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The purpose of this dissertation is to capture and explore the existence of white privilege in K-12 schools through the perspective of minority educators. Further, my hope is to engage educators of all kind to begin conversations about white privilege in the schools; to deconstruct whiteness and its impact on education. This research brings forth voices of minority educators to shed light on conversations around race, whiteness and power in education. Today's educators must critically examine race and whiteness in order to break down barriers for children of color and create spaces where critical race consciousness is developed among students, parents, teachers and administrators. Not talking about race simply ignores it. By ignoring it, we are allowing systems of privilege to narrow mindedly influence education for us all.

At the center of this dissertation lies a critical race theory foundation that calls one to challenge the experiences of whites as the normative standard. The null voices of minority educators are no longer acceptable within a critical race theory lens. Using narrative research design and semi structured interview questions, I was able to describe the experiences around white privilege from six minority educators. Dominant and emerging themes emerged including: Power Advantage, Exclusivity, Cultural Differences, Colorblind Ideology, Lack of Awareness or Understanding, Intentionality and Relationships.

A STUDY OF WHITE PRIVILEGE IN K-12 SCHOOLS:

MINORITY TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

by

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Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother

Doris Pope Thompson

who always taught me to be kind, love others,
and to be the change you want to see in the world

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Kristen Pope Thompson Christman, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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PREFACE

A Personal History of White Privilege

I grew up with too much stuff and not enough substance. My life has been covered by a shadow of guilt, naivety and concern I have felt for having so much. I have always felt like even though I had so much, my experiences never taught me enough about "the other." Looking back on my childhood I can remember awkward situations I would be in when race and class would be clearly present and I would feel a tension inside me as if I was embarrassed, yet somewhat proud, of what my family had. I never recognized that many of those first conversations and awkward situations were among minorities. I remember being so happy when the black boys from my elementary school would think I was cool- I loved that; it was as if their acceptance of me made me feel more normal, yet I realized that they thought I was cool because I invited them to my birthday parties that involved riding to the country club in a limousine for a pool party. I soon recognized that their acceptance of me wasn't genuine- I was the rich white girl who invited them to parties, but I didn't really know them. What I had was entertaining to others. Many times I felt gawked at when I was talking about what I had done for the summer or what kind of car I was going to get when I was 16. The things that surrounded me growing up were just things. Relationships seemed superficial and you always "dressed to impress" for whatever reason I never understood. Your name said a lot about your family and that was going to help me go places, as my father said.

I was always taught through clear and subliminal messages that blacks and other minorities weren't equal to whites. The messages I received as I grew up were to be a little afraid of blacks and Hispanics. They made my grandmother nervous and since she is who I would I spent a lot of time with, I too learned to be a bit afraid of what I didn't know or understand. It's difficult to say that my family was racist. I would like to say they were just uninformed about their privileges and how that has an impact on their language and understanding of the world, but I recognize that if I don't name it as racism I cannot problematize my past. I went to private schools after my elementary school and there were 2-3 black students there- one of which was my best friends (Her mother, who was really her grandmother, was my father's Nanny growing up). They were always thought of as "top-notch" by my parents. That now says to me that they were different than other blacks. I knew that back then and see those messages more clearly now. I was accepted by them and while I accepted them, there was a clear division between who my family was and who they were. They were "nice and wonderful people" I used to hear… as opposed to what? I never questioned the thinking or the comments. I remember meeting my now husband and I was afraid to tell my grandmother that he didn't have a college education and was a fireman; although the fireman part I thought she would respect and she did. It was clear that as long as he wasn't black, Hispanic, or any other non- approved minority group he was going to be pretty good. I knew the fact that he was a preacher's son would be my saving grace to compensate for him choosing a 2 year degree vs. a four year degree, which was clearly expected of me.

I never knew how to speak up or consider the other side of white privilege because our privilege was never problematized among us. We went about our privileged lives never thinking about others who weren't given the same opportunities as us or considering how society has perpetuated class divisions. My grandmother had a huge heart for helping others and that always came in the form of donations: monetary donations. She actually had a large black book of all the charities she gave to on a consistent basis. While I will be forever impressed by her gratitude and kindness, I recognize that there has to be another way to help in order to understand the reasoning behind the need for such help. I believe there is so much education to be found in looking at the history of things that we might have been able to talk about the reasons of organization for many of the groups she gave to, rather than thinking on the surface of "give money and all is well." I never found my voice in speaking about white privilege until I entered my graduate program.

I have never known enough about what to me seems to be "real life experiences" i.e. struggling to pay bills, having a family member leave or be imprisoned, having to work for my first car, gas, college; the list goes on and on. It wasn't until 2003 that I was impacted by a dramatic life change. My family's house was listed in the foreclosure section of the paper and no one but my father knew this was coming. My mother denies it all and blames him for "losing everything." They are now divorced. I might say I lost "things" but I began to gain substance as I was forced to reconcile the economic privileges I grew up with that was now gone. It's been a hell of a ride, but I have to say that this event has given me an opportunity to see life fully, to see life as something worth

fighting for and something to appreciate. It's not about you vs. me; it's about the journey that takes us to constant learning and better understanding. I have lived a life of privilege and while I am now able to appreciate the opportunities I was given, I still struggle with my story and appreciating who I am as a white middle class female. With privilege; however, comes a sense of emptiness when there aren't critical conversations about the reality outside of privilege. There is so much denial with privilege it's sickening and paralyzing if you do nothing.

I am privileged now to recognize the education I received in and out of the classroom to be one of hegemonic/white Anglo-Saxon protestant thinking. It was an education for and about the privileged class. The black students and other minority students were simply meeting a quota of diversity and a slim one at that.

I enrolled in Westchester Academy for kindergarten and began to notice that everyone in the class was at least 6 years old. I was five years old, the typical age of a kindergartener. My mother told me that all the other children had been held back a year so as to explain their age. There was of course more to the story. Typically, students at Westchester attended a local church pre-kindergarten in order to prepare them to be more competitive in their upcoming academic years. I already felt out of place because all the kids knew each other and attended pre-kindergarten together. The whole idea of intelligence manifested through my early years at Westchester. The Sylvan Learning Center, private tutoring and IQ testing were part of the norm. It's seems absurd to look back on the amount of attention that was paid to these things, but the attention was not seemingly for academic achievement alone, but for competitiveness and rank.

Soon after filtering into the Westchester "scene" I remember going to a child psychologist to test my IQ. I remember playing games and answering somewhat awkward questions so as to prove that I was "just as smart as the other kids." I don't remember much about the reasoning behind it all except for what I can now make of it; it seemed that the priority to learning was intelligence. Intelligence takes on a completely new meaning for me now, but does not escape the branding it left on my self-confidence.

Life is not a score, a rank or a label, but society reveals the opposite. We still live in a society where the ideas of efficiency and modernism prevail. A society that claims to support and revere diversity but clearly doesn't see others as equal through systems of ranking and labeling groups that continue to be branded as the problem. It has hardly been fifty years since integration and a hundred since the rise of the IQ test. As different groups (e.g., African Americans, the New Woman, homosexuals and adolescents) began to be polarized by the "normalized bourgeois" as a problem to society, there had to be a solution to make everyone normal, to change individuals, to change families, to change thinking and all of this primarily took place through schooling (Lesko, 2001). We still live in a place where some schools are primarily black and some are white. In my experience going to a private school with 500 students enrolled, and only two were black. One was an athlete who was recruited to come and play at our school, while the other was from a family that was financially able to send her there. Can we possibly attest to living in a world where things have changed and diversity is embraced and everyone is given fair treatment and equal opportunity? We will always find a way to keep people out; out

of a system that preaches fairness and practices injustice. Just as segregation was used to preserve and maintain order so was the use of the standardized test.

While to be brutally honest with my above introduction, I must say that somewhere along the way I have become a caring, compassionate, loving, open-minded, analytical, and genuine person and educator. My grandmother had lots to do with that and for that I am grateful. I care that I now have an opportunity to really learn about white privilege and do something with that knowledge. I have always been taught to help others and to give back and for that lesson I am grateful. It is probably out of that lesson that I find my curiosity in each individual's story and the history that makes them who they are. I have a lot to learn in terms of the meaning of white privilege and how it impacts me and others. My goal in this research was to interview people of color who have been silenced and taken for granted in education research (Dillard, 2000; Stanfiled, 1995). My need to understand the inequities produced through racism and classism is just the beginning of my life's work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Whiteness studies, critical race theory, and critical multiculturalism call us to go head-to-head with one's whiteness and are all critical to decentering whiteness. Theories about whiteness problematize the un-naming of it and call us to decenter whiteness from its throne. Akom (2008) calls the work of many whiteness scholars "second-wave whiteness" (p. 251), which examines how whiteness and white supremacy frame and rework racial categories, hierarchies, and boundaries. In addition to whiteness studies, critical multiculturalism reframes multiculturalism to include a critical analysis of whiteness (Nylund, 2006). Through critical multiculturalism we are acknowledging whiteness as a race and in turn a vital piece of multicultural education. Recentering whiteness is not about overlooking whiteness or taking it out of the picture, but rather looking through whiteness. Systematic and institutionalized racism is created by the continued perpetuation of whiteness and white privilege. The struggle of being white and deconstructing whiteness is wanting to avoid and or deny the privileges we have because we are white. We want to think we deserve them, we have earned them fair and square, but instead the study of whiteness calls us to look at the historical construction of whiteness and white privilege. The study of whiteness calls us to think about the ways the benefits of whiteness permeate our lives. My privileges have been passed down to me,

never considering who got “passed” on the way. Jensen (2005) reflects an active stance when he states,

> Shouldn’t we be trying to take the focus off of white people, who dominate society and can so easily drown out the voices of non-white people? Of course we should; as white people we need to realize we are not the point of reference for everything. White is not, by definition, the norm, the standard, the best. (p. 2)

I would argue that “white” should be the focus. We should step back and look at what whiteness has created for ourselves and taken away from others. Whiteness needs to be looked at from a critical lens and not through the lens of current history textbooks that read the same year after year, propping up whiteness as normal; instead, let us talk about the history of how white came to be, whiteness as property, and of the sacrifices nonwhites made and the bulldozing effect white power has had on various cultures attempting to establish themselves with no success (Smith, 2007). In addition, Fine (2004) continues her concern around the crisis of whiteness by stating,

> I worry that by keeping our eyes on those who gather disadvantage, we have failed to notice the micropractices by which White youth, varied by class and gender, stuff their academic and social pickup trucks with goodies not otherwise available to people of color. (p. 245)

As long as we don’t focus on whiteness, we are supporting the ways in which systematic and institutionalized racism exists to support whites and keep out minorities. While critiquing domination and oppression are important aspects of deconstructing whiteness and incorporating critical multiculturalism, it’s important to provide avenues

for whiteness to have the potential to be an integral part of social justice education. Rodriguez (2000) states,

> By highlighting the necessary tension between understanding whiteness as oppression as well as thinking through its potentiality, such a dialectical approach to the study of whiteness pushes the boundaries of multicultural education not only by bringing whiteness inside multicultural education for critical analysis, but also by thinking through its potential as a progressive racial identity linked to a broader democratic project. (p. 15)

It "is the necessity not to abolish whiteness but instead to rearticulate it" (p. 2). If we talk in terms of abolishing whiteness we are advocating that we ignore it and conveniently pass over history and how it continues to live on. Critical whiteness studies, critical race theory, and critical multiculturalism all critique power structures, a system of hierarchical ordering constructed by whiteness, an exclusionary history, and a lack of minority voice. All of these things are foundational in abolishing systems and institutions that continue to oppress minorities and lift up whites.

The goal of this research is to develop a deeper understanding of white privilege within education through the perspective of six K-12 minority educators. Conducting narrative research lends itself well to this study as it reflects on individuals' common or shared experiences (Creswell, 2007). The strength of a qualitative research approach is the focus it has on people or situations and words rather than number (Maxwell, 2005). Furthermore, Moustakas (1994) states, " The researcher's excitement and curiosity inspire the search. Personal history brings the core of the problem into focus" (p. 104). My exploration into my own whiteness is integral in this research as it is coupled with the voices of those traditionally oppressed. In her study using white pre-service teachers,

Alice McIntyre (1997) reveals a need for "structured immersion experiences" so that white participants spend time with people of color. The participants in McIntyre's study had a hard time grasping the lived experiences of people of color in a white researcher-white researchee framework. I am supporting the need for whites to take responsibility to learn about racism, whiteness, and inequity. Furthermore, listening to the lived experiences of people of color can create a space for "emotional bonding" between members of racial groups (McIntyre, 1997, p. 139).

White Privilege: Why Should We Care?

> The oppressed suffer from the duality, which has established itself in their innermost being. They discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Yet, although they desire authentic existence, they fear it. They are at one and the same time themselves, and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized. The conflict lies in the choice between being wholly themselves or being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting him; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and recreate, in their power to transform the world. This is the tragic dilemma of the oppressed, which their education must take into account. (Freire, 1970, pp. 32–33)

Ann Phoenix (1997) reminds us that

> studies of "race", racism, ethnicity, and identities have, historically, tended to focus on black people and those from other minority ethnic groups, and furthermore the absence of focus on "whiteness" coupled with implicit constructions of white people as "the norm" serves to maintain the privileged position of whiteness, but to obscure the ways in which it is implicated in power relations. With the majority of research focusing on the "black experience," it is probably no surprise that whiteness as an identity position is silenced and less tangible than the "black identity." (Phoenix, 1997, p. 187)

I have never had to think of myself as white. When I have participated in icebreakers in workshops, conferences, and classes where we were to put identifiers that describe ourselves on our nametags (i.e., words like strong, independent, student, higher education administrator, wife, mother, etc.) I never put white. I can recollect many females having black as an identifier and I never thought twice about it. I never thought that being white was important to me.

I was recently talking to my mother-in-law about white privilege/whiteness as a potential dissertation topic and I asked her two questions. The first being: "Do you think you are privileged because you are white?" The second question: "Was race or class talked about in your family growing up?" Her answer to the first question was very similar to what the literature reveals in regards to whites not recognizing that being white has privileges in itself—she tied privilege to money and saw privilege as a class issue, not a race issue. This was my perspective not long ago. She said she never thought about whiteness as being a privilege in itself; she saw her privileges as being a part of things such as being a top student (in a certain class—back then she was called a 1 as opposed to the students who were 2-4's), and she saw it as a privilege being a cheerleader. Whiteness was normal and the underlying privileges were taken for granted or unseen. Regarding the second question: "Was race or class talked about in your family growing up?," she said no, there was one black family she remembers and that her dad would "say things" about the mother, but the topic wasn't up for discussion. She said "you think everyone is like you." Luckily as an educator, she recognizes that not everyone comes from the same place or has the same story. It is important to recognize difference, but it's the underlying

systemic hegemonic ways that suppress others that don't seem clear to her, or to me. This topic is a continual site for learning. As I hear stories of others and listen to stories of difference I am better educated and informed. At the end of our conversation, after she recognized that thinking about having privilege because of her skin color, she said her answer would have been different if I had asked "Who do you think is privileged?," and she would have said those who have money. That question as a first question made more sense to her, and then followed by "Do you think you are privileged?" Again, this confirms that whites don't consider their racial identity privilege.

Phoenix (1997) says,

> The difficulty of talking about being white, however, does require explanation. Reasons proposed in the literature for this absence include denial of power (Pajaczkowska & Young, 1992; Young 1995), the general failure of the dominant to reflect on dominance (Ware, 1992), and the lack of recognition of historical power relations between black and white people (Hall, 1992; Ware, 1992). (p. 187)

To me it doesn't feel good to think that white people have the power and have since the beginning of this nation. I can't deny that I feel comfortable in the normalcy of white privilege, but I also see the need for self and world education on this topic. I think it's dangerous to feel comfortable where I am. So much of the time I feel I am riding the fence of white privilege and reality and it makes it difficult to jump over and stand up for disrupting the norm. The norm is safe; it's oblivious and comfortable, but the norm doesn't disrupt the systemic institutional ways that white privilege permeates through life. Phoenix's (1997) admittance to the difficulty in talking about white privilege correlates with the societal impact of white privilege. It hurts to talk about it and it hurts

to think about what negative impact it has on society. It's easy to play "dumb" and not consider the other story, the other side. White privilege impacts us in visible and not so visible ways. On a daily basis I must recognize who I am and where I stand in relation to my privilege and where I stand in relation to helping others understand the implications of privilege. The impact is wonderful and scary at the same time. I am grateful for the ability to recognize and problematize my privilege, but I am always reminded that I am white and what I might see as my privileges may only be a small amount compared to the reality of my privileges. I will always remain in a circle of white privilege to a certain extent. I cannot change who I am and where I came from, but I can change how I see myself in the world and the impact I can have on other privileged individuals impacted who don't see, deny, or fail to recognize their privileges.

Chalmers (1997) talks about the outcome of a potluck supper for parents and children of color hosted by the staff of color at a school where frenzy followed because the parents of students who were not black felt excluded. Chalmers (1997) says,

> Many of the parents statements worked to erase the complex set of racialized negotiations and historic relationships embedded in power and privilege that have contributed to contemporary race relations in America. They claim race as a color only, trying to minimize its importance in understanding the nature of people's lived experience. (p. 71)

The story is somewhat difficult for me to understand. The parents of students who were not black saw a glimpse that empowerment and power were not allowed among those who are non-white (i.e., the students and parents who attended the supper). Chalmers (1997) states: "However brief the meeting, the effect of such a minor redistribution of

power was profound" (p. 73). This is difficult for me because I have heard similar stories where for example, there was a meeting for black firemen and the white firemen felt like they were left out—they didn't understand why there wasn't a meeting for everyone together—why would they divide them? I can see both sides to an extent, but I must admit, as I problematize myself as white and privileged I am unable to fully understand the need for separate meetings and I believe it has a lot to do with the fact that whites have had less experience with racism than other groups (Phoenix, 1997)—this is an opportunity for learning for me. As Kincheloe (1999) reflects on the twenty-first century and recognizes that as whites have been "watching themselves being labeled as oppressors in the eyes of the world, white people face an unprecedented crisis of whiteness and a new consciousness has formed that induces Whites to ask 'who are we?'" (p. 171). I too am asking the question, "Who am I?"

Education, while historically seen as "the great equalizer" intensifies my interest in the thoughts of minority educators and their experience within an institution of privilege. This study is in large part about reeducating myself. My experiences as a K-12 student were clearly embedded around white privilege practices. I neither heard nor considered the term white privilege or whiteness until I was pursuing my doctorate degree. Whiteness and white privilege are more than mere "terms"; these ideologies helped me understand my education as schooling rather than education as a practice of freedom (hooks, 1990). My experiences were not sheltered from issues of race, class, and privilege; rather, my experiences were seen as normal rather than privileged. Discussions of race, class, and privilege were not discussed in ways that challenged our comfort with

being white and privileged. There was never any question that my education was anything but the best. The school I attended was 99% white and we lived our lives not truly seeing experiences different than our own or those like us. Kendall (2001) reminds us, “we must ask how we participate in not seeing the experiences of people of color that are so very different from white peoples” (p. 12). It is important to acknowledge voices of difference—voices of those who haven’t been captured to the extent of white educators. The aim of this narrative study is to pose questions to discover the concepts and essential structures of a lived experience, concept, or phenomenon (Rudestam & Newton, 2007)—in this case, the experience of whiteness or white privilege within education as experienced by minority educators. Narrative researchers make no attempt to generalize to a specific population (Bailey, 1992). Thus, this study is guided by specific contexts and purposeful participant selection.

Whiteness—Identifying its Power and Privileges

Whiteness theory grounds itself in the importance of bringing forth the invisibility of whiteness in order to deconstruct ways in which it has supported systemic and institutionalized racism. What one does not see or choose to see cannot be addressed. What cannot be addressed cannot be problematized and changed. Whiteness studies acknowledge the privileges of whiteness as it remains unnamed and naturalized through systems, institutions, law, curriculum, etc. Whiteness is seen as the “way of the world” and “normal.” The whiteness agenda is clearly not hidden, just unseen as it is viewed as “everyday” by white people. The privilege of being unnamed doesn’t hide the power of whiteness. Whiteness rears its ugly head within systems, institutions, and schooling

practices. The act of ignoring race reveals the dominance whiteness has on their thinking that they don't need to talk about race. White people's lack of consciousness about their own racial identity continues to hinder white people from seeing the advantages they have by being white. What they fail to see continues to prevent a decentering of whiteness and perpetuates educational practices that lift up whites and push out students of color. There is a fear and defensiveness among whites as we begin to deconstruct whiteness because it may be seen as challenging their identity. After all, whiteness is an identifier of who they are and they want to protect their identity by not talking about it; however, whites have been allowed to talk about and "deconstruct" people of color since the inception of this country. Actively unraveling whiteness as a structure of power and privilege (Akom, 2008) is a central tenant of whiteness studies. Transforming and impacting communities is not about standing still and ignoring our place in the world. We must acknowledge our privileged place and begin to deconstruct who we are, individually, through whiteness in order to impact our schools and communities.

This research is not only about reflecting on my own experiences, but being able to further conceptualize the larger system of whiteness. Katz and Ivy (1997) refer to the "system of 'whiteness' as providing a barrier that encases white people so that they are unable to experience themselves and their culture as it really is" (p. 485). While I strongly agree that continued work and conversations among whites must continue, Alice McIntyre (1997) discusses creating dialogue with people of color as of vital importance so as not to "encapsulate ourselves in our own white world" (p. 140). I plan to provide

personal reflections alongside my interviews so as to critique my own experiences and interrogate whiteness.

Summary

Prior research about whiteness and white privilege have not examined voices of minority educators in making informed decisions and changes within the K-12 school system. Majority of writings on white privilege look at problematizing history through the lens of whiteness. The following chapters will move beyond the importance of the study and the need to care to reviewing a conceptual framework in Chapter II that theorizes whiteness, critical multiculturalism, and critical race theory as foundations to breaking the cycle of privilege. Chapter III details the methodology used in the study, including participant selection and data analysis. Chapter IV details the expected and emerging themes and subthemes collected from the interviews, and finally Chapter V offers a summary of the study along with implications for future research and implications for practice.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is built on both the research literature around whiteness and my personal experience. Existing research details whiteness through a broad lens of viewing whiteness in many forms of systematic privilege; however, it does not provide a complete picture of privilege by capturing voices of those who are silenced by white privilege: minorities. Further, research lacks voices of minority educators and how white privilege is perceived and played out in K-12 schools. In addition, the research discusses disparate ways in which whiteness can be theorized.

Detailed in this chapter is a brief overview of the history of whiteness in addition to reifying the need to ground whiteness in theory. We take a journey by theorizing whiteness through various lenses. First, I discuss whiteness theorized through the lens of civility and morality and discuss how fear is perpetuated by race. Then we look through the lens of liberal politics and discuss colorblindness, tokenism, essentialism, and meritocracy, followed by a look through the economic lens and discuss affirmative action, integration, and property. Finally, we consider critical race theory and critical multiculturalism. The topics I discuss all reveal connections to the lack of understanding that racism is a system of advantage and that the advantage of whiteness is that it historically has not had to identify itself as privileged, therefore ignoring who might not

receive the same privileges. Racism is continually produced by a lack of knowledge and understanding of how it is more than an individual act toward someone else, but rather is embedded in our systems of thought, work, and education.

Theorizing Whiteness

Whiteness has been theorized by many scholars and broken down in many ways. The field of whiteness studies is broad and diverse, and situates itself through interdisciplinary perspectives. The work of whiteness studies is at work in the fields of history, sociology, legal studies, literature, women's studies, and education (Croll, Hartmann, & Gerteis, 2006). Named as early as W. E. B. Dubois's work in the early 1900s, whiteness theorists have more recently challenged to bring whiteness out of its protective shell and make whiteness visible. Scholars such as Frankenberg, Lipitz, Lopez, Morrison, Roediger, Delgado and Stefanic, McIntosh, and Giroux have played pivotal roles in deconstructing whiteness. As Croll et al. (2006) state,

> Whiteness scholars have begun from the proposition that social scientists know a great deal about how white intolerance, prejudice and racism affect people of color, but that this is not enough. They suggest that we also need to know about how the identities and beliefs of those who benefit from racial hierarchies contribute to reproduction of race in America. (p. 1)

This turns the power of whiteness on its head as we look in to the eye of privilege to analyze whiteness. The interdisciplinary nature of this work calls one to focus on the perpetuation of "whiteness as part of a broader system of oppression" and bring to light the "taken for granted nature of whiteness" (Croll et al., 2006, p. 20). For too long and still all too often, whites have viewed themselves as nonracial, neutral, normal beings.

Although hidden, everyone is measured against whiteness, and people of color feel its jarring effects. A central proposition of whiteness theory is the inability and invisibility of whites to acknowledge their identity and their white privileges (Croll et al., 2006; McIntosh, 1988; McIntyre, 1997; Tatum, 1997). This normalization of whiteness implies anyone other than white is different, unequal, less than, and is thus labeled as such. Frankenberg (1993) supports that whiteness has a set of linked dimensions in revealing,

> First, whiteness is the location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, 'whiteness' refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. (p. 1)

The unnaming and invisibility of white privilege is central to the research on whiteness. Peggy McIntosh's (1988) classic article, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" echoes the belief that "whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege" and arguably if one was to recognize their privilege they would "give up the myth of meritocracy" (p. 2). This recognition would disrupt the accepted foundation of our country that is based on freedom and equality for all. The difficulty in recognizing whiteness is said best by McIntosh (1988), "I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in the invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth" (p. 3). This is where racism and the study of whiteness intersect. As a system of advantages based on race that whites continue to see as normal, white privilege prolongs its domination.

Long before whiteness studies emerged, W.E.B. Dubois wrote and analyzed the power and privilege that grew within and among whiteness. DuBois (1920) thoroughly

acknowledged the history of white as a privileged color and that which all other colors were measured against. He witnessed and felt the struggles and domination people of color felt because of the systems of white privilege that set out to control them. It is however very important to note that being white is not problematic in itself; it is the dominance and white privilege that normalize through whiteness that is problematic. While being white has historically been accepted as the privileged color, as being better than; it is through the ways in which "white" has been used to privilege the majority and establish systemic and institutionalized racism that has pushed out all others and continues to handicap our ability to decenter whiteness. Normalizing whiteness since the beginning of time set up expectations everyone should follow. White dominated systems were put in place so that everyone did follow "their" rules or suffered grave and sometimes deadly consequences. DuBois (1920) states, "But what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it? Then always, somehow, some way, silently but clearly, I am given to understand that whiteness is the ownership of the earth forever and ever, Amen!" (p. 32). Ignoring whiteness and all of its baggage continues to be problematic because whiteness theory calls us to take a critical look at the structure of whiteness, a structure based on hierarchy and privilege, and as DuBois (1920) points out, whiteness is attached to ownership, and to be further implied a right to ownership, which explains how problematic it is for one to deconstruct whiteness when whiteness has constructed ways to negotiate a status distinct from people of color.

History of Whiteness

"Everyone or Everything else is 'marked'; whereas white is not anything really, not an identity, not a particularizing quality, because it is everything—white is no color because it is all colors" (Dyer, 1988, p. 45). It is difficult to think of a place to begin in terms of describing when whiteness began. Once one becomes aware of whiteness it can be seen from the beginning of everything: before slavery, before Jim Crow, and long before World War II . Allen's (1994) book, *The Invention of the White Race*, provides an in-depth historical perspective of the ruling class and the white race. While I will not go into detail as Allen has, I do want to frame whiteness around a few impressionable pieces of information that inform my writing. As Roediger (2005) states, "from the first congress in 1790, the law required that an immigrant seeking citizenship be a 'free white person,' which creates with legal words a collective civic identity" (p. 61). Anyone not white was, and arguably still is, seen as a problem and a threat. W. E. B. DuBois speaks of this in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) as he writes:

> They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? They say, I know an excellence colored man in my town . . . Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word. (as cited in West, 1994, p. 5)

From the very beginning, being white came with it immense privilege and protection. As Cornell West (1994) states, "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" (pp. 5-6). So here we must ask: What are the flaws of American Society that are rooted in historical inequalities and longstanding cultural stereotypes? We can review the history of whiteness as far back as one can see, but nothing changes the fact that whiteness is grounded in a very long history of racial inequality. Whiteness is imbedded in everything. Greene (1988) states,

> When oppression or exploitation or segregation or neglect is perceived as "natural" or a "given," there is little stirring in the name of freedom. When people cannot name alternatives imagine a better state of things, share with others a project of change, they are likely to remain anchored and submerged, even as they proudly assert their autonomy. (p. 9)

Anyone other than white has been victimized and marginalized throughout history. As West (1994) states, "black existential angst derives from the lived experience of ontological wounds and emotional scars inflicted by white supremacist beliefs and images permeating U.S. society and culture" (p. 27). Whiteness could be seen as a piece of history, but to me, it is history and it is present. Nothing that I see now is outside the lens of whiteness. I see more clearly, although disturbing, the ways in which whiteness is the everyday.

