

DEEPENING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF RACE AND
ETHNICITY THROUGH INTERGROUP DIALOGUE

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2016

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the participation of undergraduate pre-service teachers in an intergroup dialogue course. Intergroup dialogue (IGD) is one model of organizing a critical dialogue about race and ethnicity (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003). This study was used as an intervention with pre-service teachers to explore whether the participation in an intergroup dialogue course influenced their understanding of their racial and ethnic identities, racial attitudes, and the experiences of others. It also explored whether the course influenced how they thought about their future teaching. Data analysis included recorded dialogue sessions and weekly written reflections that asked pre-service teachers to reflect on their racial and ethnic identities, to consider how privilege or oppression have impacted their lives, and to examine race policies and practices in their school placements. Five case study interviews were conducted at the start of the dialogue experience and again four months after the dialogue experience.

Findings from this study suggest that intergroup dialogue was a useful intervention to help pre-service teachers develop more race-conscious attitudes and see the impact of race and racism in society and, more specifically, in schools. Participants reported a greater understanding of race, privilege, and oppression, conveyed a greater understanding of racial identity, developed a comfort level talking about race related issues; also they gained useful facilitation skills to talk about critical issues in their future classrooms. This is important given that the teaching force is predominantly white, whereas students of Color are increasingly changing the racial makeup of schools. This intervention provided these pre-service teachers a better lens into lived racial experiences of students they will one day teach as well as tools and skills to facilitate dialogue with their own students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The passion I have for teaching and learning would not be possible without Jesus. Jesus, you are my greatest source of strength, comfort, and hope and this dissertation would not be possible without You. You never wavered and I thank you for being a constant in my life and providing me with a clear purpose and vision for my life. Thank you for being my everything.

Granny. Your courage to move from Trinidad to England and then to the United States to become a nurse and set up a better life for your family did not go in vain. Thank you for taking that risk for your family. Your legacy continues today. I love you and the sacrifices you made more than words can say.

Mom and Dad, I would not be here if it were not for the sacrifices you made for me growing up. Your constant prayers and unconditional love and support stays with me each and every day. I feel it ALWAYS. Thank you for constantly reminding me that I could do anything. Thank you for quietly reassuring me that this day would happen. This achievement is as much for you both as it is for me. I love you both more than you know.

MY LOVE... your support, your love, and your encouragement day in and day out during my program never went unnoticed. Thank you for always listening, for making me laugh when I sometimes wanted to cry, and for your unwavering faith in me that I was more than enough. I love you Kiirus. Thank you for being my other half.

Michael Parrish, my partner in crime. This project would not be what it is today if you had not agreed to co-facilitate with me. Thank you for broadening my perspectives, giving me new insights, and for reminding me that I had something important to say and that the world needs to hear it. Facilitating with you over the past four years has been one of my greatest joys and one of the best parts of my doctoral career. I love you, friend.

Members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Violet J. Harris, Dr. Karla J. Möller, and Dr. Anjalé D. Welton, I appreciate your support and guidance. I am a better scholar because of each one of you. Your guidance will help me long after graduation. Thank you for constantly challenging me to grow in my scholarship. I must offer a special thank you to my advisor Marilyn. I could not have asked for a better advisor and mentor. I know how lucky I am to have had your guidance throughout my graduate career. I constantly felt your support and encouragement. You believed in me even when I did not believe in myself. Thank you for ALWAYS going above and beyond the duties of an advisor. I am indebted to you for the countless hours you spent working with me on this dissertation. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Sam and Laurie, (Dr. Sam Richards and Dr. Laurie Mulvey) your class fourteen years ago gave me a voice to express my racialized experiences. You showed me how powerful and transformative dialogue can be. I never imagined fourteen years ago when I sat in your classes that I would be here today. I am forever grateful to you both.

To my dissertation participants, all 17 of you, thank you for agreeing to be a part of this project. You have taught me more than I could ever have imagined. Thank you for candidly sharing your experiences, taking a risk, and leaning into the dialogue.

To my family and friends, both near and far, thank you for your unending support and love throughout this process. This degree is the result of hard work and support of many, all of you included. Your encouragement is something I am most appreciative of and I am indebted to you all.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Appreciations	A genuine compliment of someone who has impacted or added to the dialogue group.
Color consciousness	“[O]ften seen as developing more knowledge or understanding of “other” cultures, a first step is understanding oneself as a cultural and racial being.” (Ullucci & Battey, 2011, p. 1208)
Cooperating teacher	In-service teacher that pre-service teachers are placed with for their field placement/student teaching. Also known as a mentor teacher.
Discrimination	Actions that are based on prejudicial views and beliefs
Prejudice	Learned judgments or assumptions made by individuals about another social group.
Pre-service teacher	Teacher candidate, participant, student teacher in their early field placement or student teaching placement who is an undergraduate student in a teacher education program.
Early field experience	Semester before student teaching where pre-service teachers are in the local schools for a two day field experience. Also known as (early) field placement.
Student teaching	A semester long experience prior to graduation in which a pre-service teacher takes increased responsibility in a K-12 classroom. The task of the pre-service teacher usually begins with observation and gradually leads to full takeover of the class.
Teacher education program	In this study, a university undergraduate program preparing pre-service teachers.
Whiteness	Specific dimensions of racism that advance White people over people of Color. This includes basic rights, resources, and experiences that are assumed to be accessible to all but that are only available to Whites. This also includes Whites viewing race as having little to no meaning. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. 119). Often invisible to and by Whites.
White privilege	Unearned advantages, rights, and protection at the expense of others as a result of structural racism.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

I first developed a deep interest in race-related work while in college, where I took a sociology class my freshmen year entitled “Race and Ethnic Relations.” I was one of 400 students in a large lecture class confronting racial and ethnic issues in the United States and abroad. Each week students also met in small recitation discussion groups for an hour to discuss and share personal experiences. It was a time to debrief and analyze the concepts we learned in our lecture classes. Some of the issues I had already known about, personally experienced, or witnessed, but had not yet been able to articulate. These included my family’s immigration to the United States and the sense of community I felt in elementary school with other students who had similar immigrant stories. However, there was a disconnect from the school content because I had never read books or heard stories about people who looked like me or had my experiences.

In my sociology class *I fell in love* with dialogue, with the complexity and messiness that comes with discussing racial inequality. That next year, I was trained in how to facilitate dialogue sessions on race and ethnicity while also attending to my own continued personal racial identity development. I went on to facilitate and later supervise dialogue groups throughout my undergraduate career. It was during this time that I learned about the complexity of race and ethnicity and how difficult it can be to build race relations. I also learned how vital it was to have uncomfortable conversations about race and racism in order to foster racial awareness and transform the current system.

Years later, when I became a teacher, I discovered the color-blind mentality of many teachers with whom I worked. I witnessed the low expectations they had for many children. I

saw how they were not able to connect with their students because of their contrasting cultural backgrounds. I noticed that, similar to my own experiences, students did not see themselves in the curriculum; their background and culture were seen as something to be ashamed of, a deficit. While teaching, I came to realize how important it was for teachers to understand the lived experiences of the students we teach. We do a disservice to children by keeping silent about issues related to race and ethnicity and by not talking about the racialized experiences of our students. Talking about race is imperative, as our schools are diversifying at a rate faster than the teachers who serve them. The majority of teachers are White and female, which is in direct contrast to the changing demographics in the schools (Hussar & Bailey, 2014).

Students in K–12 notice differences and need opportunities to talk about race-related issues. Unfortunately, children are not often given opportunities to talk about race in school—a place where they learn and talk about everything else (e.g., math, reading, and writing). Children’s perceptions of race are primarily shaped and formed at a very young age through media and through the attitudes of their parents. Unfortunately, their perceptions often lead to prejudices and stereotypes, but not through actual interactions and understandings of students who have a different racial and ethnic background from their own. This has especially affected people of Color. If students are not able to have authentic conversations about race, they will not be able to struggle against racial bias and prejudice. Hughes, Bigler, and Levy (2007) looked at history lessons taught during a summer program. The history lessons incorporated highly charged words, such as *racism*, in an experimental group while a control group did not mention racism when teaching course content. This study did not have students dialogue about race but did seek to examine students’ attitudes toward it. Data showed that White students who were a part of the racism condition group displayed fewer biases toward Blacks than students who

received identical lessons where mention of race was omitted. Students in the former group had more positive attitudes and fewer negative perceptions than the control group. This finding suggests the importance and benefit of race being discussed in classrooms. I stand firm in my belief that racial issues need to be taught and discussed among students. The research also shows that when students are actively engaged in this process, they have more positive thoughts and beliefs about students who have different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and in some cases, build friendships outside of their networks (Stoughton & Siverston, 2005).

Thus, pre-service (and in-service) teachers need to engage in race dialogue. Teachers need to be more culturally aware in order to teach students who are racially and ethnically different from them (Howard, 2000; LeCompte & McCray, 2002; Milner, 2006; Ukpokodu, 2003). Attempts to integrate race-related topics into the teacher education curriculum and professional development have been made, but it is clear from the literature that not enough work is done on *good* facilitation of such conversations. Often the conversations are met with resistance and anxiety from pre-service teachers or the dialogue is not sustained over long enough periods of time to deeply delve into the issues. Additionally, conversations are not always presented in a space where the pre-service teachers can be truthful or vulnerable: “The lack of honest and open conversations on race can have devastating consequences in the classroom or supervisory relationship when major misunderstandings or racial offenses lie unspoken or untouched” (Sue, Rivera, Capodilupo, Lin, & Torino, 2010, pp. 206–207).

I offer three reasons why teachers do not engage in conversations about race with their students. First, like Rodríguez-Scheel (2015), who conducted a similar study, I argue that most teachers assume that students are not able to have real conversations about difference and inequality. Second, I extend this argument by adding that teachers also do not know *how* to talk

about race and other social identities in the classroom. They lack the conceptual understanding of race and identity needed to critically examine these issues, which may in part be because teacher education programs do not yet know how to best support and prepare teachers for increasingly diverse schools and students. Third, some teacher education programs are trying to figure out how to equip pre-service teachers with skills that will allow them to meet the needs of all students; however, this has not been consistent among teacher education programs. While some teacher educators (and programs) recognize the need for this shift, others struggle to do so. Ukpokodu's (2003) research indicates that many teacher educators often apply a "safe" approach to multicultural education because they want to avoid any risk (p. 21). Teacher educators who *have* tried to facilitate teaching from a critical, multicultural perspective in the classroom have often been met with resistance and defensiveness from students (Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, & Lin, 2009).

LeCompte and McCray (2002) looked at pre-service teachers' perspectives of racial identity as a cultural component in their methods courses. The challenge of this process ended with teacher candidates experiencing feelings of guilt and anger. Pre-service teachers felt they were being pushed too hard and that the information presented on racial and cultural issues was foisted upon them. They did not see their racial identity; rather, they identified themselves in terms of individuality. Though students engaged in intense instruction in racial and cultural identity as well as multicultural awareness, these skills and attitudes were not transferred into their teaching practice.

Kyles and Olafson (2008) sought to uncover teacher candidates' beliefs about diversity through reflective writing and field experience. They used mixed methods to determine whether pre-service candidates would teach more effectively if they reflected on their personal beliefs

about diverse students, or if their experience in diverse settings would increase their effectiveness in teaching. They found that pre-service teachers who had previous multicultural school experiences held more positive beliefs about teaching diverse learners than those with monocultural school and/or life experiences who felt a disconnect in incorporating multicultural practices. Kyles and Olafson concluded that more time has to be dedicated to pre-service teachers' reflecting critically on multicultural issues. This study speaks to the important work that still needs to be done in teacher education programs and what we must do as teacher educators to provide teacher candidates with spaces to critically reflect on *their* social identities in relation to the students they will teach, and to give them strategies to conduct dialogue about race and ethnicity with their own students.

In order for teachers to understand their students, they first need to understand who *they* are themselves, including the origins of their own biases and racial attitudes. Learning about their identities is prerequisite for understanding their students and talking with them about critical issues. As a result, my research interests, since starting my doctoral program, have been twofold: first, to educate pre-service teachers and provide them a dialogic space to delve into their racial and ethnic identities, to explore and consider the racial and ethnic experiences of others, and to investigate how that knowledge can transform their teaching practices; and second, to support pre-service teachers as they work through their color-blindness in order to see racial inequality. Thus, this study used an intergroup dialogue focused on race and ethnicity as an intervention to increase pre-service teachers' understandings of race-related issues such as power, privilege, and oppression, and of how they as teachers can subsequently use that knowledge to create a more inclusive classrooms.

Intergroup Dialogue as Pedagogical Intervention

Intergroup dialogue (IGD) is one model for organizing a critical dialogue around race and ethnicity. Research shows that intergroup dialogue can lead to building relationships across cultural and power differences, raising consciousness of inequalities, exploring similarities and differences in experiences across identity groups, and strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice (Nagda & Gurin, 2007, p. 35). This study examines the racial attitudes and racial identity development of pre-service participants in an intergroup dialogue course. As such, the following research questions guided my study:

- How does participating in an intergroup dialogue influence pre-service teachers' understanding of their racial identities, racial attitudes, and the differing experiences of others?
- How do these understandings influence how they think about what they will do as teachers?

Intergroup dialogue may seem like a broad term, but it is actually a specific interdisciplinary pedagogy, both an integrated theory and set of practices, that gained attention in the 1980s. The earliest model was established at the University of Michigan in the Intergroup Relations program. A review of the literature shows that IGD occurs most often at the post-secondary level. In one dissertation, Rodríguez-Scheel (2015) used intergroup dialogue with teacher candidates who were part of a master's program studying early childhood education in an urban education department of their university. However, there is virtually no research with undergraduate pre-service teachers in a teacher education program. This current project, along with Rodríguez-Scheel's, adds to the teacher education literature around preparing teachers for diverse classrooms using intergroup dialogue as an intervention. This work is important because there is an increasing mismatch between teachers and children in many classrooms; the majority

of pre-service teachers are white, middle and upper-middle class females, a direct contrast to the changing demographics of our schools, which are becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse (Gay & Howard, 2000; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Hussar & Bailey, 2014; Sue, 2006; Tenore, Dunn, Laughter, & Milner, 2010; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). Many of these teachers come from different backgrounds and communities than the students they teach and are not prepared for race-related dialogue with their students. However, it is imperative that teachers confront issues of race and racism in their classrooms, because these are issues many of their students face. Intergroup dialogue allows pre-service teachers to become more comfortable and to be prepared to address the racial experiences of their future students through a dialogic experience.

Research highlights teachers' difficulties in talking about issues pertaining to race. Race is frequently silenced, muted, or ignored in schools (Pollock, 2004) even though it permeates society. Conversations about race are often avoided because of social taboos and discomfort. In addition, some feel that race is now an issue of the past and that we are in a post-racial society, having adopted color-blind ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Castagno, 2013; Choi, 2008; Neville, 2009; Winant, 2001).

There are a number of reasons why students are rarely given opportunities to talk about race in their schools, but they are beyond the scope of this project. Here I offer two reasons—racial silence and a lack of culturally relevant pedagogy—and argue that these are in part the result of a color-blind mentality. Racial silences have lasting consequences for students, specifically children of Color who may not see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Although teachers may include material that displays diverse people and their experiences, students will

not be able to make sense of such materials without opportunities for reflection on their identities and experiences.

Intergroup dialogue as a pedagogical model provides an avenue for teachers to think about their social identities and their relationships to others; such thinking is necessary to teach students of all backgrounds effectively. In order to teach in a way that is culturally relevant, and with a deep understanding of students' lived experiences, teachers—in this particular case, pre-service teachers—first need a space to understand, process, and reflect on their own social identities and lived experiences.

Research in teacher education indicates that teacher education programs have not been consistently successful in helping teacher candidates to think more deeply about issues of diversity; that is, they do not consistently change students' perspectives on race and diversity (Ball & Tyson, 2011; Coville-Hall, MacDonald, & Smolen, 1995; Sleeter, 2008). In addition, their commitment to teaching diverse children often reverts to deficit thinking¹ once they are teaching (Zeichner, 2010; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). Talking about diversity is not enough to change stereotypes acquired in their own schooling; deliberate planning and interventions are required (Sleeter, 2008). Following Sleeter's advice, I have chosen to systematically address the teacher candidates' understandings using the particular programmatic approach (of IGD) to specifically focus on race and ethnicity.

Intergroup dialogue introduces participants to various aspects of controversial topics. Students are asked to explore issues of race, ethnicity, and race relations in the United States by examining past and current histories, social contexts, and the ideas that have shaped their personal experiences (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). Additionally,

¹ The idea is that students of Color are intellectually handicapped because of deficiencies that hinder their learning (i.e., family structure, linguistic background, and culture.) This puts the own-ness on the individual person rather than the structural problems. For more, see *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking* (Valencia, 2010).

participants explore their personal racial identities; examine the similarities and differences of groups with regard to race relations; and discuss the historical, current, and future interactions that racial identity affects—personal, interpersonal, and with organizations, institutions, and U.S. culture. Participants are encouraged to find ways to promote fairness in relation to racial identity and racism in the United States. As part of this research project with pre-service students, participants engaged in these activities but were also provided with ways to facilitate dialogue on race and ethnicity in their placements and future classrooms.

This Study

This research study included pre-service teachers who were a part of a teacher education program at a large predominantly and historically White institution in the Midwest. The participants attended IGD for 2 hours each week in addition to their content method courses during the fall semester of their senior year. They were also assigned a two-day early field placement during this semester and were able to make connections between these issues discussed in the IGD class and what they saw in their school placements. Participants also practiced how to facilitate dialogue on critical issues such as race in their future teaching. Interviews, dialogue sessions, surveys, and written work are some of the data collected for this study to examine the influence and understandings gleaned from participating in the dialogue.

The majority of pre-service teachers in this study reported that their understandings of race and racism had deepened as a result of engaging in the IGD course. Students stated they felt more knowledgeable about issues of race, including privilege and oppression. They were able to broaden their perspectives about the importance of racial identity and deepen their understanding of White privilege and whiteness. The pre-service teachers also stated that they developed a greater comfort level talking about race-related issues and other critical issues. Other findings

from this study included how pre-service teachers came to understand the implications of certain race policies and practices in schools and ways they could struggle against them, including how to facilitate difficult conversations with their future students. These findings will be examined more deeply in the upcoming chapters.

Although this study was focused on race and racism, and ethnicity, it also dealt with other social identities, such as gender and class, and issues of diversity. For the purposes of this study, when race and racism are mentioned, please know that other forms of societal inequalities and social identities can be applied.

Significance of the Study

This study adds greatly to the field of teacher education. As mentioned above, with the exception of Rodríguez-Scheel's dissertation study, there have been no studies that have looked at intergroup dialogue with teacher candidates, and to my knowledge no study that has looked at IGD with *undergraduate* pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers need to be prepared for schools (and students) that are reflecting the changing racial demographics in society. One way to prepare for that requires engaging in critical self-reflection and examining social identities, both personally and in relation to others. Carter and Goodwin (1994) underscore this point: "the most important implication of racial identity theory for educational practice is that educators need to understand their own levels of racial identity development in order to change their perceptions and expectations of children of color" (p. 324). Rodríguez-Scheel also cites Carter and Goodwin; this I believe demonstrates the grave importance for pre-service teachers to examine themselves in relation to the students they teach. When pre-service teachers are able to do this, they can begin to move from color-blindness to race (and color) consciousness and potentially be more effective in their teaching practices with elementary school students.

Upcoming Chapters

To situate intergroup dialogue and my rationale for it as an intervention in teacher education, I review the relevant topics in Chapter Two. Given the significance of race and racism, I define key critical terms such as race, ethnicity, and identity. This chapter also critically examines color-blind ideology and how it relates to education and how it affects K–12 students. I use critical race theory to provide a framework to understanding the saliency of race and racism in society and in education. I look specifically at dialogue and the ways it has been defined in the literature. This chapter also describes intergroup dialogue, how it is used as a theory and pedagogical model, and the potential benefits for pre-service teachers as they engage in an intergroup dialogue course focused on race and ethnicity.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the methodology for this study, and I explain why I have chosen to use a qualitative approach. I explain my data collection process, and discuss my methods and protocols. This chapter highlights my data analysis and establishes credibility.

Chapter Four provides context for how intergroup dialogue in teacher education is used in this study. I discuss the co-facilitator relationship and how my co-facilitator and I worked through the emotions and tensions experienced as a result of the dialogue. I also discuss the structure of a typical dialogue session.

I present my case study participants in Chapter Five. The five students are a representative sample from the dialogue course. The cases each had a unique journey in the dialogue process and provide a closer and richer look at the racial identity construction and racial attitudes of these participants as well as their understanding of race and racism.

Chapter Six includes the thematic findings from this study, which include exploring intergroup commonalities and differences; examining policies and race practices in schools;

finding a deeper understanding of whiteness, privilege, and oppression; and engaging in facilitation training.

I conclude the dissertation report in Chapter Seven by discussing the significance of the study. I summarize my thematic findings and discuss how this study contributes to teacher education research and how this particular intervention prepared these teacher candidates for teaching an increasingly diverse society.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This research study examines how pre-service teachers developed critical race consciousness by participating in an intergroup dialogue intervention. The study included a analysis of participants' understandings of race and racism, ethnicity, and racial identity. As such, I begin this chapter by discussing key terms such as race and ethnicity as defined in the literature to help provide context to the research study.

Second, I build a case for why children in K-12 schools may not engage with issues of race and racism by highlighting colorblind ideologies in education and how they contribute to a lack of culturally relevant teaching practices and racially silent classrooms. Third, I include a discussion on Critical Race theory, social identity, and racial identity to provide an interpretive framework.

Finally, I build a case for the use of intergroup dialogue as an intervention in teacher education programs by describing ways dialogue has been defined and theorized in the literature. I broadly discuss ways that dialogue is used, or not, in higher education where the goal is to promote dialogue about race. As mentioned in Chapter One, intergroup dialogue (IGD) is a critical-dialogic approach to explore similarities and differences in and between various social identity groups. I describe this approach, its uses, and its advantages and disadvantages as it might be used in education as both a pedagogical tool and theoretical model. I then present relevant literature and empirical work on intergroup dialogue.

Critical Terms

Race and racism, ethnicity, and identity are significant in this study and were explored by participants in the intergroup dialogue. I will therefore define these critical terms.

Race and Racism

Race is a critical term that is defined to provide context for how it is used in this research study. *Race* is a socially constructed category of identity used as early as the 1600s to characterize people based on their skin color. Carter and Goodwin (1994) state, “race, as defined by skin color, physical features, and/or language, is the primary criterion used to classify individuals into one of five United States specific racial groupings (i.e., White, Black, Hispanic, Indian, or Asian)” (p. 293). As a social construct it has also included a system of advantage that privileges some and disadvantages others. Tatum (1997), along with many others (e.g., Wellman, 1993), makes the argument that racism cannot be seen solely as a form of prejudice, but also as a “system of advantage based on race” (Wellman, 1993, cited in Tatum, 1997, p. 7). Tatum states that racism is not just an individual ideology, but that it is a system

involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals. In the context of the United States, this system clearly operates to the advantage of Whites and to the disadvantage of people of color (p. 7).

Simply put, I define race in the United States as a system of advantage that privileges Whites and is a form of oppression for people of Color. Hence, delving into one’s racial identity is acknowledging the unequal social status in society, which inevitably influences one’s past experiences and perceptions.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a term used to describe kinship to a common place or shared descent. Cornell and Hartmann (2004) argue that ethnicity is a product of “self assertions of the collective identity” (p. 28). It is based on an identity that is ascribed by the group itself. Ethnic identity centers on “who *we* are,” whereas race is an identity that is typically assigned by outsiders and

focuses on “who *they* are.” Another salient point given by Cornell and Hartmann is that race tends to be more fixed and exclusive than ethnicity: people are not able to enter and exit their race as fluidly as their ethnicity.

Social Identity

Social identity is best defined as “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional [connection] and value significant to him of this group membership” (Tajfel as cited in Rodríguez-Scheel, 2015). Tajfel, who first developed this theory in the 1970s, believed that issues of discrimination and intergroup conflict arose from the operation of larger social forces rather than from individual personality traits. Social identity refers to group membership rather than an individual identity that is not shared with others. This is important to consider when thinking about intergroup dialogue because it recognizes the similarities and differences of different social identity groups. However, social identity theorists do not believe that similarity between different groups is necessary to reduce prejudice, but in fact argue that the opposite happens: “similarity serves as a threat to intergroup relations precisely because it does not allow individuals and groups to maintain their strong, highly valued, and functional ties to important social groups” (Brown & Lopez, 2001, p. 285). Social identities hold significance and meaning to an individual, so denying one’s social identity to relate to other social identity groups is not the answer to fostering relationships.

Racial identity. Racial identity is a type of social identity that looks specifically at one’s membership in terms of race. Race, while a social construct, is complex and can play a major role in how individuals may view their identity, even though race and racial identity are different. Carter and Goodwin (1994) explain the difference between race and racial identity:

A person's race is commonly thought to be equivalent to racial identity. Thus, racial identity typically is used to refer to how a person feels about his or her racial group. The assumption that racial identity is synonymous with one's race does not consider within-group psychological variation as it relates to the psychological implications of race. (p. 292)

Helms (1990) has long since stated that though people may all belong to a racial group, the way in which they identify with their racial group may differ. Carter and Goodwin (1994) extend this argument stating that one's racial group membership is not necessarily indicative of whether or how one may identify with their actual racial group. They further assert that how "one's own racial identity is integrated into one's personality depends on numerous influences: family, community, society, and one's own interpretive style, and the manner in which important peers validate, deny, or ignore this aspect of one's identity" (p. 308). This may begin to explain why people of Color often have a stronger affinity to their racial identity than that of most Whites. People of Color are faced with race and racism on an everyday basis, creating a saliency around their racial identity. In contrast, many Whites do not view society or themselves in terms of race (Sleeter, 2004), so their racial identity is not as important to how they see themselves. This is in part because whiteness has become normative. Racial identity thus becomes important to examine when thinking about identity development vis-à-vis intergroup dialogue.

Race Relations in the United States

Many American citizens claim that we are in a "post-racial" society: slavery is dead, Jim Crow laws have ended, and our country is now more multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural while many scholars argue the opposite (Alexander, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Howard & Flenbaugh, 2011). We live in a society that often believes the fictitious view that racism is a part

of our past. However, race “plays a play a fundamental role in structuring and representing the social world” (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 55). The notions of color-blind ideology complicate and distort the racial inequalities that still exist. In short, color-blind racism is situated and couched in a society that has seemingly become race neutral.

The language and the history surrounding race and racism in the United States have evolved greatly over time. Two hundred years of chattel slavery was followed by Jim Crow racism to present-day color-blind racism. The Jim Crow era, which focused primarily on the racial divide between Whites and Blacks, was overt, and racial inequality was blatant. Discriminatory practices were used to enforce segregation, and Blacks faced adverse societal outcomes during this era because they were believed to be biologically and morally inferior (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Because these interpersonal forms of racism are not as transparent in today’s society, it appears as if racial issues have become a thing of the past. The Civil Rights Movement ended the Jim Crow era, and for many Whites, the anti-discrimination laws that emerged symbolized the end of racial oppression for Blacks (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). However, I believe the gains made during the Civil Rights era are being destroyed in this growing movement of color-blindness. The overarching difference with color-blind racism is that the many who embrace it are consciously unaware of it, thus viewing the United States as a post-racial society. I do acknowledge, however, that we are at a point in history where there is national discourse on race and racism and a strong movement, namely the Black Lives Matter Movement,² that has pushed back on this post-racial myth.

² Black Lives Matter started in 2012 after the murder of Trayvon Martin. According to blacklivesmatter.com, “Black Lives Matter is a chapter-based national organization working for the validity of Black life. We are working to (re)build the Black liberation movement.”

Despite the post-racial rhetoric, this national pushback against a post-racial view of society further illustrates that race and racism are still major issues. The effects of police brutality on the lives of Blacks are especially worth noting, because awareness of this issue was mentioned as a turning point for many in this study, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters. For example, events in Ferguson, Missouri, and the non-indictment of Darren Wilson helped many participants in this study better understand systemic racism.

Racism takes on different forms, and color-blind mentality does not explain or excuse the structural and institutional forms of racism that are entrenched in society. The American Sociological Association (2003) believes that these racial issues cannot be ignored, because they penetrate social institutions such as housing, health care, and education. This is made evident in the many inequities and disparities that are seen in the housing and education systems today. Statistics reaffirm that segregation is found in all these sectors of society (Shields, 2009). Delgado and Stefancic (2012) highlight that realists view racism as “a means by which society allocates privilege and status. Racial hierarchies determine who gets tangible benefits, including the best jobs, the best schools” (p. 21). If this is the case, then racism is not dead, and it benefits those who have privilege and prosper in the United States.

The notion that we are in a post-racial society may be a planned cover for concrete steps that some are taking to roll back achievements in equality and awareness (e.g., the roll back of voter rights protections in the past few years). However, for others, this post-racial notion allows many to believe that we can disregard race and the differences that exist. Though often well intentioned, this attitude creates more harm than good because the race and culture of people go unacknowledged. This consequently allows people to ignore the still-existing effects of racism. Bonilla-Silva (1999) calls this is the “New Racism” in the United States.

There is a significant body of research surrounding color-blind racial ideologies. The discourse surrounding color-blind ideology/racism dominates the literature across multiple disciplines. It is discussed in education, sociology, psychology, and law, to name a few. Color-blind ideology is a major topic of discussion in the literature in part because it is so widespread. However, researchers (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Castagno, 2013; Choi, 2008, Gallagher, 2004; Lewis, 2003; Neville, 2009; Pollock, 2004; Winant, 2001) of color-blind ideologies have found that color-blindness may be more detrimental than other forms of racism because the people engaged in it are unaware of it and that the harm it causes has lasting effects on people of Color. King (1991) refers to this unconscious color-blind racism as “dysconscious racism.” Researchers believe the implications of color-blind ideology do in fact perpetuate stereotypes of certain racial groups and further contribute to inequities in our education system today (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Lopez, 2003).

Color-Blind Ideology/Racism: A Discussion and Critique

Color-blindness works when the goal is not to discriminate against people based on race. But the rhetoric is not such. Instead, color-blind ideology is multifaceted and incorporates a denial of racism, beliefs in meritocracy, and discursive strategies that help to maintain White racial supremacy (Hooks & Miskovic, 2011). The ideology of color-blindness is the belief that people, namely Whites, do not see color and/or claim that race and racism no longer matter in today’s society. It operates under the guise that race is irrelevant in a society that views everyone as equal. A belief in meritocracy is central to the color-blind argument because it views race as a non-issue, that hard work and determination alone will move people ahead in life (Milner, 2012b). The meritocratic idea is based on the principle that people should be rewarded for their work effort; it purports that success provides opportunities. Meritocracy is so powerful because it

works under the assumption that we live in a just society that is equal and fair, namely because overt racism is notably wrong and illegal. Because blatant racism has been on the decline since the Jim Crow era, the color-blind ideology becomes hard to recognize and thus harder to combat. Critical race theorists argue that even though this overt racism has diminished, everyday racism has increased through institutional practices and policies that *appear* fair but adversely affect people of Color (Lynn & Parker, 2006). Winant (2001) and Bonilla-Silva (2010) call this color-blindness a form of racism that functions without racists but one that protects the status quo and maintains the current racial hierarchy. Color-blindness emerged as an attempt against racial bigotry (Atwater, 2008) but today it masks racial inequality with the rhetoric of equal opportunity and fair treatment (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Choi, 2008; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Gallagher (2004) notes that the color-blind mentality is a myth of race in the United States and one that is morally gratifying for Whites because it liberates them from charges of oppression and separates them from the “racist days of the past” (p. 577). This is problematic because disregarding race only reproduces the flawed structures in society; it does not allow for an analysis of social inequality, which is the root of the problem. Furthermore, it does not take into account centuries of marginalization, exploitation, and oppression in the lives of people of Color, and more specifically it does not compensate for these injustices (Williams & Land, 2006).

Ideology of Color-Blind Racism through the Eyes of Bonilla-Silva

Bonilla-Silva (1999, 2001, 2010) has done extensive research on new racism through the lens of color-blind ideology. While his work does not focus solely on color-blindness in education, he offers insights into the ways color-blindness operates. He questions the claim that race and racism are a thing of the past when there is still a tremendous degree of racial inequality embedded in almost every area of society (e.g., segregated neighborhoods and schools, and

friendships). Bonilla-Silva contends color-blind racism is the result of this dichotomy; he makes a compelling argument for how this “New Racism” functions to justify reasons other than race and racism for the plight of people of Color. He states that “. . .the beauty of this new ideology is that it aids in the maintenance of White privilege without fanfare, without naming those who[m] it subjects and those who it rewards” (2010, pp. 3–4).

In *Racism Without Racists* (2010), Bonilla-Silva prefaces his work by acknowledging that his intentions are not to call Whites racists but that racism is a problem of power and that the *intentions* or the character of Whites are irrelevant to his analysis of social outcomes. Using this structural definition of racism, his racial analysis moves “beyond good and evil” (p. 54). I believe this must be noted before examining his work, which focuses primarily on Whites who embrace a color-blind ideology.

His in-depth study³ (2010) seeks to understand the more contemporary racial beliefs and attitudes of Whites rather than using arguments from the Jim Crow era. From his data analysis, he devised a framework to explain how Whites use a color-blind mentality to justify racial inequality as nonracial outcomes. He found abstract liberalism, naturalization, and cultural racism as rationalizations for the new racial order of today. Table 2.1 highlights each frame by providing a definition and examples of how the frames manifest themselves. Bonilla-Silva explains that these frames work collectively rather than in isolation. His research is very telling and uncovers a number of ideological practices that reinforce racial order in this color-blind era.

Bonilla-Silva (2010) claims that the frames are not absolutes but offer room for Whites to be crude and forthright or quiet and implicit. The language of color-blindness further exacerbates

³ Data sources include the 1997 Survey of Social Attitudes of College Students and the 1998 Detroit Area Study (DAS). The college survey was taken from a convenient sample of 627 college students, 451 of which were White. The study also included interviews from 41 White students. The Detroit Area Study (DAS) included in-depth interview data from 84 White and Black Detroit residents.

these frames: “the language of color-blindness is slippery, apparently contradictory, and often subtle” (p. 53). He notes strategies such as the avoidance of direct racial language to express racial views, central “semantic moves,” and disclaimers to maneuver around dangerous discussions surrounding race. Verbal strategies are used to save face. These may include phrases such as “I am not prejudiced but . . .” or “Some of my best friends are Black” (p. 57).

Bonilla-Silva (2010) and others (see Choi, 2008; Gallagher, 2004; Winant, 2001) highlight not only the major tenets of color-blind ideology/racism but also why it is so powerful. It is packaged well and at first glance does not appear to perpetuate racial inequality; some people of Color, though marginally, have even bought into it. It becomes evident how color-blindness subtly purports itself to be race friendly and race neutral in today’s society. Part of this is due to historical events that have helped to solidify this ideology.

Table 2.1. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism

<i>Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s Central Frames of Color-Blind Racism (Chapter 2, p. 27–29)</i>		
Central Frames of Color-blind Racism	Definition	Example
Abstract liberalism	The concept of equal opportunity and individualism (choice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposing affirmative action because it’s seen as preferential treatment • The right to live in neighborhoods of one’s choice (e.g., segregated neighborhood)
Naturalization	The belief that consequences of what is called racism are simply naturally occurring phenomena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That’s just the way it is” • Segregation is natural because people gravitate toward those like themselves; everyone does it
Cultural racism	Culturally based arguments to justify minorities’ place in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Mexicans are lazy” (replaces biological view of racism)
Minimization of racism	Discrimination is a thing of the past because things are better now than in the past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s better now than in the past” • Belief that people of Color use race as an excuse or play the race card

Historical Influences

Color-blind mentality has increased in its influence despite the prevailing racial inequalities that are found in almost every sector of society. Additionally, color-blind ideology holds sway because of historical events such as Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech and the election of President Obama. I highlight them to show the power and flaws in color-blind ideology/racism.

Martin Luther King, Jr. phenomenon. As mentioned above, color-blind ideology comes across as well intentioned; this is in part because of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Many researchers acknowledge that this speech has helped entrench color-blindness into our society (e.g., Alexander, 2010; Lewis, 2003; Ullucci & Battey, 2011; Williams & Land, 2006). His speech expresses his hope that one day people "will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." However, this statement has become misconstrued and taken out of context in many ways, giving color-blind ideology widespread popularity. Noticing race and difference was never the problem. Ullucci and Battey (2011) note, "instead, King specifically names people by their racial and cultural groups [Blacks, Whites, Jews, Gentiles]. His words caution against *judging* people based solely on their skin color, not *acknowledging* skin color" (p. 1198). This in no way implies that King believed race should be ignored all together, but sadly this phrase has been used to imply that we should stop seeing race. Ullucci and Battey sum it up well: "Our objective is to eradicate racism, not eliminate race" (p. 1198).

Obama phenomenon. The 2008 election of President Obama demonstrates another illustration of how color-blindness becomes rooted in the United States. It, too, rationalizes the belief that race no longer matters if we are at a point in history where the majority of American

voters feel comfortable electing a Black president (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hooks & Miskovic, 2011). During President Obama's campaign, he and his political party remained race neutral despite President Obama being called a host of negative names (e.g., terrorist, a traitor). Ironically, this is further proof that we are *not* in a post-racial era. In spite of this, adopting a color-blind ideology was in many ways a tactic used by President Obama's campaign, thus signaling to people that his win demonstrates a country that is past racism.

However, Bonilla-Silva (2010) puts it bluntly:

Perhaps the most important factor behind Obama's success, and my biggest concern, is that he and his campaign mean and evoke different things and feelings for his white and nonwhite supports. For his white supporters, he is the first "black" leader they feel comfortable supporting because he does not *talk* [added for emphasis] about racism; because he reminds them every time he has a chance he is half-white; because he is "articulate" or in Senator Biden's words, echoed later by Karl Rove, Obama was "the first mainstream African American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy"; because Obama keeps talking about national unity; and because he, unlike black leaders hated by whites such as Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, does not make them feel guilty about the state of racial affairs in the country. (pp. 222–223)

Undoubtedly it becomes no surprise why people, namely Whites, believe we are in post-racial era. Consequently, since President Obama's nomination and inauguration, many politicians and pundits share the sentiment that we have progressed beyond racism. Despite the historical win of Barack Obama, the first Black president, Shields (2009) states, "the legacy of racism related to the age of slavery has not been overcome" (p. 58).

At first glance, color-blindness and its appeal make sense in a society that espouses the ideals of Martin Luther King, Jr. It makes sense with the election of the first African American president. However, after a closer, more critical examination, the arguments supporting color-blindness fall short.

As mentioned above, color-blindness is embedded in the fabric of society. My discussion thus far has been to highlight and critique the major tenets of color-blind ideology, what it is, how it works, and how it has become entrenched in society generally speaking. However, my specific interests lie in how it operates in education and how it affects children of Color. Thus, the discussion now turns to color-blindness in education and its subsequent consequences on children of Color.

Color-Blindness in Education

It must be stated that this discussion is not an attempt to explain or decide whether Whites are racists, but to highlight how many Whites (and some non-Whites) engage in a color-blind mentality. That said, I also acknowledge that not all Whites have adopted a color-blind perspective; many recognize their White privilege, and in some cases work to become critically race conscious.

Color-blindness in education is challenging to eradicate, as many teachers view it as an effective approach for treating students equally. Often this is done with a genuine belief that a color-blind approach will prevent teachers from being prejudicial to any of their students. Tatum (1999) states, “Many teachers aspire to be ‘color-blind’ when interacting with their students. To notice racial and ethnic differences among students feels wrong to them, a sign of bigotry or prejudicial thinking” (p. 28). Thus, it becomes commonplace to hear phrases such as “I don’t see color,” or “I treat all students the same the same regardless of their race.” Ladson-Billings’

(1994) research describes similar sentiments from her experiences with both pre-service and in-service teachers and their color-blind mentality:

My own experiences with White teachers, both pre-service and veteran, indicate that many are uncomfortable acknowledging any student differences and particularly racial differences. Thus some teachers make such statements as “I don’t really see color I just see children.” Or “I don’t care if they were red, green, or polka dot. I just treat them all like children.” (p. 31)

These common phrases are used by teachers because they have bought into the idea that we are in a post-racial era and that racism no longer exists. Though I acknowledge that some of these citations are dated, these sources are still valuable, and researchers (e.g., Alexander, 2010; Atwater, 2007, 2008; Lewis, 2003; Milner, 2012b; Ullucci & Battey, 2011; Williams & Land, 2006) not only cite these earlier works but make similar claims of their own. “Many teachers refuse to acknowledge the prevalence and salience of race in their work as teachers because in their minds, race is inconsequential, and they often believe that we live in a post-racial society” (Milner, 2012b, p. 17). Unfortunately, this mindset has lasting consequences for students, specifically children of Color.

Issues in the Literature

There are a number of issues discussed in the literature related to what children experience (or do not experience) and the impact of colorblind ideologies, but they are beyond the scope of this project. Here I offer two issues that affect the experience of children of Color: a lack of culturally relevant teaching practices and the desire to silence race talk despite the pervasiveness of race. I suggest that these issues are in part a result of color-blind ideology/racism.

While this discussion is meant to focus on children's experience, it cannot be discussed without looking at teachers and the curriculum (both the expressed and hidden) as the two (children and teachers) are closely related when looking at education. Teachers' beliefs and instructional practices have a direct impact on the lives and the experiences of students.

Culturally relevant teaching (or lack thereof). Many researchers agree that the educational experiences of children of Color are hindered as a result of their racial background, a lack of resources, and the teachers who teach them (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Milner, 2012b; Nieto, 1992; Sleeter, 2001). Students of Color primarily attend urban, overcrowded schools. They are often referred to as "at risk" students who lag academically behind their White counterparts. Likewise, children of Color are said to have more behavioral or emotional issues. Ladson-Billings (1994) regards their lack of academic achievement or behavioral issues as being environmental and social, a result of a lack of opportunity and the result of poverty. Ladson-Billings does not blame families, but rather argues that environmental and social factors have constructed an unjust social order and the restrictions based on race that keep many Blacks in poverty. She asserts that when looking specifically at African American children, almost half are living in poverty. These are reasons often cited for the poor academic performance of non-Whites in schools, in place of a critical analysis of teaching practices or a curriculum that does not take into account the culture of the students.

