Negritude movement in which Black students from French colonies of Senegal, Martinique, and Guyana, sought the development of a collective Black identity that rejected French colonial racism (Cokely & Chapman, 2009). Further, the ―Negritude movement (whose closest English translation is ―blackness‖), was greatly influenced by the Harlem Renaissance, a literary period during which Black American authors focused on Black life from a Black perspective‖ (p. 284).

Further, while William Cross‗s (1971) racial identity model is considered the seminal piece to address Black Racial Identity, and ―has received the most scholarly and empirical attention‖ (Cokely & Chapman, 2009, p. 284), the initial groundwork for this model can be traced to an article published in 1969 by Charles Thomas, the first president of the Association of Black Psychologists. Cokely and Chapman (2009, p. 284) highlight the contributions of Thomas (1969) by quoting his work as follows

> Through his [Thomas‗] discussion of how ―Black people accommodated and internalized their astoundingly oppressive society (p. 39), ―the felt meaning of blackness is akin to one‗s first physical sexual encounter or a deep religious conversion….and ―few blacks can claim they were always black.‖ (p. 41)

Similarly, Cross‗s model was ―originally referred to as the *Negro to Black conversion experience*, and involves five distinct psychological stages, each characterized by different racial identities. These five stages are: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization,

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and internalization-commitment (Parham & Helms, 1985). These five stages are simplified nicely by Parham and Helms (1985, p. 432) who write:

1. In the pre-encounter stage, a person is programmed to view and think of the world from a EuroAmerican frame of reference as he or she thinks, acts, and behaves in ways that devalue blackness and idealize whiteness.

2. In the second stage, encounter, the person begins to abandon his or her old world view as a consequence of a startling personal or social event.

3. In the third stage, immersion-emersion, the person idealizes blackness, although the degree of internalization of positive attitudes about one's own blackness is minimal. The person immerses himself or herself in the black experiences (e.g. joins political groups or attends seminars that focus on blacks). In addition to the general orientation that everything of value must be black or relevant to blackness, the immersion-emersion stage is also characterized by a tendency to denigrate whites.

4. In the fourth stage, internalization, the person achieves a feeling of inner security with his or her blackness because the person has incorporated aspects of the immersion-emersion experiences into his or her self-concept. Ideological flexibility and a general decline in strong anti-White feelings also typify the internalization stage; and

5. The fifth stage, internalization-commitment, is characterized as one in which the person continues to express her or his black identity by means of continued political involvement for the sake of the group.

While Cross's model has been widely used, —one persistent criticism of the model is its assumption that most Blacks experience pre-encounter attitudes because of internalized negative beliefs and attitudes about Blacks" (Cokely & Chapman, 2009, p. 287). It has been noted that not

all Black people experience the pre-encounter negative attitudes about Blacks, especially when they have been raised in predominantly Black communities where they have attended predominantly Black schools, churches and have always socialized with positive messages and images of Black people (Cokely & Chapman, 2000). To further underscore this point, there have been several studies as described by Swanson, Cunningham, Youngblood and Spencer (2009) that have even shown African American children to not show preferences for Eurocentric images or viewing them as more positive.

> One explanation is that the children had significant adults reinforcing positive Black, Afrocentric, or African American images. Thus, when these children were presented with a choice of a Eurocentric (White) or an African American (Black) image, they had the cognitive schemas to choose the Black image as more positive. (p. 271)

Further, Swanson, Cunningham, Youngblood and Spencer (2009) posit that

> Children whose parents socialize them regarding racial history and values report more positive self-concept than children who lack an intervention that protects against unchallenged and pervasive stereotypes. As such, older children's racial attitudes and preferences are influenced by their social cognitive abilities in conjunction with their socialization experiences. (p. 271)

Additionally, Demo and Hughes (1990) found that Blacks who experienced or grew up in homes with parents who shared firm messages about being Black tended to have stronger feelings of racial identity than those who did not recall their parents telling them anything about being Black. These conversations between parent and child about race often take place in response to specific events rather than planned conversations, for example, after a child has been treated

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unfairly because of race (Coard & Sellers, 2005). However, it has also been reported that a mother who transmits messages about the obstacles that a child will face because of race, without also instilling pride in the child's race, will convey an overall fatalistic feeling of trepidation in the world (White-Johnson, Ford, & Sellers, 2010).

Another related criticism of Cross's model is that it is not truly a developmental   stage model because "not all African Americans proceed through all the stages in the linear, hierarchical manner that is required by true developmental theories" (Cokely & Chapman , 2009, p. 287). Also, Helms (1994) notes that in general, "increasing maturity signifies increasing awareness of the conditions of oppression associated with race and the manner in which they have been internalized" (p. 306). Further, another example of such diversity in experience and opinions of the self is the lack of consensus about what "Black" people call themselves.

> The marginalized and oppressed status of African Americans has historically
> resulted in periodic attempts to name themselves in an effort to bolster their
> collective racial self-concept and racial self-esteem. History shows that
> Americans of African descent have called themselves, or been called, *African,*
> *colored, negro/Negro, Black, AfroAmerican,* and *African American*. Each label
> used is a reflection of a change in sociopolitical consciousness (Holloway,
> 1990) and racial identity. (In Cokely & Chapman, 2009, p. 283)

This diversity in race consciousness among adults is contrary to the normative developmental course among children who over time acquire greater ability to differentiate (Swanson, Cunningham, Youngblood II, & Spencer, 2009). Specifically, Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1939) were pioneers who examined self-identification in African American preschool children and found that African American preschool boys could identify themselves as distinct individuals

from other groups by age 5. This finding laid the foundation for future work examining preschoolers' knowledge of the self with value judgments attached to their racial preferences (see K. B. Clark & Clark, 1947). For example, Katz (1976) reported that "people know' to which group they belong by the time they are three years old, although they may not understand the social implications of such group membership" (in Helms, 1994, p. 296).

Similarly, Moore (2007) talks about the "rightness of whiteness in the U.S. culture [that] affects children before the age of four, providing white youngsters with a false sense of superiority and encouraging self-hatred among third world youngsters" (p. 368). Moore uses the term "third world' to describe all people of color" (p. 371) from nations such as Africa, Asia and Latin America, who are controlled by the "first world" represented by the United States and Western Europe. Additionally, it is also suggested that by age 8, children understand racial classification beyond simple physical features and characteristics; and by age 10, children recognize social stereotypes associated with different racial groups (Swanson, Cunningham, Youngblood II, & Spencer, 2009).

Evidently cognitive behaviors in children with respect to racial identity development are far more predictable than those existing in adulthood—hence the criticisms of Cross's model. In fact, Robert Sellers (1998) and his research team's *Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity* (MMRI) speaks to the complexity of racial identities in adults. Sellers et. al, believe that "although race is a very important identity, it is only one of many social identities that are of significance to an individual's self-concept" (In Cokely & Chapman, 2009, p. 287). Therefore, unlike Cross's Nigrescence theory, the MMRI allows researchers to assess whether race is important to an individual's self-concept rather than assuming it is (Cokely & Chapman, 2009). It is for this reason that Parham and Helms (1985) recommends that Cross's stages be considered

as ―types of attitudes that one might possess, with the strength of each type of attitude possibly varying across individuals" (p. 432). All this said, however, Cross's ―model maintains its broad appeal because it appears to be applicable to other marginalized social groups who also struggle with developing positive collective identities in the midst of societal oppression" (Cokely & Chapman, 2009, p. 287). One other marginalized group that is relevant to this study is Asian Americans.

<center>Racial Identity Among Asian Americans</center>

When we think about the history of race in the United States we often think of Slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and the basic legacy of conflict between Black and White people. US history is debated as a ―Black and White issue" and this minimizes the oppression and discrimination that other racial minorities experience, including Asian Americans (Yoo & Lee, 2006; Wu, 2001; Lee & Johnson-Bailey, 2004). All of them ―must grapple with discrimination and oppression based solely on their not being part of the White mainstream" Merriam, Caffarellla, Baumgartner, 2007, p. 243). However, many people believe that Asian Americans do not even experience discrimination in the United States (Aguirre & Turner, 2004; Wu, 2001) or that they have been ―the targets of persistent anti-Asian violence and harassment" (Alvarez & Helms, 2001, p. 217). However, according to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1992), numerous incidents of personal attacks ranging from racial intimidation to outright physical assaults are reported every day.

Perhaps there is difficulty believing that Asian Americans experience this type of treatment because ―Asian Americans as a racial group have been labeled and elevated to the status of a _model minority' by the national media" (Alvarez & Helms, 2001, p. 217), holding seemingly positive racial stereotypes like economic and educational success (Alvarez & Helms).

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Therefore, despite these "positive" racial stereotypes they experience on one hand, Asian Americans must also learn to live in an environment in which their race also invites racism and discrimination. This "schizophrenic" treatment of Asian Americans in the US is suspected to negatively impact the psychological well-being of them but with only a few exceptions, "the influence of race and racism on the mental health of Asian Americans has not been investigated" (Alvarez & Helms, 2001, p. 218).

However, in the absence of theoretical models available, Alvarez and Helms (2001) have examined how Asian American university students deal with race, racial issues, and their racial adjustment in using Helm's (1990) psychodiagnostic model of racial identity—specifically the "racial identity schemas" that act as the cognitive or affective "filters" that individuals use to process and incorporate race-related experiences into their overall identity; and the "sociocultural communicators" like parents, family, friends, schools, churches, etc., that may convey race-related messages that shape the perceptions about the value and worth of Asian Americans.

In their work, Alvarez and Helms (2001) also use Helms's (1995) *people of color racial identity model* as the theoretical framework for their study because the basic premise of the model is that all people of color are exposed to similar conditions of oppression in the United States and therefore, they may also experience similar psychological strategies for responding to and coping with such conditions. Helms's model/work is "greatly influenced by Cross's (1971) Nigrescence Model….as evidenced by the fact that she continues to use most of the original Nigrescence theory stage names" (Cokely & Chapman, 2009, p. 287). The racial identity schemas that Helms says "are filters used to shape whether Asian Americans internalize positive or negative messages from society about their racial group" (In Alvarez & Helms, 2001, p. 219)

are Conformity, Dissonance, Immersion-Emersion, Internalization, and Integrative Awareness. Alvarez and Helms (2001, p. 219) describe these schemas as follows:

1. Conformity is characterized by denial or minimization of the importance of race in society and the racial aspects of oneself, as well as a preference for the standards and norms of White rather than Asian cultures.

2. Dissonance involves a sense of confusion or ambivalence about identifying with Asian Americans.

3. Immersion-Emersion is the voluntary psychological immersion and idealization of the Asian American racial group and cultures and a rejection of White cultural standards and values.

4. Internalization involves the capacity to objectively reappraise the strengths and limitations of both Asian and White Americans and their respective cultural socialization.

5. Integrative Awareness is the process of using a personally meaningful racial definition of oneself that also involves a ‗capacity to value one's own collective identities as well as empathize and collaborate with members of other oppressed groups' (Helms, 1995, p. 186).

    Helms [also] acknowledged that individuals may use a ‗dominant' racial identity schema to process racial information in many situations.

However, it is important to also note that according Helms (1995), people of color are not the only ones who go through a process of racial identity development. Helms believes White people also go through two different phases of White Racial Development—Abandonment of Racism, and Defining a Non-Racial Identity. This model is further explored in the next section.

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Helms's White Racial Identity Model

As previously discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, Whiteness/White Privilege is regarded as ―the other side of racism‖ (Rothenberg, 2002) and racial inequality is not just a ‗Black' or ‗Brown' problem, it affects all of us (Singleton & Linton, 2006). Therefore, since ―racial identity theory discusses individuals' psychological processes within a sociopolitical and cultural environment or society in which power is differentiated by race‖ (Helms, 1984, 1990, 1995, in Constantine, Warren & Miville, 2005, p. 490), then even White individuals experience identity issues. People of all races have the potential to experience racial identity development (Constantine, Warren & Miville, 2005); and for White individuals, this identity development process includes the recognition of a false sense of racial superiority and eventually adopting an identity that is nonracist (Helms & Cook, 1999).

Helms's (1984, 1990, 1995) White Racial Identity Model ―is the only one to date to have received any empirical substantiation‖ (In Helms, 1994, p. 302). This model includes 6 schemas that White people experience while in pursuit of a healthy racial identity. These include (a) contact, (b) disintegration, (c) reintegration, (d) pseudo-independence, (e) immersion-emersion, and (f) autonomy. These schemas are succinctly summarized in Sue, et al. (1998):

1. Contact: People in this status are oblivious to racism, lack an understanding of racism, have minimal experiences with Black people, and may profess to be color-blind—believing that racial and cultural differences are unimportant and do not see themselves as ―dominant‖‖ or having biases and prejudices . Societal influence in perpetuating stereotypes and the superior/inferior dichotomy associated between Blacks and Whites are not noticed, but accepted unconsciously or consciously without critical thought or analysis.

2. Disintegration: In this stage, the person becomes conflicted over unresolved racial moral dilemmas that are frequently perceived as polar opposites: believing one is nonracist, yet not wanting one's son or daughter to marry a minority group member; believing that "all men are created equal," yet society treating Blacks as second class citizens...(a la the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles.) The person becomes increasingly conscious of his or her Whiteness and my experience dissonance and conflict between choosing between own-group loyalty and humanism.

3. Reintegration: Because of the tremendous influence that societal ideology exerts, initial resolution of dissonance often moves in the direction of the dominant ideology associated with race and one's own socioracial group identity. This stage may be characterized as a regression, for the tendency is to idealize one's socioracial group and to be intolerant of other minority groups. There is a firmer and more conscious belief in White racial superiority and racial/ethnic minorities are blamed for their own problems.

4. Pseudo-Independence: A person likely moves into this phase due to a painful or insightful encounter or event, which jars the person from Reintegration status. The person begins to attempt an understanding of racial, cultural, and sexual orientation differences and may reach out to interact with minority group members. The choice of minority individuals, however, is based on how "similar" they are to him or her, and the primary mechanism used to understand racial issues is intellectual and conceptual. An attempt to understand has not reached the experiential and affective domains. In other words, understanding Euro-American White privilege, the

sociopolitical aspects of race, and issues of bias, prejudice, and discrimination tend to be an intellectual exercise.

5. Immersion/Emersion: If the person is reinforced to continue a personal exploration of him/herself as a racial being, questions become focused on what it means to be White. Helms states that the person searches for an understanding of the personal meaning of racism and the ways by which one benefits form White privilege. There is an increasing willingness to truly confront one's own biases, to redefine Whiteness, and to become more activistic in directly combating racism and oppression. This stage is marked with increasing experiential and affective understanding that were lacking in the previous status; and finally,

6. Autonomy refers to increasing awareness of one's own Whiteness, reduced feelings of guilt, acceptance of one's own role in perpetuating racism, renewed determination to abandon White entitlement leads to autonomy status. The person is knowledgeable about racial, ethnic and cultural differences, values the diversity, and is no longer fearful, intimidated, or uncomfortable with the experiential reality of race. Development on a nonracist white identity becomes increasingly strong.

In essence, Phase 1 racial schemas include the first three schemas and collectively reflect the period in which White individuals reflect and attempt to abandon racist attitudes; while Phase 11 includes the last three schemas where White individuals develop a healthy and nonracist White identity (Constantine, Warren & Mivile, 2005).

In summary, we have learned from this chapter that approaching race from a psychosocial perspective is very complex and involves literature from many different areas and disciplines in order to elucidate this topic. We have learned how important race, class and gender

are to our beliefs and actions when we are interacting with others; and we have also learned how important it is for all of us to be cognizant of our own beliefs and actions as we move through the world. This cognizance and awareness are best achieved through critical reflection and dialogue—just as was done in this study. The next Chapter, the methodology section, explicitly describes how this study was executed using critical reflection and dialogue.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore educator's beliefs and reactions to race using critical incident scenarios. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by educators of color?

2. What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by White educators?

3. What factors inform beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race?

Theoretical Framework

If we look critically at our individual lives and the experiences we have on a daily basis, we understand that mere interactions or —contact" with others from different racial groups does not necessarily yield any substantive or meaningful connections or understanding among us. The only real way to gain an understanding of others and to build rapport is to get to know others through dialogue. However, our daily comings and goings do not necessarily afford us this opportunity to engage in dialogue with others outside of our racial group so when the opportunity presents itself, it is worthwhile to participate. One such opportunity to do so is within educational settings where teachers are charged with the task of either creating a —community" in their classrooms with racially diverse students, or are expected to facilitate discussions on race or across racial lines. However, as I have already pointed out in previous chapters, because race evokes such intense reactions and emotions in people, any discussions about race should not take place on a whim. Therefore, in recognizing the importance of having structure when it comes to facilitating discussions about race, preeminent social psychologist,

Gordon Allport, created the "Contact Hypothesis."According to Allport's (1954) Hypothesis, "the best way to reduce tension and hostility between groups is to bring them into contact with each other in different ways" (As cited in Brown, 1995, p. 236). Allport proved this point when he cited unpublished work that looked at "residential proximity between Whites and Blacks in Chicago...[and found that] the nearer the respondents lived to the Black community the more prejudiced they were" (As cited in Brown, p. 237). Obviously, mere contact with "others" from different racial groups does not inevitably create genuine, authentic relationships, or understanding. We have probably also seen this in our own classrooms. Despite our intensions to build a cohesive, "safe," and equitable learning community with our "chairs arranged in circles rather than in rows facing a teacher's desk [to] reinforce the imagery of co-learners and co-teachers" (Adams, 1997, p. 39), this does not necessarily yield our desired outcome—open and candid conversations. Therefore, for this study which involved open dialogue about race with people from different backgrounds, Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis served as the theoretical framework.

According to the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) says the best way to reduce our assumptions of others, and thus contribute to prejudice reduction is to have the following factors or conditions met: (a) the creation of equal status among persons from different groups, (b) the identification of common group goals, (c) an emphasis on the need to promote cooperation among members of the two groups to meet their shared goals; and (d) overt sanction and support by persons in authority positions. In this study all four conditions of Allport's Hypothesis were met because of this study's chosen methodology called *Racially Ambiguous Critical Incident Analysis Learning* (RACIAL).

Racially Ambiguous Critical Incident Analysis Learning (RACIAL) is a unique methodology because through the analyses of real-life critical incident scenarios, individuals engage in ―race reflections that helps them uncover their stereotypical thinking, biases, inconspicuous beliefs, perceptions, experiences, hidden values, and dispositions that are not in the fore of a teacher's thinking prior to conscious attempts to come to terms with them" (Milner, 2003, p. 175). With this methodology, grappling with stereotypical thinking, as well as the acknowledgment of hidden values and inconspicuous beliefs among the participants is achieved because during the critical incident analyses, the races of the individuals in the scenarios are omitted. Additionally, this innovative element of omitting the races is also coupled with the required tasks for participants to (a) guess the race(s) of the individuals in the scenarios, (b) answer the related scenario questions; and (c) explain how and why they arrived at their conclusions.

Therefore, as the contact hypothesis necessitates, all of the participants are on a similar level with equal status and work cooperatively because they all have the same amount of information and all have to draw from their racial assumptions and ―racial understandings" in order to collectively figure out who is in each scenario. Furthermore, this shared vulnerability of ―not knowing" all the information also reduces the chances for participants to self-report or mask their true beliefs and reactions because the methodology is designed for individuals to tap into their unconscious and unknown assumptions.

Study Design and Data Collection

This qualitative study used two key data sources to explore the research questions: (a) Two written experiences with race created by participants on cue cards, and (b) the use of two ―mini-focus groups" (Krueger, 1994, p. 17), one consisting of 3 educators, and one consisting of

4 educators from diverse racial backgrounds. In this study, the "focus" or principal data

collection activity included the reactions to real-life critical incidents by the educators who

critically analyzed and discussed the three different scenarios in their respective focus groups.

There were also three core activities associated with the use of the real-life critical incidents: (a)

reactions to scenarios, (b) discussions of scenarios, and (c) reflections on discussion. Each focus

group meeting lasted for approximately two and a half hours and both included the following

steps:

1. Participants were asked to fill out a Consent Form (see Appendix A) and a
   Demographic Survey (see Appendix B). After facilitator and group introductions,
   procedures for the focus group were conveyed to the group, and ground rules for
   discussion were discussed, including respect for alternative views and the importance
   of discussing issues not people. There was also a brief discussion about what it means
   to engage in dialogue (see Appendix C).

2. Participants were given 5 minutes to write down on a cue card one incident in which
   they were the "culprit" in an incident related to race and to also write down one
   incident in which they were the "victim" in an incident related to race. The cue cards
   were then set aside until the end of the focus group discussion and were eventually
   collected by the researcher and used as one source of data (see Appendix D).

3. Scenario #1 was the first scenario distributed to the focus group to be analyzed and
   discussed by the participants (see Appendix E). However, before any open group
   discussions about the scenario took place, individual group members were given quiet
   time to formulate their initial impressions by answering the three related questions as

they are written on each scenario card, including guessing the races of the individuals depicted in the scenarios.

4.   Participants then engaged in an open and candid discussion in which they asked questions of each other, shared their opinions about "who" the people were in the scenario, and began answering the related questions. The researcher acted as a facilitator of this discussion and only asked questions, offered insight or clarification where needed, and also ensured that discussions were respectful and "balanced" so no one person could dominate the conversation.

5.   The facilitator shares the true racial identities of the individuals in the scenarios and also provides complete descriptions of each scenario (see Appendix F).

6.   The facilitator repeated steps 2 and 3 with scenarios 2 & 3 (see Appendices G& H). All participants were encouraged to share in the dialogue.

7.   The facilitator shared an example of a time in which she was the ―culprit‖ with respect to racial assumptions (see Appendix I). Then she asked if participants wanted to share what they had written on their cue cards. These examples were included in the wrap up discussion/focus group debrief.

8.   After the focus group discussions were transcribed, analyzed and put into themes, participants were contacted via telephone or email in order to clarify any points made by the participants or to get input on themes that arose from the research (see Appendix J).