In 1923 the U.S. Supreme Court gave up on using expert testimony to decide who was "white" and therefore eligible for naturalized citizenship in the Thind case (Roediger, 2005). The basis for denying his citizenship was based on not intellectual ability, but that they "simply knew that he was not white. 'Common speech' and 'popular understanding' were to be the new tests for whiteness" (Roediger, 2005, p. 59).

The study of whiteness is critical because most whites lack understanding of what it means to be racialized beings. Race has been used by whites to "race" others, not to "race" white people. Richard Dyer (1997) states, "As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people" (p. 1). In his early works, W.E.B. DuBois (1920) acknowledges that human beings are divided into races, with whites representing the "higher nobler stock" and blacks "the lower meaner race" (p. 26). These historically upheld differences alone would be just that—an historical account of race; however, these racial representations were the foundational philosophy behind slavery, educational assimilation, and the creation of a clearly divided workforce. Constructed as a biological category, the identification of whiteness as superior has been used to justify economic and political inequalities ranging from settler colonialism to slavery (Frankenberg, 1993). Quickly one can see the power of racial identification on disenfranchising people of color and lifting up white people. This history of racial identification has continued to impact current day institutions and systems. While race is a socially constructed category with no basis of truth to biological superiority, the effects of racism are real. White people many times use the historical foundation of racism as a scapegoat in discussing it today. White individuals can easily claim that they themselves did not own slaves or lynch black people or refuse to serve people of color, etc., without recognizing the role they play in today's practices of white dominance as a member of the privileged racial group. Frankenberg (1993) supports that "central to competing analyses of race have been assertions of , and challenges to, a range

of claims about differences between people, including physiological or genetic differences, cultural differences and differences in access to power" (p. 13). It is difficult for white people to see the impact that racism, let alone whiteness, continues to have on people of color. Racism, however, has been the basis for the institutionalization of white privilege. Barndt (2007) states, "the purpose and end-goal of racism is creation and preservation of power and privilege for the white society" (p. 83). Central to racism is not how it excludes, but how it builds up systems that continually uphold and benefit whites which produce white privilege. Having primary access to power has taken whites from their side of the color line, the privileged side, and used its power to establish and maintain a system of white privilege while excluding people of color. For so long we have looked at color as a "measure of a person" and assigned labels, prejudices, expectations, and practices accordingly. As Anderson (1996) states,

> DuBois's contributions not only reveal how racialized social and institutional practices maintain white supremacy but also suggest that the problems of Black Americans are not rooted in their heredity, but, rather, in their environment and the social conditions that confront them. (as cited in Akom, 2008, p. 249)

The construction of whiteness has created a system and racial hierarchy that preserves the power whites have to decide who has access to power and privilege. Kendall (2001) echoes:

> The creation of a system in which race plays a central part- one that codifies the superiority of the white race over all others- has been in no way accidental or haphazard. Throughout American history white power-holders, acting on behalf of our entire race, have made decisions that have affected white people as a group very differently than groups of people of color. History is filled with examples of

> the purposeful construction of a systemic structure that grants privileges to white people and withholds them from others. (p. 2)

The history of racism has set up and continually perpetuated systems of privilege for whites and not for people of color. Ignoring these privileges ignores the importance to critically investigate whiteness.

The Social Construction of Intelligence Testing

Throughout history and with continued claims to "improve" the testing methods and measures, we cannot exclude the era in which these ideas were founded. The propaganda used to organize citizens into schools to better themselves was a false reality where education was organized around the ways in which society would benefit, as opposed to individuals. The goals of the schools during the progressive era reveal undeniable examples of bias, inequity, and racism. It is also important to discern the expectations of the elites placed on those who were and were not considered intelligent. After all, the government believed they were doing children and society a favor by putting them in different classes and different vocational or educational tracts. It can be concluded that the creation of intelligence tests fostered a scientific revolution formed around elitist thinking and social Darwinian ideals.

> Whether we like it or not, the educational system is one of society's most powerful mechanisms for sorting out children to assume different roles in the occupational hierarchy. (Jensen, 1972, p. 81)

History reveals the animosity and biased educational practices implemented by many of our founding fathers and educational leaders. If we take a critical look into the

purposes of education we find many mixed ideas, but one main idea stands out. Education was created to educate society to be socially “moral” and think the way the government wanted them to think. This acculturation of society began with children during the eighteen and nineteen hundreds. While this movement included children from all backgrounds, it alienated children of immigrant and factory workers who did not have access to the types of education to which the elites had access.

As history continued, schools began to focus on increasing industrial education. The government believed that if they could increase the skills of labor workers then industry would abound and profits would increase (government profits). During this movement, children were detached from their families and exploited as labor workers. The conditions of the factories were of no importance to the government as long as production sustained and increased over time. Education still remained a way to school the masses (although many were exempt from the “privilege”), but it was education for the purposes in which the government had in mind at the time. The rights of education changed throughout history and those rights were not given to all. The right to an education while voiced to be “for all” was in fact for those with money, those who were white, those who were seen as needing an education to cooperate with government, and those who needed supervision. In the researcher’s opinion, education was one of the first acts of discrimination institutionalized by the government. Education defined was of course in the view of the government and the “elites”: the right way to think, act, and be, which was to be protestant, white, and Christian.

It is important to acknowledge the focus on advancement and achievement that was overtaking the nation during the 1900s. While everyone was affected by these changes, the impact on children was extremely significant. Children were seen as the way into the future; by molding and manipulating their learning and their opportunities to learn, society could be changed. Children were Americanized against their will and forced into a system of assessment and accountability. The industrial and educational innovations mixed to create a social survival of the fittest institutionalized by the elites (e.g., the scientists, the school board, and the government, local and nationwide). The superiority of race and the aim toward progress was put on display at the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, with a congressional mandate to be an exhibition of the progress of civilization in the New World. The focal point of the exhibition was the White City, which represented civilization's highest achievements. "The White City was an icon of the superiority of civilized white men and pointed towards the ideal, perfectible future of the race" (Lesko, 2001, p. 19). The advancement of civilization remained on the forefront at a time when the white race was considered the only "civilized" group of the time. When educational elites and government had worked so hard to come this far educating those that should and could be educated, and with the industrial progress as the focus of the future, they needed to create a more "modern social order" which included "boundary sanitation." Boundary sanitation "inaugurated the sustained scientific effort to measure, record, and rank the differences among human beings in the middle and late nineteenth century" (Lesko, 2001, p. 26). This was the beginning of a socially cohesive industrial ideal that would move America towards a

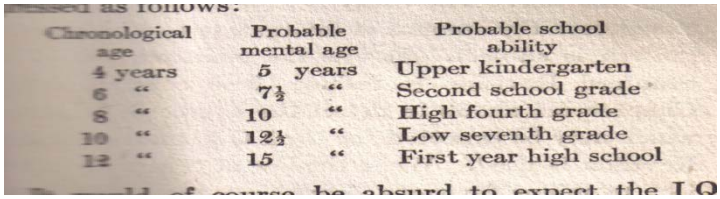
perfected society. It was the science of the future with the ideals and restricted benefits of the past.

The future integrated mental measurements through intelligence testing. Intelligence testing involved ranking children according to their intelligence level and grouping them in classrooms that would provide a specific curriculum based on each group's needs. This was of course the ideal situation, not the actual situation. While money for the schools during the late 1800s and early 1900s was scarce, so was the purposed "better curriculum" suited to the needs of the children. The goal to organize and educate the masses was all part of the progressive area. Here began the great divide between the disenfranchised and the advantaged. Those who could afford education got good education; those who could not were either swept into the bureaucratic organization of schooling or the industrial world of work. It is in this discussion that we explore the history of intelligence testing and the effects it had on the minds of young children, minorities, and society as a whole. As we look into the foundations of intelligence, intelligence testing coupled with schooling, and the discrimination that existed within this area of education, I ask that you consider who was in charge of "changing society," what ideals were held that brought about certain changes, who was considered privileged and who was not, who was taken advantage of and last, and how has this impacted our thinking today.

What is Intelligence?

Psychologists vary in their belief that individuals are either born intelligent or become intelligent. Scientifically, the intelligence quotient (IQ) is measured and obtained

by dividing the mental age by the chronological age and then multiplying by 100. The mental age of a child is the degree of mental ability which is possessed by the average child of corresponding chronological age and indicates the level of development the child has reached at a certain time (Terman, 1919). It is important to note that this score is based on the average score which subjects of the same age have obtained. It is in the very basics of intelligence testing, the intelligence quotient (IQ), that we can begin to question its foundation. If we agree that each individual is unique, but we compare them to the "norm," we are discounting individuality and promoting assimilation. Figure 1 represents Terman's (1919) example of probable mental age related to chronological age. Figure 2 represents classifications systems related to IQ.



Chronological age	Probable mental age	Probable school ability
4 years	5 years	Upper kindergarten
6 "	7½ "	Second school grade
8 "	10 "	High fourth grade
10 "	12½ "	Low seventh grade
12 "	15 "	First year high school

Figure 1. Terman's (1919) probable mental age related to chronological age.

INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS	PERCENTAGES INCLUDED	CLASSIFICATIONS
125 and above	5	very rapid learners
110 to 124	20	rapid learners
90 to 109	50	average learners
75 to 89	20	slow learners
below 75	5	very slow learners

Figure 2. Classification systems related to IQ.

Binet and Simon (1905/1916) add to the meaning of intelligence by stating, "To judge well, to comprehend well, to reason well, these are the essential activities of intelligence" (p. 43). Binet and Simon's (1905/1916) vague definition of intelligence

combined with a connection to non-native speakers creates ironic semblance to what they began to foster—institutionalized segregation. Binet and Simon (1905/1916) state, “One of the clearest signs of awakening intelligence among young children is their understanding of the spoken language. . . . Idiots are beings who remain all their lives in this elementary stage unable to communicate with their fellows through language” (p. 184). Could we compare Binet and Simon’s (1905/1916) words to those outside the “feeble-minded,” but foreigners instead? After all, the attention around intelligence can be traced back to the flood of immigrants seeking refuge from the “old country” in hopes of the promises America could fulfill in their lives. Little did they know that their arrival reinforced the government’s ideal that it would be better if everyone was essentially the same, or as I see it, it was seen to be easier if everyone was the same. When the immigrants arrived at Ellis Island they were weeded out if they were mentally or physically incapable of self-support, and there came the recognition that a disproportionately large number of the retarded children were immigrants or the children of immigrants (Goodenough, 1949). While a part of the educational difficulties of these children could be traced to imperfect knowledge of English, it soon became apparent that this was not the whole story. Goodenough (1949) states “The feebleminded immigrant became an ever recurrent problem as well” (pp. 68–69). In the government’s view, these newly-defined populations had to be controlled so as to prevent ever recurring problems.

If we traverse the definitions and implications of intelligence in relation to the society that was, the outlook for children and minorities was grim. Society had a prescribed place for those who were considered at the bottom of the intelligence ladder

and those who were at the top. School was viewed as a privilege that the immigrants looked forward to which gave the elites an easy way to initiate ulterior motives through schooling. According to Terman, “those with IQ’s below 75 were destined for unskilled labor; for those who scored between 75 and 85 semiskilled occupations awaited. Only if one’s IQ exceeded 113 could substantial success be predicted” (as cited in Locurto, 1991, p. 18). This idea permeated throughout society and the labels stuck. Students were treated as if they were puzzle pieces. Once a student’s IQ was determined they were put into a pre-designed track which was believed to be the best for society and for the child. Or was it? Arguably, the interrelationships of the mission of the schools, society, and the state were all wrapped around organizing schooling to shape the mind of a child.

The Testing Movement

During what has been deemed the progressive era, school administrators and curriculum reformers continued their goal of developing individuals who would be active members in a democratic society. The administrators and reformers saw the power in educating the masses for the betterment of society. Differences that should be acknowledged and managed accordingly seemed to be the belief held by educational reformers. Many names (Spearman, Sequin, Galton, Binet, Henri, Simon, Weschler, and Terman) and many years of collaboration of ideas brought about the IQ test. We could also go back to another influential name of the time, Charles Darwin, whose theory of evolution was well known and at the center of scientific and intellectual discussions during the nineteenth century (Demetriou & Papadopoulos, 2004).

The original and what many deem as the first "valid" IQ test and a model for others was developed by Alfred Binet in an effort to determine and educate those that were subnormal or inferior (Binet & Simon, 1905/1916; Kaufman, 2000; Rury, 2005). And while many terms were used to label subjects, Binet and Simon (1905/1916) categorized individuals as "*idiot* as applied to the lowest state, *imbecile* to the intermediate, and *moron* (débile) to the state nearest normality" (p. 10). These terms of course are different across psychologists and researchers. Other labels included feeble-minded, backward, and average, among others.

Binet and Simon (1905/1916) reveal many important insights into testing groups of feeble-minded subjects. They claimed to make all their tests "simple, rapid, convenient, precise, heterogeneous, holding the subject in continued contact with the experimenter, and bearing principally upon the faculty of judgment" (p. 41). This, however, does not make the test unbiased. Binet and Simon (1905/1916) also believe that intelligence can be measured in three groups: (a) the anatomical method, (b) the pedagogical method, and (c) the psychological method (measurement of the uncultured intelligence), and it is to the third group that is focused on in order to assess natural intelligence.

It is important to note that Binet and Simon (1905/1916) concede that "one can not make tests of judgment on children of less than two years" (p. 43). They also reveal the manner in which the child should be treated when he or she arrives for testing.

> If he is intelligent enough to understand certain words, awaken his curiosity, his pride. If he refuses to reply to a test, pass to the next one, or perhaps offer him a piece of candy; if his silence continues send him away until another time. (p. 44)

Children being tested were treated like animals being trained to sit or stand and were rewarded for “appropriate” actions. Similarly, when asked to make a bow from a few ribbons with complete refusal Binet and Simon (1905/1916) state “Having been rather severely reprimanded they would consent and would then make an attractive bow” (p. 186). The focus on coaxing the student is one that displays the power held by the examiners and felt by the examinees paralleling the power of the schools over the student once they were labeled.

Binet and Simon (1905/1916) reference giving different types of tests that range from discovering whether a subject can make a distinction between familiar food and that of which can and cannot be eaten, verbal knowledge of pictures which asks the subject to pick out the mamma, the bouquet, the duster, the big sister, the window etc., and tests around designated objects where a picture is shown the subject is asked to explain what certain things are in the picture, and tests of verbal definition of known objects which asks a subject to answer questions such as: What is a mamma? What is a fork? What is a horse? What is a house? The material covered in these tests further reveal the manipulative power by the testers and the schools to alienate those who cannot identify these objects. This is supposed to measure what Binet and Simon (1905/1916) call “uncultured intelligence” (p. 221). Eysenck (1971) and I would argue that intelligence tests can never be viewed apart from a common cultural basis. A house could also be a hut or tee-pee. A fork could be chop sticks, and not every child has a “mamma.” There are exceptions to the norm.

While previous examples mentioned were first designed for the "feeble-minded," Binet and Simon (1905/1916) used the series of tests on "normal children of three-eleven" in the primary schools. In noting one instance in particular, Binet and Simon (1905/1916) use the responses of the eleven year olds to form a standard for which they compare the younger students. The questions and responses given to seven-eleven year olds, then "graded" so to speak are very interesting. See Appendix A for examples. Binet and Simon (1905/1916) state:

> Frequently we have encountered these unexpected ideas, which amused us greatly. Certain expressions, by the way, such as "Ah! Madame!" of Shakespeare, would be appropriate for every possible situation. We have nevertheless concluded that what would be wit in a skeptic of thirty, would be incoherence of thought in a child of 7. (p. 123)

One of the more baffling tests is that in which six drawings, as seen in Appendix B, required the children to indicate which of the women (two presented at a time) is prettier? According to Binet and Simon (1905/1916), "it is necessary that the child should reply correctly three times" (p. 202) Therefore, in order to get the question "right" the child has to indicate on three separate "showings" which of the two women is prettier. Can you actually standardize questions related to attractiveness?

While Binet's tests were the foundation for many others in the United States it came at a time during a societal upheaval of educating all those who were of primary school age as was the similar pressure in the States. The Darwinian view of survival of the fittest permeated into the world of science and provided a frame in which the origin of human intelligence could be discussed and studied. A later revision of the Binet test, the

Stanford-Binet in 1916, was recognized as needing revisions in which Terman and Merill (1937) proposed alterations. One example in Appendix C is titled “Differences” where a student comments on the difference between a bird and a dog, etc. Notice that correct answers are indicated by plus and insufficient answers are indicated by minus. The same applies to the test on “Mutilated Pictures” where the missing part of the object must be named or described verbally (see Appendix D).

In addition to the earlier tests, measurement of intelligence was also claimed to be interpreted through drawings. Keep in mind that this was the beginning of intelligence testing and Goodenough (1926) believed that early investigators were able to show conclusively that drawings made by young children have an intellectual rather than an aesthetic origin. Appendix E shows examples of drawings and their determined scores. While each feature of a drawing has specific requirements one example is that the legs had to be attached to the trunk and the arms attached to the trunk at the correct point also the neck should be present, the eyes present, etc. (Goodenough, 1926). These requirements must be based on the belief that every person has all the body parts Goodenough requires to get the question right. What if one child’s family member has one leg or one arm- how would individual differences be taken into account?

Intelligence and Schooling

Let’s consider further the idea of classes created for students at different “levels.” In the 1920’s the public schools in Jackson Michigan organized students into a classification system comprised of seven special classes. The “Ungraded Classes” are to have held the feeble-minded of many ages and are to complete their schoolwork within

the walls of the “ungraded class” and would not return to regular classes (Davis, as cited in Whipple, 1923, pp. 131–132). The “Lower Auxiliary Classes” are comprised of students 12 years of age, but with a mental ability under 9 years. The students in this class have intelligence quotients from 70 to 85 (Davis, as cited in Whipple, 1923, pp. 132, 135). The mere language of the words lower auxiliary and ungraded class reap difference in the sense of deficit, not equality, because they were not viewed as equal. Those who were in a different classroom were seen as children with differences whose lives and place in society were permanently determined. An individual with an average IQ that then increased over time was almost unexplainable—everything had to fit into the “scientific” mold of society. The limitations of the tests were many times believed to be too few to mention (Terman, 1919); however, it could be argued that limitations are determined by what one believes to be significant which can differ from the norm. Miller references the limitations and resulting exclusions that resulted from the test themselves when he states:

> The officer who wished to get rid of a subordinate officer with fifteen years’ experience because he rated ‘C’ on the army test did not understand that fifteen years’ training of an average man in a relatively simple mechanical activity would give service quite comparable to that of a high-grade man trained in the same field for a period of two or three months. Officers failed frequently to comprehend that the test did not give a measure of all the desirable general virtues a man might possess. (as cited in Whipple, 1923, p. 191).

Virtue was not considered an important factor in the foundation of intelligence testing. The focus was placed on creating an interventionist state that sought to fix the problems of what was believed to be a degenerative society.

Let us not ignore the fact that organized and standardized intelligence testing was seen as a way to help the schools move forward in putting students in classes that met their needs and in turn produced more productive citizens at a faster rate. This was organized through a test that was easy to give and grade to an overall extent; however, this was the view of the creators and implementers, not the children and families affected by it. I would argue that a student's IQ score could be inaccurate if the student had language barriers (or other cultural unfamiliarity's), was unfamiliar with testing (low self-confidence and test anxiety), or was tested by an inexperienced examiner. Also, many times group intelligence tests were administered by teachers and graded by teachers before being sent off to the office of the Department of Measurement (Davis, as cited in Whipple, 1923). If a teacher grades IQ tests and is aware of the different classes for children with different IQs, many stereotypical assumptions can be made. Miller states:

> Pupil 50 is 15 years, 2 months of age. He is very much over weight and a "good feeder". He is well behaved, good-natured, easily embarrassed, very reticent and lazy. He is not regular and persistent in his efforts. He has on certain occasions written almost perfect examination papers. He does not conform to class requirements that are necessary to make good marks. He opened the first quarter with a P.R. in school marks of 70 and averaged 39th P.R. for the year. His father is a successful businessman. It is clearly evident that school is not getting out of the boy all that he is capable of doing. Why? (Miller, as cited in Whipple, 1923, p. 218)

There wasn't much room for someone to rise out of the label they were identified as. There wasn't a way to climb the social, economic or educational ladder if school was a place that manipulated learning objectives and in turn teased out those who might

threaten tradition and the formation of proper social order. Furthermore, when a tester "accommodates" a foreigner by administering a test that does not focus on language, does the student not feel different already? They can't speak the same language, they are in a new environment in many cases and in the 1900's foreigners were not considered citizens (all signs of imposed limitations); so who was giving the test—a white Anglo-Saxon protestant who speaks English? It is ironic that it is currently seen as commendable when a native English speaker is bilingual, but the same enthusiasm doesn't exist for immigrants who are non-native English speakers. Society expects them to acculturate.

Discussion

> The dull Negro mother working out her guts to keep her family together is, in human terms, worth many times such bright world conquerors as Alexander, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin or Mussolini. There are many human qualities quite uncorrelated with IQ, such as courage, compassion, friendliness, 'soul,' and helpfulness, just as there are many abilities, particularly in the arts, which are only marginally correlated with IQ. Nobody has ever suggested that a measurement of IQ appraises the general worth of a person. (Eysenck, 1971, p. 55)

Eysenck (1971) reveals a correlation to the inhumane usage of IQ testing and the value of a person. Value cannot be measured and replaced by a test score. A person's worth cannot be measured and should not be determined by a number; arguably the progressive era and thereafter created a stigma attached to intelligence and ability that cannot be shaken. Through the segregated schools, boarding schools for non-whites, the institutionalized protestant curriculum, and many other discriminating acts, education was a way to keep people out, although it was advertised as for all. We are still blinded by the way it was because that is the way it is—still. Counts (1932) states, "They have

called it Education with a capital *E,* whereas in fact I has been American education with a capital *A* and a small *e*" (p. 16) While many reformers may have felt it was in the best interest to establish a standardized test to better serve students at different levels, let's not ignore the basis behind the foundation of education. Why change one when all of society needed to be changed was the view of the reformers and the government. Education was seen as a machine and all it needed was a few standardized tools to make it run faster.

I cannot accept the claim that using different types of tests will give a better picture when the questions and the scope is biased in its questions and its examiners. Does it give us the full picture of a child? When you have to coax a child with candy where is the validity and desire for action? Furthermore,

> An inexperienced examiner has no idea of the influence of words; he talks too much, he aids his subject, he puts him on the track, unconscious of the help he is thus giving. He plays the part of pedagogue, when he should remain psychologist. (Binet & Simon, 1905/1916, pp. 44–45)

Binet and Simon (1905/1916) cannot deny the impact the environment has on children when they reveal in the test of definitions by use that when asked: What is a horse? The child said: "A horse is to eat" (Typical answers: it is to draw wagons, it is to run, it is to sit on). Where is equity in differences? After all, Binet and Simon (1905/1916) echo the impression many have on assuming that everyone is not of the same intelligence level when they state:

> We out not to expect that all the children of a given age should be of the same intelligence level. . . . What we have a right to demand is that there should be a balance between those who are behind and those who are advance; if we have

> twice as many behind as we have in advance it would show that our tests are too difficult. (p. 251)

By the 1960s the declining faith in the use of IQ tests related to problems implied in the creation of the original tests. Ackerman (1995) states:

> The discovery and encouragement of new talent was a fine ideal, but the shortage of low-cost higher education and financial aid- two items proposed by the President's Commission- prevented mental tests from contributing to the expansion of educational opportunity. The development of individualized curricula also required a tremendous increase in the financial resources devoted to education, but these funds never materialized. Instead, it appeared that the tests were being used to deny student educational opportunities (pp. 295–296)

Some may have argued that intelligence tests were one of many components to move society into the educational millennium (Terman, 1923), but the enthusiasm toward scientific testing alone was undeniable.

Furthermore, how can you define tests as objective when they are written by elites and psychologists who have internal biases and social expectations of intelligence testing and its effects? They could formulate a test that told them what they wanted to hear and established order in ways they envisioned. If we define individuals as below average, average, and above average there is a subjective stigma attached. A numerical test score is not objective. Previously mentioned examples describe how teachers interpreted a test score, making it subjective. In addition to the argument on objective vs. subjective, Terman (1923) proposes that neither the public nor the pupils should have access to their scores. If a child is inquisitive they can simply be told that he has done "well" or "pretty well." If the rule of revealing scores is ever "broken, it should be in the case of pupils in

the upper grades or high school who test high but lack self-confidence or do not apply themselves diligently" (Terman, 1923, p. 24). In addition, Goodenough (1949) states, "Even when a question seems to its originators perfectly clear cut and straightforward and the responses of the subjects do not suggest any misunderstanding or confusion until further analysis is made, such misunderstandings may nevertheless exist" (p. 127).

IQ testing was used to weed out the feeble-minded and educate the masses accordingly; however, as it has been mentioned, the resources to educate students appropriately were not always recognized. If a child is deemed of a lower IQ do we not provide them with the same opportunities to succeed, or do we concur that he or she will amount to a handful of things based solely on his current so-called ability? It is a self-fulfilling prophecy for us to put an expectation on children equal or lower of those in their family because that is what we expect. Why not provide all the options and let the child lead? No, the government and the school system must maintain a system of schooling in which students are categorized, labeled, and tracked according to the ideals of an American meritocracy. We are limiting children who we expect are at "this level," not "that level," to conform to the expectations set by teachers and administrators. The methods of teaching at that time (and arguably now as well) favored the bright and high IQ child by stressing conceptual abilities versus pedagogical determinants. When we decide that children are "most likely" to do such and such because that is what they have done we are limiting them on the opportunities available to all. Terman (1922) states:

> When it is recalled that the children of the Mexican laborers in the mines of the district almost invariably drop out after the sixth year to take up unskilled manual

> labor or to set up homes of their own, it will be readily appreciated that the school owe it to these children to provide them with definite training in this direction in place of condemning them to failure, discouragement, and early elimination by confirming their school training to the traditional course of study looking toward high school entrance and graduation. (p. 102)

With or without IQ tests, we are labeling children and institutionalizing decision making by the schools and the government for the future of children. Terman (1922) sounds so sincere as he feels that the schools owe it to the children to provide them with the type of schooling they need, rather than what they deserve. Who is deciding? It is this language that reflects the signs of the times. As the white men began to lose power and the "control of the advance of civilization" was rattled with the influx of immigration, science served a pivotal role in post-war America (Lesko, 2001, p. 28).

Life is not a score, a rank, or a label, but society reveals the opposite. We still live in a society where the ideas of efficiency and modernism prevail, and a society that claims to support and revere diversity but clearly doesn't see others as equal through our ongoing systems of ranking and labeling those who continue to be branded as the problem. It has hardly been 50 years since integration and 100 since the rise of the IQ test. As different groups (e.g., African Americans, the New Woman, homosexuals, and adolescents) began to be polarized by the "normalized bourgeois" as a problem to society, there had to be a solution to make everyone normal, to change individuals, to change families, and to change thinking, all of which primarily took place through schooling (Lesko, 2001). We still live in a place where some schools are primarily black and some are white. It was my experience of attending a private school with 500 students

enrolled and only two were black. One was an athlete who was recruited to come and play at our school, while the other was from a family that was financially able to send her there. Can we possibly attest to living in a world where things have changed and diversity is embraced and everyone is given fair treatment and equal opportunity? We will always find a way to keep people out of a system that preaches fairness but practices injustice. Just as segregation was used to preserve and maintain order, so was the use of the standardized test.