Statistically it has been demonstrated that the number of children of Color are increasing in our schools while the number of White teachers are increasing in the teacher workforce (Gay & Howard, 2000; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Sue, 2006; Tenore, Dunn, Laughter, & Milner, 2010; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). Many pre-service teachers are White and of middle- and upper-middle-class socioeconomic status. Most teachers are White females, and many come

from backgrounds and communities different from those of the students they teach, (e.g., Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Milner, 2006). This exacerbates what Delpit (1995) calls a “cultural conflict” between White educators and many of the children that they teach.⁴ Researchers (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Milner, 2006; Sleeter, 2001) agree that a culturally relevant pedagogy is what is needed to address this cultural conflict and the miscommunication in classrooms between teachers and “other people’s children.”⁵ What often happens in classrooms across America is that teachers engage students in a monolithic curriculum that places value on Eurocentric views and white norms that are infused into society, thus conferring privilege on the dominant culture (the culture of power). This is an issue because students are taught a curriculum dominated by White contributions and white norms, a curriculum that often excludes or minimizes the contributions from other racial and/or ethnic groups (Banks, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Milner, 2012a; Nieto, 2000). These same researchers agree that when students do not see themselves in the curriculum, it can pose a problem because students are not able to connect their learning instruction with their experiences: “When teachers ignore the racial component of students’ identity, they are in effect treating their students as incomplete beings, and student performance can suffer as a result” (Milner, 2012b, p. 16).

Culturally relevant teaching helps to combat this because it welcomes the knowledge and experiences that students of Color bring into the classroom. Ladson-Billings’ (1994) work on culturally relevant teaching underscores how important this is. Her influential work in *Dreamkeepers* provides a portrayal of what culturally relevant teaching looks like and how it

⁴ *Cultural conflict* refers to a conflict between educators and children of Color. Most White educators teach the culture of Whites—a culture of power that runs opposite to the culture of the children of Color that they teach. It is an imbalance of power and a strong miscommunication between White teachers who teach children of Color.

⁵ *Other people’s children* refers to the children of Color and children in poverty that are often taught by White educators.

directly increases the academic success of students. She states that culturally relevant teaching “uses student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture” (p. 17). It empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically. This type of teaching has students question racism, forms of inequality, and injustice in today’s society. Likewise, it places value on cooperation and collaboration with others in order to achieve success.

However, a color-blind mentality (often adopted by teachers) can diminish the importance of culturally relevant teaching because it sustains and justifies the culture of power, a power that often runs counter to the culture of students of Color. If the mentality is to create a race-neutral society where race and the role it plays in society is irrelevant, then there is no need to have a teaching practice that takes into account the race and culture of others, namely children of Color. Ladson-Billings (1994) states, “it is presumed that African American children are *exactly* [added for emphasis] like white children but just need a little extra help” (p. 9). This mentality fits well with the color-blind mindset because it contends that White children and children of Color are the same, with no need to take race or culture into account. This idea supports the notion that we live in a just society that provides equal opportunity to all. However, as Milner (2012b) affirms, educational practices and opportunities are anything but equal or equitable (p. 30). Students, specifically children of Color, are unable to compete on meritocratic criteria because not all students begin their education in the same place; as such, it is unfair to expect them to finish their education in the same way (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

A color-blind attitude is problematic because it adversely affects academic achievement for students of Color. Educators and policy makers who do not acknowledge the cultural differences of children of Color will not see the power or importance of a pedagogy that is

culturally relevant. Poverty and lack of opportunity will continue to be rationales for why children of Color do not perform well. However, it cannot be disputed that many students of Color are overrepresented in special education, that an overwhelming number of African American students are referred for disciplinary actions and consequences, and that they have the highest rates of suspension or expulsion (Milner, 2012b, p. 22). “Educators who take a color-blind approach,” says Milner, “are apt to be unaware or unconcerned with the disproportionate representation and enrollment in different courses and on various academic tracks” (p. 23). This speaks in direct contrast to the notion that students of Color are the same as Whites (who just need a *little* extra help).

In Delpit’s (1995) seminal work, *Other People’s Children*, she exposes how *schools*, not children, are what must change in order to close the achievement gap. Her work focuses on the language and culture of students of Color. She informs us how vital it is that students of Color need to have their culture and language reflected in their learning. She advocates for students to be taught the codes⁶ needed to survive and “participate” in mainstream American society, but she also firmly contends that students need to be supported with the home language and culture that they bring to the school, to use what they know in order to teach them what they do not know. Unfortunately, many teachers do not adopt a culturally relevant pedagogy because they do not see its relevance. If race and culture are not important, then they do not need to be taken into account in the classroom. While Delpit exposes what happens when we do not teach the culture of our children, Ladson-Billings (1994) provides another viewpoint by showcasing what *does* happen when teachers successfully teach children of Color (specifically, African Americans) using culturally relevant teaching practices. She highlights success stories in her ethnographic

⁶ *Codes* refer to the linguistic and communicative strategies (i.e., thinking, dressing, writing, and interacting) that are necessary to participating in the culture of power.

study, which follows eight teachers, five African American and three White. These teachers not only effectively taught African American students but also helped their students achieve academic success without having to sacrifice their identity as African Americans. In short, students were able to maintain a positive identity. This is important because, as Ladson-Billings points out, “somehow many [African Americans] have come to equate exemplary performance in school with a loss of their African American identity: that is, doing well in school is seen as ‘acting white’” (p. 11). And children should not have to adjust their identity or abandon their culture in order to perform well.

Racial silence. In addition to the lack of a culturally relevant pedagogy, racial silence is another issue that children of Color experience as a result of color-blind ideology/racism. I focus my attention on racial silence. Students are very much aware of racial and cultural differences but are not provided opportunities to discuss the differences or their identities and lived experiences. Race is very much patterned (Castagno, 2008), yet it is frequently silenced, muted, or ignored in schools (Pollock, 2004). Teachers often avoid conversations about race and difference when students bring it up. Consequently, students are often not given opportunities to talk or express their interest or questions about race in school, a place where they learn and talk about other important issues (e.g., math, reading, and writing). When students bring up such topics, the subject matter is often minimized or shut down. Because White norms are fixed and color-blindness is widely adopted and ingrained in society, there is a dominant belief that racial matters need not be discussed. The silence on race and identity is thus maintained as the status quo—by the dominant culture.

Castagno (2008) makes distinctions between *silence* and *silencing* in her analysis of racial silence legitimizing whiteness. Silence is “an absence,” whereas silencing “is an act done

to someone else” (p. 318). Both occur in schools, and teachers often engage in silence whereas students are the ones being *silenced* around race topics. This occurs for a number of reasons. As mentioned above, many educators, specifically White teachers, avoid talking about it and are most uncomfortable talking about it with their students. Additionally, many feel guilty; many lack knowledge or the importance concerning racial issues; and others believe that race is a thing of the past that does not need be discussed.

In a case study by Hollingworth (2009), an upper elementary school teacher actually *tried* to encourage classroom discussion around prejudice by incorporating multicultural children’s books that discuss past intolerance (slavery in colonial America). However, these conversations became more about normalizing whiteness, which ended up shutting down the conversations among students. Hollingworth found that the teacher’s beliefs could have a huge impact on class dialogue on racial topics. Her color-blind attitude essentially affected the classroom discussions despite the fact that students were *open* to having their racial attitudes challenged and discussed in the classroom.

Researchers (e.g., Bolgatz, 2005; Liggett, 2008) argue that teachers do not know *how* to talk about racial issues in part because Whites do not believe they have a racial group or a culture. Because of this notion, many teachers do not feel the need to discuss or examine their identity in this context. As a result, they tend to dismiss or minimize the importance of race in classroom discussions. Liggett (2008) found that teachers misinterpreted their students’ racial comments in class discussions because of the lack of examination that they had on their own racial identity construction.

This is problematic because it creates normalization around topics that become silenced and off limits. Equally important, this silence cast the idea that if something is not talked about it,

it is not important—in other words, the notion that “ignorance is bliss.” Ironically, some researchers argue that by not talking about race we *are* inevitably talking (and teaching) about race (Castagno, 2008; Pollock, 2001). When we do not incorporate multicultural literature into the curriculum, for example, it is teaching something about the literature that gets valued. This sends a message to students about race, making race all the more important because race *is* salient for students of Color. A number of researchers have noted the importance of talking about racial issues (e.g., Pollock, 2004, Singleton & Linton, 2005; Tatum, 1992, 2007). The opposite of silence is the power of voice, and I believe power of voice is something that needs to be given to students. Unfortunately, when students challenge the curriculum and try to voice their thoughts and questions about race, they are socialized to become silent (Castagno, 2008). Pollock’s research references these silences as being “colormute” (2004). Looking at teachers, she argues that educators were silent or “colormute” to discussing race in public but open to talking about it with those they felt comfortable with in private settings. This transferred blame from teachers to others (i.e., students). By displacing blame and not talking about race, it further reproduces racial inequality and perpetuates the racialized structure and essentially legitimizes whiteness. Ironically, while educators are silent around racial discourse, Lewis’s (2001, 2003) research on racial messages and lessons students receive in schools exposes how race is rooted in both the expressed and hidden curriculum. Race is conveyed in many lessons through instructional practices, and despite educators’, administrators’, or policymakers’ racial silence, race and racism does influence the way they view their world, interact with others, and *teach* children.

Fine’s (1987) ethnographic work looks at silencing that occurs in a public high school; she specifically highlights the silencing of low-income minority students. Her research also reveals avoidance in talking about race. She found “undesirable” talk among high school

students to be challenged, corrected, and exported. The conversation, the teaching, and the curriculum were in constant conflict with the students' daily realities. Fine's study revealed Delpit's (1995) notion of a cultural conflict and Milner's (2012b) stance that the lived experiences of students are constantly challenged by instructional practices and the curriculum.

Color-blindness helps sustain this structure, this silence, and these hidden everyday racial lessons; if teachers do not "see" race, then there is no need to discuss it should it come up with their students. Gordon (2005) sums it up well: "Color-blindness is a bid for innocence, an attempt to escape our responsibility for our White privilege. By claiming innocence, we reconcile ourselves to racial irresponsibility" (p. 143). Color-blind notions are problematic because our identities, experiences, behaviors, and views on life are intricately shaped by race (Milner, 2012a, 2012b): "When teachers ignore the racial component of students' identity, they are consequently treating their students as incomplete beings, and student performance can suffer as a result (Milner, 2012b, p. 16). This is challenging for children of Color because they need to voice their experiences and race is a part of that experience. Unfortunately voicing their everyday reality cannot happen if we live in a color-blind society. In order to fight against racial inequality, a conversation about race needs to be initiated to support students; a discussion needs to occur; a dialogue needs to happen. This needs to start with teachers.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical lens used to understand the impact of race and racism in the United States, and it has proven to be valuable when discussing issues related to race and/or ethnicity in society and, more specifically, in schools. Originating in legal studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), CRT has been established in the field of education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, 1997).

Critical race theorists, contend that dominant norms have become neutral, objective, and color-blind in society, and use CRT to challenge these notions. Critical race theory asserts that whiteness has become the norm (Willis et al., 2008). According to Ladson-Billings and Donner (2005), “the real issue is not necessarily the black/white binary as much as it is the way everyone regardless of his/her declared racial and ethnic identity is positioned in relation to Whiteness” (p. 116). Critical race theorists argue for the use of lived experiences as sources of knowledge—as counter-narratives to mainstream discourse.

Solórzano (1997) further developed CRT by identifying five central tenets of CRT in education, summarized in Table 2.2 on page 36. The first tenet is the centrality of race and racism in society, which argues that race and racism are defining characteristics of American society. The second is the challenge to dominant ideology, which exposes power and privilege as serving the interest of dominant groups. This tenet includes ideals of meritocracy, equal opportunity, and color-blindness. The third tenet is the centrality of experiential knowledge, which values the knowledge that people of Color share as legitimate, and important for understanding and examining racial inequality in U.S. society. This may include testimonies, narratives, and counter-storytelling. The fourth tenet of CRT is the interdisciplinary perspective, which speaks to the value of a historical and contemporary analysis of race and racism. By engaging multiple frameworks and methods, CRT can develop a more comprehensive analysis of race and racism. The fifth tenet is commitment to social justice, which calls for people to not just eliminate racism but to collectively dismantle all forms of oppression and become agents of change.

The third tenet, centrality of experiential knowledge, can be particularly powerful for both teachers and students. Critical race theory in education emphasizes the importance of

making racism explicit in students learning so that they may begin to recognize and struggle against racism as a form of oppression (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Critical conversations allow students to be more aware of the societal influences that shape their perceptions and beliefs, especially as it relates to race, class, and gender. However, this cannot occur unless teachers are willing to engage in race dialogue. It must start with educators first.

Table 2.2. Tenets of Critical Race Theory

<i>Tenets of Critical Race Theory</i>	
Tenets	Description
1. The centrality of race and racism in society	Race and racism are embedded in society.
2. The challenge to dominant ideology	Liberal ideals such as meritocracy, equal opportunity and colorblindness need to be challenged as they maintain dominant structures if they go unchallenged.
3. The centrality of experiential knowledge	The lived experiences of people of Color are important and the knowledge should be examined and analyzed to challenge mainstream ideologies
4. The interdisciplinary perspective	Multiple frameworks and methods can help develop a more complete analysis of race and racism
5. Commitment to social justice	Collective effort that all forms of oppression need to be eradicated

What Is Dialogue?

Though dialogue is a commonly used word, researchers have theorized dialogue as a cultural tool, a method of transformative learning, a way of promoting social justice, and a complex process (Burbules, 1993; Freire, 2000; Johnston-Parsons, 2012). A great deal of scholarship on dialogue builds on Bakhtin’s (1981) work, which focuses on dialogue as language, a cultural tool that is socially constructed. He argued that the language people speak is constructed from larger social discourses. However, my frame of dialogue shifts from the

Bakhtin's emphasis on linguistics to Freire's (2000) transformative form of dialogue. Dialogue is an *intentional* coming together to discuss differences through critical thinking and perspective taking. In this perspective, dialogue is not just ordinary talk; rather it is purposeful and strategic. It allows one to be in relation to different ideas, cultures, perspectives, and people (Shields & Edwards, 2005). Dialogue is multifaceted, and it forms the conceptual framework for my research study on intergroup dialogue.

One of Freire's (2000) main tenets is the importance of dialogue and how dialogue can be liberating to both the oppressor and those oppressed. If humans are silenced, learning cannot occur and critical thinking is absent: "true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking . . . only dialogue which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education" (pp. 92–93). Freire believed that if we are consciously engaging in dialogue then people become aware of the systems of oppression that are placed on "others." Dialogue also becomes a place where individuals come to their own understandings and make sense of their lived experiences.

Dialogue as Learning and Understanding

Dialoging with others can result in great learning and understanding. Dialogue is a place where past and current knowledge is challenged and new knowledge is constructed. This type of knowledge cannot be created in isolation: it requires a relational commitment and reciprocity from the participants (Burbules, 1993; Shields & Edwards, 2005). Participants in dialogue are challenged in their thinking. That challenge usually comes from examining their differences. We rarely learn from our similarities; rather, we learn about ourselves as individuals and about others through our differences because they teach us something new (Johnston-Parsons, 2012). Freire

(2000) puts it eloquently: “Dialogue can only take place when we accept that others are different and can teach us something we do not already know” (p. 212). According to him, we promote learning when we talk about the differences. Learning cannot occur if we are silenced and do not engage in dialogue. Again, Freire states it well: “true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking . . . only dialogue which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education” (pp. 92–93).

In addition to learning about others, participants in dialogue also learn a great deal about themselves through the dialogue process, as they become observers of their own thinking (Senge, 1990, cited in Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006). Put another way, “Our dialogic partner becomes for us something of a mirror in which we perceive our selves in ways we could not otherwise do” (Swidler, Cobb, Knitter, & Hellwig, 1990, p. 58). Dialogue allows us to see ourselves in a new way through the eyes of others. Learning about ourselves as individuals and how we see the world is equally as important as learning about others.

Engaging in dialogue has the power to lead to the understanding of the other. Understanding can occur only when participants are willing to suspend their own thoughts and assumptions, so that others can share their experiences without judgment:

Dialogue permits us to understand meanings and culture that are not our own. They do not become ours. We do not become the other, but by meeting at the boundaries rather than where ideas have become enclosed, the potential exists for understanding. (Shields & Edwards, 2005, p. 130)

Bohm (2004) also asserts that dialogue creates new ideas and shared meaning. It is a space where no one is trying to win. Dialogue is a game played *with* each other, not against each other (as in a debate), in order to analyze and break up different points of view.

With IGD specifically, dialogue values the salience of interpersonal and cross-group interaction where students come together and learn not only about differences but how to *communicate* across those differences despite histories of conflict and subsequent current realities (Nagda, 2006; Nagda & Gurin, 2007; Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, & Maxwell, 2009). This idea is grounded in the assumption that dialogic encounters must be explored rather than addressed in a banking approach to diversity education (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). When students come together, dialogue becomes a space for transformative learning to take place.

Dialogue to Promote Social Justice

Dialogue can create important awareness of issues related to diversity and social justice. Social justice education aims to highlight group-based inequalities, promote greater social structural equality, and prepare people to live in multicultural societies (Nagda & Gurin, 2007, p. 36). Dialogue then becomes a place to begin bridging differences in order to disrupt various forms of oppression (i.e., racism, sexism, classism) and the pervasive social inequalities that are embedded in our social institutions and in the consciousness of individuals (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). If dialogue on social issues is not attempted, inequities such as educational disparities are likely to continue (Shields, 2009).

Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000) is useful as a theoretical framework. This work is valuable when thinking about critical social issues such as oppression and injustice. Freire sees dialogue in many societies as a platform to dismantle various forms of oppression.

His work focuses on those who oppress and those who are oppressed. In his work, he views dialogue as a means of empowerment and liberating freedom for those who are oppressed. When talking about race or the racialized experiences of those “othered” in society (which often occurs in the IGD process), dialogue becomes powerful when the collective group is actively engaged in the process.

In sum, Freire (2000) calls for us to “read the world” in order to see the deep oppression that exists in society. Drawing on his concepts of criticality and liberation in a situated context, we first have to examine our own identity, attend to issues of oppression, and subsequently question, listen, and free ourselves of that oppression through a dialogic space (Sorensen et al., 2009; Zúñiga, Lopez, & Ford, 2012). Intergroup dialogue can help accomplish this as it helps students “personalize the connection between identities and inequalities” (Nagda & Gurin, 2007, p. 36). In my study, I see dialogue as “an existential necessity” (Freire, 2000, p. 88) for people to think critically about issues of social justice. Although dialogue does not necessarily provide solutions, it is a *starting* point to begin naming and addressing social and cultural issues. In this particular research study, intergroup dialogue on race and ethnicity provides students a space and opportunity to learn about self and others.

Dialogue as a Process

Dialogue as a process allows people to come together to share knowledge, learn new knowledge, and create a new knowledge. Participants in dialogue need to examine “presuppositions and compare them against different ones, to make [them] less dogmatic about the belief that the way the world appears to [them] is necessarily the way the world is” (Burbules & Rice, 1991, p. 414). With this challenge, however, comes conflict. Many people are afraid of engaging in dialogue because of the conflict and tensions that may occur. Tensions and conflict

may arise, but they should not be deterrents to dialogue. Burbules (1993) states, “A successful dialogue involves a willing partnership and cooperation in the face of likely disagreements, confusions, failures, and misunderstandings” (p. 19). In intergroup dialogue, conflict is not masked, but is in many ways encouraged because it provided “valuable opportunities for participants to engage in significant conversations about different perspectives and tensions that shape their relationships” (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007, p.15). Put differently,

Bridge building allows for the recognition of differences and conflicts without attempting to reconcile them quickly; students can develop a willingness to stay engaged in the midst of conflict, gain a fuller understanding of the cumulative effect of intergroup differences in daily life and make commitments to bring about change. (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003, p. 114)

IGD recognizes that not everyone comes into a dialogue space with the same knowledge and experience, but the process supports, respects, and values what each individual brings. This can occur even if some students bring racist attitudes to the dialogue space. Dialogue does not assume that all participants are the same, speak the same, or are interested in the same issues, but rather dialogue can only occur when people are committed to this open process of communication (Burbules, 1993, p. 25). The dialogue process is meant to work with students to become more racial aware regardless of where they start. While being open to what people say in the dialogue is essential, the long term goal is to dismantle race and help participants become more race conscious.

The Power but Difficulty of Race Dialogue

Tatum (1999) suggests that despite teachers' hesitation to engage students in racial dialogue in the classroom, it can help everyone to become more color-conscious as they begin to make sense of their race-related experiences: "The sharing of race-related narratives can prove meaningful and productive in helping students and teachers understand, think about, and change their thinking about such issues" (Milner, 2007, p. 603).

What would have happened if adults *had been* encouraged to talk about race, its manifestations, and its inequalities at a younger age, in school? What if their questions had been answered? Would color-blindness be what it is today? I speculate that color-blind racism would not hold the power that it does today if we lived in a society that encouraged us to talk about it, especially at a young age. Unfortunately, this is not the case, and talking about race and racism *is* taboo even when it is undeniably a part of society and daily in the faces of children of Color. Discouragingly, it is something we struggle to talk about in our racialized society. Researchers have grappled with this phenomenon for quite some time (e.g., Choi, 2008; Goodman, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tatum, 1992). Tatum (1992), adding value to the study of race dialogue, has provided a rationale for why this occurs. Her extensive research demonstrates how race-related content in college courses engenders students' feelings that range from guilt and shame, to anger and despair. Tatum cites three reasons why students, specifically White college students, resist talking about race-related issues. Though Tatum's work focuses on White college students, I mention it here because I believe these feelings can be applied to teachers (the majority of whom are White) and why they often shut down racial dialogue with their students:

1. Race is considered a taboo topic for discussion, especially in racially mixed settings.

2. Many students, regardless of racial-group membership, have been socialized to think of the United States as a just society.
3. Many students, particularly White students, initially deny any personal prejudice, recognizing the impact of racism on other people's lives but failing to acknowledge its impact on their own. (p. 5)

Studies have been conducted on dialogue groups occurring in higher education in social justice programs and race/ethnicity classes (e.g., Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Stoughton & Sivertson, 2005; Tatum, 1992). Researchers have hinted that dialogue is helpful for students navigating the racial terrain. Tatum (1992, 2007) and others (e.g., Lewis, 2004) agree that dialogue about race is not easy and is not meant to be easy; the conversations are not comfortable because they require participants to be vulnerable and honest. Research shows that when students push past their discomfort, engage in perspective taking and active listening, and share personal experiences to highlight injustice, dialogue can be powerful (Dessel et al., 2006; Shields, 2009) and empowering and liberating for those who are oppressed (Freire, 2000).

Notwithstanding these difficulties, research has shown that deeper learning about racial issues can occur through dialogue. When students are actively engaged in a dialogic process, they have more positive thoughts and beliefs about students who have different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, they are able to make sense of their racialized society and how that connects to their everyday reality and lived experiences. However, many teachers may not have the training or conceptual understanding to facilitate such dialogue groups with students and may therefore inadvertently silence or shut down the potential for more educative conversations.

Race Dialogue in Higher Education

Dialogue occurs broadly at the post-secondary level. Some components of dialogue occur when we look specifically at teacher education. I contend that dialogue is particularly useful for teacher education programs as a way to support pre-service teachers in their racial identity development. Dialogue can also provide pre-service teachers an opportunity to reflect on the multiple perspectives that others bring to the dialogue so that they may in turn better support their future students. In the next section, I will highlight empirical research on race dialogue conducted in higher education in both teacher education and in other disciplines such as psychology and social work.

Teacher Education

Most pre-service teachers today are White women from middle- and upper-middle-class communities, and many come from backgrounds and communities that differ from those of the students they will teach. This creates challenges, especially given the growing number of students of Color in schools today (e.g., Gay & Kirkland, 2003; National Education Association, 1992; Sue, 2006; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). Unfortunately, many pre-service teachers come into education programs completely unaware of the inequities that surround education and society as a whole (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Ukpokodu (2003) argues that the beliefs and behaviors of pre-service teachers may reinforce social and racial inequities in the classroom. Howard (2000) adds that teachers are also ill prepared to effectively teach culturally diverse students. Goodwin (1997) found that teacher education programs have increasingly emphasized the need to train pre-service teachers in cultural awareness and have them develop a sensitivity that promotes responsive teaching practices. Many teacher educators try to encourage pre-service teachers to engage in critical conversations around race and ethnicity, as this topic has become

more prevalent and salient in the educational discourse (Milner, 2006). However, as stated in Chapter One, teacher education programs have not successfully aided pre-service teachers in considering how their understanding and perspectives on race and diversity could impact their teaching with diverse students.

LeCompte and McCray (2002) studied pre-service teachers' perspectives of racial identity as a cultural component in their methods courses. The outcome of this process ended with teacher candidates experiencing feelings of guilt and anger. Pre-service teachers felt they were being pushed too hard and that the information presented on racial and cultural issues was forced upon them. They also exhibited feelings of tension, anxiety, conflict, and resistance when encouraged to talk about race and White privilege (Sue, Rivera, Capodilupo, Lin, & Torino, 2010; Tatum, 1997). Henze, Lucas, and Scott (1998) looked at training in-service teachers to dialogue about race-related issues. The outcome was similar to the study by LeCompte and McCray with pre-service teachers—participants left, felt clear discomfort, and experienced incidences of conflict within themselves.

LeCompte and McCray (2002) also found that pre-service teachers were not aware of a racial identity within a wider culture of whiteness, but rather identified themselves in terms of individuality. Although students in this study engaged in intense instruction on multicultural awareness around race and ethnicity, these skills and attitudes were not transferred into their teaching practice. Sue et al. (2010) found in their study that “The lack of honest and open conversations on race can have devastating consequences in the classroom or supervisory relationship when major misunderstandings or racial offenses lie unspoken or untouched” (pp. 206–207). Integrating race dialogue into pre-service education programs is certainly a complex, messy, and challenging experience to navigate. Given the importance of racial identity in our

students' lives, we must find better ways to help future teachers become more self-reflective and appreciative of opportunities to learn about race.

Race Dialogue in Other Disciplines

Race dialogues are common at both the undergraduate and graduate level in higher education. Historically, race dialogue in higher education has been a part of counseling, psychology, and social work programs (e.g., Sue, 2003). In the field of psychology there is an emphasis placed on the importance of being racially and culturally competent as counselors, therapists, and psychologists, as these professionals work with people from various backgrounds.

Miller and Donner (2008) discuss various models of race dialogue, noting that despite the different models, most seek similar goals. Race dialogue can lead to greater understanding of various racial and ethnic groups, reduction of prejudice and stereotyping, and a dialogic space that encompasses trust, respect, and honesty. Looking specifically at master level students in a social work program, this study included 80 students who were broken into smaller fishbowl dialogue groups that took place over the course of one day. Researchers gave questionnaires to gauge the impact of the dialogue, and findings showed that close to 100% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the racial dialogue was helpful and an important method for dealing with racism.

Sue (2003) looked at social work educators, and found that if educators are not encouraged to become aware of their own prejudices, they are not going to have successful race dialogues. In an additional study, Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, and Lin (2009) looked at White faculty professors who taught graduate level courses in a social work education program where professors tried to facilitate these difficult race conversations in the classrooms. Sue and colleagues categorized dialogue as difficult and filled with tension, anxiety, awkwardness, and

fears of being misunderstood. This mirrors much of what Tatum (1992) highlights as the challenges of dialogue work on race. Additionally Sue and colleagues (2009) found that many racial conversations were filled with strong emotions, such as anxiety in *both* White educators and their students. These researchers also discovered that these emotions interfered with the professors' facilitation of successful learning opportunities for their students. The professors also reported that they were afraid of losing control of their classrooms, and that, too, hindered the race dialogue.

Fisherman and McCarthy (2005) found that a White college professor (Fisherman) also noticed many of the aforementioned factors in his philosophy class. He had a hard time promoting dialogue on race and ethnicity, and the conversations he did promote turned out to be both uncomfortable and counterproductive. Fisherman tried to encourage students to make their voices heard and to talk about their experiences with racism. However, students did not have positive experiences. Many students did not get to fully explore their feelings or thoughts, as many of their comments were redirected to the professor's main point of view and purpose for the class. Students did not appreciate their classmates' points of view, and they stopped listening to what each other had to say. This study reveals that sharing experiences is not enough to promote a successful dialogue of race. The failure was due, in part, to the professor-researcher himself, whose behavior hindered the conversations. Fisherman realized three things as a result of this study: (a) he needed to be receptive to the racialized nature of his classroom; (b) by addressing the negative aspects of minorities he was ignoring the benefits the White majority receive as a result of racial discrimination; and (c) in order to have a positive dialogue about race with his students, he needed to gain a stronger knowledge of U.S. race relations, dialogue, and language (p. 359).

In sum, these studies highlight the issues surrounding the work being done with dialogue and race. Scholars problematize how difficult this work is because it is often ridden with tension, anxiety, and discomfort. Unfortunately, while many efforts are made, they are often done over a short span of time, met with resistance, and are sometimes counterproductive. It also becomes clear from a review of the literature that not enough work is done on effective facilitation of race dialogue. These dialogue efforts do not have structures put in place to deal with the tensions that *will* emerge in the dialogue. Educators do not always have the content knowledge or tools needed to facilitate race dialogue effectively. In some cases, they have not attended to their own racial attitudes and identities. Intergroup dialogue offers one possible intervention approach to combat some of the aforementioned challenges when engaging in race dialogue in educational contexts. In the same manner, my intent in this research is to use IGD as an intervention to help pre-service teachers attend to race related attitudes and identities.

Intergroup Dialogue as an Educational Model

Intergroup dialogue (IGD) is an educational model developed in higher education. It is also used in community and workplace settings. My focus on IGD in this study, however, was to study IGD situated within education. As mentioned earlier, it is a critical-dialogic approach that is innovative and transformative (Zúñiga, Lopez, & Ford, 2012). Around college campuses, students are engaged in dialogue with students of different social identities who have had a history of conflict. The common intergroup dialogue courses offered focus on a particular social issue: race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality, gender, ableism, and religion to name a few. However, intersectionality occurs between the various social identities and can be explored within and between different groupings in any given IGD group (Lopez & Zúñiga, 2010). In my study, IGD focused on discussing race and ethnicity.

Intergroup dialogue differs from other multicultural programs because it “focuses on intergroup understanding and action while having students study and address the roots and consequences of structural inequalities” (Nagda & Gurin, 2007, p. 35). When describing their practice, these researchers also include other dimensions of learning in the intergroup dialogue process, such as content and process learning; critical and affective engagement; individual, intergroup, and institutional analyses; heterogeneous and homogenous groupings; and individual and collective action (p. 35). Nagda and Gurin highlight that IGD builds on the work of social justice education and diversity, which values the promotion of unity, tolerance, and acceptance.

Intergroup dialogue is both pedagogy and an ever-evolving theoretical framework (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). As shown in Figure 2.1, IGD as a pedagogy encompasses active listening, structured interaction, and facilitative guidance, which leads to both communication and psychological processes that allow students to build intergroup understanding, intergroup relationships, and intergroup collaboration (the outcomes of IGD). Table 2.3 highlights the theoretical framework used in IGD for both research and practice.

Table 2.3. Intergroup Dialogue Pedagogy

<i>Intergroup Dialogue Pedagogy</i>		
Active/Engaged Learning	Structured Interaction	Facilitated Learning Environments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course content/curricula including readings, videos, narratives, etc. • Didactic and experiential activities • Written assignments for self-reflection • Questions to stimulate reflection, critical analysis, and dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal number of students from two (or more) social identity groups (<i>this is the ideal</i>) • 1.5–3 hours a week for 10–14 weeks • Interdependent learning to practice listening, question asking, making connections, and exploring controversial issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team of co-facilitators with different racial social identities (e.g., White male and African American female) • Inclusive and involved learning environment • Structured activities with facilitator guidance

Concepts adapted from Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga, 2009, p. 4–5.

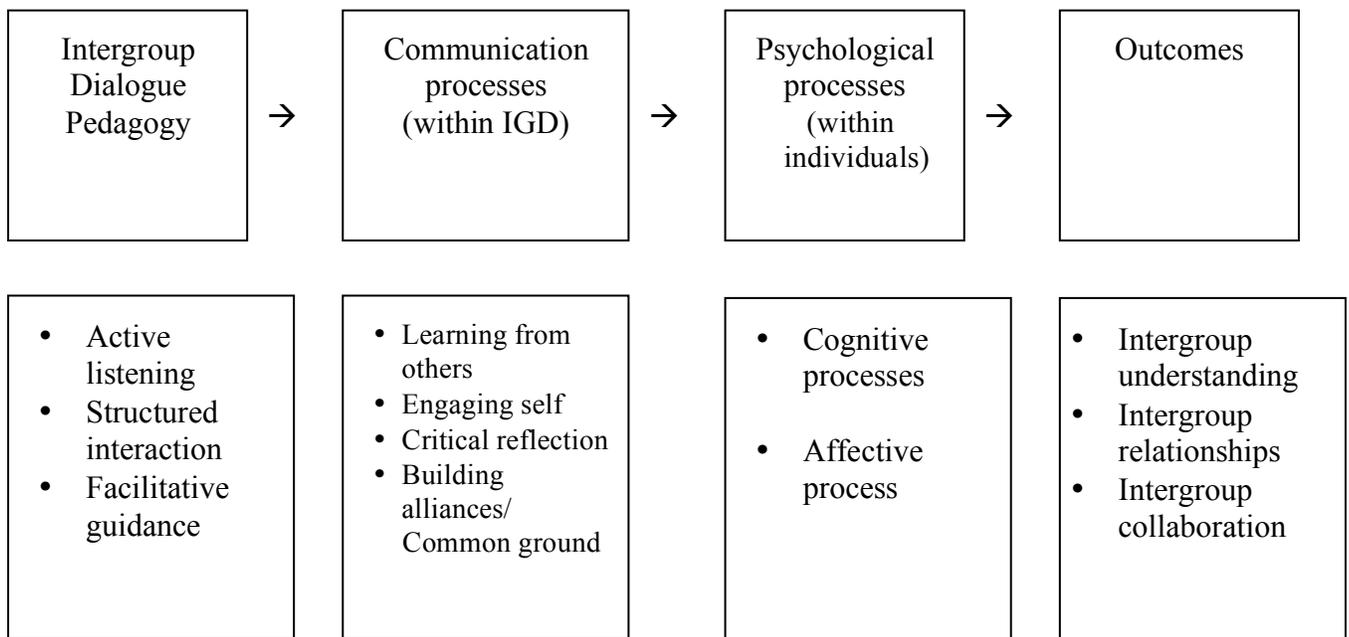


Figure 2.1. Intergroup Dialogue’s Theoretical Framework for Research and Practice
Taken from Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga (2009, p. 5).

Intergroup dialogue takes time; moreover, it is not a solution, but rather a critical space for naming and addressing social and cultural issues. In this case, IGD on race is one method that may prove beneficial and advantageous for students who engage in it. Drawing on the work of Freire (2000), intergroup dialogue extends the belief that members of oppressed groups need to learn about their oppression in order to fight against it. Additionally, *all* IGD participants—members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups—need to understand how people have been oppressed and how others (advantaged groups) have been privileged because of that oppression. This is embedded in IGD work through three overarching educational goals briefly mentioned in Chapter One: consciousness raising, building relationships across differences and conflicts, and strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002).

Consciousness raising happens by developing both personal and social identity awareness (Zúñiga et al., 2007). This requires students to delve deeply into their own racial identities, to explore how their identity affects them and in turn impacts others. Tatum (1992) asserts that this is a back-and-forth developmental process, a slipperiness that occurs when new knowledge is obtained. This is in part because Whites and people of Color are often at different stages in their racial identity development. In addition to reflecting on personal and social identity, consciousness raising requires students to see the greater social implications that are associated with their social identities (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Membership in a White or minority social group has broad social implications. Students in IGD are challenged to consider how the greater society is affected and shaped by individual, interpersonal, and institutional privileges and power dynamics. They are asked to question how their racial group has been shaped by history and economic systems and in turn how it has been reproduced over time (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. 12).

Building relationships across differences and conflicts requires forging relationships across racial lines (Nagda, 2006; Nagda & Gurin, 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2007). This in turn requires building sustained communication and bridging differences. Due to different life experiences, many students come into the dialogue with different and varying degrees of knowledge about race, privilege, and oppression. As such, many participants can default to surface-level conversations that are merely polite or, on the other end of the spectrum, polarized. Because IGD generally takes place over the course of 12–16 weeks, however, it requires dialogic communication over time, mutual respect, empathy, and trust. These components are developed as experiences and stories are shared and members learn about one another. This in turns requires self-reflection, dialogic listening, perspective taking, and developing a strong sense of critical thinking. In order to build bridges, students need to expand their knowledge, correct

misinformation, and think through their currently held assumptions of their social identities and the social identities of others.

The last core educational goal of IGD—strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice—can occur only when the first two goals are met (Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). This final goal asks group members to make individual commitments and contribute to social change. It also asks participants to become allies between and within racial groups to enact change. In IGD, students are also given opportunities at the end of their dialogue experience to create an action plan or project that will challenge discrimination and oppression on their campuses. These three educational goals form the foundation of IGD’s theoretical framework; its pedagogy, communication processes, and psychological processes bare three important outcomes of this work: intergroup understanding, intergroup relationships, and intergroup collaboration. Students follow structured stages in the dialogue process that prepares them for the next, as shown in Table 2.4 on page 53. This is important because it lays out a blueprint of the dialogue goals at each stage, key questions for participants, as well as what the facilitator’s role should be throughout. Because there is a structure in place, both facilitators and participants can remain focused on the educational goals (Zúñiga et al., 2002).

Intergroup Dialogue in Education

Research on intergroup dialogue has looked at its effectiveness as a program, as well as the cognitive and affective psychological outcomes on dialogue participants. In general, the results show that it is beneficial for participants. Although intergroup dialogue is found primarily in higher education, it is slowly but surely being integrated into K–12 settings.

Table 2.4. Stages of Intergroup Dialogue

Stages of Intergroup Dialogue	
Goals of Dialogic Process	Facilitator Role
STAGE 1: Group Beginnings/Forming and Building Relationships—2 sessions	
Key Questions: <i>Who am I? Who are you? How are we going to dialogue with each other?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group formation • Relationship building • Building foundations for the dialogic process • Dialoguing about dialogue (What is it?) • Participant needs/expectations • Discussion of hopes and fears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate experiences, expectations, and concerns of participants • Model active listening, encourage voicing and listening to multiple perspectives • Respond to feelings or experiences shared by both individuals and the collective group
STAGE 2: Exploring Differences and Commonalities—3-4 sessions	
Key Questions: <i>What does it mean for me to be a member of my social identity group? What advantages and disadvantages do people in my group face? What role do I play?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to become increasingly self-aware as members of different social identity groups in the context of power and privilege dynamics • Explore impact of stereotyping and prejudice on cross-group interactions • Group-building activities, including affinity groups, are included in this stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support students' present level of awareness of both their own social identities and that of others • Asking participants to recognize how different social identity groups experience or are impacted by power and privilege • Encouraging thoughtful, empathic, and informed dialogue
STAGE 3: Exploring and Dialoguing about Hot Topics—3-5 sessions	
Key Questions: <i>Should we have affirmative action? How do I feel about interracial relationships?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore issues that typically stimulate conflict • Encourage conversations about controversial topics • Identify things that participants can do to learn more about particular topics and/or perspectives • Readings, videos, and structured activities are included in this stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators integrate both content and process of IGD • Encourage students to connect what others have shared by having them to build on each other's ideas and experiences • Ask students to examine their beliefs and preconceived notions critically and identify misinformation, omissions, and distortions
STAGE 4: Action Planning and Alliance Building –1-3 sessions	
Key Questions: <i>Where do we go from here?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring closure to the dialogue experience • Prepare for post-dialogue activities • Develop action plans and develop personal and collective visions for a more just and inclusive university and/or society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite students to envision a more just society • Help students identify realistic next steps • Affirm everyone's contributions to the dialogue process • Encourage participants to express how group members have helped in their development.

Higher Education

There has been extensive research on intergroup dialogue in higher education. Most studies use pre- and post-test measures; other studies use focus groups, interviews, and observations, or a combination of mixed methods. One study (Nagda et. al, 2009) used focus groups, surveys, interviews and observations with 50 students in a social work program. Researchers wanted to evaluate the program, to discover how participants came to learn about their social identity and the social identity of others. Other goals included learning how (and if) participants took on multiple perspectives; how participants dealt with conflict; and how participants built collaborative relationships across social identities. Many of these mirror the aforementioned learning goals of IGD. Study outcomes show that students were able to learn about the experiences of others, gain *and* value new perspectives, increase knowledge and understanding of social inequalities, and understand how society impacts various social identity groups.

Gurin, Peng, Lopez, and Nagda (1999) designed a longitudinal study that is particularly noteworthy because it included a control group. Researchers found that students who participated in intergroup dialogue had more positive views of conflict, and people of Color had more positive relationships with White students four years after engaging in the dialogue over students in the control group. In another study, Gurin, Nagda, and Lopez (2004) report on two longitudinal studies. In one, first-year students at the University of Michigan took a course through the Intergroup Relations Program (IGR) and were matched with a control group from the same university. The control group included non-participants taken from a larger study (the Michigan Study, Gurin, 1992). The groups were composed of University of Michigan students who matched the comparison group for race, gender, in-state vs. out-of-state residency, and

campus residency. Students were surveyed when they entered school, when they finished the IGD course, and again four years later. Results show that students who took the course expressed more democratic sentiments and were more motivated to take on multiple perspectives. They also saw more similarities with students of different social identity groups. The second, much broader study looked at all students who entered the university their freshman year in 1990 and followed students through their senior year. Researchers looked at students' experience with diversity and found that those who engaged in a racial and/or ethnic or multicultural course during their college career, compared to those who did not, showed a greater tendency to be more engaged in democratic practices and were mindful of structural inequality as it relates to race and ethnicity.

Nagda, Kim, & Truelove (2004) researched undergraduate students who participated in intergroup dialogue courses and found that both White students and students of Color valued participation in the intergroup dialogue process much more than reading and lecture courses. Through pre- and post-test surveys, researchers found that students attributed the intergroup dialogue course (encounter) as more effective in increasing their learning and desire to take action higher than in class lectures (enlightenment). Students also had a greater desire to promote diversity and reduce prejudice.

Much of the research described above is composed of longitudinal studies, which indicate that participation in an IGD positively affected students over time and long after engaging in the dialogue. Students reported being able to better deal with conflict and take on multiple perspectives. Most notable is that IGD did not shy away from the tension, anxiety, and conflict that participants experienced as a part of dialogue. Rather, IGD curriculum plans for the tensions and conflicts that will inevitably occur in the dialogue space. It is discussed and acknowledged in

the dialogue space. Time is set aside for check-ins during which students express the tensions and anxiety they may feel about conflict-ridden topics. Facilitators use the emotions that arise for students as a tool to delve deeply into how and why those emotions, tensions, and conflicts occur even outside of the dialogue space. Consequently, facilitators encourage the participants to sit with and experience the emotions, which can be used as a pedagogical tool to eventually bridge differences and build relationships.