Autobiographical Approach to this Study

The decision to utilize racially salient critical incidents (Collins & Pieterse, 2007) in focus group discussions for this study is supported by Stephen Brookfield (1995) who also

highlights the invaluable utility of individuals' critical incidents as a teaching tool. Brookfield (1995) insists that, "Our autobiographical experiences as learners and teachers provide a rich (though often unacknowledged and even derided) source of material for us to probe" (p. xiii). In his book, Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher, he wrote:

> I wanted this book to flow, and I believe that when I write from personal experience, this is more likely to happen. I think too, that a process as complex as critically reflective teaching needs to be grounded as much as possible in the description of concrete events and actions. (p. xvi)

Similarly, Smith-Maddox and Solorzano (2002) also recognize that

> The experiential knowledge of people of color is critical to understanding and analyzing issues pertaining to race and racism. Indeed…the experiences of people of color should be examined for their ability to influence how teacher candidates [and teachers] think about learning and interacting with their students. (p. 71)

Further, in her highly autobiographical book, Teaching to Transgress, hooks (1994) describes her pedagogy as being shaped by the reality that "students from marginalized groups enter classrooms within institutions where their voices have been neither heard nor welcomed" (p. 84). Additionally, hooks says, "We all bring to the classroom experiential knowledge, that this knowledge can indeed enhance our learning experience" (p. 84). Additionally, Sekaquaptewa, Espinoza, Thompson, Vargas and Hippel (2002) also express a "need for more experiential investigations in this area" (p. 76) because dismissing a person's race leads to misunderstandings about how that person experiences the world (Milner, 2003).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) also encourages and values the personal stories of people of color through what they call *Counterstorytelling* because traditionally, as is articulated by hooks

(1994), the voices and experiences of people of color are on the margins and are seldom or never heard. Therefore, ―counterstorytelling and the inclusion of narratives as a mode of inquiry, is a methodology grounded in the particulars of the social realities and lived experiences of racialized victims" (Howard, 2008, p. 6), and are considered important methodological tools (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Howard, 2008). In addition, as was previously stated in Chapter 2, the experiential knowledge of People of Color is legitimate, appropriate and critical to understanding and teaching about race (Soloranzo, 1997, 1998; Yosso, 2007; Bernal, 2002). Moreover, the use of scenarios and storytelling are identified as ways to explicitly learn about the lived experiences of People of Color (Soloranzo, 1997, 1998; Yosso, 2007). This sharing of personal stories and ―narratives help people make sense of their lives and the lives of others" (Richardson, 1990, p. 10).

Another justification for this study's autobiographical approach is supported by Brookfield (1995) who, as mentioned above, asserts that critical incidents written by people about events in their lives are indisputable sources of data that represent a person's reality. Brookfield also insists that using critical incidents to help people explore their assumptions is far less intimidating because the learners are not asked direct questions. Given the potentially volatile topic, it is important to make the process of exploring racial assumptions as minimally threatening as possible. Therefore, using real-life critical incident analyses in conjunction with storytelling or narrative, is supported by CRT and Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) new methodology that I will explain in the ―Data Collection and Procedures" section of this chapter. This methodology employed by this study may be a better approach because it avoids head-on approaches like interviewing; and Brookfield (1995) suggests that where possible, avoiding head-on approaches when exploring peoples' assumptions is the best approach to take. In

addition, Merriam and Brockett (2007), while discussing the "growing critique and attention to diversity" (p. 306) in adult education, identify critical race theory as one "tool" for analyses of "taken-for- granted worldviews and assumptions about all aspects of our practice" (p. 306). Furthermore, Brookfield (1987) says,

> Through realizing this diversity, our commitments to our own values, actions, and social structures are informed by a sense of humility; we gain an awareness that others in the world have the same sense of certainty we do—but about ideas, values, and actions that are completely contrary to our own. (p. 5)

Critical Incident Scenarios

Most of the data in this study was collected in response to selected critical incidents that are entitled "Stimulus Passages" and are designed in a racially ambiguous manner. As described earlier, based on this design, participants were required to take out the racial ambiguity in the scenarios by guessing the race(s) of the individuals described in the scenarios; this is in addition to answering a related question that asked what participants believed was the "motivation" behind the behavior of the individuals involved. This process of analyzing critical incident scenarios that are racially ambiguous is a new methodology I have created called Racially Ambiguous Critical Incident Analysis Learning (RACIAL). Although the acronym "RACIAL" was recently created in 2009 by the researcher to describe the new methodology, this methodology has been utilized by the researcher while conducting her workshop "Think You Are An Unbiased Teacher? Think Again!" at many conferences both nationally and internationally since 2006. Of note, this methodology has been utilized at international conferences in Paris, France in 2008, and also at the 8th International Transformative Learning Conference 2009 in Hamilton, Bermuda that was sponsored by Teachers College Columbia

University. This methodology has been received very favorably by all educators who have participated in the workshops in the past.

Selection of Critical Incidents for this Study

All of the chosen critical incidents have been described in the "Stimulus Passages" and all include the following characteristics:

1. Each is in an educational setting.

2. Each is left intentionally ambiguous with respect to the race of one or more of the people described in the passages. The settings or contexts of the scenarios are also partially described which requires the participants to "make sense" of the situations by making inferences about what is taking place. This helps the participants focus only on the information provided in the passages so when guessing the race(s) of the individuals, they will begin to vocalize their reasoning and in the process, reveal any assumptions they may have. This design helps bring back some of the subtlety and complexity of everyday knowing that Hollway and Jefferson (2000) believe the research process has lost.

3. Each of them is a real life event from the life of the author. The inclusion of real-life critical incidents is important to the study because a true experience cannot be refuted (Brookfield, 1995) Therefore, if/when participants in the study draw on their racial assumptions to decide the race(s) of the individuals in the passages and if they guess incorrectly, then there is an opportunity for deeper and more authentic discussion. Also, because the incidents are events that were experienced, participants will be compelled to consider and examine an alternative way of "reasoning" that may be contrary to their initial thinking.

4. Passages were selected by the author and her committee that are indicative of specific categories of critical incidents that are direct manifestations of issues elucidated by Critical Race Theory. These three categories of critical incidents include: underestimation of academic ability (b) intentional stifling of personal progress; and on some level, (c) human collusion to normalize racism.

Participants

A total of 7 educators working in K-12 and higher education settings from a wide spectrum of professional areas—K-12, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and Law, participated in two focus groups for this study. Specifically, Focus Group One took place in the South Eastern United States and consisted of 3 participants—two women and one man. On the demographic survey, where asked, ―What is your race/ethnicity?‖ the two women wrote, ―West Indian,‖ and ―Black‖ (respectively); while the male participant said he was ―African American.‖ For Focus group Two, which took place in the North Eastern United States, a total of 4 participants (three women and one man) participated in the study. On the demographic survey, where asked, ―What is your race/ethnicity?‖ the man wrote down ―Italian,‖ while the three women's responses were ―East Indian,‖ ―American,‖ and ―White.‖ The ages of participants ranged from 35 to 65 years of age with an average age of 46 years. See Table 1 for a participant summary of each focus group. Also, Tables 2, 2a and 2b represent participant profiles from Focus Group One. Tables 3, 3a, 3b and 3c represent participant profiles from Focus Group Two. These profiles include critical incident information from each participant that assists with our understanding of them.

Table 1- *Participant summary*

	Focus Group One		
Name	**Age**	**Race**	**Profession**
Clare	65	West Indian	Law School Professor/ Lawyer
Jeremy	40	African American	Instructor/ Social Worker
Angela	37	West Indian	Instructor/Occupational Therapist
	Focus Group Two		
George	65	Italian	Special Education Teacher/Counselor (Retired)
Kate	36	American	K-12 Teacher/Assistant Principal
Mary	35	White	K-12 Teacher
Marilyn	45	Indian/East Indian	University Professor/Nurse Practitioner

Focus Group One: Participant Profiles

Table 2- *Clare's participant profile*

Demographic Information: 65 years old, ―West Indian,‖ Law School Professor/ Lawyer
I went into the hospital and immediately, I saw this young man and he had that look of West Indian and we both said hello and he started to talk and say, ―Where she's from in the Caribbean?‖ And then he said Bishop Anstey (A private school in Trinidad) women really feel that they're everything and very snobbish and won't talk to you and a lot of them have rejected me. I let him finish and then I said, ―I'm a bishop Anstey woman.‖ He was in shock but recovered very quickly. And then here I am talking to him. Then he said come on over and meet this lady. This is the first time this man has ever met me in his life. Some clerk. He said you really have to meet this nice lady-of me to the clerk. Then we parted company. He had such an idea of what my school people were like and a lot of Trinidadians feel like that too. So here he was talking to one and he didn't know….Just don't judge a book by its cover.

Table 2a- *Jeremy's participant profile*

Demographic Information: 40 years old, ―African American,‖ Instructor/ Social Worker
I was play fighting with another boy in grade 7. It started off play-fighting but then I gradually realized it was becoming something more and more pernicious, aggressive. Then this guy suddenly started calling me every single racial name—some things I had never even heard of. In a row, ziggy, nigger, spear-chucker, shadow, eggplant…names I had never heard from anybody…So needless to say, I beat him up because of that…he became angrier so I got angrier. Why were you calling me all these names? It became a fight but now that I think back to it, number one, we were in grade 7, and he was young. It is alarming how young I was…when White people started hurling those racial slurs at me. I was 5. I remember when I was 4 kids were saying nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger; even before I even knew what it was about…That's why when people say things like reverse racism or those kind of things, um, they don't understand where we're coming from. When people say White racism versus Black racism, it is not the same because we did not start in the same position. We don't have the same history as you. You don't have the same precedence behind your hatred. We have precedence; there are all types of reasons for Black people not to like White people. But vice versa, there's nothing historically so you can't tell me it's the same thing.

Table 2b- *Angela's participant profile*

Demographic Information: 37 years old, ―West Indian," Instructor/Occupational Therapist

Critical incident Information

Angela shared this critical incident that took place at school when she returned to the change room from physical education class.

It (the picture) pointed out skin color and hair was like a big huge part of it and all the ways that they thought that I was different pointed out for everyone to see. So it was really traumatic and you know, it was the first time I realized that people viewed me differently. I didn't know that before but the real critical incident here is how my parents responded… It wasn't until there were the negative effects of it like not wanting to go to school and behaving completely out of character that my parents really dealt with it…. So I think in two ways it affected me 1. I would have to always stand up for myself because I didn't feel anyone was going to do it for me. And 2, I took from my parents at 10…that you are different and sometimes I read situations wrong because I have that underlying need to fit in. I learned that from my parents. But I'm aware of it now so I always ask, ―Am I looking at this weird because of my need to fit in?" This is the instinct I have that comes from what my parents want for me rather than what I want for myself. Or am I really trying to see the best from people? So if someone says that someone treated me differently, I won't see it right away because I went so long, um, almost being told that that's not really what I'm seeing.

Focus Group 2: Participant Profiles

Table 3- *George's participant profile*

Demographic Information: 65 years old, ‒Italian," Retired Special Ed. Teacher and Counselor

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Critical incident information

I came here as an immigrant and I was called a ‒dirty old whop;" and my first friend was black and I remember both of us being beat up. And my mother was loving and that's what carried me; I had to rise above that and be better than them and that's what made me get going. It's individual. And I became the interpreter for the other immigrants in '53 and we were just coming here so I became the interpreter for the first year for other people coming and some couldn't handle it so they quit school, they joined the Mafia, whatever….whereas my mother always said, ‒Be educated."

…. I'm a Special Ed Guidance person so I was very sensitive to that (grading nicely). Now I remember my high school…I had an English teacher who used to call me Columbus—you know? Christopher Columbus, because I was Italian. And that was an English teacher, can you imagine? I can imagine how he marked my papers. So I'm saying, you're that kind of person [Mary] and in my life and in my experience as a student from an immigrant boy, there was always that nice teacher that was always sensitive to me and then you get the ones who are belligerent and just there. You know you're just that kind of person. It's important to know.

Table 3a- *Marilyn's participant profile*

Demographic Information:	45 years old, ―Indian/East Indian,‖ University Professor/Nurse Practitioner

Critical incident information

The following dialogue took place when the participants briefly went off topic and talked about how people "beat the odds" when they grow up in difficult situations.

…. my mom worked really hard but she didn't have any time for us. She didn't raise us. I had a key around my neck and once I was too old for daycare, you go home by yourself and you deal with it.

George- well could you depend on your mother being there all the time?

No. and my mom used to beat me so…when I was 18 years old I had the opportunity to go to university. I had no money, I had nothing. I said I'm getting the ―F‖ out of here and I took my stuff and I left and I have not lived at home since.

…I am East Indian, have married and dated people that are not East Indian. But if you take them to a family event, East Indians are extremely racist; I will tell you that. So White is okay, Indian is better, Muslim is not okay, Sikh is not okay, Black is not okay---anything that is not the same race or religion as you is not okay. But my family is very mixed. We have German in my family, Filipino in my family; we have all kinds of things. So I tell who ever I'm dating, oh well my family is really cool….these are all the different races that are in my family. I think I do that to make sure that the person feels comfortable

I'm just laughing because this happened to me last week. We were in Miami for carnival and of course I'm with West Indian people. And some people know me and some people don't. Actually, only one of the people I was with knew me. And we went to, we were trying to go to a party on the Saturday night and the people that were keeping the party were Trinidadian, but Indian Trinidadian. There were automatic assumptions that I was Indian Trinidadian because I'm at carnival, in Miami, with a bunch of West Indian people. And everyone I was with was black. And they wanted to go to the party but they wanted to see what the party was like so one girl looked at me and said, ―Go and do your Trinidadian thing and go in the party and see what it's like.‖ Laughter—okay, you want me to be ―Trini.‖ Of course I went to the guy and told him that we all wanted to get in. I came back and the person I was with said, ―How did you do that?‖ Just like the guy in the scenario at the restaurant. He just assumed that because of where you were, that you were Black American and not West Indian.

Table 3b- *Kate's participant profile*

Demographic Information: 36 years old, ―American,‖ K-12 Teacher/Assistant Principal

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Kate's critical incident information

-Kate made the following comment to George's when he shared a scenario involving a friend who was homophobic but later changed his mind when his son came out.

You know, we can sit here and judge that but probably in his life, he did not have anything that forced him to take a look in the mirror. You know, I remember when I had to look in the mirror. You used the phrase that I wrote down, ―disorienting dilemma.‖ I grew up and I love my family to death but with a British/Scottish background. I remember I brought home my first Black boyfriend, my dad just about had a heart attack. And here's my dad who is a wonderful man but nothing had…that wasn't even in his mind thought that that was even a possibility and then I was talking about this boy and then I brought him home. My dad didn't freak out but he said, ―oh‖— that was his reaction.…So your friend, perhaps he's never been affected personally by it. You can discuss things with people but unless you are personally tweaked… so it's easy to judge…I judge all the time from the time I wake up to the time I go to bed but it's just being aware of that, questioning yourself…

…See, I don't play that game. I have to sleep with myself at night. And like I said, I've been treated differently because like I said, I don't play the game, I speak up for what I believe in and I stick up for students and parents who I feel don't have, um, the chance to speak up—or teachers or whatever. I remember once I was teaching in an inner city school and I had gone over and beyond for this kid, grade 8. My mom had taught him all the way through and then I taught him. Right, and his family wouldn't help so much and the mom knew it. And the kid screwed up and I called her on it and she called me racist. I lost my mind on this woman. This poor woman had never seen the wrath that was coming.

Table 3c- Mary's participant profile

Demographic Information: 35 years old, ―White,‖ K-12 Teacher

Critical incident information

―I have my critical incidents but I‘m only going to share my second one because I am really and truly embarrassed and ashamed of myself so I‘m not going to share it. Here I am 20 year later…‖

After minimal encouraging, Mary shared the following…

Okay when I was 13 years old…okay I will share it. I have to get this out now. My friend Lydia and I were friends and we used to go trick or treating. We actually talked last week and every once and a while, things that I have done and ashamed of come flooding back at random times and I think, ―oh, gosh.‖ And there‘s a lot of them but we were talking about a Halloween costume. I hadn‘t thought about this for a long time. Anyway, I‘m getting red just thinking about it because it‘s so awful. Anyway, we were talking about Halloween and we were talking about moments of shame and I said, ―When I was 13 do you remember…and old enough to know better but clearly not thinking. I aw, somebody had given me a sari and I dressed up like what I called a ―Pakistani princess.‖ And I went door to door in my neighborhood asking for Ghandi, you know like candy, like thinking that was quite hilarious.

George- wow!

Mary- yah, until I knocked on somebody‘s door and it was a pretty diverse neighborhood that I lived in and I just didn‘t think. I was young but should have known at13. And I went around and an East Indian family opened the door. And I just…in that moment…it was obviously too late but I‘m thinking…I‘m the biggest asshole that ever lived!‖ You know? What are you going to do? I don‘t think I apologized, I just took off! But I should have known better and I‘m sure I‘ve done other things but you know…so insensitive.

Kate- but you were young and you didn‘t know better.

Mary- but I knew the minute they opened the door so I knew better. I obviously wasn‘t thinking about it but I knew. So when I was faced with it I knew.

Marilyn- this is just the point of view of an East Indian person. If they saw you standing there in a sari they probably would think, ―Oh my gosh, isn‘t that beautiful?‖ that would have been their perspective… ―Oh my gosh, isn‘t she beautiful and she‘s wearing something from our culture.‖

Mary- but I don‘t think I had intended initially to mock it but I did when I found myself asking for Ghandi…anyway….

Recruiting

Several attempts to recruit participants via telephone calls and/or emails to different institutions without any prior "relationships" with the institutions or people did not yield any results. Therefore, participants were ultimately recruited via purposive snowball sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Specifically, my friends and former colleagues, whether by word-of-mouth or by circulation of my call for participants email (see Appendix K), contacted individuals they knew who in turn, contacted their respective friends and family members in order to recruit individuals. My goal was to recruit a total of 12 participants for the study since Morgan (1997) suggests over-recruiting by at least 20% of the total number of participants because on the day of the focus group some participants might not be available.

Once potential recruits were identified, I either sent my call for participants email and/or contacted them via telephone in order to introduce myself (see Appendix K) and to describe the study as an opportunity for them (as educators) to engage in a conversation about an issue that although is sensitive in nature, is relevant to us all. Additionally, I also told the recruits that regardless of our racial backgrounds, participation in the study would be invaluable because it did not only identify theory related to our assumptions about race, but it was also linked to practice, affording practical strategies to participants on how to deal with race. Upon confirmation of interest, the focus groups were scheduled and on the day of each focus group discussion, participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix A) authorizing their voluntary participation in the study.

Role of the Facilitator/ Researcher

Even though the discourse on race in these focus groups was influenced by CRT's assertion that the world is racist, the teachings of Gordon Allport's Contact Hypothesis served as the catalyst for discussion. The discourse was a patient, methodical process in which participants were asked to speak their minds and to rely on each other for support during their explorations of their beliefs and reactions to the incidents related to race. The participants were also encouraged to feel safe in knowing that they were free of negative judgments and criticism. However, establishing such an atmosphere was not an easy or arbitrary endeavor. As previously stated, I first described the study as an opportunity for individuals, regardless of race, to discuss a sensitive issue that to some degree, affects us all but we are too afraid to discuss it, especially in the presence of ―others." I then set ―ground rules" for discussion and explained what it meant to engage in dialogue because of the potential volatility of discussions like this. Mezirow (2003) says

> Discourse is that type of dialogue in which we participate with others whom we
> believe to be informed, objective and rational to assess reasons that justify
> problematic beliefs. Discourse leads to a best tentative judgment that is always
> subject to new insights, perspectives, evidence or arguments. The quality of this
> assessment is, itself, enhanced through free, full participation in a continuing
> discourse involving critical reflection on assumptions with an increasingly broad
> and more diverse group of informed and open minded participants having the
> widest range of views possible. (p. 2)

In addition, as a part of my ―ground rules speech," I included my embarrassing experience of unconsciously pre-judging the ability of a black boy when consciously, I should

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have known better. This sharing of my personal experience of "culprit bias" (Poulton, 2003)

broke the ice and allowed the participants to also feel comfortable sharing their vulnerabilities.

Further, during the focus group discussions, I played an intimate role as facilitator and as

participant observer, documenting or recording the course of ongoing events (Preissle & Grant,

2004). However, as previously noted, I only participated in the conversations when (a) points of

clarification were needed, (b) to keep the process going; and (c) to ensure that one person did not

dominate the conversation. My role is consistent with what Krueger (1994) describes as the

responsibilities of the moderator during focus group discussions—facilitating the discussion,

encouraging all members to participate, requesting overly talkative members to permit others to

speak, and prompting members to speak (Cited in Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran,

2009).

Audio-taping Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups are an economical, fast, and efficient method for obtaining data from

multiple participants. Because of its sheer design, participants are given the sense of belonging to

a group (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). These focus groups—also referred

to as group interviews, "allow respondents to draw each other out, although some individuals

may be reluctant to speak" (Stake, 2004, p. 155). In other words, focus group research is "a way

of collecting qualitative data, which essentially—involves engaging a small number of people in

an informal group discussion (or discussions), _focused' around a particular topic or set of

issues" (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 177).

In this study, 3 educators participated in Focus Group One, and 4 educators participated

in Focus Group Two. There were enough participants in each group to yield diversity in

information obtained but not too large such that participants felt uncomfortable sharing their

thoughts, experiences, opinions and beliefs (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009).

These focus group discussions were audiotaped and later transcribed with data specifically

coming from three key sources (a) reactions to scenarios, (b) discussions of scenarios, and (c)

reflections on discussion. Researchers have used focus groups for the last 80 years and in the

past 20 years, social science researchers in particular have used focus groups to collect

qualitative data (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). However, Paul Lazarsfeld

and Robert Merton are credited with formalizing the method of focus groups in the early 1940s

(Madriz, 2000; Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009); their contributions are

highlighted by Kamberelis and Dimitriads (2005) who say

> Two dimensions of Lazarsfeld and Merton's research efforts constitute part of the legacy
>
> of using focus groups within qualitative research: (a) capturing people's responses in real
>
> space and time in the context of face-to-face interactions and (b) strategically focusing'
>
> interview prompts based on themes that are generated in these face-to-face interactions
>
> and that are considered particularly important to the researchers. (p. 899)

This capturing of focus group responses via audiotape and later by transcriptions, is considered

the most rigorous but time-sensitive mode of analyzing data (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, &

Zoran, 2009). However, having focus group conversations transcribed, lays the foundation for a

researcher to begin the process of data analysis, which in itself, is a difficult process because

―unlike statistical analysis, there are few fixed formulas or cookbook recipes to guide the novice"

(Yin, 2009, p. 127). This notion is further discussed in the coming section.