The Production of Racism: A Culture of Fear

> America is facing the largest cultural shift in its history. Around the year 2050, whites will become a 'minority.' This is unchartered territory for this country, and this demographic change will affect everything. Alliances between the races are bound to shift. Political and social power will be re-apportioned. Our neighborhoods, our schools and workplaces, even racial categories themselves will be altered. Any massive social change is bound to bring uncertainty, even fear. But the worst crisis we face today is not in our cities or neighborhoods, but in our minds. We have grown up with a fixed idea of what and who America is, and how race relations in this nation work. We live by two assumptions: that "race" is a black and white issue, and, that America is a "white" society. Neither has ever been strictly true, and today these ideas are rapidly becoming obsolete. (Chideya, 1999, p. 34)

In the opening of the book *Legacy of Fear* (1985), Michael Cassity poses the following question: "Why have Americans often feared that greater freedom for others necessarily implies a loss for themselves?" (p. xiii). His statement clearly establishes a comprehension framing the culture of fear established in history that we currently hold on to today. We as a country speak about freedom for all, but when it comes time to actually do something about the lack of freedom minorities and disenfranchised groups lack, those who have the power to make change neither wish to give up any benefits procured nor do

they want to critically analyze their positionality in order to make room for others to receive the privileges whiteness bears.

Our country was founded on a culture of fear and has created a history of individuals being greater than or less than because of their color. We can fast forward to the emancipation of slaves which leaves slaves with a history of being less than equal to their white counterparts and in turn gives them a false sense of freedom. The rhetoric of freedom during the civil rights movement does not change the culture of fear our country was cultivated on in regards to race relations. As Cassity (1985) states, "The new freedom to be experienced would be essentially a market-bound conception that valued not the creative potential or free individualistic nature of man but instead stressed the individual's responsibility for his own fate" (p. xxvii). In other words, people of color must know their place in order to survive. Having not been provided the same privileges as whites, people of color have continually been marginalized. The new freedom touted by civil rights laws didn't leave room for reeducation of whites. Blauner (1998) states, "In the 1940's racism referred to an ideology, an explicit system of beliefs postulating the superiority of whites based on the inherent, biological inferiority of the colored races" (p. 32). This is a foundational statement to describe from where we have come and at the same time where we are. Only a little over 60 years later minorities are hitting up against this foundation and this belief system that has permeated our world. The rhetoric during the 1960s may have spoken about freedom for all, but the civil rights law, for example, did not take effect immediately, and by that point generations after generations of families had been miseducated on the "truth" about freedom for all. And so follows the

hundred year old statement “pull yourself up by your boot straps,” implying that we all have the means and “freedom” to pull ourselves up out of a bad situation and move on. When the brief history I have mentioned above follows you daily, especially as a minority, it’s all the more the difficult to see freedom as authentic, especially when actions speak louder than words. It’s not as easy as pulling yourself up by your bootstraps; it’s not a one-size-fits-all statement. This places the responsibility on the oppressed, not the system. The examples and historical accounts below shed light onto whiteness and its pervasiveness within our society today.

Many historical moments have continued to impact the culture of fear we live in today, as Cassity (1985) states:

> The eruption of racial violence in the urban centers of the North suggests that the system that led to racial antagonism in the South was now part of a much larger, national, system. Instead of resolving the problems of racial subjugation and social harmony, the problems changed form and managed to emerge in an ever more resilient and durable package. The legacy of slavery, the legacy of indentures, the legacy of paternalism, the legacy of emancipation, and the legacy of a powerful and ubiquitous force of social transformation, by the dawn of the twentieth century would be the legacy of fear, the fear that greater freedom for some must mean a loss of freedom for others. Freedom itself, which had in the nineteenth century become placed in a market terms of opportunities, by the end of the century had become a commodity to be gained in competition. That would be not just the legacy for the twentieth century; it would be the challenge (p. xxxii).

I include this lengthy statement as it reminds us of the embedded legacy of fear in past and present times. Because of the labeling and stereotypes of color, minorities have lived in a culture established by a system of white privilege. Freedom is tainted by the culture of racism that history has continued to produce. Based on my review of the literature

surrounding our culture of fear, I discuss the fear of naming color and color-blind ideology, the fear surrounding affirmative action, and the continued production of racism within education. Each of these topics has continued to be studied and problematized as they are lived and felt among people within our society. By looking at the systems, institutions, and laws founded on principles of whiteness, we can begin to understand how racism is continually perpetuated today and how a culture of fear historically supported the rhetoric of these ideas. In our society we operate on a "I gain, you lose" mentality. It can be difficult for whites to consider sharing their privilege without feeling like they are losing something they feel they deserve. In a study done by Alice McIntyre (1997) with white pre-service teachers, she noticed that "the participants felt if they were going to make things equitable for people of color, they, as whites, would have to 'lose something'" (p. 57). This mentality is evident in the topics discussed below. Racism within this culture is produced through individual and systematic ways whites are viewed and treated as better than people of color.

Fear of Naming Color: Colorblindness

> If white as race is taken into consideration it is impossible to ignore the privilege that comes with this race; the privilege to not think about race. This privilege "allows whites to ignore race, even though they have one, except when they perceive race (usually someone else's) as intruding upon their lives. (Grillo & Wildman, 1997, p. 623)

Racism is produced in this culture because we are taught to ignore race and be color-blind, but neither whiteness nor color is neutral. Forman (2004) argued that "the racial ideology that developed after the civil right era in the United States is best described as

color-blind racism and many American assert that they no longer view race as important or state that they 'do not see race'" (p. 45). We are taught that recognizing color is not important and in fact it is taboo to talk about color, after all we are all equal. A color-blind perspective "grows from a dominance-oriented perspective. Difference threatens dominance, because it upsets the belief in one's own rightness. 'We are all the same' translates as 'We are all like me,' which is comforting for those who are accustomed to dominance" (Howard, 2006, p. 57). In today's society, this distinction between a "race should not matter" philosophy and a "race does not matter" philosophy has become blurred (Atwater, 2008). With the continuing belief that civil rights legislation took care of racial discrimination, we have chosen to ignore race and color conversations. The notion that there is no need to talk about race because racial discrimination laws exist does not explain why we still recognize skin color discrimination in employment, government, and in education (Atwater, 2008). Many times we deny feelings of prejudice and chalk it up to be different values, different ways of living, and/or personality traits with which we disagree. Racial apathy, however, is just another method through which we express color-blind racism (Reason & Evans, 2007). If we don't think color is important we don't recognize history and we aren't recognizing the experience and presence of people of color. I am talking about a history of slavery in all forms, subtle and overt, a history of continued denial and lack of access. Black people were not allowed to read or be educated until it was used as an assimilation tool. Blacks were beaten, hanged, and murdered for being black and they were labeled inferior, dirty, uneducated, and overall overwhelmingly different than whites. Knowing that, how can

we ignore how this history of oppression is embedded into today's society? All of these things bring together a white culture based on fear that the dominance they have would be taken away by those they wronged. Furthermore, Bergerson (2003) states,

> Proponents of colorblindness argue that decisions should be made without taking race into consideration. The problem is that most whites cannot practice true colorblindness. In fact, whites attribute negative stereotypes to people of color while at the same time espousing their opposition to blatant racism. (p. 53)

Stage and Manning (1992) point out six assumptions underlying the manner in which colleges and universities work with students and appear to be based on color-blind racist attitudes that are still guiding practices today:

> First, students of color are expected to adjust to the college environment, which is almost always White and Eurocentric in structure. Second, the expectation is that non-White faculty, staff, or students will be responsible for any initiative to address non-white cultural issues. Third, students of color are assumed to have interests that are similar to white students. Fourth, when students of color fail to take part in academic support programs provided for them by the university, they are reviewed as ungrateful and lazy. Fifth, an obvious color-blind racist assumption is that all students are provided equitable educational opportunities by colleges and universities. Lastly, the dominant white culture through which the university environment functions is working well and requires no adjustment. (as cited in Reason & Evans, 2007, p. 70)

Our appeal for consensus removes the acknowledgement of color and the differences it affords. As described above, colorblindness really amounts to a requirement that people of color become more white (Bergerson, 2003). Recognizing color is seen as a cost to society, education, and society; therefore, we ignore its presence. By allowing whiteness to remain invisible we neither have to acknowledge our privileges nor deconstruct color-blind ideology. In discussing liberal multiculturalism, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997)

make an important point about the beliefs of multiculturalism to include color-blindness as they remind us that "dynamics of difference are erased by the ideological appeal of consensus and similarity" within liberal multiculturalism (p. 11). We don't recognize that it is important to recognize difference and seek to understand race, class, and gender; instead, liberal multiculturalists—as I have personally experienced—seek to normalize culture and support assimilation tactics. We ignore race and the "bad" and uncomfortable conversations that go along with it when we could possibly recognize the truth(s) outside of our own. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) echo my sentiments that "the dominant discourse positions color-blindness as an ideal" (p. 14). Dixson and Rousseau (2005) talk about the examination of color-blind ideology by a founding member of Critical Race Theory, Patricia Williams, who states:

> If we accept the notion of whiteness as normal, then any person who is not white is abnormal. Thus, within polite, middle class mores, it is impolite to see when someone is different, abnormal, and thus not white. Hence, it is better to ignore, or become color-blind, than to notice that people of color have the physical malady of skin color, or not whiteness. (p. 16)

By not recognizing color we are perpetuating the structures of whiteness and the hierarchies of power, while implying that anything other than white is abnormal. It's as if we are taught not to recognize color to ignore the embeddedness of racial privilege.

Affirmative Action

Another way racism is produced in this culture is in the way we create laws that are supposed to support disadvantaged groups, which are in turn manipulated by the dominant group. Affirmative Action is a clear example of one law whose intentions

require us to understand systematic racism. Colorblindness and affirmative action intermix with the following statements: “we are all the same under the skin,” “color doesn’t matter,” and “I don’t see color.” But Rodriguez (2000) reminds us that

> we are all told that all people are the same under the skin and that we all have the same equal chances of making it. Therefore, the “logic” continues; if a minority person fails to achieve, then the blame lies solely with the individual. However, what is the discourse of color blindness but nothing more than a neoconservative right-wing racial project committed to dismantling important rights discourse as well as “preferential” programs like affirmative action. (p. 9)

We view preferential treatment in the form of affirmative action when historically whites have been the advantaged group. If we attempt to dismantle the structures of whiteness through affirmative action whites begin to claim people of color are getting preferential treatment instead of the fair treatment they have so long deserved. Whites believe minority groups have gotten “white jobs” at the expense of white, working class people (Rubin, 1994). In addition to this belief a rise in anger has displayed itself in multiple ways. As Good (2000) describes,

> First there has been an increase in support for conservative politicians who advocate repealing many of the victories of the civil rights movements-restructuring or abolishing affirmative action, for example. Second, there has been an increase in the formation and support of white supremacy groups. Third, this anger has been expressed through an increase in racial incidents. (p. 104)

Each example above displays a fear that minorities are becoming “too equal” to whites, rather than seeing these efforts as ways to dismantle racism. Whiteness continues in these ways to dominate and rule. When laws are made, like affirmative action, they are accepted until whites see minorities taking “their” jobs. Whites play the victim of

affirmative action laws that they feel keep them out. Whites see this as favoritism, not fairness. Whites do not recognize affirmative action as one small step in deconstructing power structures that make affirmative action necessary. Peller (1995) discusses the issue of affirmative action as he states:

> Affirmative Action has been characterized as merely an exceptional remedy for past injustice, rather than an affirmative right rooted in present social circumstances. It has been characterized as temporary and necessary only to achieve integration, at which time equal opportunity can take over. And affirmative action has been defended on the grounds that its beneficiaries have suffered from a "deprived" background, so that putting a thumb on the minorities' side of the scales of social decision-making helps to even out the otherwise rationalized competition for social goods. (p. 132)

Within white privilege and among many of the conversations I have had with people is defensiveness about affirmative action and assumptions that affirmative action is really about lowering standards to meet diversity needs. I see their defensiveness as a lack of understanding and willingness to think deeper about the issues surrounding affirmative action. I am hurt by the lack of understanding because affirmative action was not meant to "lower standards" or "meet quotas for diversity"; it calls attention to a deeper issue of minority disadvantage and white privilege. We must recognize that many jobs have historically been inaccessible to minorities as the education, training, and experience that are required for positions have not been available to them. And even when we establish a law such as affirmative action, the majority (whites) will find ways to label situations "reverse discrimination" because there is a fear of coming in second to minorities. Here again we see a culture of fear that to open our minds to question our privileged positionality we fear we will have to give up what we believe we so rightfully deserve.

We fear not being first choice and having to share our white space with others. Our minds are shut off to considering things from different perspectives. Peller (1995) states:

> Whether articulated in terms of remedy or diversity, this discourse assumes that minority applicants are less qualified on neutral, impersonal, and objective criteria. Thus, to integrate institutions, we must compromise meritocratic standards either temporarily, in order to break the cycles of institutional life that racial domination entailed, or permanently, by diffusing merit with other ends such as diversity. (p. 132)

We have taken a law that as Peller (1995) states is an "affirmative right" and revealed our internalized fear of having to "share the wealth" with others who are deserving of everything to which we have access. We would like to think we have come a long way in "leveling the playing field" through programs like affirmative action (Kivel, 2002); however, we must remove the obstacles that cause affirmative action to be necessary.

Integration

> Schooling, like all other social institutions, continues to function as a system of privilege and preference, reinforced by power, favoring certain groups over others. (Howard, 2006, p. 118)

The history of integration and its effects on education continue to reveal the ways systemic racism is present within our schools. Color-blind ideology and racial dominance is deeply embedded within curriculum and educational practices. A fear of recognizing color, especially within education, produces a fear among educators that they may have to teach, act, and live differently, which produces discomfort. When white educators have for so long seen equality in terms of treating children equally rather than deconstructing unequal outcomes, then there has been no room for focusing on an "expansive vision of

equality" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 14). An "expansive vision of equality" calls into question the historical and continued race-based achievement gap heavily weighted by students of color. In a 1997 article, Linda Powell (1997) talks about black underachievement as the "Achievement Knot." Powell states that "'black underachievement' is not a simple knot tied within and among the Black community, but is actually composed of many strands of differently weighted rope, some of them black and some white" (p. 3). The "Achievement Knot" wasn't created by blacks and students of color alone, but by the ways in which whiteness has dominated educational practices. For example, when you historically have only allowed whites' access to the tools to read and not to minorities you are sending a message that they do not deserve the same privileges and that they are not equal. Whiteness has played a continued role in facilitating a "discourse of deficit" (Powell, 1997, p. 236), where the dominance of whiteness has maintained an "assumption of rightness, the luxury of ignorance, and the legacy of privilege" (Howard, 2006, p. 118). Students of color have historically been viewed as having deficits, yet were expected to obtain levels of excellence because the system that kept them out was seen as opened by *Brown v. Board of Education*. In this light, racism has been viewed as an old concept. This "old concept" did not take into consideration racism outside of individual acts, and saw racism as a system of advantage based on race (Tatum, 1997).

White privilege is embedded in our educational system. Powell (1997) tells a story of getting two letters from an institution of higher education since she was both a State Scholar and a National Achievement Semifinalist (African American student). One

letter had the “discourse of potential” as she says, and the other had the “discourse of deficit” (p. 4). The “discourse of potential” letter talked about how it would be an honor to have her while the “discourse of deficit” letter talked about how fortunate she would be to have a chance to attend the university. She talks about thinking through getting two letters, both very different. She considers it a computer glitch, a possibility that she couldn’t be a state scholar *and* a national achievement semifinalist. Her conclusions based on her personal experience and embedded privilege in the educational system reminds us that racism is embedded in education. Furthermore, Powell (1997) states:

> White students are supported, empowered, and affirmed, via the discourse of potential (as though they had no deficits) and it just feels like “they earned it.” Black students, their families, and their communities are burdened with the “rumor of inferiority” (Howard, 1986) in a subtle and stifling way. White students remain unfettered by the complexities of race and their whiteness, believing that meritocracy must be real because it has always rewarded their hard work. Black students are keenly aware of unfairness, expected to keep silent and continue to perform if they seek the benefits that the white world offers. (pp. 4–5)

The effects of integration and education have not only a historical presence, but impact current day curriculum. When you create an educational system to exclude individuals (i.e. tracking system) and then to assimilate people how can you ignore the privileged system you have created? In a lengthy but appropriate excerpt on this topic, Peller (1995) states:

> Within the black community there are two separate challenges to the traditional integration policy that has long constituted the major objective of established negro leadership. There is the general skepticism that the negro, even after having transformed himself into a white black-man, will enjoy full acceptance in American society; and there is the longer-range doubt that even should complete integration somehow be achieved, it would prove to be really desirable, for its

> price may be the total absorption and disappearance of the race-a sort of painless genocide. (p. 134)

Historically, minorities—especially blacks—have been "integrated off into the white community-absorbed into another culture, often with undisguised contempt for all that had previously constituted their racial and cultural heritage" (Peller, 1995, p. 135). How can we expect education to be one of interest and excitement for minorities? With a history of assimilation and integration that strips them of their heritage and beliefs, why is it so hard to understand that whites have the upper hand? Whites work toward the belief that being color-blind is the answer to racial equality and neutrality is positive. Peller (1995) reminds us that resources and power play a huge role in understanding integrationist race neutral ideology as he states:

> Rather than providing the material means for improving the housing, schools, cultural life, and economy of black neighborhoods, nationalists saw mainstream race reform as entailing "progress" only through blacks moving into historically white neighborhoods, attending historically white schools, participating in white cultural activities, and working in white owned and white-controlled economic enterprises. (p. 139)

If I were to reverse this scenario I immediately feel betrayed, hurt, and a loss of identity if I were to be uprooted in this sense. If the white majority were to experience this type of uprooting and transformation it might be easier for us to understand the impact of such a movement. Integration has not only historically impacted education, but the structure of integration has continued to impact education today. Today's system of education continues to privilege whiteness and ignore the ways we are stripping students and

teachers away from a pedagogy that investigates, problematizes, and questions societal norms and sees racism as a powerful subject, rather than one to fear.

In summary, fear paralyzes us. Many times what we fear is having to confront ourselves and consider a new way of thinking, a new way of acting, a new way of living. In relation to white privilege, fear is perpetuated out of the idea that white privilege thinking might be compromised or shaken up by a new way of thinking. How dare someone shake up our white world! I say sarcastically. I follow this statement to connect fear to our current election. Many people fear a change with Obama, because he's not a representative of the white elite class, which has had a huge impression on this country. Obama represents change and difference. In our "culture of fear" I have lived and understand an ingrained fear of challenging the norm. Growing up Republican and in a privileged household, you always voted republican without question. The moment I voted for Barack Obama I remember standing in the booth, knowing full well what choice I was going to make and in a brief second questioned my decision (what if I was wrong about him, was it because he was black, was it because everyone I knew was voting Republican) but I followed through. There was undoubtedly a sense of doubt present and in that moment I understood what it was like to feel the pressures of a lifetime of privilege, ingrained in even a personal decision, rear its head. I was making a change and fear was present. While many whites may argue that things have changed and blacks have the same opportunities as whites, I see beneath that talk and sense a breath of entitlement. James Baldwin said "not every problem faced can be solved, but no problem can be solved until it is faced" (as cited in Powell, 1997, p. 10). We will always live in a

culture of suspicion as long as we don't talk about race and deconstruct our positionality as whites in order to impact racism. A lack of understanding of the impact a colorblind ideology has on society continues to prevent us from seeing value in difference. The laws intended to benefit disenfranchised groups, but continue to benefit whites must be examined as part of a system of oppression. Lastly, the history of integration did not rid our educational systems of institutionalized racism, but has left our schools, educators, and students following a curriculum void of critical discussions about racism and social justice. While many times viewed as separate, these examples discussed above weave together to reveal a possessive investment in whiteness. These topics reveal white superiority being used as a defense mechanism to protect whiteness and the systems, laws, and institutions that support it.

Whiteness as Property

One important piece to whiteness studies is the concept of whiteness as property. As history reveals, one of the government's initial purposes was to protect property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Property included the slaves that landowners "owned" as well. A government created to protect the property rights of landowners failed to protect the human rights of African Americans because they were objectified as property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Even when slavery was abolished blacks were still denied the right to own property (Blaisdell, 2005) which in turn continues to give whites power; property equals power. Whiteness is appropriated as tools to create the rules and decide who benefits and who doesn't, and that is the power of whiteness. Those who had property and currently have property have used their whiteness to create racial spaces or

spaces in which individuals with property receive more benefits (i.e. classroom and/or community resources, advanced tutoring without being labeled at risk, etc.). Land ownership also equated to more intellectual property for whites. This perpetuation of power through property strings itself along in ways whites benefit. The availability of intellectual property rights can be seen in current day college prep courses that are more available in highly populated white schools, advanced summer programs, afterschool programs, and clubs all benefiting whiteness. Owning property historically and today has advantages. Those who own property in the more affluent side of town have children attending schools that are more than adequately funded. Schools also provide intellectual property of varying kinds depending on the courses offered (AP or IB courses, foreign language options aside from Spanish and French) which provide students "rich" intellectual property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Those who don't have an accumulation of property don't have access to these privileges—nor do whites want them to—for it would decrease whites' property value; this is the silence of whiteness. According to Bell (1989), "the concept of individual rights, unconnected to property rights, was totally foreign to these men of property; thus, despite two decades of civil rights gains, most Blacks remain disadvantaged and deprived because of their race" (as cited in Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 53).

The construct of power is critical to investigating and understanding the positionality of whiteness as illustrated above. Throughout history wealthy whites have taken charge of situations and events that displayed power, alienation, and violence onto other non-white groups. In our textbooks these archetypal power stories where white

male leaders “led their forces” or “took over the land” were never questioned or problematized as a product of whiteness. We see in our textbooks and stories of “heroes” fighting battles and signing historical documents as true history, as earned privileges. We never question whiteness as culture and what it has created; instead, we question those outside of it who fail to assimilate into white culture. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) state that “the power of white supremacy is an important target of critical multiculturalism; with its phenomenal ability to camouflage itself to the point it can deny its own existence” (p. 30). White culture is seen as simply blending in. It is not something to problematize because it is normal, unquestioned, and uplifted. Whiteness studies call for us to recognize whiteness as it is stripped from the glory of battles won and land accrued and people overtaken, but instead recognize whiteness as a place of power that has been purposefully constructed through racism throughout history.

Critical Multiculturalism

Critical to whiteness studies and critical race theory is critical multiculturalism. As Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) remind us, “critical multiculturalism examines whiteness, its privilege, normativity (its ability to designate itself as the standard) and erasure” (p. 20). Like whiteness, critical multiculturalism is complex and multidimensional. According to Nylund (2006), critical multiculturalism has the following features:

> (1) recognizes the socio-historical construct of race, and its intersections with class, gender, nation, sexuality and capitalism; (2) creates pedagogical conditions in which students interrogate conditions of “otherness;” (3) challenges the idea of social work (and other social sciences) as an apolitical, trans-historical practice

> removed from the power struggles of history; and (4) makes visible the historical and social construction of whiteness. (p. 30)

This "new multiculturalism" (McClaren, 1994) is committed to taking a model of cultural appreciation masked as multiculturalism out of the classroom and transforming it into an antiracist practice of critical multiculturalism. Rather than learning about multiculturalism in reference to anyone other than white, critical multiculturalism is more inclusive of white students and may possibly have a profound impact on them (Nylund, 2006). The importance of including the deconstruction of whiteness and white privilege in critical multiculturalism is foundational to its efforts to transform traditional multiculturalism. According to Nylund (2006), "Critical multiculturalism induces white people to rethink their understanding of their own ethnicity and the construction of their consciousness" (p. 30). With its roots in critical theory, critical multiculturalism promotes self-reflection, which in turn could result in changes of perspective. Contrary to traditional views of multiculturalism, especially within the schools, critical multiculturalism doesn't have a neat set of rules and procedures with which to "teach" and/or promote multiculturalism, but instead is aligned with critical pedagogy. Through critical pedagogy students and teachers are not in an education of "politically neutral set of skills and an objective body of knowledge," but rather they seek to understand and deconstruct "the subtle and often hidden educational processes that privilege the already affluent and undermine the efforts of the poor" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 24). In this form, critical multiculturalism asks us to problematize how marginalized groups have been driven away and out by white privilege and hegemony. Critical multiculturalism

emphasizes “difference within unity” as “critical scholars seek a multiculturalism that understands the specific nature of difference but appreciates our mutual embrace of principles of equality and justice” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 33). Combined with whiteness studies, critical multiculturalism calls us to bring whiteness out of hiding and discuss the normalization of whiteness and its ignored impact on multiculturalism.

Critical Race Theory

To situate the study of whiteness and critical multiculturalism and how they intersect, we must understand critical race theory. Critical race theory (CRT) has its “roots” in legal studies with legal scholars Bell, Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda, and Kimberley Crenshaw among its originators. When the civil rights legislation was stalled and dragging on these scholars saw CRT as a “form of oppositional scholarship that challenges the experience of whites as the normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of color” (Taylor, 1998, p. 122). Giving voice to the experiences of people of color is central to the ideals of CRT. CRT doesn’t see whiteness as a place from which everything should be measured against, but instead CRT acknowledges whiteness as the normative, privileged story, and in turn seeks to retell stories through the voices of those whose voices have been excluded or misrepresented. In a history where minorities have had no voice, yet been impacted most by white systems of oppression, CRT welcomes their voices. Where whites see their viewpoints as truth, critical race theorists call into question the viewpoints of whites bestowed on people of color as a single, unified truth. CRT calls into question the normalcy of whiteness as it carries on without thought of the oppressors and the

oppressed. CRT also problematizes the concept known as interest convergence, “that is, the interests of blacks in achieving racial equality have been accommodated only when they have converged with the interests of powerful whites” (Taylor, 1998, p. 123). Two examples of interest convergence are Integration and Affirmative Action. Blacks were integrated into white schools and expected to adopt white ways in order to survive. Integration was not a joint effort—it was a forced effort where whites saw the benefit to themselves and whiteness altogether. If blacks could learn how to “act white” and assimilate into white culture then they would be less troublesome and easier to manage. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) state “a model desegregation program becomes defined as one that ensures that whites are happy (and do not leave the system altogether) regardless of whether African-American and other students of color achieve or remain” (p. 56). Even today we see perks and privileges given to white parents to keep their children in a school that is desegregated (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Bell (1995) also rearticulates the *Brown* decision, re-historicizing the decision to show how it fits the interest of whites. This is key to critical race theory; rehistoricizing and rearticulating through the voices of those who have been historically excluded from laws that directly affect them. Blaisdell (2005) acknowledges that “CRT scholars attempt to critique standards versions of history that hide white privilege” (p. 8). In regards to my example of affirmative action, a look at the numbers in 1993 reveals that the major recipients of affirmative action hiring policies have been white women (Guy-Sheftall, 1993), and in turn the benefit is to whites in general.

Cornel West writes, “critical race theory compels us to confront critically the most explosive issue in American civilization: the historical centrality and complicity of law in upholding white supremacy” (as cited in Taylor, 1998, p. 122). CRT, like critical multiculturalism and whiteness studies, brings race and racism to the forefront, acknowledging its presence rather than ignoring it. Most importantly, critical race studies recognize and value the voices of people of color and see their voices as void from legal scholarship. Ladson-Billings (1999) states that “CRT theorists attempt to interject minority cultural viewpoints, derived from a common history of oppression, into their efforts to reconstruct a society crumbling under the burden of racial hegemony” (p. 215). CRTs believe in exposing racism and drawing on the stories of struggle among minorities to give voice to those who have been ignored. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) echo the need for voices to “name one’s reality” and serve to interpret one’s experience in order to affect not only the storyteller, but the oppressor in an effort to jar dyconscious racism. Dyconscious racism, as defined by King (1991), is “an uncritical habit of the mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given” (p. 135). Critical race theory attempts to exploit the norms of whiteness so that one can develop a critical consciousness and begin to take hold of the reality of racism.