A more recent research project was conducted as part of a large Multiversity Intergroup Dialogue Project (MIGR) to examine the ways that dialogue impacts participants, and their learning process; it also evaluated the outcomes of participation in intergroup dialogue (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Nagda et al., 2009). Students were either randomly assigned to a race and ethnicity or gender IGD group (experimental groups) or placed in a control group (students who did not participate in IGD). Comparison groups were also included in this research project. Participants in comparison groups were students who took a lecture class related to race and ethnicity or gender but who did not participate in a dialogue group. The comparison group, I assert, is especially important because it demonstrated the effects on racial attitudes of students who took just a diversity course versus those who took just an IGD course. Results actually showed that IGD participants did, in fact, have more empathy and motivation to bridge differences across race/ethnicity and gender groups (Nagda et al., 2009, p. 5). The extensive MIGR research project was conducted across nine major universities and involved 26 race and 26 gender experimental groups and matching control groups for both. Comparison groups included 14 race and ethnicity groups and 14 gender groups. Pre- and post-tests were administered to all, and there was a one-year follow-up. Videotapes, content analysis of final papers, and interviews were also used as

qualitative data measures. As a result of this research project, multiple studies have since been conducted, a few of which are highlighted below.

One study by Gurin-Sands, Gurin, Nagda, & Osuna (2012) using data from the MIGR study tested whether the theoretical framework (pedagogy, communication, and psychological processes) had effects on students' commitment to social action through the analysis of students' final papers. Results show a connection between participation in a race and ethnicity or gender dialogue group and their commitment to social action. Students did in fact demonstrate that components of the theoretical model (Figure 2.1) all impacted how much students wrote about in regard to engaging in individual and collective action. Gurin-Sands and colleagues (2012) also note that these impacts were more significant for those who took a race and ethnicity dialogue over the gender dialogue.

Zúñiga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, and Keehn (2012) also used data from the MIGR study and looked at the role of engaged listening, which they define as “times when participants listened to something said in their dialogue that engaged them enough to be able to remember significant details about what had been said and describe them to the interviewer after the IGD course was over” (p. 84). They conducted more than 200 interviews, and findings suggest that students who remembered more instances of engaged listening may have developed a greater understanding of structural inequality than students who did not recount as many instances. Once again, findings show that this was truer for students in race and ethnicity IGD groups than students in the gender groups.

Alimo (2012) looked specifically at White college students who participated in IGD. His study, using MIGR data, investigated whether White students who engage in the dialogue process develop as racial allies. Using pre- and post-test data, he found that though students who

participated in a race and ethnicity dialogue group did not always feel confident, they reported more ally behavior than students in the control group (students on the waitlist to partake in IGD). This study highlights the importance of White students engaging in this work, which is also an argument that Miller and Donner (2008) make.

The Multiversity Intergroup Dialogue Project illustrates how valuable intergroup dialogue work can be. This research took place longitudinally across nine universities, and multiple findings articulate the positive impact it had on the students one year after they engaged in a dialogue course compared to those who did not. Because the results of this study highlight intergroup dialogue's effectiveness, it is something to strongly consider in K–12 settings.

Intergroup dialogue varies slightly at each university, depending on the needs of the university and the department where it is housed. Some institutions house IGD in student affairs. For example, at the University of Illinois, the program operates out of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR), a student affairs unit. At the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and Syracuse University, IGD is led through the College of Education and focuses on Social Justice Education and Cultural Foundations of Education. University of Washington, on the other hand, leads IGD through its social work program. Regardless of its variance and location, the core structure of IGD in higher education remains the same, and many studies highlight the program's effectiveness. However, after extensive research, it appears that IGD has not focused on pre-service teachers, which will be discussed in further detail in the subsequent sections.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Intergroup dialogue, as previously stated, has a long history in higher education. IGD in K–12 settings, however, is an emerging field of study. Intergroup dialogue in K–12 settings often deviates from the traditional model. Zúñiga, Lopez, and Ford (2012) highlight the need for

further attention to this demographic group and how it may differ from the research and practice of IGD in higher education. I argue, as do Zúñiga et al. (2012) that IGD has the potential to be transformative for youth who may not have the chance to go to college and/or engage in this work.

Youth Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit is a program designed to disrupt the racial segregation that exists in the city by increasing dialogue among urban and suburban youth. It calls for an increase in collective action through youth civic engagement (Checkoway, 2009). The study includes adolescents (13–19 years old); these youth dialogues differ from traditional models of IGD in higher education in length and structure. Program evaluation included pre- and post-test questionnaires to assess changes in students' colorblind attitudes, conflict, and self-esteem among other categories; interviews, focus groups, and observations were also analyzed. Findings support the claim that youth have the capacity to dialogue about political and racially charged topics and want to talk to members of different racial and ethnic groups. Participants were able to increase their knowledge of their racial and/or ethnic identities as well as those of others; they also increased their knowledge and understanding of racism and privilege while developing leadership skills to take social action (p. 41). Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, and Richards-Schuster (2012) used data from this study as well, looking specifically at changes (if any) in youths' racial consciousness when engaging in intergroup dialogue. Findings indicate that adolescents showed increases in racial consciousness. This is important because consciousness raising is a major tenet of IGD.

In another study on intergroup dialogue (Lopez & Nastasi, 2012), Syracuse University partnered with local schools. This collaboration brought together urban and suburban students taking an English course that focused on race, rhetoric, and voice for a daylong institute. The

institute allowed students to gather in small groups and engage in writing to advocate for shared concerns across both schools. Through writings, it became evident that students developed an awareness of inequalities and agency, as well as an interest in future engagement. Evaluation surveys were positive, and the study concluded that the institute was “inspiring,” “unifying,” and “thought-provoking,” to name a few positive adjectives (p. 150). Moreover, students admitted to wanting more than just a day to engage in dialogue. This affirms the importance of IGD occurring over a sustained period of time.

All these studies demonstrate ways that intergroup dialogue at the K–12 level is beneficial. Some advantages for engaging in intergroup dialogue at this level are that students become more aware of social inequalities and there is a better understanding and reduction of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination (Griffin, Brown, & warren⁷, 2012). Both of these factors are pertinent to middle- and high-school aged students. However, it is clear that intergroup dialogue in K–12 settings does not occur during the school day, which I argue disadvantages students who may not be able to stay after school, may be involved in after-school activities, or cannot take part in summer institute programs. This becomes a missed opportunity for those students.

The benefits of IGD demonstrated in higher education also lend support for pursuing this pedagogical model in elementary and secondary schools. I, along with other scholars (Boulden, 2006; Griffin et al., 2012; Lopez & Nastasi, 2012), argue that it is possible to do IGD with younger students. Though research investigating IGD’s impact in K–12 settings is relatively new and limited, it shows promise. Unfortunately, this promising work has rarely extended into elementary settings, which I contend is especially important for younger students. It is a crucial time for students to dialogue about race and ethnicity, given how early they pick up on racial and

⁷ warren does not use capital letters for any parts of her name.

ethnic differences. These are developmental years where opinions, ideas, and perspectives are still changing, growing, and developing.

Despite the many advantages that IGD offers, there are disadvantages for engaging in this kind of work. First, intergroup dialogue is an educational model that takes time. I stress this because sustained communication over time is vital to creating positive outcomes of IGD. The communication and psychological processes are necessary for intergroup understanding, for cross-racial relationships to develop, and for intergroup collaboration to take place. This requires students to make a commitment to stay engaged and sit with emotions that may cause discomfort. As such, facilitators advise students to reflect on the reasons for that discomfort (Gurin-Sands et al., 2012). Unfortunately, in some cases students may leave the dialogic space because the discomfort is too much and feel that is not worth the time and effort.

Additionally, effective training and strong experience in facilitation is necessary for IGD work to be successful (Griffin et al., 2012). This means that training facilitators and equipping them with skills needed to facilitate a dialogue group are necessary. Likewise, facilitators need to have not only deep knowledge of social justice issues such as power and oppression but also a commitment to social justice work. This too takes time, money, and resources. Another challenge with facilitation of IGD work is that, in some cases, trained facilitators are peers and in other cases are faculty and staff. Peer facilitators are said to “create a sense of safety and a nonjudgmental atmosphere . . . peer facilitators can draw on their own experiences to empathize and connect with students” (Nagda et al., 1999, p. 440). Moreover, participants sometimes feel they cannot be as honest as they would like with faculty or staff facilitators because they do not share their status, or because they feel intimidated by the knowledge facilitators have on the topic.

Students who participate in IGD come in having different levels of knowledge of racial issues. Some have thought about issues of privilege and oppression, but others have not—often *because* of their privilege. The experiences of the students greatly affect the knowledge brought into the dialogue space. While IGD does try to balance content and process (encounter and enlightenment), some students still do not have the content or the cognitive skills needed to make connections between social identity and how it plays out on an interpersonal, institutional, and structural level.

Another disadvantage is the lack of racially balanced groups, which is one of the major underpinnings of IGD work. Allport (1954) asserts that in order to produce increased intergroup tolerance, groups need to be perceived as racially balanced and equal. Some programs, however, are not able to enact *true intergroup* dialogue because the racial makeup of the town, school, or class is racially unbalanced.

There are also critiques to using the IGD model. As outlined earlier in this chapter, IGD uses a four-stage model. This model, while useful, suggests a hierarchy and implies a stage sequence. However, participants who engage in IGD may not necessarily move through all four stages and they may not do so within the recommended number of sessions outlined in the framework. For example, students may explore differences and commonalities throughout the entire dialogue course, not just during the recommended 3-5 sessions devoted to examining differences and commonalities. Additionally, while the focus of the first stage is building relationships, participants may well be building and forming relationships throughout the class sessions. These stages should occur organically and not be limited to the sessions as outlined in the model.

Another critique of IGD as an intervention is that students who participate are asked to create action plans and build alliances. Some participants may not develop the motivation and/or the commitment to continue engaging in anti-racist work by the end of the dialogue course. This last “stage” requires participants to create an action plan or form alliances across differences; my position is that they should not have to devise a plan of action if they are not ready. Furthermore, they may not want to build alliances. The model, as is, does not take into account that some participants may not be ready, or want, to build and foster relationships across differences or engage in intergroup collaboration.

Last, this model came out in the 1980’s. The model is the same and has not been responsive to changes in the discourse around social identities. To my knowledge, the theoretical framework has remained constant and has not been reevaluated. This is something to consider.

As mentioned earlier, intergroup dialogue is by no means a stand-alone solution to fixing our society’s racial problems. And as illustrated above, there are challenges and limitations to using the IGD framework. It is not full proof. Additionally, it does not fully address all issues related to race or to the creation of a society that is democratically just and diverse (Schoem, 2003). However, it is an avenue for students to learn and discuss how their social identities are affected by race and racism, and in turn how to individually and collectively struggle against structural inequality and forms of oppression. The results of this study demonstrate the value to the students in this particular IGD group.

The Need for Intergroup Dialogue on Race and Ethnicity in Teacher Education

As referenced earlier, intergroup dialogue is housed in different university departments. Some universities have even integrated IGD work into their education departments; however, IGD has yet to be used systematically with pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers do engage

with issues of diversity in their courses, but it is often done on a surface level. Pre-service teachers have discussed the value of learning about differences in their method courses; however, it is done without sustained reflection on their own racial and ethnic identities (Milner, 2012a; 2012b). I argue that intergroup dialogue work is critical for pre-service education students and has the potential to enrich their teaching experience.

My advocacy for IGD and my research interests are multifaceted. I advocate that students in K–12 settings *need* to participate in dialogue about their racial identities and how their experiences are shaped by privilege and oppression in society. Similarly, Freire (2000) advocates that students need to understand the role race plays in creating the structural inequality that exists. It is known that during these crucial developmental years, students engage in stereotypes, prejudice, bullying, and acts of discrimination (Griffin et al., 2012) and distance themselves by race (Tatum, 1997). I argue that this occurs in part because they have not crossed racial lines. They have not been given opportunities to dialogue with one another about conflict and politically charged topics because, as previously mentioned, race is often silenced and rarely discussed in schools (Pollock, 2004) and when they are integrated into class they are often silenced as well. This becomes ever more important as schools continue to grow and become more racially and ethnically diverse. Thus, for students' voices to be heard and validated, I posit that teachers need to have confidence, experience, and training on how to facilitate dialogue with their students. Consequently, this type of dialogue cannot effectively occur in a classroom until classroom teachers undergo this work themselves. Elsewhere in this chapter, I have highlighted that professors and teacher educators need both content knowledge and facilitation skills to dialogue about race-related issues. The same holds true for pre-service teachers, and I am therefore advocating for IGD in pre-service education programs.

Intergroup dialogue can serve as a pedagogical model, and it offers a toolset to address the racial experiences of pre-service teachers directly. It can provide an avenue for teachers to think about their own social identities and their relationships to others, which I argue is necessary in order to teach students of *all* backgrounds effectively. Facilitating these dialogues in the classroom is potentially powerful because it acknowledges the salience of race and ethnicity and influences how students respond to both instruction and the curriculum (Hawley & Nieto, 2010). The assumption underlying this research project was that pre-service students in teacher education programs need a space to first understand, process, and reflect on their own social identities and lived experiences and then to gain the facilitation skills necessary to integrate IGD into their future classrooms.

I also argue that intergroup dialogue on race in teacher education programs can help to bring reality to what pre-service teachers often assume to be the theory proposed in their university courses. Reading about race issues is not the same as hearing about real stories from their peers. Dialogue about race can capture what Schoem (2003) calls “the emotion and real ‘lived’ experience that is offered in texts. It allows participants to reach more deeply into the theory and information . . . bringing a kind of qualitative or anthropological insight into quantitative data and abstract intellectual insights” (pp. 220–221).

More specifically, in this study, I sought to explore what occurs when pre-service teachers engage in an intergroup dialogue course in conjunction with their methodology courses and is an integral part of the overall curriculum. I wanted to investigate whether IGD will help pre-service students integrate the theory and content they received from their courses with what they learned from their own identity development. In this research study, my co-facilitator and I

conducted weekly intergroup dialogue sessions with a cohort of pre-service teachers in their education program and tried to encourage this kind of theory-practice integration.

The research conducted in higher education illustrates the salience of intergroup dialogue. Findings demonstrate that intergroup dialogue was effective at creating students who were more social justice oriented. The findings also show that most participants were able not only to understand racial identities that were different from their own, but also were better able to understand their own racial identities and how they were positioned in society. Furthermore, the evidence demonstrated that IGD has the ability to break barriers, increase intergroup relationships, and develop collective action through intergroup collaboration. Hurtado (2001) states it well: “Several studies show that student interaction with racially diverse peers is associated with increases in cultural knowledge and understanding, leadership abilities, and commitment to promoting racial understanding” (p. 25). This research suggests that pre-service education students may also benefit from engaging in this work, and it may similarly have a lasting impact on their future teaching. It is critical that scholars engage in dialogue as well (hooks, 1994); I see it as our personal responsibility as teacher educators to cross racial boundaries, bridge differences, and foster intergroup relationships.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

In the first chapter, I detailed my research interest in intergroup dialogue (IGD) on race and ethnicity and provided a rationale for its potential usefulness with pre-service teachers. In Chapter Two, I reviewed the relevant literature and empirical research on intergroup dialogue and its impact on university students across the United States. I discussed IGD's positive success and results and highlighted the potential benefit that this intervention may have in a teacher education program. In this chapter I describe my methodology, data collection, the methods I used, the data analysis I conducted, and my efforts to establish credibility.

Methodology

The proposed research used a qualitative approach in the form of a case study. A case study, as Stake (1995, xi) puts it, "is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances." Case studies are unique in time and space. This research study was a case of a dialogue, which has an experience, as do the participants engaged in it. As the researcher and co-facilitator of the research, I, too, had an experience by interacting in the dialogue.

The data collected were analyzed using a variety of qualitative methods. In accordance with Lincoln and Guba (1985), I tried not to make generalizations but rather to focus on the specific experiences and responses of the participants in *this* study. Researchers who engage in qualitative research should look at individuals and how they "construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (Merriam, 2009, p. 22). Qualitative research is the study of a phenomenon and understanding the meaning of that phenomenon. Merriam points to three characteristics for

conducting a qualitative study: how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. She states the “overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences” (p. 23). This study is best supported by a qualitative approach because I was attempting to uncover the racial attitudes and experiences of students who participated in an intergroup dialogue course. Additionally, qualitative data helped me to examine how participating in a dialogue course influenced teacher candidates’ ability to “see” and name race, as well as their awareness of their teaching practices and their understanding and relationships with both their peers and their students.

Research Design

This section discusses the design of my research study. I detail my research questions along with the criteria by which the facilitators were trained in the protocols, and I describe my participants and my data collection.

Research Questions

My research examined how intergroup dialogue, as an intervention, influenced pre-service teachers’ attitudes and understandings about race and ethnicity. The theory of dialogue highlights the importance of using discourse to increase consciousness-raising and self-reflection (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Intergroup dialogue combines Freire’s (2000) notion of critical examination and transformation of oppressive social realities (critical praxis) with a situated critical dialogic experience. This notion helped form the basis of my research study and rationale. As such, my research questions were:

- How does participating in an intergroup dialogue influence pre-service teachers’ understanding of their racial identities, racial attitudes and the differing experiences of others?

- How do these understandings influence how they think about what they will do as teachers?

The first question is important because I wanted to study how engaging in a dialogue about race and ethnicity had an impact on participants' racial identity development as well as their understandings of others' racial experiences. Examining their racial attitudes was important because it provided me with a baseline of where pre-service teachers' racial attitudes were at the beginning of the intergroup dialogue course, at the end of the course, and again after they completed their student teaching experience. I wanted to examine not just whether they gained a greater understanding of their racial identities and that of others, but also whether their ideologies were influenced. I used the follow-up question to examine how the participants' understandings of racial identities and racial attitudes influenced what they thought about their future teaching and practices. Collectively, these two research questions helped give me a richer context for how intergroup dialogue might be useful in a teacher education program.

The Facilitators

As recommended by intergroup dialogue experts and intergroup dialogue theory, two facilitators with different social identities should facilitate dialogue sessions together. Therefore, an intergroup dialogue that focuses on race and ethnicity needs facilitators who are of different races. This is important because it helps participants to see someone "like themselves" represented in the facilitated leadership of the group (Nagda, Zúñiga, & Sevig, 1995). This typically includes a White facilitator and a person of Color. While the facilitators are to be active and engaged in the dialogue process both personally and intellectually, their role includes modeling and guiding the dialogue process. They are also to offer insight when something has been left unsaid in the dialogue space. Facilitators are also charged with intervening

constructively when there is a breakdown in the communication process. Overall, facilitators are to serve as a catalyst that will deepen the dialogic inquiry (Nagda et al., 1995; Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). These facilitation skills are crucial in the IGD process, as the role of the facilitators can largely influence the direction of a dialogue.

Michael, a White Jewish female, is a staff member in the College of Education who has worked with the pre-service teachers who are participating in the dialogue. I am a Black Christian who serves as an instructor for a number of courses in the education department for pre-service teachers. The two of us together have previously taught IGD groups over three semesters. Michael and I have developed a great rapport and friendship that, I argue, is a facilitation tool and one that has enhanced how we facilitate dialogue sessions. As a result of our facilitation skills, prior experiences working together, and knowledge of the teacher candidates in our program, it was decided that we would facilitate this intergroup dialogue class together.

As a high school student, Michael became involved in anti-oppression activism as a result of her experiences as the child of a gay parent. Her involvement in that work led her to attend dialogue facilitation training in 1999, and she began facilitating sessions in her community shortly after. As a student at the University of Montana, she facilitated intergroup dialogue courses for five semesters. Once she relocated to Illinois, she began facilitating dialogue courses on the University of Illinois campus and has done so for nearly seven years. Michael's dialogue facilitation focuses on creating a space where participants can speak openly about the impacts of oppression, particularly racism, and encourages members of dominant groups to examine and shift their understanding of their embedded systemic privilege.

As mentioned earlier, after taking a race and ethnic relations class in college, I was trained in race dialogue facilitation. While a student at The Pennsylvania State University, I was

able to put words to the structural inequalities that I noticed growing up, the disparities in schools, and the expectations that teachers had of White students compared to students of Color. My second year, I went on to facilitate race and ethnicity dialogue sessions. Next, I supervised facilitators and studied the overall group dynamics in more than 15 dialogue sessions that occurred across campus. The dialogue facilitation training that I previously received was based on a version of the Socratic method. In other words, as facilitators we were applying advanced communication skills to the philosophical method of inquiry that Socrates authored. Since beginning my studies at the University of Illinois, I became involved with the Program on Intergroup Relations, where intergroup dialogue is housed. This is where Michael and I started co-facilitating intergroup dialogue sessions on race and ethnicity. However, the IGD dialogue model, as outlined in Chapter 2, is a specific model and a framework that was unfamiliar to me before coming to the University of Illinois. This model was more structured and followed a four-stage process.

The Participants

The 2014–2015 academic year brought about many changes in the education program at a large Midwestern university. In this academic year, a pilot study was implemented for one cohort of elementary education students. The cohort had a Global Perspectives theme. Students who expressed an interest in learning about education with a focus on global perspectives applied to be placed in this cohort. There were a total of 22 students in the cohort and half of them were the students who applied to be in the global perspectives cohort. The other students were placed to this cohort if they were seeking bilingual certification or endorsement, or if the students were placed in one of the three collaborating schools identified for this pilot cohort. Out of the 22 students, 17 of the students voluntarily signed up for the intergroup dialogue course and all 17

signed the consent form. Table 3.1 lists the names (pseudonyms) of the participants, their gender and their racial and ethnic identities.

Table 3.1. *Demographic Information of Participants*

Name*	Gender	Racial Identity	Cultural/Ethnic Identity
Brooklyn	Female	White	Greek American (not strongly connected)
Christina	Female	White	European American
Claire	Female	Asian	Korean American, first generation
Eric	Male	White	European American
Gabriella	Female	Biracial	Polish/Mexican American
Hannah	Female	White	European American
Irene	Female	White	European American (Polish heritage, not strongly connected)
Lila	Female	White	Jewish/ European American
Lin	Female	Asian	Chinese American
Leoandro (Leo)	Male	Latino	Mexican American
Mai	Female	Asian	Korean American
Nicole	Female	White	Serbian American (strong connection)/ European American
Olivia	Female	White	European American (moderate connection to German heritage)
Paige	Female	White	European American (significant time living overseas, military family)
Rachel	Female	White	Rural-Farming Identity/European American
Sophia	Female	White	European American
Sydney	Female	White	European American

*pseudonyms

The teacher candidates were undergraduate students in their senior year and in the second year of the teacher education program. The participants took five methods courses (math, science, social studies, literacy, and pedagogy) and engaged in their field placements two days a week in local schools during the fall semester. In the spring they student-taught five days a week. In support of the goals of the global perspectives theme and my research interests, an intergroup dialogue course was added to provide an avenue for implementing and researching the influence of an intergroup dialogue course in this program. As such, I did not have to recruit outside participants for this research project.

Keeping with the authenticity and recommended structure of intergroup dialogue, an

experienced dialogue facilitator and I co-facilitated the weekly dialogue sessions each week for a semester (12 weeks). Each dialogue session was 2 hours in length and occurred on Wednesdays. The first 9 weeks of the dialogue focused on teacher candidates' racial attitudes, their own social identities (specifically race and ethnicity), and how their social identities were positioned against others who are different from them. The second half of the semester focused on training pre-service teachers on how they could begin to facilitate these conversations on race and ethnicity with their future students.

Data Collection

Research for this project was yearlong and occurred during the 2014–2015 academic year. All participants in the dialogue course were given consent forms detailing the data collected, and they were notified that their confidentiality would be maintained in the write-up of this dissertation study (or any other possible publications) should they agree to participate. Dialogue sessions and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Observational notes were taken after the dialogue sessions. In addition, some participants were asked if they wanted to participate in interviews. Surveys were also given at three time points throughout the academic year. Class artifacts and written reflections were also collected for analysis. Pseudonyms were given to each student, and students who chose not to participate had their data removed. In accordance with IRB, students were asked to participate by a staff member not associated with the pilot program or course. She discussed the research project with the pre-service teachers in one of their methods classes during the first week of school during the fall 2014 semester.

Methods

This section will describe in detail the specific data collection methods used in this study, and why they were chosen.

Surveys

Teacher candidates were asked to complete demographic information as well as the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville et al., 2000), which pertains to attitudes and awareness of racial issues and inequality. Items on this Likert-type scale include three subscales (unawareness of white racial privilege, unawareness of institutional racism, and unawareness of blatant racial issues). Neville et al. conducted a validation study and reported concurrent validity between the three subscales and the total scores. Higher score on this scale indicate higher levels of unawareness or denial of race and racism. The Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale survey was utilized to determine pre-service teachers' racial attitudes and their perceptions of racial inequality. It was also meant to serve as a baseline for participants' understandings of race, privilege, oppression, and inequality at the beginning of the dialogue in order to assess possible change over time. The survey was given at the beginning of the project in the fall (August 2014), at the end of the dialogue course, before their student teaching placement in the spring (December 2014), and again at the end of their student teaching (April 2015).

Dialogue Sessions

The dialogue sessions were audio-recorded and then transcribed. These data provided me an opportunity to analyze and interpret what participants have said. Audio recording gave me an overall sense of what occurred and a detailed record of what was said in each session. Audiotaping the sessions was effective because I could gauge the experiences and learning as expressed during the dialogue sessions. The audio recordings also allowed me to repeatedly analyze the transcription to find common themes and codes.

Observational notes of the dialogue sessions documented what could not be captured on tape. After each dialogue session, I made observational notes to describe any conflicts that arose

and students' reactions and interactions with each other. I also described the overall tone and process of the dialogue group. Because I was co-facilitating the dialogue sessions, it was also important to be self-reflective and critical of my own perspectives. Therefore, drawing on ethnographic approaches (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw 1995), I kept a research journal that detailed my feelings and interpretations as well as what I observed in the dialogue sessions. My debriefing conversations with my co-facilitator also helped me to remain critical during the process. Having my co-facilitator as a critical friend helped me to think about the outcome of each session through her perspective as well as my own. Documenting this allowed me to critically reflect on each session. My advisor, Dr. Marilyn Johnston-Parsons, also served as a source of criticality to help me make sense of the data I was interpreting.

Interviews

Interviews were used at the beginning of the project in September 2014 and again at the end of the academic year, when pre-service teachers were finishing their student teaching in April 2015. Interviews gave me a deeper look at how some students were thinking about their racial identity at the beginning of the dialogue experience and again at the end of the project. I interviewed five students. My selection criteria were based on balancing gender, race, and levels of participation. I also chose students who applied to be in the global perspectives cohort and those who were placed in the cohort. Table 3.2 on page 76 highlights my selection criteria. Conducting interviews was important to this study because it provided participants an opportunity to reflect on their thinking and learning, which is not always easily captured on paper or in group discussions. Conducting semi-structured interviews allowed participants to talk through their experiences and also allowed me the opportunity to ask follow-up questions based on what participants have shared.

Table 3.2. Case Study Participants

<i>Case Study Participants</i>				
Student	Gender	Racial Identity	Applied to Global Perspectives Cohort	Initial Participation Level
Leo	Male	Latino	✓	Low/Moderate
Eric	Male	White	✗	Low
Rachel	Female	White	✓	Moderate
Mai	Female	Asian	✗	High
Olivia	Female	White	✓	Low

Writing Assignments

Students wrote weekly reflections in which they were asked to take what was discussed in the dialogue class and apply it to their own racial experiences. These reflections also allowed me to trace the participants’ thinking over time. These reflections were rich with students’ thinking, learning, and growth.

These assignments were required for the dialogue groups, and students were given written feedback and comments; no letter grades were assigned for participating in this course, but rather a satisfactory/unsatisfactory if they attended class and completed the written reflections.

Planning Sessions

Facilitating an intergroup dialogue on race and ethnicity takes extensive and careful planning and consideration. Prior to the start of this dialogue course, Michael and I met on a weekly basis over a two-month period during the summer of 2014. In these meetings we discussed our ideas, in particular the concepts we wanted students to think about, our expectations, and outcomes of students’ participation in this semester-long course. Initially we needed to agree on the learning objectives and goals for the course. We also looked at previous lesson plans that had been created from our past intergroup dialogue courses and revised them accordingly to reflect the specific group of students with whom we would be working—i.e.,

teacher candidates. We also looked up additional resources, videos, and articles that could be added and used as supplemental resources for this dialogue class.

During the fall semester, we continued to meet twice a week for planning. Every Thursday we met for 1 to 2 hours to look at the lesson plans we created over the summer. In these meetings, we looked at what was scheduled for the upcoming week; we took into account what we were able to cover and edited our plans accordingly to reflect the salient points from the previous day's dialogue. Every week, we also met on Wednesdays, an hour before our class, to discuss in more detail which parts of the IGD session we would each facilitate. We considered how certain topics would be received and who would be best to discuss them. We acknowledged that certain issues and concepts would best be received when presented by Michael as a White female who shares a racial identity with the majority of our students, while other concepts would be better received if I, a Black female, facilitated them. Michael and I have past racial experiences, so our perspectives inevitably impacted the dialogue and how we planned. We also discussed our reactions, reflections, and thoughts about the written assignments that students turned in for the week.

Because our planning sessions were paramount to what we did in the dialogue space, I audio-recorded them in order to better describe how we planned lessons and how that influenced what we did in our dialogue sessions. A sample of our summer planning, a lesson plan, and a student activity sample are located in Appendices A, B, and C, respectively, and a full description of planning and implementation are included in the dissertation.

Artifacts (Document Analysis)

Artifacts are also used in qualitative studies. A major component of IGD sessions were experiential activities that asked students to think about issues of race in society as well as their

positionality. Students worked in groups creating charts, story narratives, and engaged in fishbowl activities (to name a few) to reflect on their experiences. These activities are a rich component of IGD because they often directly reflect the experiences of the participants, which are viewed as valid knowledge that can be used for further discussion (Nagda et al., 1999).

While I collected all of the above data, the dialogue sessions and the written reflections provided the richest data and helped to assist in identifying reoccurring patterns in the data.

Table 3.3 summarizes the data collection timeline for this research project.

Table 3.3. Data Collection Timeline

Data Collection Timeline	
Semester	Activity
Fall semester	Week 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed CoBRAS (pre-assessment) • Distributed demographic Form • Dialogue course began • Weekly reflection collected
	Week 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue session (audio-recorded) • Weekly reflection collected
	Week 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewed case study participants • Dialogue session (audio-recorded) • Weekly reflection collected
	Weeks 4–6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue sessions (audio-recorded) • Weekly reflection collected
	Weeks 7–8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dialogue course
	Weeks 9–14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue sessions (audio-recorded) • Weekly reflection collected
	Week 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed CoBRAS (post-survey) • Final weekly reflection collected
	April 2015 (spring semester)

Data Analysis

For my dialogue session analyses I used Bogdan and Biklen’s (2006) suggestions for

finding emergent themes (categories). After transcribing each session, I looked for meaningful segments in the data and assigned codes so that I could begin category construction. Coding my participants' perspectives and ways of thinking were useful given that my research questions sought to identify their racial and ethnic understandings. As Bogdan and Biklen predict, the patterns that emerged from these codes revealed some of my participants' ideological beliefs. With my research questions in mind and potential codes, I then looked across each dialogue session for repeated patterns and regularities (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006) to analyze the data. I also kept a master list of the major categories found from coding the dialogue sessions. I then used the same coding method for my interview data. Keeping in mind my research questions, I compared categories from subsequent data to see if new concepts or categories emerged. Identifying similarities and differences among their responses helped me describe in detail how participants viewed the dialogue and its influence on their racial and ethnic understandings.

Taking into account the codes (and subsequent categories) from dialogue sessions and interviews, I checked to determine whether they were also present in students' weekly reflections. Additionally, looking across all of the participants' reflections gave me a collective sense of whether their understandings of race and ethnicity have developed. I continued to add codes and kept a master list of all themes generated.

I made comments on each set of data and compared them against each other. I checked to see whether the themes developed from earlier analyses "held up" as I continued to collect and analyze new data (Merriam, 2009, p. 183). This followed Strauss and Corbin's (1990) comparative method for open coding. Open coding is "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (p. 61). Additionally, this form of coding suggests analyzing and coding the data and using the findings to inform me of the next iteration

of data collection. I analyzed multiple forms of data to triangulate my findings. I wanted to ensure that my themes were credible through various methods. I thus analyzed the different forms of data until my categories become more deductive and saturated.

Because this research project valued participants taking on multiple perspectives on controversial topics such as racial and ethnic attitudes and identity, I paid close attention to these multiple perspectives in the data. Including extensive data from my research participants in the analysis (written reflections, interviews, and dialogue sessions) was integral to the study because these data situated them as experts in their lived experiences and provided me an in-depth look at their thoughts and feelings on issues of race and ethnicity. As Malagon, Perez Huber, and Velez (2009) state, the “value of research participants’ knowledge [creates] a more lateral relationship in place of a hierarchical relationship” (p. 268). Moreover, it provided participants “a role in communicating how their experiences and stories are portrayed in a research project.” (Malagon et al., 2009, p. 268).

In addition to the qualitative data analysis I conducted, I used a paired-sample t-test to analyze the quantitative results from the Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS). As mentioned earlier, the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville et al., 2000) was collected at three time points. Results from this scale indicate participants’ attitudes about racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racism. This survey served as a quantitative measure to give me a sense of my participants’ racial attitudes pre-, post-, and lagged-dialogue experience. The results from this survey contributed to the analysis of the influence of the dialogue sessions. Often, paired-sample t-tests are commonly used to investigate whether there are statistical differences from one statistical point to another (Moore, McCabe, & Craig, 2009). As such, t-

tests were utilized to explore if statistical differences existed between each of the groups: pre to post-experience, post-experience to lagged results, and pre-experience to lagged results.

Lastly, my own lived experiences helped me sort through the data as it influenced how I thought and made sense of what is going on. Subsequently, all of this influenced how I analyzed and coded my data.

Conclusion

Multiple sources of data were collected for this research to ensure trustworthiness. Surveys and interviews were given before and after the project; observations were written after each dialogue session; and written work and class artifacts were collected and analyzed each week. Looking across various sources of data served to triangulate the data and increased the credibility of my research findings. I also used member checking with my participants build credibility.

In the research, my co-facilitator and advisor were a source of criticality. My co-facilitator and I debriefed after each session; this was helpful when interpreting the dialogue sessions, and it provided me with additional insight on the research study. My advisor was able to help me check my biases and whether I was interpreting the data based on my findings. Through these various data sources and analyses, I report my findings in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER FOUR

Intergroup Dialogue Context

During my first semester (Fall 2011) at the University of Illinois, I looked for different community organizations and university-wide programs that used dialogue as an avenue to discuss racial and ethnic issues. I came across the Office of Inclusion and Intergroup Relations (OIIR), which housed intergroup dialogue at the university. I got excited at the prospect of getting back into dialogue facilitation work. I met with the director of the program, shared with him my background and my past experiences facilitating, and learned more about the program. Soon after, I started facilitating for the program on intergroup relations.

The Facilitators and the Co-Facilitator Relationship

I met Michael in spring 2011. We were assigned to facilitate one of the race and ethnicity dialogue groups for OIIR. We had only the general instructions to respect each other and think about our social identities, and the task of developing a curriculum. From that initial meeting our relationship has grown and deepened as we have continued to facilitate together. Michael is a White American, Jewish woman, whereas I am a Black Caribbean American, Christian woman. What makes our relationship unique is that we are incredibly different but with a shared bond in raising awareness about social inequalities. We have a shared understanding of the importance of talking about difference to create a space for more understanding and equity. We have long since learned how to appreciate our own social identities as well as each other's identities, including our differences.

Natasha's impressions of Michael. Spring 2011. I wanted to meet my co-facilitator before our training meeting. We met at a coffee shop that January. I remember being excited and nervous at the same time, and shocked to discover that Michael was a female!

Michael is a great listener and finds value in providing people the opportunity to sit with emotions that come with critically examining issues of race and racism. She shares many of my beliefs about dialogue as a way to explore commonalities and differences across racial groups. We are both passionate and knowledgeable about issues of social inequalities. Though she does not have the experiential knowledge and racialized experiences that I have as a person of Color, she is committed to raising awareness around issues of race and racism. Michael is also an advocate for all forms of social justice—race, gender, religion, and sexuality—and in some ways, I am not. As a Christian, it was, and still is hard for me to advocate for all forms of social justice. We had a shared bond about race and ethnicity but did not view other social identities such as sexuality or religion in the same way. Because my previous experience with dialogue was almost exclusively around race and ethnicity, working with Michael was new. She made it complex as she wanted to talk about the intersectionality of how social identities interact with race and ethnicity.

Over time, through planning, through sharing, a sense of trust and openness developed. I shared with Michael without fear of judgment knowing that she respects my perspective, different as it was. This has made our facilitation all the richer.

Michael's impressions of Natasha (written by Michael). For the purposes of the dissertation, Michael wrote her impressions of our meeting and relationship.

Natasha is kind and disarming, truly interested in other people. She asks great questions, tracks responses, and intuitively and skillfully reads between the lines. Through our

initial planning for our classes we followed the limited suggestions we had been given in training for getting to know your co-facilitator—ask about each others’ social identities, ask about triggers, etc.—but we quickly realized that those perfunctory questions were not sufficient to build a strong co-facilitation relationships. At the same time, I was becoming more aware of the places where our identities might create friction, particularly around the intersection of religion and sexuality. As the child of a gay parent and as a Jewish woman raising a Jewish child, I find that my defenses are automatically way up when people identify with particular streams of Christianity.

I would be lying if I said that there was not a bit of disappointment knowing we didn’t agree on all forms of social justice, that these pieces of my humanity and that of my family weren’t reconcilable with what had become not just a productive work relationship, but a deep friendship. For the first time however, it clicked that to really build a relationship, this relationship, across racial lines, we would have to contend with these issues and decide to stay connected. This work is not all or nothing; we talk to students about examining grey areas, about not knowing, about not universalizing their own experiences and values. It’s important to the work of intergroup dialogue that we as facilitators do that, too.

My friendship with Michael strengthened our facilitation relationship. Despite the fact that we do not view all aspects of equity and justice in the same way, we have a high level of mutual respect. We are comfortable asking how the other is doing, checking in, and valuing what each other has to say; this level of mutual respect that then carries over into the dialogue space. I highlight our facilitator relationship/friendship because it is crucial to the work we did in the dialogue group for this study. It is demonstrated in the way we plan, how we facilitate, and how

we dialogue with one another after a dialogue session. These things have become natural for us. We wanted our students to view us as a model for how to act and interact with each other (their peers) across differences. We are two very distinct people who have different perspectives yet get along because we have a shared bond for building awareness of social inequalities. In facilitating the IGD sessions, we tried to show that we are able to let down our guards and be completely vulnerable about our thoughts and feelings, which is difficult to do.

Organization of Intergroup Dialogue Sessions in Teacher Education

Pre-service teachers in this cohort were placed in three elementary schools. The three schools were identified as being globally focused and aligned with the theme of the cohort. It also allowed the methods instructors a more cohesive opportunity to get together, meet, and plan with the cooperating teachers.

Our dialogue sessions met on Wednesday afternoons from 4–6 pm. Students were coming from the second day of their field placement for the week. We met in one of the empty classrooms at Lakeville Elementary School. Students were usually running in from their placement a bit frazzled but often excited to sit and dialogue for the first time that day. The first 15–20 minutes of the dialogue session started with a check-in. Students took turns sharing how their day or week was going. Sometimes Michael and I had a question for them to answer, and sometimes it was open ended. Often it was a place for them to share their frustration or excitement about something that happened during their placement. When we did not do a whole group check-in, we would have students get with a partner and each share anything that was on their mind or that they needed to get out for 3 minutes. While a student was talking, his or her partner was to remain silent during the time, not offering suggestions or advice, or asking questions, but to simply listen. This allowed participants to engage in active listening, a difficult

skill because talking often comes *with* interruption and questions. However, as facilitators, our goals were for students to engage in active listening and also to get their minds clear so that they would be able to be fully present in the dialogue space without distraction.

After check-in, Michael and I would open up the space to discuss the readings. A list of the readings is located in Appendix E. This was a time for students to ask questions or seek clarifications if they were unsure about concepts. We also talked about their reflection posts. We discussed overarching themes that we noticed in their reflections, but we did not call out specific examples or stories shared in their writings. It was important for us to let the students share their stories if they wanted to, but not for us to bring them to the group. This is based on the belief that each person is the knower of his or her experience: each student knows his or her story better than anyone else, and it was not Michael's or my place to share personal stories for other people's consumption.

We then delved into issues such as oppression, whiteness, and privilege. Students engaged in whole group activities, small group activities, gallery walks, and quiet reflection. Other activities included the completion of a social identity chart and reflection on the saliency of their social identities; they also participated in creating a racist school⁸ (J. Minarik, personal communication, December 2, 2012) to help them understand how schools are set up as racist institutions; and they discussed disciplinary practices that they noticed in their school placements.

At the end of the class session we took time to check out. This usually included students' sharing how they felt about what had happened in the dialogue session. Students would

⁸ Students worked in groups to create a racist school. They had to create a school in a way that perpetuated the racial status quo but not get caught. Each group represented a part of the school (personnel/hiring, leadership, community interaction, structure, vision/mission/goals, school culture, and discipline and safety) and had to brainstorm ideas to maintain the status quo.

summarize their feelings in a sentence or in three words or less as a way to close out the session. Sometimes it included appreciating someone else. Appreciations are meant as a counterweight to some of the heaviness that comes up when we dialogue about race. We asked students to appreciate the person sitting next to them—a genuine appreciation that goes beyond a compliment. We wanted students to think about how the person next to them offered something unique to the dialogue and how that person added value to the community.

Although each dialogue session had a different topic, the basic elements such as check-in, debrief on readings, and check-out remained constant. Table 4.1 on page 88 outlines a typical dialogue session. Using the intergroup dialogue model, Michael and I designed this course with these four stages in mind:

- Stage 1: Group beginnings: forming and building relationships
- Stage 2: Exploring differences and commonalities
- Stage 3: Hot topics
- Stage 4: Action planning and alliance building

A more detailed description can be found on page 53. The stage names in the IGD model are useful, but I shy away from calling them *stages* because the word implies that things are fixed and hierarchical. This scheme does, however, provide a baseline for the order in which things should develop in the course, without necessarily limiting the development. Students were constantly exploring differences and commonalities, not just in stage sequence.

Hot topics such as Ferguson were discussed, but the hot topic stage or category was not the focus here—exploring schools was the focus. Action planning and alliance building was important and students found ways to be agents of change but again the focus was on providing

them facilitation skills. Figure 4.1 shows the general breakdown of the stages/categories over the course of the IGD sessions.

Table 4.1. Example of a Dialogue Session

<i>Example of a Dialogue Session</i>	
Time	Activity and Examples
4:00 pm	<p>Check-In</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In one sentence, how are you doing? • Turn and talk with a partner for three minutes
4:20 pm	<p>Discussion of Readings and Reflections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any words or concepts from the reading that you need clarification on? • Was it difficult to write your reflection this week? Why? Does anyone want to share what they wrote?
4:40 pm	<p>Gallery Walk Topic: <i>Whiteness</i> Students went around and wrote examples of where they saw whiteness in various places. They used their reflections as a guide.</p> <p>Topic: <i>Stories</i> Students went around and provided examples on chart paper from their own experiences related to the four stories they learned about (stock, concealed, resistant, and transformative).</p> <p>Schools as a Racist Institution Group Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students got into groups and “created” a racist school to show how the cycle of racism is embedded in the school system.
5:20	<p>Whole Group or Small Group Discussion Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are these things considered white? • What was it like to create a racist school? • How did you subtly maintain racism in creating this school? • How did it feel to keep your attention on this?
5:40	<p>Check Out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciations • In three words or less, how are you feeling?