<center>Data Analysis</center>

Literature on focus groups and how to successfully conduct them are in abundance

(Krueger, 1988, 1994, 2000; Morgan, 1997) but the analysis of the data generated by research of

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this kind is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing the research (Yin, 2009). Wilkinson (2004) echoes this point by stating,

> There is relatively little in the focus group literature on how to *analyze* the
>
> resulting data. Data analysis sections of focus group _handbooks' are typically
>
> very brief.…[And] in published focus group studies, researchers often omit, or
>
> briefly gloss over, the details of exactly how they conducted their analyses.
>
> (p. 182, emphasis in original)

However, despite this reported paucity of knowledge about how to analyze focus group data, Duggleby (2005) suggests that there are three different types of data that can arise and be analyzed from focus groups: individual data, group data, and/or group interaction data. Also, according to Wilkinson (1998), the group is the unit of analysis that is most analyzed by focus group researchers. However, in this study the focus group was merely a means to collect data and therefore, the unit of analysis was the individual.

Likewise, in this study, I first transcribed and analyzed the data from Focus Group One, determining the emergent themes in the form of expressed beliefs and reactions among educators of color that corresponded directly with my Research Question One. I then repeated the same steps for Focus Group Two, with the majority White focus group (3 of 4), trying to determine any emergent themes that corresponded directly with Research Question 2. Since the unit of analysis was the individual, I was able to look specifically at the lone educator of color's responses in Focus Group Two and performed a constant comparison analysis with the response of the educators of color in Focus Group One. Then, as expected when there are multiple focus groups within the same study, I analyzed all of the focus group data via constant comparison analysis, which allows the focus group researcher to assess saturation in general and across-

group saturation (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009). Initially, I naively thought the emergent themes would fit "neatly" under each of the three Critical Race Theory critical incident categories chosen for this study: (a) underestimation of academic achievement, (b) intentional stifling of personal progress, and (c) human collusion to normalize racism. However, I quickly determined that this was impossible. However, the constant comparison analysis also enabled me to determine any emergent themes across both focus groups that corresponded directly with Research Question 3.

My constant comparison analysis of the two focus groups initially yielded 18 categories of expressed beliefs and reactions by the groups; but upon deeper analysis, I determined that some themes could either be collapsed together and/or become subcategories or combined with other major themes. By doing this, I ultimately reduced the number of categories from 18 down to 9 themes with 4 themes that addressed Research Question 1; and 2 themes that addressed Research Question 2, and 3 themes that addressed Research Question 3. In essence, my analysis probed whether the different focus groups appeared to share some similarity and therefore, deserved to be considered instances of the same "type" (Yin, 2009). Similarly, Charmaz (2000) asserts that since focus group data are analyzed one focus group at a time, the analysis of multiple focus groups is akin to having additional sampling in order to assess the meaningfulness of the themes and to refine themes. Further, Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, and Zoran (2009) also describe the usefulness of having multiple focus groups to test themes; they call this design an "emergent-systemic focus group design, wherein the term *emergent* refers to the focus groups that are used for exploratory purposes and *systematic* refers to the focus groups that are used for verification purposes" (p. 6, emphasis in original).

However, focus group theorists don't all agree on what the most appropriate unit of

analysis should be (Kidd & Marshall, 2000). One major limitation of using the group as the unit

of analysis when analyzing focus group data is that ―it prevents the researcher from documenting

focus group members who did not contribute to the category or theme. As such, their voices, or

lack thereof, are not acknowledged" (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009, p. 7).

Further, Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, and Zoran (2009) also state that by only presenting

and interpreting the emergent themes among groups, no information about the degree of

consensus, dissent, or outlier comments is reported among the individual participants; these

negative voices or outliers are what Kitzinger (1994) calls ―argumentative interactions."

Therefore, keeping in mind what Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) say, ―…. The goal

must be to discover the correct manner of interpreting whatever data we have" (p. 131), I also

analyzed the data obtained from this study at the individual level. Having a total of 7 participants

across two focus groups afforded me the opportunity to do so. Specifically, I analyzed the

individual responses of group members both within and across their respective focus groups.

However, there was no evidence of unacknowledged individual voices (Onwuegbuzie,

Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009), or what Sim (1998) calls ―conformity of opinion within focus

group data [that] is…an emergent property of the group context, rather than an aggregation of the

views of individual participants" (p. 348). There were four distinct categories of expressed

beliefs and reactions among the educators of color (Research Question 1); and there were two

distinct categories of expressed beliefs and reactions among the White educators (Research

Question 2). Also, with respect to Research Question 3, there were three factors identified as

informing the expressed beliefs and reactions of all the educators. One key factor was family

influence—especially childhood critical incidents related to race. All of these expressed beliefs

and reactions will be further discussed in Chapter 4, the findings section. It is also important to

note that these findings are written verbatim and therefore, include any conflicting opinions—

just as recommended by Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, and Zoran (2009) who say,

> When discussing emergent themes, we recommend that in addition to providing
>
> verbatim statements (i.e. quotations) made by focus group participants, whenever
>
> possible, researchers delineate information about the number or proportion of
>
> members who appeared to be part of the consensus from which the category or
>
> theme emerged. (p. 8)

Similarly, Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) agree with the inclusion of all dissenting information

when they say,

> Just as the subjects in studies have multiple identities in multiple contexts, we
>
> believe the analysis of this data is multilayered and full of contradictions and
>
> competing answers. Most importantly, we believe the multiple and different
>
> interpretations can be valuable simultaneously. (p. 168)

Moreover, the inclusion of verbatim responses of each participant does not only contribute to the

rigor and validity of my findings, but their inclusion also enabled me to perform a critical

discourse analysis, which ―require a critical rereading of processes that occur in social

interactions that have been overlooked" (Cowan & McLeod, 2004 in Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson,

Leech, and Zoran, 2009, p. 7). This type of analysis is further discussed in the coming section.

Critical Discourse Analysis

I believe it is always important to not only listen to what people say, but to also pay close

attention to what they don't say while in conversation. This is necessary because I have learned

that language is very powerful and people do not always use it innocently or for positive

purposes; it can also be used to serve an agenda or in the case of ―defended subjects" as

described by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) who say that people usually speak in a manner that helps preserve the positive perceptions that people have of them and in a manner that reduces anxiety. Therefore, the focus group discussion was analyzed through a lens of "critical discourse analysis" (CDA). The basic premise of critical discourse analysis is to

> Shift our view from a perspective on text and discourse as constructed artifact
> explicable by reference to essential characteristics of its producers and productive
> contexts to the study of how texts are constructive of social formations,
> communities, and individuals' social identities. (Luke, 1995-1996, p. 9)

In other words, all "texts" are not arbitrary or random, but are located in key social institutions like families, schools, workplaces and the mass media, and humans use texts "to make sense of their world and to construct social actions and relations required in the labor of everyday life. At the same time, texts position and construct individuals, making available various meanings, ideas, and versions of the world" (Luke, 1995-1996, p. 13). Further, Luke (1995-1996) says "every waking moment is caught up in engagement with text of some kind: from children's stories to political speech, from television sitcom to casual conversation, from classroom lesson to memorandum" (p. 13). "Text," therefore, put simply, is language in use (Halliday & Hasan, 1985) or "any instance of written and spoken language that has coherence and coded meanings" (Luke, 1995-1996, p. 13). Further, "all texts are made up of recurrent statements, claims, propositions, and wordings that recur across texts, setting up intertextual networks and webs" (p. 14). For example, with respect to

> The public discourse of 'Asianness.' In any given day, one might encounter a
> newspaper or magazine article on the 'Japanese economic miracle,' a racist
> comment on the street, a television portrayal, or a portrayal of a Chinese family in

a textbook. Taken together, these wordings, statements, reference, and themes make up available discourses for the reader/viewer; in this case, they racialize particular human subjects. (p. 14)

Or another example is the comment made by Mexican President, Vicente Fox who said, ―Mexicans will do jobs that not even Blacks will do.‖ This statement created a huge uproar in the Black community and was considered racist, because of how his words were stated and the implications of the statement. The inference of his statement was that Blacks are more likely to or more prone to perform the grunt work. ―It is through everyday texts that cultural categories and versions of children, students, adults, and workers are built up, established in a hierarchical social grid of the ‗normal,‘ and taught and learned‖ (p. 14).

Luke (1995-1996) therefore, says that ―critical discourse analysis of written and spoken texts can operate in two ways: *critically* and *constructively* and both have significant potential applications in education. Specifically, since dominant discourse can be used as a way to naturalize and disguise power relations that are tied to inequalities that are products of history, social formation, and culture (i.e. gendered divisions of work or patterns of minority school achievement), critical discourse analysis can be considered a political act—an intervention in the supposedly natural flow of talk and text in institutional life in an attempt to disrupt everyday common sense (Luke, 1995-1996). Luke further states that critical discourse analysis has the potential to weaken ―‗authoritative discourse‘ (Bakhtin, 1986) and foreground relations of inequality, domination, and subordination‖ (Luke, 1995-1996, p. 12). Additionally, with respect to how critical discourse analysis operates constructively, Luke (1995-1996) says it

Sets out to generate agency among students, teachers, and others by giving them tools to see how texts represent the social and natural world in particular interests and how texts

position them and generate the very relations of institutional power at work in

classrooms, staff rooms, and policy. (p. 12-13)

Therefore, critical discourse analysis is clearly a powerful method to expose and

counteract what Brookfield (2005) calls our "one-dimensional thought," which is "instrumental

thought focused on how to make the current system work better and perform more

effectively…[He also says]…adults learn to keep their thought fixed within familiar boundaries

[and] thus, the status quo is easily maintained" (p. 190). Moreover, Marcuse (1972) says:

Existing society is reproduced not only in the mind, the consciousness of men, but

also in their senses; and no persuasion, no theory, no reasoning can break this

prison…until the oppressive familiarity with the given object world is broken. (p.

72)

In other words, we should be skeptical about the "transparency of talk, interview data, and

recounts as unproblematic sources of information about "reality" and "truth," "intent" and

"motivation" (Luke, 1995-1996, p. 9) which is the basic premise of this study. "People have

individual subjectivities that are strategically constructed and contested through textual practices

and…they are crafted in the dynamics of everyday life" (p. 14).

Therefore, the data in this study was "consciously read as racial text" (Cochran-Smith,

2000, p. 185) since "all Americans are racialized beings; knowledge of who we have been, who

we are and who we will become is a story or text we construct" (Castenell & Pinar, 1993, p. 8).

In addition, even though the data was coded for themes and trends, "the goal of coding is not to

count things, but to "fracture" (Strauss, 1987, p. 29) the data and rearrange them into categories

that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of

theoretical concepts" (cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 96). Moreover, since this study addresses the

sensitive topic of race that often makes people uncomfortable and fearful of saying the "wrong"

thing, data was analyzed by "paying attention to the missing, obscured, or subverted texts—what

is left out, implied, veiled, or subtly signaled as the norm by virtue of being unmarked or marked

with modifying language" (Cochran-Smith, 2000, p. 168). Therefore, while taking into account

the notion of "racial text" (Cochran-Smith, 2000), I systematically analyzed the data for

thematic patterns by reading through the transcripts, using the following steps (Solorzano, Ceja,

& Yosso, 2001):

> 1. identifying the types of, and reactions to the scenarios and discussion.

> 2. determining whether patterns could be found in the types of, and responses to the
> scenarios and discussion.

> 3. deciding if certain types of, and responses to scenarios and discussion could be
> collapsed into similar categories; and

> 4. finding examples of transcribed text and information obtained from the critical incident
> scenarios that support any emergent themes.

Ultimately, critical discourse analysis

> Can tell us a great deal about how schools and classrooms build "success" and
>
> "failure" and about how teachers' and students' spoken and written texts shape
>
> and construct policies and rules, knowledge, and indeed, "versions" of successful
>
> and failing students. (Luke, 1995-1996, p. 11)

All this said however, it is important to note that people who have criticized this type of research

and who question the validity of it, do so on the grounds that only "'subjective' judgments are

used to collect the data" (Yin, 2009, p. 41). However, in the coming section I discuss the steps I

took in order to increase validity and reliability of this study.

Validity and Reliability

As previously stated, the three steps in this focus group study were (a) reactions to scenarios, (b) discussions of scenarios, and (c) reflections on discussion. After the audio-tapes from each focus group were transcribed and coded for themes, I contacted participants to either clarify points or to get input from them regarding any emergent themes that were determined. These follow up discussions served as a form of "member check"—getting feedback from the participants about whether or not I interpreted the discussions correctly; or whether I was correct in what I believed was happening during the focus group discussions. Similarly, with respect to program evaluation, Stake (2004) says "member check" is a jargon term used to describe the fact that "almost always, one should draw others into the quality control effort, including your data resource people" (p. 187). He also defines quality control as "the effort to monitor and correct ordinary operations so that a high level of effectiveness is attained and maintained" (p. 186); this is specifically done through member checking—giving the data resource person an opportunity to object to misrepresentation or misinterpretation (Stake, 2004).

Therefore, with respect to this study, I contacted all of the participants and asked them to clarify any points made (see Appendix I for focus group debrief), and to also share my findings with them. The participants all agreed with my interpretations of the focus group conversations and the emergent themes generated as a result. However, this was done in spite of Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) who do not believe in attaining participant input because it is not necessary. They say, "Where the researcher is particularly interested in categories in terms of which participants view the world, this sort of account is of limited value" (p. 222). Additionally, they say "…the aim is to not gather 'pure data' that are free from potential bias. There is no such

thing. Rather, the goal must be to discover the correct manner of   interpreting whatever data we have" (p. 131).

In response to Hammersley and Atkinson's position, Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) rhetorically ask, "Who is better…to assist in the construction of categories than the very participants about whose lives we write?" (p. 168). They also asked more provoking questions like "What are the accounts to be interpreted? Whose account matters and who decides?...And most importantly, what is the best manner in which to interpret the data? Can there be multiple interpretations that are all valid?" (p. 168). Brayboy and Deyhle answered their questions by saying, "We believe the analysis of this data is multilayered and full of contradictions and competing answers…We believe the multiple and different interpretations can be valuable simultaneously" (p. 168).

Limitations

There are limitations to this study as there are with any study, particularly those in the social sciences. One possible limitation in this study was participants not feeling comfortable enough to open up and share their true feelings about race; or conversely, due to the subject matter, shut down or emotionally withdrawal from discussions because of negative emotions that are evoked as a result of candid and open discourse. This is always a possibility "in the constructionist section of the scale [when] researchers become acutely aware that their studies are collaborations between themselves and their participants, who may cooperate or not [or] reveal or conceal information" (Preissle & Grant, 2004, p.174). However, this was not the case; the participants were pretty open and honest in their responses and many revealed very personal and painful experiences particularly through the critical incident activity.

Another possible limitation is my high interest in the subject matter and also the fact that I utilized a new methodology that I created. Even though I constantly engage in self-reflection and always try to be objective, I agree with anti-oppression workshop facilitator, Dr. Kevin Kumashiro who says ―regardless of our intentions, we all look through lenses in a world that shapes our experiences; and all of our lenses are partial, including that of the presenter in a workshop" (Telephone conversation, June 25, 2009). Therefore, I know it is a possibility that I may have unconsciously influenced the study without full awareness. However, the benefits of this study far out-weighted the potential limitations because it afforded participants an opportunity to openly discuss an issue that greatly and adversely affects all of us.

Researcher Bias and Assumptions

In the context of qualitative research, subjectivity refers to ―the persuasions that stem from the circumstances of one's class, statuses, and values interacting with the particulars of one's object of investigation" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). Peshkin (1988) says that in order to identify his subjectivity, he has to monitor himself and how he is feeling. When his feelings are aroused, this means that his subjectivity has been aroused (p. 18). Like Peshkin, I am aware that my thoughts and feelings are informed by my subjectivities, and that these subjectivities do influence conscious or unconscious responses of thought and behavior in any setting, including during the research process. This monitoring of personal subjectivities is a kin to the phenomenon of ―insider-outsider" status in research endeavors.

Merton (1972) defines the insider as an individual who possesses *a priori* intimate of knowledge of the community and its members. However, ―the word ‗community' is a much wider concept than just an organization, and possessing intimate knowledge of it doesn't necessarily mean being a member of it yourself" (Hellawell, 2006, p. 484). ―Insider" research

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can also refer to researchers and participants sharing similar cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national and religious heritage (Ganga & Scott, 2006), while conversely, an "outsider" researcher does not have *a priori* familiar with the setting and people s/he is researching (Hellawell, 2006). Instead, the outsider is said to be an "objective" observer recognizing that his behavior significantly affects the relationship between himself and his informants and therefore, assures both the estrangement from, and the superordinate position in relation to those studied (Lewis, 1973).

However, Lewis (1973) also says, "obviously, the perspectives of both outsider and insider reveal _certain truths'…Each perspective has its advantages and disadvantages, both intellectual and practical" (p. 585). Similarly, Garfinkel (1967) cleverly contributed to this debate of insider- outsider knowledge and the advantages and disadvantages of each through use of projects given to his students that were "anthropologically strange." Specifically, he asked his students to position themselves as outsiders and make observations of the effects of their acting as polite lodgers in their own dwellings.

Additionally, according to Hellawell (2006) "a researcher should ideally be both *inside* and *outside* the perceptions of the _researched'" (p. 487) and display attributes of both empathy and alienation (Hammersley, 1993). There is a range of ethical issues associated with social research carried out by outsiders (Mullings, 1999; Ganga & Scott, 2006), and not enough attention has been directed to the complexities and contradictions related to insider status (Ganga & Scott, 2006). Further, by coining the term "diversity in proximity" Ganga and Scott (2006) describe these complexities by stating the following:

> We must not assume that insider status leads to greater proximity in the social
>
> interview, and an ultimately smaller divide between researcher and participant. On the

contrary, we argue that whilst insider status is generally beneficial to the research process, it also brings to the fore a range of social fissures that structure interaction between researcher and participant, fissures that may have otherwise remained hidden. (p. 3)

Moreover, Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) say insiders miss things or take things for granted because they have "over-rapport" with informants, which leads to distortions of their analyses; and Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) say "outsiders are, of course, plagued by failing to see nuances from the perspectives of the informants" (p. 165). Therefore, Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) argue that researchers should take a "marginal position" (p. 112) which means neither completely outside nor inside even though it is difficult to strike the balance between participant and observer (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000). In the end however, Brayboy and Deyhle infer that the type of study seems to dictate whether having insider status or outsider status is helpful or not. For example, in their research within American Indian communities, Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) who are also Indian, discuss the complexities of participant observation in their communities. They say it is the lack of distance that has enhanced their research because "as insiders in Indigenous communities, if we do more observation than participation, the participants may view us as 'stuck up'" (p. 165).

Regardless, however, of insider or outsider status, both require critical reflection (Ganga & Scott, 2006). A researcher's consciousness or deliberate self-scrutiny in relation to the research process (Hellawell, 2006) is paramount because "the ability to be objective; to stand outside one's own writing, and to be reflexive about it, and about one's own relation to it, are some of the hallmarks of a good thesis" (p. 483). Further, Hammersley (1993) says, "in general, the chances of findings being valid can be enhanced by a judicious combination of involvement

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and estrangement. However, no position, not even a marginal one guarantees valid knowledge; and no position prevents it either" (p. 219). Therefore, I always try to be constantly vigilant about how I feel as I move through life and often take inventory of my subjectivities when situations or people evoke physical and emotional responses in me—including during the research process. This is especially the case in situations of conflict, at which point I stop and ask myself, "How did I contribute to the situation?" "What assumptions did I make?" Put another way, as Peshkin would probably ask, "How did my subjectivities influence my thinking or decisions?"

Furthermore, I am aware that one may believe I would not be able to be objective in this study since I am the facilitator of a controversial subject that utilizes my racially salient critical incidents (Collins & Pieterse, 2006). However, I have facilitated these types of discussions many times in the past, not to mention that I am a trained teacher/facilitator and a certified conflict mediation specialist. Undoubtedly, as the researcher of this study, I had both insider and outsider status but the practice I have had facilitating sensitive discussions and learning to remain as objective as possible allowed me to live simultaneously in two worlds, that of participation and that of research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1996). Also, for the six different occasions that I have facilitated *Think You Are An Unbiased Teacher? Think Again!* at several conferences over the last few years, I have never had an incident or problem.

Even though assessing prejudice is usually "plagued by problems associated with whether people are willing….to admit, even to themselves, that they might hold negative attitudes toward members of certain groups" (Hippel, Sekaquaptewa & Vargas, 1997, p. 490), in my previous workshop facilitations around race, participants have always felt comfortable sharing their beliefs and assumptions. This was also the case in this study I suspect, because of

the methodology employed by the workshop in which participants collectively endure some

degree of uncertainty and vulnerability because they do not know the races of the people in the

scenarios and have to guess who they are. This shared experience of the unknown probably

creates comfort among the group; and as a facilitator, I often help the group focus on different

views and make sure the discussion goes well (Ashby, 1997). It is for these reasons that during

the facilitation of this study, I did not perceive any problems.

In this Chapter, the ―nuts and bolts" of this study were thoroughly discussed. These

important areas of the study include the procedures and methodology, the participants, the role of

the researcher, including her limitations and potential biases, and also a detailed description of

how data was obtained and analyzed. In Chapter 4, beginning on the next page, the findings of

this study are thoroughly discussed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore educator's beliefs and reactions to race using critical incident scenarios. Data was obtained from two focus group discussions with a total of 7 educators working in K-12 and higher education settings from a wide spectrum of professional areas—K-12, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and Law. Data was also analyzed through a lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to determine emergent themes that coincide with the three research questions of this study:

1. What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by educators of color?

2. What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by White educators?

3. What factors inform beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race?

The salient themes that emerged relative to Research Question One will be summarized, followed by the findings related to Research Question Two; and then the findings related to Research Question 3.