Summary

In a speech given at the 3rd National Conference on Whiteness, University of Chicago, November 7, 1998, Jeff Hitchcock states:

> At the Center for the Study of White American Culture we've developed a perspective we call decentering whiteness. In brief, we say that:
> - Whiteness forms center of our society in the United States
> - We believe no single racial or cultural group should control the center
> - We need to take whiteness out of the center and replace the center with multiracial values. (p. 1)

Whiteness studies, CRT, and critical multiculturalism call us to go head-to-head with one's whiteness and are all critical to decentering whiteness. Theories about whiteness problematize the un-naming of it and call us to decenter whiteness from its throne. Akom (2008) calls the work of many whiteness scholars "second-wave whiteness" (p. 251), which examines how whiteness and white supremacy frame and rework racial categories, hierarchies, and boundaries. In addition to whiteness studies, critical multiculturalism reframes multiculturalism to include a critical analysis of whiteness (Nylund, 2006). Through critical multiculturalism we are acknowledging whiteness as a race and in turn a vital piece of multicultural education. Re-centering whiteness is not about overlooking whiteness or taking it out of the picture, but rather looking through whiteness. Systematic and institutionalized racism is created by the continued perpetuation of whiteness and white privilege. The struggle of being white and deconstructing whiteness is wanting to avoid and/or deny the privileges we have because we are white. We want to think we deserve them, that we have earned them fair and square, but instead the study of whiteness calls us to look at the historical construction of whiteness and white privilege. The study of whiteness calls us to think about the ways the benefits of whiteness permeates our lives. My privileges have been passed down to me,

never considering who got “passed” on the way. Jensen (2005) reflects an active stance when he states,

> Shouldn’t we be trying to take the focus off of white people, who dominate society and can so easily drown out the voices of non-white people? Of course we should; as white people we need to realize we are not the point of reference for everything. White is not, by definition, the norm, the standard, the best. (p. 2)

I would argue that “white” should be the focus. We should step back and look at what whiteness has created for ourselves and taken away from others. Whiteness needs to be looked at from a critical lens and not through the lens of current history textbooks that reads the same year after year, propping up whiteness as normal; but let us talk about the history of how white came to be, whiteness as property, and of the sacrifices nonwhites made and the bulldozing effect white power has had on various cultures attempting to establish themselves with no success (Smith, 2007). In addition, Fine (2004) continues her concern around the crisis of whiteness by stating,

> I worry that by keeping our eyes on those who gather disadvantage, we have failed to notice the micropractices by which White youth, varied by class and gender, stuff their academic and social pickup trucks with goodies not otherwise available to people of color. (p. 245)

As long as we don’t focus on whiteness, we are supporting the ways in which systematic and institutionalized racism exists to support whites and keep out minorities. While critiquing domination and oppression are important aspects of deconstructing whiteness and incorporating critical multiculturalism, it’s important to provide avenues for whiteness to have the potential to be an integral part of social justice education.

Rodriguez (2000) states,

> By highlighting the necessary tension between understanding whiteness as oppression as well as thinking through its potentiality, such a dialectical approach to the study of whiteness pushes the boundaries of multicultural education not only by bringing whiteness inside multicultural education for critical analysis, but also by thinking through its potential as a progressive racial identity linked to a broader democratic project. (p. 15)

It "is the necessity not to abolish whiteness but instead to rearticulate it" (Rodriguez, 2000, p. 2). If we talk in terms of abolishing whiteness we are advocating that we ignore it and conveniently pass over history and how it continues to live on. Critical whiteness studies, CRT, and critical multiculturalism critique power structures, a system of hierarchical ordering constructed by whiteness, an exclusionary history, and a lack of minority voice. All of these things are foundational in abolishing systems and institutions that continue to oppress minorities and lift up whites.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The importance of bringing to light whiteness studies and the systematic privileges whiteness creates allows whiteness to be deconstructed and repositioned. This study is one of advocacy and support for the ignored and null voices of minority educators. By gaining valuable information from the voices of minority educators we can continue to educate other white educators, like myself, on the impact of white privilege within schools. Furthermore, we can work together to implement strategies to reposition white privilege within the schools.

> As educators, we are involved in the struggle over meaning. Yet, in this society as in all others, only certain meanings are considered "legitimate," only certain ways of understanding the world get to be called "official knowledge" (Apple, 1990, 1993). This doesn't just happen. Our society is structured in such a way that dominant meanings are more likely to circulate. These meanings, of course, *will* be contested, will be resisted and sometimes transformed (Willis, 1990); but, this does not lessen the fact that hegemonic cultures have greater power to make themselves known and acceptable. (Apple, 1997, p. 124)

Linda Powell (1997) reminds us that

> the ongoing conversation in this culture about race is sometimes notable in its silences or its perversions, but it is always in progress by virtue of each of our physical embodiment and identity development. Regardless of what we intend to teach or learn we each import our part of the conversations in the classroom. (p. 10)

As educators, we must problematize our own positionality so we can be a critical participant in our classrooms to deconstruct whiteness, race as a social construction, and the ways in which white dominance is normalized within our schools. Kincheloe (1999) reminds us that "as whites, white students in particular, come to see themselves through the eyes of Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and indigenous peoples, they begin to move away from the conservative constructions of the dominant culture" (p. 163). Teaching about whiteness is not about making people feel guilty, but rather, it is about understanding the impact of history on creating white hierarchal thinking that saw non-whites as irrational and inferior (Kincheloe, 1999). It is also important that white students and educators listen to non-whites and work together to reinvent whiteness. Powell (1997) goes on to say that:

> We must face those areas of fear and of collision with the larger social system that we both love and hate. Teachers have the privilege and responsibility of creating new conversations in our classrooms which go beyond a description of risk and capacity, to actually demonstrate and develop them. (p. 10)

I would add that we are all responsible—students, parents, faculty, staff, etc.—to engage in these conversations and attempt to collectively question normal behaviors, thoughts, and systems and engage in conversations of change and activism.

Lastly, we must make sure to understand that whiteness is not understood as unchanging (Kincheloe, 1999). Whiteness is a social construction (Kincheloe, 1999) and therefore, must be problematized. Whiteness and white privilege are foundational principles within institutions that make up our society and when white people are removed those ideals are still functioning within our institutions. Kincheloe (1999) states,

"Diversity in whiteness demands our attention. It is not contradictory to argue that whiteness is a marker of privilege but that all white people are not able to take advantage of that privilege" (p. 168). Our gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. all affect the extent to which we have white privilege (Kendall, 2006). A pedagogy of whiteness separates whiteness from white people. In this way, whiteness is seen as systems and institutionalized norms that are set up to track people "in or out" of the privileged system. A pedagogy of whiteness separates individual acts of racism from systematic and institutionalized racism that is embedded in everyday life. The meaning and reality of whiteness in each of our lives will be different. It is important that within a study of whiteness to be careful not to essentialize white people. We cannot say "all white people are . . ." or "all black people are . . .," as that gives way to essentializing people based on race. Equally important is investigating and deconstructing the ways whiteness has been enacted as normal and superior within our educational system. Through this research there is a hope to reconceptualize whiteness. While the history of whiteness is critical, the paralyzing effects of whiteness seen through the lens of domination can leave no room for hope to change. The recovery process for whiteness redefined involves listening to the voices of those who have been silenced.

Participant Selection

Education, while historically seen as "the great equalizer," intensifies my interest in the thoughts of minority educators and their experience within an institution of privilege. Kendall (2001) reminds us "we must ask how we participate in not seeing the experiences of people of color that are so very different from white peoples" (p. 12). It is

important to acknowledge voices of difference; voices of those who have not been captured to the extent of white educators. By focusing on K-12 educators we can capture information on the system that has impacted the college students with whom I work. Howard (2006) echoes my interest by stating,

> White multicultural awareness must be mediated through actual engagement with "the other." Authentic engagement with the reality of those whose stories are significantly different from our own can allow us to transcend, to some degree, the limits of social positionality and help us see dominance in a clearer light. (p. 39)

This study explores self-perception of the essence and meaning of whiteness/white privilege within the educational system as experienced by K-12 minority educators. This phenomenon is examined through the following dimensions: dominance and presence of white privilege within education, classroom pedagogy, and a charge for white educators. The sample consists of six participants. In-depth interviews were conducted based on qualitative research design of narrative research.

Design Introduction

This research was aimed at developing a deeper understanding of white privilege within education through the perspective of six K-12 minority educators. My exploration into my own whiteness is integral in this research, as it is coupled with the voices of the oppressed. As previously mentioned, I grew up in private schools most of my life. I had one black friend and I never had a black teacher. When I began to understand white privilege and class privilege while in my Ph.D. program, my world opened up and was completely shaken by the impact privilege had not just on my life, but my schooling.

Whiteness and white privilege are more than mere “terms”; these ideologies helped me understand my education as schooling rather than education as a practice of freedom (hooks, 1990). My experiences were not sheltered from issues of race, class, and privilege; rather, my experiences were seen as normal. Discussions of race, class, and privilege were not explored in ways that challenged my comfort with being white and privileged. My education was not questioned as being nothing but the best (the school I attended was 99% white); therefore, I lived my life not truly seeing experiences different than my own or those like me. Kendall (2001) reminds us “we must ask how we participate in not seeing the experiences of people of color that are so very different from white peoples” (p. 12). It is important to acknowledge voices of difference—voices of those who haven’t been captured to the extent of white educators. The aim of this study was to pose questions to discover the concepts and essential structures of a lived experience, concept, or phenomenon (Rudestam & Newton, 2007)—in this case, the experience of whiteness or white privilege within education as experienced by minority educators. Thus, this study is guided by specific contexts and purposeful participant selection. Most importantly, this study is more than about educating myself and continuing to further understand white privilege. The focus here is not on the voices of those who are dominant, but those who are *not* asked what it’s like to teach within and around systems of white privilege. These are the voices of educators that have been and may still remain silent. By hearing the lived experiences of minority educators in schools, I am able to deconstruct the dominance of white privilege within education while

listening to voices of those who have been marginalized within systems of white privilege.

Qualitative Research Design: Narrative Inquiry

This study used a qualitative research design using narrative research. Narrative research holds an underlying assumption that there is neither a single or absolute truth; the narrative research philosophy is one of pluralism, relativism and subjectivity (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998 p. 2). Moustakas (1994) states, the question grows out of an intense interest in a particular problem or topic. The researcher's excitement and curiosity inspire the search. Personal history brings the core of the problem into focus" (p. 104).

In her study using white pre-service teachers, Alice McIntyre (1997) reveals a need for "structured immersion experiences" (as cited in Sleeter, 1993, p. 169) so that white participants spend time with people of color. The participants in her study had a hard time grasping the lived experiences of people of color in a white researcher–white researchee framework. I am supporting the need for whites to take responsibility to learn about racism, whiteness, and inequity. Furthermore, listening to the lived experiences of people of color can create a space for "emotional bonding" between members of racial groups (McIntyre, 1997, p. 139). White-on-white research also allows more room for whites to slip into "white lies" (Fine, 1997) and justify their positionality.

Incorporating narrative research allows me to hear the voices from educators whose voices have been silenced. Guidance by interview questions allows for a semi-structured narrative approach, but leaves way to encouraging the subjects to discuss

topics they might not otherwise. Creswell (2007) adds that leaving room for unstructured exploration is a key to actively involving both parties (researcher and researchee) in the exploration:

> As researchers collect stories, they negotiate relationships, smooth transitions, and provide ways to be useful to the participants. In narrative research, a key theme has been the turn toward the relationship between the researcher and the researched in which both parties will learn and change in the encounter (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). In this process, the parties negotiate the meaning of the stories, adding a validation check to the analysis. (Creswell & Miller, 2000, as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 57)

Central to this narrative methodology was an element of counterstorying. Bergerson (2003) states "Counterstories are narratives that challenge the dominant version of reality" (p. 54). Delgado (1989) stated that for outgroups—people whose experiences have been marginalized—counterstories create bonds and represent "cohesion, shared understandings, and meanings" (p. 2412, as cited in Bergerson, 2003, p. 54). For example, a minority educator would tell their story and the dominant group (myself) also tells their story in which each are given space to talk about their experiences, but then the "outgroup" challenges the reality of the "ingroup," which in turn challenges the structure of privilege. Bergerson (2003) states,

> Counterstories not only have a positive role for outgroups in creating bonds and legitimizing their experiences: they also subvert dominant views of reality by expressing the experiences of people of color in ways that whites may be more willing and able to hear. (p. 54)

Furthermore, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) remind us:

> Since many stories advance White privilege through "majoritiarian" master narratives, counter stories by people of color can help to shatter the complacency that may accompany such privilege and challenge the dominant discourses that serve to suppress people on the margins of society (as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 28).

Using the tenets of narrative research grounded in CRT, participants were presented with their transcribed interviews and had an opportunity to provide clarification, elaboration, and critique. In this research, the use of critical race theory requires a questioning and critique of the normalcy of whiteness and will guide the way I interpret the data so as not to privilege my voice.

As discussed in Chapter II, CRT is deeply embedded in my research. Creswell (2007) states that "critical theory perspectives are concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender (Fay, 1987)" (p. 27). When the civil rights legislation was stalled, scholars such as Bell, Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda, and Kimberley Crenshaw saw that "as a form of oppositional scholarship, CRT challenges the experience of whites as the normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experiences of people of color" (Taylor, 1998, p. 122). Giving voice to the experiences of people of color is central to the ideals of CRT. CRT does not see whiteness as a place from which everything should be measured against; instead, CRT acknowledges whiteness as the normative, privileged story and in turn seeks to retell stories through the voices of those whose voices have been excluded or misrepresented. The null voices of minority

educators are no longer acceptable within CRT. By using narrative research coupled with CRT, whiteness is questioned, decentered, and problematized by minority educators and myself.

Positionality

Madison (2005) reminds us that it is important that researchers acknowledge their own power, engage in dialogues, and use theory to interpret or illuminate social action (as cited in Creswell, 2007). As I continued throughout this research it was important to remember that my positionality of being white and privileged played a part in the interaction with the participants and the interpretation of data.

One might ask: "As a white person, who are you to talk about race?" I asked myself this very question in the beginning of my research and inquisitions and my response is as follows:

1. I can discuss white privilege through my personal connection. White privilege has touched me and lives with me every day.
2. If I were not to speak out, I would only be allowing the silence of white privilege to continue in its silenced ways. In order to support antiracist dialogue and pedagogy, I have a moral obligation to speak of what white privilege is.
3. Lastly, I am adding to the literature and the writing on the subject of white privilege. All other authors should be considered when developing understanding around these issues.

So again, this is being written from my perspective while being informed by distinguished authors on this subject. It is being written as a personal reflection of my life, which until now, was void of white privilege in my thinking, living, and being. My reflections on my schooling are also ways in which I experienced white privilege and economic privilege. My calling as an educator, teacher, and mother obligate me to reflect and question my own teaching pedagogy against my past, in addition to hearing voices of minority educators that were null and void in my schooling experience.

In addition, this is written for those who, like me, have never considered white privilege as living and breathing in personal and systematic ways. My learning and education is in no way complete after this writing. This is just the beginning of deeply understanding white privilege in my own life as well as within the educational system.

I was careful not to position my own agenda or thoughts over those of my participants. CRT as an analysis through which narratives are presented allows for the "deprivileging of mainstream discourses, while simultaneously projecting the voices, stories and experiences of those that have been marginalized" (Decuir &Dixon, 2004, as cited in Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005, p. 204). Narrative research and CRT are collaborative practices where marginalized voices are heard and social justice is paramount.

It is extremely important to recognize my whiteness in this study. I am a white female who does not have K-12 experience as an educator—only as a student. I approached this study with my participants very open to my belief that white privilege does exist. I opened up to my participants in the beginning about my background and

how my interest in this topic came to be. I remained genuine and open and I encouraged honesty. I cannot change my whiteness, but I can change the way I see and understand it. Tatum (2001) writes,

> In a race-conscious society, the development of this positive sense of racial/ethnic identity not based on assumed superiority or inferiority is an important task for both white people and people of color. The development of this positive identity is a life-long process that often requires unlearning the misinformation and stereotypes we have internalized not only about others, but also about ourselves. (p. 53)

By focusing on K-12 minority educators we can capture information on the system that has impacted me and the college students with whom I work. Howard (2006) echoes my interest by stating,

> White multicultural awareness must be mediated through actual engagement with "the other." Authentic engagement with the reality of those whose stories are significantly different from our own can allow us to transcend, to some degree, the limits of social positionality and help us see dominance in a clearer light. (p. 39)

This research is focused on gathering information from individuals who have knowledge about white privilege and who believe white privilege exists within the schools.

In addition, due to the limited research and material in regards to education from the perspective of minority educators, it was decided to focus solely on the views of minority educators (those educators who view themselves as other than white). The method used for recruitment is snowballing, otherwise knows an chain sampling. This approach is aimed at "locating information-rich key informants or critical cases and the

process begins by asking well-situated people: 'Who knows a lot about [white privilege]? Who should I talk to?'" (Patton, 1990, p. 176).

I began by emailing teachers I knew in Triad schools, colleagues, and friends, asking them to forward the pilot study and invitation and fact sheet as well as the consent form and participant information form to minority educators they felt would be interested in being interviewed and able to provide information about white privilege. The potential participants contacted me directly if they were interested in participating. The data collected were from the individuals, not the schools. Schools were not be used to access or recruit participants.

The sample size was kept to six educators in an effort to deeply explore the interview questions, as well as to allow time for counterstorying and added thoughts from the selected participants in response to the transcribed interviews. Patton (1990) reminds us that "qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases" (p. 165). Participants selected were K-12 teachers within the NC Triad area. The approved IRB information form (see Appendix F) was emailed to various people to share with colleagues who were minority K-12 teachers and the participants contacted me to be interviewed. The participants decided on a location for the interview with which they felt comfortable. It was important that they chose the location so they felt comfortable and weren't forced into any environment they didn't choose. The sample was truly random. None of my colleagues within my graduate program who are K-12 educators were solicited. I knew none of the participants prior to the interviews. Patton (1990) states,

> Interviews are interventions. They affect people. A good interview lays open thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experience not only to the interviewer but also the interviewee. The process of being taken through a directed, reflective process affects the persons being interviewed and leaves them knowing things about themselves that they didn't know—or least were not aware of-before the interview. (p. 354)

The goal of this research was to begin conversations with minority educators about white privilege. It was not my goal to overgeneralize what minority educators say about white privilege because the sample size is small. This is also just the beginning of a possibly larger research study.

Data Collection

Using standardized open-ended interview questions allows structure to the interview questions when asking a number of people about the same topic. Patton (1990) lists three major reasons for using standardized open-ended interviews as part of an evaluation:

> 1) The exact instrument used in the evaluation is available for inspection by decision makers and information users;
> 2) variation among interviewers must be used; and
> 3) the interview is highly focused so that interviewee time is carefully used. (p. 285)

In addition to using open-ended interview questions (detailed below), I allowed time for probes and follow-up questions to a response to increase richness of the data. Probes and follow-up questions like "What was your involvement in that situation?," "How did that come about?," or "Can you elaborate on that?" allowed blank spaces in a response to be filled in. I also interrupted when necessary for clarification to make sure I understood

what the interviewee said earlier. I interviewed the participants once for up to 1.5 hours. As detailed in the data analysis section, follow-up entailed transcription of the interviews into a word document to allow the participants to provide clarification if needed. I tape recorded my interviews, which allowed me as the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee (Patton, 1990).

The following is a list of semi-structured interview questions I used during each interview. The questions are broken up into three sections. The first focused on white privilege and personal meaning, the second on classroom pedagogy, and the third focused on transforming the paradigm—taking action to be transformative as a white educator (see Table 1). Some of the questions have been pulled and adapted from an autobiographical assignment given by Karyn McKinney (2005) to her class and then discussed in her book, *Being White: Stories of Race and Racism* (2007) as well as from Gary R. Howard's (2006) book *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*. Ultimately, the questions help us understand and document perspectives never before heard.

Table 1. Semi-structured Interview Questions

White Privilege	Classroom Pedagogy	A Charge for White Educators
What does the term white privilege mean to you? Do you think white students are aware of their privileges? Do you think that is problematic?	Are topics of race/ whiteness discussed in your classroom/school? Are you comfortable discussing race issues within your classroom and/or among your colleagues at school?	How do we help white educators make a paradigm shift in challenging the system of white dominance?

Table 1 (cont.)

White Privilege	Classroom Pedagogy	A Charge for White Educators
Do you think the educational system advantages whites students over students of color? In what ways have you seen this in your experience/your school? How are perceptions about race and "whiteness" manifested in your schools? Among faculty? Administration? Parents? Students? There are assertions that the achievement gap in education today, in many ways, is the result of our history of white social dominance, what evidence do you see that either supports or counters this argument?	How do you feel about current pedagogical practices- does it emphasize one culture over another?	How can white educators become allies for children of color? Do you see evidence of this in today's schools? For people of color and white people, what do we need from each other if we are to create spaces of trust and effective collaboration in the service of our students?

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were complete they were transcribed by a professional transcriber who signed a Certificate of Confidentiality that is kept on file with the Principal Investigator's research records and consent forms in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office at UNCG, to which only the researcher has access. Electronic transcriptions are stored in a password-protected computer at UNCG to which only the

researcher has access. Participants were interviewed at a mutually agreed upon location. The transcription reports used pseudonyms so as to maintain the privacy of participants being interviewed. Once the interviews were transcribed, they were sent to the participants for member checking. None of the participants had changes to the transcribed interviews they received.

With three sections to the interview, initial searches for major themes were focused around each section, the first major interview section being white privilege and personal meaning, the second classroom pedagogy, and the third transforming the paradigm—taking action to be transformative as a white educator.

Using methods of analysis suggested by Stevick (1971), Colaizzi (1973, 1978) and Moustakas (1994) as guides in analyzing the data, the transcripts were read several times to obtain their overall feeling followed by the procedure of horizonalization. Horizonalizing the data involves listing every expression relevant to the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Following horizonalization, reducing and eliminating each of the expressions listed that either do not contain a moment of the experience that is necessary for understanding it or are repetitive, overlapping, or vague expressions leads to meaning units that can be listed from the interviews. The meaning units are then clustered into common themes or categories and the clustered themes and meanings are used to develop descriptions of the experience that construct the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). As Worthen (1998) states,

> You look for meaning in the data and for its repetition and redundancy across cases. You see whether there are patterns to the data, and whether you can match

> the data with the emerging meaning and take the meaning and impose it back on the data to see whether it holds up. (p. 140)

I also noticed emerging themes and subthemes, discussed in Chapter IV, throughout the overall interviews that were common among the educators.

Validity

Verification is the first step in achieving validity of a research project (Creswell, 2007). Each participant verified the verbatim transcript as their interview. As the researcher, I made a conscious effort to make the participant feel comfortable, but then to allow them to speak and for me to really listen to what they had to say. By doing this I bracketed past experiences to be fully present. To further enhance the validity of the study, I have listed in the results verbatim statements made by participants in response to interview questions. While Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method pulls significant statements and then formulates meaning, due to the nature of my study and the foundation of CRT within my study, I am refraining from formulating meaning without including descriptions of the experiences provided directly from the participants' transcripts. The experts here are my participants, not the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter introduces the participants, reviews the interview questions, and provides the data analysis for my research study. The aim of this study was to pose questions to discover the concepts and essential structures of a lived experience, concept, or phenomenon (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). In this study, the narrative focus was on the perception of white privilege within schools as experienced, seen, and understood by minority educators. By hearing the lived experiences of minority educators in schools we capture the voices of those who have been marginalized within systems of white privilege. Interviewing also furthers deconstructing my own whiteness.

The interview questions (detailed below) guided the semi-structured interviews and results were organized around the three pre-determined clusters of questions detailed below (White privilege, Classroom pedagogy, and A charge for white educators):

White privilege

- What does the term white privilege mean to you? Do you think white students are aware of their privileges? Do you think that is problematic?
- Do you think the educational system advantages whites students over students of color? In what ways have you seen this in your experience/your school?
- How are perceptions about race and “whiteness” manifested in your schools? Among faculty? Administration? Parents? Students?
- There are assertions that the achievement gap in education today, in many ways, is the result of our history of white social dominance. What evidence do you see that either supports or counters this argument?

Classroom pedagogy

- Are topics of race/whiteness discussed in your classroom/school? Are you comfortable discussing race issues within your classroom and/or among your colleagues at school?
- How do you feel about current pedagogical practices- does it emphasize one culture over another?

A charge for white educators

- How do we help white educators make a paradigm shift in challenging the system of white dominance?
- How can white educators become allies for children of color? Do you see evidence of this in today's schools?
- For people of color and white people, what do we need from each other if we are to create spaces of trust and effective collaboration in the service of our students?

Participant Profiles

As outlined in Chapter III, six educators were identified through snowball sampling for this study and interviewed one-on-one for approximately 1.5 hours each. Although interviews were fully transcribed, the search for patterns, trends, and contrasting and unique answers comprise the analysis phase reported here. Participants who satisfied the criteria for this study were interviewed face-to-face employing a semi-structured interview format. The advantage of a semi-structured interview allowed me to gain information on specific questions to maintain focus on the topic being investigated, while also allowing space for the conversation to stay open and relaxed as topics took different turns. The exchanges between the educators and myself were quite informative, laden with insights as to their feelings and perceptions of white privilege within schools.

“Kathryn”

Kathryn has been in her school for five years. She revealed during the interview that she teaches fifth grade at a magnet school. The demographics of the school are 97% African-American and 3% other. Interestingly, Kathryn is quick to say at the beginning of the interview that she doesn’t think it’s problematic that the white students at her school aren’t aware of their privileges:

> I don’t think it’s a problem . . . I don’t think they are aware. Um, not the students here. Not meaning . . . all. . . . Some of my students are but not all because we aren’t like that at Magnet, but I do think it’s a problem that they have poor education because of the color of your skin, but that’s the way it is. Eventually they will figure it out.

This was all said in a matter of fact way, as if she was ready for the next question. Kathryn also told me that the faculty and staff are predominantly Caucasian. She shared that the faculty are “basically divided” and says, “That’s just the way it is. I mean sometimes that’s the way it is; I shouldn’t say that’s the way it is, but it’s so divided” When asked to elaborate, Kathryn says, “meaning that you have black and then you have white. I mean if you have a parent teacher faculty meeting, you have all the blacks on one side, all the whites on the other. So divided, not a whole lot of interaction going on unless they absolutely have to.” During this part of the interview, Kathryn seemed to be hesitant about being open about these divisions. She also clearly said that she and her colleagues do not talk about race and whiteness. “That’s a touchy subject in my school” she said twice, very affirming. “Race is not something you discuss here; it’s not something they want to hear about, white privilege” she said. Kathryn shared that the faculty (I presume

the white faculty) says “it’s the parents. Because the parents don’t do this and the parents don’t do that; then why do you think the parents don’t do that she says?” Instead of telling the parents how they can help, Kathryn suggests asking them how they can help. It’s an effort to meet in the middle. Kathryn shares about one teacher,

> Kathryn: I knew one teacher, she grew up um, and she’s very white privilege.
>
> **KC: When you say she’s very white privilege, can you . . .**
>
> Kathryn: She came from money.
>
> **KC: Okay.**
>
> Kathryn: So she doesn’t understand, she can’t. It’s hard to put that shoe on the other foot and say . . . and she doesn’t have kids so all you have to go by is your own experience. So, if you haven’t experienced it, then you don’t know that. Whereas we have one teacher who is a white male and he grew up with money but he saw things differently and so he had to tone it down. He was down in the trenches and he was trying to motivate the kids and meet the kids help their needs and get them to say you can be somebody, you can do this. Don’t let anybody tell you that. Well, he did not see color, he saw a child. So, I can’t say it’s the way you grow up, but it’s just from you know, your own experiences.

Kathryn shared instances throughout the interview that describe how people do see color, even if they say they don’t. She shared an experience where she and her 10-year-old son were walking to the grocery store: “He was walking behind me and a white lady passed him and she clutched onto her purse. His pants wasn’t baggy, I mean he was tall so she thought he was older and he ran up and said why is she clutching her purse like I was going to jack her?” She also says whites have advantages when it comes to jobs. Kathryn says, “When I was doing . . . going to an interview for a job, when people found

out I went to UNCG, it's like their whole attitude changed because they thought I went to a HBCU. Why, because I'm black?"

