

Syracuse University

**SURFACE**

---

Dissertations - ALL

SURFACE

---

December 2014

## A Critical Race and Critical Whiteness Theory Analysis of Preservice Teachers' Racialized Practices in a Literacy Across the Curriculum Course

Kathleen Cullen  
*Syracuse University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/etd>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Cullen, Kathleen, "A Critical Race and Critical Whiteness Theory Analysis of Preservice Teachers' Racialized Practices in a Literacy Across the Curriculum Course" (2014). *Dissertations - ALL*. 190.  
<https://surface.syr.edu/etd/190>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the SURFACE at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations - ALL by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact [surface@syr.edu](mailto:surface@syr.edu).

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the racialized practices enacted by seven preservice teachers while they participated in a university-based literacy across the curriculum course that included a school-based tutoring component. Research questions asked: 1) what racialized practices were enacted by preservice content-area teachers when they participated in a required literacy across the curriculum course that included one-on-one tutoring of youth at an urban secondary school, and 2) how did preservice content-area teachers' backgrounds contribute to their racialized practices?

This study drew on the premises of critical race theory and critical whiteness theory to define racialized practices. The study began with these theories' assumptions that race is an important social construction in U.S. society that is used to position people hierarchically, especially oppressing people of color. Racialized practices are ways of acting, speaking, and teaching that construct race as important. These practices include colorblindness, essentializing, and microaggression, as well as culturally responsive teaching, a positive racialized practice grounded in students' funds of knowledge and intended to counter more oppressive practices.

Data sources included transcripts from semi-structured interviews, field notes from classroom and tutoring observations and various course and tutoring related artifacts such as the course syllabus, lesson plans, unit plans and written reflections. Data were analyzed first, using a reflexive, constant comparative approach to gain insights into participants' rhetoric and actions. Second, data were reconsidered to delineate racialized practices.

The racialized practices of the preservice teachers involved in this literacy study were categorized as relationship-focused or instructionally-focused. Although all participants enacted both positive and negative racialized practices, relationship-focused participants tended to exhibit qualitatively different practices compared to the instructionally-focused participants.

Regardless of their orientation, when participants shared their view of whether race mattered in education, the mostly White participants spoke predominantly of the significance of other people's races and not their own race.

Racialized practices that were consistent with culturally-based pedagogies included intentionally nurturing relationships with students at the tutoring site, talking about ways to help students understand and negotiate the culture of power that is dominant in educational institutions including higher education and cautioning preservice peers that they need to be cognizant not to advance stereotypes. Racialized practices that reflected participants' deficit thinking about their tutees, as well as their own discomfort in talking about racial issues included the enactments of racial microaggressions, distancing strategies and White talk.

This study provides new insights into how preservice teachers' racialized practices shape and are shaped by the racial hierarchy that continues to exist in schools. Findings have implications for school professionals, teacher educators and researchers who are interested in identifying and disrupting racialized literacy practices that may be harmful to students. Additionally, this study suggests that further exploration is needed to understand how race is implicated in relationship-focused literacy teaching, content-focused literacy teaching and students' engagement in learning across the curriculum.

A CRITICAL RACE AND CRITICAL WHITENESS THEORY ANALYSIS OF PRESERVICE  
TEACHERS' RACIALIZED PRACTICES IN A  
LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM COURSE

by

Kathleen A. Cullen

B.S., SUNY Oswego, 1981  
M.S., SUNY Oswego, 1984  
C.A.S., SUNY Oswego, 2001

Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Syracuse University  
December 2014

Copyright © Kathleen A. Cullen 2014  
All Rights Reserved

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my niece and my father. To my niece, I hope the world becomes a more socially just place. To my dad who passed away before I completed my dissertation, I want you to know that I did it!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although my name appears prominently on the cover of this doctoral dissertation document, this product is the result of a great many people. First, I would like to acknowledge and thank my doctoral dissertation chair, Dr. Kathleen Hinchman, and my dissertation committee members, Dr. Marcelle Haddix and Dr. Barbara Applebaum, for their mentorship and support throughout this process. I would also like to thank Ms. Becky Freeman and Ms. Isabelle Glod for their constant support and guidance. In addition, I would like to thank my doctoral student friends whom I met at Syracuse University - some of whom have already attained their doctoral degree - and some of whom are still in the doctoral degree pipeline. I would like to especially thank Dr. Kristen Munger who was a never ending cheerleader and mentor throughout this process.

Lastly, I am extremely grateful to the professor who graciously welcomed me into the literacy across the curriculum course to collect my data, and to Ann, Eden, Helen, Josh, Kristen, Randy and Rufus, who volunteered to be part of this important work. I am grateful as well to the principal, staff and students at the urban middle school where the tutoring sessions took place.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One ..... 1

    Rationale ..... 2

        This Study ..... 9

        Significance of the Current Study ..... 9

    Overview of Chapters ..... 10

Chapter Two: Literature Review ..... 12

    Teacher Education and the Racialized Practices of Preservice Teachers ..... 12

        Teacher Education and Race ..... 12

        Preservice Teachers’ Perspectives Toward Teaching Students of Color...14

        Teacher Educators’ Efforts to Address Preservice Teachers’ Perspectives  
Toward Race ..... 19

            Multicultural Education ..... 20

            Culturally Relevant Pedagogy ..... 23

            Culturally Responsive Teaching ..... 24

            Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy ..... 27

            Field Experiences ..... 27

        Summary ..... 30

    Literacy Teaching and Racialized Practices ..... 31

        Evolution of Literacy Across the Curriculum Preservice Teachers’  
Education..... 31

        Multicultural Literacy Education..... 34

        Culturally Responsive Literacy Pedagogy ..... 35



Culturally Sustaining Literacy Pedagogy.....	36
Summary .....	36
Theoretical Frameworks .....	37
Critical Race Theory .....	39
Critical Whiteness Theory .....	43
Conclusion .....	47
Chapter Three: Method .....	50
Settings .....	50
University Classroom .....	51
Field Placement .....	52
Interview locations .....	53
Participants .....	53
Data Sources .....	55
Interviews.....	56
Participant Observation .....	59
Course Related Artifacts .....	60
Data Log.....	61
Data Analysis .....	61
Trustworthiness of Research.....	64
Conclusion .....	68
Chapter Four .....	70
Racialized Practices and Relationship-Focused Participants .....	70
Prioritizing Social Relationships .....	71

“I will ask [my tutee] how he has been and what his plans are for the weekend.” .....	71
“Because she told me that was her favorite type of dog.” .....	76
Considering Different Perspectives .....	82
Learning about multiple perspectives. ....	82
Teaching about multiple perspectives. ....	84
Negotiating multiple contexts. ....	87
Making Sure to Address Course Requirements .....	92
Does Race Make a Difference in Teaching and Learning? .....	98
“I think it [race] plays a factor.” .....	98
Relationship-Focused Participants’ Ideas about Literacy .....	103
Benefits associated with literacy .....	103
Costs associated with lack of literacy .....	104
Relationship-Focused Participants and the Teaching of Literacy .....	106
“Why is a ninth grade level a ninth grade level? Who decides?” .....	106
Anticipated teaching issues .....	107
What class participation and attire revealed. ....	109
Backgrounds of Relationship-Focused Participants .....	111
Relationship-Focused Participants’ Decisions to Pursue Teaching .....	111
Family influences .....	112
Other influences .....	114
Relationship-Focused Participants’ Selection of Content Area .....	116

“What I knew best.” .....	116
“Because it was cool.” .....	117
Conclusion .....	119
Chapter Five .....	121
Racialized Practices and Instructionally-Focused Participants .....	121
Prioritizing Content .....	121
“I’m there to teach him how to write and read.” .....	122
“I know she’s got something.” .....	125
“In his best interest.” .....	130
“[My tutee] doesn’t mind leaving her classroom to come with me.” .....	136
Relationships and Instructionally-Focused Participants.....	140
Does Race Make a Difference in Teaching and Learning?.....	146
“Race didn't really make a difference. Which was nice.” .....	146
Instructionally-Focused Participants’ Ideas about Literacy .....	151
Literacy as reading and writing .....	152
Lack of literacy can restrict access.....	152
Instructionally-Focused Participants and the Teaching of Literacy .....	153
Anticipated teaching issues .....	155
Meeting the needs of diverse learners.....	157
What class participation and attire revealed. ....	159
Backgrounds of Instructionally-Focused Participants .....	161
Instructionally-Focused Participants’ Decisions to Pursue Teaching .....	161

Family influences .....	161
Other influences .....	163
Instructionally-Focused Participants' Selection of Content Area .....	165
Conclusion .....	167
Chapter Six: Discussion .....	170
Summary of Findings .....	170
Discussion .....	174
Teacher Education .....	178
Literacy.....	179
Critical Theory .....	180
Limitations.....	182
Implications For Future Research and Literacy Teacher Education.....	183
Conclusion .....	189
References.....	191
Vita .....	216

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 .....54

## CHAPTER ONE

The purpose of this study was to explore preservice teachers' perspectives and enactments related to race (i.e., racialized practices) and literacy. Participants were enrolled in a literacy across the curriculum course (LAC) at a large university in the northeastern United States (U.S.). I observed participants while they were in the LAC class, examined assignments they completed, interviewed them, and observed them at the site of a required field placement associated with the course. I initially analyzed the data to specify emergent themes, and then used aspects of critical race theory (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993) and critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993) to focus on racialized practices that construct race in a way that maintains or attempts to interrupt society's racial hierarchy that privileges Whites and marginalizes students of color.

Brown, Souto-Manning and Laman (2010) referred to racialized practices as "the raced and class-based actions that underpin 'normalized' school practices" (p. 514). They delimited their definition, however, to view racialized practices solely as "situated representations of racism" (p. 514) that maintain society's racial hierarchy. In the current study, I suggest that racialized literacy practices are broader in scope and include not only race-based beliefs, attitudes and actions that construct race in ways that perpetuate racism (e.g., deficit thinking, colorblindness), but also include ways of acting, speaking and teaching that construct race in ways that are consistent with culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000/2010). In essence, I suggest that all literacy practices are racialized and construct race in ways that may reinforce or interrupt racism.

## Rationale

A number of scholars (Delgado, 1995; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nieto, 1992) have theorized that teachers' perspectives toward race affect how they think about and interact with students of color. Recent meta-syntheses of empirical studies of preservice teachers by Castro (2010) and Hollins and Guzman (2005) found that preservice teachers lack experience with people whose race they do not share. If teachers lack experience in working with students of color, how and where do they learn to understand their students' perspectives in respectful and culturally responsive (Gay, 2000) ways? In theory, teacher education programs are designed to foster this understanding, as well as the circumstances under which this understanding can most benefit students.

To date, many of the studies exploring the racialized practices of preservice teachers have been situated in multicultural education courses (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Sleeter, 2001), where topics related to race are explicitly addressed; however, considerably fewer studies have been situated in teaching methods courses (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), where the topics of race and teaching actually intersect. In courses in which racialized practices of preservice teachers have been explored, the settings of the studies have been elementary methods courses (Mosley, 2010; Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Turner, 2007; Xu, 2000). No studies were located exploring the racialized practices of secondary preservice teachers while they were enrolled in a literacy across the curriculum course. This is surprising given that literacy learning is grounded in culture and involved in essentially every content area discipline taught in schools.

Researchers such as Ladson-Billings (1992) have asserted that effective literacy teaching is heavily reliant on teachers having both understanding and appreciation of the background

knowledge students bring to school, including those students whose backgrounds are different from their own. Howard (1999) found that White teachers tend to privilege their own background knowledge in their teaching, and these racialized teaching practices can create obstacles for students' learning, especially for students whose background knowledge and experiences may be vastly different from that of their teachers. When teachers include their students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), in combination with knowledge from the dominant group, and students are taught to critique the sociopolitical structures underlying these sources of knowledge (i.e., the "hidden curriculum"; Furman, 2008), what results is "culturally sustaining teaching" (Paris, 2012). Paris defined culturally sustaining teaching as teaching and teacher support that embraces the linguistic and cultural diversity of students, while also providing adequate access for students to navigate dominant cultural practices in schools and society, both of which Paris convincingly argues are goals of educational practices in a modern day society.

One problem with achieving the goals of culturally sustaining teaching is that White teachers may be unaware of sociopolitical aspects of race and culture that impact both teaching and learning. Research founded in critical theory has helped to illuminate the sources for why White people may lack this awareness. In reference to schooling, White teachers may not develop an awareness of the meaning of race in education if, as children, they attended suburban or rural schools and/or lived in majority White communities (Howard, 1999; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Due to their upbringing, their backgrounds would mostly include the values and discourses of these communities, unless some other source also provided a counter-narrative or alternative explanation (Solorzano, 1997) to these experiences. Although a lack of experience may partially explain why some White teachers may not use culturally-sustaining teaching



practices, arguments using critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993) maintain that being White can actually barricade the development of multicultural perspectives because White people are often blind to their own White identity. For educators, this blindness not only potentially prevents the development of multicultural awareness but also the development of “critical consciousness” (Gay, 2000/2010), which is required not only to teach diverse student populations more effectively related to content knowledge but also to teach students more effectively about sociopolitical power structures that privilege and marginalize knowledge according to racial hierarchies (Edwards, 2011; Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

Despite gains in literacy achievement for all American eighth grade students since 1975, (U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], 2013) the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency continues to vary by racial category. With the exception of Asian/Pacific Islanders who outperformed Whites by one percentage point in 2007 (i.e., 41% compared to 40%) and six percentage points in 2013 (i.e., 50% compared to 44%), eighth grade students of color remain well below the proficiency level. In 2013, 21% of Hispanics, 16% of Blacks or African Americans and 19% of American Indian/Alaska Natives reached the NAEP cut point for reading proficiency. Deschenes, Cuban, and Tyack, (2001) suggested over a decade ago that these racial disparities reflected an educational crisis stemming from years of unequal access to a quality education, which Ladson-Billings (2006) referred to as an “education debt” (p. 3). In 2007, Flores called this discrepancy an “opportunity gap” (p. 23). Gay (2010) expressed her concern about the disparities in this way:

Too many students of color have not been achieving in school, as well as they should (and can) for far too long. The consequences of these disproportionately high levels of

low achievement are long-term and wide-reaching, personal and civic, individual and collective. They are too devastating to be tolerable. (p. 1)

Delgado and Stefancic (2012) asserted that “racism continues to blight the lives of people of color” (p. 11) as evidenced by discrimination and inequitable access to housing, medical care, employment and education. Furthermore, racism and inequities are also experienced by students of color in school, in the form of disproportionate placement in special education (Ferri & Connor, 2006; Kearns, Ford & Linney, 2005) compared to their White peers, disproportionality in suspension rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2014), and high numbers of students of color are being tracked into low level courses as a result of low teacher expectations (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Oakes, Ormseth, Bell, & Camp, 1990). Since the majority of students in urban schools are students of color, they or someone in their family have most likely experienced such discrimination and/or marginalization.

On the other hand, most teachers in K-12 schools are White (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b) and members of the dominant racial group. Their experiences have most likely not included significant marginalization or discrimination because of their race. Instead, their racialized experiences have most likely included interacting in neighborhoods, schools and places of worship with people whose race and values they shared.

Many changes have occurred for students of color since the civil rights movement of the mid-Twentieth Century, as evidenced in increased upward mobility in terms of increases in pay, increases in the number of people of color being hired in managerial and professional positions and increases in the number of people of color who have been appointed or elected to political positions (Hall, 2005; Taylor, 2003), including the presidency of the United States. However, although more equitable changes have occurred over the last several decades, people of color

still continue to experience racism in their daily lives (Bell, 2003; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). Often, White people will deny the existence of racism saying that it is a thing of the past, or they unknowingly deny that race even exists by saying that they do not see color. These denials by White people, coupled with the counter-narratives (Solorzano et al., 2000) from people of color, show the insidious and institutional nature of racism.

If White teachers have experienced little to no marginalization because of their race, or do not realize that they are “raced” at all (Bernal, 2002, p. 105), they might neglect to consider how racism is a problem in society or how they might be implicated in the problem. How might a teacher who believes we are living in a race neutral society interact with students who have been discriminated against? Do some teachers disregard the students’ experiences? Is “the problem of the color-line” (Du Bois, 1903/1989, p. 3) a problem in classrooms and other education settings? Since teachers are the ones who allow or deny students’ access, choose topics and texts, and are in a position of power in the classroom, it makes sense to explore their perspectives and practices on educating students whose opportunities to learn may be constrained by the very school they attend and the teachers who teach them. The aim of this study was to extend the literature on this important topic to provide new insights regarding how preservice teachers enacted ideas of race when they addressed students’ literacy in class, assignments, and their field placement.

My interest in race and literacy was largely driven by two experiences that were highly personal and powerful for me. The first experience involved the birth of my niece in 2006. She is the first and only biracial child to join my family - born to my sister who identifies racially as White, and her husband who identifies racially as Black. Race is often superficially associated with skin color and other physical characteristics (Machery & Faucher, 2005; Omi & Winant,

1993); however, it is the meaning that society attributes or ascribes to race that is of particular importance to this study.

I grew up in a small city in the northeastern United States that was occupied predominantly by people who are White. Looking back, I recall that my own White race and that of my family was invisible to me, and most of my contact with people of color occurred through the media until my sister married a man of another race. While this had some effect in bringing race into the foreground of my family, it was not until the birth of my niece that I began to realize the importance of race in people's lives. I now know that I was not unique in that my race remained invisible to me. After reviewing the literature on racial identity, I learned that many people who identify as White do not readily recognize the influence or the implications of their race (Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 1988; Owen, 2007) or the race of others. The birth of my niece was accompanied by a burgeoning awareness that not only did her race matter, but my own race mattered – and always had – though I had failed to realize it.