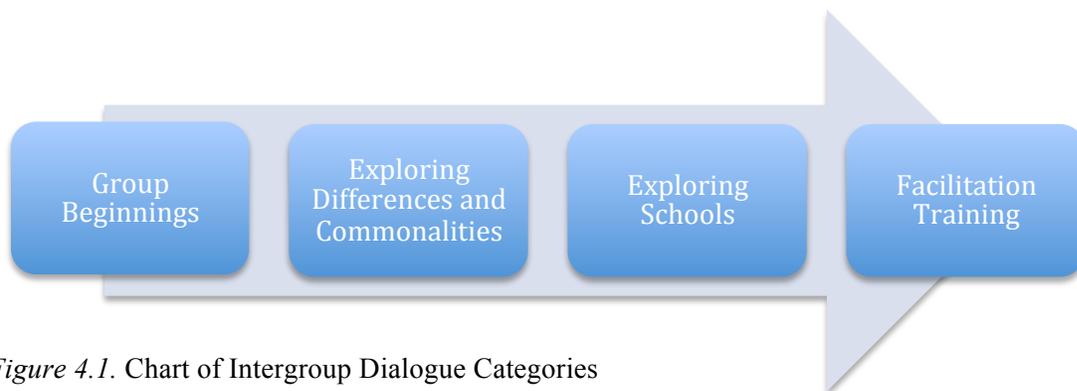


Figure 4.1. Chart of Intergroup Dialogue Categories

Group Beginnings: Building Relationships

In the beginning of the semester, we spent a lot of time building rapport and getting to know each other. We started the first class by having a discussion on the difference between dialogue and debate. We really wanted our students to understand that dialogue is not an absolute and is not about having the right answer. We talked about not having one winner in dialogue, as is the case in debate. We stressed that dialogue is not combative, but rather a collaborative enterprise where we attempt to find common ground and understandings, including different understandings. Additionally, instead of critiquing one's position we tried to look at an issue or perspectives from another's point of view as well as our own.

One of the other things we did during our first class session was to begin building relations and trust by having students share their life stories. Students took a few minutes to chart out their life stories by creating a timeline of salient life experiences. They were encouraged to think about whether and when race was present. They then shared their stories with the class. This provided students an opportunity to get to know each other better and to begin to open up to one another. This process required a willingness to be vulnerable with the hopes of creating a space where students felt they could share their perspectives honestly.

During the first class session, we also took time to develop group norms by asking students what they needed to share openly and honestly in the space. On chart paper, they wrote such things as confidentiality, amnesty, and lack of judgment. This was important, because we wanted students to recognize that they were a part of this process.

All of these methods helped to create an environment where students could share and take risks. It was the beginning of forming bonds and ultimately relationships with one another. It is important for students to develop relationships and trust with one another; it is equally important for the facilitators to do the same.

After each dialogue session, Michael and I would sit down in a chair or on top of the tables, take a deep sigh, and say, “How are you?” We were exhausted, but it was important to check in with how the session made us feel. Facilitating a conversation about race for 2 hours can be heavy work, so it was important to debrief on what had happened, on our interactions, and on the direction we needed to go in the next session.

Below I analyze a debriefing session, one that demonstrated how we worked through our feelings. This included our sensitivity to each others’ perspectives, which we do not always appreciate, how we checked in with one another, and how we thought about adjusting for the next dialogue session. This debriefing session took place after a session that was powerful (IGD session 6). It was the first session where the students drove the discussion with little intervention from us.

Debrief Session 10/15/2015 – 6 pm. (Class Session 6)

Natasha: I think a lot of the examples were with Black students or African Americans. I always feel torn with wanting to share my perspective or share a Black perspective and then being a facilitator and not being that token Black person that speaks for my race.

There were times I wanted to elaborate or jump in, but I felt that they did a pretty good job. If Lila said something, Mai was able to give her a really good answer that you or I would have given. And Brooklyn, I felt like she and Mai did a really good job, helping some of the White folks. . . . I felt like a lot of them were listening, more than any other dialogue session we've had, people were engaged. . . .

Michael: I do think it's helpful, that triad of Nicole, Rachel, and the rest of the suburban group and Sydney in there too, we have different white experiences. . . .

Natasha: I think it was one of the best dialogue sessions we had with them personally.

Many students in our teacher education program came from the suburbs and had "traditional" families with two heterosexual parents. Many came from economically and academically privileged backgrounds. We also had a few students who did not fit those criteria because they had divorced parents or were working long hours to pay for part of their tuition because their parents could not. As a result, we had different White perspectives in the class. We then talked about some of the conversations that came up in the class and the risks that some of our students took. Leo was one student who was honestly sharing his experience as a Mexican who was often the target of discrimination. This then led to a conversation about how we (Michael and I) were doing, more especially, how I was feeling as the only Black person in the dialogue and what we could do to support each other.

Natasha: I didn't realize how impacted I was until Leo started sharing. It's overwhelming to think about it, that it happens all the time . . . But I'm happy with this class [session].

Michael: How are you?

Natasha: I'm good, I really am. I don't have specific . . . lots of emotions, and none are bad, none of them are negative. . . . They handled it well [pause]. Today was the first day I felt Black, or rather felt "out" in terms of my race. Not like I haven't before. . . . if that makes sense?

Michael: Yeah, it does. In terms of co-facilitating, what would be useful around that or is there anything I can be doing differently as a co-facilitator?

Natasha: Yeah, I dunno. I was thinking about that. You said something and I thought that would be a good example of Michael saying "oh Natasha blah blah blah," but then I reminded myself, that's not what we do in IGD because we talk about our own experiences not others . . . I dunno the answer to that. I'm going to have to really think about that.

Michael: There have been moments when I've been like, oh, we have this interaction, and I could say this, but I do think it would be weird for me to share for you but that it's not for you to share for me. I wonder if we could say, in the name of transparency, if you have that thought again, you could just say, "Can I share?", and I will say yes—I promise I will. I wonder how we are modeling our relationship a little bit.

Natasha: Good point and I forgot about that, if we are trying to have them do the same thing. I would say we did that more in the beginning, in the first few weeks, and I feel I am pulling back a little bit and I don't know where that's coming from and I need to think through that. . . . But we should focus on that maybe the next time we meet and plan and flesh the next session out a little bit more.

Michael: There is something about sharing stories. I didn't want to say it today 'cause I didn't want to shut anybody down, but there is the piece that we are making an agreement

in this space to share with each other and I usually say which I haven't yet, that it takes generosity on the part people of Color to be willing to share their stories with White people for our own benefit and knowledge and growth and it takes courage for White people to also share and take that risk and worry about being seen as racist and that comes from building and community and relationships with each other, and people of Color don't owe White people their stories.

This interchange then led into a conversation about readings that we could give students to dig deeper to get them to think critically about privilege and meritocracy, since these were issues that came up in class that students were beginning to tackle.

Natasha: No, that's a good point. Do you think there are any articles or anything quick to give them to read? I really think—the one White privilege piece that I read recently felt it could be useful for some of them, maybe not all of them, but in terms of the feeling guilty. The bike one.

Michael: That's one that I sent to Marilyn.

Natasha: I think that could be really useful. . . . Not to trivialize what we are doing, but I think it will hit what Sydney was saying and Mai in terms of we are not saying you don't have to work hard . . . but these are the benefits you get.

Michael: I wonder if we can post that, and the other one I read and sent to Marilyn was from the African American teacher talking about the White teachers in her building bringing the Black students into her room to be disciplined. And I was trying to think if this will raise or lower their defensiveness. But the last part of it is specific and really tangible. I don't know if it works for next week but somewhere along the line it may be useful

Natasha: I didn't feel it was right to talk about in this particular class, but when Nicole talked about how her teachers treated her as a White teacher in terms thinking about culturally relevant teaching and the reason why some of your students may not receive things the way you want them to receive it is because you have two different identities and you're bringing your identities or norms into the classroom, and she touched on it a little bit but I just didn't feel I could go back to it, I guess. Other thoughts?

Michael: I just think they went to good places today. I think it's useful to have a couple White people who are willing to be honest about "I just don't know and I feel defensive about this," or whatever you feel. I also think, because I think that's good—this didn't feel heavy to me, and then, it took me a while to notice that it was heavy for some of them and for you and me was like, this is amazing!

Natasha: It was amazing.

Michael: But I wasn't clueing in to it being emotional for other people because I'm at a point where I'm like, YES! This is amazing. So I need to watch that 'cause I don't think I'm tracking emotionally very well.

This debriefing session was eye opening for Michael as well; her excitement at finally having White people talk about whiteness was one of her major goals for IGD. Having the students finally interact and discuss whiteness blind-sided her a little so that she did not recognize the heaviness of the dialogue session. Without each other and our interaction, I am not sure if she would have picked up on this. These conversations kept us honest and held us accountable to what we were noticing and doing in the space as facilitators.

Natasha: I don't know if it's for me as a Black person who has so many White friends and I've seen where they are uncomfortable, such as when they are at an all-Black party

or an all Latino event, something so I feel I am very in tune with if they are uncomfortable. That's the only thing I can attribute it to or—yes, and the fact that as a Black person who has been in a space where I am the only Black person and knowing how that feels, I am very sensitive to that, or aware.

Michael: Yeah, the context to the times where I have been the only White person, the first several times that has happened to me was specifically at racial justice conferences and retreats. So it had a context, and as I have had people of Color in my life in terms of friendships and being the only White person in a social situation, I think by the time that was happening to me, I was like . . . this is totally fine! I could contextualize my own discomfort if it came up.

Natasha: I think I have so many White friends, who though they are not opposed to this work, they are not immersed in it, and I don't want to say I'm protective, but pretty conscious of it. I see Mai in me; she doesn't want to step on people's toes and she does not want make people uncomfortable because she herself has been in that situation. I could tell when Lila got defensive. I could—

Michael: That feels easier for me and I feel I can read Sydney pretty easily. I feel I have felt it in previous weeks, and today I just, and part of it is where I'm at, too. I think it came up—as we talked about the reflections, for me, when I hear this, or read their reflections, I'm like, they are being White! This is the stuff we want to come up, but because I'm not the target of racism, it's not hard on me, other than to start thinking of the interventions or the ways we can start talking about it. But the whiteness is not targeting me so, you know...

[overlapping talking]

Natasha: Which might be why I've been. . .

Michael: Which may be why I may shut down your . . . when you're like this is really hard for you to read and I'm like, not me! And I don't mean it dismissively, but I've been aware of that for a few weeks and not wanting to negate your experience.

Natasha: 'Cause some of them are hard for me to read and some of them, I'm like, ugh, you don't get it! And I know you have this patience level with them, you get it, but for me it feels like they're not moving anywhere and that's hard. So I guess today felt good because I felt like we are moving somewhere.

Prior to this dialogue session, Michael and I had discussed the reflections. I often struggled reading through the White lens that informed their writing. It felt like they were not growing in their knowledge of racial injustice and that they were not gaining an understanding of their whiteness. While I recognized that, developmentally, they were not there yet, their reflections barely scratched the surface and were rarely critical. I would share my frustrations with Michael, and she would often say the written reflections were okay and that the responses were typical. She did not notice anything out of the ordinary. However, during our debriefing session, she mentioned that she recognized that she shut me down sometimes when I tried to express how I felt about the reflections. This was something I was not attuned to, but rather chalked up to second-guessing myself, thinking *maybe they are not that bad, maybe I was reading too much into them*. It was not until this debriefing session that I came to understand *why* they were difficult for me and not her—she is not the target of racism. I am. My defenses were raised when reading their thoughts on issues that impacted my life on a regular basis.

During the class session that day, students talked about race in a dichotomous fashion—Whites and Blacks, which at times filled me with tension as I tried to negotiate whether to share

my perspective as a Black female. This tension sometimes caused me to retract or say little in the dialogue in fear that students would become defensive. During our debriefing session, I was able to deconstruct why I was filled with tension. This was important to acknowledge and come back to, as it could prove to be a missed opportunity to share with my students.

Conclusion

The four-stage model of intergroup dialogue provided Michael and me a good starting place to think about how to structure IGD in teacher education. In order for students to take risks and share honestly, they needed to feel comfortable with one another. That required building relationships and establishing trust in the classroom. Taking time to do that in the beginning weeks of the semester (and constantly coming back to it) was just as important as the content we discussed. Having a semi-structured schedule also provided students with consistency and knowledge of what they could expect each week.

Planning was crucial to the work that we did—deciding which articles we wanted the students to read, which questions we wanted them to think and write about. Ultimately we wanted to provide students with resources that would guide their thinking in order to generate a fruitful conversation. Coordinating with our participants' social studies instructor took back-and-forth emails and conversations. We were thoughtful about what we wanted our students to read for dialogue that would support them, and which articles and readings their social studies instructor would assign them that would enhance and carry on the conversation on White privilege and whiteness more broadly. During our debrief sessions we discussed readings that could be useful, readings that could potentially raise students' defenses, and readings that would provide tangible teaching strategies.

The above transcript from our debriefing session highlights what Michael and I did every week after class to share our thoughts and sit with our emotions. Fostering a relationship between the facilitators is what made this dialogue course unique. Just as we asked students to share their thoughts and sit with their emotions, we did the same both during the class sessions and during our debriefing sessions. Debriefing sessions were also important for planning. They provided us a time to assess what had happened in the dialogue, examine the impact, and decide what we needed to do in the next session. These sessions also provided us time to discuss the affects the dialogue had on one another other and ways we could support each other as facilitators.

CHAPTER FIVE

Case Studies

As mentioned in Chapter Three, I interviewed five students at the beginning and the end of the research project who became my case study participants. I identified 8 students of the 17 who were diverse representatives of the group, using gender, racial identity, demonstrated participation levels in the dialogue sessions, and both students who requested to be in the cohort and those who were placed in it. Out of the 17 students, 2 of them were males, both of whom I interviewed. Five students of the 8 agreed to be interviewed at the beginning and the end of the research study.

The five case study participants included two students of Color, an Asian female (Mai) and a Latino male (Leo) who grew experiencing many racialized situations in their communities and K-12 schooling, a White male (Eric) who grew up in a small rural town and served in the military before coming back to college to become a teacher, one White female (Olivia) who grew up in a fairly white context until coming to college, and a second White female (Rachel) who grew up in a rural area. These students had different experiences prior to the IGD dialogue and their sharing within the dialogue group influenced them in different ways.

Mai

Mai is of Asian American heritage and identified as Korean American. She grew up in a suburb of a major city. Mai was one of the few Asian American students in her teacher education program. She admitted that she felt like an outsider who did not fit in with the rest of her peers in the program. She often attributed it to her race and cultural background, which differed significantly from the majority of her education classmates. She had deep ethnic and cultural roots, and that was demonstrated in many of the things she said and the extracurricular activities

in which she participated. This may be in part because of the racial discrimination she vividly remembered from her childhood and adolescence. During her initial interview, her written reflections, and the dialogue sessions, Mai shared powerful stories about the visible racial discrimination she experienced and the many stereotypes that had befallen her as the “model minority”⁹.

Mai said in her initial interview that she was motivated to take the dialogue class: “I want more people to know more about the racial inequalities that we have. So I hope to share more about that.” Mai wanted to share with her White peers some of the past racial incidents she had experienced. She felt there were misconceptions and inaccurate perceptions about those who identify as Asian American heritage, and she hoped that sharing her experiences would help dispel some of that. Following is part of the interview session that took place on September 8, 2014, and includes a few examples of Mai’s racialized experiences.

Mai: I remember my freshmen year, when I wore my letters to class [sorority letters] and people would be like, I have never heard of that, what is that, and I would tell them it’s an Asian interest sorority and they would give me a weird look.

Natasha: Okay.

Mai: And then the whole thing about my sister, she came home crying from her dialogue group where she was talking about multicultural Greek fraternities and sororities and that made me sad that people thought that way.

Natasha: Thought what way?

⁹ The belief is that Asians as a minority group have successfully “made it” in the United States through hard work and education and without special assistance. They serve as a model for other people of Color to follow. This portrayal has been a major theme in media since the middle of the 1960’s (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Wing, 2007; Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998).

Mai: Oh sorry, how they think multicultural Greeks [sororities and fraternities] are not necessary. Especially the Black sororities and fraternities, they go so far back and then I think a lot of people don't know. The same concept for the Asian sorority applies to my high school life. . . . I always thought it was strange that Caucasian people make fun of ethnic groups for hanging out together. Like my prom group senior year was all-Asian. And then people would say "oh aha. It's like an all-Asian prom group." And I never understood why. No one makes fun of all-Caucasian prom groups, so "Why are you making fun of an Asian prom group?" Even Asian people will fall for that. My Asian friend told me, [laughs] "Oh haha your prom group is all-Asian." And I said, "Why would you say that? And he was "Oh, I'm sorry; I don't know why I said that." And it's so weird because he is Asian. I feel like something has been ingrained in our heads that it's bad that ethnic groups hang out together and that we should all assimilate or something. Yeah. My high school life was the first time I experienced a lot of racism. . . . The one that shocked me was when I was in gym class; I didn't really have many friends in gym class, because it was mostly boys in gym class because the girls signed up for dance class. These guys were like "There is going to be a party at Mai's house" and I was just laughing along and they said "Oh yeah, if you want to get in, you have to get your eyes fixed and bring your report card to get approved to get in." And I was like "What?" I didn't even realize and I didn't tell the gym teacher because I didn't realize that was racist.

Mai made a very distinct comment about when her peers made fun of her Asian prom group: "*No one makes fun of all-Caucasian prom groups.*" This demonstrated that Mai was critically thinking about the way that people of Color, namely Asian Americans, are viewed in comparison

to the White majority in similar situations. Mai also wrote about this story the week before in her written reflection. She admitted that she was so shocked that she did not speak for the rest of the class period. It is an experience that stayed with her to that day. She wrote, “to this day I wish that I had informed the teacher.” In her interview, I probed a bit further.

Natasha: Is it just that it didn’t sit well with you? You didn’t know that was racism? What were you thinking in that moment?

Mai: When I first heard that, why would they have to bring their report card? Why would they have to get their eyes fixed? And I thought, oh, those are Asian stereotypes and then I was like that isn’t funny. And they were Caucasian boys. I think the very first time I experienced racism, though, was when I was in sixth grade, middle school. I was at a Caucasian girlfriend’s house. She went in to go to the bathroom and her brother came out and he said, “Why are you playing on our trampoline, go back to China, you chink.” I think at the time, I was like what is a chink? And he said it in such a mean way that I knew I should be hurt so I felt hurt even though I didn’t know what it meant and then when I got older I learned. . . .

Natasha: Yeah and it sounds like it stayed with you. . . .

Mai: That was the first time I heard someone say something so meanly and aggressively to me. At first I was not offended, I’m not Chinese but then I was like it doesn’t matter—he was directing it to me with hate and that was the thing that shocked me.

This, too, Mai had shared in her written reflections before bringing them up in the interview. In the interview, she explained her stories in greater detail, and I was able to probe how the experiences made her feel. Her racialized experiences may begin to explain *why* Mai surrounds

herself primarily with her racial group. To her, she had no reason to surround herself with the White majority, with whom she has had negative past experiences.

From this interview, it was evident that Mai had close ties to other Asians; attending prom with other Asian heritage peers in high school, starting a Korean club, and joining an Asian interest sorority in college. These all indicated that her culture played a major role in her identity formation.

Mai recognized that she had been, and at times still felt negativity towards Whites and she was hoping to open her mind to what they might have to say. Her comments showed the complexity of her racial understandings and attitudes. It was obvious that Mai thought very deeply about racial inequality and how she had been a target of racial insults as well as how she herself had biases against Whites.

Mai: Yes, my mom is from Korea. My dad is from Korea . . . they raised me with very Asian customs. Being very strict, not letting me go to sleepovers. I think the way I was raised definitely has to do with the person I am now. . . . Because I grew up in a place where my race was so apparent to me. I had, maybe not that I had no choice, but felt I had no choice but to be friends with the Asian people. It's interesting, because when there were Asians who did become friends with White people, we would call them whitewashed. I don't know how I feel about that because sometimes I would talk with my sister, "Oh yeah that girl joined the *PanHellenic* sorority, she is so whitewashed," and I kinda catch myself and I'm like, is something wrong with that? But I think it's that I feel bitter that the girl assimilated and let go of her culture. I dunno, that makes me sound so mean but like . . . [laughs].

Natasha: No, you're human.

Mai: I get most angry when I see “whitewashed Asians.” I get most resentful that they have let go of their heritage.

Natasha: Do you think that’s because of how you were raised?

Mai I think it’s because I grew up with it and it’s such a part of me, my customs, eating certain foods on birthdays, and I think how could anyone just throw that away.

Calling Asians who associated with White classmates “whitewashed” demonstrated this bias. It bothered her because she felt that they should hang out with own “kind.” What was refreshing about Mai was that she recognized this and acknowledged her own prejudice.

Mai’s high school was majority White, and it was where she started to notice blatant differences and where her racial struggles grew. It left her feeling lost and unsure. Her stories may lend insight into why it was so important for her to share as an Asian who had experienced racial discrimination and blatant racism. To her, she believed many did not realize or think that Asians experience racial discrimination because they are seen as the model minority. Her stories began to contradict this notion.

When in high school, she and other Asian heritage students were pulled out during advisory periods to talk about their feelings in the form of a dialogue that was facilitated by the advisor and a teacher. She never understood clearly why some Asian heritage students were pulled out and why some were not, but she did believe the experience of being in a dialogue group helped. In her interview she discussed the impact of being a part of the dialogue group in high school.

Mai: I don’t know why I was put in it, but I thought it helped so much. Because we would talk about experiences we had in the schools. Like have you ever faced racism or things like that. It was so helpful just to talk about it.

Natasha: Why do you think that was? You said that it was so beneficial to just be able to talk about those experiences.

Mai: Well, it was because there were not a lot of Asian people in the high school and when we were the victims of these racist incidents. . . . I just held it inside, I didn't really tell anyone, and when I did tell someone, like a teacher nearby, he would just say, "Oh, I'm sorry." So it helped to talk to students who went through the same things as me. It was kinda of like a rant. It was helpful to just rant. I still don't understand what that was. Maybe it was experimental but with high school. But it started freshman year, every advisory period, which is the first period of the day. Certain Asian students were pulled out of random advisories and were put in a room and this advisor asked us to share about our experiences, which was fine because I liked talking about it. And, yeah, sophomore year it continued. But I think junior year it became an afterschool thing where people could come if they want to, and I think that was fun, too, because I could bring my friends and we could talk about it.

Here we see that a space to discuss racial discrimination was useful for Mai and her peers. It was so influential on her that she went on to form a Korean club and began to truly surround herself with those who shared her ethnicity. This hints at the need for an authentic space to dialogue with others about the experiences they have.

Mai: Yeah, because in middle school I had friends of different ethnicities. But starting from high school it [race] was so blatant. You could see in a classroom everyone was White. It was just me who was Asian or like me and one other Black person. And when we were talking about race issues, like it became really apparent. Like my social studies class freshman year, if we were talking about how China gives the U.S. Americans guns

for war, they would look at me. Like why are you looking at me? [laughs] Like I don't understand, so starting from there I felt different from other people. That's why I founded Korean club and people who understand what I am going through. (Mai, interview, 9/18/2014)

She found a group of people who had similar experiences to her, students who had also been the target of racist comments and students who shared similar cultural backgrounds. Starting Korean Club was difficult though, and presented its own challenges. In her written reflection she wrote about her experience advertising for the club. While she and her friend were putting up flyers, two White students from the lacrosse team "passed by, snickered, and asked loudly, 'Korean club? You guys gonna eat dog?'" She admitted that she and her friend looked at each other in shock. "We had not experienced blatant racism such as that before so it took a minute for us both to register what they had said." After Korean Club had been formed, she asked a friend who sat on the Social Service Board at her school if she would like to come to the club. She wrote vividly what her friend said that day:

She paused and slowly replied, "Well, I don't know if it would be awkward for me to go because it's all Korean people." My heart sank and I thought later when I exited the room, *What do you think it feels like for me when I walk the hallways of this school?* I couldn't help but feel disappointed that a member of the Social Service Board, an organization that advertises helping all different types of people in need, could be so close-minded. (Written reflection, week 1)

Mai stated in our first interview that she hoped that IGD would change her perception of Whites that seemed to have grown from her K-12 experiences. Collectively, the many negative experiences that Mai had with race lends some understanding as to why she had such strong, and

sometimes negative, thoughts about Whites. Mai, in tune with her emotions on race, hoped to dispel some of these negative thoughts. Through an exercise known as appreciations, I witnessed this happen as Mai broke down some of her perceptions of Whites.

By the midpoint in the semester, Michael and I introduced appreciations to our students in one of our dialogue sessions. Appreciations are meant to be a counterweight to some of the heaviness that can come up when we have a dialogue about race. We asked students to appreciate the person sitting next to them—a genuine appreciation that goes beyond a compliment. We wanted students to think about how the person next to them created something unique in the dialogue space and the way that person added value to the community. Though students found this a bit uncomfortable at first, this was the moment I saw Mai break down some of the guardedness she had toward Whites.

Mai to Rachel: Rachel, before I came into IGD, I was really scared of IGD because as a person of Color, a minority, I had a lot of preconceived notions of what majority people would think. I was really scared actually and I think on day one there was some confusion about why do people of diversity get special treatment and Rachel raised her hand and said, “well people from my home town got a scholarship too.” Just talking with Rachel, she was telling me how willing she was. I think it was the first time I saw a White person who wanted to learn and it completely shattered my fears. So I appreciate you. (IGD session week 9, 11/5/14)

This was a powerful moment in the session. Many students were crying and affected by Mai’s words. It was also a turning point for Mai; she stated in her final reflection how strongly intergroup dialogue impacted her. “I am glad that I had the experience in Intergroup Dialogue because my preconceived notions of my non-minority classmates unwilling to understand and

learn were completely shattered.” Mai walked away that summer surprised that she would feel “safe, happy, and stimulated” in a dialogue with complete strangers, most of whom were White.

Leo

Leo was one of the few males in his teacher education program, and he was the only Latino male in our dialogue course. Leo was born in the United States and self-identifies as a Mexican who grew up in the suburbs of a major city.

Assumptions: Language and academic discrimination. Leo shared many stories in his interviews, in his written reflections, and in class about how he had been the target of police and language discrimination, and how he had felt “othered” because of his racial and ethnic identity. His stories were filled with complexity.

They assumed I was an ESL student. So they pulled me out of class and when I was passing all the exams, they were becoming curious as to why I was doing so well. . . . they had to compare my scores with Caucasian students and I actually did better than them, the majority [members] of the class and they were like “Aren’t you from Mexico?” and I said “No, I was born here.” I remember the look on my teacher’s face when she realized that she made a terrible assumption. They assumed all the Hispanic students were immigrants or illegal. (Initial interview, 9/9/14)

Leo recognized that many of his teachers associated Mexicans with low-performance. Asking him if he was from Mexico suggested an implicit teacher bias about the academic achievement of students who *look* Mexican. Additionally, it led Leo to believe that children who looked like him were thought to be immigrants. Leo stated that these assumptions were continually evident growing up.

We also were told not to speak in another language other than English in our elementary school, which I found very interesting, mostly towards Hispanics because a lot of us like to speak Spanish.

This bothered Leo because students who spoke Spanish were singled out for talking in their native and/or home language. Other students, such as the Polish children, were not singled out for speaking other languages. Leo then added that the Latino students were told not to speak in Spanish in school, because it was assumed they were cheating or saying or doing something bad. They are often told not to speak in Spanish because their native language is viewed not as an asset but as a negative (Nieto, 2001).

You know, we are kids. I don't understand why I can't speak a language that I've been encouraged to speak at home. It's very conflicting ideas so I mean we kept doing it and eventually they kinda just gave up. We didn't know it at the time but we were fighting them on it. (Initial interview, 9/9/14)

On the other end of this spectrum were teachers who utilized Leo's understanding of the Spanish language when it was beneficial for *them*.

I remember sharing with the group that I was a translator for my preschool when I was 3, 4 years old. They would pull me out of class, tell me can you communicate with this parent, can you translate this letter into Spanish for us so we can send it home to these parents specifically. I recall . . . they were very heavy on assuming who was who or who was capable of what. I remember I was classified as an ELL student. I wasn't . . . I was born here. (Initial interview, 9/9/14)

Leo also wrote in his reflection about this notion of teachers calling on him to translate and speak in Spanish when they needed to communicate with parents. In his writing he went on to say that

he also served as a translator during elementary school and junior high for recent Spanish-speaking immigrants, to help students with their schoolwork. Both of these examples demonstrate the usefulness of his Spanish language when it benefited the teacher.

Leo also talked a lot about how people made assumptions and how frustrated and sad that made him. He reported that he also felt he had to dress in a particular way in order for people to look at him differently and take him seriously.

Yeah, I sometimes get that [I'm an immigrant] unless they get to know me. It's more an assumption. People just assume based on appearance what I am. I realize that. As you can see today, I am wearing glasses, shaven, haircut. And this is what I do to get a better impression, which is, I find that interesting, because I do that, I clean up as best I can to make that first impression and I feel people don't judge me as much when I look like this right now. However, when I get lazy, and I don't shave, and I wear contacts and my hair is longer, I notice people look at me differently. (Initial interview, 9/9/14)

Leo offered a few examples from high school where people made assumptions about him. He spoke about how people in high school and college began to see him as “the exception” to his ethnic identity group. In both his initial interview and in his second written reflection he recounted one of the most frustrating days of his life. It occurred in his high school psychology class, where he and his classmates were having a discussion about diversity in the school and the various ethnicities that were represented. In addition to sharing this story in a dialogue session and during his initial-interview, he also wrote about it in his reflection:

Two Caucasian girls in my class began making very racist comments. They said things such as “the Mexican kids just hang out in the front hallway and holler at girls who pass

by. All they do is speak in Spanish and I know they talk about us. They always dress ghetto and never dress in real clothes.” (Written reflection 2, 9/16/14)

He reminded his classmates that he, too, was Mexican, and they responded with “You are one of the good ones.” He described being so enraged that his teacher had to intervene in order to stop a controversy from occurring. Leo recognized that these were stereotypes and that his classmates were not thinking more deeply about *why* the Mexican students may have been hanging out in the front hall. In his interview he further explained it was because most of the Mexican students had ESL classes in that wing. His classmates also did not recognize that just like there was a Mexican “hall,” the Whites in his school had a “hall,” as did the Black and Asian heritage students. I question whether Leo, in spite of how upset the comment made him, had in fact been influenced by how he came across to others.

In his final interview Leo talked about the benefit of being a Latino male teaching in a bilingual Spanish classroom. He shared that he often had conversations with students about racism and discrimination and how they were real and present but that his students also needed to know who they were and not let their ethnic appearance define who they are but rather their actions. This was an interesting comment since he himself took such care in his own appearance, to shield him from what other people might say about him.

Leo also shared how he was treated by one of his social studies teachers in high school. Leo felt that her initial assumptions about who he was influenced her treatment of him in the class.

So my freshman year, my first semester or the first half of the year, I had a social studies teacher and she *loved* me. She was like you are awesome. She was a great teacher and second semester I was heartbroken 'cause they [the school] moved me to the other social

studies class. . . . and I was like okay, well maybe she'll be cool. And I could tell from the instant she looked at me . . . and I remember, I sat down near the wall and maybe the second seat in the row or something and everyone settled down and she is going through attendance and she gets to me and she's like "Who are you?" because a lot of the class she had last semester was in that class again and I was like the new kid and I knew absolutely no one in this class. . . . I didn't know the rules of the class 'cause I was new and I was the only one sitting in my row. . . . And she looks at me and says, "No, you can't sit there." Where would you like me to sit? Not the desk in the front of the class or in the middle or anything or in the middle, the one in the back of the class. And I was like, okay. That went on for a while. . . . Maybe like a week, I didn't say anything in class, I didn't know anyone, and I didn't feel comfortable in there. And then she asked a question . . . absolutely no one in the class was answering it correctly, she was getting frustrated and I was just like okay, I'll take a shot, she doesn't like me anyway, so I raised my hand and answered her question exactly the way she wanted and after that moment I could tell it changed because she was like, why are you sitting in the back row, you should come sit up here and I was like don't give me that. You had that notion before and then now that I'm answering your questions perfectly you are like maybe there is some hope or she thought maybe he is not what I thought he was. It was very. I dunno, it's burned into my mind when that happened. Going into teaching I never want to do that to a student. Just look at them and judge them. I want to be able to give everyone a clean slate.

This personal narrative impacted how he plans to interact with his future students. Leo shared a lot of stories from his childhood, similar to Mai. Their racial and ethnic identities influenced how other people saw them.

Leo gave a lot of himself in the dialogue course. There was a generosity on his part to provide other students a glimpse into his lived experiences, which were all different from theirs. He had experienced blatant racism and discrimination throughout his life. It was not until the dialogue course, however, that he realized just *how* much he had experienced and how vastly different his life experiences were from many, if not all, of his peers in this program. However, Leo shared *his* experiences, not those of all Latinos. Michael and I structured the dialogue so that Leo did not have to speak for anyone but himself and told him he did not have to share anything he did not want to share. The point of our instruction was to foster a space where he felt he *could* share. But sharing does not come without consequences; it is a draining process and one that left him feeling somewhat disheartened at the end of the dialogue course. Here is an excerpt from his final reflection:

I grew up in a place where I really was the minority and so it was difficult to fully relate to any of my peers. I could tell that I was different growing up and I would get treated differently from my peers, but I never quite understood why. In this class I was asked to reflect on my past experiences and share them with the class. I realized fairly soon that my experiences were completely different from others around me. I feel like the one that I could relate to the most was Natasha, the other individual of Color in the classroom. It was incredible to see that everyone in the classroom did not experience the same sense of discrimination in their lifetime and did not really have to worry about race in their daily lives. I realized through this dialogue that I was treated differently all of my life because

of my race and ethnicity and that impacted who I became today. It became more apparent the more I shared in this class that many people in my life expected me to fail or did not think I would succeed in life. I felt like I always had to prove myself and this class helped me realize that this constant seeking of approval continues today. I still worry about race to this day and it affects every aspect of my life whether I want it to or not.

Leo recognized the weight of racial discrimination that he experienced by seeing just how much his peers did not share his experiences. During our sixth class session, we provided students time to deeply reflect and think about their racial identity in regard to oppression, and where they noticed racism happening. Leo sadly stated, “I realized that racism was a lot more a part of my life than I realized,” before he began sharing his racialized experiences with the class. Leo continued:

I find myself feeling a little hopeless after this IGD group because of these realizations. I have been judged my entire life and I know that it will not stop any time soon. Race and ethnicity influence how someone may be treated even though they had no say in which they wanted to be or what they were born into. It is an unfair life but it is a realization that I have come to accept. The best I can do is embrace who I am and hope to go through life undisturbed by the race issues that constantly surround us. (Final reflection, 12/19/14)

Leo did not just feel hopeless at the end of the dialogue, but he was a bit frustrated and angry that his classmates had yet heard the stories of the lives that many people of Color experience. Here is an excerpt from his final interview:

. . . they were shocked and because they’d never heard something like that before I’m hoping that it kind of opened their eyes about what it was actually like or what a different experience was like from their own, even if they came from a small town or a big town it

would give them a little of insight. . . . I mean there was that sense of like anger that why am I talking if no one can relate to me. . . . Because, I know when I would look to you you'd [Natasha] nod and you'd be like, yeah, I know exactly what you're talking about; I could see you understood, but when I looked around, they kind of had blank faces when it came to responses other than shock or like oh my goodness that happened or I'm so sorry. Sometimes I'd get that sympathy look and it's like, no, I don't want your sympathy, I want you to be aware of what's going on.

Leo realized that he was “teaching” his classmates in many ways. This heaviness that falls on people of Color is one of the detriments to engaging in race dialogue work. And Leo was in a unique position in the course as one of two male students and the only Latino male. Leo shared that having me in the dialogue helped. His words also confirm a stance about dialogue work that there be a person of Color in a facilitative role so that a student can “see” someone who looks like them, and though I am not Latino, some experiences of Blacks and Latinos are similar. Here are more excerpts from his final interview:

Leo: I would say that some of those notions were reinforced in the sense that I can just tell you know by the facial expressions when I was sharing my own experiences of what happened, the shock that came across people's faces. That just told me that they'd never considered that and never even thought that was possible or thought that happened in the world. I remember you shared a story about your husband, how he is always cautious when he is driving because the police are always watching, and when you were telling that story I was like I couldn't agree more, you know that's real life and I know that upset you incredibly.

Natasha: Um-hum.

Leo: I was like, well, I know where she's coming from; I know exactly what she's talking about, but when I looked around the room nobody really understood what that was like and what that kind of meant.

Like Mai, Leo shared that he wanted his classmates to be aware of the treatment of people of Color because they did not all know about the prevalence of racial disparities: "People in our cohort were unaware and just by hearing that [my story], hopefully that kind of makes them think about the way they react and the way they're treating others around them" (Final interview, 4/21/14). A number of participants indicated that Leo's numerous stories changed their perspective of race and ethnicity, making them more aware that racial inequality does exist.

Eric

Eric is a White male who grew up in a small town and has a strong military background. His background and military experiences have inevitably shaped his ideologies about race and ethnicity. He acknowledged that race was salient and difficult to ignore. Being a member of the military opened Eric's eyes to things of which he was previously unaware. He admitted to witnessing discrimination of his Black friends. But in many ways Eric met race differences with resistance. He sat in this tension between knowing and accepting racial inequality while still demonstrating color-blind perspectives. In some ways Eric felt it was a waste of time to talk about race-related issues. He stated in his first interview, "It's [race] talked about enough, it's just not talked about in the right ways." When asked if he thought we make a big deal about race, he unhesitatingly said yes.

We put it [race] into things that don't need to be there. . . . A lot of times it doesn't need to be there. You can put it into . . . all shootings that have happened with police officers. It should be police officer, civilian, this is what happened. It shouldn't be Black versus

White anymore. I get tired of hearing it. And it's not because "oh, I'm getting profiled as a White kid," but I'm just getting tired of hearing this in general. If there is a problem, it's a problem with your police force and that civilian. It's not a problem with Black versus White and I wish America didn't look at it like that. That they would look at it like "why did this human do this to this human?" And not race. We do too much of "oh well, he killed him because he is Black." No. We don't know if he did that really. But that's what the media is gonna put out.

He mentioned that he thought many racial issues in society were the result of people from older generations and not so much with the younger generation today. Eric believed that the younger generation could handle the race conversation more, citing that different racial groups interact and talk more than people from older generations. According to Eric:

I just don't think *that* age group, the older people in America are ready for it. They are not ready. 'Cause they were brought up . . . I don't even want to imagine, the stories I heard in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, when a lot of them were growing up and racism was very, very alive, and even in the 80s when a lot of them were growing up they were telling me how alive it [racism] was, I feel like now we are starting to come out of that, you are starting to see the younger generation grow up and it's becoming less of an issue with us and I feel like a lot of the people who start issues are older.

This comment is interesting since many of the racial issues, such as police brutality, occur with Black men who are in the same age group as him—the same generation. However, he was talking from his vantage point as a White 20-something college student and not as a person of Color. The current Black Lives Movement is not being discussed solely within the older generation but has grown out of the current generation's activism. The older and younger

generations are both actively engaged in the current movement. It is possible that his belief that the older generation was not ready to handle a race conversation stemmed in part from his experience with a member of his family, whom he shared bluntly was racist. He offered an example of one member being angry for not receiving a job because it was given to a Black male. He admitted that since he realized how racist his relative was, their relationship had not been the same.

Eric admitted that acknowledging race was hard for him, namely racial profiling. In a dialogue session, he even mentioned how he himself was trained to racially profile in his past career. During our interview, he described racial discrimination with a bit of resignation.

It's hard. I mean seeing direct things happen to some of my friends. I can say . . . I feel like there are times I have been given privileges over others. One of my really good friends was African American, Aaron, that I really liked. . . . when he was here, we were just walking down the street and the cops pulled him over and said he looked like the guy who just robbed a liquor store a couple of minutes ago. And we were like "really"? He is dressed in a freakin' polo and khakis. He is dressed like really nice, just coming from this party and we're so confused and they were like you can go, but they made him sit on the sidewalk for so long. . . . They [the police] kept wanting me to leave to see what they could obviously do with him and I wasn't going to leave. Either way . . . those instances I've seen where they have woken up my eyes. I never see that in my town, you're never going to see that, a town of 600 people. Coming up here [college] and meeting more people and having more friends of different races and different backgrounds, I got to see it and I was like holy crap. Okay, I've taken a lot of things for granted in my life and maybe I shouldn't have, but seeing stuff like that first hand is kind of a wake-up call. And

I'm sure there are certain circumstances where a lot of people look at me and they are just like, oh, you are just a middle-class White kid you are probably fine and then you might judge the next person and say "oh, we don't know." [whispers] Working at a restaurant, when I bartended, people would judge people who came in because of the way they looked or because they had different clothes on. I mean it's weird, I dunno how to explain.

His response was noteworthy because he recognized that people got judged and profiled by the way they looked. He had seen it firsthand. His comment also suggests that he believed that because his friend who was dressed in a polo and khaki's that he should not have been accused of robbery. While he made a valid point that his friend probably should not have been questioned, part of his argument was because his clothing did not fit the typical stereotype of someone who robs a liquor store. However, Eric was able to see how a person of Color was treated in opposition to a White person. Yet, Eric vacillated when asked if he felt that he had privileges based on his own race and ethnicity. "I wouldn't say privileges we don't have, but I would say it's hard to look at certain things and wonder why it's getting . . . how do I explain . . ." He struggled with admitting the privilege that comes with being a White male. It was evident that he was trying here to make sense of the racial realities that he saw, as in the case with his African American friend, but he was not able to generalize what happened to his friend in a more systemic or problematic way. Eric described himself as having a privilege, as opposed to his friend, but later on in his interview when asked more directly if he had privilege, he vacillated. He was able to provide examples but found it difficult to acknowledge it as privilege.

Eric also reported that he believed that the media impacts how critical issues get portrayed and perceived by people. This came up in his first interview, but also in a makeup

reflection paper he wrote about Ferguson. When the Ferguson indictment was announced over the Thanksgiving break, Eric emailed Michael and me a paper about his outrage with the media and the violence occurring in St. Louis. Eric was very angry that the media only highlighted negative aspects of the United States and presented a very one-sided view of Ferguson. Unfortunately, Eric was not present in the dialogue session on Ferguson the week after. I offer his written reflection to demonstrate the complexity of Eric's thoughts on Ferguson.