It was clear during the interview that her perspective is based on her experiences in her school, which is predominately black. After being asked about ways she has seen the educational system advantage white students over students of color she responds by saying "No, because our population is predominately black so I wouldn't really see much of that." She can, however, say that friends of hers who have white kids in high school got all the information. "It comes down to knowing your rights and a lot of times people really don't know their rights. They're not well kept up a lot of times with what their rights are. Whereas, I think Caucasians are well kept and comfortable in the circle they're in to know what their rights are." During the interview Kathryn shared that she grew up in a single parent home and her mother had a sixth-grade education. She talks about growing up poor and her mother working three or four jobs at a time. She and her sister were the first siblings in her family to graduate from college. As we finished the interview, a theme of the importance of relationships arose. As she reflected back on the male teacher who "gets it" and the white privileged teacher who doesn't, she said,

> You've got to understand that you've got to open your mind to be able to understand. You've got to be able to get that and not think that, okay, so you are socially economic disadvantaged so I'm going to give you a break. No, this one you don't give them a break because we all have problems, you teach them how to use what they have to get where they need to go. It's not where you come from; it's where you're going. That's why I tell my student; you determine where you're going and the only thing you have that no one can take from you is your brain. You got to feed your brain.

Of all the interviews, my interview with Kathryn was somewhat awkward. Even though she responded to the call to be interviewed she was very short with most of her answers. I felt as if she was holding back from sharing entirely with me. I felt she hesitated to really open up throughout the entire interview. I had to prod for her to go deeper into answering questions, but the climate of the interview never changed. She continued to be "to the point," as if to get the interview over with.

"Ann"

Ann has been in the school system for nine years. She teaches at a Montessori school. She described the demographics of her school as "very equal." She shared that she is in the primary division in her school, which is pre-K and kindergarten. "We are a magnet school and because we are a very successful or very effective school, lots of people try to get in. So, we have a good mixture of minority, majority, and the economic diversity among our students here also," said Ann. "There are less minority teachers and one of the reasons is because not only do I have to be certified as a teacher in North Carolina, but I also have to have Montessori training," she said. It is clear throughout the interview that Ann is proud of being a Montessori teacher. Ann shared,

> Montessori helps me be real. To me, it's just a big practical, living environment. It's not a classroom. I don't even call it a classroom. We call our classrooms children's houses and it's their space and this is where information is shared. It's not me being the dominant person in the room. That's another issue I have. All of us learn from each other. My students teach other. I will ask a student to teach another student anything that I know they've mastered. So, I'm not even considered the teacher in the room; I'm the facilitator and I'm the one who makes the final decisions about things because I'm the one who will be . . . and they understand this, accountable for if anything goes wrong. But that's our relationship. I'm not better than you; I don't deserve any more respect than you have and because of that I can be real with them.

Overall, Ann is extremely positive and optimistic about her school and teaching experience throughout the interview. Despite her optimism, when asked about what white privilege means to her she said,

> I think that it probably means to me the opposite of what I've been taught all my life. Being a black woman, I've always known that there was disadvantage, so I guess white privilege would mean that there is an advantage attached to being white, or not of color. Um, I think it has changed over time, but I do still believe that there is some advantage to being not of color in this society. You get a little further or people assume things that are more advantageous rather than disadvantageous.

Because of the age group she teaches she doesn't think the children are aware of their privileges. She said, "I think that happens a little bit later." Ann also feels like things are changing and that white students do not necessarily have advantages over students of color. Ann said,

> My mother lives about three miles from the school where I teach and I live one mile from the school where I teach. I've seen things happen. I . . . had you asked me this question twenty years ago, I probably would have said, yes; but I don't think so anymore. I think that people have come to realize that people of color have just as much intelligence and given the right motivation and the right encouragement, that they can do anything. We can do anything. Women can do anything. Um, so I think things are changing and from where I sit . . . now I'm not saying it doesn't exist, but from where I sit, I don't see a lot of that. We have a black principal; we have a black superintendent in our school system, so we had a black mayor who was a female, so I think things are changing and I think people have come to realize that everyone has capabilities. So, I just don't see it as it was before.

Along with living in Greensboro her whole life, Ann said she was four years old when the Woolworth sit-ins happened and she remembers the environment around her. She said, "I remember the tone of the city back then" and she talks to her students about that.

She said she thought it was changing in 1971 when her high school was first integrated. She said,

> See, if you don't know you're poor, if you don't know that you don't have the best; then you always think that you have the best. So, I always thought I had the best. I didn't know I didn't have the best until I came here and then that's when I realized it, but I also realized at the same time, nobody here is any smarter than I am. I knew that. I knew that. I mean, nobody can really do any more than I can do.

Ann did talk about experiences that she had growing up such as going to dance class and other classes and said her mother opened up a lot of doors for her.

Ann commented during her interview, in response to one of my questions, "I feel like I'm living in a bubble" and overall has a very optimistic view of race, whiteness, and privilege. She did say many times, "I don't see that at my school," "That doesn't happen here," or "I don't see it as it was before, things are changing." Part of me feels like in fact she does live in a "bubble" while the other part of me thinks that her school is awesome and her outlook is refreshing, yet isolated. She did share that she hasn't taught a long time in the public school system, and says she's a latecomer, as she owned her own preschool before teaching in the public school system. She does comment, when asked about race and whiteness manifested in her school, that in the other school where she taught

> you could see where people were aware of things and people requested certain things based on race, but where I am right now, no, I have just as many white parents request me as a teacher as black parents. I see it all over the school. I see black children going home with white children for sleepovers, for play dates. I see . . . I just see everything going on. I see people hugging as they're walking around the track, you know, of different race. I see even the boys getting together and almost as though as if everybody is just clear. It's . . . that's one of the reasons that teachers don't walk away from our school.

Ann's optimism continued throughout her interview. She smiled a lot as she responded to questions that clearly shows she doesn't see things "as bad" as I do. Her comment about living in a bubble permeated throughout her interview.

Similar to my other interviews, Ann did reveal that she sees a gap in exposing children to certain things that contributes to the achievement gap. A powerful excerpt from her interview follows when I asked her to elaborate on how she thinks history has impacted the achievement gap. Ann shared:

> I do believe that all of our parents, even our parents of color, they do the best that they think they're doing, that they can do, but I do see a gap there. I see a gap in just exposing your children to certain things and everybody will not have the funds to travel the world, but you can open a book and you can learn about it if you would choose to and those choices just are not made. When it comes to parents visiting their children, coming and seeing your child do a presentation, we can't seem to get in there. Again, it's not because we have the kind of jobs that won't release us, it's just because, well, it's just kindergarten, you know. Even that is taken lightly as though . . . well, if everybody is nice to him and if he has good teachers all through school, then he'll do just fine. Well, why settle for just fine? He can be awesome, you know. But it does take a partnership of teachers, educators and parents; and parents, especially, parents of color I think sometimes we just leave too much of that for someone else to do and we feel less capable or we feel less obligated to get in there and help. I can speak from that side because of who I am. I get very angry with us. I don't think . . . I don't have a problem with um, whites feeling like they have some privilege. I don't have a problem with that at all. I have a problem with blacks who feel like we don't have privilege; and we do. That's where . . . that's where my . . . I get angry with that. I believe history does have a lot to do with that, I say get over it. It's time to move forward. My husband gets angry with me because he says, well, you just don't see it . . . this is why that's happened. I get it, I really do, I get it. I mean I've been discriminated against, but I feel like you still have good . . . you can make good choices. You can make better choices and every generation can make the best choice that it can make for the next generation. If I don't make the best choices that I can for my children right now, then my children grow up not making good choices. And it becomes that self-fulfilling prophecy that we never will and I don't believe that. I believe as a Christian, God-fearing woman that we can do all things through Christ Jesus, who strengthens us, but you have to take that strength on and you have to use it for something and not just complain. So, um, there are

> like-minded people like me at [*school name excluded*]. Our principal is always saying don't complain about anything. Get up and do something. Do what you can do. I just believe we get better when we do.

Although Ann's optimism permeated throughout the interview it struck me that there was, what I would call, a feeling of "pull yourself up by your bootstraps mentality," even if the system was created by a white man. Anne commented,

> As a race of people, I really do think that we can make better choices. So, I don't see it as something that people are doing to us. I see it more so that we've started doing it to ourselves now. It's too many opportunities out here for us to take advantage of—to the point that we can still say it's because you're not treating fairly that I can't advance. I just don't . . . I don't choose to believe that anymore.

Ann also talked about the importance of developing relationships with the children, staff, parents, families etc. When I asked her to elaborate on what she meant about kids in her class seeing each other as "clear" she said,

> Well, I'll tell you it's hard after you grow up not to see color. Um, but no, I don't think it's important for us to see color. I think it's important for us to know culture, though. I think it's important for us to know where children come from so we can be respectful to them. I try to be very respectful to their culture. Not so much treating their skin color differently, but the culture differently.

Her perspective is to validate children on where they are or where they are coming from. "It's ok to eats pig feet" she shared with one of her students, and she herself decided to change her hair and shared with me,

> But it's okay to be whoever you are and that's what people need to just . . . we need to let go of and I tell my husband this all the time because he really had a problem with my hair. I said, I don't want to be white any more, I'm tired of that. I have spent thousands of dollars on my hair trying to get it straight, it won't get

> straight, it's time to let go and be who I am. So, in order for me not to fuss with myself every morning, I cut it all off. It was too thick; too course; too . . . I would just be angry going out of the house every day. Now I wash my hair, I put moisturizer on it and I walk out of the door. I'm so much at peace. I said, you know, it's good not to try to be something that I'm not. We need to stop trying to make each other something that we're not. We need to stop making our students something that they're not. Now everybody can achieve just go with it. You know just go with it.

"Nina"

Nina has been in the school system for 16 years. She is a reading specialist. She described the demographics of her school as "half and half" (half African-American and half Caucasian) with a large ESL population. She teaches in a Title I school in an area that used to be predominately white, but now is mixed. She believes there is at least a 20% ESL student population. Nina shared that 60% of the kids at her school are on free or reduced lunch. Of 35 faculty members, she shared that only 10 are African Americans.

Nina shared that growing up she was considered "privileged for African-Americans." She said both of her parents were in management positions and they always had fancy cars and were exposed to fancy dinner parties. She lived with her grandmother in another state because her aunt, who was a teacher, told her parents that they wouldn't want her in the [state excluded] school system so she went to live with her grandmother so she could be bussed to an affluent white neighborhood school. She stayed with her grandmother Monday through Friday and along with one other boy and girl, she was among the minority at an all-white school. "Me being the only black child in those classes, it was hard. I sat back . . . nobody had to say it to me, but I thought that I wasn't as good as they were," she shared. When her grandmother and parents found out she was

courting a boy they decided to send her back to her parent's state. She said she was "devastated because all the schools in [state excluded] were black." She described the transition back home:

> My parents lived in . . . actually it's considered the richest, well long time ago it was, the richest African-American district and county, which is Prince George's County. I mean on every corner, you would see million dollar houses, if you go now, I mean on every corner there are million dollar houses. It's amazing. But, so, we grew up there, but it was all black and she put me in a black high school and I was like . . . it was the biggest culture shock for me. I mean, I went in scared like, oh my God, someone will kill me. I had my little hair feathered and everything and they had all these different haircuts and everything and you know, I was probably the nerd or whatever, but then I'm so glad I had a transition because then I ended up going to A&T and it really helped the balance. It helped me feel proud of my color because I will tell you that going to those white schools; it's not what they said to me . . . when you're different, you're going to have those battles inside your head.

She also said,

> because of my upbringing though, you know I can go anywhere, I can work with kids that grow up in low income areas, I can go to the country club and I can . . . so, I had a very diverse upbringing and I think because of that and my confidence now, I really think going to A&T also, helped me embrace who I am and be proud of it too.

Her story really connects with how I feel about my upbringing. I went to all white schools growing up and then ended up at UNCG, which was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. I doubt I would have ever problematized my privilege in the ways I have had it not been my experiences at UNCG.

Not unlike the other teachers, Nina recognizes white privilege in terms of having "just so many benefits that are unspoken in your skin color." She does believe that it

happens more with men than women. Nina said, “I think when a black man walks into a room there is hesitation. What kind of black man is he? Is he intimidating?” In terms of white students being aware of their privileges she clearly does see it as a problem that they are not aware of their privileges. She described being black as being a different culture, something mentioned by others in their interviews. She also said that African Americans have a huge disparity in terms or reading/literacy and says it’s because of a lack of experience and/or exposure to things. She doesn’t believe you have to have money to expose students to different things, but rather from her experience sees literacy as a way kids can be exposed to things and sees a deficit in the African-American community. Nina talks about her parents not reading to her as she says,

> I got a master’s in reading and I remember one of our classes, we focused on reading to your kids and the importance and I’m thinking back, well my god, my parents didn’t read to me. Why didn’t they read to me? I get on the phone and I call my mom, I said, mom, I just want to ask you a question. Why didn’t you all read to me? She said . . . I mean, the line went silent and I said, mom . . . I’m thinking and I’m like you all were intelligent, you had jobs, making a lot of money and I said what in the world were you thinking and she said I guess I thought it was my role to dress you, make sure you were clean, have your homework done and to send you to school and that they would take care of that. I’m like, ha-ha, so I speak a lot at workshops. I’m getting ready to do a parent workshop in another month, but I tell them that ... I tell my white teachers, please don’t assume that they don’t love them, it’s a different culture, you know. And if my parents thought that and I grew up in the suburbs, you know, can you imagine some of the kids that are living in poverty. Sometimes it’s just, you know, it’s just the way it’s been, it’s a cycle, it’s the way they were raised.

Nina also feels like the educational system gives advantages to white students over students of color but that it’s not intentional. She believes it shows up in the testing in terms of language where an African American student, because of lack of exposure, can’t

visualize a story or words they aren't familiar with. "I think a lot of our kids are at a disadvantage because so many of our white teachers don't or cannot relate to them," she said. She talks of what we might call cultural differences that whites deem as "not normal." Nina said,

> I can't tell you how many comments I've heard, and I don't get mad, but I just have to pull them aside, but a little boy rolled his pants leg up . . . that was the style, one leg up and one leg down one year and the teacher said what do you think you're in a gang. And I'm going, why does he have to be in a gang to have one pants leg rolled up and one down. That's just the style of his neighborhood, that had nothing to do with a gang, he's only in third grade, are you kidding me. I think our kids are at a disadvantage because of that so often and it's amazing, like I say, I'm sitting down with you because I think about this every day. I think sometimes you don't know how to discipline African-American kids. We have a different tone when we discipline.

Throughout the interview, Nina was very passionate about talking with me. Of all the interviews this was the most conversational. I felt like I could relate to her privileged "growing up" yet she really informed me about what I didn't see as a white person.

She thinks the textbooks and the curriculum are getting better. She said she noticed the changes within the last five years. She did notice in her last school that a lot of the African American chapter books were written about slavery. Now she sees more chapter books written about black kids living in the city: "I mean she's not necessarily on welfare, you know, just a story about African-American families." Nina says,

> I do wish we would talk a little more about African American inventors other than in February. I would like to . . . you know, and I guess, I get why we have black history month because if we didn't some people would never talk about it, but I would like for us to talk a little bit more about it. All I knew I think was Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks.

Nina was very complimentary of the teaching profession as a more tolerant profession. Nina shared,

> So, I will say refreshingly, in my field, that I find more teachers that seem to just be more accepting of differences and I think it's because of the kids and loving kids of different races and being tolerant of differences. So, I don't know if I feel anything in my new school, yet. I think a lot of teachers also, though, they want to say, well, I treat all the kids the same because I don't see color. I don't really like that. A lot of people say that, I don't see color . . . well, see, you kind of have to see color and we need you to see color because as I said, our cultures are so different. Like my own kids, I have a grown boy, I treat them differently. I have to. They're different kids. The same thing, you can't you know discipline your kids, you know, it's just different. There are some kids that, if you give them a hard look, you know they will cower, cry for hours whatever; another kid needs that look. You know that kind of thing. That's the only thing I would love to shake some of my teachers, my Caucasian teachers, and say that I need you to see color because they are different and to treat them all the same is such as disservice for them in what they need as well. I mean, I get why they are saying it and I think that's why I talk about the difference so much because I think we need to talk about them. I think to be an effective teacher, you've got to know what works for what child and how to interact with the parents is a big thing and what to say to the parents.

Nina is not alone in her comments about the disadvantage in not seeing color. This forms a theme we will discuss later in the chapter. She also brought up an emerging theme from the other interviews, which is the value of relationships and the value of conversations about differences. After sharing that race issues are not talked about among her colleagues she shared,

> I don't have a problem talking about it and I think African-Americans, they don't really want to talk about it because I don't know them to know that we're different and I want them to think that we're just like them and I'm like, no we're not. We're not, so let's talk about it. Let's talk about the differences and I think they were afraid because it's kind of like telling someone about your own child. You don't want to, you know, you want to protect your own child and we're going to keep all of their problems behind closed doors because it's my baby.

> Well, that's the same thing with African-Americans. They're not going to speak out and say, there are no books in their homes. They are not going to say that because they want to mask that. But see, we're hurting our kids and I say, let's tell them. There are no books in the homes and its' not just in the poor homes, but it's in affluent homes, African-American homes, no books. Nobody is reading.

Nina was very complimentary of what I am doing by interviewing her. She views that as a solution to white teachers becoming allies for children of color. She was very focused on the importance of recognizing that there are differences, not hiding from them, and having conversations with others about the differences. Getting to know people on a personal level, accepting who they are, and accepting that they may live a different life is foundational to changing the way things are, according to Nina.

"Sarah"

Sarah has been teaching for one year. She was a teaching fellow in undergrad. She spent two years in a teaching position in another county, but said "it wasn't in the same way that it is here." The demographics of her school are predominately white students. She said that her second-grade students had never seen a black teacher before. She said "we have one non-Caucasian student per class in the school." She estimated that less than 10% of the student population is minority. The faculty is primarily Caucasian with 5% minority. She did clearly mention that her administrator is African American and believes that contributes to conversations about race in the school. Sarah described her previous teaching experience:

> I had Hispanic and African-American and um, Asian students, multi-ethnic students and it's really interesting because I am dealing with a pile of different issues here, but people think it would be much harder to work at a school like that.

> But interestingly enough, it's much more difficult, hands down, to work at a school like this. But it's fun.

Sarah doesn't necessarily think that the educational system is set up for one to fail or be successful, but she thinks that individual schools make up the system that can create separation and tracking. She talked of growing up in a school that's predominately white, and shared,

> My parents . . . my mother was a director in the county. Everybody knew her. All my teachers knew her; the principal knew her so I was always a child that, if you will, had those same special privileges and I wasn't Caucasian. So, but my mom was involved and she knew the system and she knew how you could do this and this to get where I need to go. So, I think you can go both ways, but I think typically the minorities don't necessarily have the same opportunities.

Sarah's experience is unique being at a school with a majority of white students. It doesn't surprise me that she doesn't think white students are aware of their privileges at her school. She said,

> Not specifically at this school or at a school where the minorities are a very small percentage, they are not always aware because this is their reality. I consider they're at K-6, their reality is based on what they see at home and what they see at school; and so, in large part they don't see that contrast.

It's as if she is saying their perception is their reality and having grown up in that environment, I can relate. She does see it as a disadvantage that her students don't see their privileges because they don't have the experience of understanding that people are different and she foresees them having a hard time getting acclimated to differences.

Interestingly, she too doesn't think the educational system advantaging white students over students of color is intentional. She also references that some of the higher reading passages are targeted to some experiences these children may have. Sarah says,

> For instance, there was a story about the rules of soccer and the questions that the kids had to write about were what were the rules of soccer and what the purpose of a goalie is? Well my students didn't even need to read the book because they knew it from their prior experiences. Interestingly enough, I had one minority in my class had no idea and he struggles in reading, so when he's reading it, he still has no idea because he's never played soccer before.

She goes on to talk to me that there is a certain level of expectation for white students and they must "make the mark or supersede it." She talks in depth about parent conferences where parents are adamant—almost demanding, it sounds like, that their child be at a "four." Sarah says,

> I've never seen so many kinds that have so much anxiety about school and so much pressure and they melt down if they get something wrong and that breaks my heart because um, that's life. You get things wrong and you learn from it. But they all want to be in AG, you know, they don't want to feel like they are less than anybody else and to me that's something that I wanted to be at a diverse school for and I never saw that.

She says this is definitely cultural.

I must stop and say when Sarah was talking about these kids it was as if she was talking about the first private school I attended. Everyone at the school had attended a pre-K so they could be "ahead of the rest" and everyone was expected to be advanced. I was IQ tested at a very young age and I can remember my mom talking about me and saying "Even though she is shy; her IQ is higher than [insert my best friend's name]." It

was troubling to me then and still is. I really feel for the students Sarah talks about. What pressure they are under at such a young age and it doesn't end there. Sarah said, "The focus is no longer on the learning that's taking place, it's on the grades that are . . . and so there is this disconnect and I see it more so here than I've ever seen. It's also because there is more parent involvement and so that can have a lot to do with it." She continues throughout to talk about this "different mindset" the parents have that is solely driven on excelling and because of their involvement in the school that they "drive what education looks like." Might this be parental involvement gone wrong, I ask? You want parents involved in education, but this perspective is extremely narrow.

Like Nina, Sarah is complimentary of the teaching profession as she says,

> educators are typically very diverse in their thinking like they come to education because they want to educate everybody and some of our roles as teachers here, we all feel that these kids need exposure to different cultures in our service learning projects have been a great vehicle that reviews to get those kids to kind of see different cultures.

She was very open to talking about race in her class. She talked about diversity in an all-encompassing way. She discussed different abilities, different hair types (curly and straight), different cultures, etc.

When we begin to talk about white teachers becoming allies for children of color, she talked about the importance of "being knowledgeable of what children of color really go through and that takes some very intentional time to get to know them and intentional times to think about what are some misconceptions that I have as a person." She also talked about the importance of not seeing everyone the same. "It's not about tolerating

diversity she says, it's about appreciating diversity." Similarly to Nina's comment about being honest with ourselves and each other, Sarah said,

> We don't realize that once we put down that curtain that we are more alike than we are different. The only difference is truly our skin color; everything else is equal playing field. There is nothing else that makes us different. So, when we can be honest about that, then we can make some changes, but until then, it's going to really be the same.

Here again, we see the value of developing relationships, having honest conversations, and breaking down barriers set up by silos.

"Jean"

Jean has been working in the school system for fourteen years. She works in the special education department at a Magnet school. The demographics of her school is predominately African-American. She says, "There are three white kids and maybe four Hispanics in the entire school. So we're predominately black." The faculty is half African-American and half white teachers. She works with students in grades K-5 doing IEPs for Other Health Impaired (OHI), Learning Disabled (LD), and Emotionally Disabled (EMD). She shared her interest in my research by saying, "I'm seeing it firsthand in my building with the privilege of my colleagues. But, then of course, throughout my childhood, that's been conversation in my family about privilege and what we have to do over what our white counterparts have to do." She shares that she grew up on the black side of town and went to black schools, the grocery store, and "rarely ran into white people . . . So you know, even though we were desegregated, we were very much segregated." Her mother worked for General Motors starting in the 1970s. She

experienced a “boys’ club” and sexism. Jean shared that this is when she was first introduced to white privilege—through experiences her mom shared with her while working at General Motors.

As we began to discuss the meaning of white privilege, Jean shared,

> It basically means being able to do say, be something pretty much who you want to be, say, or do. And, not having many repercussions, if any, for you being, saying or doing what it is you feel like is totally okay for you. Whereas, African-Americans have to be so careful in what they say and do because it can be misconstrued as something other than what it was intended to be or bring on a stereotype of some sort.

Being white allows you privileges you wouldn’t otherwise have. It’s an automatic pass in many ways. She talked about a white student who has had experiences that his black peers haven’t been able to experience. She sees white privilege as an opportunity to have experiences that those who are not white may not have. This reference to experiences is not uncommon from other interview responses.

Jean does think that the educational system advantages white students over students of color. Even though she’s at a magnet school, which she says is supposed to be pulling from other areas, the school is primarily African-American. She shared,

> when I look at what our school looks like as a Magnet student school, it’s supposed to be a school where you can have more options, more opportunity; we’re still not situated as well as some of our other Magnet schools who don’t have predominately African-American students.

She noted that the more diverse magnet schools seem to get questions answered more quickly, and they get what they need. They don’t have technologies that their

counterparts have. In her area as a special education teacher, Jean doesn't see textbooks or curriculum portraying white privilege, but says that she doesn't see the textbooks the kids get to see.

When we talked about how perceptions of race and whiteness manifest in her school, she started to laugh and was able to connect immediately to an in service workshop where an African American professional came and talked about

> how you have to be in relationships with your peers and your students . . . Then some of my peers, my white peers, left saying how dare you say that I don't like black children, that I have not vested into my black children, and it wasn't . . . she really didn't say anything like that if you had listened to her, it was supposed to be a motivation and us understanding that in order for the kids to work for us, for them to do anything for us and this is in all kinds of studies, any time a kid feels like they have a relationship with you or your peers they are more apt to do things for you because it's going to please you.

The white teachers felt attacked—a typical reaction from someone who hasn't started to problematize their privilege. Jean also sees a clear connection that race and whiteness are manifested among students and parents, not administration. She said,

> So, the parents feel sometimes, I think that the white teachers don't care for their student and that is what I've been hearing a lot lately. Um, and over the last couple of years that the parents are feeling that the white teachers don't care about their kids. I can't say if it's true or not. I can't imagine you come to work every day not caring about somebody. I just can't imagine you can do that, but it's something within our relationships that's making the parents feel like the white teachers aren't caring for the kids.

She shared with me that when African American boys in her building go to higher grades they become frustrated. There are more white teachers in the upper level grades than the lower levels and "they tend to be more frustrated; not feeling like they're able to be

heard; they can't do anything, they can't say anything, and they just feel like that nobody cares for them." Jean talks third- through fifth-grade boys through their concerns and calms them down. At least once a week somebody has something to say about one of their teachers, Jean said. When talking about how we can make a paradigm shift to challenge the system of white dominance, Jean shared that we must "acknowledge that there is dominance, acknowledge there is a difference; how people learn different and how cultures are different." Making sure the relationships are there is equally important, she said. "If you make it personal you can advocate for anybody." She sees some of her colleagues making an effort to get to know families and breaking down barriers by talking to each other.

I was interested in her perspective if people should see color or not. Her response was valuable. Jean shared,

> I think for you to acknowledge who I am, you then have to also acknowledge my experiences which then go back to my skin color. So for you to say, oh, I don't see black or white, I think it's kind of hard then to truly see me and acknowledge who I am. If you don't acknowledge my experiences, which is closely tied into my skin color or black or white, Asian, what have you, whatever the ethnicity is if you don't acknowledge that piece, then you're kind of not acknowledging who I am as a person.

The way she articulated this really struck me. I expressed to her that I wondered why white people can't understand that their skin color represents an experience of privilege. When I bring it up to people I know there is an immediate defense.

“Mary”

Mary has been in the school system for 13 years and in her current school one year. She described the school she came from as more diverse and shared that the school

> was failing for a lot of years and coincidentally we had a white principal who came in and she was really hard on the teachers and we brace against it. We really did. We felt like we were doing all we could, but evidently we weren’t doing as much as we could because after one year we met AYP standards and it was amazing when I heard we had done it . . . I have not met a lot of principals like her before, especially you know, a white principal at a school like that.