A second important experience that led to my interest in race and literacy occurred when I began my doctoral work at a local university where, as a graduate assistant, I was hired to supervise preservice teachers at an urban middle school. Upon entering the school for the first time, I was immediately struck by the contrast between the majority White faculty and the vast majority of students, who were African American according to school demographic reports. I soon discovered that the preservice teachers I was supervising were also primarily White. Then, during a subsequent visit to the school, I overheard a student who was obviously upset talking to an adult in the hallway. While I made an effort to not listen in on what appeared to be a private exchange of words, as I neared the area where they were standing, I heard the student exclaim that his teacher was racist. I remember trying to keep pace and not make eye contact, which I

feared would reveal my unintentional eavesdropping, but I am certain I appeared affected. I wanted to stop and ask the student what happened. Why did the student think his teacher was racist? What did the teacher do or say? As I continued down the corridor, I realized that what I was also questioning was whether I was racist. I wondered what acts of racism I exhibit and how I might be the same or different from the teacher about which the student was complaining. Do I even notice when my own words and actions could be received as racist? I silently argued with myself that I was a good person and that acts of racism were inconsistent with my good person identity. I felt ashamed because I realized that I likely had been hurting people with my faulty assumptions and good intentions, yet at that moment, I could not pinpoint a single instance in which I could identify my own racism.

When I reflected on those two powerful experiences – the birth of my niece and my observations of White teachers teaching students of color – I worried about what my niece might experience in the schools she attends. I was also troubled by the idea that had my niece not been born, perhaps I would not have experienced the series of reflections that caused me to feel compelled to research the topic of race in education. For my niece, will there be a predominantly White or a more racially diverse teaching force where she goes to school? If the teaching force is largely White, will they understand the implications of my niece's race and all their students' races? Will they understand the implications of their own race in teaching students of color versus teaching students who look like them? Will my niece ever wonder if her teachers are racist? And more importantly, what about other children of color taught by White teachers who have yet to realize the implications of race in education?

## **This Study**

The focus of this study was to explore the racialized practices connected to literacy instruction of mostly White preservice teachers, including enactments consistent with the goals of culturally-based pedagogies and associated with privileging or marginalizing their students' knowledge and experiences. I explored the following two research questions: 1) what racialized practices were enacted by preservice content-area teachers when they participated in a required literacy across the curriculum course that included one-on-one tutoring of youth at an urban secondary school, and 2) how did preservice content-area teachers' backgrounds contribute to their racialized practices?

I chose to study the racialized practices of preservice teachers (as opposed to inservice teachers) because gaining insight into the practices of preservice teachers increases the likelihood that racialized teaching practices known to marginalize students of color may begin to be interrupted during their initial teacher education years prior to their employment in schools.

I observed preservice teachers in their literacy across the curriculum classroom and during their one-on-one tutoring sessions with students. I also interviewed the preservice teachers and collected various course-related artifacts. I used a constant comparative method of data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Glaser, 1965) to explore emergent patterns in the data, and then I used applicable aspects of critical race theory and critical whiteness theory to explore how their practices were racialized.

## **Significance of the Current Study**

This study is important because it identifies potentially positive and problematic racialized practices that could be addressed in preservice literacy methods classes. It is important for preservice teachers to understand that good intentions (Applebaum, 2004) are not

enough to become effective, culturally responsive literacy teachers. Sometimes, racialized practices laden with good intentions can result in maintaining racial inequities. Teacher education courses provide an opportunity for preservice teachers to learn the nuances of racialized practices and how their practices can help or hinder reaching educational goals, such as those related to literacy.

This study is also timely and of particular importance to the educational community because of the tensions that continue to exist in American society, including in schools, between those who recognize and critique the continued privilege and marginalization of people along racial lines (Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, & Embrick, 2004; Gomez, Khurshid, Freitag, & Lachuk, 2011; McIntosh, 1988; Solorzano et al., 2000) and those who recognize and critique the views of individuals who insist that we now live in a post racial society (Donnor & Brown, 2011; Howard & Flennaugh, 2011; Temple, 2010). Critical race theory and critical whiteness theory provide a helpful framework for exploring how racial privilege and marginalization not only exist in society but continue to exist in schools. These theories also suggest that awareness of privilege and marginalization is necessary to eradicate their harmful effects. One cannot change something if one does not know it is a problem.

### **Overview of Chapters**

Five additional chapters follow this one. In Chapter 2, I review the pertinent literature that informed my two research questions. I begin the chapter with a discussion of teacher education from a historical perspective and then report on preservice teachers' perspectives and practices and how culturally-based pedagogies are aimed at addressing those perspectives and practices. Next, I contextualize literacy across the content area methods classes as they relate to my study. Finally, I discuss my theoretical framework by introducing critical theory and then

center on critical race theory and critical whiteness theory which are the core theories that grounded this study.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methods I used to conduct this study, including participant recruitment techniques, data collection procedures, data analysis methods, and my perspectives as a researcher. I describe the methods and multiple settings in which participants were observed and interviewed. I also describe how the data were analyzed using a constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) and using aspects of critical race theory (Matsuda et al., 1993) and critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993).

Chapter 4 describes the racialized practices enacted by four participants whose teaching appeared to be more relationship-focused as compared to the other participants, which is one of the often recommended tenets of culturally responsive teaching. The chapter also suggests how relationship-focused participants' backgrounds related to family, school and discipline-related epistemologies might have contributed to their racialized practices.

Chapter 5 describes the racialized practices enacted by three participants who appeared to be more instructionally-focused as compared to their relationship-focused peers. The chapter also suggests how instructionally-focused participants' backgrounds related to family, school and discipline-related epistemologies might have contributed to their racialized practices.

Chapter 6 begins with a summary of the findings reported in Chapters 4 and 5 and then proceeds into a discussion of each chapter's main points, including my interpretation of the findings, as well as the connections these findings have to the available literature. Finally, I discuss the implications these findings have for research, school professionals, literacy education classes, and teacher education programs.



## CHAPTER TWO

### **Literature Review**

This literature review addresses three main bodies of research that ground my study. First, I present background and research on teacher education, with a focus on the racialized perspectives and practices of preservice teachers. Next, I give a historical overview of literacy teaching across content areas, including methods related to the culturally responsive teaching of literacy. Finally, I highlight the theoretical frameworks (i.e., critical race theory and critical whiteness theory) that I use to describe and critique racialized literacy practices relevant to the current study.

#### **Teacher Education and the Racialized Practices of Preservice Teachers**

##### **Teacher Education and Race**

The professional preparation of teachers in the U.S. has been a topic of debate as far back as the early 1800s when conversations about the necessity of formal teacher preparation emerged (Learned et al., 1920). In the early days of the profession, teacher educators considered knowledge of subject matter the most important aspect of teacher preparation (Learned et al., 1920) and taught course content consistent with this belief. Specific exploration of how to best prepare preservice teachers did not emerge until the 1950s, when research on teacher education split from the more general domain of research on teaching (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Grossman & McDonald, 2008).

Once teacher education became recognized as an autonomous domain of study (Grossman & McDonald, 2008), research expanded from the context of controlled laboratory studies to university and school-based classroom contexts (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Lagemann, 1997). Despite the transition to compulsory education, changes in patterns of immigration, the end of legalized school segregation and inclusion of African American students

in classrooms as a result of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), preservice teachers were still being prepared using methods designed for homogeneous (i.e., White American) student populations (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Teacher education programs were slow to implement changes in their programs to better prepare their mostly White preservice teachers for a more diverse classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Research on teacher education was also slow in widening its research focus to include issues of culture and race.

Even when the fight for civil rights of various racial and ethnic groups became prominent starting in the 1960s, also during this time, teaching and teacher education research related to race remained largely absent from the scholarly literature. Instead, research tended to focus on topics, such as the relationship between teacher behavior and student achievement (e.g., a “process-product” approach; Medley, 1977, p. 2). This implicit denial of the relevance of race in preparing teachers represented a concomitant denial of the racially stratified structures that research has shown to systematically marginalize entire groups of people in the larger society (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre & Demers, 2008).

In 1979, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) began to draft standards for the purpose of examining how teacher education programs were reforming their programs to meet the demands associated with multicultural education (NCATE, 2008). Beginning in 1981, teacher education programs seeking national accreditation were required to include in their application their plans for addressing multicultural education in their programs. In 1990, NCATE revised their standards to address student admission criteria, faculty qualifications, curriculum, and field placement requirements. Of the 59 teacher education programs that sought accreditation that year, only eight programs were in full compliance with the new standards (Ladson-Billings, 1999).

Thus, teacher education only emerged as its own area of study in the 1950s when it separated from the general study of teaching. With changes in the demographics of those who attended schools, the composition of students in classrooms diversified. As classrooms became more diverse, teacher educators and teacher preparation programs began to respond to these demographic changes.

### **Preservice Teachers' Perspectives Toward Teaching Students of Color**

One area of teacher education research central to this study includes preservice teachers' perspectives toward teaching students whose racial and ethnic backgrounds they do not share. Much of what is known about preservice teachers' perspectives on teaching students of color has been gained through the use of surveys, inventories and interviews (Bakari, 2003; Castro, 2010; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Larke, 1990; Milner, 2006; Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, & Flowers, 2003; Sleeter, 2011). For example, in one exploration of preservice teachers' perspectives, Larke (1990) administered a diversity awareness inventory to a group of 51 preservice teachers. Although over 90% of respondents acknowledged that they believed that it was inevitable they would work with children whose cultural background they did not share, approximately two-thirds admitted that they would feel uncomfortable doing so. Moreover, participants also acknowledged their general acceptance of the use of ethnic jokes by children in their classrooms and would most likely refer students for testing who were having learning difficulties, even if the difficulties appeared to be culturally or linguistically grounded.

A little over a decade later, Milner et al. (2003) replicated aspects of the study conducted by Larke (1990) to compare the extent to which attitudes of preservice teachers toward working with diverse populations of students may have changed. Milner et al. (2003) found in their group of 99 participants that preservice teachers seemed similarly aware that they would likely be

working with students from diverse backgrounds; however, unlike the preservice teachers in the Larke study, participants in Milner et al. (2003) did not report being as uncomfortable with a future of working with students whose cultural background was different from their own. Furthermore, participants reported being less likely to accept the use of ethnic jokes in their future classrooms. Although research by Milner et al. may suggest preservice teachers' attitudes have changed substantially, it is difficult to rely on this conclusion when an alternative explanation is that preservice teachers' way of reporting their attitudes may actually be what changed. For example, they may have become "more sophisticated in their use of racial etiquette" (Castro, 2010, p. 207) or learned to enact responses to questions about race that reflect social desirability (Bakari, 2003) rather than their having different beliefs from participants in Larke's (1990) study.

In a related study, Bakari (2003) found in a sample of 400 preservice teachers a reluctance to work with African American students; however, unlike in Larke (1990) and Milner et al. (2003), Bakari purposefully included a group of African American preservice teachers as participants to whom she could compare White preservice teachers' perspectives. She found that White preservice teachers reported being less willing to teach African American students compared to African American preservice peers, and this reluctance was no longer simply attributable to their being new to the teaching profession but was at least partly attributable to their being White.

In addition to research on perspectives of White teachers, perspectives of preservice teachers of color have also been explored (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Kea, Trent & Davis, 2002; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010). In one such study, Kea et al. (2002) found that the majority of the 43 African American preservice teachers surveyed expressed positive perspectives toward

teaching students of color and conveyed a strong sense of teacher efficacy. Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2010) found that the two preservice teachers they interviewed went into teaching to be role models for similarly gendered and raced students. Findings from Kea et al. (2002) and Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2010) are consistent with what Bakari (2003) found in her survey study highlighting differences in perspectives among White and Black preservice teachers.

Hollins and Guzman (2005) conducted a rather broad review of the literature on preparing preservice teachers to teach diverse populations of students. In all, they reviewed 101 studies published between 1980 and 2002. Of particular interest to the current research are findings from 15 studies that revealed preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs associated with diversity. Similar to the studies reviewed above, Hollins and Guzman found that White preservice teachers generally held "negative attitudes and beliefs about those different from themselves" (p. 485); however, the preservice teachers nonetheless reported being "willing to teach in urban areas" (p. 485).

Based on their review, Hollins and Guzman (2005) identified gaps and inconsistencies in the literature associated with preservice teacher perspectives on diversity, the limited nature of the settings where studies took place and pervasive methodological concerns in the studies they reviewed. For example, studies overwhelmingly relied on self-reported data, as opposed to the use of multiple data sources which allows for corroboration of findings. In addition, most studies took place in standalone multicultural courses which limits generalizability to other settings such as methods courses. For the most part, the researchers tended to be the teacher educator teaching the course, which is potentially problematic because these types of studies are more likely to be fraught with researcher bias and students' possible feelings of duty or coercion to participate in the study.

Castro (2010) extended the review done by Hollins and Guzman (2005) by synthesizing findings from 55 studies published between 1986 and 2007 on preservice teachers' attitudes toward working with diverse students. Although Castro's review included some overlap (13 studies) with the review by Hollins and Guzman (2005), Castro's review differed in that it specifically grouped studies into three time periods so that a comparison of findings among earlier and later studies could be made. Castro found that the most recent studies revealed that preservice teachers showed more acceptance of cultural diversity in education, when compared to preservice teachers of earlier decades.

Despite this greater acceptance of diversity, preservice teacher participants in studies reviewed by Castro (2010) typically still held negative attitudes about African American students in particular. For example, Castro reported that preservice teachers generally conveyed that African American students themselves and/or their families were largely responsible for any negative academic and social outcomes experienced by students (i.e., blame the victim), rather than acknowledging the role of systemic factors related to racial hierarchies and the marginalization of people of color built into the American social structure. These narrow beliefs reflect a false sense of racial equity and explanation for success as attributable to notions of individualism (i.e., people are solely responsible for their own problems) and meritocracy (i.e., effort alone will result in success, McNamee & Miller, 2004). Since most preservice teachers are White, the fact that they are not aware of (or perhaps disregard) systemic reasons contributing to these outcomes places all the responsibility on children and families to change, without any regard to the institutional forces that maintain a well-documented imbalance of power (Castro, 2010).

In a more recent study by Kumar and Hamer (2013), the beliefs of 784 preservice teachers were explored related to student diversity and projected instructional strategies (i.e., approaches to instruction that participants anticipated instituting in their future classroom). Preservice teachers were surveyed at four different intervals over the course of their teacher education preparation to determine how their beliefs changed over time. Kumar and Hamer found that overall, the preservice teachers' education program positively influenced their beliefs toward culturally diverse students; however, certain preservice teachers' responses on surveys revealed that their new beliefs were not likely to transfer to their actual work with students when they were to enter the field. Also of concern was the finding that a quarter of the preservice teachers surveyed were found to hold stereotypical beliefs about students from diverse backgrounds and were more likely to hold these beliefs about students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

What is learned from the study by Kumar and Hamer (2013) is threefold. First, although positive changes in preservice teachers' attitudes are desirable, they may not carry over into teaching practices, which makes them of limited value for actually meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Second, positive attitudes about diversity do not necessarily negate simultaneously held negative attitudes, such as the adherence to racial stereotypes. Third, and most important, surveys only reveal what people want to disclose. When preservice teachers are not actually observed teaching students of color in reference to their beliefs, conclusions about how to best prepare preservice teachers to meet the needs of diverse student populations remain decontextualized, speculative, and theoretical.

As mentioned earlier, perspectives of preservice teachers have mostly been studied through the use of surveys to explore their attitudes related to working with students of color.

While some of these researchers have noted that preservice teachers' (particularly White preservice teachers) communicate a reluctance to work in urban settings (Bakari, 2003; Castro, 2010; Hollins & Guzman, 2005), other researchers have found more willingness on the part of preservice teachers to work in this setting (Kumar & Hamer, 2013).

Although these mixed findings may be confusing, some inconsistencies across studies are likely due to differences in data gathering, as well as differences in preservice teachers' experiences across study samples. For example, as stated previously the majority of studies on preservice teachers' perspectives and attitudes have used survey instruments in which subtle differences in the wording of items may underlie how participants responded. When studies rely on self-reported perspectives and enactments, findings are limited to what participants say without a comparison to what they actually do. In effect, in studies where there is an absence of triangulated data sources such as interviews, observations and exploration of teaching artifacts, there are limits to the scope of interpretations researchers can make. Findings from this and the other studies referenced above suggest that preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward teaching students of color should remain a focus in both teacher education research and the teaching profession. Missing from this work are insights into how the preservice teachers bring their understandings of race to their work in schools.

### **Teacher Educators' Efforts to Address Preservice Teachers' Perspectives Toward Race**

Another area of teacher education that is pertinent to this study has to do with how teacher education has responded to what the research has revealed about preservice teachers' perspectives in relation to working with diverse students. Methods courses and field placement experiences are critical components for addressing multicultural and race-related issues in



teacher education because they provide instructional content and techniques related to teaching diverse populations that are then practiced within authentic multicultural contexts.

As I noted in the previous section, research has shown that preservice teachers have reported negative attitudes and a lack of openness toward teaching students from diverse backgrounds. This reluctance appears to be due, in part, to the fact that many do not feel prepared to work with students who differ from them (Castro, 2010). To address these issues, teacher education programs have taken steps to (re)design their programs with the following goals: to educate preservice teachers about diversity, to prepare them to teach students from a variety of cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds and to disrupt negatively held attitudes about students from a variety of backgrounds (Banks, 1995). The approaches to this work have had many labels, including multicultural education (Banks, 2002), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1992), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000/2010), anti-racist pedagogy (Giroux, 1992) and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014).

**Multicultural education.** Multicultural education emerged in the 1960s upon a foundation built by African American scholars/activists, such as W. E. B. Du Bois (1903/1980) and Carter G. Woodson (1933), with the intention to establish educational equality for all racial, ethnic and social-class groups (Banks, 1995). Further grounding for multicultural education included the intergroup education movement of the 1940s and 1950s (Banks, 1995; Cooke, 1947), and later, the expansion of ethnic studies to multiethnic studies (Gay, 1983). In a 1994 review of the multicultural education literature, Gay (1994) asserted that multicultural education is an educational reform movement that promotes “learning about, preparing for and celebrating cultural diversity . . . [and it will require] changes in schools, programs, policies and practices” (p. 4).