Findings Related to Research Question 1: What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by educators of color?

As a result of rigorous constant comparisons and multiple analyses as I described in Chapter 3, the educators of color were very direct in their responses revealing four clear themes or expressed beliefs and reactions. These beliefs and reactions are summarized in Table 4 below, followed by a detailed explanation of each.

Table 4—*Themes related to research question 1*

Expressed Belief & Reaction 1:	White educators treat White students better than students of color
Expressed Belief & Reaction 2	Being of color means you do not judge based on color
Expressed Belief & Reaction 3	Our society is controlled by Whites who have all the power so be careful addressing incidents of racism and discrimination
Expressed Belief & Reaction 4	White people are shocked when people of color speak proper English

Expressed Belief & Reaction # 1: White educators treat White students better than students of color

Overall, the educators of color believed that White educators treat students of color differently, as compared to White students. In particular, this ―different" treatment is manifested by the underestimation of their academic achievement and intelligence, and by streaming students of color to ―lesser" positions and/or opportunities.

Underestimation of academic ability and intelligence

It was explicitly stated by the educators of color that it is not uncommon for White educators to underestimate the intelligence and/or academic abilities of students of color. For example, Jeremy in Focus Group One illustrated this point by stating the following in response to Scenario One:

> Jeremy-Professor, race is White, student Black. And as to why the prof assumed it was a master's student as opposed to further along in education. The appearance of the student in the professor's eyes…(pause), the appearance of the student…and the professor changed his mind because the student surprised the prof with his/her

diction....The professor was taken aback. Wait," he probably said, ―This student has great presence and is more intelligent than I thought!"....Always going on assumption is the first thing that goes on in my mind. We go on our assumptions then they talk and then you're taken aback.

Clare and Angela also had similar reactions to the scenario. They said the following:

Angela-… I agree that the professor probably had a predisposed assumption that the student, which I said was a person of color—not necessarily black because I think it happens to anyone with any professor who may think that a minority should not have gotten that far.

Clare-I thought the professor was White and the student was Black. And I felt the same way that Jeremy did, that um…he assumed that a person of the race could not reach that level of education but once he had spoken to the student and could assess her capability himself, then he re-read the paper from that point of view and then changed the mark.

The reactions of the educators of color to this scenario is indicative of Singleton and Linton's (2006) description of racism. They describe it as ―the conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional enactment of racial power, grounded in racial prejudice, by an individual or group against another individual or group perceived to have lower racial status" (p. 40). These assertions made by the educators of color are congruent with the teachings of Critical Race Theory (CRT) because CRT simply deduces that since the world is racist, then we must be too. The beliefs are also consistent with Kumashiro's (2002) opinion that oppression is not always easy to recognize among educators but it effects the expectations, assumptions, and treatment of the ―Other." Likewise, Singleton and Linton (2006) believe many educators have unquestioned assumptions about the attitudes and abilities of students of color and their families.

But it is important to stress that this questioning of the attitudes and abilities of students of color is not necessarily done at the conscious level because racism is an invisible presence that plays a major role in determining how our society functions (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000). Also, the beliefs of the educators of color are consistent with the findings of the study conducted

by Johnson-Bailey, Cervero, Valentine & Bowles (2006) and also Lund (2005) that suggested that students of color in graduate programs experience having their academic abilities underestimated by White professors. This focus on Black students' experiences in adult education would be no surprise to the educators of color in this study because with respect to Scenario Two, it was suggested specifically by Jeremy and agreed upon by the others that not all ―minorities‖ are regarded at the same level and therefore, not treated in the same manner or equally. Jeremy said,

> I also say the student's race was Black because White people tend to
> have less of a shock when it is a minority who isn't Black. See, they will
> more easily see an Asian person or an Indian person in a master's degree
> program than a Black person so it wouldn't be so much of a shock or a jolt
> to see a person of Indian descent who earned a Ph.D. in their mind as
> opposed to a Black person with African descent.

The above comment suggests that there are different sets of expectations for different types of people of color, and that all people of color are not perceived or treated equally. For example, Jeremy's statement, ―they will more easily see an Asian person or an Indian person in a master's degree program than a Black person‖ is consistent with the literature that talks about the perception of the ―model minority‖ (Alvarez & Helms, 2001). The model minority refers to how the national media elevates Asians to such a high level of educational and economic success— above all other minorities. In terms of intelligence, if not second to Whites, Asians are also ranked first, before Whites (Rushton, 1996). Moreover, this hierarchy of races is also connected to the concept of ―streaming‖ in education. This topic came up in discussion among the educators of color.

Streaming

This subcategory of Underestimation of Academic Ability and Intelligence refers to the expressed beliefs of the educators of color who said that not only are students of color often

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graded lower than their White peers, but they are also more likely to be "streamed" to different

areas—often with lower, at a higher rate than their White peers.

> Clare-I thought the graduate director was White. And the student was
> non-White—probably Black. What motivated the graduate coordinator
> (reading the question aloud)? I think that the graduate coordinator did not
> believe the student was capable and it was an attempt to stream. What
> angers me is this sense of superiority and how often you get that, and how
> difficult it is to fight it. Because in the person's mind, people are set up in
> a certain order and that must not change and anyone who tries to change it
> is an uppity.

Clare continued,

> I really think this is a huge element of "I really like this subject and where
> does this Black person or minority come off coming up with an idea like
> that?" You know? "That is an idea that should really come from somebody
> who has studied more, is in a higher position, and has done more work in
> the area and so on and so on—namely me." That's the director… "And I
> could do real justice to this subject you know…This is a good subject for
> me to follow through so I'm just gonna divert this person off to something
> else and then I'm going to take that idea."

Similarly, Jeremy shared the following,

> I said the grad director was White and the student was non-
> White—a person of color. Um, what motivated the graduate director? A
> total bias…a total assumption and an agenda to stop the progression of the
> student. Just a real agenda, a deep-seeded…(pause)…I don't know if it's
> hate but a deep-seeded fear of progression of that student and that
> student's ethnicity in that program.

As evidenced by the dialogue, the educators of color agreed that in comparison to their

White peers, students of color are perceived as "less than" and as a consequence, are treated

differently by not being given equal chances for opportunity or advancement. Also, when Clare

said, "I think that the graduate coordinator did not believe the student was capable and it was an

attempt to stream…[and] people are set up in a certain order and that should not change," her

comment is indicative of Weissglass' (2001) claim that people of color face systemic and

ongoing institutionalized and personal biases every day and also that Black people are

continuously ranked at the bottom of the ―racial hierarchy‖ (Helms, 1994). Further, Clare‗s point

is also consistent with one of Critical Race Theory‗s (CRT) five tenets of education which

refutes the claims of educational institutions as being free from oppression and operating as

meritocracies (Yosso, 2007; Solorzano, 1998, 1997).

However, one educator of color was not convinced, at first, that Scenario Two involving

the graduate coordinator was race-related. The following dialogue took place in Focus Group

One beginning with Angela‗s comment,

> Because we are here talking about race and because the two questions
> before make you think about that but I said the grad coordinator was
> white and the student‗s race was a person of color—probably Black. But
> then when it came to what motivated it, it‗s like what you said (looking at
> Jeremy). That the grad coordinator didn‗t think that the capabilities would
> be up to par and that there was a ―better‖ or easier or less challenging
> program to stream that person…Um, but I think that I‗m not entirely sure
> that this is race related. Possibly the person felt that this person would
> challenge the direction of the program or the department. That it was
> very…it was already consolidated and like-minded so if the person came
> in regardless of race, and did not embrace the idea, then they wouldn‗t fit.
>
> Jeremy- Okay, but they talked on the phone before. So the only
> determinant is how the person looked.
>
> Angela-No you‗re right….Yes you‗re right.
>
> Clare-So it has to be appearance that made the difference.

When we consider Angela‗s critical incident and the lessons she said she learned from

her parents at a very young age about race, her inability to see race in Scenario Two—like the

other educators of color is understood. This is not to suggest however, that all educators of color

or all people of color must believe and react to situations in the same manner, but it took Jeremy

to remind Angela that the student and the grad coordinator had spoken on the phone before the

incident so something must have changed the grad coordinator‗s mind once they two met.

In her own words, Angela said, "If someone says that someone treated me differently, I won't see it right away because I went so long…almost being told that that's not really what I'm seeing." Angela's statement suggests that she does not have a full sense of her racial identity since the definition of racial identity is conceptualized as the racial awareness, attitudes, socialization and preferences of a person (Katz & Kofin, 1997). Also, in terms of Cross's Nigrescence model which addresses the process or developmental stages that Blacks in America go through in order to develop a psychologically healthy identity, (Cokely, 2002), it is difficult to definitively "locate" Angela at any particular psychological stage. However, if forced to do so, it is safe to conclude that Angela has at least reached the second stage of Cross' model— "encounter"—since this stage signifies a startling personal or social event in someone's life and we are aware of the devastation Angela felt when she experienced the critical incident she shared. However, I would also safely conclude that Angela is at the third stage—"immersion-emerison"—since although this stage typifies a time when the person of color idolizes blackness, it is still a time when the degree of internalization of positive attitudes about one's own blackness is minimal (Parham & Helms, 1985). Moreover, I also place Angela at this stage (three) because at the fourth stage—"internalization," the person achieves a feeling of inner security with his or her blackness (Parham & Helms, 1985). In Angela's own words, she always asks herself, "Am I looking at this weird because of my need to fit in?" She asks herself this because she was always told that "what she was seeing was not really what she was seeing." Therefore, by her own admission, Angela's lack of security with her Blackness does not coincide with stage four— internalization.

Conversely, based on the responses of the other educators of color, it is safe to "place" them—at the very least—at stage four—"internalization," since again, this stage signifies a time

when a person achieves a feeling of inner security with being Black. However, I am unable to definitively place those educator's of color at the fifth stage since this stage involves continued political involvement as an expression of black identity; the political involvement of the participants was not shared in the focus groups. However, interestingly and contradictorily, the educators of color explicitly stated they did not believe that people of color judge others based on race, but they were also pretty explicit in their descriptions and sometimes criticisms of different racial groups. These contradictions are further described in the coming section which represents the educators of color's second belief.

Expressed Belief & Reaction 2: Being of color Means You Don't Judge Based on Color

It was also learned from the reactions of the educators of color to the scenarios that they too make assumptions or have negative beliefs about others based on race—sometimes without even realizing. For example, Clare, a West Indian Black woman in Focus Group One, shared her negative assumptions about African Americans Blacks during the discussion of Scenario Three. The discussion began with Clare's comment,

> Hmm, not like other Chinese, Whites or West Indians… I would say then that student X was probably a Black American.

> Jeremy—Woo geez, I didn't think about that! Why?

> Clare- Because they make a distinction between themselves and the —new Americans," the West Indians, the White people of course, the Chinese, and anybody else. And that's what gives them their sense of superiority; that they were here first.

> Jeremy-Them?

> Clare- Black Americans…That they were here first. And these new immigrants came in and think that they're better, more intelligent, etc. —But we were here first and we are the Real McCoy." So that's my answer.

Additionally, Marilyn, an East Indian woman in Focus Group Two, illustrated this point of

people of color having negative beliefs about other people of color. Marilyn spoke openly about

her dating experiences, particularly with people outside of her race. She made this comment

during the discussion about Scenario Three that briefly went on a tangent. Marilyn said,

> …East Indians are extremely racist, I will tell you that. So White is okay, Indian
> is better, Muslim is not okay, Sikh is not okay, Black is not okay— anything that
> is not the same race or religion as you is not okay.

Lastly, Jeremy also provided an example of how Asian people judge each other according to

when they arrived to the United States. This comment was made in response to Scenario Three in

which the participants in Focus Group One were discussing the lengths that different people of

color go to either ―fit in‖ to American culture or to make others feel comfortable. Angela first

stated,

> My take on the whole thing is that student X is Chinese taking this group of people that
> he doesn‛t know that well because it‛s a class to the Chinese. And then to make himself
> more comfortable and more removed from his own race, he‛s saying, this is a nice guy,
> he‛s not like other Chinese, White, or West Indian so is not to identify with one race. So
> he does not take on the perceptions of the other people that he has come with about the
> place or the restaurant…. So in this situation, the guy is saying something negative or
> stereotypical   to remove himself from the responsibility of taking on the ideas of the
> others.

> Jeremy- I think she‛s bang on. That‛s exactly what I thought too. Chinese
> or Indian but I think Chinese. But in this case I think a ―banana‖ as opposed
> to a ―FOB.‖

> Angela- I don‛t even know what that is?

> Jeremy-Ok, let me go over these terms. When you‛re Black on the outside but
> White on the inside you‛re an ―Oreo.‖ Asian people made this up. If you‛re
> yellow (Asian) on the outside but White on the inside you‛re a ―Banana.‖ Then
> there‛s FOB which is ―Fresh off the boat Chinese.‖ There‛s a designation there.

> Facilitator-So are these terms they call each other?

> Jeremy-Yes. That‛s why I think he‛s Chinese and student Y is Black. He
> said that because he‛s trying to form a camaraderie between he and the

group, in particular the Black. ―See I'm just like you. I'm going to ―dis"
my Chinese guy so I fit in." I can do this because I'm ―dissing" the
Chinese also. So I'm American, I'm just like you brother and the other
guys are fresh off the boat.

The above dialogue elucidates the point that even though it has been acknowledged that

Whites in this society are in control and have created unfair distinctions between people of color

and themselves (Banks, 1995), people of color also do it to each other—just as Milner (2003)

argues that people of color also operate through oppressive misconceptions. For example, ―fresh

off the boat (FOB)" and ―banana" designations among Asians, Clare's description of Black

Americans as ―The Real McCoy" and their sense of superiority because they were here in the

United States first before other immigrants; and also Marilyn's description of who is okay and

not okay to date in the East Indian community are all examples of how people of color unfairly

judge other people of color. It is therefore instructive for all people, regardless of race, to learn

how to stop, put personal assumptions in abeyance, and think before acting.

These examples of negative beliefs among people of color towards other people of color

is also indicative of the grappling with discrimination and oppression people of color have to

endure as a result of not being part of the White mainstream (Merriam, Caffarellla, &

Baumgartner, 2007). In particular, this grappling with not being a part of the mainstream is

directly related to the teachings of racial identity theory which as previously mentioned, refers to

a person's attitudes and racial awareness (Katz & Kofin, 1997). However, with respect to Clare,

whom I previously stated was more than likely in stage four (internalization) of Cross's

Nigrescence model, her comments made about African Americans were indicative of cultural

differences rather than race difference. This topic is beyond the realm of this study but I will note

that as a West Indian woman from Trinidad, Clare clearly believes she is very different than

Black Americans.

Also, although we do not have the benefit of directly hearing the beliefs and reactions to the scenarios of Asian persons in this study, Jeremy's comments about their group designations is interesting to explore. Like other racial groups, Asian Americans also experience oppression and discrimination in the United States (Yoo & Lee, 2006; Lee & Johnson-Bailey, 2004).

However, apparently this discrimination can also come from within their community—hence their "designations of worth" (as I call it) according to their arrival to the US. Even though many people believe that Asians do not experience discrimination probably because of all the positive stereotypes associated with them (Aguirre & Turner, 2004; Wu, 2001) the fact that they have made designations like "FOB" and "Banana" are exemplars of psychological strategies for responding and coping to conditions of oppression (Alvarez & Helms, 2001). In particular, these "designations" are indicative of Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the racial identity schemas created by Alvarez and Helms (2001). This first stage—"Conformity" is characterized by the preference for the standards and norms of White rather than Asian cultures and also includes the denial or minimization of the importance of race in society; and Stage 2, "Dissonance," involves a sense of confusion or ambivalence about identifying with Asian Americans. Therefore, it would be interesting to learn specifically the experiences of how Asians who are "fresh off the boat" to the United States are treated in comparison to other Asians who may have been in the US much longer.

It is also interesting to note the psychology of the use of the term "banana" and also the word "Oreo" in the Black community. Both terms imply that each minority group "acts White" or is regarded as White for whatever reason. Also, other than the term "wigger" which describes a White person who is trying to "act Black" or as the term implies, like a "@igger," all of these terms involve White people as the key ingredient. I do not recall ever hearing about a name

created to describe for example, how one "minority" imitates or acts like another "minority."
This is indicative of how Whiteness in our society, as a structural practice, is usually unmarked
and unnamed (Frankenberg, 1993).

My analysis of the aforementioned terms is also applicable to Marilyn's comments
regarding East Indians and their hierarchy related to who is "okay" and "not okay" to date and
marry. It clearly shows that yet another minority group has negative assumptions about other
minority groups—but interestingly, not about White people. Marilyn's statement was
contradictory in nature because she said "anything that is not the same race or religion as you is
not okay" but yet she said "White is okay, Indian is better." Her statement suggests that in the
hierarchy of races, Whites are at the top—just below her own race, with Blacks at the bottom.
Marilyn's statement is the epitome of why Jay and Jones (2005) talk about the importance of
having "Whiteness Studies"—in order to help us think critically about how white skin preference
has operated systematically, structurally, and sometimes unconsciously as a dominant force in
the United States—including in communities of color!

Furthermore, the examples shared above about different peoples' of color who
discriminate against other racial groups refutes the statements made by Angela and Clare in
Focus Group One who both suggested that people of color do not make assumptions based on
race because they supposedly know better. The following dialogue took place in response to
Scenario One when the professor changed the student's grade.

> Angela- I couldn't really imagine another minority making such a judgment and
> then make such a drastic change later in their opinion. So when I read it I
> envisioned that person to be White.
>
> Facilitator-So you believe that people of color are less likely to make that
> kind of assumption or mistake?
>
> Angela-I do.

Clare- Because they're in power?

Angela-Yes, because of their experiences. Because another Black person or another person of color may have had their experiences, which would cause them to judge people less quickly.

However, Marilyn, an East Indian woman in Focus Group Two admitted that she does not look at the names of her students when she grades papers because she knows she would make assumptions. She said,

I have a small class of university students, I have a class of 16 right now and I don't look to see whose paper it is before I start marking. And I do it on purpose because some of my students talk a lot in class and they seem extremely intelligent. And this happened to me last year, there was one student who was extremely articulate in class but wrote the worst paper. So on purpose, I don't look at who the student is.

The fact that a person of color (Marilyn) has to enact specific strategies in order to hold her assumptions in abeyance about other students of color is further evidence that even educators of color can be influenced by race (Milner, 2003). Additionally, this revelation offers contradictory evidence to Angela's suggestion in Focus Group One that ―White people judge more because they are in power." Even though this idea is beyond the scope of this study, Devine, Plant, Amodio, et. al. (2002) offer some insight into this matter when they say the persistence of prejudice even among those who are vocally against it, suggests that responding without prejudice is sometimes difficult. Further, Brown (1995) says, from a social psychological perspective, there has been evidence that shows that our assumptions and biases are almost automatic in their operation. Therefore, in light of these authors' assertions, and the examples of the educators of color who revealed that they also judge others based on race, it is worthwhile for all people to engage in explorations of their automatic assumptions that guide everyday thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Collins & Pieterse, 2009).

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The contradictions highlighted in this section are exemplary of the type of disconnect between what we say and what we do—hence Argyris and Shon's (1974) model of theory in action versus espoused theory. The authors suggest that people have road maps in their heads that tell them what they should do and how they should act, but this internal road map is not necessarily in synch with what they say. In this case, the educators of color were pretty emphatic that people of color do not judge based on race because they know better; but at the same time, without realizing, the educators shared how they negatively viewed other people of color.

Expressed Belief and Reaction #3: Our society is controlled by Whites who have all the power so be careful addressing incidents of racism and discrimination

The educators of color were very explicit when they talked about the structure of the United States and how important it was to be very measured and strategic when—if at all, people of color address incidents of racism and discrimination. This is not surprising since there are penalties in place for educators and learners of color for being assertive and attempting to challenge the status quo (Lund, 2010). The full description of this ―expressed belief and reaction section" begins with dialogue among the educators of color in Focus Group One which explicitly discussed the power and control Whites have in our society.

> Clare-…They (Whites) are the dominant group in society. They are whether we want to believe it or not, they run the world. They're the ones with the money and the power.

> Angela- I agree. I think wrong or right, because they are in the position of power, they are more likely to judge than others.

> Jeremy- I think White people, regardless of their power or anything, they're the one race of people that have…What's the word….(pause)…A thought of entitlement; such a belief in entitlement even if they're not a powerful person per se. If you look back historically, when you talk about race relations and those kinds of words they use, it's usually in regards to how White people react to something…When we talk about history, historically. Of course minorities—what we call minorities, have their

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infighting too, but by and large people's psychosis about their own racism always comes back to the White factor….White is master, the beauty factor, and always trying to look that way.

The aforementioned dialogue shows a level of "acceptance" among the educators of color in Focus Group One—that this is how the world is and even though they do not necessarily agree with how it is, they have learned to understand it in order to live with it. This "acceptance" is a kin to the teachings of Critical Race Theory that asserts that all people are complicit in this society and collude to normalize racism (Taylor, 1998). Also, when Jeremy talked about a sense of entitlement among some White individuals, in essence he was saying that regardless of a White person's positionality like class differences or any "position" a White person may hold in society, s/he always tends to believe that his/her Whiteness trumps anybody non-White. Jeremy's beliefs are consistent with Adair, Howell, and Adair (1988) who say the general characteristics of a dominant group are a self-image of superiority, entitled and correct (to name a few). Further, Jeremy's beliefs are consistent with Frankenberg's (1993) definition of Whiteness which is a location of structural advantage and of race privilege. Also, his statement was juxtaposed by his comment that "White is master," and his reference to the "beauty factor" that people try to ascribe to. These two points are congruent with Jones's (1997) definition of cultural racism which occurs when White culture or whiteness is considered the norm and superior to other racial groups.