She said she has worked primarily in Title I schools, but did work in “an upper middle class school, a predominately white school.” She was a young teacher and says she thought that the things that were available in that school were available in all schools. She currently teaches kindergarten. The demographics of her school are 95% African-American and she described the faculty demographics as “half and half.” Mary shared with me that her dad was in the Marines for 20 years and said,

> We moved around a lot. I was often the only black child or one of two in the whole class. We moved around so much that I probably was in a different school at least once every year or every other year. So, I didn’t stay anywhere long. I think that has a lot to do with how I feel about white privilege or race, based on my own experiences as a child. Um, I was often asked questions about black people and it’s like, well, what do you mean? I don’t really know how to answer that question. It often made me feel uncomfortable, but . . . and then, when I got to the point where I could kind of choose where I wanted to go, like in high school, I wanted to go to a black school because I was tired of having to be a certain way. I just wanted to be around people who . . . I just kind of wanted that family like atmosphere so I wouldn’t have to be the only one. I had some really good white friends growing up, but I was still like, who they looked to when they had a question and I didn’t like that. I didn’t like that at all. But, as far as having a lot of privilege, I probably had a lot of privilege because of my environment. My parents were able to do for me. I was the only child for eleven years; so I was kind of a spoiled brat . . . military brat.

She doesn't think it's problematic that white students aren't aware of their privileges because of her grade level. She thinks it could be problematic in the high school. She has experience firsthand on how the educational system advantages white students over students of color. Mary said,

> I just remember being in a lot of predominately white schools myself growing up and never could seem to qualify for AG at the time, but I always made As in school. Then once I became a teacher, I don't know if it's just the sign of the times, now I found that there are ways to get students into the program who don't pass the tests that they have and it could be according to teachers input, parents input, but I guess I didn't have anyone to speak for me during the time I was coming up. I don't know. It may have nothing to do with that, but now I'm very aware of that with the AL program now. I look for ways to push my students who may not test well, but I know they can handle the work.

Because it's her first year at the school she really doesn't see how perceptions about race and whiteness are manifested among faculty, administration, parents, and students. She did say she wasn't aware when she came to the school that there weren't many white students, and that surprised her. She's never had a class that didn't have at least one white student. She shared that it is harder to find stories with minorities or African-Americans.

Mary feels strongly that there is more to do with the "so-called achievement gap" than a history of white social dominance. Mary said, "It's not that the students can't learn; it's just, are they being enticed or invited to learn by presenting the information, in a way they can receive it?" Mary pushes her students in her class to achieve. She says that white administrators have often said that she's too hard on her kindergarteners, but she disagrees. Mary said, "Children will learn if you allow them to. Don't just say well,

they're a child, they don't know. Talk to them and explain it to them in their terms, on their level and they can get it. I don't think everyone sees that."

When we talked about issues of race and whiteness discussed in her class she recalled a recent situation when she was doing black history with her class and they were talking about Jim Crow and segregation. She was very cognizant that she has a white teacher assistant and she revealed, "I was a little uncomfortable because I didn't want to make her feel uncomfortable. With all the children here being minority children, they were asking questions, and for them to understand it, I had to break it down. Unfortunately she was my only example that they could see."

Mary talked about the importance of relationships in becoming allies for children of color. "I feel that if white educators would try to build that relationship beyond the classroom with their students no matter what race, it would really make students work harder for them." She talked about going out of her comfort zone herself when she was in a white school and attending dance recitals, ball games, etc. Mary shared,

> I didn't always feel comfortable because I was often like the only black person there. But, I don't . . . I know sometimes it can be harder, I think, for probably a white person to go to a gathering where they're the only white person there if they don't have that relationship beforehand. So, they might feel a little bit intimidated in going to, you know a ball game. But they have to do it, I mean, because that's the only way those parents are going to work for you, work hard to help you with their student and that, that's what I can see.

Honesty is also key when it comes to creating spaces of trust and collaboration. Mary shared:

> To be honest, you've just got to know there is prejudice in the black race and the white race. I mean, you just can't get around it. Once we all start being honest with how we feel about certain situations or certain um, groups of people, then we can start over coming stereotypes. There is no room for stereotypes in school, especially when you are a teacher. We've got to not . . . and we've not got to be so naive to say we don't see color, because you see color. But, don't let the color influence how you teach to the point where you think this is what they want or need. I exposed my African-American students to classical music; you know, they need to hear it. They need to read about different things that you would think they don't need to.

Preconceived notions about black children not being smart have to be dismantled. Mary commented, "They can be as bright as white children if they are exposed, especially if there is no one at home helping the black child." She goes on to talk about a child in her classroom who her assistant read to and became his "surrogate mother" and the impact of that bond on his scholastic improvement.

Major and Emerging Themes

After reading and reviewing the interview transcripts, I was able to pull out four major themes from the interviews and three emerging themes. The following major themes emerged:

- Power Advantage
- Exclusivity
- Cultural differences
- Seeing Color/Colorblind ideology

The three emerging themes that are significant to mention are:

- Lack of awareness or understanding of white privilege
- Intentionality

- Relationships

Power Advantage

> As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage. —Peggy McIntosh

A theme of power emerged quickly with the first interview question: What does the term white privilege mean to you? The following participant quotes reveal statements from which the theme began to emerge.

> Benefits that are unspoken in your skin color. (Nina)

> My grandmother communicated to me any time we were in the store, they would say shshshsh . . . don't make all that noise, you don't behave like that around white people. You know my grandmother put that in my head that you know, we can't act like that white people. So there is already this, I'm not as good as you when they come in. (Nina)

> being able to do say, be something pretty much who you want to be , say or do and not having many repercussions. (Jean)

> benefits of being part of the culture. (Sarah)

> the expectations are different for white students as opposed to minority students. (Mary)

> it probably means the opposite of what I've been taught all my life. Being a black woman, I've always known that there was a disadvantage, so I guess white privilege would mean that there is an advantage. (Anne)

> I do still believe that there is some advantage to being not of color in this society. You get a little further or people assume things that are more advantageous rather than disadvantageous. (Anne)

So we gather from their statements that in many ways there are unspoken advantages for whites versus people of color. This is nothing different from what the literature tells us about white privilege, but what's significant about these statements is that these are perspectives from women of color. I find it interesting that everyone interviewed had a concept of what white privilege means to them. I, on the other hand, never knew the concept of white privilege until I was in graduate school. Whites just "are," whites have had no need to define themselves because they have and hold the power, but as we later discuss people of color are noted (i.e., in the news) and identified.

If those interviewed were men, we might imagine a different dynamic in terms of privilege, as gender and privilege are not mutually exclusive. These are women who are educators and it shows us that white privilege is alive. It's beneficial to be white in order to automatically have privileges based simply on skin color. Nina told a story in her interview that speaks to this:

> My family, my cousins, my older cousins would say, watch when we go into the pool, they are going to clear out. I guess I was so naive and I was always kumbaya and was just like, no you just think that or whatever, but it took me probably five or six years of the pool clearing out to know they were just ready to leave. But seeing that happen over and over and finally, it hit me that maybe I don't know they are just intimidated by us, I don't know, but we were just kids and I didn't understand that because I went to all white schools and I had all white friends. So, I'm jumping in the pool getting ready to play with my white friends and their parents are saying, come on. So, I saw that for years; now it's gotten better. You know, we still go.

In her article, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, Peggy McIntosh (1988) speaks about "conferred privilege" and how that can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. When whites have been allowed to ignore

their privileges rather than problematize them, there is an absence of knowledge and accountability to whites.

A piece that adds to the layers of power advantage incorporates gender and media. Nina talks in her interview how black men are seen as intimidating, more so than women. “I think it happens more, though, with our men than I do our women. I think when a black man walks in the room, there is hesitation. What kind of black man is he? Is he intimidating?” She goes on to talk about how she feels what I would define as “white privilege in action” happens more with men due to the impact of media on society’s views of black males.

> So, I do think it now happens more with [men] and I think it has a lot to do with media, you know, TV, so I do think that, you know, just our perceptions, you know the things that we see in society, you know, I’m still amazed that we have an African-American President, but I truly believe it’s because there were people who voted for him that are out west, they are not growing up in these inner cities, so they don’t have these preconceived images of blacks doing drive-by shootings with the pants hanging down, these thugs, you know. I think a lot of that damages the African-American culture.

I completely agree with Nina’s comment and I think it’s an important point to consider. The images in the media of African-American males are damaging. These images are framed in a way that makes society believe that all black males behave a certain way. Media supports a power advantage for whites over people of color.

Another layer to the dynamics of the power advantage that comes with being white are the resources that are afforded to you or “your school.” Many teachers talked about a greater lack of resources at their school than they expected there to be. Jean said,

> So, when I look at what our school looks like as a Magnet school, it's supposed to be a school where you can have more options, more opportunity, we're still not situated as well as some of our other Magnet schools who don't have predominately African-American students.

The upper class school where Mary worked had lots of resources that she didn't find at the Title I schools she's been in. A power advantage in favor of whites within the educational system is evident throughout the interviews. Kathryn shares a powerful statement, "I think Caucasians are well kept and comfortable in the circle they're in." My interpretation of this is that Whites are running things especially in terms of education and the choices they have, and that's the way they [whites] like it. These power advantages continue to create systems of tracking and perpetuate curriculum that expects students to be in a certain place at a certain time versus being able to provide students what they need at the right time.

Exclusivity

Nina's story also reveals the theme of exclusivity when she says,

> We were very rare in many ways; one, in that we would go to the beach every summer Black people, that's not something they did. But my family, since we were five, we've been going down to Myrtle Beach and years ago, we would be the only black family in the hotels for years. I used to go running with my dad in the morning and I would see a bunch of blacks on a school bus and I would say, that must be a black family coming. Well, come to find out, they were the . . . what do we call them . . . the cleaners and they would let them off at the different hotels. But pretty much, we were the only black family.

I use this term to encompass an exclusiveness that is provided to whites versus people of color. Throughout the interviews there were mentions of a difference in experiences of white versus people of color as well as a lack of exposure to various

experiences/things for people of color, all of which reveal an exclusiveness to being white. Common among the interviews was a connection to test scores and a disparity among children of color and white children. The tests are based on experiences of whites. Nina shared,

> Math, we usually score better, but in reading, and it's because of vocabulary, it's because of lack of experience as we don't take our kids skiing, we don't take them horseback riding and like I said, for years I thought it was income and I was like well, no wonder why kids do well, they've got money and whatever. Nope, I've taught in schools where the white kids were poor and the black kids were poor and the white kids still performed better.

Jean shared an example of a student she felt was aware of his privilege:

> it may not be his privilege that he is so much aware of, but maybe what his . . . what he has been allowed to experience. I don't know if he knows it's his privilege that he's been able to experience these things over some of his black peers um, because he will say things like I'm advanced and things like that and not be afraid to say those things in the company of the other students.

Many of the teachers interviewed commented that they look to find literature that is geared towards their nonwhite students so their books not only show white characters but characters of color.

In addition, interviewees talked about LG (Learning Gifted) and AG (Academically Gifted) and how tracking creates an exclusiveness and lack of access to these "labels," as I would call them. Regardless, these labels add another level of privilege for those who are tracked into them. In the school where Nina works she sees parents taking advantage of outside psychologists to "diagnose" a child with ADHD in order to make sure their child lands on top. Nina shared,

> The parent was very honest; she said I need my child to be a four before the year is over. I said, I would really like for your child to be a four too. I would really like to see a four work and that's what's really going to help me get there. But sometimes you have to say, you know, I really need my child to be a four now because when she gets to Kaiser, because she's not a four and in AG, she will be put in a class with all the other kids and I've been in those other classes and I see that they can't learn in there.

Cultural Differences

> I do believe that all of our parents, even our parents of color, they do the best that they think they're doing, that they can do, but I do see a gap there. I see a gap in just exposing your children to certain things and everybody will not have the funds to travel the world, but you can open a book and you can learn about it if you would choose to and those choices just are not made. When it comes to parents visiting their children, coming and seeing your child do a presentation, we can't seem to get in there. Again, it's not because we have the kind of jobs that won't release us, it's just because, well, it's just kindergarten, you know. Even that is taken lightly as though . . . well, if everybody is nice to him and if he has good teachers all through school, then he'll do just fine. Well, why settle for just fine? He can be awesome, you know. But it does take a partnership of teachers, educators and parents; and parents, especially, parents of color I think sometimes we just leave too much of that for someone else to do and we feel less capable or we feel less obligated to get in there and help. I can speak from that side because of who I am. I get very angry with us. I don't think . . . I don't have a problem with um, whites feeling like they have some privilege. I don't have a problem with that at all. I have a problem with blacks who feel like we don't have privilege; and we do. That's where . . . that's where my . . . I get angry with that. (Ann)

Throughout the interviews a theme of cultural differences arose. Nina said,

> I like to have conversations with my friends about the differences. We don't like talking about the differences and there is a difference. There is just a difference in how we praise, you know, how we celebrate God in church, how we eat, what we eat and that is okay to embrace it. So often, you know, and it took my white friends to get used to that, you know, and so now they feel comfortable asking me, you know questions about why do black people do that. It's just a different culture. It's okay. I used to be embarrassed by it, but now I celebrate it. I mean, I just think it's funny. You know . . . I always tell them when they go skiing, I said,

> did you see any black people? They said, nope, didn't see any black people. Because we don't do that. You know, there are certain things we do.

Nina's comment brings forward that there are differences in black culture. My interpretation is "that's okay!" But what happens in society and in our schools is that tests, books, and curriculum are all based on the expectations that students will have experiences that are "white." This connects back to our themes of exclusivity as well. Furthermore, U.S. History has overwhelming focused on minority groups (especially blacks) as having physiological, genetic, and cultural differences in access to power (Frankenberg, 1993). This reveals that when we speak of differences, the foundation for the conversation around difference has been historically connected to race, and race is socially constructed. So when we speak about accepting differences and appreciating differences, I can't help but bring up that difference, historically, has been wrapped up in social constructions of race that portray white as good and black as evil. Efforts toward multiculturalism have also been limited in scope and not yet a part of most people's daily thought or practice.

Following is a powerful excerpt from Nina's interview:

> My parents did not read to me and I was fascinated by that. I got a master's in reading and I remember one of our classes, we focused on reading to your kids and the importance and I'm thinking back, well my god, my parents didn't read to me. Why didn't they read to me? I get on the phone and I call my mom, I said, mom, I just want to ask you a question. Why didn't you all read to me? She said . . . I mean, the line went silent and I said, mom . . . I'm thinking and I'm like you all were intelligent, you had jobs, making a lot of money and I said what in the world were you thinking and she said I guess I thought it was my role to dress you, make sure you were clean, have your homework done and to send you to school and that they would take care of that. I'm like, ha-ha, so I speak a lot at workshops. I'm getting ready to do a parent workshop in another month, but I tell

> them that . . . I tell my white teachers, please don't assume that they don't love them, it's a different culture, you know. And if my parents thought that and I grew up in the suburbs, you know, can you imagine some of the kids that are living in poverty. Sometimes it's just, you know, it's just the way it's been, it's a cycle, it's the way they were raised.

It's a white world that we live in. Nina shares,

> It's like we don't want to recognize the difference. Um, so I think it would start there—talking about it. Um, it would also start, and I tell my Caucasian friends, they'll say, I didn't know that, I didn't know that every time I share something and I say, well, you know what it would help, why don't you go see that African-American movie every once in a while. Why don't you go to an African-American church, why don't you . . . what I also explain to my friends, we are kind of forced in our society to know about Caucasians. We are forced because . . . I can't tell you how many times I have gone in my own doctor's office, all white magazines. No black magazines. You have a lot of African-American clients, you know. Television shows, so many, you know sitcoms, white sitcoms, I have to turn on BET to watch the black shows, you know. So, we are kind of forced into the white world, so we know a lot about you all. We do. You don't know a lot about us. I think it would help if there were more of an effort on white teachers, white people to get to know, not just Asians, not just . . . but get to know, and you know, I'll hear, well so and so, I know so and so, she works with me, you know, or that's my best friend, or whatever, you know I just . . . you know when we all leave work, you go in our white world, we go in our black world and then you come back to work. So, the only experience sometimes you have is at work. The other thing about African-Americans, we're very private and that's the ongoing joke, too. White people will tell everything; we tell nothing. White people will say how are you doing and they will tell you all their business; and we have this whole privacy thing, well, they don't need to know this and it goes back to what I said about African-American education and standing up and saying, look, here is the problem with our kids. No, we keep that . . . now we'll go to our black churches and we'll talk, but no, we're not going to tell them about this, we're not going to tell them that literacy is not in our home. We're not going to tell them that. And that is a problem. We are on the end of the spectrum, I mean, as far as the home goes. We don't talk about money, we don't talk about our problems.

Kathryn also shares with us that the wording on the SAT and all the tests frame questions in such a culturally different way that students of color cannot relate to them.

"They can't even visualize it because they have never experienced it. A story about fishing, a black child is not going to be able to relate to it," said Nina. And what we might classify as cultural differences creates a cultural advantage for whites over blacks. There is an overall lack of connection with children of color to testing, curriculum, literature, and as Nina added, language. Nina shared,

> I think sometimes you don't know how to discipline African-American kids. We have a different tone when we discipline. You know, I study when I'm in the grocery store and I'll see a Caucasian mom, you know when the child is misbehaving, the tone is, now, Johnny, we're going to blah, blah, blah (speaking softly). You are not going to hear that in a black home. You're going to hey, put that down, get over here, I'm not playing with you, all right good (speaking firmly). That's a problem. Language is an issue with African-Americans.

One might argue that the achievement gap in education today is a result of our history of social dominance. Many of the interviewees talk about a history of "not having" as people of color which in turn impacts achievement today. Nina talks about the impact of history on cultural differences when she says,

> I think it has a lot to do with history and because we were not exposed to that and so . . . and you will find that African-Americans who go to school with more Caucasians who are in environments will do things like that. They will take their kids skiing; they will go horseback riding and give them those experiences. So, yes, income and money as well. I tell everyone, African-Americans are known to not be good money managers. They're just not. I mean, you know, I tell my friends, oh, you know we're just not. I can tell you we're not and I think it has to do with a history of not having money, of not knowing what to do with it, not knowing how to save and so, you know, we laughed and said, don't you accept a check from a black person. (Laugh) So, I'll tease them and that kind of thing, but really, I think there are a lot of negative things because of our history and because of just years, you know, of not having. I don't know when we are going to catch up, but I think education will help in getting our kids out of some of these environments and traveling and going away to school.

One instance stood out to me when discussing cultural differences. Kathryn shared that in her classroom they discuss

> race identity and what they have to do and how the cards are stacked against them especially if they are an African-American male. The statistics show that by the age, you know, intercity, 21, they kill each other, they're in prison. I discuss that with my kids and how they can beat those odds.

What's significant here is that throughout the interviews there is a theme around difference, but this statement in particular reveals a disadvantage for children of color. We talk of celebrating differences, embracing differences, and accepting differences, but underneath all of those statements is a history of difference creating a disadvantage for people of color. That black shadow of difference always seems to be there. Sarah shared a powerful statement to support my concern. Sarah said, "because you're seeing dominance on the one side that means the other has to be inferior."

Will difference really ever be viewed outside of a disadvantaged paradigm? Nina expanded upon my concern when she shared that there are open talks about the ESL population at her school, and when she attended a workshop an ESL teacher did as well, and Nina said,

> I mean, can you put all the African-American in that group because the same things that those kids [ESL] need, our kids need. And yes we're African-Americans and yes we're Americans and supposedly we're all together, we were all raised here, but it's almost like we are from a different country.

Her plea is for all of us to recognize differences, talk about them, and work together to support all students, but above all, to be honest about the huge achievement gap that

exists and will continue to exist if everyone stays quiet. Jean echoes this stance as she shares that in order to challenge the system of white dominance we must "acknowledge that there is dominance and move through that with dialogue."

Colorblind Ideology

I found it interesting that there were differences in views on the importance of seeing or not seeing color. Kathryn said, "people say they don't see color, but they do. I think you should see the person. You have to learn how to separate the color from the person because you . . . I think it makes you have stereotypes that are not all true. Then, that works both ways." While I appreciate Kathryn's view to see "the person," it's not enough to dismantle privilege. As Smith (2007) states, "people in the United States are still living in this era of multicultural colorblindness. Lacking a sense of history, while at the same time claiming full equality for everyone, the dominant discourse shifts the blame for glaring inequalities onto those who are suffering from oppression. 'Everyone is equal- so if you can't make it, it must be your fault'". I wonder as I hear these varying responses about seeing color as opposed to not seeing color, if the participants view naming color as naming deficit. As I discussed in Chapter II, there is a fear of naming color which leads me to believe that to recognize color is a cost and therefore we ignore it. Not all of the participants share a color-blind perspective. Many of them say you should see color, but some say not.

Jean also shared,

> One of my peers, who is a white lady, we just had lunch together yesterday, and she told me that she believes that the reason why a student that she had in her class is the parent is finally accepting what she said the year before this year, is

because there is an African-American female teacher teaching him this year. So, she feels like the parent can then receive the news from an African-American teacher as opposed to a white teacher. So, she felt that since, that um . . . even though she tried to say it, and she also felt like um, in her words, she said he would . . . um, the parent couldn't tell that teacher this crap that she's been telling me straight faced into the teacher this year's face, the African-American teacher's because she would then come back. So, the parents feel sometimes, I think that the white teachers don't care for their student and that is what I've been hearing a lot lately.

Nina stated,

I think a lot of teachers also, though, they want to say, well, I treat all the kids the same because I don't see color. I don't really like that. A lot of people say that, I don't see color . . . well, see, you kind of have to see color and we need you to see color because as I said, our cultures are so different. Like my own kids, I have a grown boy, I treat them differently. I have to. They're different kids. The same thing, you can't you know discipline your kids, you know, it's just different. There are some kids that, if you give them a hard look, you know they will cower, cry for hours whatever; another kid needs that look. You know that kind of thing. That's the only thing I would love to shake some of my teachers, my Caucasian teachers, and say that I need you to see color because they are different and to treat them all the same is such as disservice for them in what they need as well. I mean, I get why they are saying it and I think that's why I talk about the difference so much because I think we need to talk about them. I think to be an effective teacher, you've got to know what works for what child and how to interact with the parents is a big thing and what to say to the parents.

Mary also very adamantly stated,

and we've not got to be so naive to say we don't see color, because you see color. But, don't let the color influence how you teach to the point where you think this is what they want or need. I exposed my African- American students to classical music; you know, they need to hear it. Everyone needs to be exposed to different things.

Ann doesn't think it's important to see color, but rather it's important to see culture. She talks about a student in her class whose parents are from Africa and she comments trying to be very respectful of his culture.

> Different doesn't mean better or worse, it just means different. I was reading a Dr. Seuss book around Dr. Seuss's birthday—the foot book—it got to a place where there was something about pig feet and I turned the book over and I said, who in here has ever eaten pig feet; and one little black girl went . . . I . . . then she looked around and she went no I haven't. I said, girl, I have and I enjoyed it. Have you had them pickled? And she just fell out laughing. I said, that's okay, they're good, but that's when she was validated. It's okay to eat pig feet.

Overall, colorblindness creates a "power evasiveness" and "color evasiveness" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 14). So if one does not acknowledge color, we are reinforcing sameness and overlooking power and color that have and continue to impact individuals of color as well as the system of privilege. Classic colorblindness is acknowledging that "color" doesn't exist, that history doesn't exist, that systems aren't created and perpetuated to benefit one group over another, and that to ignore is not to have to acknowledge or question. As Omi (2001) states, Many whites believe that the goals of the civil rights movement have been achieved, that we are now a "color-blind" society, and that we all need to "get beyond race"' (p.268). This thinking only serves to continue to create racial divides. We must acknowledge color and the history that surrounds privilege and the lack of privilege that color affords. A race-blind society does not mean the overthrowing of white privilege. Race-blindness only contributes to an invisibility to whiteness.

Lack of Awareness or Understanding

Overall, individual differences arose during each interview due to the background of each individual and the grade level taught. I was surprised at times when answers to "Do you think it's problematic that white students don't see their privileges?" were "no" or "not at my grade level." Is there a lack of understanding on their part of the impact it has for a student not to be aware of their privileges? How does this impact and shape her as an educator when it comes to discussing race in the classroom? Several of the interviewees were unsure of it being problematic and/or were hesitant to explore this. Perhaps they had not considered it before? I include Sarah's response to the question below because it is identical to my personal experience:

> **KC: do you think that white students are aware of their privileges?**
>
> Sarah: No. Often times not. Not specifically at this school or at a school where the minorities are a very small percentage, they are not always aware because this is their reality. I consider they're at K-6, their reality is based on what they see at home and what they see at school; and so, in large part they don't see that contrast.
>
> **KC: Do you think it's problematic that they don't see it?**
>
> Sarah: Maybe... well, I think in general, because our world is so global and because the United States is known as the melting pot, it's problematic and it's a disadvantage for those students. Um, because it doesn't really always help them see other people's perspectives and you'll find sometimes they cannot . . . they'll have a problem on the playground, they'll have a problem and they can't handle it, they can't solve the problem because there is a missing piece which is not . . . sometimes people are different and they have different points of views, so it's sometimes difficult for them to, you know, work through their problems when you have conflict because they don't always see differences when everybody looks like you and everybody goes to the same churches you go to and they go to your school and you have play dates with them . . . you have a lot of commonalities. So, when you meet someone who is not like you, you just have a really hard time kind of getting acclimated to their differences.

Kathryn's response also strikes me:

> I don't think it's a problem . . . I don't think they are aware. Um, not the students here [her school]. Not meaning . . . all . . . some of my students are, but not all because we aren't like that at Magnet, but I don't think it's a problem that they have poor education because they're white. It's not . . . to me, you shouldn't have poor education because of the color of your skin, but that's the way it is. *Eventually they will figure it out.* It's almost as if we are saying, eventually they will figure out the color lines, the advantages and disadvantages . . . let's not worry about it now.

This answer doesn't surprise me from a white person, but I am surprised that a person of color wouldn't problematize this more, but it's as if she's succumbed to the "way things are" and doesn't fight it. Jean shares in another part of her interview that when it comes to discussing race issues within her classroom and among her colleagues that she's "okay with it, I just believe it is what it is," as if the topic is a neutral subject. Throughout Ann's interview, she commented that she "lived in a bubble" and always shared that her school was a "microcosm in and of itself and doesn't function like any other." Her optimism bleeds throughout her interview.

As I think about the commonalities among these responses it's as if they all are saying "it just is the way it is," without a lack of concern for what seems to me ignoring the issues of privilege and the dominance that comes with it. As Maxine Greene (1988) talks about freedom, there is a connection to what's being said underneath these responses. Greene (1988) says, "When oppression or exploitation or segregation or neglect is perceived as "natural" or a "given," there is little stirring in the name of freedom" (p. 9). It's as if freedom to the participants is accepting the way things are or rather remaining submerged in their words. As Garner (2007) shares, "Thinking about

whiteness as a *system* of privilege is a huge source of anxiety for individuals who consider themselves white" (p. 5), but why is their hesitancy or lack of concern from people of color to discuss the future of white privilege their students will face?

Intentionality

In more than two instances, when I asked, "Do you think the educational system advantages white students over students of color?" interviewees responded, "I don't think it's intentional" but will follow with examples of how it's revealed through bias in the testing. One person shared that while they don't think it's intentional, there are higher reading passages targeted to white children because children of color may not have the experiences the passage is referencing. Children of color can't conceptualize every experience. Later in the interviews, the theme of intentionality shifted to an intentionality of getting to know children of color in order to become an ally. Sarah shared,

> Being knowledgeable of what children of color really go through and that just takes some very intentional time to get to know them. That takes intentional time to think about what are some misconceptions that I have as a person. Because first we're people and those feelings that we have, we take them to the classroom. So, that needs to be something that we truly take a look at; is what do I really think about myself in relationship to other people and then that also will affect our teaching. So, um, looking at my educators... the educators that are around me, They have intentionally tried to make it their life a life of equity and equality where they see everybody the same. You can't think that. You can't think that you appreciate diversity because some people can tolerate diversity, but it's very different when you appreciate diversity.

Here again, I wonder if we are seeing a product of assimilation into whiteness in answers to this question. How can the participants see these advantages as unintentional, when intentional choices can be made to provide difference experiences to children,

experiences that are inclusive? Whiteness can be further produced and maintained by withholding of information and it can look as if it's unintentional. This play on unintentionality is what Michele Fine (1997) would call "Witnessing Whiteness."