Multicultural education initially focused on school textbook and curricular reform, and then extended its reach to include educational programs, practices and policies with a revised focus “to increase educational equity for all students” (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. xii). This expanded focus drew attention to additional identity markers such as gender, class and ability. Lorde (1983) advocated that paying attention to the needs of every marginalized group is important because “there is no hierarchy in oppressions” (p. 9). There are three ways that multicultural education has been typically implemented, which include a standalone course model, an integration model and a hybrid multicultural model.

***Standalone multicultural course model.*** One way that teacher education programs have responded to increased diversity in classrooms is to provide one or more required (i.e., if NCATE driven) or optional standalone multicultural education courses (Brown, 2004b; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). One benefit to using a standalone model is the opportunity to address issues of diversity deeply. Another benefit is that the whole course can be focused specifically on diversity issues without worrying that subject area content will be crowded out. A challenge with the standalone model is that the course may be optional, and thus, leaves the decision up to the students on whether to take it. Additionally, some students may view the content of this type of course as specific to that course and not understand possible generalizability to other contexts. Another challenge is that because of the sensitive nature of the content, students may enact distancing strategies (Case & Hemmings, 2005), which may result in silence and discomfort by both the instructor and preservice teacher. The use of distancing strategies will be discussed in more depth later in this review.

***Integration multicultural model.*** As an alternative to the standalone course model, individual teacher educators may choose to infuse/integrate multicultural teachings into and

across the curriculum and methods courses (Ambe, 2006). A benefit to this model is that students will get multiple exposures to issues related to diversity taught by multiple professors across a number of different courses. This model does put the onus on the teacher educator to integrate material, and there is no guarantee that all teacher educators will do that or know how to.

***Hybrid multicultural model.*** A third option is to add a field placement to either model mentioned above so that preservice teachers will have an opportunity to practice their newly learned skills and will have the opportunity to return to the classroom for debriefing and feedback (Sleeter, 2001). A benefit to this model is that preservice teachers will be able to observe how diversity issues are addressed in authentic school settings and will be afforded firsthand experience with implementing some activities themselves.

To date, multicultural teacher education continues to be a focus of research in teacher education. Areas of exploration have included preservice teacher recruitment, exploration of the “hidden curriculum” (i.e., the unspoken transmission of values of dominant groups; Furman, 2008, p. 62), how preservice teachers are portrayed in research (Lowenstein, 2009), what explorations of multicultural syllabi reveal (Gorski, 2009), what multicultural teacher educators have found to be most influential in implementing multicultural education (Gorski, 2010), and as was discussed earlier in this literature review, investigation into preservice teacher attitudes toward working with students of color (Bakari, 2003; Castro, 2010).

In 2001, Sleeter reviewed 80 studies on multicultural education published between 1985 and 2000 focusing on preservice teacher recruitment and preparation strategies to teach a diverse student body. She concluded that “institutions [of higher education] have generally responded very slowly to the growing cultural gap” (p. 95) between teachers and students. For example,

Sleeter found that in the early 1990s, only slightly more than half of the 19 teacher preparation programs in the Midwest even required students to complete a multicultural education course.

As a result of her review of the literature, Sleeter (2001) was cautious in recommending multicultural education coursework with or without fieldwork because “it is difficult to say how much impact multicultural education courses have on White students” (p. 100). Sleeter’s conclusion is based on multiple findings that suggest that preservice teachers tend to cling to the beliefs they hold upon arriving to their programs. For example, Haberman and Post (1992) found that their study participants embraced stereotypic attitudes as a result of a field placement, whereas, Bondy, Schmitz and Johnson (1993) found the field experience had a positive effect on their preservice participants. Due to the inconsistency of findings in the literature, Sleeter (2001) recommended more research be conducted to explore the benefits of multicultural education courses, with and without associated field placements.

**Culturally relevant pedagogy.** It is crucial to understand the theories and research associated with teachers of students whose race and culture the teachers do not share. Ladson-Billings (1992, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 1999, 2006, 2011) has written extensively on this topic and remains true to her message that to maximize the learning of African American students, teachers need to understand and implement culturally relevant pedagogy.

Ladson-Billings’ past and present work on culturally relevant pedagogy stems from insights related to her research with intermediate grade teachers in the late 1980s who were identified by parents and principals as being exemplary in teaching African American children. This formative study brought the importance of cultural relevance to the forefront of education, while simultaneously increasing the literature base describing the attributes of exemplary teachers.

Culturally relevant teaching, as exemplified by the teachers in Ladson-Billings' (1992) study included a focus on student achievement, a focus on cultural competence (i.e., helping students remain proud of their own culture while also learning about school culture), and a focus on critically interrogating inequities in school and in the larger society (i.e., critical consciousness). This last tenet is why Ladson-Billings (1992) referred to culturally relevant teaching as a "pedagogy of opposition" (p. 314) and is what sets it apart from other pedagogical practices, such as culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000/2010), discussed in more detail in the next section. Based on her observations, Ladson-Billings (1992) brought these components together to create a useful definition of culturally relevant teaching. She describes culturally relevant teaching as

the kind of teaching that is designed not merely to *fit* (emphasis in original) the school culture to the students' culture but also to use student culture as the basis for helping students understand themselves and others, structure social interactions, and conceptualize knowledge. (p. 314)

Ladson-Billings (1995b) also discussed the importance of teacher-student relationships that underlie the practice of culturally relevant pedagogy. In order to teach with cultural relevance, relationships among teachers and students must be both "equitable and reciprocal" (p. 480). What this means is that high quality, meaningful relationships are a cornerstone of culturally relevant pedagogy that lead to students gaining a better understanding of themselves, others and society.

**Culturally responsive teaching.** While culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billing, 1992) is ultimately focused on students' academic success and student critique of inequities in society, Gay's (2000/2010) notion of culturally responsive pedagogy is more concerned with

teachers teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds more effectively. According to Gay,

Culturally responsive teaching means using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively.

It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly.

(Gay, 2002, p. 106)

As a way to become culturally responsive, Gay (1993) suggested that teachers be “cultural brokers” (p. 293), which requires teachers to gain knowledge of a variety of cultural and ethnic groups so that the new knowledge can be incorporated into curriculum and instruction. Similar to the point made by Ladson-Billings (1995b) about the need for connected and reciprocal relationships among teachers and students, Gay (2002) discussed “cultural caring” (p. 110), which includes not only forming strong partnerships with students but also acting in ways that are genuinely in the best interest of students with respect to their families and communities.

While culturally relevant teaching and culturally responsive teaching are not synonymous, they both offer relevant advice regarding how to address and use culture in the classroom to bring about benefits to all students. For this reason, Morrison, Robbins, and Rose (2008) sought to combine findings from research on theory and teaching practices to explore what was known to date about culturally-based pedagogies. In a research synthesis, Morrison et al. (2008) examined 45 studies published between 1995 and 2006 that focused on either culturally relevant and/or culturally responsive classroom practices. Morrison et al. used Ladson-Billings’ (1995b) theoretical framework to organize findings, which included practices

to enable students to meet high academic expectations, develop cultural competence, and develop critical consciousness of inequities in schools and in society. These categories (i.e., high expectations, cultural competence and critical consciousness) were found to encompass the most common ways in which culturally-based pedagogical practices were enacted in classrooms.

Morrison et al. (2008) found that the ways in which teachers helped their students meet high expectations was through the use of a rigorous curriculum, using students' strengths in instructional practices, taking responsibility for students' success, and creating an environment that was both nurturing and cooperative to further promote high levels of achievement. Teachers demonstrated cultural competence (i.e., positive cultural identity) by reshaping the prescribed curriculum, building on students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) and encouraging relationships between schools and communities. Teachers demonstrated critical consciousness (i.e., critique of social inequities) by instructing and supporting students to critique power dynamics in mainstream society and by providing critical literacy instruction (e.g., as critiquing texts used in the classroom).

Ladson-Billings (1992) and Gay (2000, 2010) are united in asserting that the culture of students constitutes an important strength upon which to build. They also are aligned in asserting the importance of teachers building and maintaining positive relationships with students. Where Ladson-Billings (1992) and Gay (2000, 2010) differ somewhat is in their recommendations for what teachers should do in their classrooms related to culturally-based teaching methods. Ladson-Billings' (1992) conceptualization of culturally relevant pedagogy includes a component directly related to teaching students about power dynamics that exist in society to help students negotiate through and critique them. This component is not specifically emphasized in Gay (2000), whose theories and recommendations are more tied to teaching

practices that honor and harness culture to promote learning. Because culturally relevant teaching includes critiquing existing power structures in society at its core, this pedagogical framework must include the development of cultural consciousness on both the part of the teacher and the student. Honoring and harnessing culture to promote learning does not necessarily require critical consciousness, though arguably, critical consciousness would likely enhance these teaching practices as well.

**Culturally sustaining pedagogy.** Although work by Ladson-Billings (1992) and Gay (2000) have been central to the development of recommendations for teaching practices in teacher education, recently, a notable critique has emerged regarding the adequacy of these culturally-based pedagogies guiding teaching practices. Paris (2012) has suggested that the concepts of culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy are incomplete because they do not include the dual educative role of “supporting young people in *sustaining* [emphasis added] the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (p. 95). Paris recommended the use of the term “culturally sustaining pedagogy” to better account for practices that promote learning based on culture, while simultaneously acknowledging the power structures and value systems involved in learning. Consequently, culturally sustaining teaching is a term with roots in the critique of two important culturally-based pedagogical theories which have principally guided the field to date.

**Field experiences.** Another critical component of teacher education programs is the field experience (Brayko, 2013; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Lastrapes & Negishi, 2011-2012; Marx, 2004; Sleeter, 2001). As noted by Feiman-Nemser (2001), field-based learning and practice are essential components of teacher preparation programs. More specifically, “observation,



apprenticeship, guided practice, knowledge application and inquiry all have a place in field-based learning” (p. 1024). In teacher preparation programs, preservice teachers typically complete a sequence of multiple field placements in one or more settings that may include carefully structured field assignments (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) that afford preservice teachers opportunities to situate theoretical learning in practice.

One aspect of field placements that is particularly valuable for preservice teachers is the opportunity to observe and work directly with students whose racial, cultural or linguistic characteristics differ from the preservice teacher. Sleeter (2001) noted the potential of community-based cross-cultural immersion experiences (p. 97), where preservice teachers reside in a community that is culturally dissimilar to theirs. Brayko (2013) studied preservice teachers who attended a literacy methods course that included a field placement in a neighborhood community center. Both Sleeter (2001) and Brayko (2013) found that field experiences such as these can result in preservice teachers gaining a sense of awareness of culture and context that differs from their own experiences, as well as a deeper understanding of literacy practices. Sleeter (2001) also noted, however, from her review of the literature, that in some cases stereotypes were confirmed, whereas, in other cases they were disconfirmed.

In a related study, Marx (2004) analyzed transcripts of interviews and journal writing to explore ways in which her participants’ whiteness and racism influenced their experiences of tutoring English language learners at a field placement. Her analysis led her to describe her nine preservice teachers as having a “tenacious hold on deficit thinking” (p. 34) in relation to discussing the English language learners whom they tutored. Deficit thinking views people through a lens that illuminates their perceived weaknesses and blames them for those weaknesses (Valencia, 1997). For example, Michelle, one of Marx’s participants, used the term “trashy” (p.

35) to describe her tutoring site that included a student body of predominantly African American students. Another participant in Marx (2004) named Valerie remarked about her tutee, “Her English is so poor” (p. 35), and then proceeded to mimic her tutee’s pronunciation of words.

When Marx discovered the pervasiveness of her preservice teachers’ deficit thinking, she added a goal to her study to “firmly but gently draw attention to the White racism of participants that was revealed during conversations” (p. 37). To pursue her goal, Marx facilitated participants’ reading their own interview transcripts to create an ongoing dialogue to problematize the racist language reflected in the transcripts. Marx questioned if she had gone far enough with her intervention. From Marx’s perspective, the participants appeared to make progress in acknowledging and reflecting upon their apparent racism as a result of the intervention, though the process took an emotional toll on her participants, as well as on herself. She suggested that this work is a difficult journey and is more akin to running an arduous marathon rather than a sprint.

In a more recent study of preservice teachers, Lastrapes and Negishi (2011-2012) explored the cultural consciousness and self-efficacy of 46 mostly White preservice teachers who were enrolled in an introduction to diversity course that included a school-based tutoring component at an urban site with a diverse student population. Lastrapes and Negishi concluded that university courses, coupled with a field placement requiring preservice teachers to practice teaching, are key to developing preservice teachers who have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach an ever increasing diverse student population. Therefore, including a field experience appears to be an important component to preservice teacher learning, but teacher instruction and opportunities to dialogue about what is happening at the field site appear to be equally important.

## Summary

Since teacher education's emergence as an autonomous field of study in the 1950s in the U.S., much has been learned about the attitudes of preservice teachers in relation to teaching students of color. For example, preservice teachers have been found to be reticent in their willingness to work with students in urban settings (Bakari, 2003; Castro, 2010), although some more recent studies suggest White teachers have become somewhat more willing to engage with students from a variety of backgrounds (Kumar & Hamer, 2013). It is not known whether this effect is due to actual increases in willingness or whether changes in discourse patterns and self-reported attitudes revealed on surveys are predisposed to the effects of social desirability (Bakari, 2003). Regardless, positive trends in attitudes of White preservice teachers are certainly not consistent. Recall that as recently as 2013, Kumar and Hamer found that preservice teachers still admitted to discomfort and a lack of interest in teaching students whose backgrounds were different from their own.

To respond to these challenges, teacher education programs have altered or added courses, developed curricula and fieldwork assignments for preservice teachers and have included instruction in how to become culturally relevant, responsive and sustaining teachers. In addition, although preservice teachers expressed they would institute more culturally responsive practices once they got into future field placements, results from follow-up studies showed that this was not necessarily the case.

While individuals in higher education have been attempting to address each of the above concerns, according to Hollins and Guzman (2005), limitations to teacher education diversity studies have constrained insights. Often, diversity studies take place in multicultural education courses, which are valuable because instructors can focus directly on diversity without having to

divide their attention across other course content; however, this strength is also an obvious weakness because if culturally-based teaching methods are designed to be used in content area classrooms, researchers need to explore how culture and teaching intersect. Another potential limitation to studies of teacher education and diversity is the fact that they are often conducted by the instructor who is teaching the course, which means that researcher bias and possible coercion of students may inadvertently influence findings. A final point is that the data collected for analysis are often self-reported by participants, and self-reports provide limited understanding of the complexities involved in the study of race teaching. More studies situated in methods courses, which are completed by researchers who are not involved in teaching the courses, and which involve data collection using a variety of means to explore consistencies and inconsistencies across settings, are needed.

### **Literacy Teaching and Racialized Practices**

#### **Evolution of Literacy Across the Curriculum Preservice Teachers' Education**

Notions of literacy have evolved considerably since 1958, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared a person to be *functionally literate* if he or she could “with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 153). Definitions of literacy from this era were constrained to the domains of reading and writing. They also mostly reflected behaviorist theory (Skinner, 1974) in that the acquisition of reading and writing skills was thought to be dependent on neutral, mechanical skills that could be learned in isolation (Alexander & Fox, 2004). The type of research that followed focused almost exclusively on cognitive aspects of reading comprehension (O'Brien, Stewart & Moje, 1995), including work related to reading in content areas (Herber & Sanders, 1969).

Following cognitive trends in literacy research, the Sociocultural Era of Literacy brought forth ideas related to cultural dominance that appeared to maintain social inequities. For example, in his work, entitled *What is Literacy*, Gee (1990/2008) discussed how discourses (i.e., communication among similarly minded people) consistent with literacy experiences are related to “social power and hierarchical structure in society” (p. 144). He further explained that “control over certain Discourses can lead to the acquisition of social goods (money, power, status) in a society” (p. 144). What this means is that conceptions of literacy also evolved to acknowledge social structures maintaining both power and influence.

The Sociocultural Era began when researchers acknowledged the social influences of literacy, such as who was doing the reading and writing, the purpose of the literacy activities, and the contexts in which they occurred (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). This Sociocultural Era of Literacy (Alexander & Fox, 2004) became apparent in the work of theorists and researchers such as Street (1984), Gee (1990/2008) and others (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 1998) who expanded upon traditional views of literacy to include other forms of communication, such as listening, speaking, and viewing (New London Group, 1996) and possible social sources of those literacies.

It was also during the Sociocultural Era that content-area reading courses were changed to content literacy (McKenna & Robinson, 1990) and literacy across the curriculum courses (O’Brien et al., 1995), that were taught alongside content-area courses in teacher preparation programs. This combination of content and literacy courses was thought to be synergistic, based on the belief that developing students’ reading, writing, talking, listening, and viewing skills could enhance the learning of subject matter across the curriculum. One idea undergirding this notion was that comprehension strategies instruction (e.g., predicting, visualizing, inferring) that

has high utility for comprehending narrative texts would be equally effective for comprehending informational or content-area texts (Block & Pressley, 2002).

Some resistance has been encountered on the part of content-area teachers in implementing comprehension strategies instruction because they do not necessarily view the teaching of literacy as part of their role as educators (Hall, 2005; Moje, 2008; O'Brien et al., 1995; O'Brien & Stewart, 1990; Stewart & O'Brien, 1989). While some studies have demonstrated that teacher educators have been successful in helping content-area teachers learn about comprehension strategies (Fine, Robbins, Miller, & Yribarren, 2013; Massey & Lewis, 2011), when preservice teachers actually enter the field, research has also shown that they largely ignore the implementation of these strategies. One possible reason for this disregard is that content area teachers believe that the disciplines differ so much in purpose, textual structure and vocabulary that a generic set of comprehension strategies is insufficient for deep understanding of content across the disciplines (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012).