Additionally, when Jeremy spoke about the history of race relations, his comment that "it's usually [discussed] in regards to how White people react to something" speaks to how this society functions under the presumption of an unacknowledged but pervasive White cultural norm (Bell, 1997). Further, Angela also raised an interesting point when she said, "Because they [Whites] are in power they are more likely to judge than others." Whether this statement is true

or untrue, to echo a point made in the dialogue, the consensus among the group members was ―whether we want to believe it or not, they [Whites] run the world.‖ Therefore, if one interrogates Angela‗s statement, can one conclude that White people judge more because they are in control? Or is there just a perception that White people judge more because they have the power to make their opinions/judgments count? We really do not know.

It is also interesting to note the there was also a display of acceptance among the educators of color with respect to the hierarchy that exists in society and where in the hierarchy they reside as Black people. This display of ―acceptance‖ took place when the group agreed with Clare who essentially stated that Whites are the dominant group in society with all the money and power, and ―whether we want to believe it or not, they run the world.‖ Clare‗s statement is consistent with Helms (1994) point that ―on virtually every socially desirable dimension, the descending order of superiority has been Whites, Asians, Native Americans, and Africans‖ (p. 299), with the occasional exception of Asians being put first followed by Whites (Rushton, 1988). Further, the group‗s agreement with Clare‗s statement is also indicative of Utsey, Ponterotto and Porter‗s (2008) claim that racism is embedded in the collective consciousness of our experiences as human beings.

However, it is important to note that even though racism is so entrenched in our minds and in society and consequently, leads to many incidents related to race, people of color do not necessarily react to or respond to every racial incident they experience. Otherwise, they would probably have to react to multiple incidents every day since they experience incidents related to race like microaggressions (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000) on a daily basis. This point is elucidated by the following dialogue that took place after a full description of Scenario Two was shared with the group in Focus Group One.

Angela—No!

Jeremy- (Laughing)….Wow! You're joking….

Facilitator- Kid you not.

Angela- And what did you say?

Facilitator- I just couldn't say anything. I didn't know what to say.

Jeremy- I would be shocked too.

Facilitator- And I didn't know what kind of connections she had. She could have made my life difficult in her position. She was the graduate coordinator so she is the first person of contact for that program so she basically was deciding who could be admitted to the program and who could not. The other huge thing is…I had just moved to a new place, I just got admitted to a new school and I didn't know anyone so it's my word against hers.

Clare- That's right…And no witnesses! She was the streamer.

Angela- That's right.

Clare- That's why I talk about station…you know she is your ―boss,‖ not boss, but she is your senior so to respond to something like that so blatant, on the spur of the moment with someone who is senior to you is very difficult. Even if she wanted to take that study, to her, you're nobody. She could take that study and fly with it and you know…it would be fine.

Jeremy- Did you ever follow up with her or know what became of her?

Facilitator- I don't know. My advisor at that time encouraged me to take action but I decided not to.

Clare- It would have been difficult to prove.

Angela- Yah, who's going to admit to saying that?

Clare- It would have come down to credibility and I'm sure you would have done very well as a good witness because you're well dressed and you speak well, but it would have been very difficult.

Angela- It would have also been difficult with her room full of African artifacts (laughter)! She could say, ―Look at my office I've had for 25 years…I would never say that!‖

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Jeremy- This is like a movie, like a comedy (laughing).

Angela- This is like ―Look at all the black art in my office‖ (Laughing). This is a kin to saying ―One of my friends is Black.‖ Or it‘s like…it‘s such a cute baby, my God-son is Black. It‘s all there to give them credibility in her warped mind.

Jeremy- I think the fact that she had African artifacts in her office was an interesting point.

Angela-Yes, because that‘s how she sees herself. It has bearing on how…and that‘s what motivates all your behavior—how you see yourself.

The reactions of the Educators of Color are indicative of the point that there are fundamental differences of power, position, and privilege that White people have in the United States, versus people of color who are viewed as ―the other‖ and in a deficit position (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000). Thus, Clare‘s comment about ―staying in your station‖ is correct because our assigned racial status exists to create and maintain hierarchies of power (Berbrier, 2008).

The reactions of the Educators of Color also highlight the type of power Whites have to discriminate against people of color without fear of consequences. Angela was joking about the African artifacts when she said the grad coordinator could easily say, ―Look at my office I‘ve had for 25 years…I would never say that!‖ but she is probably right. ―Whiteness and its resultant power and privilege undergird and perpetuate systems of domination and opportunities within adult education practices‖ (Manglitz, 2003, p. 120). Also, two noted benefits of White educators are the power to maintain the status quo and also distrust and ignore those who bring up racism without recourse; and they also have the power to view charges levied by peoples of color as unfair and ignore them (Lund, 2010). The presence of African artifacts is further ―evidence‖ beyond Whiteness that a White graduator coordinator would never say such a thing.

Additionally, had the student complained, the African artifacts, ironically, would have inevitably been viewed as artifacts representative of the graduate coordinator's "evolved" racial identity. My analysis of the graduate coordinator would place her in the category of "Pseud-Independence Stage" because clearly, the primary mechanism used to understand racial issues is intellectual and conceptual rather than on an affective domain—thus, racial issues, Euro-American White Privilege and sociopolitical aspects of race, bias, prejudice and discrimination are an intellectual endeavor (Sue, et. al, 1998). Furthermore, I would place the graduate coordinator at this level because level five, the "Immersion/Emersion" stage because individuals at this stage are activists who combat racism and oppression (Sue, et. al, 1998). Clearly, the graduate coordinator was not at that level.

Expressed Belief and Reaction 4-White people are shocked when people of color speak proper English

With respect to Scenario Two, the subject of language came up as an important topic among the educators of color. In particular, they expressed their opinions about the shock and bewilderment of some White people when a person of color speaks English properly. In Focus Group Two, the following dialogue took place beginning with Marilyn's first impressions of the scenario before the details of the scenario were revealed to the participants. She said,

> I thought that, well first of all, when the professor saw the student, I
> think that the voice that they heard on the phone did not match what they saw in
> front of them. So the person was not who the professor was expecting, really…But that
> happens to me because I have an American accent (even though she is East Indian).
>
> George-Yah, you can't tell…
>
> Marilyn- And you can't tell. And if I use…If I don't use my real name,
> and when I was using my married name, "Marilyn Butler," you don't
> know right?
>
> George-Exactly.

Similarly, the dialogue in Focus Group One among the educators of color was as follows,

> Clare- She (the graduate coordinator) was saying, ―Don't go and shock anybody again.‖ ―Don't go shocking people like this.‖

> Angela- Don't threaten what they know about the world and don't upset their categories. When they hear your voice on the phone they want to know what they're dealing with when you show up.

> Jeremy- Keep in your box.

> Clare- Exactly…Speak ebonics and dress with your pants down and your bottom out and stuff, and just be Black! Be what my idea of Black is!!!

It is clear from the aforementioned dialogue in both focus groups that how a person speaks and the mere name of a person can greatly influence the assumptions, perceptions and impressions that others have of her/him—especially if the person is not seen! For example, even though the educators of color in Focus Group One made light of the situation by saying, that ―the student should have just been Black (over the phone)‖ and ―should not go around shocking people and upsetting categories by speaking proper English that is free of ebonics,‖ their bantering has some validity.

Our tendency to categorize or stereotype is a very natural phenomenon since stereotypes are the perception that the majority of a category of people share some attribute—in this case, the inability to speak proper English. Stereotypes arise directly out of the categorization process (Brown, 1995). Spikard (1992) also posits that when we differentiate groups into exclusive categories, the implication is a hierarchy among people with respect to psychological characteristics like intelligence that determines where a group is located in that hierarchy. Therefore, it is not unusual to be surprised by a person of color speaking well since they are often placed in a deficit position based on race (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000). However, this is not a new or recent phenomenon; Miller (1995) highlights how Blacks have been viewed by

Whites in the history of our society—as stupid, lazy, and ignorant (to name a few descriptors). Therefore, is it that unusual for Whites to be surprised when they hear a Black person speak proper English? Stupidity and articulation do not go together. Further, even more disturbing is the fact that adult White educators also believe that Black (African American) students have good oral skills but generally have poor writing skills (Lund, 2005, 2010). Therefore, what are the implications if White educators are shocked when people of color speak properly and at the same time, say that when they (people of color) do have good oral skills there writing is always worse?

In history there were also various legal and governmental procedures used to distinguish Blacks from other racial groups, including a registry of Black last names, particularly in the Southern states to identify Black people even if they didn't look Black (Helms, 1994). The lesson here is that in history, language has had a profound influence on how people are viewed and treated, and therefore, its existence as a factor influencing the perceptions of the educators in this study is not an anomaly. Language is an integral part of any culture and it does not only develop in conjunction with a society's history, but it also reflects that society's attitudes and thinking (Moore, 2007). Therefore, it is no surprise that Clare said the student would have been a good witness had she filed a complaint—because she dressed well and spoke well.

Clare was highlighting the importance of language and appearance, and how people use these factors to judge perceived levels of intelligence, trustworthiness, and ultimately, treatment. Congruent with Clare's assertion, Brown (1995) says when we meet a person we have at our disposal not just our preconceptions about their group membership but also information about the way they actually appear, dress, and behave. Thus, it is clear that even beyond race, how well a person speaks and how well they carry themselves is important.

However, when Yosso (2007) describes inextricable layers of racialized subordination based on factors like gender, immigration status and surname that exist in the United States, here point is solidified by the dialogue in Focus Group Two when in reference to Scenario Two, Marilyn readily stated that the student was not what the graduate coordinator was expecting when the student showed up for their appointment. Like in the scenario, Marilyn talked about the different types of reactions and receptions she gets when she uses her East Indian maiden name, versus when she uses her American married name. Similarly, in Focus Group One, Jeremy suggested that if a student's name is ―Aptar Singh" for example, then unlike in the scenario, the graduate coordinator would have been able to ―prepare" for the student of color because his name would have given away his racial identity. However, are White people the only ones who react and judge based language? This question is answered in the next section.

Educators of Color Also Judge Based on Language

Even though the educators of color sarcastically talked about ―upsetting peoples' categories," during the Focus Group One discussion, they too were culpable for wrongfully making assumptions about people because of language. Ironically, the educators of color were unfairly judged because of their English language fluency; while the educators of color made assumptions about others due to a lack of English fluency. There appeared to be a correlation between how well individuals speak English and their level of intelligence or competence. This point is highlighted in the following dialogue, beginning with Angela who shared her critical incident example in which she was the culprit—unfairly judging her coworker.

> Angela- Because I teach adults in healthcare I was organizing an education seminar over the phone and I could tell by her accent that she was Filipino. I work with a lot of Filipinos in the classroom and over time I got to know more about her and I learned she was a registered nurse in her own country but then she had other credentials that were really specific to the population we were working with. So it was just to me that as I was getting to know her in the classrooms, I realized

that I had ideas about where she was starting from and they were way off so that situation.

Jeremy- Well my scenario where I was the culprit. I asked a lady who I used to work with how long she had been in the country—she was from Poland. And she told me 20 years. I didn't say it immediately but later on that day when we were talking I said she sounded like she had been there for 2 years.

Clare-You said that?

Jeremy- Yes, I did and I didn't mean it as an insult. It just came out. I was so surprised because she sounded like she had just come less than 2 years before so I knew her pretty well. But she got really offended by that. I didn't really like her and many people didn't because she was really rude; I guess that was part of it but when I thought about it later I said, ―Wait a minute, that sounds kind of messed up!‖ You sound like you've been here for two years. In her mind she never forgave me….I had to think about how it came out because I didn't mean it.

The preceding dialogue illustrates how much language influences our assumptions and perceptions of others—in this case, even the assumptions of people of color. Based on the findings from the focus group discussions, it was revealed by the educators of color that how well one speaks English seems to be indicative of one's level of intelligence and competence. It is interesting to note the irony; the educators of color spoke passionately about the experience of White people being surprised when they spoke proper English—but at the same time, they also made assumptions about others because of language and race. This revelation suggests that all people are capable of making assumptions based on race and language, thus, supporting Nieto's (2006) assertion that we all learn the same lies.

We also have the benefit of hearing Jeremy's ―self-reflection‖ when he said, ―When I thought about it later I said, wait a minute, that sounds kind of messed up!...I had to think about how it came out because I didn't mean it.‖ Jeremy's statement is representative of how deeply ingrained our assumptions and generalizations are and how we are not aware that our mental models can unconsciously affect our actions (Senge, 1990). Also, his quote shows us just how

much our assumptions based on race can happen automatically and how these unspoken assumptions that drive our behaviors in different situations can be learning opportunities (Collins & Pieterse, 2007). Furthermore, Jeremy also demonstrates to us ―out loud,‖ the process of critically assessing our taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations that support our beliefs, judgments and actions (Mezirow, 2003).

On another note, with reference to positionality theory, it is clear that race is not the only factor that can influence the beliefs or behaviors of individuals. This is true even though in the United States, race is such a salient issue that has such clear penalties and benefits attached to different features of individuals (Helms, 1994). It is also clear that even beyond the assertions of Andersen and Collins (2007) who stress ―the idea that race, class and gender are interconnected‖ (p. xi), or the teachings of Martine and Gunten (2002) who insist that ―we are all raced, classed and gendered,‖ it is obvious that there are many other factors that could influence how we react to others. Therefore, while I agree with Martine and Gunten‗s assertion—I would add one more descriptor; we are all raced, classed, gendered and biased! Therefore, it cannot be assumed that educators of color do not subscribe to racial, prejudicial or stereotypical thinking about culturally or racially diverse individuals (Goodwin, 1994).

Findings Related to Research Question 2: What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by White educators?

It was explicitly stated by the White educators that it is important for individuals to address incidents of racism and discrimination when they happen; and the White educators also believed that people of color are not necessarily the only ones who experience discrimination. These two beliefs are summarized in Table 5, followed by a thorough description of each beginning with the matter of confronting incidents of discrimination and racism.

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Table 5—*Themes related to research question 2*

Expressed Belief & Reaction 1:	People Should Always Address & Confront Incidents of Racism & Discrimination
Expressed Belief & Reaction 2:	White People Also Experience Racial Discrimination

Expressed Belief and Reaction #1: People Should Always Address & Confront Incidents of Racism & Discrimination

Even though there is an established ―racial hierarchy‖ (Helms, 1994) in our society in which Whites are in Control and with all the power, the White educators still explicitly stated that it was important for people of color and also themselves, to speak up and address incidents related to race whenever they occur. However, the White educators did not necessarily understand the power dynamics that the educators of color acknowledged as influencing ―how‖ and ―whether‖ they responded to incidents related to race at all. This point is elucidated in the following dialogue that took place after a full description of the incident in Scenario Two was shared with participants in Focus Group Two.

Kate- So what did you say?

Facilitator- I'm not speechless quite often but I was floored. I cried later….I was just so disappointed because at that level of education and in San Francisco and in the office of a woman who had African artifacts everywhere, it was incredible. So I was really taken aback.

Kate- You're better than me. I would have said….

George- I would have said ―F‖ YOU!

Facilitator- See but there's a power dynamic. Not that I would have because I was in shock but just picture going to a new place, I didn't know all the players, I didn't know how much power she had and I was finishing my Master's Degree so…

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Kate—See…I don't play that game…. I have to sleep with myself at night. And like I said, I've been treated differently because like I said, I don't play the game, I speak up for what I believe in and I stick up for students and parents who I feel don't have, um, the chance to speak up—or teachers or whatever. I remember once I was teaching in an inner city school and I had gone over and beyond for this kid in grade 8. My mom had taught him all the way through and then I taught him. Right, and his family wouldn't help so much and the mom knew it. And the kid screwed up and I called her on it and she called me racist. I lost my mind on this woman. This poor woman had never seen the wrath that was coming. We had a talk and the same thing, when going through the process of administration, the superintendent took my principal aside and said, ―You gotta watch out for her, she's trouble."

George- That's what happened to me.

Kate- I had a principal who was brutal at that same school. This lady, a Jewish teacher, was talking about the Holocaust and reading ―The Diary of Anne Frank" and she went up to her and said, ―You also need to teach the positive aspects of what Hitler did."

Group response- ―What?" What was that?

Kate- She was just causing trouble so I went to her and said, ―You can't treat people like this, are you crazy?" See, I was pinpointed as a trouble maker and still to this day. I don't play the game well. So I will be that person…See, it doesn't really matter to me where I want to go because in the end, I'm going to be okay. I'm going to live.

George- You have to….As long as you're consistent and fair, it's going to work out.

Kate- Yah, at night when I go to sleep, if I can't lay my head on that pillow, it's only me. Right, so you know what I'm like right?

It is obvious from the dialogue above that in spite of our society's racial hierarchy

(Helms, 1994) that tells us what we can and cannot do, the White educators still believed that it

was important and imperative for all people to address incidents of racism like what occurred in

Scenario Two with the graduate coordinator. In George's words, ―You have to." This collective

belief among the White educators was drastically different than the opinions of the educators of

color, as I noted earlier. To reiterate, the educators of color believed they had to weigh each

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situation and decide whether it was worth it to address a particular incident. Therefore, following the lead of Kate and George who said things like ―F-you‖ or ―I don't play the game‖ is not a viable response for the educators of color towards the graduate coordinator.

Moreover, George and Kate did not realize that they had the privilege to respond in such a manner when a person of color wouldn't dare consider such a response. As McIntosh (2007) acknowledges the privileges White people have—for example, being able to ask to speak to a manager and trust that that person would look like them, White people also have the privilege of speaking up and complaining about issues without having to worry about long-term consequences or repercussions. This is contrary to the plight of people of color who are always faced with the enormous challenge of attempting to find a foothold in a nation that does not fully respect them or grant them equality (Singleton & Linton, 2006). These differing opinions between the White educators and the educators of color are tantamount to the amount of ―power‖ one believes they have in such situations. Singleton and Linton further state that the way to achieve racial justice and equality and basic respect for one another is for everyone, regardless of their positions of privilege or not, to recognize, understand and accept how we are positioned in this society.

Thus far I have pointed out that George and Kate did not recognize the privileges they had to even consider responding to a racial incident in such a manner with a person of authority/power. However, I must also highlight their strengths—especially their willingness to address issues of inequality and racial discrimination. No, this study was not a ―trial‖ to determine whether the White educators were racist or not, but Singleton and Linton's (2006) assertion is instructive to this conversation because they say, ―for White educators to claim rightfully that they are not racist, they must take action in bringing about true racial equality and

insist on racial justice always and everywhere" (p. 27). It was evident from their contributions to the focus group discussions that George and Kate were both ―activists" who worked towards racial equality. Kate actually stated emphatically that she speaks up for educators and students who do not have a voice. Likewise, George was obviously a huge proponent of social justice and was genuinely sensitive to the plight of people of color. This was evidenced by his knowledge about racism studies and discrimination, his acknowledgement of the dire circumstances of Native Indians who he says are even worse off than Blacks because ―at least Blacks have been able to achieve some power;" and George also talked about his grandson who was half Black and half Italian. Specifically, George told the focus group (two) that he always puts his friends on the spot by insisting that if his grandson were with a group of other Black boys in public, then they (his friends) would automatically view the group as hoodlums simply because they were Black. George made the following comments,

> ….Let's not forget the Native Indians because they are still at that lower level. The Blacks have been able to get some power. The Native Indians are still there and at the bottom and I really feel for them.

Additionally, George made the following comment about people's perceptions of Black boys when he spoke about his grandson who is half Black and half Italian.

> If it's a gang of kids and it's a different group (Whites) then they will think they would rob the place. I said to a friend of mine, ―If you saw my grandson with a group of Black kids you would not assume it was Jerome, you would assume it was a group of bad kids." They say…duh…yah, you know….It's the assumption you make when you do that.

Clearly, understanding the notion of ―context," George knew his Black grandson would be viewed differently if he were on the street with other Black boys than say, if he were in George's living room. George's argument also illustrates the point that our experiences do not stand apart from historical or sociocultural contexts (Clark & Wilson, 1991). Furthermore,

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George's opinions about how Black boys are viewed are also consistent with Jeremy's point in

Focus Group One in which he said, "Black people are the _boogey man' in this society—

especially black boys." George and Jeremy's opinions are congruent with the literature which

talks about the plight of Black boys, particularly in the education system (See Noguera, 2008;

Sewell, 1997). Especially in school settings, "many educators have grown accustomed to the idea

that a large percentage of the Black male students they serve will fail, get into trouble, and drop

out of school" (Noguera, 2008, p. xix). This point about educators being accustomed to the

underachievement of Black students is similar to George's opinions shared in Focus Group Two

in which he talked about witnessing his teacher-colleagues throughout his career having

"weaknesses in their marking."

George said,

> In high school, I remember a couple kids, they got caught
> plagiarizing things and they got zero. But still, I still find that in a staff
> meeting teachers, when they are marking papers, they say…Teachers
> automatically say, "Oh that student," and you can tell there's going to be a
> weakness in their marking; I'm sorry, no matter what…it's there! I've
> seen it so many times and they're sitting there with all their papers and it's
> "Oh yah," and incidentally overlook certain things…In my opinion.

George emphatically stated, "I'm sorry, no matter what…it's there!" By "it," George was

referring to negative assumptions some educators have about the ability of students of color. In

Delpit's (1995) words, bringing attention to the "haze over their cultural lenses" that leads them

to mistreat students. Moreover, George's opinion and Noguera's (2008) assertions coincide with

studies described in Chapter Two that were performed by Lund (2005) and Johnson-Bailey,

Cervero, Valentine and Bowles (2006) who exposed the negative experiences students of color

experience in the education system. However, are people of color the only ones who can face

discrimination? The answer to this question is answered by the White educators' second belief described next.

Expressed Belief and Reaction #2: White People Also Experience Racial Discrimination

As it has already been discussed, Kate, one of the White educators, believed she was "singled out" and regarded as a "trouble maker" for "not playing the game well" and standing up for those teachers and students who did not have a voice. Likewise, George shared an incident in Focus Group Two when he was trying to become a principal. He said,

> This makes me think about my experience. When I was going for my Principalship the area was basically a bunch of "rednecks." There was a club up there and I did everything right but the principal, I believe, was prejudice against me. I had a different style; I was Italian, I was verbal and I moved, and that's not what they wanted up there. So I didn't go any further. In fact, I did everything required. I did night school. I was doing a night school Principalship where the superintendent was afraid to come in the parking lot at night——"Oh…well they will break into my car." I handled so many situations but I didn't make it because I was a ticked off agitator. That was me…I just did it to prove that I could do it. But that's what you need, someone to support you.