Relationships

> Once it becomes personal this is my student and this is, you know, if you can make it personal then I think you can advocate and change, shift anything to make it personal. (Jean)

An emerging theme that arose throughout the interviews, but especially during the later questions, was the theme of relationships and the importance of relationships with colleagues, other adults, parents, and guardians and students. When I discussed the perceptions of race and whiteness manifested in Jean's school she shared the introduction to the theme by stating,

> anytime a kid feels like they have a relationship with you or your peers feel like they have a relationship with you, they are more apt to do things for you because it's going to please you. You're going to be happy about what that . . . and so you then push forward to do a little bit more for your peer or the student does a little bit more for the teacher.

I feel like I shouldn't have been surprised by this emerging theme, but it was quite dominant once I began to ask people about race and whiteness within their schools among administration, parents, and students.

When I asked the question: "How do you think we help white educators make a shift in challenging the system of white dominance?" Kathryn shared,

> I think you have to do like we were talking about race, you have to self-reflect and a lot of times we don't want to say this is what I'm doing wrong. It's always somebody else's fault. So, too, I think when it comes to the higher ups to their . . . they spend time instead of looking at stuff in a snapshot, looking at test scores and do that self-reflecting piece and meet the kids and the parents at their needs then they won't see that there needs to build change.

In order to be allies for children of color, the majority answered that creating relationships is central to advocating for children of color. Jean stated, "Focus more on the kid and the relationships. Making sure the relationships are there, then I think . . . if you make it personal you can advocate for anybody." Getting to know the parents was a very common theme in developing relationships. "Learning families, going to ball games and all of that stuff and maybe just getting to know parents and things like that so when they make a phone call home, the parent can then say you care about my kid and so now I'm able to listen to you" was something else Jean shared. Kathryn shared that in order to be an ally, "you've got to get to know your students. You've got to get to know your parents."

Mary added,

> I feel that if white educators would try to build that relationship beyond the classroom with their students no matter what race, it would really make students work harder for them. It was somewhat uncomfortable for me at times when I was in a white school, but I had to go outside my comfort zone. When they invited me to the dance recitals, I showed up and I think it really made a difference with those students and their parents because they were looking at me like I didn't know you were going to come. I didn't always feel comfortable because I was often like the only black person there. But, I don't . . . I know sometimes it can be harder, I think, for probably a white person to go to a gathering where they're the only white person there if they don't have that relationship beforehand. So, they might feel a little bit intimidated in going to, you know a ball game. But they have to do it, I mean, because that's the only way those parents are going to work for

> you, work hard to help you with their student and that, that's what I can see. That's what I can see has helped me.

Along with building relationships in order to become allies for children of color, Ann added by saying,

> Continue to encourage; continue to say yes you can, yes you can, I'm going to help you. I'll show you. Um, if a child is not confident, then you take extra time with them. If a child is not performing the way that they need to and you know it can be better, give some um, suggestions to their parents and continue to lift them up.

We should be doing these things for all children, but I appreciate Ann's emphasis on the continuation of support. Support has to be sincere and built over time. As we see tokenism when it comes to things like "black history month," when it comes to relationships it has to be authentic and nurtured. Relationships are a process and require development and intentionality. Ann also talked about the importance of honesty in relationships as she says, "I believe as a parent and as a grandparent, that when you can be real with me and tell me what my child needs, then you are showing your love for my child. If you just let him go, then you don't really love him." What a powerful statement [If you just let him go then you don't really love him] and how often do we see difference viewed in a way as something to set aside, leave behind or tip-toe over rather than to fully embrace.

Kathryn reveals,

> Relationships are deliberate. They don't just happen, so you have to work at your relationships. You have to work together. So for every step we take forward, we take three steps back. I mean think about Martin Luther King and say he had a

> dream one day. Yeah, that's true, but for every step we take forward, we take two steps back. I saw a billboard one time that said racism is easily seen, but hard to prove. That's true. So, we have to get past all our stereotypes . . . and start working together and build those relationships. You know relationships take time.

Within this theme there was also mention of the counterplay between recognizing difference and not recognizing difference. It seemed essential to Nina that in order to have relationships that were authentic, one must be willing to be real and talk openly and candidly. Nina said,

> We have a lot of personal problems that have nothing to do with the system that we're working out, but I do think that to bridge the gap, I think there has to be more conversation and I just think we have to be real about it and not pretend, oh, to talk about it means that you know, I recognize it or there might be racism. No, find out. Ask the questions. You know.

Jean echoed what Nina is said and shared,

> I think we have to stop taking everything so personally. There are things that have happened, um, not everybody is good, not everybody is bad, take it for what it is, get to know me as a person, I get to know you as a person and then we work together for the best for these kids. Yeah, not taking everything so personally. There are things that you may agree or disagree and don't take it to be a race issue because I've said something and I won't take it to be a race issue because you said something; let's just break down all these barriers, talk with each other and you know, work for the kids.

Summary

Chapters I–III set up the background and need for the interviews laid out here. Here you have gotten to know the participants through their participant profiles and after reviewing the questions and dominant and emerging themes. Dominant themes that

emerged include Power Advantage, Exclusivity, Cultural differences, and Seeing Color/Colorblind ideology. The three emerging themes that arose were Lack of awareness or understanding of white privilege, Intentionality, and Relationships. The individual profiles and themes reinforce the powerful voices of minority educators that are essential to begin to break down systematic white privilege in schools.

CHAPTER V

WHITENESS, CLASS, & INTERSECTIONALITY

It's important to recognize that there are many faces of whiteness. My experience is from the upper middle class perspective of whiteness in a small town where if you had money, you attended private school, were a member of the country club, attended the largest church and deep down, you knew you were different than other whites and especially people of color.

When I began this study, I honestly expected to hear the participants say the same things. I expected much overlap in responses; even more so than was revealed. I recognize that's where a gap in understanding lies for me. My whiteness, my experiences were reflected in my expectations. I expected commons experiences in many ways, even though I know everyone's experience is different. I expected the interviewees to believe that whiteness existed in intentional ways at their schools. I didn't expect such optimism at times and varied responses. Why, I ask myself? I know better than to put everyone in the same category, but I did.

I have to continue to work through my monolithic view of whiteness. As Warren and Hytten (2007) discuss, there are many faces of whiteness. The face of whiteness I have been looking through has been my own. I say this to recognize various faces of whiteness and to recognize that my experience is only one face of whiteness, but in many ways I am careful not to dance around the importance of recognizing whiteness,

especially in a historical context; for whiteness formed our cultural ideals, our economic, social and educational systems that are alive today. In my call to action below, I am speaking to white educators who may have come from a similar background as mine. I cannot speak for whites who haven't had the economic, social or educational advantages I have had, but I must recognize their experiences are much different than mine.

In many ways I hope to debunk the "we-ness" as Audrey Thompson (2010) talks about in her journal article, "Colortalk: Whiteness and Off White." Thompson (2010) shares,

> What seems self-evident from the predominately white colorblind perspective-namely the existence of an overarching "we-ness" across ethnic and racial differences-is exactly what many people of color call into question, for there is plenty of evidence that white Americans do not wish to live in the same neighborhoods with people of color, send their children to the same schools, or work with "them" in the same organizations. Given that "we" category seems to become operative only when it serves whites' interests, those without the privileges of whitenss may see white claims regarding colorblind "we-ness" as romantic, uninformed, or arrogant. (p. 141)

In the same way, my "we-ness" describing whiteness may not take into account those who have not experienced life as I have. As Thompson(2010) reiterates, " Colorblind discourse attempts to suppress any recognition of meaningful differences across white, black and brown forms of experience" (p. 142). The key throughout all of the interviews, research, and rethinking, I must recognize how whiteness has blinded me.

Furthermore, as Thompson (2010) states,

> a strictly theorectical approach to whiteness allows white anti-racist theorists to "do" antiracism without undoing who themselves are or how they do what they do. One of the key lessons of whiteness theorizing is that what counts as anti-

> racism, as morality, as justice, and as rigorous scholarship must all be rethought. Unless anti-racists whites interrogate the whiteness of their own anti-racist practices, they risk working within the terms set by the white, mainstream moral economy, gaining moral credit by "helping" people of color. (p.155)

It is with all of this information that I must reconstruct my own knowledge about whiteness so as not to imply that being white is "bad," but that without recognizing whiteness first historically, then currently; one cannot begin to break down its monolithic thinking. Whiteness lives and breathes in various forms and I would argue, is part of what Thompson and Gitlin (1995) refer to as the project of reconstructing knowledge. Reconstructing knowledge involves "altering normative assumptions in order to create the possibility of knowledge geared to new visions of the good, appropriate, the possible, the desirable, and the relevant. What is at stake is not only a revisioning but a re-envisioning of meanings" (p. 135). So in taking this information into a classroom of all white students with various backgrounds and experiences, I would ask students to engage in producing reconstructed knowledge where we

> look at whiteness from the outside in by learning from those who reside on the margins of powers, and to challenge in whatever ways possible the "single consciousness" which frames most knowledge production, while recognizing that such changes do not escape institutionalized power relations. (Thompson & Gitlin, 1995, p. 149)

The Costs of Racism and Call to Action

One of the first influential books I opened on the topic of white privilege was Alice McIntyre's (1997) *Making meaning of whiteness.* McIntyre focuses on the need for white educators to reeducate ourselves and to do that, she says one must become more

self- reflective as a white person. That was the starting line for me. In this final chapter, I will examine how whiteness theory and white identity construction have created a place where I can decenter and rearticulate whiteness. By breaking the silenced dialogue through the interviews represented in Chapter IV, I am able to investigate how critical pedagogy and transformative education can enhance our responsibilities as educators to break down barriers. The themes that were pulled from the interviews (Power Advantage, Exclusivity, Cultural differences, Seeing Color/Colorblind ideology, Lack of awareness or understanding of white privilege, Intentionality and Relationships) all collectively join around a call for educators to engage in social justice to transform communities.

> The oppressed suffer from the duality, which has established itself in their innermost being. They discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Yet, although they desire authentic existence, they fear it. They are at one and the same time themselves, and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized. The conflict lies in the choice between being wholly themselves or being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting him; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and recreate, in their power to transform the world. This is the tragic dilemma of the oppressed, which their education must take into account. (Freire, 1970, pp. 32–33)

Whiteness Theory—Identifying its Power and Privileges

Whiteness theory grounds itself in the importance of bringing forth the invisibility of whiteness in order to deconstruct ways in which it has supported systemic and institutionalized racism. What one does not see or choose to see cannot be addressed. What cannot be addressed cannot be problematized and changed. Whiteness studies acknowledge the privileges of whiteness as it remains unnamed and naturalized through

systems, institutions, law, curriculum, etc. Whiteness is seen as the "way of the world" and "normal." The whiteness agenda is clearly not hidden, just unseen as it is viewed as "everyday" by many whites. The privilege of being unnamed doesn't hide the power of whiteness. Whiteness rears its ugly head within systems, institutions, and schooling practices. The act of ignoring race, which whites created to identify anyone other than white, reveals the dominance whiteness has on its thinking that it doesn't need to talk about race. Many white people's lack of consciousness about their own racial identity continues to hinder them from seeing the advantages they have by being white. What they fail to see continues to prevent a decentering of whiteness and perpetuates educational practices that lift up whites and push out students of color. There is a fear and defensiveness among whites to begin to deconstruct whiteness because it may be seen as challenging their identity. Actively unraveling whiteness as a structure of power and privilege (Akom, 2008) is a central tenant of whiteness studies. Transforming and impacting communities is not about standing still and ignoring our place in the world. We must acknowledge our privileged place and begin to deconstruct who we are, individually, through whiteness in order to impact our schools and communities.

White Identity Construction

Because many whites have so easily ignored their whiteness and the privileges it has given them, it is important to look at how recognizing whiteness weaves into models of white identity development. Deconstructing whiteness calls one to recognize whiteness exists. In addition to acknowledging the power and privileges whiteness incurs, whites must travel through a recognition process without shutting down. Interestingly,

McKinney (2005) observes that there is an assumption that racism is damaging to white identity, arguably because whites do not see themselves as racial beings, so Helms's (1990) white identity model focuses on establishing a positive identity where one recognizes and further opposes institutional and cultural racism while abandoning individual racism. Helms (1990) discusses six stages in which whites begin to deconstruct their whiteness and gain a more integrated view of race. The stages are: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independent, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. Referred to as "statuses" by Ortiz and Rhoads (2000), the movement between these statuses generally flows from a "superficial and inconsistent awareness of being white" (Helms, 1990, p. 55) to high levels of consciousness characterized by a realization of white privilege and a commitment to pursuing social change. Movement through and among these stages doesn't free one from struggle. Guilt, shame, and anger can many times be associated with recognizing personal and systematic prejudices. Many times whites can feel like they are to blame for all of racism and defensiveness arises. Howard (2006) reminds us that "it is important to remember as we embark on this complex and sometimes uncomfortable journey into greater understanding that the "enemy" is dominance itself, not white people" (p. 31). It is not only by focusing on oneself that whites can establish an integrated view of racism, but recognizing they are members of a group that collectively creates dominant ideology.

Naming Oneself: Decentering and Rearticulating Whiteness

While it is important for whites to acknowledge how they impact racism, it is critical for whites to begin to decenter and rearticulate whiteness down from its

privileged position. The educators that I experienced in my elite private schools would benefit from naming their own whiteness and its position within society and schools where it is so often perpetuated. It is only through naming it educators can deconstruct it and call attention to it as a historically accepted, unproblematized norm. This naming of whiteness breaks down the silence of whiteness and engages schools and community to begin to "create an oppositional space to fight for equality and social justice" (Montgomery, 1999, p. 144). Nylund (2006) discusses oppositional whiteness as deeply aligned with questioning one's whiteness and positionality in order to bring forth a progressive white identity. Oppositional whiteness is not about racial inferiority, but rather about confronting white hegemony directly and being constructive about our choices so we can take pride in who we are (Nylund, 2006; Tate, 1997). Critical to social justice Giroux (2002) sums up his notion of oppositional whiteness:

> By rearticulating whiteness as more than a form of domination, white [educators] can construct narratives of "whiteness" that both challenge, and, hopefully provide a basis for transforming the dominant relationship between racial identity and citizenship, one informed by oppositional politics. Such a political practice suggests new subject positions, alliances, commitments, and forms of solidarity between white [educators] and others engaged in a struggle over expanding the possibilities of democratic life. (as cited in Nylund, 2006, p. 32)

White educators must decenter themselves from the domination that is centered around whiteness in order to work through personal transformation which will in turn impact students and society. Howard (2006) states, "We cannot help our students overcome the negative repercussions of past and present racial dominance if we have not unraveled the remnants of dominance that still lingers in our minds, hearts, and habits"

(p. 6). The impact of dominance and naming ones whiteness can begin to unravel the ways in which both have impacting schooling as a social control mechanism that favors white children (Howard, 2006). Naming our whiteness allows us to discuss our privileges and discuss our students' positionality in a white dominated world. If we agree with Lippin (2004) when she says "Antiracism work always begins with us" (p. 110), we must strive to recognize who we are in the presence of the classroom. Decentering whiteness is a shock to the system of whiteness, but breeds hope for students of color to be heard. Students have grown up with hegemonic power structures dictating their education and until we, as teachers, recognize our stance among and within white privilege we cannot begin to dismantle it. In naming their positionality, white teachers are also responsible for helping other white teachers recognize racism and promote activism that not only supports minority students, but challenges the educational structure, rules and programs that limit minority engagement. Lippin (2004) talks about the act of declaring her whiteness in the classroom as she states, "When you speak about yourself as a white, middle-class person, a dominant category whose influence is the underlying fabric of our North American reality, you invoke a questioning or the unquestioned" (p. 114). Never in my undergraduate years or any time before that did I ever hear anyone question whiteness. I never was someone who would have admitted to whites being better than minorities and it was never said in those words, but it was said through the expectations my family had of me and of where I went to school, to camp, to church, etc. I knew I was different from minorities. I knew I didn't have anything to worry about being white. My actions, existence and goals were never questioned. I was never told I wasn't good

enough or wouldn't make it. I wasn't uncomfortable in a classroom—I felt I belonged. It was a comfort I carried with me, a comfort and as Peggy McIntosh says, a "knapsack" of privileges. In the following lengthy but appropriate charge given by Howard (2006), we can begin to move our quest from deconstructing white identity and naming our privileged position to giving voice to the lived experience of minorities:

> If our examination and understanding of the root causes of social inequality are too shallow, then our approach to corrective action will necessarily be superficial and ineffective (Sleeter, 1996). If we do not face dominance, we may be predisposed to perpetuate it. Students, parents, and colleagues of color have repeatedly called for greater racial and cultural awareness on the part of white educators. Their voices challenge us to catch up with our own history by acknowledging the reality of past and present racism and dominance. (p. 30)

The Lived Experience of Minorities: Breaking the Silenced Dialogue

White educators must help students find their voices and identities outside of a curriculum that currently promotes cultural tourism, a casual "show and tell" of cultures that leaves no room for questioning or analysis of the dominance of whiteness and clearly measures culture against the purity of whiteness. Kincheloe and Steinburg (1997) state that the "hidden hegemonic curriculum of pluralist multiculturalism involves the promotion of a form of cultural tourism that fails to address or understand the harsh realities of race, class and gender subjugation" (p. 18). Examples of cultural tourism are things like: lessons on black history month which are many times displayed on school bulletin boards for one month out of the year and plays put on that reveal Columbus's discovery of America where Indians are seen as barbarian people, and white men are the heroes who colonize land that is "rightfully" theirs. The voices of minorities are hidden

and or pushed aside as having no resemblance of "truth." As long as minorities don't challenge the norm they can have a voice, but even then their voice is inauthentic because they are speaking to what teachers want to hear, not what they want to say. The saying "if you can't say anything nice don't say anything at all" is interpreted to mean if you can't say anything outside of agreeance with white culture then we don't want to hear it. Maalouf (1996) discusses the challenges students of color may face as they carry an imposed sense of identity. Maalouf (1996) states:

> People often see themselves in terms of whichever one of their allegiances is most under attack. And sometimes when a person doesn't have the strength to defend that allegiance, he hides it. Then it remains buried deep down in the dark, awaiting its revenge. But whether he accepts or conceals it, proclaims it discreetly or flaunts it, it is with that allegiance that the person concerned identifies. And then, whether it relates to colour, religion, language or class, it invades the person's whole identity. Other people who share the same allegiance sympathize; they all gather together, join forces, encourage one another, and challenge "the other side." For them, "asserting their identity" inevitably becomes an act of courage. (p. 26)

I give this excerpt to point out how many minority students in our classrooms may be feeling this on a daily basis. With hegemonic discourses and white privilege values permeating the schools, how might minority students who feel like they have to give up their identity and assimilate into white culture feel? In this same vein, students of color feel a sense of "two-ness," a competing identity, in which they are pulled in different directions never being able to define who they truly are. According to DuBois, "Black personhood was existentially divided in at least two, perhaps more, selves—between the subjective, self-determined, agential Self and the objectified, exoticized, excluded Other" (Blau & Brown, 2001, as cited in Akom, 2008, p. 250). Wouldn't you be angry if on a

daily basis you were expected to act and be something that didn't feel right, always juggling your identity for the sake of someone else's expectations? Linda Powell (1997) provides:

> White students are supported, empowered and affirmed, via the discourse of potential (as though they had no deficits) and it just feels like "they earned it." Black students, their families, and their communities are burdened with the "rumor of inferiority" (Howard, 1986) in a subtle and stifling way. White students remain unfettered by the complexities of race and their whiteness, believing that meritocracy must be real because it has always rewarded *their* hard work. Black students are keenly aware of unfairness, expected to keep silent and continue to perform if they seek the benefits that the White world offers. (pp. 4–5)

By calling attention to whiteness, and bringing forward the voices of students of color, educators can continue to work within a critical pedagogical lens always questioning, always calling forth the silenced dialogue, and problematizing race and whiteness as foundations of power and privilege.

Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Education

Since students come from various backgrounds and families with different cultural orientations, white educators need to "incorporate strategies appropriate for all the children in its confines" (Delpit, 1988, p. 286). Delpit states,

> What the school personnel fail to understand is that if the parents were members of the culture of power and lived by its rules and codes then they would transmit those codes to their children. In fact, they transmit another culture that children must learn at home in order to survive in their communities. (p. 286)

As a white educator, I am not aware of every student's-background, culture, family life, but the task of asking students their experiences and sharing those with the class and

celebrating their voice is beginning to dismantle whiteness and the act of schooling where the teacher knows all and tells all. Instead, in my classroom, my students are just as much a part of the education process as I am. Delpit (1988) supports my aims as she says, “the teacher cannot be the only expert in the classroom. To deny students their own expert knowledge is to disempower them” (p. 288)

Transformative education involves application and a move toward social justice. hooks (1994) recognizes one of Paulo Freire’s statements that speaks to my vision of transformative education in relation to social justice. Freire writes:

> Authentic help means that all who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in the common effort to understand the reality which they seek to transform. Only through such praxis—in which those who help and those who are being helped help each other simultaneously—can the act of helping become free from the distortion in which the helper dominates the helped. (as cited in hooks, 1994, p. 34)

Education doesn’t happen within four walls with desks bolted to the floor. Transformative education involves action in and out of the classroom. When we relate issues we are learning about to current problems and issues it makes the topic real. If we can show students how real the issue is and help them deconstruct it, then they may be able to better understand where they stand on issues and why; furthermore, it supports them in their journey to act on issues they better understand and feel passionate about. Giroux (2005) states, “Educators need to take positions without standing still and make available those ideas, values and theories that can critically challenge official knowledge that indiscriminately embraces both religious fundamentalism and neoliberal ideology” (p. xxix). Education is about envisioning a different way, a connected people who feel

democratic values vs. commercial values of utmost importance and a future of dialogue that promotes justice and critical thinking.

Furthermore, white teachers can espouse a critical pedagogical lens through which they teach and work. Critical pedagogy intertwines with critical multiculturalism and deconstructing whiteness to provide students and teachers an opportunity to take a critical look at whiteness, but also discuss ways they can use their whiteness to challenge and break down barriers. Rodriguez (2000) reminds us that

> the discourse of critical pedagogy offers insight into the overall purpose of pedagogy of whiteness. That is, it is imperative that such a pedagogy invite (white) students to critically engage with inequality and asymmetrical relations of power so as to challenge and transform them. (p. 15)

We must not only think of whiteness through a critical research lenses but consider its potential in being transformational within education. Part of critical pedagogy is questioning normalized curriculum. I have been through more than 16 years of education never learning the value of a question other than to memorize what questions might be on the exam. Never did we say, “Who decided Columbus would be who we learned about in relation to the discovery of America?” Were there not other people who “discovered” America before him? Did the Indians really only “relocate”? Why do we have only one month to celebrate black history? We weren’t supposed to ask those questions or to learn outside of the curriculum. A critical interrogation of texts, history, and learning is more personal and provides personal connection to learning. Lippin (2004) states,

> Education is never politically neutral (Shor & Friere 1987). As a matter of fact, the most potentially subversive act is to teach. Everything from the classroom

> protocol to seating arrangement and pedagogical style can reinforce or challenge traditional power structures. (p. 110)

She also reminds us that all teachers carry bias and that we must own that bias and invites our students to challenge and discourse with our students. We must also work together to provide more "egalitarian relationships" (p. 110) with people we work with and people we live among.

Critical pedagogy and transformative education is deeply entrenched in love. We must love one another as we want to be loved. This is not an exclusive love, but rather a love of difference and a love of understanding and questioning. It's a love to question each other, educate each other, and being open to more to lifelong learning. It's the "multidimensionality" that Lugg (2007) talks about that we should consider in order to be more inclusive. Instead of asking not only those who identify as black, but anyone who feels they have to hide from who they are or to "cover their identities" (Lugg, 2007, p. 125) give them the freedom to express who they are and educate others that each person is an individual. Being black doesn't mean that you represent the entire black population. We each have our own story and our own history and that should be honored and appreciated. As Dantley (2007) states, "no one is an isolate . . . we are all connected to one another in some fashion and therefore we become responsible and accountable to one another" (p. 171). The historically oppressed and marginalized groups that have always had to act on a terrain that is not of their choosing (Apple, 2007) should no longer have to do so. We must let go of this "possessive individualism . . . for collective solutions to pressing social problems" (Apple, 2007, p. 39). Change is not easy to think about,

consider or implement. Quantz (2007) reflects on the impact of change in the role of administrators and says “it would require the recognition that school administrators may not be the only leaders in the school, but all kinds of people assume leadership rolls” (p. 56). Giving up control is central to a change in education.

Our Responsibility as Educators and Community Members

> I am certain that if we are truly to effect societal change, we cannot do so from the bottom up, but we must push and agitate from the top down. And in the meantime, we must take the responsibility to teach to provide for students who do not already possess them, the additional codes of power, but I also do not believe that we should teach students to passively adopt an alternate code. They must be encouraged to understand the value of the code they already possess as well as to understand the power realities in this country. Otherwise they will be unable to work to change these realities. (Delpit, 1988, p. 288)

As Cooper and Gause (2007) state, “social justice educators also acknowledge the need for every class participant to feel valued and validated” (p. 197). In my classes it is so important that whether or not the student comes from a privileged family or a nontraditional family or has financial aid to pay for their education, that the fact that each of them are different makes the class wonderful. We cannot maintain an ideology of racial sameness (Kinchloe & Steinberg, 1997), we must acknowledge color and the (racial and political) implications that follow. It would be a boring world if we were all the same, but it is important that the elite (white Anglo-Saxon protestant) thinking and power not control a world where diversity is so important and valuable. Cooper and Gause (2007) reveal that “democratic education involves educators empowering students to engage in free and open discourse” and critical pedagogies “challenge students to question taken for granted cultural scripts and norms” (pp. 198–199). Chajet (2007)

offers questions that can be easily transferred in to any classroom. We can ask: “From whose perspective are we seeing, reading, or hearing? How do we know what we know? Why is it important? Could things be otherwise?” (p. 290). It’s easy to feel overwhelmed by the need for change and the need for deconstructing what we have become accustomed to in terms or schooling and education. I say this especially as a person from privilege who hasn’t always seen the limited views and alienating practices that were happening around me. I have been blinded by the operation of schooling and the perpetuation of normalcy. I always encourage my students to understand that, as Cooper and Gause (2007) state, “‘what they see’ may not really be ‘what they see’ in terms of others identities, stories, etc.” (p. 207). I always encourage students to engage with one another about who they are as people and where their stories might intersect because when people can see a connection between one another they are more likely to open up to challenging their own stereotypes. To me stories are a snapshot into the soul. Again, it is difficult to open up and let others in and be ready to change; however, I believe this to be one of the most powerful actions in deconstructing whiteness. Scatamburlo-D’Annibale, Suoranta, and McLaren (2007) remind us not to give up hope when they state:

> But hopes and wishes for something better can never be completely extinguished particularly when linked to critical spiritual reflection and action. Enter revolutionary critical pedagogy. Among the core ideas of revolutionary critical pedagogy are the importance of intruding into realities which the security state has identified as “off limits.” (p. 83)

It’s the “off limits” thinking I would say we should pursue. We should ask those “hush hush” questions and question the unspoken rules and regulations as to why and how and

who is being left out and excluded and who is being “lifted up” as the elite. We must bring in the voices of those whose children we teach: members of minority communities, poor communities, etc. to discuss whiteness and its impact on our schools and within our communities. This study is only the beginning of my personal call to investigate white privilege and its impact on education.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE

> It is important for us to unlearn prejudice, broaden our understanding of racism, and learn to recognize racists acts when we see them. But unless we are actively involved in the fight against racism, we haven't taken it far enough. —Paul Kivel

As I reflect on the process of writing this dissertation, I don't know where to begin. When I began this process I was newly married, had no children, and my parents were together. During this process, I have had a child, gotten two promotions, moved into a new home, and my parents have divorced. It's been an intense but rewarding process.