In addition to the notion that content-area teachers may not believe that they should be teaching literacy in their classes, another dilemma for teachers and teacher educators is how to negotiate “a desire to meet content learning objectives with their respect for students’ backgrounds and beliefs . . . . in a way that produces [not only] socially just subject-matter instruction . . . . [but] also produces social justice (Moje, 2007, p. 1). The distinction made by Moje between socially just pedagogy (i.e., providing equitable opportunities to students) and social justice pedagogy (i.e., going beyond equity of opportunity to include opportunities to challenge notions of normative knowledge) is an important one and aligns with the concept of responsive teaching (Moje & Hinchman, 2004) and notions of critical theory which will be discussed later in this chapter.

## **Multicultural Literacy Education**

As mentioned previously, an option for addressing multicultural education is to infuse its curriculum into a variety of courses, and several studies of literacy-related elementary methods courses include aspects of multicultural education (Laframboise & Griffith, 1997; Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Xu, 2000). Hollins and Guzman (2005) reviewed two studies directly related to literacy in their chapter on preparing teachers for meeting the needs of diverse populations. One study took place in the context of an Introduction to Children's Literature course (Nathenson-Mejía & Escamilla, 2003), and the other took place in a reading language arts course (Laframboise & Griffith, 1997). Both of these courses had field placements associated with them. The combination of literacy methods and multiculturalism was especially beneficial because preservice teachers who experienced this type of preparation were reportedly more motivated to teach in multicultural settings and outcomes such as understanding perspectives of themselves and others better were reported by the researchers of both studies (Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

In another study on literacy methods and multicultural education, Xu (2000) used a case study methodology to investigate how three preservice teachers explored issues of diversity while enrolled in an elementary literacy methods course. Through examination of a series of course assignments, Xu found that her participants were generally able to express their knowledge of literacy and diversity-related strategies, but this knowledge did not transfer to their teaching. In addition, Xu became troubled by the preservice teachers' lack of awareness that the primary language of an English language learner can help accelerate second language acquisition. Xu made a decision to address this misconception through instruction hoping that

this clarification would transfer to their teaching at their field placement site. Unfortunately, participants generally did not transfer these insights into their fieldwork with students.

Thus, for literacy related methods courses, Laframboise and Griffith (1997), Nathenson-Mejía and Escamilla (2003), and Xu (2000) each found that infusing multicultural content reduced prejudicial attitudes in the short term. More research is needed to understand what would dismantle barriers to working with students from diverse backgrounds over the long term.

### **Culturally Responsive Literacy Pedagogy**

To explore culturally-responsive teaching in reference to literacy, Moje and Hinchman (2004) reviewed the literature that included both secondary school literacy and culturally responsive pedagogy and categorized studies according to three perspectives. The first perspective focused on the importance of tapping background knowledge to provide bridges that connect what students bring to the learning with the academic discourse. The second perspective highlighted the importance of teaching all students how to navigate the academic discourse. Teaching included explicating the ways power operates in and across discourse communities. The third perspective encompassed teaching students to be critical consumers of knowledge and curriculum. Moje and Hinchman also described two classrooms, one math and one science, that were considered exemplars of culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally responsive practices delineated by Moje and Hinchman included a number of points that earlier researchers have supported, including (see, for example, Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Gay, 2000/2010) the importance of teacher-student relationships, recognizing that people are members of multiple discourse communities, importance of relevancy, developing knowledge of discipline-related concepts, creating opportunities for communicating across multiple discourses, and developing knowledge and skills to critically interact among those with varying perspectives.



## **Culturally Sustaining Literacy Pedagogy**

In an effort to explore culturally sustaining literacy teaching practices, researchers have begun to focus on the counter-narratives of students of color. This research has helped to dispel the myth that students of color are not as capable at developing literacy skills or are not interested in literacy. For example, Kinloch (2009) illuminated the literacies of four students of color from Detroit who described how their out-of-school literacies carried over into their classrooms. Similarly, Haddix (2009) provided a counter-narrative to the pervasive deficit depictions of African American males in schools and presented evidence that African American males readily engage in writing in out-of-school contexts. Additional scholars who explored the breadth of students' funds of knowledge to counter stereotypical deficit thinking include Kirkland and Jackson (2009), who studied the literacy knowledge of Black adolescent males by studying the symbolism of their dress, talk and actions. Similarly, Winn (2010) explored the literacy of African American adolescent females who were formerly incarcerated and found evidence of sophisticated literacy representations through participants' writing of plays in a summer program.

## **Summary**

The constructs of literacy and literacy teaching have both evolved over the decades. Notions of literacy as involving "skills" were eventually replaced by an acknowledgement that social aspects of literacy were related to power and inequitable access to literacy teaching. This change ushered in an era of research focused on culturally-based teaching and student learning.

Teaching literacy in a socially and racially stratified context has become an expectation for all teachers, including content area teachers. While literacy across the curriculum models have become more widespread in teacher education classrooms, these changes have not readily

been embraced by preservice teachers, in large part, because some content-area teachers have not viewed the teaching of literacy as part of their role. Furthermore, teacher education programs have since attempted to infuse multicultural education content and culturally-responsive teaching methods into their content area courses, which has resulted in even greater challenges. Research that highlights the potential benefits of multicultural literacy education (Haddix, 2009; Kinloch, 2009; Kirkland & Jackson, 2009) and culturally sustaining practices (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014) propel the field forward in terms of fostering the achievement of students of color, through insights gained from exploring counter-narratives of students of color (Haddix, 2009; Kinloch, 2009; Kirkland & Jackson, 2009).

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

Certain aspects of critical race theory (Matsuda et al., 1993) and critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993) were used in this study to inform the exploration of preservice teachers' racialized practices and ways that they construct race. This study was founded on the premise that everyone in U.S. society is raced (Greene & Abt-Perkins, 2003), which means that all peoples' thoughts, perspectives and enactments have at least some footing in their racial backgrounds. Since we are products of our racialized backgrounds, children most likely learn most of what they know about race from stories told to them by their elders. As children get older, they may have personal experiences that support or refute what they have been told. Thus, the meaning attached to people, places, things and concepts is not developed solely or neutrally in the mind but is a result of interacting with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Since people tend to self-segregate and socialize in communities of similar races and economic levels, it is possible that White teachers may have had little or even no direct contact with people of color

while growing up. Now as teachers, they may continue to have little to no interaction with people of color outside of their work.

It is widely accepted that race, like many other terms used to describe group membership, is socially constructed, which means society determines the written and unwritten rules of who belongs to a group and the accepted conventions of their social interaction (Omi & Winant, 1993). It is less widely recognized that in U.S. society this racialized social system is hierarchical (Bonilla-Silva, 1997), which advantages members of the dominant racial group and disadvantages people who are not part of or affiliated with the dominant racial group. In the system, the most dominant race is White, and members of this dominant group are often not aware of their dominant position (McIntosh, 1988). Nevertheless, this dominance is revealed in the resources, privileges and subsequent power afforded to U.S. Whites throughout history (Harris, 1993). Delpit (1995) called this implicit authority the “culture of power” (p. 24), whereas, McIntosh (1988) called it “an invisible package of unearned assets” (p. 291). Both Delpit and McIntosh agree that this power operates in all aspects of society, including schools which is a major setting of the current study.

In theory, we should be able to observe how this culture of power operates in schools. This notion is supported by critical race theory (Matsuda et al., 1993) and critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993). These perspectives would suggest that, not only are our schools historically based on White privilege in construction and operation, but also that people with arguably the most influence in schools are teachers who are majority White and oversee the education of students of color in schools across the nation (Sleeter, 2001).

Critical theorists recognize social power struggles and continue to critique hegemonic aspects of culture. Critical theory has become the tool embraced by researchers who study

marginalized groups, to provide an outlet for narratives to counter the more often reported one-sided perspectives of the dominant group. Critical theory has also been used to study the narratives of the dominant group in order to better understand their racialized practices. In its most basic form, critical theory refers to the theoretical tradition of cultural criticism (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002) that have their roots in critical pedagogy (McLaren, 1989) most notably in the work of Freire (McLaren, 2000). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) provided an overview of a number of critical theories in their 2001 book entitled *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. Some of these theories include critical Latino/a theory which illuminates the social inequities and mistreatment of Latino/a people, critical feminist theory which provides an avenue for women, often women of color, to elucidate the raced-based and gender-based injustices they have endured, and critical Asian theory which critiques the poor treatment of people of Asian descent.

### **Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (Matsuda et al., 1993) involves the application of critical theory to race-based human injustice (Milner, 2008). Solorzano (1997) defined critical race theory as “a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalization of people of color” (p. 6). Although the term critical race theory was not formally introduced until the early 1980s by legal scholars such as Derek Bell (1980), the foundations can be traced back to work by W. E. B. Du Bois (1903/1989) and Carter G. Woodson (1933), who both decried the social inequities experienced by African Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. Du Bois (1903/1989) uniquely brought forth the idea of double consciousness, which involves a splintering of identity from being both Black and American and can cause conflicted feelings because part of White American culture involves holding negative

views of Black people. Because being Black is often treated as a problem by the dominant culture (Howard, 2013), Black people may feel pressured to adopt a negative view of themselves, and this can cause lingering conflict. Since the early work of twentieth century African American philosophers and legal scholars, critical race theory has more recently been applied to education in an attempt to understand oppression, marginalization and inequitable treatment of students of color in schools (Brown et al., 2010; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn & Parker, 2006; Rogers & Mosley, 2006). Similar to other applications of the theory, the use of critical race theory in schools involves recognition of how oppressive practices play out in this important American institution.

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), critical race theory includes five main premises. First, critical race theory stresses that racism continues to be pervasive and in many respects normalized in society. Although expressions of overt racism in previous eras, such as schools being segregated by law, are less apparent in modern American society, proponents of critical race theory suggest that expressions of racism have simply evolved into more subtle representations. The second premise of critical race theory involves the acknowledgement that being White carries with it rights and privileges that make success in American society more likely than it is for those who do not possess this characteristic. These rights and privileges are often unacknowledged, particularly to individuals who are White. This lack of awareness reinforces a culture that espouses meritocracy, where success is judged according to effort rather than acknowledging the social lubrication underlying White success. While this kind of more subtle racism, which Harris (1993, 1995) termed “whiteness as property” (p. 276), does not always invoke the same outrage as more overt acts of racism, the fact that Whites lack awareness

of their privilege and that people of color are told to try harder propagates the myth that it is merit that drives success. This study draws the most on these first two premises.

The third premise of critical race theory is that inviting and including the voices of people of color can reveal racism's harmful effects so that these effects are better understood. More subtle and indirect forms of racism are often unrecognized and unacknowledged by Whites, and it is through these counter-narratives (Solorzano, 1997) that people of color can fully reveal their experiences of marginalization related to the actions of others. These actions include racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1970) and acts of colorblindness. An example of a racial microaggression includes asking someone, "Where are you from?" which implies to the recipient that he/she does not belong, whereas an example of colorblindness includes someone White claiming that race is irrelevant. This draws the least on this premise of critical race theory, not because counter-narratives are not important but because six of the seven preservice participants in this study were members of the dominant group. It is actually the dominant narratives of my participants that illustrate the problematic nature of many of their negative racialized practices.

A study in which racial microaggressions were explored included Solorzano et al. (2000), who found that a group of African American undergraduate students revealed that they had experienced a number of racial microaggressions on their college campus in both social and academic spaces. Students reported experiencing low expectations and stereotyping from both faculty and peers. Examples of low expectations included being accused of cheating by a professor in response to earning a 95 on a test and made to retake the test, being chosen last to join class groups which was perceived as a need to prove intelligence, and hearing White students discuss that affirmative action was "the only reason Black students were getting into these universities" (p. 67). Examples of stereotyping included overhearing a White faculty

member say, “Oh I should have locked the door. My purse is in there” (p. 68), after a student of color walked by, and various other instances of African American students being unnecessarily monitored on campus.

A fourth component of critical race theory pertains to the way racism is addressed rhetorically in our society which may actually slow rather than accelerate changes to eliminate representations of racism. For example, it is not uncommon to hear talk of Americans living in a post-racial society (Donnor & Brown, 2011; Howard & Flennaugh, 2011; Temple, 2010). One example given as proof of this notion is the election of Barack Obama to the highest office in the American government. Although rebuttals to this post racial rhetoric can be found in a number of journal articles (see, for example, Donnor & Brown, 2011; Howard & Flennaugh, 2011; Temple, 2010), the myth continues to exist. This study gives some examples of how this worked for my participants.

The fifth and final premise of critical race theory is related to a concept called “interest convergence” (Bell, 1980), which involves White people supporting the elimination of discriminatory practices only when abolishment serves their own best interest. Interest convergence helps to explain that the seemingly good intentions of Whites may be undergirded by concealed attitudes of subtle racism. An example of interest convergence includes the sanctioning of policies related to affirmative action, which are intended to benefit people of color, when much of the benefit of these policies are actually experienced by White women (Yosso, Parker, Solorzano & Lynn, 2004). The theory of interest convergence was not evident in my participants.

Critical race theory has been used by numerous educational researchers to explain forms of racial inequity observed in schools (Brown et al., 2010; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Dixson &

Rousseau, 2005; Kearns et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Michaels, 1981; Oakes et al., 1990; Skiba, et al., 2006; Stovall, 2006). Examples of micro- and macro-level discriminatory practices (i.e., microaggressions) that have been studied include teachers giving their White students more attention than their students of color (Michaels, 1981), teachers having lowered expectations for students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and teachers systematically placing students of color in lower academic tracks (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Oakes et al., 1990). Furthermore, racial disproportionality in suspension and expulsion rates have been identified (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Kea et al., 2002; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2010), along with disproportionate placement of students of color in special education programs (Ferri & Connor, 2006; Kearns et al., 2005).

Brown et al. (2010), used critical race theory and critical discourse analysis to elucidate how racism was normalized in three early childhood contexts including a mandated literacy program. They found that White middle class cultural values were consistently embraced at the schools associated with the case studies such as having only books that reflected the dominant group characteristics and culture available.

### **Critical Whiteness Theory**

A second theory that informed this study was critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993), which is an extension of critical race theory. Critical whiteness theory illuminates “behaviors that signify what it means to be white in our society” (Charbeneau, 2009, p. 2). Frankenberg (1993) asserted that White people and people of color live racially structured lives. Critical whiteness theory stresses that whiteness “has a set of linked dimensions” that include racial advantage, egocentrism, and oblivion to whiteness as race, and thus, whiteness is theorized as “a location of structural advantage,” whether realized or unrealized by White people



(Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1). McIntyre (1997) asserted that White people often engage in White talk to “insulate them[selves] from examining their individual and collective role(s) in the perpetuation of racism” (p. 66).

Frankenberg (1993) suggested that whiteness shapes peoples’ lives not only for those who are White but for people of color as well. By naming whiteness as an influential element in teaching literacy to African American students, attention is drawn to potential biases that preservice teachers may bring to their teaching. Although not always realized, “Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when [we] work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow ‘them’ to be more like ‘us’ ” (McIntosh, 1990, p. 32). Since more than 80% of American teachers are White and English speaking with middle class backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b), “more like us” means that unless interrupted, students, no matter their cultural, racial or linguistic backgrounds, may be taught solely to assimilate into the dominant majority. In these instances, teachers may merely disregard students’ funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), or at worst, may treat these funds of knowledge as illegitimate, lesser, and undeserving of acknowledgement.

In an effort to investigate what aspects of school activities provide or deny access to acquiring literacy skills, Michaels (1981) explored the year-long interactions of a White teacher and her diverse class of first grade students during sharing time. She found that White first-grade students were treated differently than their African American peers. Michaels asserted that “some children come to school with a discourse style that is closer to the literate standard of the school” (p. 424). More specifically, “children from different backgrounds come to school with different narrative strategies and prosodic conventions for giving narrative accounts” (p. 423). Michaels found that the White children she observed used a narrative style more closely aligned

with the standard discourse than African American students and that the teacher privileged the White children's style. These observations occurred during teacher-student interactions and guidance during sharing time. The differential treatment of students resulted in unequal amounts of practice for African American students, which were speculated to interfere with student learning

In concert with scholars who have been exploring how critical whiteness theory can help explain inequitable treatment of students in schools, other scholars have been exploring its explanatory power on a wider scale. For example, Owen (2007) was interested in exploring why racial oppression seems to have such a strong foothold in American society. After surveying the literature he concluded that a "critical theory of whiteness is necessary, though not sufficient" (p. 203) to adequately explain the totality of racial oppression. He does suggest however, that whiteness is a structural phenomenon that remains largely unquestioned because it affords privileges to those who are White. If this structure is questioned, someone White runs the risk of losing what they presently possess, so silence masquerades as consent, and nothing changes. While awareness of the social system seems necessary, it must be complemented with action.

An important construct associated with critical whiteness theory is the notion of White complicity (Applebaum, 2004, 2008, 2010). In its most basic form, complicity means to act in ways that are considered wrongful (Merriam-Webster Dictionary online, 2014). White complicity includes wrongful actions, but it also includes inaction by White people that results in harm to people of color and can be intentional or unintentional. Intentional White complicity reflects an acknowledgement of racism and a lack of action to disrupt its harmful effects, as well as a lack of agency to interrogate personal responsibility for perpetuating the harmful effects (Applebaum, 2004). Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) refer to this as aversive racism. According to

Applebaum (2004), however, it is unintentional White complicity that is most problematic in teacher education because this type of racism is invisible to the person demonstrating it.

In addition to people being unaware and complicit in their acts of racism, people may also have good intentions that still inadvertently result in acts of racism. For example, at a social gathering that I attended, I observed a White man walk up to an Asian woman and ask her if she was from Korea. The woman answered that she was Vietnamese. The man said, "I always do that," which clearly made the recipient uncomfortable. It seems apparent that the man had good intentions to start a conversation with someone at the gathering; however, his good intentions resulted in an unintended harmful act (i.e., a microaggression). Unintentional White complicity is especially problematic in teacher education because to address race and power in the classroom, those individuals involved in preparing new teachers need to know these things exist. Those individuals who are preparing future educators includes not only teacher educators but also field placement supervisors, master teachers, and other school staff where future teachers are learning how to teach.