Similarly, Mary also shared an incident in which she believed she faced discrimination while applying for a teaching job at an inner city school. Mary's comment started the dialogue:

> One incident when I was the victim was when I was looking for a job in an inner city school. The interview went really, really well and I felt really good about it and it looked like the type of school I wanted to teach in. It felt positive and dynamic and feeling like it had gone well. The principal even walked with me to the parking lot and continued talking so I thought…I'm in. But then she called me later on in the afternoon and said, "You know Mary that was a great interview," and she said, "It was really, really great but I'm afraid we have to go with someone else." And I said, "Oh, can I ask why because I felt the interview had gone great?" I mean, maybe my resume wasn't what it should have been or maybe there was something I had to work on. She said, "Well, you can't change your cultural background."

> Group- Wow!

Mary- She was a White, female principal so what do you say? What do you mean? I was totally taken aback. She said, ―You don't reflect the diversity of the school so we've gone with someone who could better reflect that." And then in talking about that, I spoke to a mentor of mine and she said that I could bring this up and make a complaint about this but you don't want to bother if you plan on working in the system. Um, she suggested that I just let it go and when I've described it to people they refer to it as reverse racism but the one thing that I question is how can it be reverse racism? Racism is racism? I don't know where that term came from.

Kate- I think a White person made it up because it can't be reverse racism, its racism. This happens all the time.

Mary- But I'm just surprised that she said it.

Kate- They would say it to another White person

Mary-She could have found herself in a little bit of trouble. But I kind of understand it but….

The preceding dialogue addresses many complex issues because interestingly, all three of the White educators shared clear examples of when they faced discrimination by other Whites. However, before I venture into my analysis of their expressed beliefs and reactions shared in the focus group, it is important to first note the difference between racism and discrimination. As opposed to Kate and Mary's exchange as to whether Mary experienced ―reverse racism" or ―racism," I do not believe Mary experienced either! Mary faced discrimination as a result of a White principal who decided she was not a good fit for the school. Likewise, George also faced discrimination when he applied to become a principal either because of his ethnicity as an Italian and/or because he was outspoken.

Of the many definitions of racism mentioned in Chapter 2, there are three very ―fitting" definitions to this conversation. Pine and Hillard (1990) say,

Racism describes the combination of individual prejudice and individual discrimination, on the one hand, and institutional policies and practices, on the

other, that result in the unjustified negative treatment and subordination of members of a racial or ethnic group. By convention, the term racism has been reserved to describe the mistreatment of members of racial and ethnic groups that have experienced a history of discrimination. (p. 595)

The key ingredient of this definition is the historical context of the mistreatment that people of color have experienced in the United States. There is a deeply rooted and historical context to racism that is a result of race prejudice against racial groups that have been defined as inferior by White individuals and institutions (Jones, 1997). Moreover, Weissglass (2001) says racism is the systematic mistreatment of people (often referred to as people of color) because of skin color or other physical characteristics and this mistreatment is carried out by institutions and people who have been conditioned to act, consciously or unconsciously, in harmful ways towards people of color. Therefore, in light of these aforementioned definitions of racism, it is impossible for White individuals to experience racism. However, they can indeed experience discrimination—just as Kate, George and Mary have shared; discrimination means being treated unfairly on the grounds of race, sex, or age (Oxford Dictionary).

Kate talked about not ―playing the game well‖ but there is a question as to whether Kate realized that as a member of the dominant group—that as a White woman, she had the *choice* to ―play the game.‖ Also, that her status puts her in a position of privilege whether voluntarily or involuntarily. This *choice* to ―play the game‖ is not a luxury that people of color have in this society—either you play the game or you don‗t survive. There is a sense of security that White individuals have because there is an inherent benefit to living in a society where Whiteness is ―shaped and maintained by the full array of social institutions, legal, economic, political, educational, religious, and cultural‖ (Helfand, 2002, p. 7). There is a question as to whether Kate

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realized that on some level, because of the far-reaching benefits of Whiteness that she was able to be such a fearless educator and advocate for the underserved—and without regard for any real consequences or repercussions? My analysis of Kate's position is not meant to invalidate her belief that she was being singled out as a trouble maker, or to minimize the work she does; but to acknowledge, as Gordon (2005) insists, that engagement in Whiteness is an ongoing, lifelong commitment to understanding the ways that White skin continues to furnish Whites with advantages. Further, Gordon also says that individuals should not cling to the idea that if one is thoughtful about race, that he/she has done ―the work.‖

Also, if analyzing Kate's comments and reactions through the lens of Helm's White Racial Identity model, I place Kate at Stage 5—―Immersion/Emersion‖—because this stage is marked by a person's willingness to confront one's own biases, to redefine Whiteness and to become an activist in directly fighting racism and oppression (Sue, et. al, 1998). More evidence of Kate's presence at this stage is the following comments she made regarding the critical incident activity and also the experience of participating in the focus group: Kate said,

> It's so funny, I've had so many conversations with people about
> this and many people have problems admitting to this (pointing to the
> question where they have to describe when they've made assumptions
> based on race)…I think if you had a different section of people, you would
> get very different answers.

Kate also said,

> We all have biases….every single person! I remember leaving this
> workshop at school and everyone was saying, ―I don't have biases.‖ And
> I'm like, ―You're a liar! You are a liar, you are a liar‖…Do you remember
> (looking at Mary)? I don't think I said liar but I said everyone does and I
> do. I do. Do you want me to tell you what they are because I will. It makes
> me a better person that I know what they are and I can make sure they are
> not perpetuated when I go and face my kids in my classroom. Everyone
> has them…So when I say that you might have different responses...because in this
> group we are very honest in our answers and we would say something in a group
> that may not be the desired answer…I think that is rare.

It is evident that Kate was quite comfortable talking about her biases, which is characteristic of White individuals at the Immersion/Emersion stage that Helm's (1994) describes. Further, Kate's statement about it being better to know her biases so she does not perpetuate them with her kids in the classroom shows her level of introspection as a critically reflective practitioner (Brookfield, 1995) who thinks about the ways her biases can undergird and perpetuate systems of domination and opportunities in her practice (Manglitz, 2003).

However, one interesting and somewhat contradictory expression from Kate occurred at the beginning of the focus group when she defined herself racially as ―American‖ on the demographic survey. Avoiding the acknowledgement of her race and saying she is ―American‖ is indicative of colorblind ideology. Forman (2007) defines colorblindness as the act of not paying attention to race. Further, Lawrence and Tatum (1997) say, when White educators fail to acknowledge their own racial identity, this lack of acknowledgment becomes a barrier for understanding and connecting with the developmental needs of children of color. Moreover, the authors insist that when an educator does not acknowledge her own racial or ethnic identity, she will not recognize the need for children of color to affirm their own; and nor can she serve as a role model for White students who may also be struggling to understand and change the reality of race in our society.

Kate's blatant denial of race on one hand, but her clear admission of having racial biases on the other is a prime example of Argyris and Shon's (1974) ―theory in action‖ versus ―espoused theory‖ concept. There is clearly a ―disconnect‖ between the actions of Kate filling out the demographic survey and saying her race is ―American‖ versus her ―espoused‖ statements of being comfortable with race issues and discussions. Kate's use of language is also an example

of how "texts position and construct individuals, making available various meanings, ideas, and versions of the world" (Luke, 1995-1996, p. 13)

George's Incident of Discrimination

George's incident of discrimination teaches us that we cannot judge a book by its cover because from the outside looking in, he appears to be a White man and therefore, privileged; but he self identifies as "Italian" and believes he has faced discrimination because of his ethnicity. This "different" treatment he has received because he is Italian is not surprising if we look at the history of race and how at one point, there were divisions and a hierarchy among the "Russian" race or the "Spanish" race. Therefore, it was not uncommon for George to be called "a dirty little Wop" by White people when he was growing up.

George believed he was not afforded the opportunity to ascend to the level of principal because he was different/Italian and because he was very vocal. However, although we are not sure of the reasons, I suspect George faced those barriers because clearly, George is at the highest level of Helm's White Racial Identity Model—Autonomy. This conclusion is drawn because this stage is marked by a person being knowledgeable about racial, ethnic and cultural issues and diversity; and at this stage a person is not intimidated or uncomfortable with the experiential reality of race (Sue, et. al, 1998). George is at this level probably because of the experiences he had growing up. He said,

> I came here as an immigrant and I was called "dirty old wop" and my first
> friend was Black and I remember both of us being beat up.

Perhaps because George was not considered White and was therefore, treated like other people of color, he did not identify with being White. Moreover, I wonder if George even went through the stages of Helm's White racial identity model versus going through Cross's Nigrescence Model Cross's model highlights the difficulties and challenges people of color experience

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adjusting to and living in an oppressive society? We cannot be sure but one thing is clear, George is well-read and has a clear understanding and awareness about the plight that people of color experience in this society. Especially through his statements made about his grandson who is half Black and half Italian, he knows what it means for his grandson to be a Black boy in this society.

Therefore, I also wonder if George's comfort with race issues is another reason why he was denied the Principalship? In George's own words, the Superintendent was afraid to go into the area at night because of fear of getting his car broken into. While this topic is beyond the scope of this study, I still wonder if George's level of racial identity development and comfort may have made individuals at a lesser stage of racial identity development feel uncomfortable or intimidated? This ―incompatibility" of racial identities between a boss and a worker creating problems has been documented (See Thomas, 2005).

Mary's incident of discrimination

With respect to Mary's incident of discrimination in which she was not hired for the teaching job at an inner city school despite having a good interview, the Principal's statement ―that she does not reflect the diversity of the school" is troubling. As we have learned from the literature, both White educators and educators of color can operate through oppressive lenses (Milner, 2003); therefore, like White educators, it cannot be assumed that educators of color do not harbor any racial, prejudicial or stereotypical beliefs about racially and culturally diverse students (Goodwin, 1994). Therefore, for Mary to be disqualified from consideration for a teaching position because she is White is not an informed or wise one. The mere fact that Mary deliberately chose to interview for a job at an inner city school should say something—especially since many White teachers feel uncomfortable discussing, dealing with and acknowledging the race of students (King, 1991).

However, all this said, maybe the Principal learned something she did not like in the interview and consequently, used the euphemism of ―not reflecting the diversity of the school‖ in order to disqualify Mary. Or perhaps the Principal recognized Mary‗s colorblind ideology, as I did in this study, and knew such an ideology would not necessarily serve the students well (Lawrence & Tatum (1997). An example of Mary‗s colorblind ideology is exemplified by the following dialogue that took place in response to Scenario Two in which Mary had a lot of difficulty stating whether race was involved in the scenario. She said,

> I don‗t think mine is going to be particularly helpful, only because as I‗m reading this I don‗t come up with the picture of having to do with race; again, it‗s sort of a male/female thing. I guess I could sort of assume the graduate director is a White male? Um, and there isn‗t enough detail enough for me to come to any assumptions about the race of the prospective doctoral student.

> Facilitator-What if I told you if it was a White female—the graduate coordinator? Would that change anything?

> Mary-No, for some reason I just got a male on both counts…I don‗t necessarily think along the lines of race. Um, and then it sort of…there wasn‗t enough information for me to make any assumptions about the reasons why the graduate director may have suggested…I guess I would have liked to know what the prospective student was planning on studying. I guess I need more information…can you give us more information about?

> Facilitator- I can tell you.…the key thing to recognize in the scenario is that the graduate coordinator was excited after the subject matter was revealed to her on the phone. She was excited and invited the graduate student to come. And then upon seeing the graduate student, all of a sudden, all bets were off. Something changed the graduate coordinator‗s opinion, approach or whatever…

> George- Before I forget…When she says about the gender, me, I try to avoid the gender because it is insignificant to me. I don‗t care. It‗s still a White issue, a Black student and the color of the person. Because what tainted me to go this way is because of the studies I‗ve been reading and following for a long time; it‗s quite obvious to me. Again, it‗s a personal thing.

> Facilitator- So you think race, I guess, supersedes gender? Do you think race is more important?

George- In my personal experience…Yes.

Facilitator-Okay.

Kate- I agree with Mary actually. Um, I didn't put an answer for race because I didn't feel there was enough information. Um, I tried, to think, really Hollywood movie in my head. So I try to picture this as a movie. That's just how I'm reading it. That_s how I think for anything. It's quite sad. My assumption here depends on the area of the research. I have different movies in my head. The first one was, um, it was an area and the focus research was on looking into race, gender and the graduate director was a Black female and the student's race was a White female. And when they had the meeting she (the Black graduate coordinator with a huge frown) looked up and down and said ―No." Because they wanted a person of color in that role looking at that research. That was movie #1…

Kate continued…

Movie #2 was the opposite. A White female in the role and a Black female and then going again, looking at the appearance. But for me, it wasn't just the race that caused the change, it was the look, the race, age, the style, perhaps the ability…I didn't picture a wheelchair or a walker but I think that could have been a factor in it as well. I think over my life, because I'm not a person of color, but I have been treated differently for my style because I don't fit into the Assistant Principal look. So I don't wear suits, I don't wear whatever; I wear comfortable clothes and that's my style. So when I go to a meeting or whatever, ―Oh, you're way too young." Again, I'm putting in my personal bias and my experiences into it.

Mary had a lot of difficulty—first, with deciding if race was even involved; and second, deciding who the individuals were in the scenario. Mary could easily and readily decide what the gender was of each individual. However, she took a colorblind approach by saying, ―I don't come up with the picture of having to do with race…I don't necessarily think along the lines of race." Even when Mary was told that the graduate coordinator was a White woman, she still said, ―I see male on both counts." Mary was obviously reluctant to say what she thought about the scenario, probably out of fear of saying the wrong thing or being wrong. We have learned from Social Desirability Theory that there are pressures against the expression of racially negative attitudes out of fear of looking bad (Abershon, Shoemaker & Tomolillo, 2003).

Similarly, Kate piggybacked on Mary's answer by saying, "I agree with Mary actually. Um, I didn't put an answer for race because I didn't feel there was enough information;" and yet, Kate was still able to quickly and definitively come up with two "Hollywood movies" in which the races of the individuals were clearly differentiated in each. Also, I chose not to address Kate's hand-on-the hip, neck jerking mannerisms as she described "movie one" with the Black graduate coordinator deciding that the White female student was not right for the program. However, it was noted that those same antics were not displayed while describing "movie two" with the White graduate coordinator and the Black female student. This suggested that Kate had preconceived notions, assumptions or stereotypes about how Black women are—even when they are in positions of power.

Moreover, it is also interesting to note that during the dialogue, both Kate and Mary became silent and did not make any comments when George said he didn't really care about gender and that in his opinion, race is the most important thing. Their silence was deafening and this is the reason why when analyzing what people say that it is important to pay "attention to the missing, obscured, or subverted texts—what is left out, implied, veiled, or subtly signaled as the norm by virtue of being unmarked or marked with modifying language" (Cochran-Smith, 2000, p. 168). However, all this said, Kate and Mary may not have responded to George's comment about not caring about gender because it would have probably started a whole new conversation about what they go through in life because they are female. The point here is much like Whites can choose not to see color, men can also say that gender is "insignificant" because they don't have to deal with sexism! In the end, Mary did not answer the questions but instead, shared a personal experience—one that took place involving an assistant principal at her school when she

was at the end of her pregnancy and was about to go on maternity leave. Mary described the

incident as follows:

> There had just been a sports team meeting that I hadn't been at but normally I would be
> there. And I went to her (the assistant principal's) office to fill out some paperwork or
> something and it was really unprofessional of her to even talk about this…Well,
> period…In the way that she was. They had been talking about the behavior of one of the
> students (a Black male) in the behavior program who's behavior continued to be a bit
> challenging and he was ADHD as well and some other problems and was on medication.
> So the meeting had taken place and the social worker was in the office and I was in there
> for unrelated reasons and she said to the social worker whom I know would not
> have been comfortable with this, ―Well you know, when that mom comes in what
> does she expect? She's just another single, unwed, you know, mother living in the
> projects and da-da-da-da"….Suggesting that she wasn't doing right by her son
> and this is the reason why he is the way he is.

Mary continued the story with a slight chuckle…―And meanwhile, I'm sitting there just about 9

months pregnant, um…unwed (group laughter), single, about to move to the projects and she

looked at me and said, ‗Oh, no offence!'"

> Marilyn- No way!

> Mary- I could not say anything. I was you know, dumbstruck.

> Kate- But you laughed.
> Mary- Yes, I kind of laughed like ―huh, huh, huh"… but you know, I still
> think about it. I did laugh but you know….
> Marilyn- Yes, I know…You just wish that you could rewind the clock…Just give
> me the chance so you could handle it differently. But you just don't expect people
> to be so blatantly insulting.
> Mary- I think she meant to be insulting because she is that way. And the Social
> worker was just wide-eyed because she didn't know what to say…She's so sweet.

> Mary did not offer her answers to the questions but by offering an example of her

personal experience, she was able to demonstrate through her scenario where she stands when it

comes to making unfair assumptions about people of color. My analysis is not an attempt to

criticize Mary, but to recognize her need to deflect from the process in order to protect herself—

which is a normal thing to do when an individual is feeling uncomfortable; we are all ―defended

subjects" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2002). Moreover, Mary's scenario also speaks to the notion that we are not one-dimensional. The assistant principal did not only judge the mother and her son on the basis of race, but she also judged the mother on the basis of class, marital status and her ability to "mother." The assistant principal also judged Mary—someone who looked just like her—except they were colleagues.

These points tie to the notion of "positionality" that was discussed in Chapter Two. According to positionality theory, race is not the only factor that can influence the beliefs or behaviors of individuals even though in the United States, race is considered the most salient, enduring, recognizable, and inflammatory feature of a person with preliminary credentials for access to reward or punishment attached (Helms, 1994). Andersen and Collins (2007) assert that even when we think we are not making assumptions of others based on race, they stress that "race, class and gender are interconnected" (p. xi). Martine and Gunten (2002) similarly suggest that "we are all raced, classed and gendered, and these identities are relational, complex and fluid positions rather than essential qualities" (p. 46).

Therefore, it was interesting in Focus Group Two that Mary could easily and readily decide what the gender of each individual was in Scenario Two, but took a colorblind approach by saying, "I don't come up with the picture of having to do with race…I don't necessarily think along the lines of race." If one believes in positionality theory, then Mary's position of not thinking about race is questionable. This is an example of why we should be skeptical about the "transparency of talk, interview data, and recounts as unproblematic sources of information about "reality" and "truth," "intent" and "motivation" (Luke, 1995-1996, p. 9). Given Mary's approach to the scenarios and her discomfort with the discussions, I would position Mary at the first stage—"Contact"—because people in this status may profess to be colorblind—believing

that racial and cultural differences are unimportant. The Black/White dichotomy is not noticed, but accepted unconsciously or consciously without critical thought or analysis.

Relatedly, even though it was evident that both George and Kate were "further along" the continuum of understanding and "activism" than Mary in Focus Group Two, it is important to remember that even White individuals also experience identity issues (Constantine, Warren & Miville, 2005) which usually involves the recognition of a false sense of racial superiority and eventually adopting an identity that is nonracist (Helms & Cook, 1999). Therefore, it is clear that we are *all* learners to some degree in the examination of race. No matter where we are on the continuum, what is important is our willingness to deeply explore our own racial identities and better empathize with the experiences of the racial other (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

Furthermore, it is important for all people who find themselves in positions of power to always use it in a positive, respectful and uplifting manner. I emphasize that *all* people must not abuse their power and should be respectful of others because Andersen and Collins (1997, 2009) point out through what they call, the "additive model," that people cannot necessarily be placed in either/or categories. The authors do not believe people can be dichotomized so easily as "Black or White," "oppressed or oppressor," or "powerful or powerless" because race is not fixed—but is socially constructed with its meaning changing over time (Helms, 1994). Therefore, since all people are capable of exhibiting "behavioral patterns that perpetuate relations of domination" (Adair, Howell, & Adair, 1988, p. 11), we must take each person as an individual rather than stereotyping—which is categorizing people by looking at sets of traits (that could be completely inaccurate) and using them to explain and predict the behaviors of members of socially defined groups (Miller, 1995). Examples of this are the incidents of discrimination

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that George and Mary described; one would not readily believe that two White people would experience such as thing.

Also, interestingly and contradictorily, despite their insistence that people have to address incidents of racism and discrimination when they occur, neither one of them (George nor Mary) filed complaints or pursued the matters even though they believe they faced discrimination. This is contradictory to what they said and is actually consistent with the beliefs of the people of color who stressed the importance of ―weighing" situations before acting. It appears by Mary's words that some White individuals also have reservations addressing these types of incidents. This is evidenced by Mary stating that her mentor told her to be careful if she wanted to continue working in the school district. Again, this difference between what is said and what is done is indicative of Agyris and Shon's (1974) ―espoused theory" versus ―theory in action' model. People are not necessarily aware that what they say are not in alignment with their actions. It is for this reason that we must always remain ―critically reflective" (Brookfield, 1995) of our thoughts and actions. Especially as educators with the potential and the position to harm students of color, it is imperative that we continued to bridge the gap between our espoused theories and our theories in action (Argyris & Shon, 1974).

Research Question 3: What factors inform the expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race?

It is evident from the focus group data that there are many factors that influence the beliefs and reactions of the educators in both focus groups. As thoroughly examined in Research Questions 1 and 2, one important factor influencing a person's beliefs and reactions to incidents related to race is racial identity. However, in this section I discuss the other two major factors that influenced the reactions of participants—Childhood critical incidents and family influence. Because the childhood critical incidents shared by the participants are so closely related and

impact on each other, I have discussed the two factors together. Moreover, throughout my analysis I also touch on other factors like ethnicity, gender and class since they also appeared as relevant factors to the discussion. However, the two major factors are summarized in Table 5 below followed by a detailed explanation of each.