Tonight is a crazy night for America. There is unrest in Ferguson, Missouri and I honestly can't say that I have ever been more disappointed in a community and group of people than I am watching this right now. I am very opposed to the media and how they often handle situations. I am extremely critical of this and you both know this. What I can't stand right now though is the fact that a select group of individuals are making an entire race look like complete morons. I am not racist. Not one bit. I can say though that this is the reason why people in America are still racist and think poorly upon certain races. This is sickening. . . . Lighting police cars on fire? Really? When did this become ok? FOR ANYONE? They are lighting their own community buildings on fire while other peaceful protestors are trying to stop them. I am all for the right to protest if you do it with respect. This is not respectful at all. I would guess that almost all of these people don't even know who Michael Brown was. They didn't talk to him. They didn't care about him. The family of Michael Brown says to do this peacefully. The President of the United States literally came on television and told these people not to do this. This is not America. This doesn't happen here. I get that this is isolated, but what the hell? I know I am sort of on a rant right now, but this is something that just can't be tolerated. The police officers were staying calm by all accounts and only reacted to what the protestors

did. This is a disgrace to the family and memory of Michael Brown. This is a disgrace for all of Ferguson. This is a disgrace to humanity. Do the people doing this not realize that they are simply making people around the country dislike them even more? I have zero respect for the individuals doing this. Absolutely, none!

This alone will spark so much racism in this country that it will be disgusting. People are going to start judging those who are involved and are going to associate them with an entire race. I hate that it is going to happen, but it is going to happen. A man just walked up to the CNN camera and yelled “F ____ CNN!” Half of the world just saw him do that. Half of the world just made a judgment that all African Americans are like him because of what he just did. People are making the decision around the world now that African Americans can’t be peaceful. They are saying that they can’t be trusted. I know this isn’t true. I know all of us know it really just isn’t true.

Eric seemed to care deeply about the perceptions that other people were going to have about the Black community as a result of the looting that occurred in response to the indictment decision. He was also upset about what other countries would think of us, which may in part come from his patriotic background and military experience. His response did illustrate a sense of sadness for the country as a whole and what that meant for subsequent race relations in our country.

I don’t know. All I can say right now is that I am sad. I am sad to see this happen in a country that I love dearly. A country that I was willing to put my life on the line for if needed. I get that people want to see what is going on and I totally love and respect and am glad I fought for their freedom to protest respectfully and peacefully. I just can’t be happy tonight. I can’t get myself to believe this is happening. I am sad for Michael

Brown and his family. No matter what happened that day, no one deserved to die. No matter what happened today, no one had the right to do what they are doing. Rant OVER.

I am with family right now. They are talking to me as I am typing this. I am going to tell you what they are saying in terms of race right now. "Typical." That is what everyone is saying. I just heard "I knew this would happen. Black people can't protest in peace ever." Do I like hearing this? No, I hate hearing this. I think it is disgusting. Everyone is going to have their own opinions though and because they are my family, I am not going to get into arguments with them as long as they remain peaceful about it. This is going to go on for hours though and this is going to make my family really change their opinions. They are going to think very poorly of Black people because of this. . . . I really just can't get over what I am seeing and feel that this story is ten times more important than anything that my family will say or feel. This city is in turmoil and it's sickening.

Disclaimer: I am not trying to say this is all African Americans, but from the last 2 hours that I have watched, all of the looting and fighting and things of that nature have been coming from African Americans. I know there are White, Latino, Black, Asian and many other races there doing the same, but that is saved for another day when I feel like bitching about the media. The problem right now is that these individuals know they are in the spotlight, and they didn't take the chance to show peaceful change. They ruined that. God bless those in Ferguson who are doing the right thing right now. I feel so bad for them because they aren't the ones who are doing this. This is people from outside the community doing this garbage. O'Reilly Auto parts is being looted right now as I close this rant...I can't even type anymore.

I have shared most of his reflection because his passion and anger jump off the paper when reading it. As a Black female scholar and facilitator of the IGD dialogue, I found it difficult to read. Even though he said that he recognized that it was not all African Americans and that he was not racist, his choice of words could be interpreted to mean otherwise. He positions himself in this reflection using such words as “them” and “these,” which is a way of “othering” another group of people. This coding can signal that another group is lacking or less than. I also question whether Eric used the media as a way of deflecting the saliency of race, by not recognizing the structural racism that stimulated the looting as well as owning his own privilege. These comments were often laced with defensiveness in order to prove that he was not racist, about which I assume he was sincere. This tension between knowing racism exists but failing to acknowledge privilege and systemic supports for racism was also evident in his initial interview when talking about police brutality: “It’s not that I’m racist in any way, but you do start to wonder why isn’t that [white on white crime] news, but the other one [white on black crime] is news. I dunno, it’s just weird.” He recognized that the media decides to highlight certain stories intentionally and that other crimes are happening that are just as noteworthy. However, his comments also suggested that he had strong feelings about this topic, so felt the need to reassure me that he was not racist.

While I do not at all suspect that he was, he described racist interactions as individualist and not as systemic problems that creates racism. This “I’m not racist,” “I’m not trying to say this is all African-Americans” speaks to the verbal strategies that Bonilla-Silva (2010, p. 53) calls a “semantic move” to maneuver around dangerous conversations around race. This was also demonstrated when he talked about his “Black friend” Aaron, another semantic move that Bonilla-Silva states is a way to save face from by avoiding racial language to express racial

views. During his initial interview, Eric stated he sees people as people. This also speaks to the slippery, subtle ways that color-blind racism operates. He wanted to see people as people. For example, he wanted to see his Black friend without seeing color. When stories get reported he stated it should be, “. . . police officer, civilian, this is what happened. It shouldn’t be Black versus White anymore. . . . If there is a problem, it’s a problem with your police force and that civilian. It’s not a problem with Black versus White and I wish America didn’t look at it like that.” He wanted to view the world in a way that was void of racial discrimination, but he got stuck when confronted with race related acts that goes against a color-blind mentality.

Again, Eric sat in a tension of resistance, acknowledging racial realities in the United States but not necessarily accepting them except when events happen between individuals, thus avoiding recognition of the systematic nature of racism. Eric acknowledged that many people were angry at the decision or even the psychology behind why some African Americans decided to loot and riot in Ferguson. While he recognized in some ways that the system is not set up to favor everyone, at the same time he did not always critically understand the racial implications inherent in a flawed political and economic system or the consequences of it.

Olivia

Olivia, a White female grew up in a small town outside St. Louis; she did, however, spend a great deal of time in a nearby city because she attended a private high school in the city. Olivia was one of the few students who had previous experience talking about critical social issues. She had previously taken an 8-week IGD dialogue on socioeconomic status her freshman year. She was also a member of a prestigious group of pre-service teaching scholars and had been given opportunities to think about these issues in prior years. Olivia knew what White privilege was; she had “heard” about it, but in our conversations it was something she still

seemed reluctant to talk about. When asked if she felt she had privileges based on her race, she responded, “I’m sure I do, but I couldn’t name what it would be, because I don’t know what my life would be like if I wasn’t White, but I think I would be naïve to say that I don’t.” Digging further, I asked if she had read or talked about privilege. She stated very hesitantly, “So there is the White privilege, that is a thing . . . I don’t know what to say about that.” It was not clear whether Olivia knew how to talk about it in a meaningful way. She stated,

You should be self-aware, I just think people should be self-aware and that’s just a part of being self-aware. But no I don’t, really. I know that I probably have opportunities and things that people of other races might not because of my race, but I don’t think about it on a daily basis. (Initial interview, 9/9/14)

Olivia did not offer much else during the interview or even in the dialogue sessions; she was a very succinct person who talked very matter-of-factly. Despite that, it was evident she was thinking and reflecting during our dialogue and during our conversations together. She saw the dialogue as a place for deep reflection and a place to become more self-aware. She reported in her pre-interview, “You can have judgment about things, but if you don’t realize you are having those judgments or where they are coming from, you can’t change your reaction or how you view things or your students.” She wanted to discover where her views on things came from and how they were influenced and impacted by other people.

Olivia recognized that there was a time she had little exposure to racial issues growing up and that much of what was discussed on race was on a very superficial level. She described growing up in a small town where many were racists or made racist remarks. Olivia described her Catholic elementary school as having little diversity and a high school where there was only a handful of African American and Asian heritage students:

So my high school was all girls and we had a handful. I mean like I could name the students who were African American and Asian American students. There were handfuls of them. We did diversity club. And there was always a stigma that no white students joined it. There were like a few and they were like, we want everyone to be a part of this. And that was always kind of interesting that that was kind of how the club went, that it was just the ethnic students who joined.

Olivia's point about the diversity club connects to what Mai shared about her starting Korean club, an organization that anyone could join or be a part of but had become a club that only Korean students joined. Looking back Olivia had only had a few opportunities to talk about race and ethnicity during her K-12 schooling. In college, she had more experiences. In a previous intergroup dialogue course, as well as her experience as a member of a teaching scholars program, she had opportunities to think about these issues before joining our IGD dialogue. The dialogue had led to some changes in her thinking. She shared in her final interview that when she heard derogatory remarks, she was more apt to say something than she had been in the past.

I'm more aware of it and I'm more aware of things my social circles say and like beliefs that people I hang out with have, and then I'm like I can't believe you're saying that and I don't know if I was as aware of it before. I didn't necessarily agree before but I wasn't like so likely to be like *you can't say stuff like that, like that's not okay*. [voice changes; she becomes a bit defensive].

As a result of the dialogue group, she also demonstrated in the final interview, that she was not just "aware" of White privilege, but now "knew" how to talk about it.

I think I could more easily come up with definitions and examples of things, that now it's more concrete in my head than before But when other people say comments, I will

[respond] because I feel like I'm more educated on it so I have more of a right to say something, to be like I do know a little bit more of what I'm talking about and I can back it with like examples for you . . . I don't like to just say stuff unless I think that I know more of what I'm talking about. . . . and because I have become more aware I'm probably more passionate about it so I care more to say something.

It appears that knowledge for Olivia was a prerequisite to being more willing to engage with and talk about the issues. This goes back to my theory that students, mainly White students, do not talk about race because they do not feel that they know enough, and they have not been given enough opportunities for authentic conversations about it to have an opinion. Or conversely, they do not see themselves as having a White identity that is comparable to the racial identity of Blacks and Asians.

Rachel

Rachel was a White female from a small rural town in the Midwest. Her ability to correct misinformation, keep an open mind, and learn about and from the lived experiences of others allowed her to personally grow and become an ally in anti-racist work. Having grown up in a small town, unlike most of her White classmates, who came from the suburbs, Rachel shared in her reflection that she began to view herself as a minority when she started college. She classified herself as having a distinct rural cultural identity due to the fact that grew up in a small farming community. During her initial interview (9/8/14), she said:

'Cause when I came to college I didn't even realize I had a culture. But then I was faced with it really fast. Like within the first 10 minutes of being in college. And I still am really confused as to why I notice it so much. So maybe hearing from other people will help me feel a little better . . . people asked me where I was from. "From the South?" . . .

And I was like no. At first I thought it was funny but then I would just notice that even the way I thought about things or what I liked to do for fun was different. I didn't realize people did anything different.

She had a different speech pattern and accent than most of her peers, and the things she enjoyed doing for fun were different. Although many of the people she met were White, like her, she brought very distinctive life experiences to college, and this made her feel different and set apart in many ways. For her this was difficult because she did not realize that there could be so many differences between other White people and herself. Rachel admitted that this was something she still was processing. This hints to why Rachel was motivated to take this class. During her initial interview, Rachel stated that the issues we tackled in the dialogue were ones she had never thought about. She reported that these were not conversations that came up in elementary or secondary school. Dialogue about race never went any deeper than learning about Martin Luther King or that slavery had been abolished. "I have never been asked these kind of questions or been asked to think about them."

Defining moments. Rachel reported that she learned a lot from two specific dialogue session topics: White privilege and Ferguson. She shared in both her interviews and in her reflections how dialoguing about those two things really shaped her understanding of privilege and racial discrimination.

White privilege. Rachel admitted that she felt defensive, uncomfortable, and guilty when learning about White privilege in both her reflections and in her interviews. Many scholars (Goodman, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tatum, 1992) have long suggested that these feelings of discomfort and anxiety are commonplace for Whites when talking about privilege and race. Rachel's feelings were similar to the findings in the research

literature.

In her first interview, Rachel thought about times when she may have experienced racial privilege. She hesitantly admitted that while in high school she may have gotten a job on the spot because of her privilege: fitting the “type” of hostess that her employer was looking for. But she also felt that even though people of Color experienced hardships, she did, too. This was illustrated in her comment “minority students definitely face certain prejudices more than I do, but I have had my fair share of hardships” (written reflection, week 4). While she recognized that people of Color might experience it more, her focus was on *her hardships* and not on *her privilege*. Rachel admitted during her final reflection that she wrestled with those tensions. In her final interview, I asked her to revisit the notion of privilege and her earlier comment that she also faced hardships. She stated:

Maybe it was before the whole section on white privilege. . . . because now I can see that, yes, there are things in my life that are still hard because everybody’s life is so hard, but society in general is set in ways that make it easier for me and it’s not my fault. That was an eye-opener too, just kind of like the way that schools are set up in general, privileges White culture. . . . So obviously because my parents put that individual aspect to like the highest standards, I’m going to do well in school; that’s how I was raised, but for someone who goes home at night and it’s like, no, you are part of the family and you need to help your brothers and sisters before you help yourself, school is going to be much harder. But I think that because I did come to college and I was a minority in some ways, being from a small town and not from the city, and being able to recognize that too I can better help my students because I can relate—not at the same level at all but just be

able to say, yeah, I've experienced a time when someone told me I don't talk right, you know. (Final Interview, 4/14/15)

Rachel reported that White privilege really stood out; she was able to see how race operated structurally and that White people needed to acknowledge and learn it despite how hard it might be. Hearing the lived experiences of other students of Color in the class was helpful for Rachel. She specifically mentioned that hearing the hidden stories that Leo shared were particularly impactful, when hearing how parents of Color, specifically Blacks and Latinos, have to tell their children to be careful around the police. According to Rachel:

I'd never heard that before. . . . how the police followed him [Leo] home and those kind of things . . . his parents had to tell him to dress nice when he was out in the street and that's not a conversation that White people have to have and so that to me, that's one of the things that I know that my students in eighth grade now that their parents have to talk to them about. It's good to know that kind of thing goes on.

Rachel started to make the connection that the experiences her 21-year-old friend (Leo) had were like the experiences that many of her 13-year-old Black students might also face, if they had not already—an experience that she and other Whites do not have to face as a result of their privilege. She began to understand how one's racial identity did in fact impact how he or she moves through life. She started to understand that she was born in a society and into a system that was set up to favor her.

Ferguson. Another major topic Rachel mentioned as impactful was our discussion of Ferguson, Missouri, events that began in summer 2014 but carried into fall 2015. She claimed that the dialogue session on Ferguson left a lasting impression on her. As mentioned elsewhere, Ferguson was a major hot and contentious issue during fall 2014, the same semester as the IGD

course. Michael and I provided class resources, articles, and videos on Ferguson over the Thanksgiving break after a decision not to indict the killer of Michael Brown was announced.

In order to provide context to highlight Rachel's understanding and the significant shift in her thinking, I am including the email that Michael and I emailed to the students over the Thanksgiving break.

Sorry to barge back into your break, but given the events in Ferguson, MO and a few requests and questions, we thought we would provide some resources for thinking and talking about what's happening. First, let us say that we are here to listen to you and we value your sharing and grappling with challenging issues, including this one. We also believe that you are all good—that you would not have chosen a system of societal racism if it had been a choice rather than something we were born into. We did get this system, though, and we have a choice as to whether or not we do something about it. We'll share a few thoughts and questions, but we're most interested in what you're thinking. There is a forum on Moodle if you care to share and talk with each other about Ferguson.

We provided students with a list of resources for how they could talk about what was happening with their students. Many of the resources showed a variety of perspectives and some were strictly factual information. We brought back content that we had taught in previous sessions to make connections to why this was important and how Ferguson was being told from various narratives, and narratives that change depending on who was telling it and who the audience was. The email continued:

It is sometimes hard not to see dialogue as a format for making all perspectives equivalent. Moral relativism is not the goal here, however, and it can be scary to state that

there are some perspectives that don't hold water when situated within a framework of factual information and historical context. Part of dialogue is figuring out how to point that out while staying in conversation with each other. It's striking that in the last few days, even in conversations with people we strongly disagree with; we are sharing similar emotional responses—sadness, disappointment, fear, anger. Dialogue happens when we share and see that common ground and wrestle with our differing perspectives together.

The theoretical underpinnings of Intergroup Dialogue are not neutral when it comes to race and racism. You'll see, for instance, that we didn't include readings above that deny that racism exists or informs the situation in St. Louis County. We didn't include them, not because we disagree with them, but because the preponderance of evidence suggests that they aren't accurate. Which is not to say that there is only one right or most true perspectives (the articles above include a variation of perspectives, especially when it comes to the centrality of race versus economic conditions influencing the current situation, as well as the appropriateness of certain responses to the decision not to indict).

If we think back to the reading about stock, concealed, resistance, and emerging/transforming stories, what types of stories are being told? What type of story is the media coverage of looting/rioting telling and does that match up with the actual situation? What type of story is the President's address telling or reinforcing? What role does confirmation bias play in the media coverage and resulting responses? What kind of concealed stories will develop as a result of this situation? Can an emerging story rise, too? When Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Rioting is language of the unheard," he was really imploring us to listen to the stories we're not hearing.

Thanks, Michael & Natasha

Students were already tasked to attempt a dialogue with family or friends over the break about an issue related to social justice. Rachel took this assignment to heart and decided to use Ferguson as a defining moment to dialogue with her family. She admitted that she poured over all the resources during her break, armed to debate with her family. Below is her reflection on Ferguson and what it was like to talk to a family member about such an emotionally charged topic. Her family lived in the area somewhat close to Ferguson so they knew the area well.

Due to all of the events occurring in Ferguson these past few weeks, it was a hot topic of discussion on social media and around town this week. . . . Our local news, like every other news channel, had been covering the events there. Reading the countless Facebook posts that were so uneducated and one-sided was really hard for me this week. I was relieved when you sent us the email with the different resources about Ferguson, because before that I felt that every Google search I conducted just wasn't giving me what I really needed.

Before heading to the family Thanksgiving, I made sure to read those articles and think about the most likely arguments I would hear if my family brought up the topic. I know the background information that my family has: They know where the "rich" and "poor" parts of St. Louis are at, so we know that Ferguson is in an area that is associated with high poverty. Reading the article about how St. Louis is split into so many different municipalities was really enlightening given my background knowledge of the area. I made sure to even screen shot some of the paragraphs in the article so I would have information ready if needed. I also thought it was interesting how most of the articles didn't even put the blame on the police officer at all. I think that is where many White

people are getting defensive in this whole situation. However, these articles did a good job of explaining the ideology, atmosphere, and racial biases that are ingrained into the police forces around America. So even if officer Darren Wilson wasn't intentionally trying to just kill a black man, he did because he is a part of this skewed society and operates under the way that society is set up.

Rachel began to see the complexity of the Ferguson case. She did not blame the White police officer but saw how racial bias permeates through society and in this case with the police force. Utilizing the resources she was provided gave background knowledge needed to critically examine what happened. It also gave her a better understanding of how well intentioned people can contribute to a racist society.

So, I did actually go into Thanksgiving with my arsenal of resources and a plan for what I expected to hear if the topic came up. It did come up—but just briefly. My uncle mentioned something to my dad about a friend of his who is on the Illinois State Police force. He said that his friend was told to pack a bag earlier in the week in the event that the Missouri Police Department called in for help. Illinois State Police had been given special jurisdiction in the area if the need arose. My dad said something to the effect of that the events down there were scary and sad—and indeed they are. However, my uncle said the thing that made me cut in: He said, “I can't believe all of these people think that rioting is the answer to this.” I wanted to be subtle but also share some of the things that I have been learning this semester, so I said, “We have been talking about Ferguson in some of my classes. The results of the grand jury are just the catalyst for the riots. Really, the problem is much bigger than that. Black people in this country have to tell their children to be careful around police every day. When one of them is killed by a

police officer, it is all of their worst fears coming true.” I think that my spin on it caught my uncle off guard, or he is just too nice to argue with me about it, but nothing else was said about the matter.

I wasn’t looking for a big revelation or a fight, so I’m glad that this was just a small conversation. However, I think that what I said would be enlightening for someone like my uncle, whose social circle is 100% white. . . . There are rural areas without much chance for a culturally diverse experience. So it is very easy to just listen to other white people’s take on the matter and accept that as the fact. . . . hopefully whatever I said stuck with my uncle and maybe he’ll take a second look at the news relating to Ferguson from now on.

This reflection highlights a lot of Rachel’s thinking nearing the end of our dialogue course. In small ways she began challenging her own personal social circles—something she may not have done previously. Rachel was thinking deeply about the structural problems and how they were the roots of many problems dealing with poverty and equity rather than simplifying it to Blacks angrily looting and rioting. She began embracing the complexity of the Ferguson incidence. Furthermore, she really took to heart the racialized experiences of her friend Leo, whose story I shared earlier.

Rachel did not know much about White privilege, systems of oppression, or deeply rooted discrimination before beginning the class. In her initial interview (9/8/14) she said: “I hope to understand my experiences a little bit more by hearing from other people and what they’ve experienced. And maybe kind of breaking some stereotypes that I might have that I haven’t even realized that I have yet.” Rachel used the tools, skills, and knowledge gained from IGD in her student teaching placement, which was a racially diverse middle school, where she

also accepted a full-time position after graduation. She mentioned that when students made derogatory comments to one another, she actually addressed them. She offered two examples from her student teaching placements.

So I had it happen twice—in my third grade class and in my eighth grade class where [students were] using the word *gay*. This year in eighth grade the discipline [consequence] was a warning and a reflection out in the hallway. So when I go out there we just sat down on the floor and I just talked to him really quietly. The person that happened to be saying the word *gay* was also a Black student and so I just tried to explain that when you use that term it's derogatory; it's a group of people and they can't change the way they are; it's like making fun of someone for the color of their skin, and that seemed to connect And I had a similar issue with my third grade class and the class was very diverse in general and we had that same discussion as a class and it also seemed to connect and that is something I picked up in IGD.

This comment illustrates that though the dialogue was on race and ethnicity, the skills gleaned from the course were transferred to other social identities that came up in students' student teaching placements.

The students Rachel taught during her spring placement had a semi-scripted advisory period each day and she learned to use that time to talk about deep, critical issues that go above and beyond the basic socio-emotional curriculum. She stated that before her work in the intergroup dialogue course she did not necessarily want to teach in a racially diverse school. But now she could not imagine doing anything different because she found that students in this diverse school setting brought up more engaging topics and offered different perspectives. I

asked Rachel in her final interview if her attitudes about race had changed. She empathically responded:

Yeah! When I see it on the news I actually feel like I know enough to care about it, to be perfectly honest. Yes, because I've always been the kind of person where if I felt like I didn't know enough to have an opinion, I didn't have an opinion.

This type of comment also came up with other participants, particularly Olivia. Rachel's comment speaks to the notion that because she was knowledgeable on an issue she felt she could talk about it. This may hint that students need background knowledge before they will be invested in wanting to better understand race related issues. It may also suggest that Whites do not have a need to know about race related issues because they live mostly in white contexts where they do not *have to know* anything about those different from themselves. In the data, there was strong evidence of a sense of freedom and empowerment that occurred when these participating students gained background knowledge and thus could voice their own opinions. Because of Rachel's willingness to be challenged in IGD, she grew and changed in her understandings of racial inequality. She felt a sense of empowerment and moved beyond colorblindness to color consciousness. All of this taken together suggested that she grew in her commitment to anti-racist work.

Conclusion

These five students had distinctly different narratives. They all reported that hearing the personal stories of their classmates was a major benefit of taking the dialogue course and is what made the course unique. The two students of Color, Mai and Leo, both shared their racialized experiences; they were able to vividly recount story after story from their K–12 school experiences. They were also two of the most vocal students by the end of the dialogue course. A

number of dialogue participants shared that they never realized that Asian heritage students were affected by racial inequality because the greater mainstream narrative is that they are the “model minority.” Participants also shared that hearing Leo’s stories about his K–12 experiences were new for them. It brought explicit examples of how teachers “other” certain groups of students. Furthermore, Leo and Eric’s stories made real the racial profiling that afflicts certain people of Color.

These cases illustrate different experiences and different levels of growth and change. Mai experienced blatant racism throughout her K-12 schooling. She was on the receiving end of many stereotypes that are common for those who appear as Asian heritage. Leo, also experienced racial discrimination influenced by stereotypes, commonly associated with those who appear Latino. His story is probably one of the most impactful because it made race and racism a reality for many participants in the dialogue course. The stories of Leo and Mai impacted the other students in the IGD class. The understandings Leo and Mai gained from the dialogue were different from most of the other students because they had themselves experienced so much racial inequality and racial discrimination. However, they walked away changed by the dialogue as well. Mai’s stereotypes of Whites changed, and Leo’s reflections on his experiences fortified his resolve to *not* make stereotypic assumptions about his future students. Eric had few experiences with racial differences growing up but did after joining the military. He struggled to accept the racial realities because it did not align with his colorblind notions. Olivia was similar to Eric in that she did not have many experiences with people from different racial groups growing up. But she was more willing to acknowledge that there were systematic problems associated with race in society. Her understandings were similar to some of the other White students in the class. She had little experience with understanding race and racism but was open

to being challenged. Last, Rachel, had never thought about issues of race prior to this class, but had experienced discrimination in terms of her cultural background and upbringing, which may have helped her understand race related issues. These cases all lend insight into the perspectives that students brought with them into the dialogue and the learning that came about as they participated in the course.

In the following chapter, I will present more thematic findings and highlight what students in the dialogue course collectively learned and how they broadened their understanding and perspectives of race and racism, including, whiteness, privilege and oppression. These findings are organized into the three remaining categories—exploring commonalities and differences, exploring schools, and facilitation training.

CHAPTER SIX

Thematic Findings

In this chapter I highlight the thematic findings. They are organized by the three remaining categories: exploring commonalities and differences, exploring schools, and train the trainer facilitation. The findings are from students' written reflections and the dialogue sessions.

Exploring Commonalities and Differences

Exploring commonalities and differences was one of the major categories in the intergroup dialogue sessions. In this section, I report the findings within this category, which includes two subsections: clarifying information and understanding identity. Clarifying information includes discussion of various terms that participants inquired about. The other subcategory, identity, highlights students coming to understand the intersectionality between their own social identities.

Clarifying Information

Another goal of intergroup dialogue is to clarify information. Many of the students come into the class not having a clear understanding of race and racism. Throughout the semester Michael and I had to correct or clarify information for students on a number of topics. Much of this occurred in the first few weeks of the dialogue course.

Students first completed the social identity checklist on the saliency of their group memberships. After completing the checklists and before being put into groups, they were asked if they had any questions about terminology or about the worksheet in general. Many questions arose; students struggled to understand the difference between gender and sex as well as the difference between racial and ethnic categories as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Students

did not know about the difference or preference in terms such as White or Caucasian and Black or African American, or Native Americans and/or Indians.

Following is an example of how we as facilitators clarified some information that the teacher candidates did not know.

Gender vs. sex and race vs. ethnicity. The first pieces of information that students wanted clarification on was the difference between gender and sex, and the difference between race and ethnicity. Lin did not like this question because it made her think of filling out demographic information in elementary school.

Lin: When we were kids in school and we had to fill out forms, and no one has really explained the definitions of what these words meant. So gender and sex are used interchangeably or race and ethnicity they put together sometimes. Or has that changed now or is it still like that?

Michael: If we are talking about social justice and people who do work on social identity, they would separate them out because they are different sorts of experiences. Gender very basically you can think of as the expression, so what you wear, how you walk, how you talk. Sex is what we think of as the biological categories, but it's important to be careful with that because it's how we have decided to categorize those. . . . So sex, you can think of is the thing you were assigned at birth whether that ends up being accurate or alignment with your gender expression later. May or may not be true. And race and ethnicity.

Natasha: Yeah, so race and ethnicity. Race again, is how other people perceive you. Race is a social construct. Ethnicity is more what you self-identify with. For some people your race and ethnicity may be the same thing. Often times it's not. If I were to give an

example, I could say “I am Black, that would be my race, but my ethnicity, I identify as a Caribbean American because my parents are from the West Indies, from Trinidad.” So that would be the difference for me. Someone else, who is Black, could be African American and their race and ethnic identity are one in the same.

We saw students take risks and ask really good questions about topics that students often feel they should know the answer to. Lin asked a question about gender and sex that many accept as one and the same. While gender and sex appear as pretty commonplace terms in today’s society, the terms are shifting and changing and to some, specifically in the social justice literature, they are viewed as two separate words that are not always synonymous. This Michael felt was important to discuss if brought up because she knows that some students may encounter this in their future classrooms. They may have students who do not self-identify with the same gender and the same sex. For many of our teacher candidates this conversation was new and one they had not previously heard, discussed, or thought about.

With regard to race and ethnicity, we provided students with readings that dissected the difference between race and ethnicity during the first two weeks of the course. But because this, too, was the first time many of our students learned the difference between the race and ethnicity it was something Michael and I kept coming back to in the weeks following. It was not something students completely got, as it is generally complex and not easy to define, especially for those who may not have a strong affinity with their race and/or ethnic identity.

White vs. Caucasian and Black vs. African American. Clarity on the terminology of racial identities was also discussed. Irene wanted to know what the differences were between White and Caucasian. This question sparked a bit of discussion in the class. A bit of the dialogue is reported below.

Irene: So I have a question. So how about when people say White versus Caucasian. What is the difference?

Natasha: I'll let you take that one!

Michael: So Caucasian comes from the Caucasus Mountains, which are in Georgia, part of what used to be the Soviet Union but is now the separatist region of Russia whose name I am forgetting right now. The reason, it is not really a good reason. The reason why White people, European heritage folks are sometimes called Caucasian now, is because there was a researcher in the early 1800s who thought that Georgian women, women from the Caucasus regions, were the most beautiful women in the whole world and labeled all Europeans to be Caucasian because the standard of beauty matched and then the colonial history flowed from there.

[Major chatter.]

Sydney: So that's not the politically correct way to say it...?

Brooklyn: I always thought that was the right way to say.

Irene: Because you'll say African American and Caucasian or you will use White and Black.

Michael: Right. Caucasian has fallen out of favor in the past ten years. You still see it but not as much as White. It's tricky because that is not a good reason to label a whole group of people. And at the same time is also a way to preserve racial dominance, so not naming whiteness. The reason it is so socially constructed is because we made up these terms as we went along in history.

Irene: So is it common now to say White and Black. 'Cause I just don't know. . . .

Michael: So, there isn't a standard system.

Natasha: There isn't and everyone has his or her own personal preference. Michael and I tend to use Black and White, we don't really say Caucasian and we don't really say African American strictly because well . . .

Michael: Not everybody is . . .

Natasha: Not everybody is . . . people would say you are all descendent from Africa. But whereas my kinship is where my parents are from . . . where they were born and raised, is not from Africa. So for me, I don't consider myself per se African American, but I'm not going to knock someone if they call me that because I recognize in this work that not everyone knows the distinctions between those titles.

Michael: So this is a way that race and ethnicity get conflated. As a White US-er, I wasn't raised with—I am Welsh and English and German and Swiss. A little bit of this, a little bit of that. None of that has any real meaning in my upbringing. I would say my race is White and my ethnicity is European American or White American. I think there is a distinct ethno-cultural piece to having an assimilated European heritage.

Natasha: Whereas my husband, for example, he racially identifies as Black, but he wouldn't trace his line to any particular country and he would also say he is African American and that would be his ethnicity. Actually he has a bit of Irish too, so he also takes some ownership of that.

[Laughter.]

The question posed by Irene was one that many students were thinking. They were engaged as demonstrated by their body language, many nodded when Irene asked the question. In this particular situation, because I knew that Michael was familiar with the origin of Caucasian, it made sense for her to talk about it with the class. Additionally, because many

Blacks and African Americans have different preferences about terms, it felt natural for me as a Black female to talk about that with the group.

Students were shocked to learn about the meaning of Caucasian, something that many in the group started out exclusively using because they believed it was politically correct. However, because a student (Irene) took the risk to ask about it, the class learned the history behind the word, and many stated they refused to use it again now knowing the derivation of the word.

Racial and ethnic categories. During week 2 a discussion about the difference between racial and ethnic categories came up. Students discussed how they had to complete demographic information in grade school without really knowing what it meant or its purpose. One student addressed how she felt very confused about this because she did not fit into just one particular category.

Olivia: I'll start. We were talking about . . . we wrote the checking boxes on tests. We were talking about how it asks for race, or ethnicity, or it's both and the dropdown bars can be the same thing or they can be different, and it's messy overlap and there is not a consensus of what is what.

Brooklyn: We talked about the exact same thing. And something interesting we came up with is that we never had a discussion in our elementary school classrooms about race or ethnicity but we were still expected to check those boxes on standardized tests. So it's almost, we are projecting someone else's ideas in a bubble.

Paige: Can I say something about the dropdown menu that you were talking about? I think it is interesting that when they do have race and ethnicity and you do the dropdown menu for ethnicity. They have their own little selection of what they decided you could be. Like what if you are not German American. What if you are another something

American? I feel if you are going to include that, then maybe you should have a fill in but sometimes you are excluded by their list of drop downs that they have.

Michael: We should post a chart of how the census has changed over the years. Now they are up to 53 ethnicity options or something like that.

Mai: I know people petition for those things. I know they [used to make] everyone from Hong Kong and Taiwan to put Chinese. And Taiwanese people started putting out commercials and saying, “oh, start writing Taiwanese” and I think they added Taiwanese now.

Gabriella: Just a personal story I shared with my group. I remember the first time I saw that on a test. I was super confused, because it says White, not Hispanic. Like literally in the same line and yes, and then there is Hispanic, or Latino if they put that all together. So I just remember clicking “other” and going to my mom and being like, “what was I supposed to do,” I didn’t know. I mean like now I am used to it. And also talking to other people you definitely need to put that for your university when you are applying because you will get in. You **need** to put Hispanic, don’t put other but that you are Hispanic. I never really know what to put for that; it’s like so messed up.

Michael: Particularly because the white, Hispanic category is not . . .

Natasha: Right, yeah!

Michael: Census did some interesting things to the world.

Gabriella: Why do they even put those two together?

[Facilitators laughs.]

Natasha: Yes, because this **bothers** me so much. The census box is supposed to be you checking your race, okay, and technically according to the US census, because remember

these are socially constructed categories. Latinos and Hispanics are actually considered by the U.S. census to be technically White. And being Hispanic and Latino are considered the ethnicity. But because the U.S. census does not want to confuse or doesn't want to lump "pure whites" with Hispanics or Latinos, and I put it in quotes because I don't agree with what I just said, that's why they have separate categories.

Michael: Hispanic means of Spanish heritage. Spain, Europe, so it's . . .

Natasha: It's very bothersome to me. And when people find that out. Well, I thought Hispanic is a race. And . . .

Michael: What they really mean is the indigenous people of Central and South America, parts of North America, who were colonized by Spanish people. So that's why they do that.

Gabriella: And now I know . . .

[Laughter from entire class.]

This conversation allowed the students to begin to dismantle the complexity of social identities and terminology, in this case racial categories. By clarifying information or talking through misinformation, they began to think about the questions as their own students may have in their future classrooms.

Identity and Intersectionality

One of the goals of intergroup dialogue is for participants to learn not just about others but also to learn more deeply about themselves. They learn about others by learning about themselves and thinking about the intersectionality and saliency of their social identity groups. During the first few weeks of the dialogue, students were given a social identity checklist to complete. Students had to fill out which identities were salient to them. Some students were

resistant to checking off certain categories or completing the sheet at all. Some felt it was hard to separate out some of the categories, such as sex and gender; others wanted to identify with the hobbies and activities they liked to do versus their social identities. Despite the resistance of some students, the discussion that occurred afterward was fruitful. Students really started to tease out their group memberships. Dialogue about ethnic identity, religious identity, and socioeconomic status were at the heart of the conversation.

Ethnic and religious identity. Intergroup dialogue is not just about coming to know answers and finding solutions to problems; it is also about the process. As facilitators we began by asking students why filling out a checklist on their social identities was so difficult. Our questions included “Why were you resistant to it?”; “Were there some identities that were easier to fill out than others?”; and “Who found it easy to list all social identities and why?” When discussing ethnic identity in class, Brooklyn shared how it was difficult to determine the importance she places on her ethnic identity:

One that I talked about with my group was, I kind of went back and forth with identifying with being Greek. My dad’s family is from Greece and his siblings all have families, my cousins go to Greek school, they eat Greek food every day, and my immediate family is not. Because when my parents met and got married, my mom is not Greek. So my grandparents gave a lot of resistance to them getting married. They [grandparents] did not go to their wedding. They made them have a separate ceremony in a Greek church and didn’t go to my mom’s church where they wanted to have the wedding. So my mom, since she has gotten married, has had some feelings of resistance with being Greek. So I go to holiday parties that are Greek and I eat Greek food but I don’t know the culture like my cousins do because of my mom and I don’t blame her for it, but it is something I kind

of go back and forth between identifying with because of it. (Brooklyn, IGD session week 4, 9/17/2014)

A tension for Brooklyn was knowing *what* her Greek ethnicity was but not necessarily *feeling* a deep connection to it. She did not partake in many of the customs and traditions that her Greek cousins experience, and thus it became hard for her to value her ethnic identity. Here Brooklyn felt like an outsider within her own ethnic group. Hannah's response was similar when she discussed her religious identity. She shared her internal struggles about her religious identity:

I think it's hard for me to identify what religion I am, because I was technically baptized Catholic only because my grandmother wanted us to, but I've never gone to church or anything and my mom's side is Greek Orthodox so that's a totally different thing than being Catholic. And the same thing happened. She had to convert in order to get married to my dad, but then she decided she didn't want to because she was right, so she basically left it up to us kids, so if we wanted to go to church or do, CC, what is that called? CCD class when you are little. All my friends did that and I never got to do that and they [my parents] were always like, if you want to do that, you can do that, if you want to go to church we will take you, but we are just not going to push you because that should be something you want to do on your own. But I always say I'm Catholic if people ask, but I have no idea what that means. Like at all. 'Cause, aren't there like different branches of being . . .? (Hannah, IGD session week 4, 9/17/2014)

Hannah shared her vulnerability with the class; she did not understand the "rules" within Catholicism, a religious group she had always identified with but one that she does not really know and understand. She did not know what it meant to be Catholic. She identified as Catholic

solely because that is what she was told growing up. Through that exercise, Hannah had a chance to figure out what that meant for her.

Socioeconomic status. Identity in terms of economic status was also discussed. Students discussed how socioeconomic status (SES) varied both here in the United States and also globally. In the United States, SES seemed rather ambiguous, whereas in other parts of the world, one's class status is more clearly defined and often pre-determined. We talked about England and how accent reflected one's SES positionality. In this conversation Nicole mentioned how she experienced different privileges as a member of a lower SES group in comparison to students of Color in her school and in her class growing up. She offered a unique perspective that many students in the IGD had not thought about or experienced:

So growing up I was lower middle class. Bordering working class. Which, most of my neighborhood was as well. We all went to the same school. But all the other kids in the neighborhood and my school were Black, but I think all the teachers at my school would enforce stereotypes on them, but not so much on me and I am pretty sure it was because you know, I am White and they [the teachers] were White and they kind of identified with me more. I think in a way . . . I'm not saying it benefited me but I didn't get the bad end on the deal on that one, so I think, it didn't make me feel guilty, because it wasn't something I really recognized until I got to middle school and high school but I think that's really kind of a negative. There are stereotypes for different socioeconomic status groups but then there are stereotypes for particular groups of people in that status. And I think being like this little White girl everyone was like "Oh poor baby," but for everyone else "Oh, they just don't work hard." I don't think it benefited me, but I don't think I really reaped the really negative aspects of my SES like my friends growing up did.

Here we see the intersection of race and class—one that Nicole clearly recognized but was also in denial at the same time. She acknowledged that her race shielded her from a lot of the negative stereotypes and treatment that had befallen her Black classmates. She stated that she believed that was in part because she shared the racial identity of her teachers. Concurrently she also stated having the same race as her teachers did not benefit her. However, Nicole did think about the complexity of race and class, and I believe this was due in part because she grew up in a diverse community.

Sydney also discussed growing up poor while being White and how that was conflated with having a learning disability. However, because her racialized experiences were different, she discussed it differently. Here she focused on class rather than on race and did not really make connections between the two. Sydney acknowledged that she was White, but that she had other identities that were important and she tried to make sense of it:

I felt kind of felt the same way, but mainly because of my socioeconomic status. I was always lower, working middle class as well growing up and my mom was a teen mom when she had me and my parents got divorced when I was really young. So I had a lot of struggles and I fell behind, and teachers would constantly tell me I wasn't working hard enough and I wasn't doing enough, and then when I go to college I find out that I also had a learning disability. I have attention deficit disorder. So that was also hindering my ability to learn and move forward while all of those things were going on, too. So it's not necessarily with race. We kind of had an interesting conversation about that because I don't know how to . . . I am White. But then I have this and I have this and I have this. And yes, I have a lens being White and I don't know how to separate that and I know

there is White privilege but other than White privilege then there is all the rest of it. And what's that lens, I don't know.

The benefits of having students think deeply about their social identities were twofold. We wanted students to understand that often members of dominant social groups are not aware of the privilege that comes with being a member of a dominant social identity group—and for most of our students, that was the case. As a result, there is usually little to no discomfort surrounding them, whereas someone who identifies as Latino, homosexual, or disabled will most likely experience pain, judgment, or have to defend their social identity more often than a White, heterosexual male who is able-bodied. Moreover, we wanted the students to see how the intersectionality between social identities impacts life experiences. One's experience as a female is hard to separate from being a White female, or an Asian female for example.

Exploring Schools: Race Policies, Practices, and Experiences in Field Placements

We spent the first few weeks of the dialogue building relationships. We also spent a number of sessions discussing commonalities and differences during weeks 3, 4, and 5. However, we were continually coming back to commonalities and differences. Following the four-category model, pre-service teachers spent time exploring schools. The data reported are primarily taken from weeks 7 and 8 of the dialogue sessions. They explored the following questions:

- How do schools perpetuate systemic inequality?
- How does this inequality advantage some and disadvantage others?
- What are some ways inequality played out in your schooling?
- How does the position of teachers in schools and society impact what they are able to do or how they can change oppressive policies and practices?

- How can I be culturally sensitive to the students I teach?

Pre-service teachers were able to answer most of these questions. They reported examples of the systemic inequalities that they witnessed while in their school placements. The pre-service teachers in this study were assigned to three different schools for their field placements: Parkview Elementary, Bellmore Elementary, and Lakeville Elementary (pseudonyms). Parkview and Bellmore are public schools, and Lakeville is a private school. All three schools are located in neighboring towns but in two different school districts.

Below I describe the context of the three schools. I then share the practices and/or policies that pre-service teachers identified in their field placement that perpetuated systemic inequality and how this inequality advantaged some and disadvantaged others. Then I report the pre-service teachers' responses to comments made by students of Color, namely Black students.