Brown et al. (2010) defined racialized practices as representing acts of racism. Recall that, I chose to extend this definition to be more inclusive and have defined racialized practices as practices associated with aspects of culturally-based pedagogies in addition to practices consistent with racism. What supports this extension is the idea that preservice teachers may enact both positive and negative racialized practices as they inelegantly attempt to shift from their more limited racialized practices that negate students' funds of knowledge to constructing race through racialized practices that more readily begin to embrace students' funds of knowledge. Preservice teachers are in a unique place in their preparation programs in that they

are introduced to culturally-based pedagogies which they are encouraged to implement in field placements.

Critical race theory and critical whiteness theory reject a cultural deficit model that blames the student and his/her family background for the inequities they experience. The ultimate goal of critical race theory is to transform structural and cultural constraints that maintain that inequity. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) suggested that critical race theory could be used to explore inequities in education. Research in this area is growing.

Critical whiteness studies emerged from critical race theory and put a lens on whiteness suggesting that an interrogation of white identity by Whites will help dismantle the grip of institutional racism and oppression that is affecting instruction in the classroom. Teacher education research suggests that White preservice teachers continue to enact distancing strategies and behaviors that reflect a separation from responsibility for racism, thus perpetuating the idea that institutional racism does not exist. Distancing strategies also perpetuate the racial hegemony that historically has privileged the words and actions of Whites.

### **Conclusion**

This literature review summarized bodies of research related to teacher education and its role in helping preservice teachers develop culturally responsive literacy teaching practices, how race and literacy are socially constructed and how critical theories can provide a valuable framework for studies involving the exploration of both race and literacy. Research has shown that White preservice teachers hold largely negative attitudes toward teaching students of color (Bakari, 2003; Castro, 2010; Hollins & Guzman, 2005). In addition, they lack insight into their own privilege and how people get treated differently depending on their race, culture and

language background. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) asserted that critical race theory might help explain the dynamics of the racial hierarchy in education.

Surveys of preservice teachers indicate that many feel uncomfortable and unprepared to work with students whose race and culture differ from their own. Teacher education programs have responded to preservice teachers' unpreparedness by adding multicultural education courses, infusing diversity issues into already existing courses and adding field placements. Studies reveal, however, that the majority White teacher population continues to lack insight into their own racial privilege and how students of color continue to be marginalized. Lack of awareness is particularly problematic in relation to literacy teaching because culturally responsive teaching relies on insight into how race and culture can enhance literacy teaching, particularly for students who have been underserved in schools. This includes acknowledging students' funds of knowledge and using those funds to enhance literacy teaching.

Research has also found that preservice teachers tend to construct race through negative racialized practices, such as exhibiting White talk that they enact to release them from any responsibility of racism in our society. Critical race theory and critical whiteness theory acknowledge society's and schools' racialized culture of power (Delpit, 1995) that advantages Whites, often at the expense of people of color. These theories have been used in studies to gain a better understanding of how preservice teachers conceptualize teaching and learning in settings that include students whose race the teacher does not share.

Although a number of multicultural education courses have been studied to understand how preservice teachers conceptualize how race may influence teaching and learning in general, fewer studies have taken place that explore preservice teachers' racialized practices within the context of a university-based literacy across the curriculum course that includes a school-based

field placement. Understanding preservice teachers' racialized perspectives and practices can provide teacher education with valuable information to equip future teachers in meeting the needs of a diverse student population.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Method**

I chose to use a critical qualitative approach for this study of racialized practices of preservice teachers to “describe complex personal and interpersonal phenomena that would be impossible to portray with quantitative research’s single dimensional scales” (Krathwohl, 2009, p. 237). The study is critical because it incorporates a critique of the merits and culpabilities of preservice teachers’ racialized practices and constructions of race as communicated during their participation in a literacy course, one-on-one tutoring and interviews. Data were first coded at the literal level before an identification of emergent themes and then was filtered through the lenses of critical race theory and critical whiteness theory to identify participants’ racialized practices.

In this chapter, I describe the settings where this study took place, followed by a description of my participants and how they were recruited for the study. Next, I describe my multiple data collection methods and sources. I then describe how the data were analyzed. Finally, I describe my role in the qualitative research process - including the subjectivities I brought to the current study.

### **Settings**

The main settings for this study included a university-based literacy education methods classroom and school-based literacy tutoring and observation site. Interview settings included a conference room at the university, a small office at the university, a restaurant and a dining area in a grocery store. Participants were also encouraged to select an interview setting that would work best for them.

Collecting data from these settings enabled abundant observations not only in reference to preservice teachers' perspectives on race and literacy but also what preservice teachers did within a variety of environments that demanded the actual teaching of literacy in an urban school populated by mostly African American Students. Many studies on the topics of race and literacy in schools did not include a wide variety of settings (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). These studies left questions unanswered regarding how participants' perspectives and enactments differed according to where and when their racialized and literacy practices were occurring.

**University classroom.** One of the two main data collection sites for this study was the university classroom where the LAC course was taught. I chose to include participants from a LAC course because it afforded the opportunity to explore the intersectional space where literacy, race and teacher education collide. Preservice teachers were instructed in aspects of content-area literacy and then utilized what they learned to tutor middle school students at a local urban school.

The LAC course met one time per week for approximately three hours at a large university in the northeastern United States. Twenty-seven undergraduate and graduate students were enrolled in the course, and all were pursuing teacher certification in educational disciplines such as Social Studies and Science.

The classroom in which the LAC course was taught was big, but to me, still felt crowded because of the large number of desks and tables in the room. The rectangular room was well-lit and was well-equipped with instructional technology that included a computer, projector, smart board, and teaching podium. When windows in the classroom were open, sounds of the city and university were audible (e.g., bell tolls, the faint sound of a saxophone, and periodic ambulance



sirens); however, these sounds did not appear to cause a great deal of distraction for the LAC students. The course was taught by an experienced university literacy education professor.

**Field placement.** The second main data collection site was an urban middle school where the LAC students participated in a field placement for ten of the 15 weeks they were enrolled in the course. The school is a three-story urban 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade middle school located in a residential area. To gain entry into the building, visitors are required to push a button to alert someone in the main office to verify their identity. Once inside, visitors are greeted by an adult who instructs them to sign in.

At the time of the study, 82% of the approximate 500 students at the school were identified as African American, 9% were Hispanic or Latino, 2% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and 8% were White, based on data from the New York State School Report Card (2010-2011). Participants fulfilled their once a week three-hour field placement requirement by tutoring a student for approximately 45 minutes and then spending the remainder of their three-hour placement observing their tutees in classrooms. This model serves a dual purpose, namely, it provides literacy instruction and support to adolescents who have been identified as needing literacy support, and it gives preservice teachers (i.e., tutors) opportunities to practice planning and implementing literacy lessons based on content learned in the literacy across the curriculum course.

Most one-on-one tutoring took place in the school cafeteria, which was large and well-lit. The ceiling was 15 feet high and enclosed a number of round, fluorescent lights, and the walls were made of concrete blocks, which contained windows only in the upper portions that let light in but did not allow people to see out. These characteristics caused the cafeteria to feel both expansive and institutional. In contrast to the university classroom, noises in and around the

cafeteria were more distracting (e.g., garbage cans being moved, cafeteria and maintenance people talking, lights buzzing and announcements intruding through the school's public address system). Field placements were supervised by a graduate student who observed tutoring sessions and helped troubleshoot issues that arose.

**Interview locations.** In addition to observing participants in a university-based classroom and at their field placements, I also interviewed participants in a variety of locations on and off campus. I conducted the majority of the interviews in a large well lit conference room on the university campus that was furnished with a large oval conference table and comfortable, cushioned chairs. I also conducted one interview in a small office on campus that was more cramped than the conference room but still adequately accommodated my participant and me. The remaining interviews took place at local restaurants at times that afforded reasonable privacy and where noise levels did not interfere with my ability to audio record my participants' responses. I also conducted one phone interview to accommodate one participant who was unable to come to any location.

## **Participants**

Of the 27 students who were enrolled in the Literacy Across the Curriculum (LAC) course, seven (four females and three males) volunteered to be in the study. The sample of preservice teachers represented a variety of academic disciplines within the LAC course which afforded an opportunity to better understand racial and literacy enactments from differing social constructions of literacy. For example, the ways in which preservice English Education majors conceptualize and enact literacy teaching could be rather different from Science Education majors in terms of their definitions of literacy, materials selection, etc. In other words, a discipline diverse participant sample was more likely to deliver discipline diverse perspectives

and enactments of literacy. In terms of race, I knew that the sample would most likely be predominantly White because the class was predominantly White.

I wanted to have a small number of participants so that I would have the opportunity to be able to interact with participants deeply and be able to adequately manage the logistics of data collection and analysis without sacrificing quality. Based on the data obtained, I believe studying seven participants was both representative and manageable. The sample included both undergraduate and graduate students and multiple content area disciplines were represented across these seven participants. More information about participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

*Overview of Participants*

Participant's				
Pseudonym	Age	Self-identified Race	Education Major	Program
Ann	19	Caucasian	Science	Undergraduate
Eden	19	White	English	Undergraduate
Helen	19	White	English	Undergraduate
Josh	31	White	Art	Graduate
Kristen	19	White	English	Undergraduate
Randy	25	Caucasian	Physical Education	Undergraduate
Rufus	25	Black	Social Studies	Graduate

*Note.* All participants were given the opportunity to suggest their own pseudonym. Rufus was the only participant who provided a suggestion. Participants were given no parameters of how to describe their race.

Prior to data collection, I created information packets and informed consent documents to share with students in the LAC course. I decided to invite any LAC student who was interested in participating in the study, and arranged with the course instructor to visit her class to talk about the study with the students. I recruited participants at the end of one of the LAC university classes, at which time the instructor agreed to leave the classroom while I discussed the study and shared information and consent documents. Participants were encouraged to take the documents home to alleviate any feelings of coercion or pressure and to provide anonymity regarding participation. Nonetheless, most students decided to return their consent document at the end of the class, and of those who did, six signed the consent form to be included in the study.

Because five students were not present on day of my initial presentation to recruit participants, I sent an email to these students explaining the study, along with the information packet and consent document. One person from this group volunteered for the study and returned the consent document at the next class. Neither the course instructor nor field supervisor was informed of who consented to be in the study. This procedure was followed to protect participants' identities and to assure separation of the purposes of the class from the purposes of the study.

### **Data Sources**

Over 1000 pages of data were obtained and utilized for this project. Although the course took place over a 15-week period, data collection commenced only after participants gave consent, which means the duration of the study was approximately 13 weeks - from the beginning of February to the beginning of May 2011. I collected data in each of the settings

discussed previously. Sources of data included interviews, observations and course-based artifacts produced by participants throughout the course (i.e., assignments).

In addition to myself, one other person (i.e., a transcriber) has had access to the data associated with this dissertation. Before sending my audio files to the transcriber I had her confirm in writing that she would keep the information confidential and would delete the files once I approved of the transcription. Electronic data produced from this research has been kept secure on a locked computer with password protected files at my home. Hard copies of materials have been kept in a locked file cabinet at my home. Research information will be kept for a length of time that is consistent with my IRB approval guidelines.

**Interviews.** A central purpose of this qualitative study was to “understand behavior from the subject’s own frame of reference” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006, p. 2), which necessitated the use of interviews as a data collection technique. I conducted two individual, hour-long interviews with each participant. This included a “life history” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006) interview that took place early in the study and a follow-up semi-structured interview that I conducted after participants had completed the LAC course requirements.

The life history interview provided an opportunity for me to get to know the participants in a relaxed way and to encourage participants “to freely express their thoughts around a particular topic” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006, p. 3). I chose a semi-structured interview approach for the follow-up interview so that I could create an environment where I could ask some more targeted questions without it being so overly structured that I might inadvertently constrain what participants revealed. I thought using a semi-structured technique was important because the literature suggests that the topic of race might be difficult to discuss, particularly for the White participants.

*First interview.* I conducted life history interviews with six of the seven participants. My seventh participant experienced a life change that made it impossible for him to participate in an interview at the beginning of the semester. Instead, I planned the end-of-semester interview somewhat differently than for the other participants by combining both the life history and semi-structured interview questions into one session.

For the life history interview I asked open-ended questions, beginning with a “grand tour” question (Spradley, 1979, p. 50) such as, “Tell me about yourself.” A grand tour question was used to set the tone of an unstructured interview and to provide an opportunity for me to learn, in detail, about each participant according to what he/she wanted to communicate to me. It is a useful technique to help build rapport with participants and relieve some of the stress and discomfort participants might feel due to being interviewed. My purpose was to elicit information about their family background and K-12 education experiences, without steering the conversation too strictly. If participants did not eventually respond to questions related to their backgrounds, I asked probing questions such as, “Can you talk about your K-12 educational experiences? What was that like for you?”

Also during the first interview, I asked participants to tell me about their field experiences associated with the class, the kind of teacher they wanted to become and how they envisioned themselves teaching literacy in their content area. I expected that information shared about their field experience would most likely be brief because some of them had worked with their tutee only once or twice. I did prompt participants to elaborate with examples of points they made, asking, “What would be an example of that?” or “Tell me more about that” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). I also asked for clarification if I did not understand something by using phrases such as, “I’m not sure I’m following you.”

It should be noted that during the first interview, I chose to not ask participants about issues related to race because based on the foundation of critical theories used in my study, I was aware that individuals who are White may “distance” themselves from the topic of race. Essentially, I wanted to see if participants would bring up the topic of race without prompting.

*Second interview.* The second interview was more targeted and was used as an opportunity to follow-up with questions that arose as a result of other data collected throughout the study. I began the second interview by summarizing what we had talked about during the first interview by identifying broad categories such as family background and education, field experiences, the type of teacher they wanted to become and how they saw themselves teaching literacy in their content area. I chose to use these categories as anchors to bridge more targeted questions about race and literacy in relation to each of these areas, since these were potential sources of racialized practices I hoped to understand. For example, in relation to family background, I stated, “Tell me about your cultural, racial and language background. How do you identify yourself?” I asked these questions because I wanted to hear participants talk explicitly about their ideas about race, culture and language in preparation of asking them to describe their perspective on how race may play a role in educational contexts. I also made efforts to check for my understanding of my participants’ responses by paraphrasing what they said and by asking clarifying questions.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Following these procedures enabled me to focus on what participants were sharing, without the added distraction of trying to write down everything they said. Throughout the interviews, I recorded field notes to capture facial expressions, body language and other non-verbal cues that could enhance the interpretation of transcribed data.

**Participant observation.** I observed participants for a total of 36 hours in the LAC classroom. I also observed approximately 30 hours of participants' one-on-one literacy tutoring sessions that took place at the urban middle school described previously.

I chose to be a participant observer (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006) in this study. A participant observer spends varying amounts of time observing at the study sites and participating in the activities associated with the study site. I chose this role so that I could assume the flexibility to interact with participants as I saw was helpful to gain understanding of their experiences and perspectives. In terms of my place on the participant/observer continuum, I would describe my role as variable depending on the temporal aspects of the study (i.e., beginning, middle, end) and the setting that I was in. For example, with the exception of the interviews, my participation in the beginning of the study was almost entirely that of observer. This was consistent across all settings.

In contrast, by the end of the study I would describe my participation as somewhere in the middle of the participant/observer continuum (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). For example, in the university classroom, I made a habit of sitting in when students worked in small groups to listen to participants' discussions and to occasionally ask for elaborations on topics related to racialized practices. From week to week, I made sure I was consistent in the ways I interacted across all LAC students so they became used to my presence. I circulated among all students in the class at various times and sat with each group so that it would not be obvious who my participants were.

To collect data, I wrote field notes during each three-hour LAC class and during one-on-one tutoring sessions. I did not audio record the university-based class discussions because I did not have permission from participants' classmates to record these sessions. I did not record



tutoring sessions because I did not have permission from the tutees' parents or guardians. The decision not to record in these settings carried the added benefit of my appearing as unobtrusive as possible. The content of my field notes did not include any verbalizations or behaviors of people besides my participants who were present in these settings. I did not quote the university instructor, the field supervisor, the adolescents who were tutored and classmates of the participants who did not consent to be in the study.

My field notes initially consisted of condensed notes (Spradley, 1980). These included concrete descriptions and verbatim phrases of what I saw and heard during my observations of participants in class and during tutoring sessions. I recorded as much of what my participants said and did as possible. I recorded quite a bit of content both related and unrelated to the topics of race and literacy, which was consistent with using a constant comparative approach to data collection and analysis. Although I entered into the study with a critical race and critical whiteness theoretical framework, I wanted to remain open to possible insights I could not anticipate.

In addition to these procedures, I also periodically wrote observer comments in my field notes and wrote in a subjectivity journal which reflected my thoughts, feelings and questions related to race and literacy. I made sure to delineate these comments from other notes to ensure that my thoughts and impressions would not be confused with what I observed. Immediately after each observation, I expanded my field notes and filled in details that were not written during observations. Expanding field notes as soon as possible after the observation is recommended to increase recall of details (Spradley, 1980).

**Course-related artifacts.** LAC class and tutoring artifacts, including instructor materials such as the course syllabus and class handouts, preservice teacher weekly lesson plans, unit plans

and preservice teacher reflections were collected for analyses because I wanted to determine the extent to which participants applied their knowledge and understanding of race and literacy in their written work, including lesson plans they prepared for tutoring. The instructor gave me access to all course materials including instructor and preservice teacher materials that were posted electronically.

**Data log.** Each time I collected data, I logged it on a chronological list of labeled sources (e.g., participant's name, interview 1, date). After I listened to the audio recorded interviews and made cursory notes, I had the audiotapes transcribed. I then read through the transcripts of the interview data, and at times, went back and listened to certain sections of the audio recording to clarify words and tone while simultaneously writing down words or phrases (codes) that appeared to represent participants' perspectives. For example, I wrote the following observer comments while listening to Ann's first interview:

[OC: College was a given. It was just a matter of where. This is the matter of fact path of privilege. code = privilege] (KC Observer Comment, Ann Interview 1, line 188).