Table 6—*Factors related to research question 3*

Factor 1: Influencing Reactions & Beliefs	Childhood Critical Incidents
Factor 2: Influencing Reactions & Beliefs	Family Influence

CHILDHOOD CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND FAMILY INFLUENCE

As we have learned from Berger and Luckman (1966), there are two types of socialization—primary socialization and secondary socialization. Put simply, primary socialization involves our parents or our primary care givers while growing up. Secondary socialization involves all other experiences we have that are so impactful or critical that they lead to further learning in different ways. In other words, secondary socialization is a kin to what Mezirow (2003) calls a ―disorienting dilemma‖ that leads to a perspective transformation. A person has such a profound or significant experience that he/she is forced to critically assess taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations that support their beliefs, feelings and judgment. As a result, that person embraces a new perspective and is not and cannot be the same.

My experience teaching the Black boy in California that I misjudged because of race, is an example of an incident that made me realize that I too, have pre-conceived notions about Black boys even though I know better. Also, if I consider positionality theory and the intersection of race, class and gender, perhaps I was also surprised that the Black boy was smart because the experience occurred in an inner city. After many moments of deep analysis, I cannot

definitively say that class did not influence my reaction but I am certain that race played a key role. Nonetheless, throughout our lifetime there are endless opportunities for learning about race and they begin in childhood. An example of this is what we have learned from the critical incidents of some of the participants in this study as described in Chapter 3. For example, Angela, who is West Indian, spoke about experiencing a traumatic incident at age 10 in which all of the girls in her physical education class at school drew an exaggerated picture of her that highlighted all of the ways she was ―different‖ than her Jewish and White peers. The students pasted the picture up on the wall and were laughing. Angela further talked about the reaction (or lack thereof) of her parents who in essence, dismissed the incident and avoided discussing it.

Their reaction was unfortunate because they missed a golden opportunity to talk about race, especially when conversations between parent and child about race often take place in response to specific events (like Angela‗s), rather than planned conversations (Coard & Sellers, 2005). A valuable teaching moment was lost because ―children whose parents socialize them regarding racial history and values report more positive self-concept than children who lack an intervention that protects against unchallenged and pervasive stereotypes‖ (Swanson, Cunningham, Youngblood, & Spencer, 2009, p. 271). Further, Demo and Hughes (1990) tell us that Blacks who experience or grow up in homes with parents who share firm messages about being Black tend to have stronger feelings of racial identity than those who do not recall their parents telling them anything about being Black. It was not until Angela started ―acting out‖ and having problems at school that her parents took the incident seriously.

Angela further shared with Focus Group One that as a result of that incident, even today as an adult, she tends not to see when she is being mistreated because of race and always tries to see the best in people because she does not know how to trust or interpret what she is seeing and

feeling. The lesson has stayed with Angela whose parents did not stand up for her two decades ago, and made her question whether she should have been upset by the situation or not. Even though it was not the best lesson to learn from her parents, it is not unusual that this lesson has such longevity because the influence of a person's primary socialization from parents is pretty powerful (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Angela's critical incident is also instructive to our understanding of race because she herself stated that "10 years old was very old to learn that you are different." Angela's beliefs are consistent with the literature. It has been reported that "people _know' to which group they belong by the time they are three years old (Katz, 1976; Helms, 1994). What Moore (2007) calls "rightness of whiteness," refers to how the U.S. culture affects children before age four, providing White children with a false sense of superiority and encouraging self-hatred among what he calls "third world" youngsters—a catchall phrase to include all people of color. Clearly, Angela's critical incident is an example of the superiority felt among her White peers. It is also indicative of "cultural racism" because Angela looked different from the often promoted Eurocentric standards of beauty (Utsey, Ponterotto & Porter, 2008). Cultural racism refers to the denigration of individuals for not having the "right" skin color or hair texture because having blue eyes and blond hair is more beautiful than brown eyes and brown skin (Singleon & Linton, 2006).

<div align="center">Jeremy's Critical Incident</div>

Jeremy's critical incident in Focus Group One is also an important one to critique because his incident teaches us that even when racism is not obvious or overt and masked by jokes (Poulton, 2007; Poulton, Johnson-Bailey, & Guy, 2008), it still evokes emotions like fear, anger and distrust (Wijeyesinghe, Griffin, Love, 1997). As a 40 year old man, Jeremy's

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passionate recollection of an incident that took place 33 years ago when he was 7 years old, speaks to not only the volatility of race as a topic, but also the long-lasting effects that racial incidents have on individuals. One interesting part of Jeremy's description of the incident was his vivid recollection of the language used by his friend that was obviously still indelible and easily called to mind. Rolling off his tongue, Jeremy described being called ―ziggy, nigger, spear-chucker, shadow, eggplant…names he had never heard from anybody." Perhaps the words he heard had a more lasting effect than the physical altercation itself. Moore (2007) helps with the analysis of Jeremy's critical incident because he says historically, ―perhaps the most obvious aspect of racism in language would be terms like ‗nigger,‘ ‗spook,‘ ‗chink,‘ ‗spic,‘ etc" (p. 366); words that Jeremy was called. Further, it is no wonder that this incident left an element of confusion for Jeremy; his friend was supposedly ―joking" when he called him names but those names have a direct connection to racism, not fun or jest.

Moreover, Jeremy raised another interesting point in his statement that you cannot compare what he called ―White racism" and ―Black racism" because ―there are more reasons for Black people not to like White people than the other way around." Jeremy's statement is congruent with Thomas's (2005) assertion that race inevitably influences any situation where humans are present and can cause conflict because of our history or what Cox (1994) calls *legacy effects*. An example of ―legacy effects" as described by Cox is when Black and White employees experience conflict due to their shared history of the enslavement of Africans in the United States. The White employee may doubt the competence of a Black coworker because the legacy of slavery puts Blacks in a role of incompetence; while Black employees may likewise use the legacy of slavery as justification for their distrust or dislike of White colleagues. Therefore, even though Jeremy did not mention slavery directly, the legacy of slavery may have played a role in

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the confusion Jeremy experienced with his friend's use of emotive names in so-called jest. Jeremy's vivid recollection of his critical incident also shows how much childhood experiences can stay with a person.

I must also point out Jeremy's ―flawed" designations of Black racism versus White racism because there is a question as to whether ―Black racism" even exists. Weissglass (2001) insists that racism is entirely different from prejudice. He says, ―A person of color can hurt a White person because of prejudice [but] the difference is that in this country, people of color face systemic and ongoing personal and institutionalized biases every day" (p. 49). However, as we have learned from George's example, in addition to race, a person's ethnicity can also influence how people react to different situations and why people react to others in certain ways.

George's Critical Incident

We have learned from George's critical incident that upon arrival in the United States, his first friend was Black and they were both beaten up presumably because of George's ethnicity and his friend's race. As I indicated in my answer to Research Question Two, George's experience of being called a ―dirty little Wop," coupled with the experience of not being treated properly, which was not unlike Black people being physically attacked at that time, is probably why today, George is clearly for the ―underdog" and has an ―activistic" nature (Sue, et. al, 1998). George said his critical incident has stayed with him for almost 60 years. Additionally, another reason why George has such a strong sense of race and its impact is because of his grandson who is half-black. As I previously stated, George was well read and was very in tune with the negative perceptions and low expectations that our society has for Black boys in particular (Noguera, 2008). Furthermore, even before George became a father and grandfather, I get the impression that George's mother had a profound impact on him while growing up. In his own

words he recalled his mother saying, "Be educated." These words are probably why he got his

education and also why he is so critical of "bad" teachers. The passion with which George

recalled his former English teacher calling him "Columbus" and his description of some of his

former colleagues whom he described as having "weaknesses in their marking," are excellent

examples of George's awareness of how some educators can have "harmful dispositions"

(Kumashiro, 2002). This primary socialization by his mother, coupled with his secondary

experiences of being treated poorly because of his ethnicity, are more than likely the reasons why

he is the way he is today.

Marilyn's Critical Incident

Speaking of negative perceptions, Marilyn also shared her critical incident that she

experienced as a child. She was "trick or treating" when an adult opened the door and told her

she looked like she belonged to the KKK. Marilyn did not write anything further about the

critical incident so her feelings about the situation are unknown. However, this matter-of-

factness about the sharing of her critical incident is much like Marilyn's revelation that while

growing up, she was beaten by her mother. Marilyn spoke about the situation without any

emotion; almost as if she was detached from her emotions. However, when Marilyn shared an

incident about going to the Trinidad carnival in Miami and being mistaken for a Trinidadian of

East Indian descent, by contrast, Marilyn was happy. Here it must be pointed out again that

Marilyn herself is an East Indian, born in India and the commonality she shared with the group

of Trinidadians at the party was being of East Indian descent—except from a different culture.

Marilyn's noticeable happiness when describing the Miami incident suggests that Marilyn gladly

welcomes the acceptance from people who are different from those she knew while growing up.

This is probably because her mother treated her badly. Moreover, her mother's maltreatment, the

acceptance by people outside of her race, and probably other unknown experiences from people of her own race have resulted in dating and marrying outside of her race. Her ex-husband was a Black man and contrary to what she indicated in the focus group discussion that, ―Black is not okay‖ in East Indian culture, her choice of partners was perhaps an indication of her rejection of the ―Black is not okay‖ opinion of her culture. One can deduce from Marilyn‘s experiences using Berger and Luckmann terms (1964), that her primary socialization was so traumatic with her mother that, coupled with other unknown experiences, she seeks secondary socialization experiences which are drastically different or opposite to her upbringing. Again, this is probably why Marilyn seemed flattered when she was mistaken for a Trinidadian East Indian.

   Mary's critical incident.

   Reading Mary‘s critical incident information offers great insight into why Mary responded to the scenario questions as she did, with colorblind ideology. As indicated by her critical incident, many years after the incident, Mary still feels guilty about asking for ―Ghandi‖ instead of ―candy‖ while wearing a Sari (an East Indian dress) at Halloween. As the literature indicates, it is not unusual for emotions like guilt and ignorance to be evoked in a person as a result of a racial incident (Wijeyesinghe, Griffin, & Love, 1997), but it is interesting that for almost 20 years, Mary has not moved beyond the guilt. We do not know why but the existence of her guilt is instructive to our understanding of her actions today.

   Just as colorblind ideology teaches us, sometimes people choose not to see color but instead, choose the safer path and keep on blinders. They believe that appearing not to notice a person‘s color is a way to ―guarantee‖ a lack of prejudice (Gordon, 2005). As mentioned earlier, Mary was clearly afraid to say the wrong thing. This is not uncommon during discussions about

race because typically, educators have not examined or discussed race in their schools and therefore, are afraid about not doing it correctly (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

In the course of performing a critical discourse analysis of what Mary said—paying attention to the obscured and veiled (Cochran-Smith, 2000), the question arises as to why Mary kept saying over and over again that she was 13 and ―should have known better.‖ Marilyn, as an East Indian, offered Mary the perspective that East Indians would not have necessarily been offended. This is because East Indians would have been happy to see someone in a Sari. However, Mary still refused to believe what Marilyn told her and this refusal to accept the perspective of another person also happened in the focus group discussion. For example, even after the facilitator told Mary that the graduate coordinator was a White female, Mary still said, ―I get male on both counts.‖ This showed Mary‗s refusal to analyze in terms of race, but instead continued to see things in terms of gender. This gives the impression that either Mary does not listen to others, or that she believes her ―mental models‖ (Senge, 1990) and her beliefs are right all the time—or both!

It is all speculation but what is known is the fact that for some reason, Mary would rather beat herself up about something that happened when she was young, rather than forgive herself and try to learn from it. Obviously, adopting a colorblind ideology has not moved her beyond that incident in a significant way because Mary is clearly afraid to say and do the wrong thing. All this said however, I believe Mary has challenges speaking up about things that hurt her because when the Assistant Principal blatantly insulted her in the incident she shared, Mary did not only stay silent, but she actually chuckled along with the woman who said it. As a woman who in the past, had difficulty speaking up, perhaps this is also a gendered response from Mary. But this would not be a surprise given the analysis I provided in Research Question 2 in which I

described Mary's colorblindness that was juxtaposed by her preoccupation with gender. Focusing on gender seemed to make Mary feel "safer" during the focus group discussion.

Speaking of colorblindness, Kate's critical incident in which she brought home her "first Black boyfriend" is very interesting. Again, Kate said,

> I remember when I had to look in the mirror….I grew up and I love my family to death but with a British/Scottish background. I remember I brought home my first Black boyfriend, my dad just about had a heart attack. And here's my dad who is a wonderful man but nothing had…that wasn't even in his mind thought that that was even a possibility and then I was talking about this boy and then I brought him home. My dad didn't freak out but he said, "oh"—that was his reaction….

As the dialogue indicates, Kate probably did not have a candid conversation about dating outside of her race with her father, which is why he was so startled when she brought home her Black boyfriend. Clearly, on some level, however, Kate's parents raised her to be "open" to people of color because otherwise, she would not have had Black friends, let alone Black boyfriends! However, in reference to her father's reaction, Helm's (1994) White Racial Identity Model, teachers us about this type of conflict within a person; it is not unusual and is indicative of the second schema-"Disintegration." The "disintegration" stage is characterized by a person believing that he is nonracist, but still not wanting his daughter (or son) to marry a minority group member (Sue, et. al, 1998).

This incident must have had an affect on Mary because she said, "I remember I had to look in the mirror." We are not sure what she saw when she looked in the mirror but clearly, the primary socialization she received from her father (or parents) became in conflict with her secondary socialization experience of dating a Black boy. Moreover, it is also interesting to note Kate's colorblind approach once again. As indicated in the dialogue she said, "I was talking about this boy and then I brought him home." Did it not occur to Kate to tell her father that her boyfriend was Black? Did Kate just believe it wasn't a big deal so she didn't mention it? Or did

Kate know that her father would react in that manner so she decided not to say anything about her boyfriend's race until they met? The answer is unknown but her failure to tell her father that her boyfriend was Black is an example of "ignoring race" just as she did in the demographic survey of this study in which she wrote "American" as her race. In response to Research Question 2, I provided a thorough analysis of Kate's avoidance of race and the use of the word "American" but I mention it here again to point out Kate's colorblind ideology that has surfaced twice in this study.

In conclusion, as indicated by my analysis of this research question, there are many factors that can influence the beliefs and reactions of educators to incidents related to race. However, given all of the above examples of participants who shared racial incidents that happened to them in childhood, it is no surprise that in adulthood, history "plays a significant part in how we come to construe the world in terms of different social categories." (Brown, 1995, p. 1). Our ultimate goal should be to eliminate incidents related to race whether in childhood or adulthood. However, as adult educators there are strategies we can employ to help us in dealing with incidents related to race and just the subject in general. These suggestions and recommendations are offered in this study's concluding chapter—Chapter 5, beginning on the next page.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the educator's expressed beliefs and reactions to race using critical incidents scenarios. The research questions guiding this study were (1) What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by educators of color? (2) What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by White educators? and (3) What factors inform expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race?

Summary of Findings

With the aforementioned purpose in mind, this qualitative study approached race from a psychosocial perspective and relied heavily on the work of Jack Mezirow, Stephen Brookfield and Gordon Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis, which asserts that if individuals from diverse groups are brought together under specific conditions, then this would facilitate dialogue and understanding across racial groups. Also, this study's methodology involved the critical analyses of racially salient critical incident scenarios (Collins & Pieterse, 2009) that included three core activities: (a) reactions to the scenarios, (b) discussion of scenarios; and (c) reflections on discussion.

Additionally, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used in this study to elucidate the permanence and influence of race in the United States (Bell, 1992), asserting that the world is racist and therefore, individuals in society cannot be free from its effects which include harboring negative racial beliefs about others. Therefore, Allport's Hypothesis was central to this study because it provided us the tools to address such a volatile subject as race. It taught us that

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although race has great power over our daily functions and basic perceptions of others, it is often ignored or minimally viewed as influential.

As was indicated in Chapter 4, data analysis showed that there were four identified expressed beliefs and reactions in response to Research Question 1 which asked: What expressed beliefs and reactions to the scenarios about race are revealed by educators of color? These beliefs and reactions include (a) White educators treat White students better than students of color; (b) being of color means you don't judge based on color; (c) our society is controlled by Whites who have all the power so be careful addressing incidents of racism and discrimination; and (d) White people are shocked when people of color speak proper English.

With respect to Research Question 2 which explored the expressed beliefs and reactions of White educators, it was revealed that the White educators (a) believed that people should always address and confront incidents of racism and discrimination; and (b) White people also experience racial discrimination. Moreover, the two major factors identified as informing the reactions of the educators to the scenarios about race were childhood critical incidents and family influence.

<div align="center">Conclusions and Discussion</div>

Four major conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study. First, educators of color have a keen awareness of how this society is structured and how stereotypes related to language and perceived abilities of students of color are used to marginalize students of color; Second, all educators, regardless of race, seem to face ―problems‖ when they are trying to fight systems of racism and oppression. Third, there is sometimes a ―disconnect‖ between what people say and what people do—hence Argyris and Shon's (1974) theory in action versus espoused theory. Finally, the findings emphasize the significance of not expecting all educators to have the

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same beliefs or reactions to incidents related to race simply because they all belong to the same profession. Nor can it be expected necessarily, that people of the same race will react in the same manner. This speaks to the importance of recognizing a person's positionality, rather than looking at a group and treating them like they are monolithic. In the next four sections, I will present a discussion of these conclusions in relation to the existing body of literature that was highlighted in Chapter Two of this study.

<div align="center">Discussion of Conclusion One: Limitless Limits</div>

This study has shown that people of color are very aware of how our society is structured and the invisible "racial hierarchy" (Helms, 1994) that exists with Black people usually at the bottom. The beliefs expressed by the educators of color are consistent with the paraphrased words of Shirley, Chisholm, who said, "Racism is not only universal, widespread and deep-seated in America, but it is also invisible because it is normal." The educators of color outrightly stated that "Whether we like it or not, Whites are in control and they run the world." The implication of this statement is that even in their profession of adult education, the educators of color, to some degree, must believe that their White colleagues have power over them too. This would not be an unusual belief since Singleton and Linton (2005) talk about the education system being typically run by White administrators who make all the decisions, who are in charge and who more than likely, evaluate educators of color. Moreover, the educators of color also said the presence of race, as a factor influencing educational practice, also leads students of color to be treated unfairly by their White colleagues. This manifests itself in students of color being graded unfairly, having their intelligence and capabilities underestimated and by the surprise that some educators express when students of color speak proper English. These are all expressed beliefs of the educators of color in this study. This mistreatment of students of color is

consistent with studies conducted by Lund (2005) and Johnson-Bailey, Cervero, Valentine and

Bowles (2006) who researched the experiences of Black graduate students in higher education.

The educators of color were clearly aware of the system, how it functions, and

interestingly, their "role" in it. When the statement was made and agreed upon by the educators

of color that "Whether we like it or not, they [Whites] run the world," this statement is indicative

of a level of "acceptance" among the educators of color. This is the "collusion" with the system

to keep it normal, which Taylor (1998) insists all people do.

This level of acceptance among the educators of color regarding the "structure" of our

society is probably why the educators of color also believed that it was important to be careful

when addressing incidents of racism and discrimination when they occur. Since skin color in this

country is tied to rewards and punishment (Helms, 1994), the educators believed that people of

color should weigh their options before addressing an incident of discrimination or racism

because it could be pretty costly if they step over their limits. This point is an excellent entry

point to the second conclusion of this study that discusses the idea that all educators experience

problems when they try to challenge or change the system.

Discussion of Conclusion Two: Challenges of Challenging the System

As described above, the educators of color were very clear about the limits they felt

regarding their ability to address or complain about incidents of racism or discrimination when

they occurred. Similarly and interestingly, even though racism functions not only through overt,

conscious prejudice and discrimination, but through unconscious attitudes and behaviors that

presume a pervasive White norm (Bell, 1997), the White educators in this study still suggested

that they too have experienced racism. In the last Chapter (4) when I reported the findings, I

described the impossibility for White people to experience racism because of the historical

legacy of race relations and slavery in this country. Instead, I illustrated the point that White individuals can experience discrimination because of race but they cannot experience racism because it involves ―institutional policies and practices that result in the unjustified negative treatment and subordination of members of racial or ethnic groups" (Pine & Hillard, 1990). Racism was ―designed" for people of color; not White individuals who have the benefit of many White privileges in society as described by McIntosh (1989). The White educators did not seem to understand ―institutional racism" (Jones, 1997) to the same degree that the educators of color did.

All this said however, the White educators in this study had legitimate, hurtful experiences with discrimination that should be discussed. Just as it was reported in Manglitz's (2003) study, White educators who are committed to fighting racism and oppression also experience backlash for opposing the system. This is what we suspect happened with the White educators in this study. Evidently, there are inherent challenges for anyone who is trying to ―change" the system and make things good for all people. But I would also like to point out a discrepancy between George and Mary's actions versus what they said they would do when incidents of discrimination or racism occur. This concept is discussed in the next section.

Discussion of Conclusion Three: Doing and Saying Are Two Different Things

As indicated in the findings in Chapter 4, it was revealed that George and Mary chose not to file complaints even though they both felt they experienced discrimination. This is important to note since all of the White educators agreed that you have to address and confront incidents of racism and discrimination when they happen—hence one of the overall themes identified in relation to Research Question 2. Again, this lack of congruity between what the educators did and what they ―espoused" is an example of Agyris and Shon's (1974) work. We all have taken-

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for-granted beliefs in our heads (Mezirow, 2003) and mental models (Senge, 1990) that influence what we say and do. However, as Agyris (1980) asserts, a very small number of people even realize how their actions are not in line with their words. Another example of this is Clare in Focus Group One who said that race would not be a factor in a situation involving a person of color because he/she ―knows better.‖ But in that very same conversation, Clare, who is a ―West Indian‖ Black woman, made disparaging comments and judgments about African American ―Blacks‖ whom she said, among other things, felt they were superior. It was obvious that Clare did not realize she contradicted herself in the focus group discussion.