Parkview Elementary School

Parkview Elementary School is a K–5 elementary school. It is a part of the Wyatt School District. In this district, parents are given a choice of where to send their children. As such, students do not necessarily attend the school in their neighborhood. Parkview also has a bilingual education program. This may play a role in the racially diverse school environment, as it draws students from all over the district.

Parkview had undergone significant administrative turnover in recent years. State assessments have dropped significantly over the past five years. During the year of this study, the majority of the teachers at Parkview were White, and 70% of the students were Black or Latino; 30% of students were English Language Learners and 65% of students were from low-income homes and qualified for free and reduced lunch. Figure 6.1 provides the racial makeup of the students that attended Parkview during the 2014–2015 academic year.

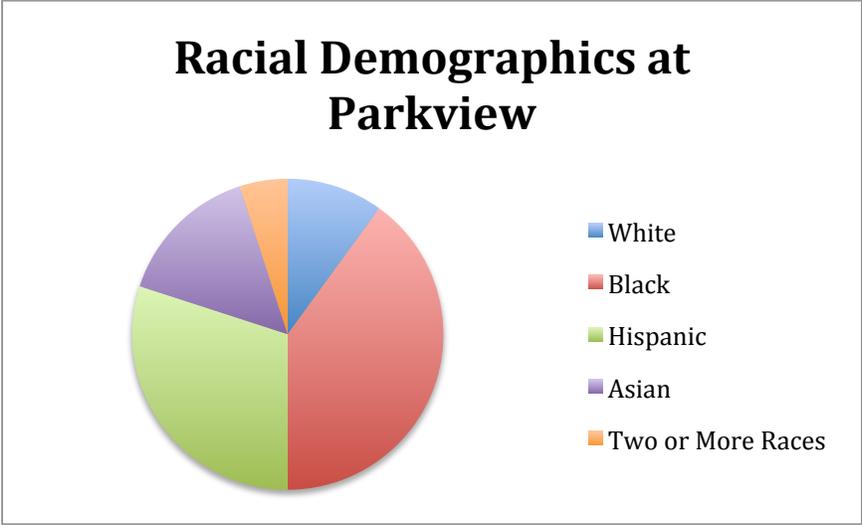


Figure 6.1. Racial Demographics at Parkview

Bellmore Elementary School

Bellmore Elementary School is located in a neighboring town. The school district does not have a school choice program; students are assigned to a school based on their location. The majority of the students that attended Bellmore were White. The school also had a strong bilingual program. Thirty-five percent of the students at Bellmore were English Language Learners, and 60% of the students were from low-income families and qualified for free and reduced lunch. Figure 6.2 shows Bellmore’s racial demographics from the year of the study.

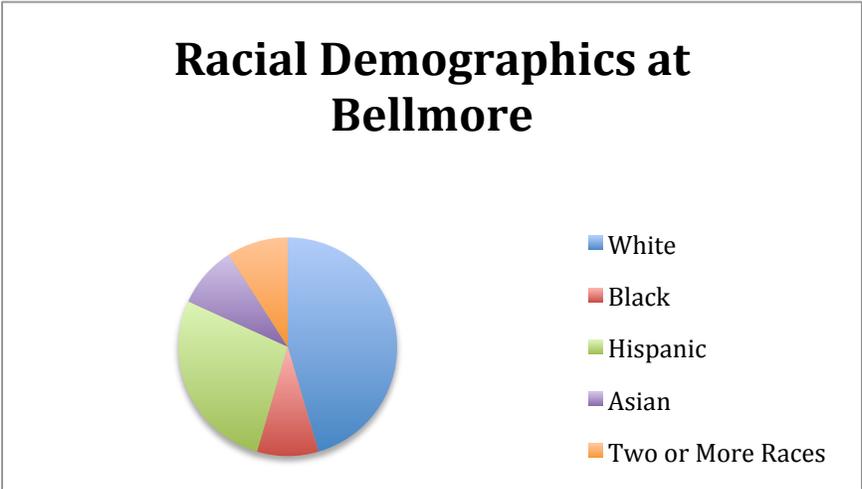


Figure 6.2. Racial Demographics at Bellmore

Lakeville Elementary School

Lakeville Elementary has quite a bit of autonomy. It is a tuition-based private school that includes grades pre-kindergarten through 5th. The year of the study, there were a total of 90 students in pre-kindergarten to 5th grade and the majority of whom were in the preschool program. The school is a Reggio-inspired school, in which students are engaged in inquiry using the Project Approach method. Students are encouraged to be creative and challenged to think critically, and they often work collaboratively. The school provides students choices within a broad school-wide annual theme as a means to foster children's learning and curiosity. The students at Lakeville are primarily White; there are a number of Asian heritage students, but few Blacks and Latinos attend the school. Twenty percent of students at Lakeville received free or reduced lunch. Only one student (7%) was an English Language Learner, and 20% had an individualized education plan (IEP) and/or diagnosed disability. The majority of the staff (70%) at Lakeville was White. Twenty percent of the staff was of Asian heritage, and there were one Black and one Latino staff member. While the school was predominantly White, the cultural climate of the school was inclusive of different kinds of people. The school was viewed as a family community that tried to work on problems together. Students and teachers alike came together to find solutions, resolve arguments, and disagreements. Students that attend were taught that different people need different things and that Lakeville was a place where people should have an opportunity to be themselves.

While Lakeville valued academics, it placed a high value on social-emotional learning. This is a school where pre-school students do not have homework or complete worksheets during the day but are really engaged in projects, play, and choice. Figure 6.3 on page 155 shows racial demographics at Lakeville.

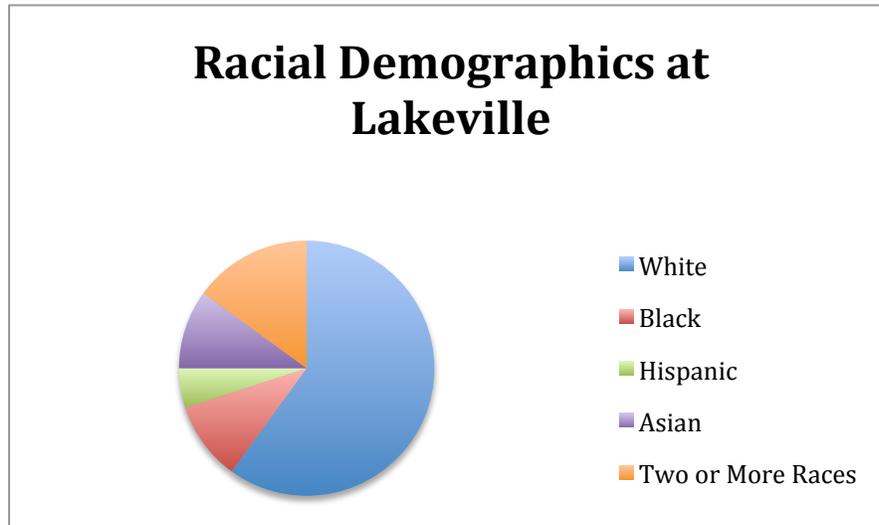


Figure 6.3. Racial Demographics at Lakeville

Racial Inequality: Discipline and Behavior

Pre-service teachers wrote about and discussed in dialogue the practices and behaviors they witnessed in their schools. Most of their written responses revolved around discipline and behavior. This was where participants saw how school inequality advantages some—in this case, White students—and how the inequality disadvantaged others—students of Color.

Participants were asked to write on the policies or practices (formal or informal) that might be reinforcing or perpetuating racism in their school contexts. There were many differences and some similarities across the three schools. This impacted how students discussed what they noticed in the schools. In their written reflections, they wrote candidly about the racial disparities they noticed in their school placements. However, in the dialogue session following this reflection, the conversation revolved primarily around the discipline disparities at Parkview. Students at Parkview noticed stark differences between White students, students of Color, and the students in the bilingual program. Table 6.1 on page 157 highlights the data sources used to analyze the discussions in each school.

Table 6.1. Data Sources of Pre-Service Teachers' Observations in Field Placement

<i>Data Sources of Pre-Service Teachers' Observations in Field Placement</i>		
School	Data Sources	Student Observations
Parkview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written reflections • Dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline disparities between students of Color and White students • Isolation between general education classroom and bilingual classrooms
Bellmore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written reflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation between general education classroom and bilingual classrooms
Lakeville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written reflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive and welcoming school environment

I will first report findings from the participants' written reflections. Then I will present part of a transcript from the dialogue session about the practices and policies pre-service teachers' witnessed at Parkview.

One-third of the pre-service teachers were placed at Parkview. Overall the students noticed a number of things. Seven of the eight pre-service teachers reported how students of Color were treated differently from White students. They noted racial disparities in terms of discipline. They also noticed that the disciplining of students of Color was more vocal, public, and more frequent than the discipline White students received. Participants mentioned that there were two Black staff members, and, though they were initially unsure exactly what the positions of these two were, it appeared their jobs were to deal specifically with problem behavior. Many mentioned that the White teachers by and large did not discipline Black students, but rather called the office to have the Black disciplinarians take care of them. I report a few students' responses on the discipline at Parkview.

One of the practices that I have seen in my school that perpetuates racism is the White teachers asking the Black teachers in the school to help with behavior management of the Black students in the school. I often see one of the Black teachers in the hallway talking to other Black students who are clearly upset. I have seen this teacher with students of all ages. My teacher also does this. She is White, and one time one of the Black students was acting up in PE. This student was tripping his fellow classmates. Instead of handling the situation like she would with any other student, she asked the Black PE teacher to call his parents. (Rachel, written reflection, week 7)

This is not to generalize all African American/Black students, but the rate they are being disciplined and called out for misbehavior at Parkview is rather high. I think some rules and norms that are in the school do not align with their culture and the way they are taught at home. It seems like the teachers think they always have to find another teacher of the same culture to fairly and effectively discipline the students. A lot of times due to preconceived notions about African American/Black students; they often get punished more severely for the same offense as another student of a different race. This is a type of inequity and is a form of institutional racism. Although the African American/Black student population is rather high at Parkview, most of the teachers do not know how to understand where they come from and direct them in a way that promotes learning. I walk down the hallways and just see teachers [White teachers] making harsh comments at them. . . I have once heard: “I don’t want to hear from you. It is what it is, don’t talk back to me.” Yes, the student did misbehave but he was trying very hard to explain why he ended up misbehaving. I also noticed that most of the students sitting in the office or

being sent home for disciplinary reasons were all African American/Black students. I had once talked to a teacher from Chicago and she told me she often feels more threatened by boys of color because they are disruptive and calling them out seems racist. I told her that in my opinion brushing the idea under the carpet is ignorant and not a good way to approach the issue. I realized from these past conversations that African American/Black students take a more direct approach and are more assertive when they are questioning things. (Lin, written reflection, week 7)

For example, I feel like they are more vocal and more public when punishing students who are minorities. They seem to do it more in a public manner that seems to embarrass the children or single them out from the rest of the people around them. For instance, you can see faculty yelling at students in the hallway or from down the hallway when they see students acting in a way that they don't feel is appropriate. I have seen instances where students who are Caucasian are acting out or running in the hallways and faculty have not said anything about it. I have seen the same instances where African American children are doing the same thing and they will openly be scolded for their behavior. (Leo, written reflection, week 7)

In addition to noticing stark differences with discipline, participants also wrote about the differences related to the bilingual students and students in the regular education program. Parkview had a bilingual program, and teacher candidates realized that the students did not interact with students of other racial and/or ethnic groups. Students described the bilingual students as isolated. Brooklyn felt that the Latino students' backgrounds were not valued in the school.

I see racism perpetuated at Parkview in a variety of ways. In my bilingual placement, I see very little interaction between my students (who are all of Latino descent) and the students from other classes. This reflects the division between the predominantly black general education students and the Latinos in the school. The separation between bilingual students and the other students is well intentioned, because Parkview is striving to meet the needs of English Language Learners all at once. But because classes are separated, I see little cooperation between teachers of bilingual classrooms and teachers of general education classes. I also see students playing at recess with others who are the same race as them. The division of classes encourages students to become friends and build relationships with others of their own racial group, strengthening the divide.

(Brooklyn, written reflection, week 7)

Five pre-service teachers were placed at Bellmore, and they also reported the isolation of the bilingual students from the students in the general education classrooms. Participants described the bilingual students as segregated from the students in the general education classes. They also reported that the general education teachers did not interact much with the bilingual teachers. Citing an example, the pre-service teachers noticed that while on a field trip, the bilingual students went in one bus, and general education students went on another bus. The students did not interact with one another while on the field trip, and the teachers did not sit with one another at lunch. Participants said it felt as if Bellmore operated as two separate schools under one roof. Trying to think critically, the pre-service teachers students suggested that the bilingual program was housed in one part of the building because of convenience, allowing teachers to co-plan and work with one another; however, this also seemed to result in the segregation. Through dialogue, pre-service teachers began to see how a well-intended practice,

such as putting the bilingual students in one part of the building, could have unintended consequences:

What I have noticed about Bellmore Elementary School is that the classes are pretty homogeneous. What I have noticed from working as a student teacher is how segregated bilingual classes are compared to other students at Bellmore. For instance, although my class is 3rd grade, the bilingual 3rd grade classroom is on the other side of the building. It appears that children from different classes hardly interact with each other. What my cooperating teacher decided to do with the bilingual class is to switch half of her class with half of the bilingual class during science and social studies. During the switch, half of her class goes to Mr. Weston's¹⁰ class for science, and half of his class comes to her for social studies. I think this is amazing and it is unfortunate that other grades do not participate in this amazing experience. (Claire, weekly reflection 7)

. . . the only thing that comes to mind is how segregated the Hispanic classes are from the regular mainstream classes. I thought about this after we went on a school field trip with one of the Hispanic speaking classes down the hall and we didn't talk to them or have our students mingle with them at all. These students were all in the same grade but did not even really acknowledge one another. At first when I realized we were going on a field trip the with a Spanish speaking class, I thought what a great experience it would be for our kids to mingle with them and work on communicating because we have two Chinese speakers in our room. I thought it would give practice to our students to learn patience with others who may be different from them in one way or another. I was a bit let down

¹⁰ All names of individuals are pseudonyms.

to see that we sat in different parts of the bus and then went to different parts of the museum that we were at. I don't know if this is a school policy that classes have to remain only with their classes or that the Spanish speaking classes can't be taught with the English speaking students . . . but it was pretty apparent that my cooperating teacher and the other teacher did not have any desire to have their students learn together.

(Hannah, written reflection, week 7)

Pre-service teachers placed at Lakeville described the school as a welcoming and accepting environment. Three of the five students stated that they did not notice anything out of the ordinary in terms of policies and practices. I do question if this is in part because Lakeville is a private school and the majority of the students and teachers at this school were White, which made the White participants placed here more comfortable. Participants mentioned that the school worked to create an inclusive environment. Students learned to work together to solve problems:

Honestly I cannot think of any policy or practice, formal or informal, that the entire school follows that reinforces or perpetuates racism. The school overall is very accepting and welcoming as are the school personnel and students; there are even rules that students must follow that reinforce the idea of acceptance and including everyone. When I think about the school, obviously it is very different from other, 'typical' schools . . . in the sense that every classroom as well as the entire school has a strong sense of community and friendship. (Christina, weekly reflection 7)

In my placement at Lakeville, I haven't seen any obvious signs of racist policies or practices. Lakeville has procedures put in place to ensure a diverse community of learners as well as guidelines to make sure all students are included in the classroom community. Our classroom is extremely ethnically, religiously, and racially diverse. Even though I'm in a kindergarten/1st grade combined classroom, we have students openly share cultural aspects with the rest of their classroom. (Nicole, written reflection, week 7)

The practices and policies students noticed in their placements also came up in our dialogue sessions, namely, the policies witnessed at Parkview. Many students talked about how they previously never noticed the differences in how different racial groups were treated. The reflection prompt laid the foundation for students to openly share what they noticed in their placement in the dialogue space. As participants began to share in the dialogue, they recognized that many of the practices and policies they reported were similar. Overall, they learned that society is set up to favor Whites. As such, schools are set up to give advantages to the dominant group. Structural racism, though not explicit, is present.

“It's because I'm Black.”

In dialogue, participants discussed the racial comments that students of Color made to each other and to their cooperating teachers, often as a result of the disciplinary action they encountered. These comments made participants feel uncomfortable. A comment they frequently heard was “It's because I'm Black . . . you are racist.”

Brooklyn mentioned that while she would not be offended if her student said this, she was afraid of a parent making such an accusation. She was afraid of a parent accusing her of failing their child because of race and not because they failed the content. Sophia agreed and referenced a teacher she worked with who was offended when a student called her racist. Sophia

stated that she too would struggle if this happened to her. This led to the participants discussing the importance of taking good notes and documentation, a practice some of them learned from their cooperating teachers. However, Michael and I quickly realized that our pre-service teachers were primarily thinking about ways to “protect” themselves. As such, we challenged them to think about their intent and motives by asking the question, “Are we documenting from a place of defensiveness or doing it because we want useful information?” Michael responded that part of doing this [anti-racist] work is enduring some of the racial comments that students make.

Lin shared an experience she had. As a result of this experience, she found the underlying reason why her Black student made a racial comment. This example provided us as facilitators with an avenue to explain how getting more information is powerful; it is not just about reading the surface comments students make at face value, but rather trying to discover their motives and experiences that lie beneath the comment.

Lin: Yeah, and I have a student in my class and I disciplined him today because he was rolling around the carpet and wasn't writing anything and he was like you are only doing this to me because I'm Black. He always brings it up. And actually I had a conversation about [his behavior] when he calmed down because two students got punished but they were a different race, but it didn't matter to him because it was about him. And he actually told me it's because his mom taught him at home, to be defensive and to protect himself. So when it [a discipline situation] does come up, to say something about it. So what do you say to the student, what do you say to them?

Leo then shared that he had also heard similar comments from his Black students and that he explicitly told his students that he was reprimanding their behavior and that it was not based on

their race. Differentiating between race and behavior led to deeper conversation about the discipline at Parkview and how their teachers attended to misbehavior.

Lila: It's interesting because my co-op is White but we call the office **a lot** [bold to indicate emphasis when speaking] to get Mr. Cannon or Mr. Neil to come to our classroom.

Mai: They are PBIS aids.

Lila: Yeah, she has never talked to me so I dunno if she calls the office right away to get them because she doesn't want to make it a race thing. They [the aides] are very good at disciplining them and getting the kids back in line and then she doesn't have to worry about any of her kids bringing that [race] up and none of my kids have and maybe it's because they are kindergarteners.

Brooklyn: Well, I think, too, I think it's overall hard though especially if your teacher is White and to me, if she is not, if she is not addressing it in the way that Leo is doing, I think that dismissing it is still saying I am above you. You are inferior, and that reemphasizes what they think.

Michael: Yeah, I think Leo is saying you have to emphasize that you aren't doing something because of their race; part of it is that you also have to make sure you aren't doing it because of their race. There is something to back that up. It's what you are modeling in the classroom. What gets real challenging is that you have a certain period of time to establish classroom norms and classroom culture. But your students are bringing stuff with them and you are sitting in a system that existed before you. So even the things we consider good behavior or misbehavior are fraught with "who set that standard?" and "is it a good match for culture?" which you all know. I think there is a piece for White

teachers especially about . . . you really need to know that you are enforcing those [things] because that's what you are enforcing everybody and it's probably not useful even though it comes out of our cultural place as White women especially to not be assertive or to not enforce discipline. I think it's really tricky, though. It is easy to say that. Harder to implement.

Natasha: I've heard many students say that they ask their students to make good choices. "Are you making right choices right now? or "Don't you think you should put that pencil away?" And the student doesn't respond the way you want them to respond. But you have to think about their upbringing and maybe their mom at home doesn't ask them "Don't you think you should put that pencil away?" The parent is probably going to say, [emphatically] "You need to go put that pencil away!" So for some students because they have a different cultural background it doesn't mean that their cultural background is bad or worse. It's just different. But because of who you are, and how you grew up, and how your teachers interacted with you, some White teachers have a tendency to put that onto their students and then separate them from good and bad and that's not fair to students because of your cultural norms, so that's one of the major issues. Same thing with language and maybe how your parents spoke to you. . . . It's important to know that just because they are acting a certain way or in a way that isn't agreeable with you doesn't mean that it is necessarily wrong. If a student is sitting there in a chair and you say "Johnny, don't you think you should do your work?" Johnny might just tell you no, or not do his work because you didn't tell him to do his work, you are asking him. . . .

This dialogue was followed by a conversation about how some teachers deal with the discipline of Black students in comparison to White students. I saw the participants come up with

examples of how this played out in the classroom. They wondered whether students of Color might have developed a lack of respect for their teachers because their teachers never disciplined them but rather called the office for help.

In the following group discussion, Lila shared how she witnessed her cooperating teacher not handle the discipline of her Black students but rather called the office for help or asked for the student(s) to be removed for the classroom. This speaks to the written reflections that other students at Parkview described. Lila described behavior management as a major issue in her classroom. This story is in contrast to Brooklyn's cooperating teacher, also White, who refused to call the office when students were misbehaving. Gabriella shared her experience in a bilingual setting in the same school where discipline was handled differently.

Lila: And that goes along with why my co-op calls in these two disciplinarian people. She tells me listen to how they talk to their students and tells me it's more of a cultural thing. Ms. Cannon will come into the room and say sit down and do your work and that's what she tells the student and they do it and that's not how my co-op talks to the students. For some reason she doesn't feel like she can talk to them in that way even though that may be the best way for them to respond and do their work, so that's a lot of the reason I think she wants that outside help because she knows her students respond to that better. She knows but she herself won't do that.

Michael: I'm assuming these two are the same racial identity as the students or no?

Lila: Yes.

Natasha: So, is it fair to constantly put that onto another teacher? I don't think it is. And when you do that exactly like what Brooklyn said, the students are not going to listen to

anything you have to say. Because whenever there is an issue, they are always going to go to the other teacher.

Lila: Yeah, and it's interesting because as soon as those people [the PBIS aides] come into our classroom, our classroom could be in total chaos and my co-op is doing everything she can to get them to sit down, but as soon as those two people come into my classroom, behavior is fixed. They sit down and they're doing their work.

Natasha: Because they respect them.

Gabriella: That's so funny, because those two people have never come to my class. I'm in a bilingual classroom, all Hispanic class. They come in and say "I'm so glad I don't have to come into this classroom, because you are so good." I also think it has to do with culture. Because my teacher is the same cultural group, and it's funny because today my teacher found out that your [Leo's] class was saying my teacher is mean because they had her two years ago and it's so funny because I see Leo's class pass by and they are all hugging my teacher and I think it's a cultural thing because she deals with it [discipline] right there. If she has to be stern, in the Spanish language—it's "*siéntate*." It's very like—sit down—or do this [gestures, claps hands]. And in other classes, I see "could you please sit down?" And when I came in there I was thinking this is too intense for me. And I thought maybe because I'm part Hispanic, I how my dad and my dad's side of the family would talk to me and it would be a totally different respect than other people talking to me. . . .

Brooklyn: But in contrast to that, my teacher is White in an all Latino classroom. We have never sent a kid to the office.

Natasha: So that's a good point. I'm glad you said that because you don't have to share the cultural identity of the students you teach in order to have a good teaching experience or good relationship with them.

Brooklyn: And that's like her whole thing. If there is a problem, I am going to talk to the kids and understand them, and not dismiss it and send them to the office and miss class time and reinforcing that divide between the cultures.

These examples were focused on discipline, comments made by elementary students, and the importance of forming relationships with students and parents. As facilitators we wanted our students to know that these are all things that require personal investments in building relationships. Michael eloquently stated the point like this:

Michael: If you are invested in continuing to work towards an equitable society there is a way you just have to inure yourself to that or figure out a way to not have it land as a personal attack but to be able to continue to consider the perspective of the person that is saying it, too. Like Lin, you can get a lot of good information from your students. . . .

And that's all stuff you can get out if you are personally invested in the relationship with the student and what's going on and are able to not get hurt by that, which is a really hard line to walk because once you're shutting certain emotions down it's hard to keep other things open.

Her comment is one that made sense for her to say as a White female who shared the racial identity of most of the students. It illustrates empathy with understanding the difficulty in anti-racist work for White students.

All three schools presented challenges and some similarities. Students at Parkview and Bellmore noticed similar policies and practices in regard to English Language Learners and

bilingual students. Parkview, the most racially diverse school of the three, was also the school in which students reported stark differences in regard to the treatment of students of Color. At Lakeville, students reported no major policies perpetuating race, as they felt it was an inclusive school environment that works hard to solve problems together.

The Need and Challenge to Cultural Competence and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

In this section I share the participants' comments on enacting a culturally relevant pedagogy as well as the challenges to dismantling racism in schools. As we discussed discipline and the differences that students of Color experience in relation to their White peers while exploring schools, the participants gradually demonstrated an understanding of the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy. As Olivia stated,

I have thought a lot about how schools are structured to promote racism and what can be done to combat this. I have started to notice the different ways teachers interact with people of certain races. Teachers set different expectations for learning and behavior based on race without even knowing it. (Olivia, Final reflection)

Critical examination of racial politics in the participants' school placements hinted that students of Color were disserved; that seemed to have provided a foundation for discussing the need for cultural competence and a rationale for its importance. Prior to this, it did not appear that the students fully understood the value of a culturally competent classroom.

Most of the participants seemed to recognize that they needed to take their students' background and culture into account when teaching and disciplining students, but they also recognized the challenges. One of their reflection prompts was "What challenges do you anticipate in implementing culturally competent curriculum or contradicting racism in your classroom as a new teacher?" Though this subject was not formally discussed in a dialogue

session, their written responses were interesting. Students frequently cited lack of time, parents, the curriculum, and school and/or school district policies as the main reasons for not implementing a culturally competent curriculum or contradicting racism. Many students felt they might lack the time needed to integrate culturally relevant materials into the curriculum or that there would not be enough time to attend to comments related to race that students might make. This is noteworthy, because even though they recognized the importance of a culturally relevant curriculum, they understood it as an add-on or separate curriculum from the given curriculum.

Another challenge many students referenced was parents. Over half of the participants stated that it might be difficult to contradict or address racism because they were afraid parents would challenge them or be upset that they were teaching race-related content. At least six students referenced that the curriculum, school, and/or the district would not support teaching about critical race issues. Students also mentioned that it would be a challenge if the school lacked diversity. Here students were referencing racial diversity, not recognizing that teaching in a culturally relevant way were not exclusive to race. More especially, students do not see that homogeneous schools, specifically all-White schools, were also disadvantaged from not contradicting issues of race in the classroom. Other challenges included resistance to not wanting to go against school policies, or not wanting to stand out as a new teacher.

A Turning Point

In the dialogue we discussed concepts of privilege and oppression. Michael and I worked closely with the social studies instructor during the semester to better understand what our students were learning in terms of privilege and oppression. This gave us a better sense of what knowledge they came into our discussions with and what concepts we needed to push them to think about more critically.

In this section, I discuss the themes of oppression and White privilege, which is a thread that continued throughout the course of the semester. I will also talk about concepts of whiteness and meritocracy that emerged from students' writings and discussions in class.

Oppression

Many of the writing prompts asked students to write about their life stories. Each week, as we introduced new readings and concepts, we had them think about their life stories through that new lens. They retold their life stories through the lens of race and/or ethnicity, through the lens of oppression or privilege, or the lens of someone who was a member of a different racial or ethnic group. In week three, students were asked to retell their life stories through the lens of oppression. In reading their reflections, it became apparent that not all students understood the concept of oppression. The students of Color in the class seemed to understand this a little more than the White students; this is not surprising given that people of Color are racially oppressed. Below I present many of their written reflections. Gabriella shared that she had not felt oppressed by society as a Polish-Mexican American:

I have felt that I was able to participate in activities without being judged. That being said, I do feel that my family and my life experiences have been affected by oppression in one way or another. Growing up, sharing the fact that I was Mexican came as a shock to many people. People naturally judge/categorize you by the way you look (race), so I feel that people didn't know how to categorize me anymore. I believe that being "white" kept me away from many acts of oppression that some of my family may have gone through.

(Written reflection, week 2)

Here Gabriella acknowledged the privilege of being "White" and how that had allowed her to pass. But she offered the story of her Mexican family members who have experienced

oppression. She shared that some of her family members left their homes because of racial profiling:

A couple years ago, my uncle and cousins lived in Arizona during the time laws were made allowing government officials to ask anyone they suspected to be illegal to show proof of citizenship. This law really got me angry with our government. How is it right to harass people who are doing no harm just because they look a certain way? People in the Arizona area harassed my family by saying racial slurs and threats. These threats included, “You better have your papers you illegal immigrant” or “I’ll call the police.” There were many instances where others would stick up for my family, but eventually they chose to move out of the state. My family felt pushed out by the government even though they were citizens of the United States. This form of oppression literally pushed my family out of their home and made them feel inferior to the rest of the people.

Although Gabriella herself could not personally think of a time she had been oppressed, she did recognize when it was operating in her own family.

Rachel offered a unique perspective. Though she herself had not faced racial oppression, she had experienced it related to her ethnic identity. Because Rachel self-identified with a strong rural ethnic identity, she noticed how she was different from many of her classmates when she came to college:

I read the article “5 Faces of Oppression,¹¹” and I really identified with the section called “The Concept of a Social Group.” In this part, they talked about how people can have very strong ties to the social groups that they identify with. Differences can arise

¹¹ This article was given to students to help them understand what oppression is and the different forms it can take, which include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.

simply in the way that certain groups interact with each other. I noticed that my “social group” was different from most others when I came to college.

I had never considered that I was different from any other white person in the world before I came to college. Within the first few hours of being on campus though, I noticed that things were different. I had countless people in my first year here ask me, “So are you like, from the south?” I would try to explain that no, I’m from Illinois. I had a suitemate that would sit down with me and try to correct the way I talk. I remember a specific instance where she told me that I said “bike” wrong. Bike? How can you say that wrong?

In time I would notice the way that I said things was slightly different from my peers, and I corrected the way I talked in order to fit in. In this way, I think that my home accent and dialect was oppressed and “weeded” out of my vocabulary. I used to always call the last meal of the day “supper,” but have since switched to calling it “dinner,” even around my family. All because my freshman year I was concerned with talking like everyone else.

The first time I experienced intentional oppression was actually just last year. I guess I’m calling it “intentional” because I’m pretty sure that the words were said in order to hurt me more than anything . . . they themselves were from the suburbs of Chicago. One day, we were together and they got on the subject of where they wanted to live after college They said, right to my face, that they couldn’t ever live in the country. “Who would raise children there anyway?” they said. “I couldn’t think of a worse place to live. Do they even have running water there?” I was raised on a farm in the country. They asked me if I thought it was awful there. I was just speechless. This

was something I couldn't change about myself. Were they implying that kids raised in the country were somehow inferior? I called my mom that night in tears. Here I was, 20 years old at the time, and I felt like I was somehow seen as "less than," all due to the place I came from.

On page 38 of "5 Faces," there is a line that says, "Our identities are defined in relation to how others identify us," and I think this is true. I never identified myself as a part of a group until coming to college. I don't even know how to put a name to this group. "Rural community?" "Farm family?" "Agriculture culture?" But, in the past four years, this identity has been very important to me. (Written reflection, week 2)

As mentioned in Chapter Five, Rachel is a White female who felt like an outsider during her time in college. She understood the concept of "otherness" from this experience, feeling oppressed because of where she grew up and how she talks. While not racial oppression, it became a way for her to understand how certain groups can be targeted and othered.

Other written responses included one by a student who shared that oppression may come from within one's own racial and/or ethnic group. Another student stated that she believed everyone was the victim of oppression at some point in his or her life. She shared an example of her grandparents who lived in Poland during the Holocaust and the oppression that they experienced. This goes back to what Rachel and Mai shared; different groups experience different forms of oppression. Throughout the data, many of the White students could not provide specific examples of when they themselves had been oppressed—which was the reflection prompt—but had a feeling that they understood it. They often referred to family members or people they knew. This may hint that many of them have not faced oppression directly.

After a few weeks into the semester, during week 6 (10/15/14), we came back to the topic of oppression. We noticed that students had a hard time grasping the ways it manifests, and we wanted to have them think of tangible examples of how oppression operates. We noticed that in most of their weekly reflections, except for a few students, it was a difficult concept. We asked students to work together and think about the commonalities between different forms of oppression. Here are many of the comments made:

- “A group of people, making another group of people feel inferior” (Brooklyn)
- “The awareness of certain -isms can be more obvious than others. People think or are aware of some more than others. As in sexism or racism are highly, people are very aware of those things. But ageism maybe not so much.” (Leo)
- “When one group points out the negative things about another group or things they perceive to be negative about another group.” (Sydney)
- “It’s mostly seen when it’s something visible. Classism, the way you dress, racism, sexism, things that are visible to the eye are probably more common than the ones that are not as noted—you have to talk to someone to be able to figure it out.” (Gabriella)
- “Also leads to limiting people within those groups. They feel limited and also other people limit them.” (Mai)

Michael and I added to their responses and shared that oppression is also hierarchal, that one group is usually the agent and the other group is usually the target. Students also sat and thought about the differences between different forms of oppression. This was a bit more difficult for them, but by the end of the conversation students were able to see that some oppressed groups are to some extent hidden and invisible whereas others, such as race, are not. We also informed

them that oppression could be internalized, particularly if we are thinking about homosexuality.

Michael provided an example that students were able to grasp:

The other piece of that is, sometimes when you talk about the things that are not initially visible there is a sense of well, you have relief from the oppression, but it's really just that the oppression targets you differently. Gay folks who are in the closet and pass are still being targeted by oppression. I think that visibility piece is important. (IGD session, week 6, 10/15/14)

We wanted students to understand the nuts and bolts of oppression in order to see its relationship to privilege and whiteness.

Is it White Privilege or Whiteness?

We spent a great deal of time discussing the concept of White privilege and whiteness in weeks 5–7 of the dialogue course. One week (week 6, 10/15) we had students sit and think for 15 minutes and reflect on their own racial identity in regard to oppression. We asked students to think and jot down where they saw racism happening and what it looks like in their lives. We asked them to reflect on where they were noticing it. For the White students we asked:

- Where do you see racism happening?
- What does it look like?
- What are you noticing?
- What does your own White privilege look like?
- What is challenging about thinking about your own White identity?

And for the students of Color:

- Where do you see racism happening?
- What does it look like?

- What are you noticing?
- In what ways do you feel oppressed?
- How does oppression play out internally vs. externally?

We asked students to think of specific examples. Below I share the dialogue about what unfolded after students reflected on these questions.

Natasha: What's hard about having attention on this topic [racism]?

Lila: I'm still not . . . this is not helping me think about it. I'm still not seeing it in my life and if somebody were to make me realize it was happening in my life, saying it out loud, but I still can't think of it.

Mai: I think if I were to take on the perspective of them [Whites] . . . you don't realize that there are people going through these things, because when you're the norm it's easy to not see what's going on outside your box and I think it's easier for people who are outside the norm to look inside and see what's different about them. So it's hard to write about something that maybe you don't even know about.

Lila: Or just growing up in the area I grew up in. I never had to think about it, never affected me at all because it was predominantly White nation; that was my high school population. So there was nothing that was in my life that is affected by that.

Brooklyn: But to me, living in a community like that, because that is definitely a community where I lived, the lack of diversity and racial minorities is racism.

This is a powerful statement. Brooklyn was really getting at the structural ways in which racism operates. She saw how living in homogeneous communities, whether intentional or not, contributes to structural racism and classism. Immediately after Brooklyn made the comment,

Lila really struggled and demonstrated some defensiveness. This then led to us working through the privilege and whiteness.

Michael: Yeah. And I also think—

Lila: —Not on my part. [Defensively]

Brooklyn: No, it's no. It's not you. I'm not calling you a racist. I'm just saying it's the system. My community, not having that, that's racism, that's classism. That's a lot of different things because those minority groups are not represented.

Lila: Yeah—right, but at the same time like—I mean, I know my family—I dunno. . . . my grandpa came here and started with nothing, didn't even speak English. Worked hard to get there and so, he worked hard for his kids, eventually when he got married and had kids, that's the life he had come to set up for his children and he came here literally with nothing. . . . So that's why I am having trouble doing this.

This was a very difficult conversation for the students. They stumbled, stopped, and corrected themselves. They were unsure about what to say. It was primarily the White students who participated, and lack of awareness was evident in their comments. But they were taking risks by trying to figure how race operates.

Michael: But that's the work, right? All of the things you just said actually are describing, are answering the question. It just doesn't feel like it.

Lila: So how is that White privilege?

Michael: It's whiteness. It is not exclusively White privilege, and that's such an important distinction.

Lila: Oh, okay. So maybe that's why I am having problems.

Michael: Well, only one of the questions is [about] White privilege, right?

Lila: Yeah, but I mean, I talked about some of the things I am seeing in my school. But, I can talk about that stuff. Like I told you guys already that one of our students, he is Black and he doesn't do this anymore, but he did it a lot in the beginning of the year. He told my co-op, his dad really wants to know how many Black teachers there are in the school and how many Black kids there are in our class. And that's pretty interesting, the mindset of that.

Lila was not able to consider that the son's father *may* have been concerned about potentially negative experiences his son might have as a Black child with predominately White teachers in the school. This was something that we could have explored further, but we let the comment go because Michael did not want to lose what Lila was saying about her grandfather.

Michael: I don't want to lose what you were saying before. Just talking about where you came from and particularly your grandfather's story. Talking about whiteness or even specifically about White privilege does not negate that. And I think that one of the dangers of an oversimplified conversation about race is that the only thing about White people is their privilege.

This was challenging for Lila; she struggled with reflecting on the questions. She got a bit defensive and began to share how her grandfather worked hard and how that had impacted her family. It was difficult for her to see her White privilege as a form of privilege when her grandfather came here with nothing. Her grandfather was a minority at one point. When Michael explained to her that this was an example of whiteness operating, she then distanced herself from working through that, by putting her attention on what she was noticing in her placement with her Black students. We did not want to lose such a powerful and often common statement about her grandfather but rather tried to address it.

Irene: Yeah. I felt the same way as Lila. When I read those questions, because my dad grew up poor and then my mom's side of the family, my grandma came here from Poland with nothing. They came out of the concentration camp like I said with one holy picture. They didn't know English or anything and I know we say "you can't always work to get what you get," but they did have to work here and get where they had to be, so I think sometimes that's hard. And even when we had to do the written assignment, I asked my friend of a different color, I asked two of my friends, one from Ecuador, too. And they said they can't describe my life for me . . . they said, "Oh, I wouldn't even know how to describe your life." So I feel classism may take a bigger presence sometimes versus the color of your skin too.

Natasha: So I think the flip side is it doesn't—it influences the value that was placed on that hard work. So often I think the narrative is the rich CEO who made it through not doing anything. He didn't get there because he worked hard but actually most CEOs work really hard and that's why they are CEOs. But the chance to do challenging work is the privilege. The doors that open to that kind of work, it doesn't mean that you don't work hard to get there. It's about what else you get that opens the door in the path, because other people who work just as hard don't have that. And this is the work around whiteness . . .

Mai: I think maybe, there is some misunderstanding around what White privilege is. It's not racist to live in a White community and your families worked hard to be there. That's not White privilege. Your ancestors, your grandpa, they worked very hard and having White privilege doesn't undermine the hard work they did. White privilege, maybe I am wrong, but White privilege simply means because the color of your skin you have some

kind of advantage over other people. It has nothing to do with “Oh, you have White privilege that’s why you guys are rich.” It has nothing to do [with it].

Here Mai used her knowledge of White privilege to explain how it does not mean that someone is racist or should feel guilty for the opportunities that they do have. This was a perfect example of the generosity of people of Color to share with Whites how racism works and how whiteness operates.

Olivia: I think it’s hard to think about what your own White privilege looks like because I don’t know what my life would look like if I weren’t White. So I am sure there are things like, opportunities that opened up to me because I am White, but I don’t know what the flipside of that is because it’s not like someone of a different color is living a parallel life to me. So it’s hard to figure out, you don’t know, I’m sure there are things, but you just don’t know because I am not a different color.

Hannah: It’s hard to know personally how it actually affects me because this is just the family and life I was born into. I didn’t choose where my family chose to live, where my grandparents chose to live; I was just born into it and raised like that. So it’s hard to really know how it would affect me because I don’t know how it would affect me on the flipside, which is kinda of like what you were saying [motions to Olivia]. So I dunno what it would be like if I wasn’t White and still lived in that same community and had parents with the same job and same grandparents and same story. So I think that’s where some of us get stuck.

Sydney: I think it’s more about thinking about how the institutions that you are a part of set up these kind of scales to determine who is going to be more privileged and who is not going to be more privileged. Because the United States was founded on an

evangelical Eurocentric White kind of foundation, then it's obvious that the people who are going to be in power and make the rules and determine who is successful, or who is not successful, or who is more successful than someone else, is going to be the people in power which are the Eurocentric White males. So it's not so much thinking about how you are personally affected by it but how the institutions have affected your way of thinking. Right?

Rachel: Yeah, I think that's a really good way to explain it. One of the things I was struggling with was that none of these things are my fault, it's like the institution, but it's hard because this is such a personal issue. . . .

Sydney: I agree, 'cause that's why I was so frustrated when thinking about this because the institutions have set it up this way. I may not necessarily agree with it, and I think that's part of the reason we are all here because we are trying to combat these things that have been happening especially in our school systems, but you have to think about it that way, and take yourself out of the picture and think about why they are set up this way, and even though it might not be your fault, how can you be an agent of change to change those systems so that way people who are not like you can experience the same kind of benefits and opportunities that you have. Sorry.

Sydney and Rachel were able to see how difficult it was to discuss White privilege and whiteness because it was and is so personal. They were able to speak to Olivia and Hannah's comments.

Whiteness blinds many Whites from seeing how the institutional structures create White privilege. Rachel recognized that we are taught that it is a choice that is either personal or beyond one's scope and that it cannot be both, when in actuality is a both/and, and that we need to move from an either-or framing to both-and framing.

This dialogue was a powerful turning point in the semester. They began to slowly see this kind of dialogue not as a personal attack on them individually, but as a systemic problem that is constantly operating. After this dialogue we asked students to try an exercise as part of their next assignment. Students were instructed to go out for the week and note anything that appeared to be White. Our rationale for this was to get students to think about White culture and how it is all around us. Often the White students commented that they did not have a culture, that they were “just White.” They saw other racial groups as being rich in culture and tradition. The objective of this exercise was to help some of them see that being White also comes with a culture. In their written reflections, they shared that they did not notice much racial diversity in the local bars; other students referenced specific clothing that they noticed many White students wearing. Other responses described a lack of diversity in the College of Education. They realized they had no professors of Asian heritage. Claire eloquently stated how even ethnic food has become “white.”

As a part time job I work at Panda Express. My entire weekend is mostly spent working as a counter helper. I have realized how whiteness even the so-called “Chinese” food is. All of the food is Americanized to best fit the needs and wants of the customers. While it all makes sense and is understandable, but that is where Panda Express loses its Chinese authenticity. (Written reflection, week 6)

This exercise started a dialogue on how White culture is embedded in our society. Because students lived and worked on or near the university, most responses revolved around things around the college campus. After reading their written reflections, we realized how similar their responses were. We also noticed that they did not critique what they had noticed. This led us to plan a class session based on the concept of whiteness.