[OC: Ann is bilingual. She speaks English and Italian. Ann differentiated Italian slang from "proper Italian." Is this similar to AAVE and proper English? code = languages spoken] (KC Observer Comment, Ann Interview 1, line 415).

Including multiple data sources (i.e., observation, interviews, artifacts) and settings (i.e., middle school cafeteria, university classroom, and various public interview locations) provided an opportunity to study both perspective and practice.

### **Data Analysis**

I entered the study knowing that I had two main data analysis goals. First, I wanted to gain a literal understanding of my participants' perspectives and practices associated with

participating in a literacy across the curriculum course and tutoring a middle school student and then determine what themes emerged from that data. Second, I wanted to explore the race-based meanings associated with my participants' perspectives and practices by considering the data through the lenses of critical race theory and critical whiteness theory.

To gain a literal understanding of my participants' perspectives and practices I reviewed my data using a recursive process. Each time I collected data, I read through what was gathered and compared the new data with data that I already had. These methods are consistent with a constant comparative approach (Glaser, 1965), which requires data to be collected and analyzed throughout the study rather than analyzing it only at the end. A constant comparative approach enables comparisons and interpretations of data, which are not restricted to predefined categories and is used during both data collection and data analysis, since it involves examining data while it is collected rather than waiting to examine it only after it is all gathered. This process can be described as both recursive and inductive, since relationships arise through sequential examinations of the data. It also allows for reinterpretations, as meanings behind participants' perspectives and practices become more salient. These procedures allow comparisons to be made across time and for all dimensions of the data. For example, I was able to analyze data from a single participant's first and second interview, examine data across different participants' interviews, and examine data across data collection methods (e.g., interview data and observational data).

My initial coding of data was both literal and inductive, something Lett (1990) referred to as emic coding. For example, some of my initial codes included categories such as the importance of teacher personality, perspective on student behavior, and importance of teacher respect. I then re-examined my data and used my theoretical framework (i.e., critical race and

critical whiteness theories) to generate additional codes that were somewhat more deductive, which Lett (1990) referred to as etic coding. In other words, I did not begin with predefined categories to which I fit the data. Proposed data themes, categories, and patterns were based, first and foremost, on the perspectives and practices of my participants, most of which were found in the interview data and participants' writing.

I used critical race theory and critical whiteness theory to guide my interpretations of themes once they emerged. Etic codes associated with critical race theory that emerged in my data included categories such as deficit thinking, funds of knowledge and stereotypes. An example of deficit thinking was when Ann said, "Both of the girls I have tutored are struggling in school and it most likely stems from their weaknesses to read and write at an appropriate level" (Ann, midpoint tutoring memo). Rufus acknowledged his tutee's funds of knowledge in a lesson plan. Rufus wrote, "I [will] ask him [my tutee] to check off what aspects of his writing he would like to focus on" (Rufus, tutoring lesson plan one). Rufus also cautioned his classmates about stereotypes. He cautioned, "You need to know differences between facts and stereotypes and that this is a point in time for the Irish" (Rufus, class).

Emergent codes associated with critical whiteness theory included categories such as distancing strategies, colorblindness and White talk. I grouped codes that seemed conceptually similar under headings, or what Bogdan and Biklen (2006) referred to as "families," to show my emergent understanding of my participants' perspectives. I also created visual organizers such as concept maps to represent the data. For example, during an early iteration of my coding, I created a concept map that situated literacy in the center among a number of arteries labeled with codes such as expectations, epistemology, agency and content.

## **Trustworthiness of My Research**

To help maximize the trustworthiness of my study, and thereby increase its worth, I used a number of methods and procedures anchored in what is essentially research validity. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), I incorporated several techniques to strengthen the study, including member checks, attention to applicability, consistency and neutrality. Member checks were used as a way to increase credibility by asking participants to verify the extent to which the data collected was accurate. I implemented member checks during the interview process by paraphrasing a number of statements they made that resulted in either an affirmation or clarification. I also emailed transcribed interviews to participants for the purpose of eliciting comments on accuracy and suggestions for clarity.

In addition to member checks, I incorporated methods to help others evaluate the extent to which my findings are applicable or transferable to other settings, contexts or populations. I maximized “applicability” by providing thick descriptions of my participants’ verbalizations and enactments, along with the contexts in which these occurred. I used methods designed to maximize the consistency of findings, by triangulating my data. Not only did I use multiple data collection methods, including interviews, observation, and artifact examinations, but I also interacted with participants over time, thus ensuring I developed understanding not based merely on a snapshot of participants’ perspectives. I also attempted to maximize neutrality in reference to interpretation of my findings, which involved my facilitating my own awareness of subjectivity and potential biases, along with using planned strategies to manage them, as described previously.

I think my presence at the different settings influenced the study at a very minimal level because of my constant presence. I also think it was easy for me to blend in because I had taught

the LAC course before and had knowledge of the curriculum. Another advantage I had was that I had previously supervised preservice teachers at the field placement site during other semesters so I knew the principal and many of the faculty and staff.

Although I understand that my data collection, observations and analyses could not help but be filtered through my theoretical assumptions, biases and subjectivities, I made every effort to construct notes that were concretely descriptive in relation to participants, activities, and contexts, with attention to refrain from using value laden language. I relentlessly interrogated my subjectivities by writing memoranda to myself that I reviewed prior to engaging in data analysis. I also made sure to record observer comments in my field notes, which helped me to liberate premature interpretations of my data when my emotions or value systems were provoked. This helped me keep from drawing conclusions before I had thoroughly described my participants' perspectives in a literal way. I am realistically aware, however, that my execution may not consistently have mirrored my intent.

Peshkin (1988) helped clarify for me just what subjectivity is. He asserted that subjectivities are the

Particular subset of personal qualities...that have the capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue what transpires from the outset of the research project to its culmination in a written statement. (p. 17)

In reality, subjectivities are inherent in all research, and requires researchers to “systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their research” (p. 17) to prevent being inadvertently led astray by their own biases. The importance of this self-examination process is well-illustrated by the following example when I was “caught red-handed with my values” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18). When I was told by two participants during their first

interview that they were taking more than 15 credit hours during the semester, I briefly wondered if Randy may have fallen behind in making progress toward his degree, and perhaps Ann was attempting to accelerate her progress. I immediately knew that I had begun to make assumptions that had no basis in my data. I concluded that my participants' responses were triggering previously constructed stereotypes about athletes and science majors that required careful reflection on my part to override. I wrote about this and other similar experiences in memos to myself and attempted to construct meaning around these experiences. At one point, I wondered if overriding my initial stereotype was a reflection of my critical consciousness, or more insidiously, if the tendency to have stereotyped thinking at all, however fleeting, reflected a lack of it. Regardless, these and other similar experiences served as reminder of the importance of continuous self-inquiry that was not just helpful when conducting qualitative research but was essential. Surfacing my own faulty thinking prompted the habit of regularly examining my beliefs throughout my study – a sort of constant comparative self-check of my own biases and stereotypical thinking.

As mentioned in the introduction, my interest in exploring race and literacy in education emerged from an accumulation of experiences that began with the birth of my niece in 2005. I know now that prior to her birth, my whiteness, and the inherent privilege that accompanies being White, were largely invisible to me. I would not go so far as to say that I was unaware of race, but I was woefully unaware of important dimensions related to the meaning of race in both schools and in larger society. Fortunately, I have begun to accumulate experiences that have continued my journey into critical consciousness. For example, in 2007 when I began my doctoral work, because of my academic interests, I began being confronted by, and confronting issues related to race in my coursework, my academic reading and in the communities in which I

worked. When I took a course on race, philosophy and education during the fall 2009 semester, the fact that I was literally brought to tears by our discussions was a sign of my burgeoning critical consciousness, as well as a sign of my need to strongly manage my subjectivities, since persistent acts of racism, and my growing awareness of institutionalized racism, made me feel simultaneously helpless and furious. I acknowledge that my feelings have the potential to bias the very phenomena I have been seeking to understand; however, I also must acknowledge that issues related to racism cannot help but be emotionally laden, since it is often emotion that drives the desire to correct injustice.

One aspect of my own behavior that I also must mention in reference to subjectivities emerged from examination of my own enactments throughout data collection. Upon listening to audio recordings of the interviews I conducted, I was mortified to discover that my verbalizations included numerous automatic phrases such as “kind of,” “a little,” “sort of.” In fact, I noticed that I used this type of language 25 times during an interview with Rufus. This type of language was not merely reserved for him but recurred throughout all of the interviews. Lakoff (2004) has categorized the phrases I was repeating as being “woman’s language,” which represents a tentative method for communicating. Brown (1980) theorized that this type of talk is a form of politeness that is strategically used to take other people’s feelings into account. I am unclear as to whether I was using this tentative language to take other people’s feelings into account or due to my initial discomfort with the topic of race. It might be said that my use of such language, which perhaps well-intended, was really a form of distancing I was using in reference to race. There is a strange irony to the fact that my data analysis included the identification of distancing strategies used by my participants. Through examination of my own



and my participants' enactments, I learned an important lesson that is well-summarized by Denzin and Lincoln (2000):

There is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of—and between—the observer and the observed. (p. 21)

### **Conclusion**

This study was both a critical analysis of the racialized practices of preservice content-area teachers while it also focused on identifying the aspects of participants' backgrounds that might have contributed to their racialized practices. Critical race theory and critical whiteness theory provided the main guidance in design, data collection and data analysis.

Preservice content-area teachers who were enrolled in a literacy across the curriculum class took part in this study. Participants were observed multiple times in their university classroom and at the tutoring site. Multiple data collection and data clarification methods were used. I interviewed participants at the beginning of the study to collect life history information and again at the end. The second interview in particular afforded me the opportunity to ask targeted questions based on theory and based on what I had learned during the data collection process.

I used a constant comparative method of data analysis that was reflexive and I used both emic and etic coding. I also used a number of concept maps to determine patterns or associations in my data. Once categories of relationship and instruction began to emerge, data were reconsidered using critical race and critical whiteness filters.

I was invested in this study on many levels and took care to attend to the trustworthiness of my research by including member checks, by providing thick descriptions of the contexts and assumptions associated with this study and by revealing my own subjectivities related to this study. I am a teacher educator interested in social justice issues who is a White female not unlike my White participants or most educators in the U.S. I wrote numerous memoranda and observer comments during the course of this study to capture my associated thoughts, feelings, questions and concerns; however, I intellectually understand that I may be unaware of certain aspects of my bias that may have impacted my data collection, analysis and representation of findings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

The seven participants in this study were all preservice teachers who were similar in a number of ways. They were all enrolled in the same literacy across the curriculum (LAC) course, yet their emphasis on building relationships during tutoring emerged as a critical theme in their actions. Other participants, described in the next chapter, did not engage in the same kind of relationship building. A number of researchers who focus on culturally suitable pedagogies (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014) have suggested that a positive teacher-student relationship is essential to improving students' success in school when it is coupled with high expectations and a focus on improving outcomes for students.

### **Racialized Practices and Relationship-Focused- Participants**

This chapter summarizes my findings related to a group of my participants who I have categorized as relationship-focused based on data analyzed from interviews, observations, and artifacts associated with a Literacy Across the Curriculum course. In this chapter I identify the complex nature of the racialized practices that relationship-focused participants enacted in various study-related settings. I describe how many of these practices align with culturally-based pedagogies and can be understood in new ways by considering critical race theory and critical whiteness theory. I also share instances when those actions or explanations reflect more negative racialized practices. Additionally, I provide some background related to participants' growing up experiences, why they choose teaching as a profession and why they chose their specific content area to explore possible ties to their racialized practices.

## **Prioritizing Social Relationships**

Eden, Helen, Josh, and Rufus' lesson plans, interactions with their tutees, and conversational content revealed that they purposefully sought to establish social relationships with their tutees. This attention to relationship could be an important intermediary to teaching literacy because when teachers build relationships with students, those interactions cause them to gain knowledge about their students' backgrounds, funds of knowledge, and preferences (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll et al., 1992). This information can be incorporated into teacher planning and instruction so that students find lessons to be relevant, helpful and motivating. Teacher-student relationships appear crucial for school success, particularly for students who have been disenfranchised in school. In this study, the relationship-focused tutors personalized greetings and interactions with their tutees, created a physical teaching space that was conducive to relationship building and learning, elicited and used tutee input in their lessons.

**“I will ask [my tutee] how he has been and what his plans are for the weekend.”** The tutors who seemed intent on building relationships with their tutees consistently included how they would greet their tutees in their lesson plans. Observations at the field work site revealed that they also personalized these greetings rather than enacted them in a more generic fashion. For example, Rufus' lesson plans always included a section describing how he would greet his tutee, as well as how he would use this planned opportunity to touch base about important events that had transpired in both their lives since the last time they were together. In the procedures section of one of his lesson plans Rufus wrote the explanation referenced in the heading for this section, explaining further that,

Since [my tutee's] dad was here for an extended period of time, I will ask how that went and if they did anything exciting? If [my tutee] does not want to talk about it that much I

am not going to push the conversation, only because I am not fully sure what their relationship is. (Rufus, tutoring lesson plan seven)

It should be noted that the instructor of the LAC course provided on the course syllabus a directive to LAC students to greet their tutees, which perhaps explains why Rufus chose to enact the greeting in the first place; however, specifics for how to greet students were not provided. Rufus, like the other relationship-focused participants, personalized these greetings in a way that reflected what Gay (2002) termed cultural caring. It is evident from the lesson plan that Rufus had recalled information previously shared by his tutee. He knew to prioritize this information in order to create a bridge between his tutee's personal interests and literacy learning. Rufus did not attempt to control the direction of the conversation, but made plans to open a conversation that would allow his tutee to share what his tutee considered important.

Another reflection of the social relationship that was established between Rufus and his tutee included the way in which they positioned themselves at the round table during their tutoring sessions. Directions for how to arrange the physical environment were not provided by the LAC instructor; nonetheless, Rufus arranged the physical environment in such a way as to maximize proximity and the ability to make eye contact with his tutee. Whereas most tutors sat next to their tutees at the round tables in the school cafeteria, Rufus and his tutee sat with their chairs facing one another next to the table rather than having the table sit between them. Rufus' body language communicated interest and openness to what his tutee said and did.

Helen's planned greetings were somewhat more generic. However, her actual tutor-tutee interactions were quite personalized and also reflected deliberate effort toward building a social relationship with her tutee. For example, in the procedures section of lesson seven, Helen wrote,

As I begin every week, I will ask [my tutee] how she's doing. I'll, again, want to ask her if she's been able to use any of the strategies we have been working on with her homework, and ask how it's been helping her. (Helen, lesson plan seven)

This section of Helen's lesson plan captures her intention to connect with her tutee at the beginning of the lesson. It also suggests that Helen was concerned about whether the tutoring sessions were helpful.

Helen also tried to relate to her tutee, albeit in sometimes unorthodox ways. For example, on one occasion, she actually said something to her tutee that was not true in an apparent effort to make a connection. During my first interview with Helen she explained,

She [my tutee] has, um, ADHD and she used to take, um, she used to take medication for it but it gave her a seizure. . . . I told her, I was like yeah I have ADD too. I take something like every morning for it and like I know what it's like to not ((laughs)) be able to focus. Like I get it, like I wanted to relate to her. So, but I mean I don't *have* ADHD but like I mean I get it. (Helen, Interview 1, line 1246)

Helen seemed to be attempting to make connections with her tutee's experiences. Although being dishonest with students is not likely a recommended practice for establishing lasting relationships, Helen's efforts might be viewed as an awkward attempt to connect with her student on her student's own terms, even if it meant sharing false information to do it.

Helen also appeared to manipulate the physical environment of tutoring in that she sat next to her tutee rather than across from her. She was observed leaning toward her tutee, and on more than one occasion, Helen's tutee was observed leaning toward Helen. The nonverbal exchanges I observed during their tutoring sessions suggested that they were comfortable around

each other. This comfort may have been born out of Helen's attention to greeting her tutee and building a relationship.

Josh's lesson plans and interactions with his tutee also reflected a deliberate effort to build a relationship with his tutee. His lessons began with notes for a tutee greeting that created an opportunity for dialogue. For example, in the procedures section of one lesson plan he wrote, "I will ask [my tutee] about his vacation and if he read anything interesting since our last meeting" (Josh, lesson plan four). After the lesson, Josh wrote a reflection that expressed his concern about the length of time that had transpired between sessions. He wrote,

At the beginning of the session, I recounted the instances of bad luck, and apologized that it had been so long since we worked together. I asked if he was upset about it, and he said he wasn't. I think he may have been, but he seems to appreciate an honest conversation about circumstances. . . . It had been three weeks since I had seen [my tutee], due to two school-wide testing days and then my spring break. . . . I thought that he may have felt that I "stood him up." (Josh, tutoring lesson plan four)

Josh revealed the importance of what he gained from his personal exchanges with his tutee, and the language used in his writing reflected the tenets of cultural caring (Gay, 2002).

Eden's written notes to provide greetings tended to be generic. For example, for most plans Eden wrote that she would spend 3-5 minutes talking with her tutee or "chat[ting] briefly about school and her weekend, etc." (Eden, lesson plan two).

Eden's face-to-face greetings and interactions with her tutees, however, tended to be personalized, and at one point, her social interactions with her tutee temporarily usurped the literacy lesson in which they were to engage. After picking up her student for tutoring from the

in-school suspension room, Eden asked her tutee how she got assigned to in-school suspension.