When I sat down in my first course, The History of Education, with Dr. Villaverde, I can specifically remember what building we were in, where I was sitting, and who was in the class. I remember roaming the classroom as to see if I was going to "fit in," and at the end of the class I thought I was in the wrong place. I remember being alongside K-12 teachers and some PhD students, but it was a mix of people I hadn't been around before. I had to seriously consider if this program was right for me. I am not one to give up on a challenge and I soon realized this class was a challenge mentally and emotionally. I still have the multiple books we read in the course and hands down, this course framed my entire PhD program. I never knew there was such a term as schooling/ schooled. I was blown away by the history of education, the history that built up elites and excluded minorities; here began my understanding of white privilege. I can remember driving home after this class and talking on the phone with my godmother or

husband about what I learned because I was just blown away, and in many ways energized by the learning that was going on for me. It was mind blowing. I never imagined this program would impact me the way that it has. I've always been told I am an "old soul" and I do love history, but this experience has truly given me feet to stand on. Before this experience, I was walking in the shadows of my white upper class family with no concern in the world, but now I have learned how to problematize situations, experiences, and conversations I have with anyone. I have a deeper understanding of the history that has created the privileged structures in which we live. I am continually questioning and even agonizing over issues of social justice.

My work and education is not over when it comes to social justice activism and education. I am learning every day, questioning every day, and challenging myself to critically think about issues of social justice. I am not an expert, nor do I expect to be if I am truly open to continual learning on the subject of white privilege. I will always be in the privileged position and always need to problematize my position.

After finding out that minority educators is a group that has not been interviewed in terms of how white privilege is alive in the schools, I was excited yet nervous to begin the interviewing. I was excited to fill a void in the research and encourage more minority voices to be cited; however, I was nervous as a white female interviewing on a subject that acknowledges me as dominant. I was very aware of my whiteness in the interviews and sometimes I think I overcompensated by telling a participant or two why I was so interested in the topic which included my family story, etc. I believe at times it made me feel like "if they know that I am sincere about my interest in the topic they will open up

more." I felt like I needed to "minimize" my whiteness so that the participants would open up. I was always concerned about my whiteness during this entire process. It took me multiple versions of Chapter IV to come to a close. I was very hesitant to summarize what participants were saying because that only overlays my dominant voice over theirs. I continue to have difficulty with my own cultural consciousness and feeling confident about what I say in terms of being socially responsible. I will never stop problematizing the ways in which whiteness impacts myself and others. I still have a lot to learn.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES TO SEVEN- TO ELEVEN-YEAR-OLDS

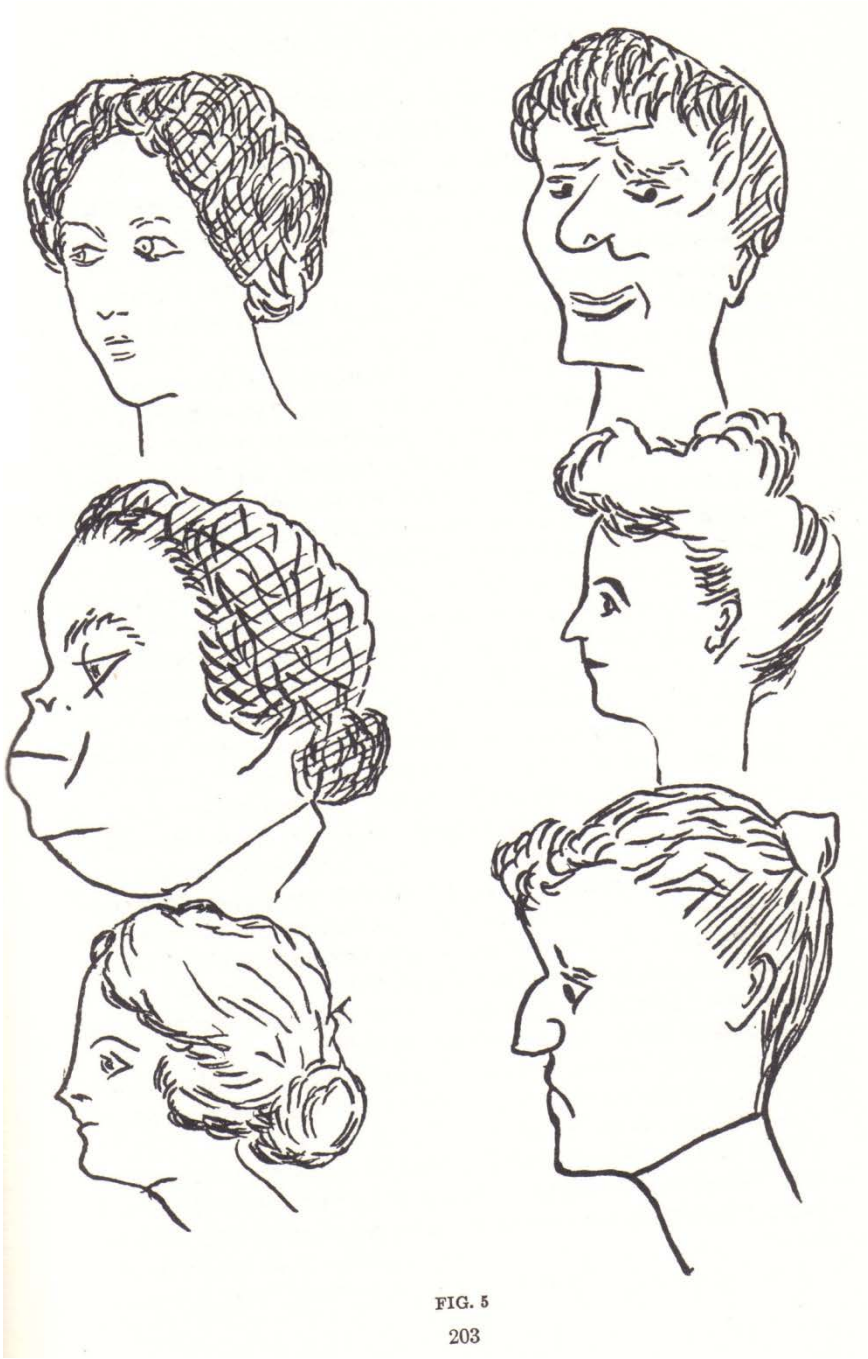
QUESTIONS	REPLIES MARKED 1	REPLIES MARKED 2	REPLIES MARKED 3	REPLIES MARKED 4	ABSURD REPLIES
14. When one has received a punishment which one has not deserved, what must one do?	One must do it so as to discuss it afterwards with the teacher.	One must protest.—One must speak.—One must tell his father.—Tell the teacher. You must tell the teacher that it isn't you.—One must try to to have it amended.	One must do it.—One must do it just the same.—One does it just the same.	One must not do it.—One must not go.	You must excuse.—Be good.—Because one has not been good.
15. Before deciding an important matter what must one do?	One must consider.	One must think if one can do it.—Get information.—One must ask if one can do it.—Pay attention.			One must go and see the doctor. — Eat. — One must run after it.
16. What can one do to earn 10 sous which one needs?	One must sell something. —One must sing.	One must work.—Go and work.—Work.			That some one gives it to us.
17. When a person has offended you and comes to ask your pardon, what must one do?	One must forgive.—One must reconcile one's self with them.	One must excuse them.	Thank them.—Receive them well.	Listen to them.—One must go and say to them to pay attention. —one must speak. One must not fight.	
18. If some one asks your opinion of a person whom you know but little what must one do?	One must say that one does not know what they are.—One must say nothing, or say that one does not know them well.—One must not speak without knowing.—One should say, I do not know that person well enough to to give you an opinion. —One might say nothing since one scarcely knows them.	One must say nothing.—That one does not know. —One says nothing.—One does not talk about it.			One must ask.—One does not recognize him any more.—Answer him.

19. When two persons discuss a question before coming to an understandingabout the words, what happens?	It will happen that they contradict themselves. —They will talk nonsense.—They will not talk about the same thing.	It will happen that one does not know.	That they dispute.—One will quarrel.—They will get angry.—A quarrel. —They will end in a dispute.		
20. When a person always contradicts you no matter what you say, what must one do?	You must try to make him understand when you are right and when you are wrong.	You must let him say —You must not speak with them.—One must tell one's parents.	One must revenge one's self.		You must stay at home. —Because one quarreled.—Do not tell others.
21. Why must we judge a person by his acts rather than by his words?	Because one is more sure in seeing the acts than the words.—Because one cannot believe the word and if one has seen it one always believes.—Because when one says the words it is not certain that they will be put in action, but when they are put in action one is sure they are done.—Because words can lie but acts cannot.	Because one can tell lies. —Because words are deceitful.—Because they will lie.			Because one does not know.—Because it is to know if one has committed a crime.—No not lie nor steal.
22. Why does one forgive a wrong action committed in anger more easily than a wrong action committed without anger?	Because when one is angry one hardly pays attention.—Because when one is angry one is forced to do the bad action.	Because anger may call itself.	Because it is bad.—Because one is angry.—That makes you angry. —Being angry one might tell.—Because he cries and upsets everything.	It is because one is not angry.	

Source: Binet and Simon (1905/1916).

APPENDIX B

PRETTY WOMAN TEST



Source: Binet and Simon (1905/1916).

APPENDIX C

DIFFERENCES TEST

made to just one of the words of a pair provided the distinction is evident from what is said about it.

(a) *What is the difference between a* bird *and a* dog?

Responses commonly are in terms of locomotion, size, shape, physical attributes, or type of vocalization. Specific differences in color are not satisfactory.

Plus. "A bird flies and a dog runs." "A bird flies." "A bird flies and a dog runs after the bird when he's down on the ground." (The differences here seem clearly implied.) "The dog can run and the bird can't." "A bird got wings and a dog got ears." "A bird has got two feet and a dog hasn't." "They're different shaped." "Bird's lighter than a dog." "A dog's bigger than a bird." "Bird says 'Tweet' and the dog says 'Bow-wow.'" "A bird can't bite." "It's a different kind of animal. (Q.) Birds have feathers and dogs have fur."

Minus. "A bird can go faster than a dog." "The bird is white and the dog is brown." "'Cause they don't look alike. (Q.) One is white and one is black." "If a dog went after a bird the bird would fly up." "A dog chases the bird." (These last two responses are minus because it is the relationship between the two, and not the difference between them, that is emphasized.)

(b) *What is the difference between a* slipper *and a* boot?

Satisfactory responses usually refer to relative comfort or convenience, protection, differences in shape, material, or use.

Plus. "Slipper is comfortable." "A boot is much better than a slipper because it's warmer." "You can get a slipper on faster than a boot." "Slipper leaks and boot don't." "The boot's longer." "A slipper has a little tassel on it, or a little round thing and shoe hasn't." "Slipper is wool and boot's leather." "A boot's made out of rubber." "Put on the slipper when we get up mornings." "You can't wear a slipper out-doors and you can wear a boot out-doors." "The men go out fishing with boots and the slipper people wear."

Source: Terman and Merrill (1937).

APPENDIX D

MUTILATED PICTURES TEST

Form M **V, 6**

6. Mutilated Pictures (Cf. Form L, p. 223)

The missing part must be named, or described verbally.

(a) *Table*

Plus. "One of the legs." "There's only one leg and two legs here. (Q.) One leg there and no leg here and two legs here." "Hasn't got four legs." "Just has three legs." "No leg." "One foot of the table." "One table stick broke." "One thing. (Q.) One leg there and no leg here and two legs here." "What holds the table up." "The other thing that it stands up on."

Minus. "The legs — the legs that stand up." "Ain't got no feet" (pointing to missing leg). "Feet."

(b) *Coat*

Plus. "Just one sleeve." "No sleeve." "The sleeve's broke." "Arm." "One where you put your arm." "Ain't got but one arm." "Part of the coat's arm."

Minus. "Hand." "One — (points to own arm) part of coat — seam." "The arms." "Half of a suit gone."

(c) *Cat*

Plus. "Tail." "Half of his tail."

(d) *Head*

Plus. "Mouth." "Teeth." "Lips." "Smile." "His mouth and two hands."

(e) *Bird*

Plus. "A wing." "His — the thing what he fly with." "He needs a wing to fly some more." "Only one wing and tail." "No wings on that side." "The other fly" (wing). "No wing." "Wing — feets."

Minus. "Wings." "His hand." "One eye."

Passed if the missing part is detected in three out of the five pictures.

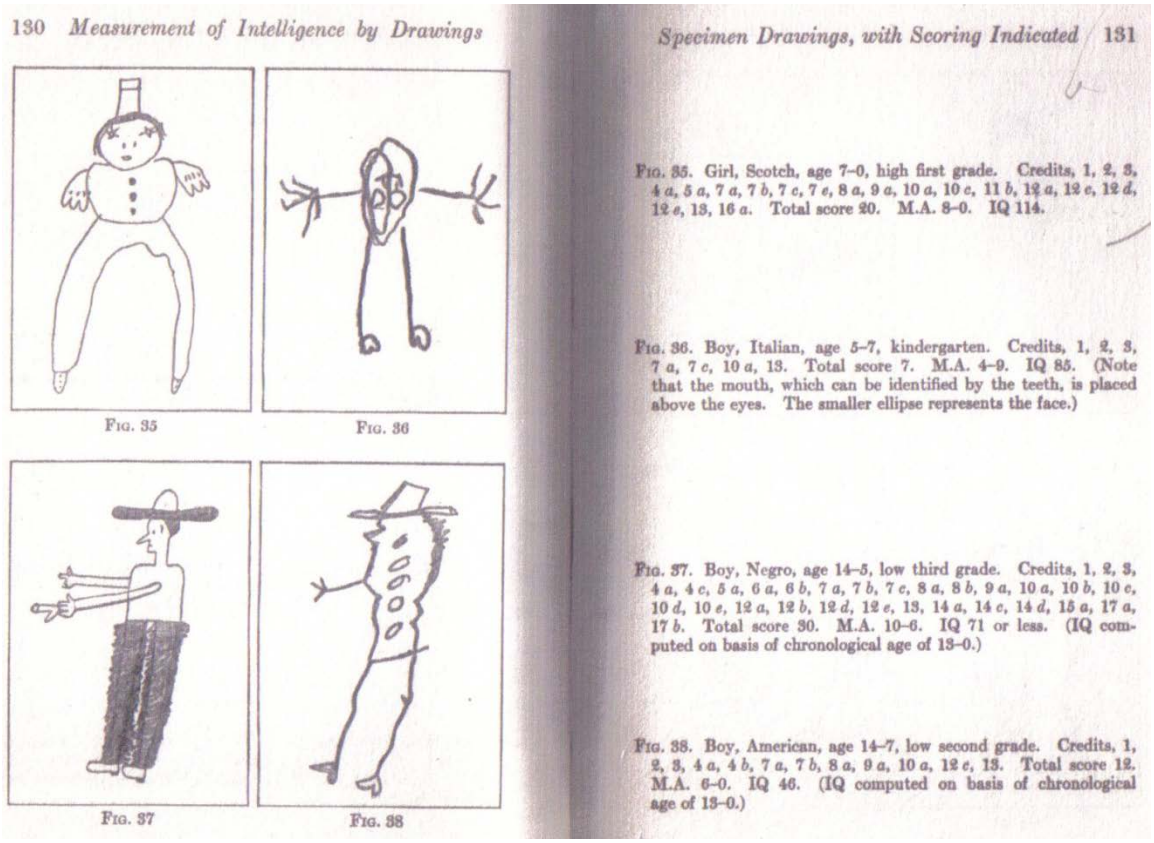
Alternate. Knot (Cf. Form L, p. 221)

347

Terman & Merrill (1937).

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLE DRAWINGS



130 *Measurement of Intelligence by Drawings*

FIG. 35

FIG. 36

FIG. 37

FIG. 38

Specimen Drawings, with Scoring Indicated 131

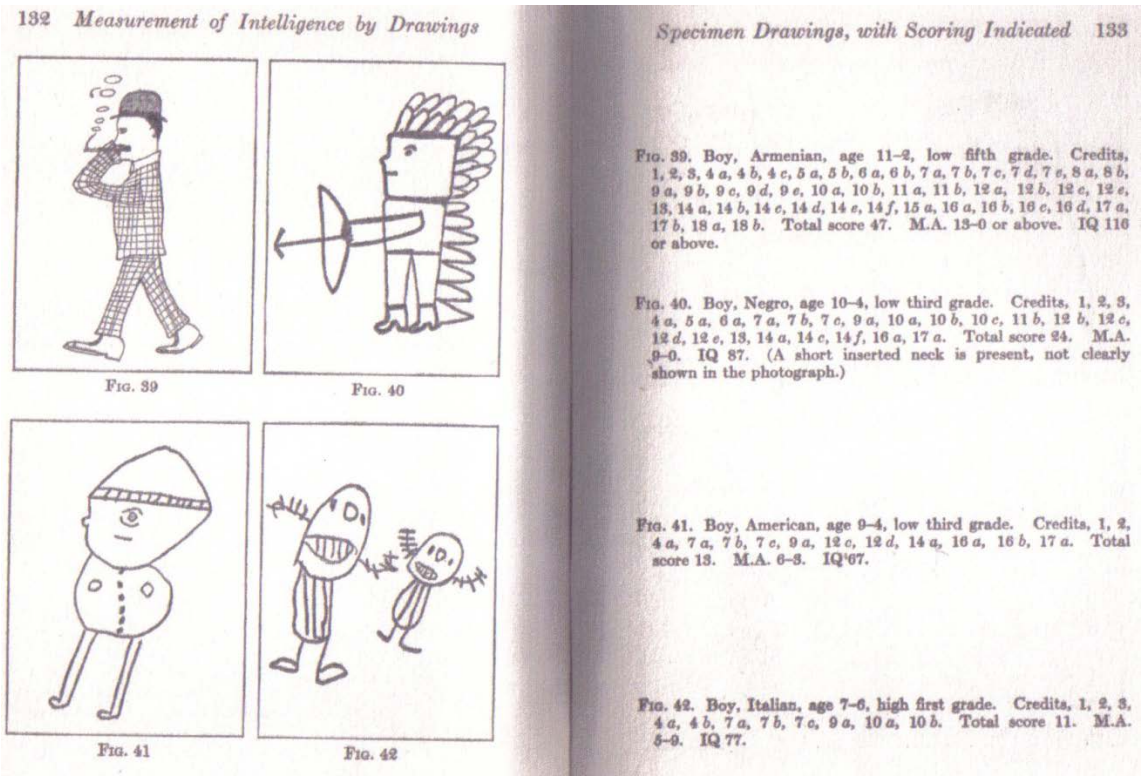
FIG. 35. Girl, Scotch, age 7–0, high first grade. Credits, 1, 2, 3, 4 *a*, 5 *a*, 7 *a*, 7 *b*, 7 *c*, 7 *e*, 8 *a*, 9 *a*, 10 *a*, 10 *c*, 11 *b*, 12 *a*, 12 *c*, 12 *d*, 12 *e*, 13, 16 *a*. Total score 20. M.A. 8–0. IQ 114.

FIG. 36. Boy, Italian, age 5–7, kindergarten. Credits, 1, 2, 3, 7 *a*, 7 *c*, 10 *a*, 13. Total score 7. M.A. 4–9. IQ 85. (Note that the mouth, which can be identified by the teeth, is placed above the eyes. The smaller ellipse represents the face.)

FIG. 37. Boy, Negro, age 14–5, low third grade. Credits, 1, 2, 3, 4 *a*, 4 *c*, 5 *a*, 6 *a*, 6 *b*, 7 *a*, 7 *b*, 7 *c*, 8 *a*, 8 *b*, 9 *a*, 10 *a*, 10 *b*, 10 *c*, 10 *d*, 10 *e*, 12 *a*, 12 *b*, 12 *d*, 12 *e*, 13, 14 *a*, 14 *c*, 14 *d*, 15 *a*, 17 *a*, 17 *b*. Total score 30. M.A. 10–6. IQ 71 or less. (IQ computed on basis of chronological age of 13–0.)

FIG. 38. Boy, American, age 14–7, low second grade. Credits, 1, 2, 3, 4 *a*, 4 *b*, 7 *a*, 7 *b*, 8 *a*, 9 *a*, 10 *a*, 12 *c*, 13. Total score 12. M.A. 6–0. IQ 46. (IQ computed on basis of chronological age of 13–0.)

Source: Goodenough (1926).



132 *Measurement of Intelligence by Drawings*

FIG. 39

FIG. 40

FIG. 41

FIG. 42

Specimen Drawings, with Scoring Indicated 133

FIG. 39. Boy, Armenian, age 11–2, low fifth grade. Credits, 1, 2, 3, 4 *a*, 4 *b*, 4 *c*, 5 *a*, 5 *b*, 6 *a*, 6 *b*, 7 *a*, 7 *b*, 7 *c*, 7 *d*, 7 *e*, 8 *a*, 8 *b*, 9 *a*, 9 *b*, 9 *c*, 9 *d*, 9 *e*, 10 *a*, 10 *b*, 11 *a*, 11 *b*, 12 *a*, 12 *b*, 12 *c*, 12 *e*, 13, 14 *a*, 14 *b*, 14 *c*, 14 *d*, 14 *e*, 14 *f*, 15 *a*, 16 *a*, 16 *b*, 16 *c*, 16 *d*, 17 *a*, 17 *b*, 18 *a*, 18 *b*. Total score 47. M.A. 13–0 or above. IQ 116 or above.

FIG. 40. Boy, Negro, age 10–4, low third grade. Credits, 1, 2, 3, 4 *a*, 5 *a*, 6 *a*, 7 *a*, 7 *b*, 7 *c*, 9 *a*, 10 *a*, 10 *b*, 10 *c*, 11 *b*, 12 *b*, 12 *c*, 12 *d*, 12 *e*, 13, 14 *a*, 14 *c*, 14 *f*, 16 *a*, 17 *a*. Total score 24. M.A. 9–0. IQ 87. (A short inserted neck is present, not clearly shown in the photograph.)

FIG. 41. Boy, American, age 9–4, low third grade. Credits, 1, 2, 4 *a*, 7 *a*, 7 *b*, 7 *c*, 9 *a*, 12 *c*, 12 *d*, 14 *a*, 16 *a*, 16 *b*, 17 *a*. Total score 13. M.A. 6–3. IQ 67.

FIG. 42. Boy, Italian, age 7–6, high first grade. Credits, 1, 2, 3, 4 *a*, 4 *b*, 7 *a*, 7 *b*, 7 *c*, 9 *a*, 10 *a*, 10 *b*. Total score 11. M.A. 5–9. IQ 77.

Source: Goodenough (1926).

APPENDIX G

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title: A study of white privilege in K-12 schools: Minority teachers perspectives
Project Director: Kristen T. Christman
Participant's Name: _____

What is the study about?
The purpose of this research study is to interview minority educators about their perception of how white privilege is played out within education.

Why are you asking me?
You self identify as a minority teacher working in the school system. Also, the literature on white privilege has failed to capture the voices of minority educators. T

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?
You will be asked to be interviewed for no more than 2.5 hours using a tape recording device. The transcription document and the thematic report based on the participants individual interview will be shared with you in order to allow you to confirm or alter the themes extracted. Once transcribed, the audio will be erased immediately. Following the interview follow-up through email may be needed to clarify statements or themes.

Is there any audio/video recording?
I will record the interview with a tape recorder. .Digital recording will be , transcribed and then compiled in a thematic report. There will be no video recording.

What are the dangers to me?
The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. Risks include possible effect on reputation or employability if confidentiality is breached. The use of pseudonyms will be automatic so as to protect your identification.
Participants will maintain full discretion as to what and how much they share. . In addition, participants are free to ask questions to gain the fullest possible clarification, comfort, and understanding. If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated or if you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Eric Allen in the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG at (336) 256-1482. Questions, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Dr. Leila Villaverde who may be contacted at (336) 334-3475 (levillav@uncg.edu).

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?
There are no direct benefits to participants in this study

Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?
Phenomenological interviews help educators and students alike
(1) Foster a better understanding of white privilege within education;

(2) Address prior research deficiencies concerning a lack of minority voices within education (and)
(3) Provide additional considerations for deconstructing whiteness within education

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

How will you keep my information confidential?

Each participant will be identified by a pseudonym so as to protect their identity. Electronic transcripts will be saved on a university computer that is password protected and located in a locked office at the university. Transcriptions will be kept for duration of the project director's doctoral studies, and will be erased within two weeks of completion. All hard transcripts will be shredded at that time. Consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researchers office at UNCG for a period of three years in accordance with federal law. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

What if I want to leave the study?

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed .

What about new information/changes in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in this study described to you by Kristen Christman.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX H

PILOT STUDY INVITATION AND FACT SHEET

Project Title: A study of white privilege in K-12 schools: Minority teachers perspectives
Principal Investigator: Kristen Christman
Email Address of Principal Investigator: kpthomps@uncg.edu

What is the purpose of this pilot study? The purpose of this study is to explore how white privilege is perceived by and played out in schools according to minority teachers.

What is white privilege? White Privilege is privilege based on skin color. Privilege based on whiteness represents the systems and institutionalized ways people either benefit from or are discriminated against based on skin color.

What do you mean by "participation in this study"? As a study participant, you will be invited to be interviewed by me, the principal investigator. I will host individual interviews with minority teachers. During individual interviews, participants are able to respond to questions. Individual interviews are estimated to ta hours. You will be asked tochose your own pseudonym.

How much time will it take to participate? Participation in the entire study is estimated to take 2.5hours maximum. Individual interviews will be arranged such that they are conducted at a location mutually agreed upon by the participant and the research.

What are the benefits of this study? You may benefit from sharing your stories about white privilege within education. Indeed, "Stories…reveal deeply held values, turning points, and amazing acts that give texture to culture" found in educational institutions. Although there is much written on the topic of whiteness/ white privilege, little is known about white privilege within schools from the voices of minority teachers. Sharing your thoughts about white privilege within schools will help others learn how white privilege impacts students.

Are there any risks involved? There are no known psychological, sociological, or physical risks associated with your participation in this study. The results of the study will be presented only in patterns that do not identify you by name or inference. All written documents about this study will be shredded within three years. You may withdraw as a participant at any time without penalty.

When will the study begin?January 2011 2010.

Why are research consent (permission) forms necessary? To protect participants' privacy.

If I want to participate how can I return the consent forms? You may return the signed consent forms in person or by mail to Kristen Christman, Undergraduate Student Excellence, 126 McIver Building, PO Box 26170, Greensboro NC 27402-6170

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project: K-12 minority teachers perception of white privilege within education
Sampling: Purposeful Concept/ Snowball Sampling **Place:**
Interviewer: Kristen T. Christman **Interviewee:** _____
Time: _____ **Date:** _____

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore how white privilege is perceived by and played out in schools according to minority educators

B. Individuals & Sources of Data:

Minority educators will be selected based on their knowledge of the topic and desire to take part in the study. Many of the participants may be recommended through the use of snowball sampling by other participants. Purposeful sampling is "selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (Patton, 1990, p. 169)

C. Confidentiality of Participants:

Digital recording will be de-identified and made anonymous. Once transcribed, the audio will be erased immediately. Electronic transcripts will be saved on a university computer that is password protected and located in a locked office at the university. Original transcriptions will be kept for the duration of the project director's doctoral studies, and will be erased within two weeks of completion. All hard transcripts will be shredded at that time. Consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. Per federal regulations, forms will be stored for the next three (3) years.

D. Length of Interview:

Participants will be asked to allow up to 2 hours for the interview.

E. Opener:

I am studying K-12 minority educators perception of white privilege within education.

F. Questions

- What does the term white privilege mean to you? Do you think white students are aware of their privileges? Do you think that is problematic?
- Do you think the educational system advantages whites students over students of color? In what ways have you seen this in your experience/your school?
- How are perceptions about race and "whiteness" manifested in your schools? Among faculty? Administration? Parents? Students?
- There are assertions that the achievement gap in education today, in many ways, is the result of our history of white social dominance, what evidence do you see that either supports or counters this argument?

Classroom pedagogy

- Are topics of race/ whiteness discussed in your classroom/school? Are you comfortable discussing race issues within your classroom and/or among your

colleagues at school?

- How do you feel about current pedagogical practices- does it emphasize one culture over another?

A charge for white educators

- How do we help white educators make a paradigm shift in challenging the system of white dominance?
- How can white educators become allies for children of color? Do you see evidence of this in today's schools?
- For people of color and white people, what do we need from each other if we are to create spaces of trust and effective collaboration in the service of our students?

G. Potential Benefits:

Exploring these semi-structured questions may help educators and students alike

(1) Foster a better understanding of white privilege within education;

(2) Address prior research deficiencies concerning a lack of minority voices within education and

(3) Provide additional considerations for deconstructing whiteness within education