The setup. We placed chart paper with different words from the students' reflections and asked them to do a gallery walk and provide examples for the different topics. The topics were place, food, language, cultural and religious events/activities, education, work, media and entertainment, and "other." After students rotated among the charts, they asked clarifying questions. This was important because it allowed us all to start the discussion with a common understanding of terms. An example of this is that one student had written "PSL" and a number of other students had put a check mark or star next to it in agreement. I myself did not know what that meant until a number of students said it was "pumpkin spice latte." This served as another model for how students could also ask for clarification. We then had a whole group discussion asking guiding questions, including:

- What was it like to notice whiteness?
- How is that different from how you thought about whiteness before?
- What are essential elements of being White?
- If we know the fuller picture of whiteness, and that White privilege is one of the features of whiteness, what do we do about that?
- Why notice whiteness? What's potentially valuable about it? What's potentially harmful?

The session. What follows is the discussion that occurred after students completed the gallery walk.

Michael: So let's get into it a little bit. **Why are these things White? What makes them White?** [bold indicates emphasis when speaking]

Rachel: I have a great illustration. I wrote "kale" right next to Leo, and he was like, what the hell is kale? And I was like, no offense but that's my point.

Michael: I grow kale . . . but what makes kale White? Because a lot of people eat kale, actually.

Olivia: I think recently it became a fad. Like avocados were a fad for a little bit. Everyone needs to eat kale. It's a super food. It's so good for you. So all of the rich White people started eating kale. So then it became White. . . .

Hannah: I think of people who eat kale as people who juice, which I think of juicers as White people because of the infomercials. It is a White thing.

Paige: Maybe the people who are chosen to advertise or the people who are tweeting about it, "Oh, going on a kale diet," maybe it's a White person tweeting it, so the people following are going to do it.

Michael: I think this piece is important. It's imbued some sort of cultural meaning that then has an economic impact. Kale is super cheap to grow and very easy to grow and it is actually something that poor people used to grow a lot because you can grow a lot of it with one or two seeds and it's super nutritious and then it's popular and popularized and becomes out of touch there

Leo: Who wrote bars? Why?

Paige: We did, why?

Hannah: I think specific bars. I don't really go out that much but—I think it's a lot of sorority people.

Michael and I: So, again, what makes this white?

Brooklyn: The Greek life culture is drinking, and so campus bars are going to have a lot of Greek people. Greek culture is normally all White unless you are in some ethnic sorority or fraternity. Greek culture is White.

Leo: I know the Hispanic frats and fraternities don't go to bars, they have house parties or they go somewhere else on campus.

Michael: And why? Why do you think that distinction happens?

We tried to challenge students to tease this out a bit further by asking, "How do we know this?" and "How are we able to make these racial distinctions?" We again went back to "How do you know when something is White?" Students were able to describe what they saw, but we noticed they were having a difficult time making deeper connections and recognizing the implications of whiteness in what they were noticing.

Leo: Because there is no real place on campus where they can identify with. So, I noticed I got invited to—there is a restaurant out of town and it turns into a bar at night and they actually play just music in Spanish, all the different genres in Spanish. And that's where they had the party; I'm like, that's understandable. Because you are not going to hear—if you do go here [place in town], and it's out at a bar; it's not going to be at a crazy dance place, it's going to be a sit down place, nothing that you can really identify with on campus if you are a Hispanic person.

Brooklyn: And bars too, the music is huge, there is country music in bars, there is pop music in bars, and some places even have country night and that's typically a White, whiteness.

Lila: Like an 8th grade night at Lido's. '90s.

Michael: So we are starting to get at both in terms of things that happen and proximity and centrality of White things. What else do you notice? What else? I'm curious particularly about the attire.

[Students laugh.]

Michael: And just thinking about this stuff. **What makes these things white?**

Elizabeth: Like the Internet, there will be things like, typical White girl attire . . .

Rachel: There are articles upon articles about basic White girl outfit.

Michael: I have a chicken and egg question. What came first? Were the clothes White first or did these articles...?

Olivia: Well, when you look at the people advertising the clothes, it goes back to the advertisements, so people advertising the clothes are normally White people.

Paige: Like yoga pants.

Olivia: White people buy them and then they just become White.

Leo: They are higher price, they are expensive.

Hannah: Those things are designer brand. I feel like a lot of people choose to buy them because of the label it is representing.

Paige: Like UGGS used to be, I don't want to say more expensive, but more exclusive. And Victoria Secret, and North Face jackets, and now it's more like Raybans.

Mai: What's interesting is I read this article about basic and if you look at the origin of basic on the Internet, it was first used in African American communities describing the same thing we are describing. It describes the same thing we are describing but in African American communities, which I think is really interesting and now it has been adapted by White people to describe basic White people.

This dialogue exchange was a good starting point for students to think about the larger implications of what they were noticing in their day-to-day routines. But the central question that we kept coming back to was "What makes this White?" A couple of students brought up how attire and the way people dress changes regionally or from city to city. They teased out nerdy

white versus redneck white attire versus attire worn in England versus a farming community. We asked them to think about these shifts in clothing, for example, and that though they are not universal we can all recognize them as all being part of White culture in some way.

A shift in this dialogue session was when Nicole shared that she thought the whiteness activity was highly offensive. This changed the tone of the dialogue. While most students saw this as a light and playful activity, Nicole looked at it from a completely different perspective.

Nicole: So I think I took this a little differently than a lot of people. I went home this weekend and did the same thing. Are there a lot of White people in Target? Are there a lot of White people in Starbucks? It was kind of offensive. I dunno, if it's because we are White and we are the majority, but I think, I just find something offensive about where are all the White people and use that to generalize your entire culture. I feel like if we had gone out and looked for all the Asian people, all the Black people, all the Hispanic people, where do they hang out, we would have gotten a completely different response. It would have been taken offensively and I think that might be, I don't think it really got at what we are trying to get out. Oh, there are a lot of White people here and here. I don't think it got to the heart of the issue. We didn't go out and look at ghettos, or prisons, but we just looked around the college campus. We didn't go out and say there are significant percentage more minorities in this particular place because this is where the system fails someone. So I think tying it back to White privilege didn't sink in at all. So I went home and asked my dad, who is a probation officer and was like how many White people do you have on your caseload and how many Mexicans are? And he had a significant percentage more of Black and Hispanic-Latino population on his caseload than he did White and he talked about the specific crimes that were committed. Like the Black and

Latino people on his caseloads were prostitutes because they couldn't afford to go out and do anything else to support the kids they have and he talked about how a lot of them have HIV and AIDs and all of these different things and I don't think going out and looking at the fact that more White people attend hockey games than Black people do really got anything. . . . I kind of found most of this whole thing offensive. . . . but like all White girls wear UGGS and yoga pants, and all White people are teachers, and pop music, and all of these things may be true but if we said this about any other culture, I feel like we would be in a completely different position where we would be labeled considered prejudice and racists. And I don't necessarily think that's fair and I know obviously life isn't necessarily fair but getting at what we are trying to get out is structurally there is a problem with the system where minorities, because they're people who are not the people that are in power, they are put at a disadvantage and I don't think this did any of it.

Nicole was occasionally oppositional to things discussed in the dialogue and may have been influenced by her experience as a White female growing up in a predominantly Black community and understanding systemic racism. She was actually describing systemic whiteness and its consequences, and making some valid comments. She brought up a good point about how we needed to get at the structural issues with the system. As facilitators, this was something we could have interrogated a bit further but did not, in part because the majority of the class did not have the background knowledge and content needed at that point to have that conversation like she did. We did tell the students that we intentionally set up the assignment for them to go out and look for whiteness. In reference to Nicole's take on the assignment, Michael and I described our purposes:

Michael: We set it [the assignment] up . . . to generate this kind of discussion, to be transparent about that. A lot of this, there is an underlying sense of we are kind of ridiculous people, this is ridiculous or these things are ridiculous and there is a useful way to be light about it and a way that it is not helpful to be separated from a positive sense of your own culture. So as we have been talking and as you've told stories, for the White folks in the rooms as you talked about your family histories and the places you come from, all of that is a part of whiteness and all of your experiences of whiteness are different because we are all different people from different places and still, Nicole, this is where we come back to it as you were saying, the systemic thing is so huge and if you are an individual in the system you have to have a sense of what that is. Particularly if we look at the intersection, race and gender particularly for White women, there is this kind of "oh, you are silly" kind of notion. Which is not a super empowering place to come at things from sometimes. I think along with that in schools there are questions: "Am I the right person to step in here?" "Do I have the capacity to build relationships with all of my students?" "If they are students of Color how can I ever understand?"

Michael wanted the participants to recognize that there is intersection between gender and race and that often for White women they are not taken seriously, which is not very empowering. This then leads to questioning their ability and their knowledge. She was explaining how this lack of confidence can transfer into their work as teachers:

Michael: If you kind of bend towards the side where you think that systemic racism is a problem and shouldn't be happening, you can be paralyzed by guilt. . . . but if you are someone who doesn't lean towards seeing that is a problem, kind of adhering to maybe a side of colorblindness, it can be a way of saying well, this isn't even a thing. I don't have

a culture; I don't have a race, so how could it be a problem. So I think this all such rich discussion. . . .

Natasha: We set it up for that purpose. I am glad you got offended. You weren't wrong to get offended. I think it's hard to talk about White privilege without talking about whiteness. Because if you talk strictly about White privilege most Whites feel defensive, most Whites feel guilty because the mentality is well my family worked hard, and I haven't done anything wrong. I'm just me—I don't have a White identity. But all of these things . . . [are] what you see and that is what whiteness is whether you take on some of these attributes. Does that make sense?

Michael: And it's not exhaustive, there is so much more.

Natasha: So when you say there is no White culture, that's inaccurate.

Michael: Which no one in here explicitly said, which is good, but you will hear it.

Here I was a bit absolute in my responses. I believe this was in part because I wanted students to understand that, for most of them, their culture is everywhere. At the time, I was probably projecting my frustration of White ignorance and naïveté on my students. Having Michael in that moment helped to soften some of my response. This also highlights the importance of co-facilitation.

White Privilege

The students also talked about the concept of White privilege more specifically. They discussed privilege in both the intergroup dialogue and their social studies class. As research has shown, students are often resistant or defensive when asked to address White privilege (King, 1991; McIntosh, 1990, Sleeter, 2004 Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005). The White students in this study were no different. Many acknowledged that they were a bit on guard when

discussing White privilege as was demonstrated earlier with Lila. As a class we worked at deconstructing White privilege as a system that is set up to favor the White majority. We provided students with readings, including a recent article at the time called, “What My Bike Taught Me about White Privilege” (Dowsett, 2014). Many commented that this article helped lower their defenses and begin to see White privilege for what it was, a privilege that favors many of them.

Earlier in the semester, students were challenged to question things they had experienced or noticed, such as if they were hired for a job because of their race. Students were able to see that their families and environments sheltered them from hardship, which was another privilege. Mai wrote about going to a bar with a friend and recognizing that they were not helped first even though they were the first. She started to question if it may have been because she was Asian. Rachel questioned whether in high school she received a hostess job on the spot because of her White privilege. Many students wrote that they led a privileged lifestyle as White, upper-class females.

Nicole, as mentioned earlier, had a unique perspective. She shared in both her written reflection and in the dialogue that growing up in a predominantly Black and low-income community still provided her some privileges. In one of our sessions, she asserted that she knew she had received special attention because she was one of the few White students in the class who also shared the racial identity as her teacher.

In third grade I remember, I was one of three or four White kids and our teacher would always use “us” as the model of “this is how you should be acting,” not because we behaved any better than the rest of the class but because we were the same race that she was. . . . I think I see it everywhere because I came from a background where I was the

minority so I noticed when people gave me special attention because I am White and because I had different opportunities than someone who performed just as well as I did but was a different race. (Dialogue session, week 6, 10/15/14).

Nicole had prior experiences with people of Color and that makes one more aware of privilege—which is harder to see when the majority of the people in your social circles also look like you. This, Nicole had admitted, was frustrating at times because she had an awareness, unlike many of her classmates, and was able to see the systemic inequalities, and understand her privilege and power as a member of the majority group.

Meritocracy

Meritocracy was also a theme that emerged from the analysis of the data. Many students early in the dialogue course made comments that their families worked hard for what they have. A couple of White students in both the dialogue session and in their written reflections stated that they worked hard to get into college and that it was not just because of their race. This implies a common belief that some do get into college because of their race and not because they also worked hard. Such comments are typical in IGD dialogues, but they signal that there is the idea that hard work equals success and that people should not be rewarded unless they work hard in a particular way. Here are some comments of this type from students:

My cousins are, some of them, are Guatemalan. . . . we were in the same school district in high school. Because she got to check that box, she got money to go here and I didn't. I remember being extremely frustrated because I worked just as hard to get here. We have the same family. We do the same things. But because your grandparents on your side came from Guatemala, you get money. (Hannah, dialogue session 2, 9/3/14)

People generalize where you are based on: where you are from, the color of your skin, all these other things. I guess an example could be, people would say, “Oh you are from the Chicago suburbs,” “Oh you must be rich.” But it’s like, no, my parents grew up really poor at first. So they had to work hard. So they think you don’t value hard work, so that gets really annoying. (Irene, dialogue session 3, 9/10/14)

I am someone that feels very strongly about people earning things (including spots at a school or university) based on merit and academia as opposed to race or ethnicity or even due to a disability or other characteristic. . . . the high school that I attended, is a selective enrollment public school in the city and as such applicants need to take a test, send in their transcripts, in order to apply and possibly be accepted. . . . I am fully aware of affirmative action, what it is and what it is trying to accomplish as well as the idea that schools wish to be diverse but I do not feel that these concepts are entirely or incredibly fair. . . . Although I did end up getting into Sunset Prep, there were other schools that I applied to that I was denied admittance partially because of my race and ethnicity. I cannot be completely certain that this is the reason. But it is a possibility. (Christina, Written reflection, week 2, 9/3/14)

Christina was one a few students who mentioned that she worked hard to get into college and that her acceptance was not because of her race. Her reflection reflects the idea that some get into college because of their race and not because they, too, are working hard. Michael and I did not always respond to this information in their posts or in the dialogue because we did not want our comments to derail the conversation or stymie individuals. We tried to be thoughtful about when to provide information or when to let students share. Hannah, Irene, and Christina’s comments

were made during the beginning weeks of the dialogue. When Lila made a similar comment during week 6, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, we did interject to suggest that this was an example of meritocracy and tried to help her examine this notion as an example of whiteness in operation.

Train the Trainer: “You Can’t be Elsa because You’re Black”

Intergroup dialogue allowed students to pay attention to things happening in the schools. They learned to compare and contrast differences between interactions with students of different racial identity groups as demonstrated in the category entitled “Exploring Schools.” It helped them to critically question systemic racism, as it exists in the schools.

During the last three dialogue sessions, Michael and I wanted to attend to the “how” of dialogue. Many students often shared that they did not know how to deal with conversations about race or other controversial issues in the class when they came up. Other students confessed that they were uncomfortable discussing them. Engaging in dialogue over the course of the semester helped to address some of that discomfort. Initiating, facilitating, and sustaining a conversation with their own students was something they did not know “how” to do. As such, we wanted to provide our students with tangible facilitation training. We wanted to give them strategies to intervene if their own students made racist comments to them or to other students. We described three types of dialogue that they could engage in with their students: in-the-moment intervention, a planned dialogue session, and sustained dialogue over time. The next section highlights examples of in-the-moment intervention.

In-the-Moment Strategies

In-the-moment interventions are strategies used to stop a behavior or comment in the moment. We discussed how then to open up a dialogue. We asked students to think about

comments they heard in their field placements related to race that they believed deserved an intervention or how they could have handled it differently than the way they did or the way their cooperating teacher handled it, and what to do if it happened again. Here are a few comments from their field placements:

- “They were coloring in people and a kid and this kid just used a brown, a light brown, and his friend turned to him and was like, oh do you want this color? The peach?” (Paige)
- “The popular one at Parkview is, ‘Is it because I’m Black?’” (Leo)
- “You can’t be Elsa or Ana for Halloween because you are Black.” (Mai)
- “Only Asian people use chopsticks.” (Sydney)
- Why did you color yourself brown in this picture? (Nicole)

We started with the comment Nicole’s student made (“Why did you color yourself brown in this picture?”) and worked through that as an example for the dialogue. One of Nicole’s students had looked at her and asked why she was using a different color crayon from her. Nicole realized that while it was a fair question, she did not know how to respond to it. As a whole group, we went through a process of the intentions the student may have had, why she may have said it, and what Nicole could have said or done after the comment was made. Nicole provided some context by explaining that her students were drawing pictures of each other. Below is the dialogue that took place to show how we asked our students to work through the conversation.

Michael: And what age?

Nicole: Kindergarteners. And the other little girl was Asian.

Michael: So usually when we talk about this, we talk about if that’s the comment, and we try and diagram that out, so we are going to do that as a group and then everyone will have time to practice this out. So the little girl—

[Draws stick figure of little girl on the board.]

Michael: So we are trying to depersonalize for a minute and think about the comment. They are exploring the activity and the social meaning. What do you think is under the question? What motivated the question?

Nicole: More along the lines of why is she different from you?

[Michael writes down the word difference on the board.]

Michael: And if she is pushing up against noticing difference, what kind of feelings does that provoke for that age group?

Gabriella: Curiosity? Is that a feeling?

Michael: Yeah.

Mai: I know that at a young age, if it's different that means it's not fair, it's not equal.

Michael: Okay, so a sense of fairness. . . .

Lin: A sense of belonging.

Nicole: A general sense of confusion, too, she really just wanted to know why.

Michael: So what else comes up for little kids? We are going to generate as many possibilities of what could have been underneath that comment. So what other feelings come up when kids notice difference?

Sophia: So if their parents said something or preconceived knowledge or something.

Nicole: Mistrust kind of.

Natasha: So if we think about the setup again. There is a student working with the teacher. You have a good relationship with the student I am assuming, and another student is noticing difference. So what else comes up in the context of noticing difference in relationships for kids?

Sydney: I don't know if this is where you are going but likes and dislikes of activities that they like to do.

Michael: Associations also.

Leo: I don't know if this would be right, but privileges and identity.

Paige: Figuring out where they fit in. I guess what I mean if you drew her this color, and her color, what would I be kind of thing. Is she doing it wrong?

Here we wanted students to think about the possibilities. Charting out all the possibilities on the board is a long-form way of what we wanted to encourage them to do in their heads when students make an uncomfortable or inappropriate comment. We wanted students to understand that comments have an impact on others, but the response that we make as teachers often focuses on the content of the comment, not at the underlying layers beneath the comment. So as teachers, they needed to take time to dig further. We explained that emotional content around comments of race and other social identities can provoke different things for people. In order to promote dialogue, we need to be careful how we respond to the comments students make by breaking down the possibilities that lay behind the comment. After the pre-service teachers shared the possibilities of why Nicole's student made her comment, we thought about what the most likely of those possibilities could be.

Nicole: Probably some curiosity and maybe some confusion.

Michael: Okay. So knowing that, what do you think it was like for the other child who was there in the moment.

Nicole: She kind of just looked at me. . . . I don't think she was visibly upset, but I think it made her wonder, is there a reason, is it bad that it's different from each other, what does it mean that we don't look the same when we draw ourselves on paper. . . . But she

is always very composed. So I think, had it been someone else, they may have had a stronger reaction, like what does it matter or something like that.

Michael: Okay. So in thinking about what would generate conversation, we will get there in a minute, but how did you respond?

Nicole: I said, the same reason why I drew my hair red. Because that's what I think I look like. And then we had to pack up and clean up. It was really just because that's what I look like and this is why my hair is orange on the piece of paper, and she thinks she looks like this, which is why she chose that marker.

Michael: And given the in-the-momentness, your response was pretty informational. Which is useful in some cases. Sometimes what people need is accurate information. Do you think that generates further conversation down the road?

Nicole: I mean, there are things that I think could have obviously gone better and in a different direction that I would have loved to have taken, but I think the little girl who asked the questions could have thought to herself, well, what should I draw myself like? Do I draw myself like this or this? Because . . . there are two Korean children in the classroom, and they are not normally in groups together and if the other kids are sitting around . . . if all the White people use this crayon, but the people who have darker skin use a different crayon, then what do I use? So I mean, that could have probably stimulated a question when she got home. . . . And I don't think [it would have] too much negative impact on them that they would go home and cry "why are we so different?" but I really would have preferred to have a conversation, like just because we look different doesn't mean anything bad. We both have hair, and look, we both drew heads and arms and eyes, but it didn't get there.

Young children do not typically draw to be “realistic.” They are often schematic drawers just representing things, like eyes, nose, mouth—sometimes they think of these schematics as having a particular color, though that is not often the case. They are not necessarily viewing the world in order to draw something that “accurately” represents the world. But Nicole was thinking of ways she could have addressed the student and the question she had asked her. She was not able to think of possible responses to the student, and the goal of this intervention was to get in the practice of thinking about how to respond to students in the moment. Nicole was doing a great job at thinking this through.

Michael: And we are not doing this as a judgment of anything you did. And the other thing I will say is that these comments are not always tinged with negativity but what to do to get that conversation moving or continuing. So what I think often happens in classrooms is the information piece overrides the conversation piece. And we are asking for something different with dialogue. . . . You are not going to have a conversation with kids about the melatonin content, even though that information is accurate info that would be useful at some point. So let’s as a group think of questions to keep the conversation moving forward. So in that situation, as Nicole, what is a question you could have asked either student that would have generated conversation.

Leo: Like, what do you think? To get a general sense of what their understanding of the topic is.

Michael: Also gives us access to what the motivation is. Good.

Eric: Ask the girl coloring, why she chose that color. Kind of goes along with what Leo said.

Michael: So redirect the question. What are other questions that get at the motivation for the comment?

Irene: Maybe the other girl who asked the question. Well, how would you draw it?

Michael: Good.

Gabriella: Is this the only color she could have used? Maybe, my hair I know isn't this exact color, but it's the closest color I could find.

We discussed how to watch for tone when responding to student comments; that is, how they ask students matters more than the actual words they may use. "Why" questions can provoke defensiveness, even if that is not the intent. We therefore asked participants to watch for things like an increase or decrease in defensiveness when they intervene and to balance the impact of the statement and getting at the motivation for the statement. Participants were then given time in class to work through another example (a comment) and map out the potential motivations behind the comment, the potential impact of the comment on the other people (their students) that may be present, as well as to think about the context in which the comment was made. Participants were then given a worksheet to help them brainstorm a list of questions they could ask their students to keep the conversation moving forward.

One salient example that was discussed in small groups and shared for the whole group was the comment "You can't be Elsa because you're Black." This comment was picked by many of the students to be discussed in small groups because they felt they would struggle if they heard a student say that to another student.

Hannah: Okay, we picked the Elsa and you can't be Elsa, because you're Black. I think some of the questions we thought a student would say were, "Don't you have to be the same color to be like that?"

Gabriella: More connections to the character, to the physical traits.

Hannah: So we were thinking to address it by making it more humorous. “Well, I’ve been a pumpkin before for Halloween and I’m not really that.”

Gabriella: But we thought to go deeper than that, rather than pushing it off as a joke because it isn’t a joke, there is something probably deeper than that. Hannah brought up a good point, about picking out the traits that are not physical but maybe more about their personalities. So saying “I think she would be a great as Elsa because she is just as brave as Elsa, she always raises her hand when I am asking a difficult question” or “I’ve heard her sing before,” something like where it is not just how she looked.

Sophia: And then we thought the next step would be like relating it to people who look alike. So asking if they have ever looked like someone else? Are they the same as someone else? And having them have a discussion about how they are unique and how we are all different so if they pick a character it doesn’t mean that they necessarily have to look like them. . . .

Lin: Our group is really similar to what they talked, where we talked about role models and you don’t have to have the role model of the same skin color versus what they said, emphasis on universal traits: endurance, perseverance, or strength; these are things that anybody can possess regardless of skin color or who they are, so basically focusing on that would be a way to address the issue without saying let’s only be finding skin color for these students and these students find things that match them. They don’t always have to match and we should help them to understand that. . . .

Participants were providing good examples of ways they could respond to the “You can’t be Elsa, because you’re Black” comment. This practice was to help prepare them for potential

comments that may come up in their future teaching. Michael and I had also heard another example discussed during small groups that we thought might be useful for the whole group to discuss and we asked them to share out loud for the group.

Natasha: Would your group say a little bit about what you discussed?

Paige: Basically, there was somebody on the screen; it was a black athlete and one of the students said “Oh, that’s me up there.” And the Black student said, “No, that’s not you, you can’t be that person, they are Black, I can be that person.”

Michael: So I am going to cheat a little bit. We were talking about listening to the emotional hook because the comment in that situation is not the first student’s comment but the second student’s response. There is an emotional ring there. And we talked about how the underlying motivation in that case may be a little different than with the Halloween costume example where there is a student who is really needing to claim something as being related to them or seeing somebody positive that is like them. And the way you respond to that is not going to be “Oh, well, anybody can be that person.” But rather first helping to address that student’s need to have a role model who is like them and then figuring out how to open it up to the classroom. So the initial questions are not even about the person on the screen. Does that make sense?

Gabriella: Yeah, but then would you try to find role models that look like them? Is what you are saying?

Michael: You could; that is one approach. In that moment, watching the video and seeing another student who doesn’t share their identity and says, “Oh, I associate with them”, and the Black student is like, “No, that’s mine.” What is underlying that comment is a deep sense of insecurity. So, however you respond, you don’t want it to be to further

unsettle that student's identity. You also don't want it to come back for the other person as replicating that you can't see anything positive. So in your example, we are talking about having a group-wide conversation about what are the positive attributes we see in Elsa. In this situation you might directly ask the Black student, what do you like about that athlete? What are the good things about him? Because he is associating himself with that person, so giving him a chance to say these are the positive things I am projecting for myself onto this person and claim it first and *then* open a conversation up that is about everybody seeing those positive things gets at the emotional hook. Does that make sense?

Natasha: Because it is acknowledging that student is feeling that this person is like them. So by opening it up to the larger group at first, you are not responding to that one student and his needs; it's kind of dismissing it and you don't want to do that.

Michael: Because that's what the hook is coming from.

We wanted the students to recognize the importance of listening to the tone, or the emotional ring, in which students make comments and using that as a guide to think about which student they need to attend to first. We then moved on to the last group and the issue of discipline and race came up again. Leo described a situation where he had a student accuse him of being racist. We then discussed the underlying motives behind his student making that comment.

Michael: Yeah, next group.

Nicole: The one we focused on is "Is it because I'm Black." Because that is one that Leo actually [had happen to him] . . . he can explain that.

Leo: Yeah, I was on bus duty at the beginning of the year and usually I would have two African American boys at the end of the day because their bus came last and they were

running around and kind of goofing off towards the end and I told both of them they should sit down because they were running through the hallways and I told them it wasn't safe. . . . one of the students listened to me and the other one didn't. And afterwards they asked if they could get a drink of water. And I told the student who listened to what I said that he was able to and the other student he wasn't able to get a drink of water and he was like "Is it because I'm Black?" and I made sure to address that it was because of his behavior that he wasn't able to get a drink of water, and kind of now that I look back at it I think it was good that I let the other student get a drink of water and didn't allow him to get a drink of water because it really showed that it wasn't about race since they are both the same race and it kind of reinforced the idea that it was because of his behavior and that that was why I wasn't letting him get a drink of water. And we were thinking of questions that I could have asked him to further the discussion, like why do you think that? What makes you feel that way? And I was explaining to the group that I feel at Parkview there is a lot more discipline towards Black students overall . . . and it may be from past experiences where people just yell at him for no reason and just like the entire race of Blacks in the school and I think just that kind of experience is why he has this idea, but I think asking him about it would have furthered the discussion, and it—depending on how he answered—could have gone further than that.

Michael: And what do you think is the underlying motivation? . . . So for that individual student, if that's the surface experience, what are the feelings he is having under that? So even if it seems like a reflective response to say is it because I'm Black, what do you think the underlying feeling is?

Leo: I think he just feels he has to be defensive against that type of behavior. And I know we learned that minority students, at home talk about race a lot more than people who are not minorities and I think it's because race comes up more in their daily lives and something that they have to deal with on a consistent basis even as young as they are. I think he wants to be defensive and he doesn't want to be pushed around and it's probably a learned behavior from home. Maybe—I know that some parents are like don't let them push you around. . . . So I think it's him being defensive in general, he wants to stick up for himself, I guess.

Natasha: And if someone is being defensive . . . what are ways to respond to lower their defensiveness?

Leo: To talk through and understand why they are being defensive. There is probably a reason why. They are not just defensive for no reason. There has to be a reason why, so if you are able to talk it through with them, you can approach their thoughts. Either explain it to them in a way they never considered before or . . . I dunno, sort out what their beliefs are from what has actually happen. They may just have a misconception.

Lin: Would it hurt their self-esteem, 'cause I notice with challenging students there are people who are more insecure with what they feel, which is why they feel the need to defend themselves. Do you feel that approach, throw it out there, that it could hurt their self-esteem even more, though? If they are already doubting things . . .

Natasha: I think that depends on the approach of the teacher. Often times what happens when that statement is said, the teacher gets defensive.

Michael and Natasha: —so then you have two defensive people.

Natasha: —and that's not going to work and as the adult it's your job to be an adult, and step back and think about those underlying reasons, which is basically why we are having you do that. So you can see that they are being defensive, but if you don't and automatically react and say it's, not because of that, or you punish them, what you are doing is reaffirming to them that what they are saying is true.

Michael: And in a way, there is also, there is a way developmentally, in upper elementary school, that they are testing out stuff on you as a potentially safe adult. So what you did, Leo, in terms of responding and showing a consistent response and showing positive response to the behavior you wanted and not to the behavior you didn't want actually builds a more solid relationship because he actually sees you being honest about your motivations, he sees that in action.

Leo: Which I notice now. Now ever since then, there is no problem.

Natasha: But that is usually not the response.

Michael: Yeah.

Natasha: Unfortunately.

Michael: So there is that piece about meeting the test or passing your test in a way and then there is also this piece about building the relationship with them, which is maybe coming back later. There is a way off, you can get too heavy with it, that is "how are you feeling about the other day with the drinking fountain," which freaks people out. Kids especially. So there is a way at being playful to get at motivations. So you all entered humor a little bit and that's a good thing to use sometimes in terms of lowering defensiveness and being able to have those parallel moments before you can have a joining moment.

This exercise, thinking about the underlying motivations and intentions behind a comment, was intellectually challenging for some students. We have been trained not to think about the motivations that people have for saying things but to respond solely to the surface-level comment in order to keep things moving in the same everyday cycle. We informed our participants that thinking in this way takes *practice*. They need to train themselves to start seeing these things, to start seeing the motivations behind comments, and to start phrasing things differently from what they have been accustomed to doing. We have to move away from asking “why” questions here. We are culturally taught to ask “why” questions, to get at underlying motivations, but we have to un-train ourselves, which is difficult and uncomfortable.

Big Ah-Ha’s from Intergroup Dialogue

One goal for intergroup dialogue is to learn more about one’s own lived experiences. Students had opportunities to explore their identities and how to situate their social identities in a much larger context. The dialogue is also intended to encompass understanding how their experiences intersect with the experiences of others. Participants in the study shared how much they learned about themselves as well as about other people’s experiences. In the data there was evidence that the dialogue course allowed most of them to understand the following:

- That race is prevalent
- The importance of talking about race-related issues
- The importance of being an ally and using White privilege
- How race is perpetuated in all institutions, such as schools

Learning about Self

At the end of the semester, students were given one final reflective post. They were asked what they learned about themselves (about others, and about their teaching). Six students

mentioned that they learned about White privilege and how much they take for granted as a White person. They mentioned that they realized they have influence to help change the system and that ignoring the problem just perpetuates racism. Many of the White students stated that they began to view their lives and experiences differently than those of people of Color because of their acknowledgment of White privilege. One student shared that she now realized that she had been treated differently all of her life because of her race and that the difference had impacted who she was today.

Gabriella shared how she had experienced both privilege and oppression in her life. As mentioned earlier, at the beginning of the semester she was not able to think about experiences with oppression, and in many ways she had not because she has been able to “pass.” By the end of the semester she had come to recognize experiences with both privilege and oppression. The following comes from her written reflection the eleventh week of the semester:

As a white and Latina women, I have had a unique chance to experience two sides of our society. I have experienced some privileges as well as oppression in my life. As I mentioned before, my Dad has always told me to express pride in my Mexican roots. I have a special privilege that my family members do not have, and this is my race. After watching a video in CI 448, I realized that a small situation that I have experienced may be a huge situation for someone of a different race.

Students had watched a Cracking the Code video clip in their social studies methods class that discusses author and educator Joy DeCruy, who shares how her sister-in-law used her White privilege to stand up to systemic racial inequality while they were both at the grocery store. This suggests that Gabriella recognized that she could use her privilege in a unique way similar to the sister-in-law in the video she watched in class:

However, even though I may have experienced privilege, I have also experienced oppression. Growing up, I never really saw my culture being represented in my classroom. This led me to disconnect from that side of my identity for a little while. I tended to prefer making White friends rather than Latino friends. I do not know if that was just the culture of the place I grew up, or if this was a result of the misrepresentation in my education. It wasn't until later in life, where I really wanted to express and learn more about my [Mexican] culture

Because of Gabriella's experiences of not seeing a part of her identity represented in her schooling, she stated why it was important for her to make sure that she was sensitive to her future students. She ends by stating "this class has helped me become more open minded and proud of who I am as a person. I realized that my race and ethnicity are a huge part of my identity" (Final reflection).

Hannah also shared that participating in the dialogue group deepened her understanding of her racial group and of herself. "I honestly just saw myself as a plain, white woman from the suburbs but I have learned that there are so many more dynamics to myself and to those people that I surround myself with" (Final reflection). Other students commented that they became proud of their background and who they were. Below are a few quotes that illustrate how they broadened their perspectives and understandings on issues of privilege and oppression:

At the beginning of the course, I definitely felt like I was able to put into words the idea that I do have a cultural identity that is different from other white people. It is something that I had been struggling with since coming to college, and meeting other white people that were not like me. I often felt marginalized or left out simply because I wasn't from Chicago. I was told that my accent was weird or that I said certain words wrong. Now,

after IGD, I have more of an appreciation for where I come from. (Rachel, final reflection)

My experiences were different because I was the lone white kid in my class. I've been the weird, ethnic kid before. And I've been the one who looks different than everyone else in the school. This experience made me cherish my own experiences in a new way. (Nicole, final reflection)

Before taking this class I never really paid attention to my race or the races of others. I would pay attention to my culture as a Polish and German American, but I never thought it was important to classify myself as "white". I think this is because the color of my skin never really had an explicit impact on my life as it might have been if I was a different race. . . . Overall, through intergroup dialogue I was able to develop a better sense of who I am and the role my racial identity plays in my life. (Irene, final reflection)

The Intergroup Dialogue allowed me not only to understand the racial experiences of my peers but my own as I shared my stories and worked towards understanding why I had the interactions I did with other people because of my race. (Mai, final reflection)

Other White students shared how they felt they took advantage of the White identity they have and shared what the dialogue taught them about their own privilege:

After participating in an intergroup dialogue, I realized how much I take for granted in terms of my race. I can go anywhere without feeling that I could possibly be

discriminated against, but I had never thought about how much that truly affects me until IGD. (Lila, final reflection)

I entered this class, as many of my classmates, believing I was sensitive, accepting, and understanding to other races and cultures. What I did not understand, at this time, was the privileged lifestyle I have as a white, upper-class female. . . . Throughout my life, I have never acted with the intention of being racist, but I now see that I have contributed to a racist society by being silent and not getting to know people outside of my own racial group. (Brooklyn, final reflection)

Learning about oneself is an important step in order to truly learn about the experiences of others. In the context of race, by learning about our own experiences we can begin to see how race impacts us, whether positive or negative. Seeing this in our own lives allows us to see how the experiences of others may or may not look the same.

Learning about Others

Students reported that hearing the experiences of others helped them to “see” racism, privilege, and oppression. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, this required generosity on the part of students of Color. In order for students to “see” the experiences of students of Color, it takes students of Color sharing their experiences of blatant and covert discrimination. Much of this fell on Leo and Mai; they became the most vocal and shared openly about their experiences with prejudice. Nicole also described her experiences as a White person in predominantly Black spaces. Through these students and others, students learned more about how race defines who people are, that everyone has a story and lived experiences, and that race plays a key role in

some people's identity and should not be ignored. Here they were offering a counter-narrative to the colorblind mentality:

When it comes to understanding other races, I have definitely changed my perspective on how to handle situations . . . Up until this class and this particular cohort that I was placed in I had always just seen other races as the same as mine. I thought that everyone was the same and equal but when I really began to think about it I realized that if I am only familiar with being one race, then thinking that everyone is the same means that I am just associating them with myself which isn't the best thing to do. (Hannah, final reflection)

IGD opened my eyes to the racial experiences of people of color. People who shared their personal experiences made it real for me. Of course, I read and see things in the news that pertain to race, but I have never heard a firsthand experience from someone I know. That is the most powerful. It makes the issues more real than ever before. (Lila, final reflection)

It [IGD] gave me an appreciation for those around me even though they were very different from me. One of the lessons that will stick with me was the one about concealed stories. Hearing Leo's point of view and his experiences being a minority was very enlightening. The idea that parents have to teach their children to be extra careful while out and about was completely novel to me. I feel like I should have had an awareness about this kind of concealed story before my senior year of college. (Rachel, final reflection)

Mai shared openly that she struggled not only to understand her own identity as a Korean-American but also to understand her White classmates in a predominantly White institution:

I am glad that I had the experience in Intergroup Dialogue because my preconceived notions of my non-minority classmates [being] unwilling to understand and learn were completely shattered. I think it may also be because we were all studying to be educators and it takes (hopefully) an open-minded and compassionate person to be a teacher, as well as our placement schools are serving an extremely different or diverse group of children that made many of us more curious to learn and talk about race. (Final reflection)

These findings reflect the understandings that some participants felt they learned about others through the intergroup dialogue process and how learning about others really expanded their perspective about race and racism.

Learning about Teaching

The students' final reflective writing also evidenced practical things that they had learned as a result of participating in the dialogue course and that they indicated they would take into their teaching. Some students mentioned skills they learned in IGD that they wanted to transfer into their own teaching practice. They also stated that the use of appreciations was something they wanted to implement into their classrooms. As mentioned in Chapter Five, appreciations are meant as a counterweight to some of the heaviness that can arise when we have a dialogue about race-related issues. We wanted students to think about how the person next to them created something unique in the dialogue space and the way they added value to the community.

Participants described how the weekly dialogue meetings facilitated the building of a close community within the group. Because they were able to build this community together, a

few students mentioned explicitly how they planned to create lesson activities to address controversial topics using dialogue as a format in their own future classrooms. Some also reported that they had become more cognizant of the responses they make to students, namely students of Color, because they realized that some remarks could be taken wrong. Claire wrote in her final reflection, “Another thing I have learned is, how apparent and discrete races and ethnicities can be in school. Sometimes, teachers make remarks or comments that are not necessarily meant in a negative way, but still come out negative and hurtful.” One student reported that she had attempted dialogue in her early field placement:

I have even tried out some of these tough conversations in my class and had a lot of success with it. I was able to make connections to my students and also give them a space to feel safe to share their experiences. (Rachel, final reflection)

A few students mentioned that they wanted to avoid jumping to conclusions about students’ behavior problems and wanted to deal with misbehavior in the classroom instead of calling the office or other Black teachers for help. One student said she wanted to take students’ lived experiences and knowledge into account when assessing classroom situations:

Just like my classmates and myself that came into the classroom with our own personal struggles with race or any issue in general, this dialogue group helped me realize that each one of my future students will come into the classroom with their own funds of knowledge as well. The dialogue group influenced me into taking each student’s experiences and knowledge into account when assessing a situation. (Mai, final reflection)

Lila stated that the dialogue gave her a sense of empowerment to make changes in the education system. She also wanted to empower her future students to take action. “...I am able to

see that it is my job as a teacher to empower my students to take action and educate themselves on national and global issues.” Overall, students stated that participating in the dialogue course had enriched their experience in their field placement and that they planned to take the knowledge they gained in dialogue into their future teaching.

Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale Survey

As mentioned in Chapter Three, students also took the Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAs). This scale provided a baseline pertaining to students’ attitudes and awareness of racial issues and inequality. The participants in the study took this survey at three different time points. They took it in August, before the dialogue course started (pre-experience); they took it in December, on the last day of class (post-experience); and they took it again in late April at the end of the spring semester (lagged-experience). Below I highlight the results from this survey.

Data for this survey include three factors. Factor 1 refers to a racial privilege, and higher scores on seven items suggest an unawareness of racial privilege. Items for factor 2 are in reference to institutional discrimination, and higher scores on this factor hint at unawareness of the institutional forms of racial discrimination. This may include social policies such as affirmative action (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Brown, 2000). Finally, factor 3 contains six items, and high scores indicate possible unawareness to blatant racial issues. Collectively the total score gives insight into participants’ color-blind attitudes. Results from a study (Neville et al., 2000) suggest that higher scores on each of the CoBRAs factors and the overall total score are related to a global belief in a just world; sociopolitical dimensions of a belief in a just world; racial and gender intolerance; and racial prejudice.

To understand if there are significant changes from pre-experience to post-experience to retention of concepts several months after the experience (lagged), a paired-sample t-test was

utilized. Paired-sample t-tests are commonly used to explore whether statistical differences exist from one statistical point to another (Moore, McCabe, & Craig, 2009). When examining significance on factor 1 (racial privilege), there were significant differences pre-experience to post-experience but not from post-experience to lagged-test. However, differences were found from pre-experience to lagged-test, suggesting that there were beneficial effects. Looking at Table 6.2, we can see that the pre-experience ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .643$) is significantly different from post-experience ($M = 2.92$, $SD = .610$), $t(15) = 7.54$, $p = .000$. The effects appeared to remain from post-experience to lagged-test because there were no statistical significant differences found.

Differences were also found from the pre-experience to the post-experience on factor 2 (institutional discrimination). Again, there were no differences from the post-experience to the lagged-experience, but there was statistical significance from the pre-experience to the lagged-experience, which suggests that there were effects. Table 6.2 for factor 2 shows that the pre-experience ($M = 2.79$, $SD = .769$) is significantly different from the post experience ($M = 2.49$, $SD = .558$), $t(15) = 3.01$, $p = .009$. The same held constant for factor 3 as well. There were no differences from the post-experience to the lagged-experience, but there was statistical significance from the pre-experience to the lagged-experience, which hint that there were effects: the pre-experience ($M = 2.30$, $SD = .658$) is significantly different from the post experience ($M = 1.81$, $SD = .590$), $t(15) = 2.48$, $p = .026$. Again the effects from the post-experience to the lagged test appear to remain constant because no statistically significant differences were found.