Eden explained,

So then when I pulled her out [of the in-school suspension room]... I was like, "What happened?" and she was like, "Oh I hate it. Now I'm stuck in there all day." And I was like, "Do you wanna tell me about like what happened?" (Eden, interview 1, line 1040)

Eden explained to me that her tutee told her that, "one of the teachers. . . . said [to my tutee]... . 'Get ... the damn book,' or something. And she [my tutee] said, 'You get the damn book.' Like she talked back to him, and he was like an administrator" (Eden, interview 1, line 1042). Eden then shared that, based on her perspective, she believed that her tutee's behavior was somewhat justified toward the adult with whom she was sparring. Eden shared, "I kind of agreed with her [my tutee], like I was like if somebody had told me to get a damn book, I would have just sat. . . . I wouldn't have yelled back obviously, but I would have just said no" (Eden, interview 1, line 1046). In her attempt to understand her tutee's perspective, Eden's relationship with her tutee was strengthened. Due to the circumstances and the emotionally charged nature of the situation, teaching a literacy-strategy became a secondary goal that day for Eden. While some might view Eden's neglect of teaching literacy as problematic, she had prioritized her relationship with her tutee, which aligns her with her other relationship-building classmates.

Eden was initially assigned to work with a tutee who was a White female. This tutee (i.e., Eden's first tutee) ended up changing schools so Eden was assigned another tutee to work with. Eden's second tutee was a Black male who requested to be tutored. This change happened after two tutoring sessions.

During another tutoring session, this time with her second tutee, Eden was observed facing her tutee while her tutee sat somewhat perpendicular to her. This sitting arrangement



suggested some level of ease between the pair, but it did not demonstrate the full attention and comfort that Rufus or Helen and their tutees exhibited. Eden's body language appeared open and welcoming toward her tutee, however, her tutee's body language appeared more closed and he rarely made eye contact with his tutor. Eden looked directly at her tutee when she was talking to him and she asked direct questions. Eden's tutee responded, often tentatively, seemingly unsure of his answer.

My relationship-focused participants all built rapport with their tutees. They accomplished this by writing a greeting into their lesson plans, greeting their students with genuine interest and establishing a tutoring environment that facilitated dialogue. One even resorted to being untruthful in an effort to build and/or maintain a positive relationship with her tutee.

By connecting with students in these ways, my participants demonstrated practices consistent with certain aspects of culturally responsive (Gay, 2010), culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1992) and culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) pedagogies. Methods based on culturally-based pedagogies all include a teacher-student relationship component, since positive relationships act as a conduit for facilitating learning. It should be noted that relationship building is not restricted to culturally responsive methods but have been regarded as integral to "good teaching" by researchers such as Ladson-Billings (1995a), as well as Moje and Hinchman (2004) who point out that "responsive teaching" methods (p. 322) encompass both general and specific practices designed to maximize the learning of all students.

**"Because she told me that was her favorite type of dog."** A second quality of the relationship-focused participants was that they elicited and used student input to make lesson-

related decisions. They elicited student input on things such as what the literacy focus of the lesson was and what text topics or genres might be used in tutoring sessions.

For example, Helen stated in the materials section of lesson four that she planned to use “pictures of the Siberian Husky...because she [my tutee] told me that was her favorite type of dog” (Helen, lesson plan four). Helen also wrote a personalized short story for her tutee to read that featured a girl whose name was the same as her tutee. Helen wrote that she “used her name to make it more personal” (Helen, lesson plan eight). Helen’s tutoring-related decisions seemed to have a positive effect on her tutee’s motivation and engagement, while also revealing general levels of her tutee’s reading and writing ability.

Rufus also elicited information from his tutee and used that information in his planning of lessons for his tutee. For example, in his first lesson plan Rufus wrote, “I [will] ask him [my tutee] to check off what aspects of his writing he would like to focus on” (Rufus, tutoring lesson plan one). To obtain additional information, Rufus often queried his tutee by asking questions such as, “Do you think that this is going to be helpful to you in your classes?” (Rufus, tutoring session four) Rufus confirmed that he always asked such questions of his tutee because, “He [his tutee] knows himself best” (Rufus, lesson plan one reflection). Each of these components in Rufus’ teaching reveals that he frequently takes his tutees wants and needs into account, which results in transactional teaching, where both he and his tutee remain flexible in reference to the learning path that literacy lessons take.

Rufus also appeared to have his tutee in mind when selecting texts. In one lesson plan he wrote, “I wanted to use a book that [my tutee] would be able to relate to and that was interesting at the same time” (Rufus, lesson plan two). For two sessions, Rufus chose to use excerpts from a memoir about a young man from Sierra Leone, West Africa. The memoir was entitled *A Long*

*Way Gone: Memoirs of a Soldier Boy*, by Ishmael Beah. Other texts utilized by Rufus during tutoring sessions included video jackets of movies that his tutee had indicated that he had seen, such as one featuring actor Denzel Washington, and articles about topics that his tutee expressed interest in, such as one focusing on twin basketball players Marcus and Markieff Morris and another focusing on musical and screen artists Bow Wow and Ice Cube. Since his tutee also expressed an interest in Xbox 360, Rufus brought in an Xbox 360 magazine, and after the session gave the magazine to his tutee, which Rufus said his tutee was excited to have. Using these individualized decisions and culturally-based teaching methods, Rufus was able to fulfill the requirements associated with the field placement, while at the same time giving his tutee much ownership of how they spent their time together in sessions.

Like Rufus, Helen, a secondary English Education major, strategically gathered information about her tutee that she used in subsequent tutoring sessions. For example, in her first lesson plan Helen wrote that it was her intent to “go to the library and... pick out literature we [my tutee and I] can read part of” (Helen lesson plan one). She went on to state that she planned to “ask the student what they hoped to gain most from our sessions” (Helen, lesson plan one).

Josh, an Art Education major and oldest participant in the study, also obtained and utilized student input in his planning and interactions with his tutee. For example, like Rufus, Josh had his tutee identify specific literacy areas with which he wanted help. Then, Josh communicated his intent to use this input to develop a tutoring contract that would delineate his tutee’s expectations of him, as well as his expectations of his tutee. Josh wrote:

I propose that we write up a contract, explaining what a contract means if needed. I [will] ask the tutee to tell me exactly what he/she expects from me, and write down

exactly what he/she says. I [will] propose additions to his/her list and ask if he/she agrees. If so I [will] add it to the list. At this point I may ask if there are specific literacy areas the tutee wants help with. . . . This activity makes clear our expectations of each other, allows the tutee to voice any concerns, or ask for specific help, and allows me a preliminary assessment of his/her reading abilities. (Josh, lesson plan one)

Although developing a contract might appear formal and distant from relationship building, the way in which Josh planned the contract showed his careful attention to relationship building. Rather than Josh's planning a list of expectations to which his tutee was to adhere, Josh's plan included eliciting from his tutee what his tutee's expectations were for Josh. In addition, Josh specifically planned to encourage his tutee to voice any concerns about the conditions of the contract, which demonstrated that Josh was using the contract to develop reciprocity and mutual trust with his tutee rather than simply clarifying expectations.

Josh also chose materials based on his tutee's interests in music and sports, two topics that his tutee explicitly expressed interest in. Because of this, Josh brought in articles on the super bowl and quarterback Aaron Rodgers, an article on quarterback Brett Favre, a picture of basketball player LeBron James, and a videotaped interview of rap artist Lil Wayne. Judging from my observations of sessions, Josh's tutee seemed very interested in the topics, especially the Lil Wayne interview.

Unlike Rufus, Helen, and Josh, Eden's written plans, interactions and talk suggested that her notions about the value of student input were initially tentative but became more intentional as the semester progressed. Eden's early written plans did indicate that she planned to give her tutee some choices during their tutoring session. For example, Eden wrote the following in her procedures section of lesson three,

If we have time afterward, I will ask [my tutee] to look over the pictures one more time and pick one person to focus on. He will then write about what he thinks is going on in the photo from that person's perspective. (Eden, lesson plan three)

The above quote suggests that Eden had a concern about how long her lessons would take. However, her plan also reflects insight into the value of different perspectives. Her concern about time management is typical of a new teacher. Her plan to have her tutee write from a different perspective reflects awareness of the value of counter-narratives which is a premise of critical race theory (Matsuda et al., 1993).

During the second half of the semester, Eden had her tutee develop some personalized "free write samples" and said she found herself seeking feedback from her second tutee. Examples of the writing prompts included, "The best thing that happened to me" and "My favorite food" (Eden, tutoring session). Eden elicited feedback from her tutee on several occasions through questions such as, "'Wait, are you bored?' And then like he'd be like, 'No, you can keep going.' Or he'd be like, 'Yeah let's stop'." (Eden, Interview 2, line 558)

Eden's ability to choose texts with which her tutee readily engaged also evolved over the course of the semester. Eden described one of her early text choices as "a little out of place and random" (Eden, lesson plan one). Later in the semester, Eden wrote,

I'm really glad I picked the picture of the player on the patriot's team. [My tutee] was the most enthused about that picture, presumable [*sic*] because he knows a lot about it and loves it.... I think in future lessons, I'll try and put more articles/pictures/activities that focus around his personal interests. They really seem to resonate well with him and they yield the best results. (Eden, lesson plan three)

Eden's tutee had indicated during their introductory lesson that he liked the Patriots. Eden's explanation indicates that she was pleased that her choice of a picture of a Patriot player was well received by her tutee suggesting her inference that tapping into students' funds of knowledge could be motivating (Moll et al., 1992).

My relationship-focused participants used what they learned about their tutees in their teaching. Their methods indicate that they were incorporating another component of culturally-based teaching methods (Gay, 2010). That is, they also focused on including tutees' suggestions of literacy areas to work on, selection of content topics, and selection of materials/texts. These practices are consistent with what Villegas and Lucas (2007) found from their work with culturally and linguistically diverse students, which was that using examples from students' lives helps students build bridges to new learning. For example, they give an example of supporting students who have immigrated to the U.S. by teaching them a social studies unit on immigration and asking them what it is like to move to a new country.

Practices were also consistent with what Brooks (2006) found while exploring how African American eighth graders engaged with literature that was "told from the point of view of the Black characters, [and dealt] with a Black family or neighborhood" (p. 652). Brooks' participants seemingly engaged with the texts because the texts discussed situations that students could relate to. The texts included characters who were African American who were experiencing personal and social pressures such as racism.

Relationship-focused tutors appeared to understand that tutoring needed to be securely anchored to their tutees' funds of knowledge and understood the importance of including materials and methods related to their tutees' preferences. These practices promoted engagement and helped the tutors connect lessons to their tutees' interests and prior knowledge. When tutors

did not know answers to questions they had about their tutees, rather than guessing at preferences based on stereotypes, the tutors actually sought answers directly from their tutees, and these practices helped to sustain their positive relationships throughout the field experience.

Having preservice teachers get to know students and build relationships is necessary but insufficient to promote learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). For relationships to benefit learning, preservice teachers must also take what they learn about their tutees and use it to connect with learning goals.

### **Considering Different Perspectives**

Unlike my other participants, the relationship-focused tutors also talked and wrote about the idea that perspectives, or points of view, vary among people. This is consistent with a premise of critical race theory that suggests the importance of surfacing students' counter-narratives, that is, other ways of understanding ideas than the dominant perspective that is typically supported in schools. The university classroom provided an important learning space for preservice teachers to consider how fostering literacy development might involve the intentional consideration of different points of view toward ideas in tutoring sessions. Tutoring provided a space to implement ideas and reflect upon the concept of perspectives.

**Learning about multiple perspectives.** Considering different perspectives was taught indirectly in their university class. For example, on one occasion, the instructor read aloud the story, *Encounter*, by Jane Yolen, which is an historical fiction picture book told from the perspective of a young boy who is part of a native tribe on the island of San Salvador when Christopher Columbus came ashore with his crew. After the story was read, students were asked to write about the events of the coming ashore scene from the perspective of a crew member on the boat. Students then exchanged their paper with a peer so that no person had her own writing.

Next, students were asked to choose a couple of salient phrases from their peers' writing. At that point, students were told that they were going to construct a class choral poem. Salient phrases were then read aloud one by one. After students read their phrase, they got up and walked to the front of the room. The class then suggested where the phrase might fit in their class story and the person took his or her place in the appropriate space in the line. The phrases were strung together to tell one story. This activity included the participation of every class member.

Feedback on the activity from the relationship-focused participants included overall comments of personal satisfaction such as, "It was fun" (Eden, class), as well as more specific comments related to the social aspects of the activity. Helen appeared to consider the social aspects related to this type of activity and offered that, "Since it was a collaborative effort you could see what your friends do before you join in" (Helen, class).

Josh and Rufus made suggestions that could be used to extend the activity. For example, Josh suggested to, "Allow for multiple sentence selection to adapt to how the poem is getting built" (Josh, class). Rufus offered that, "You could break up the groups and have some illustrate the story" (Rufus, class).

It appeared that this activity made an impression on participants. The activity appeared to help participants consider how fostering literacy development might involve the intentional consideration of different points of view. Understanding that situations can be seen from more than one vantage point illuminates the importance of multiple perspectives. Critical race theory suggests that depictions of events have historically included perspectives of the dominant group and has painted a picture that may be one sided and narrow. By including perspectives of events told from someone in a marginalized group, it is thought that more accurate descriptions will be revealed and possible power dynamics will be revealed as well.



**Teaching about multiple perspectives.** Eden and Helen were strategic in teaching their tutees that differing perspectives exist among people, whereas, Rufus and Josh communicated this idea when reflecting on experiences they had while teaching. Being aware that perspectives among people can vary is a first step in planning lessons and instruction that will directly honor differing perspectives. What the preservice teachers did not appear to learn from the class activity described above was that the power of alternative perspectives lies in understanding that stories are often told from the viewpoint of those in the dominant group. Therefore, it is not just about teaching about different perspectives per se, it is about intentionally eliciting perspectives from people in marginalized groups. All of the preservice teachers appeared to miss this important nuance as you will see below.

Eden, an English Education major, intentionally planned tutoring activities that directly addressed differing perspectives. For example, a goal of her third lesson included having her tutee “realize that there can be various meanings to different images” (Eden, lesson plan three). However, as strategic as her goal seemed, Eden expressed surprise when her tutee produced a piece of writing that included material which she had not initially considered. She wrote,

The last part of the lesson was our perspective writing. At first he was a little confused and ended up re-writing the things he had already written down on the t-chart in a little more detail. However, after I showed him the first half of my own perspective piece, he said “Oh, I get what you’re saying.” I was impressed with his perspective writing when he read it to me at the end of the lesson. He included details that I had not considered.

(Eden, reflection)

Helen, also an English Education major, also intentionally introduced her tutee to the idea that perspectives sometimes vary among people. During a lesson on adding supporting details to

writing, Helen planned a think-aloud for her tutee on visualizing someone sneezing. Helen wrote in her lesson plan,

I'm going to write down the sentence "I sneezed." I'll explain to her [my tutee] that this is a pretty boring and non-descriptive sentence. Out loud, I'll go through my thought process. I know that someone sneezed, but if I said that same sentence to a couple of different people, everyone would have pretty different visuals [or perspectives] in their mind. (Helen, lesson plan seven)

Rufus and Josh did not formally teach their students about multiple perspectives, but they both had experiences during tutoring when they realized that their perspectives differed from their tutees. Similar to Eden, this learning sometimes caught them by surprise. For example, Rufus appeared surprised by the reaction that he got from his tutee when he gave his tutee a video game magazine to keep. Although Rufus intentionally brought in this particular magazine because he knew his tutee was interested in video games, it appeared that Rufus did not entertain the possibility that his tutee would hold the apparent gift in such high regard. Rufus explained,

I brought the magazine in... and it came with like a demo game and...I bought it, ya know, we looked through it. It was a game that he had known and it was a second or third version that was coming out and we... did the lesson...and...I gave him the magazine. . . . I don't read video game magazines...so I [said], "You can keep it." I guess he was surprised and he was, "Oh okay." And he's like, "I'm gonna put this in my locker so nothing happens to it." . . . I mean for me it wasn't a big deal, it's like it's a magazine. (Rufus, Interview two, line 775).

Rufus, who since third grade grew up in a middle class town with mostly White residents, appeared to take owning a magazine very lightly. His life history interview indicated that he

grew up in an environment where he had access to financial resources. It is possible that Rufus may have taken that for granted. In contrast, 91-100% of the students in the middle school where the tutoring took place were estimated to be receiving public assistance (New York State School Report card, 2010-2011), which indicated that few had significant financial resources. It makes sense that his tutee valued the gift of the magazine, particularly a magazine about video games that, according to Rufus, his tutee was very interested in.

Like Rufus and Eden, Josh expressed surprise when he realized that he and his tutee had interpreted the same situation differently. Josh appeared to learn that language can be interpreted by a novice reader quite differently than it might be by an expert reader. He communicated this understanding in a reflection that he wrote after a vocabulary lesson. He explained,

It... became instantly clear that I was seeing the challenges through the eyes of an expert reader: I could identify potential problem words, but failed to consider that I already knew their functions in the sentence, and I therefore assumed the function would be self-evident [to my tutee]. It was a rookie mistake. (Josh, lesson plan five)

Critical race theorists such as Matsuda (1991) and Delgado (1995) assert that it is imperative that people recognize multiple perspectives, especially people whose voices have traditionally been marginalized, including people of color. Often the voices that are most prominent, whether orally or in written form, are voices of the dominant group. The idea that people can have varying perspectives on issues appeared to be an important topic for the relationship-minded tutors, although it is difficult to know if they understood the nuances related to the value of surfacing the voices of students who traditionally have been marginalized as discussed by Matsuda (1991) and Delgado (1997). Helen and Eden explicitly taught the idea of multiple perspectives to their tutees. Rufus and Josh, on the other hand, chose not to explicitly

teach their tutees about this, but did share about their realization that their perspectives sometimes differed from their tutees.