<center>Discussion of Conclusion Four: Positionality & Blurring Our Categories</center>

We have also learned from the findings in this study that we cannot necessarily predict what types of beliefs or reactions people will have simply because of how they look or what skin color they may have. For example, if we think back to Clare‘s comments about African Americans, on the surface it would appear that the only difference between herself and an African American would be probably gender or age, but because of her culture, Clare thought differently. Therefore, even beyond the intersections of race, class and gender, as Andersen and Collins (2007) and Martine and Gunten (2002) say are core parts of a person‘s identity and cannot be separated, there are other factors like culture that also influence a person‘s thinking and behavior. Nonetheless, the factors that can make us view others are endless. This is why I like to add one more descriptor to Martine and Gunten‘s assertion that we are all raced, classed and gendered. To add one more descriptor, I like to say we are all raced, classed, gendered and biased because from a psychosocial perspective, there are any number of taken-for-granted assumptions (Mezirow, 2003) or mental models (Senge, 1990) we draw from that can influence how we view and react to others.

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Additionally, we also have to be open to the idea that these assumptions and mental models we have could be wrong. This approach is congruent with Daloz (1988) who insists that we must get out of our "tribal thinking" and recognize that there are any number of "tribes" that exist in our society—all of which believe their thinking is correct. Therefore, just as Argyris (1991) so eloquently analogizes our thinking to a thermostat, we should not just let our temperatures automatically be set to 68 degrees; we must ask "why" our temperatures are set to 68 degrees. This is the distinction Argyris makes between single loop learning (the automatic) and double loop learning (questioning).

Conclusion Summary

It is clear from the findings of this study that Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis served as an invaluable tool to help facilitate the open discussions about the expressed beliefs and reactions of educators to incidents related to race. These conversations are important to have since Critical Race Theory (CRT) asserts that the world is racist and to some degree, we all play a role in perpetuating racial inequality in society. Therefore, since none of us is exempt from participating in or experiencing incidents related to race, this study is important because it teaches us why we respond to people and situations in the way that we do; and we have also learned how to engage in critical reflection in order to become more aware of our beliefs and assumptions that inform our actions. Moreover, we have also learned from this study that not all people respond to the same situations in the same manner—hence the concept of positionality and also the very different reactions of the educators of color versus the White educators. From the data analysis, it can be concluded that this study's purpose was accomplished since we learned the expressed beliefs and reactions of the educators to the incidents related to race; as well as the factors that informed their responses to the scenarios.

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Implications for Practice

Conversations about race continue to be disregarded in our wider society but this does not have to be the case in our profession of education. As educators in K-12 schools and in higher education—and especially in the adult education classroom where equity and social justice are presented as core missions of the curriculum—these conversations about race must take place in order to raise our collective consciousness about how race can influence our assumptions and our pedagogy. This is especially necessary among teacher candidates who by majority, are White females often from rural areas, and with minimal experiences and exposure to people of color; and yet, are charged with the challenge of teaching in urban settings. This lack of preparation is perhaps one of the major reasons why new teachers often drop out of the profession very early in their careers; and it is also the explanation for why I have personally seen veteran teachers struggle with changing demographics in their schools, and consequently, are forced to leave the classroom even before retirement.

Moreover, as we have found from this research, White educators and educators of color can come together and discuss race under the collective title as ―educators,‖ rather than coming to the table as members of ―different‖ racial groups. Race discussions as professional development opportunities for educators are seldom; but when they do happen, they should not take place as though race is an entity that exists outside of ourselves and therefore, analyzed from a distance. Instead, the ability to make assumptions based on race should be openly discussed as an existing deficit we all have that can negatively influence how we treat people who do not look like us. It is especially important for all educators, regardless of race, to recognize and understand that their racial assumptions and beliefs could be negatively impacting their grading, expectations, and general approach to students of color without even realizing.

One key element that helped with the facilitation of the two focus groups in this study was the presentation of race as an inevitable part of our lives and our thinking as human beings. For example, sharing my critical incident in which I unfairly made assumptions about a Black boy who was Black like me—helped the educators feel comfortable enough to also share their assumptions. Furthermore, my experience demonstrated to the educators that it is possible to unconsciously make assumptions about someone even though you consciously know better.

This study is representative of how such conversations can take place among diverse groups of educators, encouraging them to explore their personal beliefs and reactions to incidents related to race. These conversations can take place in the context of professional development opportunities outside of the traditional classroom setting (as this study represents); or as previously suggested, these conversations should also be mandatory in teacher preparation programs. But creating these opportunities and the right ―contexts" for these discussions is easier said than done.

In order to have open, genuine, and ―safe" discussions about race in classrooms requires the strong leadership and healthy attitudes of educators who are comfortable with the issue of race. Just as educators familiarize themselves with curriculum related to other subject areas—and also determine best practices for how to convey the information, this same diligence should be applied to the subject of race. In fact, as we have seen from this study, regardless of the subject matters taught, all of the educators demonstrated that race was an issue that inevitably played a role in their professions—whether it was discussed openly or not.

Therefore, simply because of our forever changing demographics in this society that are increasingly becoming more and more racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse, I believe all educators, whether pre-service or practicing, and regardless of academic discipline, or even the

level of education taught, should be required to take courses on race that deal explicitly with the issue. Furthermore, just as technology, for example, is identified as one of the latest trends impacting our profession and therefore, has required us as educators to respond to the trend by learning more about the area and its impact, changing racial and cultural demographics at all levels of education is also a zeitgeist that needs to be responded to with the same zeal.

Implications for Adult Educators and Trainers of Race

Teaching adults how to fight racism and become social justice oriented is not a task to be taken lightly. As we have learned from the expressed beliefs and reactions of the educators in this study, people of color believe they can face dire consequences if they speak up against incidents of racism and discrimination; and White educators who make the commitment to fight racism and are very vocal, may be ostracized for going against the status quo, as was the case with George and Kate.

Therefore, the lessons learned from this study are instructive for any educator or student who ventures into this work because it gives a clear picture of the types of experiences one may receive. However, despite the fact that both Whites and people of color can both get backlash for speaking up, it is also important to note that the potential consequences for the educators of color are not the same as the potential consequences that a White educator may receive. This is true because of the existence of systemic and institutionalized racism that is always in favor of Whites and leads to perpetual unequal treatment among racial groups (Jones, 1997). Additionally, because of skin privilege, the fundamental difference between a White educator and an educator of color is that at any point a White person can choose not to fight the system, whereas people of color, whether they choose to fight or not, still end up experiencing mistreatment.

I don't want to give the impression of insensitivity or invalidation of the efforts of some White educators who elect to take this risk because it is a courageous journey for a White person to go in pursuit of a healthy racial identity by abandoning racist ideology and developing a nonracist White identity (Helms, 1994; Sue, et. al, 1998). It is just important not to look at individual actions of people separately from the "system" that inevitably maintains inequality despite our efforts.

Another important point when teaching and learning in this area is to try and be as open, honest and authentic as possible. We learned from this study that people are "defended subjects" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2002) who do what is necessary to maintain a certain image or identity, but this approach to dialogue is not particularly helpful when it comes to discussions about race. As previously stated, engaging in discussions about race does not normally happen in education (Singleton & Linton, 2005), so when the opportunity presents itself, we must be as "real" as possible. We should tell the truth and not profess to be colorblind in order avoid the truth (Forman, 2004).

Furthermore, another way to be "real" is to make sure that what we say and what we do are congruent. This is a challenge, just as Argyris and Shon (1974) have pointed out but this is where the importance of learning to become a "critically reflective practitioner" (Brookfield, 1995) comes in. Mezirow (1995) says that learning to become critically reflective of our thoughts and actions is an "adult" learning activity so we can all benefit from practicing the art of questioning things for ourselves. The more that we learn to do this as adults, the closer we will get to making our words and our deeds one in the same.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was limited to two small focus groups with practicing educators who resided in the southeastern and northeastern United States. As such, these findings are limited to the types of beliefs and reactions educators in these regions and therefore, cannot necessarily be representative of all educators across the United States. However, it would be interesting to also conduct this study with a sample of educators from the Northwestern and Southwestern United States.

This study can be replicated using prospective teachers in teacher preparation programs as the sample population in order to learn their assumptions about race (if any), prior to their entry into the profession. Such a study can be done regionally, as was done in this study, or at the national level using multiple focus groups with educators selected from across the U.S. Additionally, this study would also be interesting to conduct in other countries like Canada, where the researcher is from—especially since she has also experienced incidents of racism in the Canadian education system.

The educators who participated in this study were from many different professional fields such as K-12 education, law, social work, and healthcare; and yet they all had their own ideas about race. As a result, it would be enlightening to replicate this study using participants from the same profession—i.e., all nurses, or all lawyers, etc., to see what types of assumptions about race are revealed—especially with respect to each groups' professional practice.

Further, it is also important to acknowledge that the participants who participated in this study, did so on a voluntary basis. This point, coupled with the fact that the researcher faced great resistance from some educators who declined to participate in the study, suggests that the participants in this study had some semblance of ―readiness" to have such conversations about race. Therefore, it would be instructive to replicate this study with individuals who are not

readily open to having such conversations; or even with individuals who adamantly believe that race is not a factor in their beliefs and reactions.

Furthermore, even though the sample population of educators for this study included individuals who were self-identified as African American (1), American (1), West Indian (2), East Indian (1), White (1), and Italian (1), it is also important to include other ―races‖ in these conversations like Native Americans, Asians, Middle Easterners, Africans, and individuals from other European countries. Moreover, even though this study was based on a small sample of educators from diverse racial backgrounds and from diverse professional areas, we cannot generalize the results beyond the educators who participated in this study. In order to investigate the existence of these findings on a more general level among educators across specific States or across the United States, it is recommended that this study be undertaken using a much larger sample population.

<div align="center">Concluding Comments and Personal Reflections</div>

Undertaking this study was an ironic process because the very subject matter that I investigated was what I experienced during my university years. On one hand, at times I was assumed to be unintelligent and incapable because of my race. On the other hand, I had my integrity questioned and was accused of plagiarism (indirectly) for writing sentences too well in my essays and for not referencing the authors I supposedly copied. I am grateful that the professors for my Ph.D. studies never once questioned my abilities, my intelligence, or my integrity.

As my personal experiences and this study‗s findings indicate, unfortunately, some students of color experience unfair treatment at the hands of educators at all levels of education. Even at the highest level of education possible, at the doctoral level where professors with

Ph. D's are revered and often considered infallible and ―all-knowing,‖ they too have been found to have beliefs and reactions based on race. Therefore, it is important for educators at all levels of education to explore their personal beliefs and reactions about race. Hopefully, they can develop an awareness that will help them recognize when they are singling out or treating a student of color unfairly or differently because of race. In conclusion, this study is one example of how educators can learn how to become more aware of their beliefs that may be negatively affecting their pedagogy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "EXPLORING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT RACE AMONG EDUCATORS" by Dionne Wright Poulton from the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy at the University of Georgia (770-978-8245) under the direction of Dr. Janette Hill, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy, The University of Georgia (706-542-4035). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.
The reason for this study is to explore the responses of educators as they engage in critical reflections on assumptions about race and racism in education. Two focus group discussions, each consisting of 4-5 individuals (men and women) will participate in this study. Specifically, the study will address the following research questions:
What assumptions about race are revealed by educators?
What knowledge about racial assumptions is articulated by educators?

Humankind may benefit from this study because it addresses an issue that affects all of us regardless of our racial backgrounds. It is invaluable because it not only identifies theory related to out assumptions about race but this study is also linked to practice, affording practical strategies to participants on how to deal with race.
I will not benefit directly from this research and minimal discomforts or stresses such as addressing the unknown and volunteering my personal opinions about race are expected. I understand that if some participants chosen for the study are from my same institution, social relationships may be potentially damaged. Since Race discussions are sensitive in nature, and I will be asked to share my personal experiences with Race and racism, there is a possibility that I will feel discomfort. However, since I am voluntarily choosing to attend a discussion on Race, I might anticipate this discomfort. The facilitator will set ground rules for discussions and will foster an atmosphere of openness and honesty while participants engage in dialogue. In addition, at any point during the study, participants are permitted (without penalty) to skip any questions that make them uncomfortable.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1) Participate in one of two focus group discussions with up to 4 other participants, which will last about 2 ½ hours. The focus group discussions will be audio-taped and will consist of the analyses and discussions around three different critical incident scenarios. The audiotape of the discussions will be transcribed verbatim and will be analyzed by the researcher after the focus group session. I may be contacted by the researcher via email and/or telephone and asked to clarify points or provide input on themes that arise from the research. This follow-up activity is estimated to take approximately one hour.
2) At the end of the focus group, I will have the option to talk about the experience of participating in the focus group.
3) I will also be asked to participate in a review of the collected data for accuracy.
4) I will be given a small token of appreciation- a $5.00 gift card for participating in this study. If I choose to stop participating in the study before it ends, i will still receive the $5.00 gift card for my participation.

I understand that the data collected in this study will be kept confidential and my identity will not be revealed to anyone other than the researcher. No individually identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my prior written permission. The link between the participants' names and the data will be destroyed after the conclusion of the study. Even though the investigator will emphasize to all participants that comments made during the focus group session should be kept confidential, it is possible that participants may repeat comments outside of the group at some time in the future. I will have an opportunity to choose a pseudonym to be used for research purposes. All audiotapes, transcripts, and written documents will be kept in a locked file cabinet and only the researcher and Dr. Janette R. Hill, the major professor of the researcher, will have access to these materials. The audiotapes will be handled and transcribed only by the researcher. For future research on the subject of exploring racial biases among educators, the audio files and transcripts will be kept for up to 5 years after the study's completion and then they will be destroyed by the researcher.

University of Georgia
Institutional Review Board
Approved 8-3-10
Expires: 8-2-11

Appendix A, p. 2

The researcher, Dionne Wright Poulton, will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by phone at (770) 978-8245 or via email at dpoulton@uga.edu.
I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Dionne Wright Poulton
_____

Name of Researcher   *Signature*   *Date*

(770) 978-8245   dpoulton@uga.edu

Telephone   Email

_____   _____

Name of Participant   Signature   Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

University of Georgia
Institutional Review Board
Approved:_____8 - 3 -10____
Expires:_____8 - 2 -11____

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Appendix B

Exploring Assumptions About Race Among Educators
Participant Demographic Survey
Dionne Wright Poulton
The University of Georgia
404-323-3842
Dpoulton@uga.edu

1. In what year were you born? _____

2. What is your Gender?   _____

3. What is your Race/Ethnicity?

   _____

4. What is your Job title? _____

5. What is your school level?

   _____

6. How long have you been teaching?

   _____

7. Do you deal with Race issues in your job? If so, please briefly explain.

Appendix C

Guidelines for Discussion

1. Remember that everyone has their own experiences that shape their beliefs and that make them who they are. Therefore, try and suspend judgments.

2. Discuss the issues, not the people.

3. Respect each other by not interrupting, criticizing, or putting others down.

4. Be aware of your emotions and commit to communication even when discussions get challenging.

5. Be aware of your body language—it is another form of communication.

6. Be open and honest with yourself and with others.

7. When engaging in dialogue—Listen: Apply the ―Edge of the Seat Test" (Bierema, 2003).

   The Edge of the Seat Test: When you are poised (either physically or mentally) on the edge of your seat waiting for the speaker to either take a breath or stop talking so you can insert ―superior" point of view, that means YOU ARE NOT LISTENING! Sit back, take a deep breath and listen. Get off the edge of your seat! (Excerpt taken from Dr. Laura Bierema's *Dialogue Primer*, 2003, p. 9)

Appendix D

Cue Card Example

1. Please describe ONE situation or incident that occurred in your life in which you were the "culprit" or the offender.

2. Please describe ONE situation or incident that occurred in your life in which you were the "victim" or the offended.

Appendix E

Exploring Assumptions About Race Among Educators

(Scenario #1)

In her first semester as a doctoral student at a Research 1 institution, a student received her first grade from a paper she completed for an assignment in which she had to write a paper. Upon receipt of her surprising grade of ―C,‖ the student requested a meeting with the professor to discuss why she earned such a poor grade. In the meeting, the professor opened the conversation by stating, ―As a Master‗s student, you will eventually learn how to write.‖ However, the professor was visibly surprised and embarrassed when the student informed the professor that she was a doctoral student and not a Master‗s student since she had earned her Master‗s degree four years prior to entering the PhD program. After a pleasant conversation in which the professor asked the student several questions regarding her background, the professor stated a willingness to look at the paper again and would place it in the student‗s box. To the student‗s surprise, her grade had been elevated to an ―A.‖

Please answer the following questions:
1. What is the Professor‗s race?

2. What is the Student‗s race?

3. Why did the Professor assume the student was a Master‗s student? What motivated the Professor to subsequently change the student‗s grade?

Appendix F

Description of Critical Incident Scenario 1

The real identities of the doctoral student and the professor are Black female and White female respectively. During the conversation between the student and professor, the professor asked a series of back-to-back questions of the student, including where did the she earn her Master's Degree? Where was her family from? Where does she live and what brought her to Georgia? And finally, where did her husband work and what did he do? The conversation lasted for approximately 20 minutes and only 1-2 minutes was devoted to the paper. When the student later retrieved her essay from her box, the paper was virtually unchanged except for the grade.

Description of Critical Incident Scenario 2

The real identities of the Graduate Director and the prospective student are White female and Black female respectively. Once realizing that the prospective student was Black, the Director in this scenario, promptly redirected the student to another program for ―minority‖ students at another university after making the student wait 20 to 30 minutes outside her office despite a set appointment time. Then, to add insult to injury, the Graduate Director wrote the number for the other program on a piece of paper and boldly told the student that when she called the number for the ―minority program‖ that she should be sure to mention that she (the student) was Black because she sounded White over the phone! The student was very upset about the situation but decided (against the suggestions of many) not to take action against the Director.

Description of Critical Incident Scenario 3

The real identities of Student X and Student Y are African American male and Black female respectively. After Student X made his comment about the owner not being like other ―Chinese, White people or West Indians…,‖ Student Y then replied, ―I‗m a West Indian.‖ Student X was visibly startled and embarrassed when Student Y shared her Caribbean background. Not overly offended, in order to ―lighten‖ the conversation, Student Y abruptly changed the conversation and the group had a good time eating lunch. Later on in the classroom after lunch, Student X approached Student Y and started to shower her with compliments about how well she carried herself and how much he admired her style. The conversation continued as a pleasant dialogue in which Student Y learned that Student X was born and raised in the South, was married, and had never traveled outside of Georgia in his life.

Exploring Assumptions About Race Among Educators
(Scenario #2)

A prospective doctoral student makes contact over the phone with the Graduate Director of a program in which the she is interested. Upon hearing the doctoral candidate's area of research interest, the Graduate Director is very interested and excitedly invites the student for a meeting the following week. However, upon meeting the candidate, the Graduate Director immediately decides that there is a ―better‖ program for the student to explore and abruptly ends the meeting before it even starts.

Please answer the following questions:
1. What is the Graduate Director's race?

2. What is the student's race?

3. What motivated the Graduate Director to decide the program was no longer a good fit for the student?

Appendix H

Exploring Assumptions About Race Among Educators
(Scenario #3)

A group of students in a 3-day continuing education class decided to go for lunch at a Chinese restaurant that was suggested by ―Student X‖ who is a regular patron. After the owner of the restaurant greeted the students and left the table, ―Student Y‖ said to ―Student X,‖ ―The owner is a nice guy.‖ Student X then replied, ―Yes, he is a nice guy even though he is the owner. He is not like other Chinese, White people or West Indians who think they are better than everyone else.‖

Please answer the following questions:
1. What is Student X's race?

2. What is Student Y's race?

3. What do you think motivated Student X to respond as he did?

Appendix I

Researcher's "Culprit" Critical Incident

I once volunteered as a tutor at an elementary after school program in an inner city located in Oakland, California. On that day I was helping a young black boy with his homework and after a short period of time, I literally caught myself being surprised when he correctly answered my questions. It was an embarrassing moment for me because of that epiphany; not only did I realize that I had judged him unfairly but I also realized that I had assumptions about people in my own race! I felt remorseful as a Black woman who had previously experienced such judgment. Also, as a former special education teacher who saw a disproportionate number of black boys being relegated unfairly to special education classes, I should have been more cognizant of my level of expectations since I had seen firsthand, how low expectations of teachers could translate into low achievement levels of black students.

That experience taught me that I had some unconscious assumptions that influenced my approach to the student even when I consciously knew better. It also demonstrated just how much our unconscious beliefs can affect our behavior. Even though I was the designated ―teacher‖ in the situation, I actually ended up being the learner. I truly had a moment of transformational learning; I came to the realization that we all have assumptions that we cannot get away from in our society. However, what we can do is decide not to act on our assumptions and treat people negatively or differently, based on our pre-conceived notions.

Appendix J

Debriefing Session Text

When it was necessary to contact a participant to clarify a point made during the focus group discussion I asked any of the following:

Clarifying Questions:

1. "Can you please tell me more about your comment regarding…"

2. "Can you please explain what you meant by…"

3. "Can you please tell me something else about…"

When seeking input from participants regarding any themes that have developed as a result of the research, I may ask the following:

Verifying Questions:

1. Please tell me your opinion about the theme(s) that have been developed as a result of the focus group discussion. Are they accurate depictions of the conversation?

2. Is there anything you would add or delete with respect to the themes I have shared with you?

Appendix K

Call for Participants

Hello:

My name is Dionne Wright Poulton and I am a doctoral student at The University of Georgia. The title of my Ph.D. dissertation is called ―Exploring Assumptions About Race Among Educators."

I am looking for approximately 8-10 Adult Educators who are willing to volunteer their time and participate in a focus group discussion around race. Regardless of race, cultural background, nationality, gender, etc…, all are welcome to participate. The discussion will last approximately two and a half hours and participants will be given a token of my appreciation at the end of the focus group discussion. Participants will be asked to review the data collected to check for accuracy.

If you are interested, please give me a call at 404-323-3842 or send me an email at dpoulton@uga.edu.

Please feel free and contact me with any questions. I look forward to hearing from you!

Dionne Poulton