Table 6.2. Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Survey (CoBRAS) Paired T-Test Results

<i>Factor 1: Unawareness of Racial Privilege</i>						
Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pre to Post						
Pre-experience	16	4.17	.643			
Post-experience	16	2.92	.609	7.54	15	.000**
Post to Lagged						
Post-experience	16	2.92	.609			
Lagged-score	16	3.00	.692	-.731	15	.476
Pre to Lagged						
Pre-experience	16	4.17	1.32			
Lagged-score	16	3.00	1.20	8.28	15	.000**
<i>Factor 2: Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination</i>						
Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pre to Post						
Pre-experience	16	2.79	.769			
Post-experience	16	2.49	.558	3.01	15	.009*
Post to Lagged						
Post-experience	16	2.42	.558			
Lagged-score	16	2.46	.550	-.344	15	.736*
Pre to Lagged						
Pre-experience	16	2.79	.769			
Lagged-score	16	2.46	.550	2.55	15	.022*
<i>Factor 3: Unawareness of Blatant Racial Issues</i>						
Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Pre to Post						
Pre-experience	16	2.30	.658			
Post-experience	16	1.81	.590	2.48	15	.026*
Post to Lagged						
Post-experience	16	1.81	.590			
Lagged-score	16	1.72	.411	.721	15	.482*
Pre to Lagged						
Pre-experience	16	2.30	.656			
Lagged-score	16	1.72	.411	4.93	15	.000**

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .001$

Though there were 17 students in the project, I took out one participant because I think he interpreted the survey incorrectly. His mean from pre-experience to post-experience to lagged-experience were a bit of an anomaly and thus an extreme outlier. His mean went from 5.71 (pre) to 3.93 (post) to 5.86 (lagged), and because it went completely against the trends, it

suggested that he may not have paid close attention to the survey rating scale. While, it is possible that his score may have reflected his actual status, he was in a hurry to finish the survey as he had somewhere to be immediately following it, so this could be a reason why his full attention was not on the survey. No one else in the dataset had this same type of trend to this extreme degree.

I also compared the scores of White students to those of the students of Color in the class. Analysis did not show any significant differences in pre, post, or lagged scores in any of the factors when comparing Whites to people of Color. I did, however, have a very small sample size, comparing 11 to 5 people. So maybe a more robust sample size would show significant differences. These data are exploratory and unique in many ways, and are meant to create a foundation for future research. With more data, I could run regressions to see how variables such as race, gender, and time in classroom affect the retention/awareness of each factor. Overall, the statistics, though notably indicate a significant change and suggest that students' color-blind ideologies decreased, were based on data of limited size; possibly a more robust database would yield different results.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion and Implications

Can we talk about race? Do we know how? Does the childhood segregation of our schools and neighbourhoods and the silence about race in our culture inhibit our capacity to have meaningful dialogue with others, particularly in the context of cross-racial relationships? Can we get beyond our fear, our sweaty palms, our anxiety about saying the wrong thing, or using the wrong words, and have an honest conversation about racial issues? (Tatum, 2007, p. xiii)

Intergroup dialogue in teacher education speaks to Beverly Tatum's statement above. We *can* talk about race. Many of the pre-service teachers in this study *were* able to move beyond their fear and anxiety of saying the wrong things or using the wrong words. The participants were not only given a space to authentically talk about race and racism; they also learned *how* to talk about race and racism. Participants actually *did* critically and honestly talk about race and racism vis-à-vis their racial identities. That is in part what made this study unique. I watched them as they focused on race and learned how to trust the dialogue process, an undertaking that many researchers have argued is both imperative and difficult to accomplish. Students learned to take risks, be vulnerable, and ask questions they may not have otherwise asked. Is it Black or African-American? What does "White, not Hispanic" mean on the census? They engaged in active listening and self-reflection; they shared their personal stories and asked hard and challenging questions. This dissertation reports on the dialogue process in this IGD group and the changes that resulted from them.

I have shown in this dissertation how participants explored their racial (and ethnic) identities and interacted with others who identified differently by examining the ways race plays

out personally, interpersonally, and within different organizations and institutions in the United States. They were able to consider the implications of race and racism in society, in schools, and subsequently their future teaching practices. Other benefits of the dialogue course described in this study included developing a comfort level talking about race, a decrease in participants' color-blind racial attitudes, and facilitation skills that they could take into their classrooms (especially to attend to racial comments that students may make in the classroom).

One unique aspect of the dialogue group was that the content was the students' lived experiences. To quote Leo, "This course is about our own experiences. We are talking about *ourselves*, something we lived through, not what a textbook has stated or someone else has written. It is actually people we know." This study demonstrates the significance of providing students a dialogic space to engage in critical issues that start with the self in relation to others. The dialogue allowed teacher candidates a place to consider issues related to race and racism, thereby positioning them to listen across racial differences and subsequently providing them a new language and new perspectives. For many of the students, dialogue in this way was shown to be transformative because students were offered new ways to *experience* the weight of racism and recognize its importance while finding ways to push against the current system.

In this chapter I describe the impact that intergroup dialogue had on the participants in this study by drawing on five salient findings: a greater understanding of privilege and oppression; their comfort level talking about race; a developed sense of racial and ethnic identity; policies and practices in schools; and facilitation skills to use in teaching. Figure 7.1 on page 223 illustrates the five major findings discussed in this chapter.

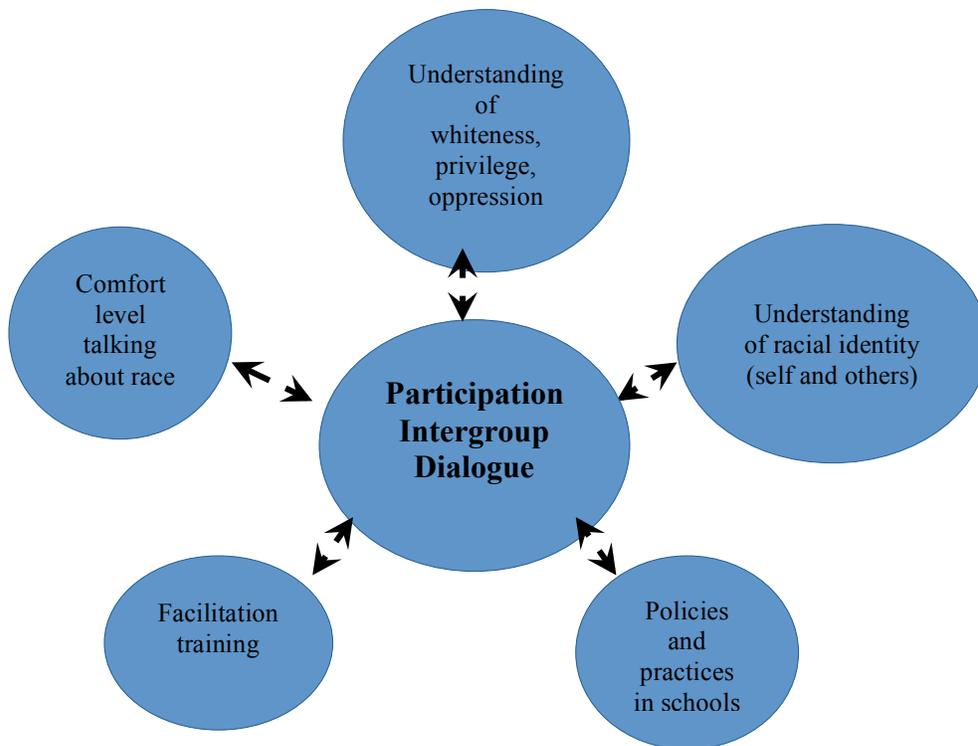


Figure 7.1. Summary of Major Findings

I connect these findings to the literature on preparing teachers for diverse classrooms and color consciousness related to the changing racial demographics in schools today (Hussar & Bailey, 2014). Next, I argue for the inclusion of dialogue approaches, such as IGD, in teacher education. I then discuss study considerations and the potential implications this research may have on teacher education and on the teaching profession more generally. Finally, I share future plans for this research.

A Greater Understanding of Whiteness, Privilege, and Oppression

Many students in this study initially struggled to discuss concepts of whiteness, privilege, and oppression. White privilege was often coupled with guilt or defensiveness, thereby making it difficult to acknowledge its existence. Lila, for example, really struggled with this; she did not understand how living in an exclusively White community contributed to a racist society. She

stated “my grandpa came here and started with nothing, didn’t even speak English. Worked hard to get there and for his kids. . . . that’s the life he had come to set up for his children and he came here literally with nothing.” Illustrated in their final reflections, Lila, and most of the participants eventually came to understand that these concepts—White privilege and whiteness—are hard to recognize because they are constantly in operation, designed to be invisible. The meritocratic view that hard work=success also makes it difficult to see privilege in existence or to appreciate that other racial groups also work hard. However, they do not always succeed, because a flawed system is not set up to their advantage (Milner, 2012b). Calling attention to, and talking about concepts like whiteness, privilege, and oppression, was part of the dialogic process and allowed students to see them in operation. This was prerequisite to finding ways to actively push back against the current system. Gabriella, a White and Latina woman in the study, recognized that because she often passes as White, she had privilege and could use it to effect change around her. Sydney stated it eloquently: “Knowing how and when to exercise your white privilege in order prevent racist things from happening to people is something I never thought of doing before. I guess I just wasn’t aware that my skin color has the power to change things.” Many students attributed these new ways of thinking and understandings to their participation in the study.

Having students reflect and examine their privilege was incredibly eye opening for many. When participants were asked what they learned from participating in the dialogue, a number of students cited White privilege as one of them. Some were able to see how White privilege influenced their life experiences and the opportunities they had, which were vastly different from the participants of Color. Students discovered how much they took for granted in terms of their race; how privilege allowed them to walk in a society void of racial discrimination, prejudice, and racism. One-third of the participants in the study cited (in their final reflections) that

engaging in dialogue helped them realize how ignoring privilege only keeps the cycle of racism in operation. However, not everyone recognized this. Eric, for example, was one of the students who really struggled to see how privilege is more than an individual notion but is a much larger systemic problem that keeps racism existing. His color-blindness got in the way. Other students did not openly share as much with the group, rather they listened more in the dialogue sessions. However, they demonstrated in their written reflections that they had a better understanding of these concepts.

Students also grappled with the idea of oppression, specifically racism, because so many of them had not experienced it themselves. As facilitators we revisited oppression multiple times over the course of the semester and had participants think of other forms of oppression, such as sexism and ableism, which they may have experienced. This speaks to the work of Peggy McIntosh (1990), who explained that gender oppression experienced by women may help people to understand White privilege and racial oppression (see also Rodriguez-Scheel, 2015). While these helped, and opened the door to understanding, some White participants candidly stated they just did not know about racism. This may be in part because students (Whites and people of Color) typically associate and befriend others who racially identify with them; they do not have access to the stories and experiences of others. Moreover, Whites in particular do not always know the racial experiences of people of Color. “The sharing of race-related narratives can prove meaningful and productive in helping students and teachers understand, think about, and change their thinking about such issues” (Milner, 2007 p. 603). As such, in this study students of Color shared openly about their racialized experiences, and other students were able to “see” the saliency of racism and the impact it can have on those who are members of marginalized groups.

Critical race theorists advocate for the use of story telling to uncover just how deeply

racism is embedded in society and ultimately into the identities and lived experiences of people of Color. By making racism explicit, people can recognize it and struggle against forms of oppression (Ladson-Billings, 1995). It must be said, however, that empirical evidence from intergroup dialogue research indicates that both Whites and participants of Color benefit from engaging in the IGD dialogue. Rodríguez-Scheel (2015), states:

For White students, hearing narratives of racial injustice may function as a catalyst for personal and social change, as well as encourage reflection upon the ways in which one contributes to the master narrative either consciously or unconsciously. (p. 41)

For students of Color, sharing counter-narratives brings immediacy to the realities of structural racism, and it is also therapeutic for the students of Color who have experienced race and racism. Rodríguez-Scheel cites Ladson-Billings (2009) who argues that counter-narratives may enable a sort of “psychic preservation of marginalized groups” by functioning as a “kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression” (p. 24).

Overall, participants were able to better understand the racial disparities of those who identified as Asian heritage, African American, or Latino, through the stories of their classmates. The participants began to see race and racism as real and how it functions in society. This takes generosity on the part of people of Color, a willingness to share stories for the benefit of Whites in order to see the prevalence of race and racism in operation. For example, participants were particularly enlightened by the discrimination narratives that students like Mai and Lin experienced as Asian Americans, often experiences that are hidden by the model minority myth.

Many participants began to realize how different groups of people experienced different forms of oppression. The stories broadened their perspectives and understanding of their classmates and more broadly the experiences that others in that racial group may face. Many

participants also saw that there are structural and systemic inequalities that go beyond individual acts of racism that have become normalized in society. Sydney, a White female in the group, took a risk questioning if racism is about the institutions and who are in positions of power: “So it’s not so much thinking about how you are personally affected by it but how the institutions have affected your way of thinking.”

This speaks to the importance of dialogue. Deeper understandings can emerge through a dialogic process and can create a sense of empowerment. This affirms Freire’s (2000) assertion that dialogue can be empowering and liberating for those who participate. He argues that when people engage in critical dialogue, learning occurs and creates awareness of oppressive systems operating in society. People are able to then transform the current system, which is empowering and liberating for both the oppressor and those oppressed. This notion of empowerment and liberation was demonstrated by some of the students in this study.

A Developing Comfort in Talking about Race

Participants in this study by and large became more comfortable and confident talking about race related issues. Throughout the semester, students no longer came to see the words *race* and *racism* as taboo, but rather a societal reality. Olivia wrote:

Students, especially students of Color, are aware of race so it is important as a teacher to be able to talk comfortably about it I will have students of different races in my classroom and now I feel more comfortable talking with them and their families about issues related to race.

Many other students in the course echoed Olivia’s sentiments. The participants acknowledged that the racial makeup in schools was changing and that they needed to be prepared to have race-related conversations in their future classrooms and teach in culturally relevant ways. They

recognized the importance of sharing stories because they themselves shared their stories and experiences. Rachel reported in her final interview that she had success when she attempted critical conversations with her students during student teaching. “I was able to make connections to my students and also give them a space to feel safe to share their experiences.” Rachel, like many of the participants, was aware that her students will come into her classrooms with racialized experiences and that as a teacher she needed to be prepared to talk about race and create a space for students to do so as well.

Researchers (Hollingworth, 2009; Castagno, 2008; Tatum, 1992, 2007) have long cited reasons why teachers do not talk about race. These studies highlight how teachers shut down and silence classroom conversations about race because they feel uncomfortable or guilty, or because they lack knowledge of racial issues and/or do not know how to talk about it. Moreover, race is not discussed because many teachers have not examined their own identity vis-à-vis their students, and subsequently they dismiss or minimize its importance in the classroom (Bolgatz, 2005; Liggett, 2008). This approach ultimately silences race and thus legitimizes whiteness.

Students in this study were able to combat many of the issues discussed in the literature. They were provided space and time to critically examine their own race and racial identity construction and thus came to appreciate the importance of racial identity. Additionally, they developed conceptual understanding of critical race issues. They felt more *knowledgeable* about race-related issues. This may indicate that because they were more knowledgeable, they were more invested in wanting to better *understand* race-related issues. The participants showed that they could talk about race and were better able to “see” the importance of race as well as the consequences of adopting a colorblind ideology. The things that appeared to influence them included reading *and* examining critical articles; sharing personal experiences; and discussing

what the *process* was like to talk about race related issues. Most of them came to see race and racism not just as individual acts of discrimination but as a much bigger and systematic problem within society. Because they themselves struggled through these conversations, they had a model for how to talk about race and diversity with their future students and felt more confident talking about critical issues.

Developing a Sense of Racial (and Ethnic) Identity

This study also speaks to the importance of identity construction. For some students, the dialogue empowered them to come to know, to understand, and to care about their race and racial identity in a different way. For other students, the narratives of their classmates brought recognition that racial identity, while not important to all, was important for others. For example, Sophia, stated: “I do not see race playing a big factor [in my life] because I am White. However, for others, it’s not that simple. They are discriminated against or treated differently because of their race and this defines who they are.” This is important to note because as Carter and Goodwin (1994) assert, racial identity is about how one *feels* about their racial group. Prior to the study, many participants did not see how whiteness and White culture permeates society. Many felt ambivalent about whiteness initially, as was illustrated in the whiteness experiment mentioned in the previous chapter and as illustrated in Sophia’s comment. However, for others, race and racial identity were important because they were a part of their lived experiences.

Wenger (1998) argues that we learn things from multiple social sources and experiences, and that our identities are formed and shaped within multiple communities of practice: “We become who we are by being able to play a part in the relations of engagement that constitute our community” (p. 152). People of Color are members of communities that deal with racial injustice daily and thus recognize their race and racial identity. This is opposite for many Whites who are

a part of a White social context and communities that tell them that culture is something others have, not them.

However, some of the participants came to see their identities in more complex and multi-layered ways. Hannah and Olivia (both White), for example, began to understand that they have a cultural identity, and they began to embrace their identities. Rachel, while she acknowledged her cultural identity prior to the study, began to *appreciate* it by the end of the study. Hearing the stories of others seemed to have challenged the concept of community for many of the White students in the study. Wenger (1998) asserts, “When we come into contact with new practices, we venture into unfamiliar territory” (p. 153). Students in this study were doing just that: learning about the racial and ethnic identities and experiences of others, about their different communities of practice. Thus, they were able to learn more about the racialized experiences of others, *vis-à-vis their own* experiences. This in turn helped them reconstruct their identity in relation to this broadened awareness.

Exploring Race Practices and Policies in Schools

Another major finding included the race policies, practices, and experiences that participants noticed in their school placements, specifically around discipline. As a result of the dialogue, the participants deconstructed and examined racial disparities that they noticed in their school placements. They considered how certain disciplinary actions on the part of their cooperating teachers and school policies affected certain groups of students, namely Blacks and Latinos.

Rather than simply noticing the severe and frequently disproportionate disciplining of Black and Latino students compared to Whites (engaging in similar behaviors), participants came to recognize the implications of those disparities. They discussed how some White teachers

did not discipline Black students out of fear of being called racist. This then led White teachers to call in teachers of Color to handle the students' behavior. Participants listened to each other discuss the practices they witnessed in their school sites and by their cooperating teachers. Some participants reported how their teachers did not call the office. Brooklyn shared that her White cooperating teacher dealt with behavior of all her students, regardless of their race, as opposed to Lila's teacher, who always called the office or called on another teacher for help.

The practices they witnessed were analyzed in the dialogue; this promoted a heightened awareness and sensitivity of racial disparities inherent in schools. Claire stated it well: "Sometimes, teachers make remarks or comments that are not necessarily meant in a negative way, but still come out negative and hurtful." While it may not be intentional, if teachers are not made aware and do not examine the unequal and inequitable practices and policies they place on certain groups of students, they will not see the potentially adverse effects it has on students. They will not be able to recognize their role in a flawed school system or figure out ways to transform it. This speaks to the importance of providing pre-service teachers with cooperating teachers who have a critical orientation and who have examined race-related issues. Rodríguez-Scheel (2015) talks about this in her study; cooperating teachers have one of the strongest influences on pre-service teachers (Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012), and thus it becomes important to consider trying to pair pre-service teachers with cooperating teachers who have a commitment to social justice and anti-racist education. Like Rodríguez-Scheel, I too argue that pre-service teachers need critical race mentor teachers. Rodríguez-Scheel defines this cooperating (mentor) teacher as:

. . . . an individual who embodies the tenets of critical race theory. They recognize the centrality of race and racism in the United States, they have a firm commitment to

challenging the dominant ideology, they have a firm commitment to social justice, they value experiential knowledge and the voices and perspectives of students of Color; and they challenge ahistoricism through interdisciplinary perspectives in their praxis as a classroom teacher. (p. 97)

The more teachers are provided opportunities to adopt anti-racist pedagogies, the more difficult it is to hold on to color-blind ideologies (Atwater, 2007). Building on Rodríguez-Scheel's (2015) study, I too argue that cooperating teachers who use critical pedagogies and who think about their interactions with students can serve as a model for pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers can then begin to think about engaging their own future students in culturally relevant ways and committing to anti-racist education.

In many of the participants' final reflections, they discussed how they intended not to jump to conclusions about students' behaviors and they planned to make a concerted effort not to call the office or other Black teachers to deal with the discipline of their students of Color. Furthermore, it helped many of them think about ways they could bring their students' experiences into the curriculum. Engaging in dialogue helped many participants begin to think of ways they could disrupt the current system and policies they had witnessed in schools.

Facilitation Training

This dialogue course not only provided pre-service teachers with a space to explore their racial identities, gain a greater understanding of the racial experiences of others, and explore societal inequalities, but also provided them with an opportunity to engage in facilitation training. This is significant because nowhere in the teacher education literature, to my knowledge, is there a concerted effort to engage pre-service teachers in facilitation training that attends specifically to racial comments made by students. Often, pre-service teachers (and in-

service teachers alike) do not know how to attend to racial comments that students make—whether innocent or not. What happens when a student calls another racist? What do teachers do when a student tells another that she can't be Elsa for Halloween because she is Black? Many teachers do not know how to handle such comments or turn them into teachable moments. Racial silence or silencing ensues (Castagno, 2008). Frequently teachers dismiss such comments, respond that the comment is unkind, instructs the student to apologize, and move on quickly.

As a result of the dialogue, the majority of the participants came to feel comfortable talking about race. All of this takes practice and skill, which we provided the participants through facilitation training. Our purpose was to help them think and respond to the underlying motivations and intentions rather than the surface-level comment. By responding to the surface-level comments, teachers effectively silence and shut down their students, rather than facilitating conversation. The results of this study add to the research in teacher education by providing a blueprint for how to prepare students to tackle uncomfortable comments and turn them into teachable moments rather than shutting down dialogue.

Study Considerations and My Dual Role

I recognize that a qualitative case study cannot be generalized or replicated in its entirety. The students who engaged in the dialogue were a part of a Global Perspective cohort. It was the first year this themed cohort was offered, and half of the students in this cohort had requested to be in it. It is possible that these particular students were already primed for and interested in discussing critical issues. While this may be a possibility and is worth noting, the majority of the students in this cohort did take this voluntary dialogue course irrespective of applying to the cohort.

I also recognize that being the only person in the dialogue who identified as Black could have impacted the dialogue course, especially since I was also one of the facilitators. This was particularly challenging when students talked in a Black/White dichotomous fashion. I have wondered whether the students were as honest as they would have been had I not been there. I will never know for certain, as it is possible that some students did not share as freely as they would have because of my presence. This is important to acknowledge, as the majority of the students in the study identified as White. That being said, students did not appear to hold back from sharing their thoughts. This is evidenced by Eric in both his interview and written reflections on privilege and his thoughts on Ferguson. Christina, Hannah, Irene, and Lila shared candidly in the beginning of the course that they did not agree with policies like affirmative action, and that people should be rewarded based on ability and not race. These were all controversial comments that students shared disregarding the racial backgrounds present in the group. It is also possible though, that they did not know that comments they made were ways that they perpetuate systemic racism.

Nonetheless, as a participant and the researcher in this study, I sat in a tension that many researchers experience. Being the researcher and the instructor for this course influenced how much I spoke and how much I contributed to the dialogue. There were moments when I wanted to share and offer my input but was cognizant that I was also the researcher, which occasionally held me back from saying something or offering my perspective. It is possible that had I been more engaged and shared more from my perspective and racialized experiences as a Black female, that the conversations in the dialogue could have been richer, more complex, and/or more uncomfortable.

That said, while my silences in some ways were a hindrance, in other ways it enhanced the dialogue experience, as I have outlined in Chapter 3. Rodríguez-Scheel (2015), a Chicana researcher who conducted a similar study, cited Delgado Bernal (1998), who suggests that Chicano/as have a cultural intuition drawing on personal experience, existing literature, professional experience, and the process of analyzing research. This same cultural intuition can be applied to other scholars of Color. As such, I have a unique perspective that influences how I approached this study and analyzed the data. Like Rodríguez-Scheel, “I align myself with a theoretical framework that embraces the voices of people of Color in the pursuit of validating and addressing issues of race, racism, and racial identity in scholarly work” (p. 55).

In spite of this tension, my participation in the dialogue allowed me to develop strong relationships with my students/participants. I wanted them to see me as someone who valued their opinion even if it was different from my own. The norms we established for the group was that there were no mistakes or right or wrong answers but that taking a guess, a risk, and considering other perspectives were allowed and encouraged.

In addition to the tension experienced as both the researcher and co-facilitator, there was a newness that came with facilitating this particular dialogue course that also impacted my participation level. This IGD model was different than the dialogic model I learned to facilitate at my undergraduate institution. Additionally, by nature, I tend to be quieter when facilitating dialogue and have, by chance, often been paired with more “talkative” facilitators. This is not right or wrong or good or bad, rather models for students that you can be present and actively engaged in a dialogue even if you are not always speaking. However, my reticence was conflated by my desire to also keep my White students comfortable. This study was the first dialogue course I facilitated where the majority of students were White and all were in the field of

education. This was new territory for me and it was not until after this study was completed, that I realized the burden I carried, trying to make the White students feel comfortable and safe. It silenced me in some ways. I wanted to be careful not offend or make my students defensive. This desire came from my years of working with pre-service teachers as both an instructor and as a supervisor and noticing what triggers them to shut down. As a result, in my quest to make my students more “comfortable,” I occasionally shut down.

I did not want my students to shut down, because I knew they were or would be teaching in schools with children of Color; I did not want them to check out of the dialogue for fear that a negative dialogue experience could impact their teaching or have adverse consequences on the students who were racially different from them. I did not want them to walk away with a negative portrayal of students of Color and thus, felt I needed to be mindful of what shuts *them* down (discomfort) in order to keep them engaged in the dialogue process. In the process, I forgot that discomfort should be a welcomed part of the dialogue experience. The problem with trying to make my White students feel comfortable and safe is that it immobilized me in the process. Zues Leoandro and Ronald Porter (2010) talk about this notion—that there is never truly a “safe space” in race dialogue for people of Color.

If we are truly interested in racial pedagogy, then we must become comfortable with the idea that for marginalized and oppressed minorities, there is no safe space. . . .

mainstream race dialogue in education is arguably already hostile and unsafe for many students of color whose perspectives and experiences are consistently minimized.

Violence is already there. In other words, like Fanon’s understanding of colonialism, safe space enacts violence. (p. 149)

Using Frantz Fanon’s theory of violence, Leonardo and Porter argue that without engaging in violence, we cannot explore or undue racism. By occasionally remaining silent, I observed the “call for safety” to provide my White students comfort, which according to Leonardo and Porter leads to a “history of violence against people of color” (p. 152). In this study, I found race dialogue to be a tricky slope to navigate. I sacrificed my voice to achieve their comfort, which occasionally immobilized me. This is something researchers of Color who engage in critical discourse around issues of race and racism need to keep in mind.

Implications for Teaching Practice

Much of the literature on facilitated dialogue groups involves college students who engage in discussion about race and/or ethnicity (e.g., Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Stoughton, & Sivertson, 2005; Tatum, 1992). I myself engaged in this work throughout college, facilitating dialogue groups similar to ones discussed in the literature. I have experienced its value as it helped me to make sense of my own racial identity. However, there is limited research in teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 2005) and even less at the elementary and secondary levels. Thus, this study adds to the body of research by including a new demographic—undergraduate pre-service teachers in a teacher education program.

Teacher Education Programs

The demographics of public schools are changing at a rate faster than the teaching force. This is because the majority of teachers in K–12 schools are White while the students they teach are becoming more racially diverse (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Hussar & Bailey, 2014; National Education Association, 1992; Sue, 2006; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). These statistics do not seem to be changing anytime soon. These changing demographics need to be taken into

account in *all* teacher education programs, not just in programs labeled as urban education or multicultural education. As such, we need to prepare all teachers to work with racially diverse students in all spaces. This includes critically thinking about how teachers will interact and teach students who look different from them. Teachers should also be prepared to have critical conversations about race with all students, including students who may be like them, in order to prepare them for an increasingly diverse world.

Because the majority of pre-service teachers in elementary education preparation programs are White females, we need to rethink our teacher education programs. Because of the shifting demographics we see in K–12 settings, we need to study the ways our teacher education programs are structured and ways they can better support pre-service teachers who will be working with racially diverse students. Teacher preparation programs need to go beyond the content (Milner 2012b), to include reflexive practices to prepare students for the shift in K–12 classrooms. Intergroup dialogue can be one intervention that works alongside method courses and complements the content specific work students are taking. In a similar study, Rodríguez-Scheel (2015) urges teacher education programs to create spaces for teacher candidates to work through the complexities of race and racism to prepare them to be more anti-racist educators and reflective teachers.

Many teacher education programs have recognized that teachers need to be prepared to take the needs of diverse learners and their cultural backgrounds into account (Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, including issues of diversity is not consistent across all content areas, and not all teacher educators engage in preparing pre-service teachers to work with diverse learners. Some programs include a diversity or multicultural education course that discusses how to work with children of Color or that focuses on “other people’s children,” but the pre-service

teachers' experiences and identities in relation to those students are often unexplored. Learning about one's cultural identity is equally important to learning about students of Color, and I argue that learning about self is a prerequisite to anti-racist teaching.

The data from this study suggest that participants, both White and people of Color, shifted their views and perspectives about race regardless of whether they had previously had opportunities to discuss these issues. More importantly, the students in this study were planning to teach in a variety of settings—the suburbs, the city, and/or rural communities. Students who were initially fearful and uncomfortable with having critical conversations began to embrace criticality as they developed a heightened sense of awareness of race-related issues. Their shift in language and how they discussed race-related issues developed over the course of the semester. Because the majority of students gained a greater racial consciousness, this study suggests the potential for teacher preparation programs in general to consider intergroup dialogue in their program irrespective of the population from which the teacher education programs draw their students.

K–12 Classrooms

Intergroup dialogue in teacher preparation programs may start in teacher education programs, but the ultimate goal is long-term effects in K–12 schools. Each teacher candidate engaged in intergroup dialogue has the potential to impact the students they will teach in the future. In the dialogue course, we provided pre-service teachers with tools and skills to attend to uncomfortable comments that their students may make and a toolbox of facilitation strategies to engage their own students in dialogue. The goal was to prepare them to develop intergroup relationships and collaboration with and between their own students.

Students in K–12 settings notice differences. They are aware of racial and cultural

differences but are not provided opportunities to discuss those differences. In addition, they should have the opportunity to talk about their experiences outside of the classroom that are related to their racial identities. An organization called Get Lit,¹² has three teenaged girls talk about how they spend their time in schools talking about everything but their racial experiences (Changing the World, One Word at a Time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YshUDa10JYY>). Studies of what is discussed and not discussed in classrooms come up again in the literature (Boulden, 2006; Checkoway, 2009; Griffin et al., 2012; Hollingworth, 2009, Lopez & Nastasi, 2012; Pollock 2008). K–12 students are capable of having dialogue about issues of privilege, power, and difference. As educators we just need to provide them with these opportunities and prepare pre-service teachers with skills to do this.

Students of Color can offer counter-narratives to the dominant discourse. Counter-narratives are imperative in order to challenge traditional theories and paradigms that have viewed language as neutral, objective, and color-blind. Critical race theorists urge this (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, 1997). It is helpful for students of Color to put a voice to their experiences; this helps situate their reality. Likewise, White students need to listen to and engage in dialogue and learn how race and racism *are* persistent issues today through the stories and experiences of others. They need a space to make sense of their identity in relation to people of Color. Furthermore, they need to talk through what White privilege is, what it looks like, and how it operates. As Milner (2007) states, “Narratives can be a ‘door opener’ to discuss and think deeply about complex and taboo issues” (p. 595). Often children, especially White children,

¹²According to gitlig.org, “The Get Lit Players (GLPs) are an award-winning performance troupe of teenagers from high schools throughout Los Angeles County. The Get Lit Players travel across the nation performing classic and spoken word poetry for over 15,000 of their peers, inspiring them to read, write, lead in their communities, and participate in the arts.”

learn at an early age that they “shouldn’t talk about race.” Tatum (1997) argues, “children who have been silenced often enough learn not to talk about race publicly. Their questions don’t go away, they just go unasked” (p. 36). And today, these students as adults do not know how to talk about it. I wonder what would happen if adults *were* encouraged to talk about race, its manifestations, and its inequalities at a younger age, in school. What if their questions got answered? I speculate that color-blind racism would not hold the power that it does today if we lived in a society that encouraged us to talk about race and difference, especially at a young age.

This all needs to start with pre-service teachers. Preparing teachers to have these conversations with students has the potential to encourage positive results. If teachers are informed and feel empowered, their actions can have a ripple effect. The participants were given an opportunity to develop their capacity to use the tools and skills gleaned from the dialogue. Whether they will have an impact on their students, and possibly their teacher colleagues as well, is a question for further study.

Implications for Future Research

This study has a number of implications for future research. I will discuss the implications for extending this current study. I will then argue the usefulness of extending intergroup dialogue for in-service teachers (especially cooperating/mentor teachers) as well as the benefits of facilitation training.

My dissertation study indicated that intergroup dialogue broadened participants’ perspectives and understandings on issues of privilege and oppression, racial inequality more broadly, and racial disparities in the schools, more specifically. Equally important, students learned about themselves and those who were different from them. They valued hearing the different perspectives of other members in the group and believed that the things they learned in

the course would influence their teaching practices. In this particular study I have been fortunate to maintain strong relationships with a number of the participants. Most are in their first year of teaching in a variety of school settings. Quite a few of them are working in racially diverse settings where the skills they learned in IGD can be applied in their classrooms. However, past research indicates a disconnect between critical pedagogy that teacher candidates learn in their university courses and their teaching in their own classrooms (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014). Why is it that the work learned from university courses does not easily transfer to elementary classrooms? One possible explanation is that the ideologies and perspectives students offered in their teacher education programs run counter to the curriculum and the demands of full-time teaching, especially in the current high-stakes accountability era.

The participants were aware of the differences between university courses and their field placement. Many shared their concerns about enacting a culturally relevant, anti-racist curriculum, citing lack of time, parental concern/fear, lack of cooperating teacher support, and what other teachers in their school building would say or think. These concerns are common for pre-service teachers (Cochran-Smith, 1995, 2004). We do not yet understand well why some teachers commit to an anti-racist curriculum while others “let go” of what they have learned and consequently perpetuate oppression (Rodríguez-Scheel, 2015). This question is worth further investigation. As such, I would like to conduct a longitudinal study that follows up with this cohort to explore how the dialogue has continued to impact their thinking and teaching. I am also particularly interested to see how the participants feel after their first and second year of teaching and (a) if they are *engaging* in dialogue with their current students, (b) if they feel *comfortable* talking about race with their students, (c) what *resistance* they may feel to enacting an anti-racist curriculum, and (d) if their color-blind ideologies have *held constant* since taking the course.

Educational researchers interested in this work with pre-service teachers could devise similar studies with a larger data set, which could lead to more robust research.

In-service teachers also have a hard time attending to race related content that students bring up in classrooms. This was demonstrated in Hollingworth's (2009) case study of an elementary school teacher who silenced conversations between students by normalizing whiteness. This teacher's color-blind attitudes impacted the classroom discussions despite the fact that students were *open* to having their racial attitudes challenged and discussed in the classroom. The teacher's color-blind beliefs, in essence, silenced her students. As reported in Hollingworth's study and others (e.g., Bolgatz, 2005; Liggett, 2008), many in-service teachers struggle attending to race issues that their students raise. Findings from this dissertation study suggest that the pre-service teachers gained a greater comfort level in race-related talk. As such, similarly, I assert that having in-service teachers engage in intergroup dialogue will provide them a space to take risks. The hope is that it helps them develop a language where they can have critical conversations with their students, rather than shutting them down. This is especially important for in-service teachers who work with pre-service teachers (as cooperating/mentor teachers), as argued earlier in this chapter.

While this study focused on pre-service teachers, further research can explore how students in K–12 schools talk about race and racism with teachers who have been through a dialogic process and who incorporates dialogue into their teaching practice. One question would be to explore whether children develop more complex and nuanced racial identities and ideologies if they are given IGD-like opportunities to talk about race. As Rodríguez-Scheel (2015) questions, “How do these students think about race and racism? To what extent can teachers play an active role in shaping the ways in which their students think and talk about race

and other identities?” (p. 103).

Finally, while the intergroup dialogue approach in this study cannot be replicated exactly, this study showed that providing facilitation workshops and training for both pre-service teachers can influence their development of more critical and reflective orientations to their teaching. The participants indicated that they did not know how to attend to racial comments that came up in their field placements but that the facilitation training they were provided in the IGD course gave them skills and confidence to approach these kinds of situations.

Conclusion

This study was bred out of my long-held desire to provide students in K–12 schools with dialogic opportunities in their classrooms. This cannot happen if we do not prepare teachers to understand the weight of race and racism in society. Furthermore, it cannot happen when teachers are uncomfortable and/or do not know how to facilitate race-related conversations in their classrooms. Working with pre-service teachers over the past five years underscored this importance for me. As more classrooms are becoming more racially diverse, issues of race become more salient and need to be addressed in classrooms. When students and teachers alike can openly discuss race-related issues, they can begin to make sense of their worlds. White students can learn the meaning and depth of White privilege, and students of Color can begin to learn how to struggle against forms of discrimination and racial inequality.

My argument is that we need to think of ways to better prepare pre-service teachers for a racially diverse society. Tatum (1992, 2007) and others (Castango, 2008; Lewis, 2004) agree that conversations about race are not easy, but are not meant to be easy; conversations are not comfortable and require participants to be vulnerable and honest. “Dialogue is more than comfortable conversation about nice things; it has an ethical element that requires confronting

inequities and silences and using both theory and practice to address what underlies the topics at hand” (Johnston-Parsons, 2012, p. 69). When students push past their discomfort and engage in perspective taking, active listening, and sharing personal experiences to highlight injustice, dialogue can result in powerful learning (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Shields, 2009; Johnston-Parsons, 2012).

In society generally, some believe we live in a post-racial era while others witness and experience the everyday weight of race and racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Rodríguez-Scheel, 2015). When we become aware of racial injustices that exist, we can push against the current system and work towards building a more equitable society. Teachers have the ability to impact their students’ understandings of inequities. But they must first start with themselves. Intergroup dialogue has the potential to change teacher education and the pre-service teachers’ understandings of race and racism because it starts with an examination of the self. This research supports Rodríguez-Scheel’s (2015) statement that “intergroup dialogue is one way in which teachers may develop more critical, sensitive, and reflective perspectives on issues of race, racism, and racial identity as it intersects with other identities” (p. 105). Furthermore, engaging participants in race dialogue provided participants a critical lens that can be transferred to other controversial topics. To quote Christina, “This class gave me ways to approach difficult topics or situations that may deal with race or not.” Here, dialogue is powerful because the knowledge and skills learned can be transferred to other critical issues.

To engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as [people], teachers, scholars and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences. (hooks, 1994, p. 130)

Hooks made this statement more than 20 years ago, and it still rings true today. The participants in this study did exactly what hooks advises us as educators to do—engage in critical dialogue that crosses boundaries. This study is a testament to that; we just need dialogic spaces that afford us the opportunities to do so.

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APPENDIX A

Summer Planning

Long Term Planning and Objectives Initial Draft				
	Group Beginnings	Exploring Differences and Commonalities	Race and Education	Skill Building Facilitation Training
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop understanding of dialogue as a method • begin to understand own social identities • begin to develop connections and understanding of others' social identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gain understanding of the meaning of race and ethnicity • develop understanding of systemic oppression and impact on individuals • begin to understand implications for education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore implications of race for teaching, teacher/student relationships, and racial justice • understand own educational experience through the lens of race • develop strategies for resilience while teaching in oppressive systems • culturally relevant pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop skills to facilitate race dialogue in own classroom • develop skills with other teachers committed to social justice • deepen understanding of child development to include understanding of racial identity development across the lifespan
Pre-Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group norms • dialogue vs. debate • stories article 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oppression articles • white privilege 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active participation in previous dialogue session • If White, commitment to exploring white privilege as it operates in own life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • readings on facilitation
In Class Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • life stories • race & ethnicity venn diagram • social identity graph • checking privilege 101 worksheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigating stories (stock, concealed, resistance and emerging) • personal identity vs social identity • salient circles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a racist school/organization • dialogue facilitation skills • practice facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • role play

APPENDIX B

Lesson Plan Example

WEEK TWO OVERVIEW:

- Life stories continued
- Where did your ethnic identity seem most salient (or not)?
- Where did your racial identity seem to be salient (or not)?
- Students will complete a Venn diagram and then share with a partner
- **Reflection: retell your life story in relation to oppression specifically related to racial and ethnic identity**

Check In— 5 minutes (Michael)

Reflection Discussion—10 minutes (Natasha)

- Where did your race and/or ethnicity seem most salient (or not)?
- What was challenging about writing this?
- What new insights do you have?

Continue Life Story telling

Article Discussion—10 minutes (Michael)

Venn Diagram Activity—20 minutes (Natasha)

- Have students work with a partner and create a Venn diagram putting their race/ethnicity experiences and see where there is overlap
- Whole group share out

5 minute break

Social Identity graph (Michael) (plant intersectionality seed)

Wrap Up—5 minutes (Natasha)

- Check out
- Next weeks topic—oppression
- Reflection: Using the concepts from this week’s reading retell your life story through the lens of oppression. Specifically how has oppression related to your racial and ethnic identity impacted your life experiences?
- Questions to think about:
 - Do you think you have been a target of oppression? What has that looked like?
 - If you don’t feel like you have been a target of oppression, what does the absence of it (oppression) look like in your life?
 - How have your family and life experiences been affected by oppression?
 - Do you think that you have personally experienced oppression or privilege differently than other members of your racial and/or ethnic group? How so?

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocols

Pre-Interview Questions:

1. What do you think this course is about?
2. Tell me about your impression of the dialogue group so far?
3. What do you hope to get out of this dialogue group?
4. Why do you think a course on race dialogue has been added to the curriculum?
5. What role do you think race and ethnicity play in schools/classrooms?
6. From your experiences in schools, how has race and ethnicity been included or not?
7. How do you racially identify yourself?
8. How do you think others perceive your racial identity?
9. What do you think is the difference between race and ethnicity?
10. How does your race factor into your (daily) life?
11. Is race something you have to think about? Why? And in what ways?
12. How has your racial and ethnic identity affected you in life? School? Employment?
13. How has schools and teaching changed since you went to elementary school?
14. Do you feel that you have any privileges (or not) based on your racial and ethnic identity?

Post Interview Questions:

1. What did you learn in the race and ethnicity dialogue course?
2. How did participating in the dialogue change/impact/influence how you think about race and ethnicity?
3. How did participating in dialogue change/impact/influence how you think about your racial identity?

4. How has participating in the dialogue change/impacted/influenced how you view others who are different from you? (the racial identity of others).
5. How has participating in the dialogue change/impacted/influenced how you think about your racial and ethnic identity?
6. Has participating in the intergroup dialogue course this past fall affected how you teach?
7. Now that the course is over, why do you think a course on race dialogue has been added to the curriculum?
8. After student teaching, in what ways do you think schools and teaching changed since you went to school?
9. What are some privileges you are aware of now that you have taken this course?

APPENDIX E

Course Readings

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