**Negotiating multiple contexts.** Some relationship-focused tutors appeared to have consistent interactions with their tutees across contexts; however, this was not the case for all. For example, Helen and her tutee appeared to relate to each other rather consistently across the different school contexts during the first few weeks of the field placement, but their interactions seemed less consistent at later points in the placement. For example, Helen shared the consistency of their early interactions across contexts in her first interview. She said,

I don't think she [my tutee] minds having me there at all. Like whenever I show up she's like, "hey," she gives me a smile, . . . and she . . . brings a seat up next to her and everything. . . . Today like one of the girls [in her class] was like, "Oh I wish I had a tutor." Like, so I don't think there's any like negative stigma attached with it or anything. (Helen, Interview 1, line 1339)

Helen's interactions with her tutee became less consistent across contexts, however, as the semester went on. For example, immediately following a tutoring session that Helen described as "one of our best to date," Helen wrote in her classroom observation log,

[My tutee] is confusing to me at times. Sometimes she is really ready and excited to work and I can see that she wants to do well. Other times she is stubborn and huffy and seems very annoyed at me. . . . It's difficult to have insight into her behavior when she follows almost no particular pattern. . . . She sat away from me [today in the literacy classroom] for the first time. (Helen, classroom observation log)

Helen seemed perplexed about her tutee's inconsistent behavior toward her. Helen did not seem to know what the changes in behavior might be attributed to and did not talk about how

she might gain access to her tutee's perspective to see why there was such a range of behaviors. Interestingly, just like her tutee's inconsistent behavior, Helen too seemed inconsistent in her methods to communicate with her tutee. Helen did not appear to be able to transfer her knowledge of her teaching about perspectives to her own situation. Why did not Helen ask her tutee about her perspective on their interactions? I had no indication that she did that. It is also possible that Helen did try to do this during a time that I was not observing her.

In contrast to Helen, Rufus' interactions with his tutee were rather consistent across the multiple school contexts. He seemed to have a very different experience with his tutee while in the classroom compared to Helen. During my first interview with Rufus, he recalled,

From what I'm noticing he's still a rather quiet kid,...but he's opening up a little more. I can see it as we get in the sessions and then when we get into the classroom as well. . . . For instance like if I'm, like now he's, he has no problem if I sit next to him to help him. But it's funny when I ask somebody else around him [if he or she] needs help he's like, "Hey man, he's my tutor, get your own." (Rufus, Interview 1, line 249)

Josh and Eden's interactions with their tutees appeared to vary depending on the context. For example, Josh described his tutee as "very, very engaged...[and he] worked really hard [during their tutoring sessions]" (Josh, Interview 1, line 960). However, when Josh was in the hallway or assisting in his tutee's classroom, Josh said that his tutee "wouldn't look at me really [he]. . . . was very standoffish. . . . [and] wanted to pretend like I wasn't with him" (Josh, Interview 1, line 949). Josh responded to this situation by doing nothing. In Josh's words, he [Josh] "sort of let it happen." In an apparent effort to preserve what relationship they might have had, Josh let his tutee set the tone of their interactions in the hallway and in the classroom.

Josh took more initiative in establishing the interactive tone in the shared tutoring space. During one session, Josh and his tutee were observed sitting next to each other at a round table. Chairs were facing the table. At one point, Josh scooted his chair closer to his tutee seemingly to be able to see the content of the book that his tutee was reading aloud from. After his tutee read some of the text in a disfluent way, Josh re-read the section modeling fluent reading. Then, Josh turned his head toward his tutee's face and asked him, "Who is asking this?" Josh's tutee, who had been looking at the page while Josh read, turned and looked at Josh's face and said something that I could not quite hear. This type of interaction repeated itself several times throughout the ten-week placement, according to Josh. During an interview Josh explained that, "When I asked him his opinion about something he would consider it and look me in the eyes and tell me [his] personal opinion" (Josh, Interview 1, line 960). Eye contact appeared to be an important gesture to Josh.

Context also appeared to mediate Eden's relationship-driven interactions with her tutee. Unique to Eden, when Eden's first tutee was not in the cafeteria being tutored, she was in what could be described as the in-school suspension room. She said of her first tutee, "When it's just her and I like the forty minutes, like she's really nice or whatever and like she's talkative. . . . It takes a minute for me to get it out of her but like she just needs somebody to like talk to her" (Eden, Interview 1, line 1284).

Although Eden's interactions with her tutee during the tutoring sessions were more communicative as suggested above, the in-school suspension context appeared to squelch any opportunities for active tutor-tutee interactions. This lack of interaction seemed to frustrate Eden. She explained,

I do the tutoring with her and then I sit with her [in the in-school suspension room] so if she needs help, like and she asks me ...it's like if she just needs help, literally [I am] just sitting there like this. . . . for an hour and a half, just like, ((taps hands on table)) writing my lesson plans for the next week and like finishing out my observation sheets or whatever. (Eden, Interview 1, line 1091)

Context did appear to play a role in the interactions between most of the relationship-focused tutors and their tutees. Rufus appeared to be the only tutor who had fairly consistent interactions with his tutee whether they were in the tutoring context, in the hallway or in the classroom. This consistency appeared to endure throughout the ten weeks of the field placement.

Josh and Eden's interactions with their tutees, on the other hand, appeared largely mediated by the different contexts. It seemed that Josh and Eden's tutees conversed much more freely during the tutoring sessions as compared to the contexts when other students were around. Helen's interactions with her tutee appeared context independent during the first half of the ten-week placement, but this dynamic was less consistent during the second half of the placement.

Although all relationship-focused participants purposely established caring relationships with their tutees, Rufus, who was the only participant of color in this study, was also the only participant who intentionally taught his tutee how to navigate what Delpit (1995) refers to as the "culture of power" in schools. For example, Rufus talked to his tutee about college, focusing particularly on some of the hidden rules of negotiating the higher education arena. During his second interview Rufus told me,

I don't think he [tutee] knew that much [about college] until I told him. We talked about those scholarships that you can get for doing really well in school, you don't just have to be an athlete. I hope when he gets to high school somebody's able to point him in the

right direction and not so much tell him that maybe you should look on this or that, ya know. And I told him, ya know, you get four years of college, but I mean I told him people change their majors all the time. (Rufus, Interview two, line 430)

Rufus did not see college out of his tutee's reach. He talked to his tutee about academic scholarship which showed that Rufus expected that his tutee could do well academically. Rufus also seemed concerned that his tutee might not get good guidance in high school. His concern suggested that he was aware of the struggles that students who attend urban schools have.

Like Dalton (2005), in his chapter entitled "Failing to See," I make a distinction between culture and race because although it has been purported that culture, gender and socioeconomic status may help explain some differences in school experiences and achievement across racial groups, these characteristics "are not powerful enough to explain all of the difference . . . in school experience and performance" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 51). In other words, different experiences and achievement levels across student racial groups cannot be fully explained by a student's culture, gender, and socioeconomic status alone. Race is a focus that may help explain additional differences in student experiences and achievement (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). More specifically, it is the socially constructed meaning of race that may help explain how race affects students' school experiences.

Prior to the tutoring experience associated with their literacy across the curriculum course, most of participants in this study had limited experiences with African American students. Six of my participants identified their race as White or Caucasian and communicated that growing up they socialized predominantly with other White people. This immersion constrained them to solely understand their White communities and the value that was ascribed to being White.



My seventh participant, Rufus, who self-identified his race as Black, also socialized predominantly with White people throughout his life where he learned how White communities operate and what White people value. However, he was not constrained to learning only the values of White people but also learned the values of the Black community of which he was a part.

### **Making Sure to Address Course Requirements**

Although Rufus, Josh, Helen and Eden's plans, interactions with their tutees and other talk were predominantly relationship-focused, they made sure to address the requirements of the literacy across the curriculum course, particularly as it related to their tutoring field placement requirements. This was evident in participants' lesson planning and course assignments that reflected the requirements of the syllabus. Participants were required to tutor a middle school student once a week for ten weeks. The focus of the tutoring was to plan and teach students how to use comprehension strategies.

The first literacy area that Rufus identified that he would address was making connections (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997), which is a comprehension strategy that has students connect the content of what they are reading to a personal experience, another text or a world event to provide a scaffold for learning. He planned "to identify and assess my tutees [*sic*] interests, strengths, weakness' [*sic*] and personality" (Rufus, lesson plan one). To assess this goal, he wrote, "I will assess our progress toward the goal based on the completion of the information sheet they have filled out" (Rufus, lesson plan one). Rufus talked about his style of planning in his second interview. He explained,

After the first lesson ...I let him choose what he wanted to, what he felt he needed to work on. So he checked off, um, on the sheet that the lesson plan is on, . . . what literacy

techniques he wanted to do. So that's how we went about it and it was a lot of doing each thing twice kind of. If he, even if he got it I would do it again the next lesson. I'd ask him if he remembered it, or I would add onto what we did. (Rufus, Interview two, line 645)

Rufus met the lesson planning requirement by teaching the required comprehension strategies in a way that was culturally responsive, in part, by asking his tutee what comprehension strategies he wanted to work on.

In addition, during his first interview, Rufus discussed the requirements for the literacy across the curriculum course and compared them to what had been expected of him for student teaching completed at an earlier time. He said,

It's kinda weird to go from like student teaching and being there every day and writing lesson plans every day to like, you gotta work with a tutee one-on-one for forty minutes and observe for another two hours. . . . The lesson plans are similar but they're at the same time they're different. . . . The one for the class I'm in right now is a lot more . . . like detailed. Like down to questions you wanna ask and everything else. . . . Where student teaching was kinda like, here's, this huge lesson plan but the procedure was, it was questions but I mean it wasn't so much as like specific question you wanted to ask. You know it's just kind of overlying ideas like to ask kinda order of thinking questions. Where this is kind of like you gotta get exactly what you wanna say in like a dialogue [type] conversation. I just don't I don't like writing like that. (Rufus, Interview one, line 216)

Rufus was the only participant in the study who had already student taught. This meant that he had more experience in writing, delivering and reflecting upon lessons. Rufus' response above

points to his acknowledgement that he understood what the requirements of the LAC course were, however, he seemed to question whether it was necessary to write such detailed plans. The rest of his program did not appear to require him to do that or he had not observed host teachers doing this. He did, however, do what was required for the course.

Like Rufus, Helen taught literacy strategies and completed all requirements associated with the field placement. Her first lesson plan was typed and included the following parts: Introductions, Getting to Know my Tutee, Small Writing Exercise, Reading a Passage, and Closing. Although for her first lesson, Helen chose not to follow the lesson plan format associated with the literacy across the curriculum course, subsequent plans demonstrated that she knew how the plans were supposed to be written. She received the following feedback on her second lesson plan, “Your plan demonstrates good understanding of GRR, especially this early in the semester. I also like how well prepared you are-- creating your own materials & making a well-informed text choice” (Helen, lesson plan two, instructor feedback). GRR is an acronym for gradual release of responsibility which is a model of instruction taught in this class that begins with a very teacher directed approach of teaching and then proceeds to involve the student in guided practice and then finally transitions to have the student independently demonstrate his or her learning (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

Helen’s subsequent plans and reflections were similarly demonstrative of field placement requirements. Her reflections, in particular, noted some frank assertions that Helen made about her tutoring skills. For example, Helen wrote,

It’s okay for a strategy to take more than one session to master. Adding supporting details was a strategy that I didn’t want to move past for a while. When my first lesson

on it failed miserably, I had to think of another way I could teach this strategy. (Helen, final tutoring memo)

The above reflection from Helen's final tutoring memo suggests her understanding that the needs of her student should drive the lesson length and approach. Her reflection demonstrated her understanding that if a student did not quite master the material then it was appropriate to spend more time teaching before moving on to a new skill or strategy.

Josh also made sure to plan for the teaching of literacy strategies while he nurtured his relationship with his tutee. Josh chose to focus his first formal lesson on determining important ideas and summarizing. Determining important ideas requires students to differentiate between key points and less important ideas in the text (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Summarizing requires students to then put the important information together in written form.

Josh's third and subsequent plans were substantially more detailed than the first two. According to the course syllabus, tutors were supposed to submit their second lesson plans to the instructor for feedback. Although I cannot be sure because Josh did not include the lesson with feedback in his tutoring binder, it appears likely that he received feedback and adjusted his plans accordingly starting from lesson three.

Overall, Josh's weekly reflections were the longest compared to all of the other tutors in this study. They were consistently typed and were a minimum of one single-spaced page each. Josh's reflections revealed his evolution as a tutor. For example, he wrote in an early reflection that, "I need to figure out an actual strategy to use to deal with summarizing, as opposed to just saying 'let's summarize' (Josh, lesson plan two reflection). In a later reflection Josh demonstrated his ability to recognize information that he was learning about his tutee as possible content for future lessons. He also demonstrated his ability to conceptualize the tutoring

experience within a larger school context. He wrote, “I think [my tutee] asked me more questions today than he has during any other session. . . . These extra questions made me think about his question-asking habits in his classes. I realized that I don’t think I have seen him ask any questions” (Josh, lesson plan seven reflection).

Eden’s plans, interactions and talk demonstrated that she learned important lessons at the tutoring site. According to Eden’s plans and reflections, Eden was at the tutoring site ten times. Eden planned for and tutored a tutee for eight of the ten times that she was there. Two of the eight sessions consisted of introductory lessons because Eden ended up changing tutees half way through the ten week placement. So, in total, Eden planned for and taught six lessons that focused on literacy strategies. Eden wrote in her fourth reflection, “Although starting from scratch is a little unexpected, I am excited for this new opportunity” (Eden, lesson plan four reflection). Eden talked during her second interview about the literacy lessons she did with her second tutee. She explained,

I kept my lessons pretty simple and like focused a lot around visuals and like short sentences and he worked well with that and he . . . picked up like directions pretty well and sometimes they were like a little complicated. Like I would have Venn diagrams and it would be like a couple of different components and one time I had this like chart and he had to like make . . . inferences or whatever, and it was like he had to write down what do I see and what does it mean and it took him a while. Like it took him a second to realize that there was a difference. And then sometimes he would also like, after I would do the modeling he would just literally copy what I wrote. I was just like, “No that’s not what I want. Like do it yourself” so I don't know, I don't know if it was just because, I could

never tell if that was his actual, if those were his learner characteristics or if that's how he felt he should be acting in the tutoring. (Eden, Interview two, line 587)

The above quote suggests that Eden wanted to understand what was behind her tutee's actions during tutoring. She seemed interested in knowing why he did things. This is a good example of Eden recognizing that getting to know her student is not an event that happens during the first lesson but something that is a continuous process. However, using a critical race theory lens caused me to wonder why Eden chose to keep her "lessons pretty simple." Could her statement be a reflection of her low expectations of her tutee that the literature suggests is so prevalent with White teachers in relation to working with African American students? Did her tutee just copy what she did because he felt pressured in some way to please her? In other words, what might cause her tutee to act in the ways that he did and what did Eden do to explore the root of his actions?

Eden's tutoring experience differed greatly from that of Rufus, Josh, and Helen whose tutees were available for tutoring each week. Even so, Eden did appear to gain valuable experience about teaching literacy strategies during her time at the tutoring site. In her final tutoring memo she wrote, "Critical reading strategies are key to growth and development within literacy across all content areas. This past semester at [the tutoring site], I have learned a lot about fostering this development in my future teaching" (Eden, final memo).

In addition to nurturing bonds with their tutees, relationship-focused tutors appeared mindful to address the requirements of the literacy across the curriculum course. They wrote lesson plans, adjusted plans using instructor feedback, taught strategies such as determining important ideas and summarizing, and wrote reflections on what they had learned during their

tutoring sessions with their tutees. They did all of this while actively nurturing tutor-tutee relationships.

### **Does Race Make a Difference in Teaching and Learning?**

All participants knew that they were involved in a study of race and literacy as this was communicated to them by me verbally and in writing. Because a main focus of this study was to identify participants' racialized practices, in addition to observing participants and analyzing course artifacts I analyzed interview data for direct and indirect messages about race. I also directly asked all participants during the last interview to talk about their perspectives on whether race mattered in education.

**“I think it [race] plays a factor.”** Of all the relationship-focused tutors, Rufus and Josh answered the most affirmatively to direct questions about whether race mattered in education, whereas, Eden and Helen's answers to direct questions were more tenuous. Additional communications, however, suggest that Eden and Helen did indeed hold a belief that race is a factor in education, even though those beliefs were not explicitly stated.

Rufus identified himself as a Black man and tutored one of the many Black male adolescents at the urban tutoring site. Initially, Rufus downplayed the significance of race in education but then modified his answer. When asked directly whether race mattered in schools, Rufus originally responded, “I would say it doesn't play that much. I don't think it is of as much of an influence as people make it sometimes” (Rufus, Interview two, line 1095). Then, Rufus continued,

I mean it definitely benefits me. You know, cause I can relate culturally and other aspects that way. . . . Being Black I do have an advantage in how I can speak to the kids I feel. . . . I think I have an advantage there. (Rufus, Interview two, line 1114)

The above quote suggests Rufus' double consciousness (Du Bois, 1935) in that his initial response seemed to reflect a message that race did not matter. I wondered if that was a reflection of the continual messages he may have received from White people over the course of his life. Was it an automatic response, almost a reflex? Did he feel that he personally was not affected by race or racism? At the same time, Rufus' immediate elaboration confirms that he did recognize that being Black had implications, for himself and for his tutee, who was also Black:

I mean I think it [race] plays a factor but I think it, I guess it plays more so a factor when you walk into a room in a shirt and a tie and the only other Black people you see in school are janitors. You know? So, it's like, oh well how did you get here? It's like I got here the same way every other teacher in the building did. I went to school, did well, passed the certification test, and am, able to do this. And I guess for them being able to see somebody of color succeed in an area where they might come from a single family home, and nobody has graduated from high school. . . . But I think it's just for them to be able to see somebody who looks like them in a position of essentially power in that room is, that's where I think a difference comes in. (Rufus, Interview 2, line 1160)

Rufus' talk about wanting his tutee to see a Black man in a professional role was important because he was attempting to break a stereotype about roles and expectations about Black men in society. What is most interesting about Rufus' discussion with me was his direct acknowledgement of power. He acknowledged that race and power are intertwined and that students need to have the racial hierarchy directly challenged, and he viewed it as his role to challenge it.

What Rufus' talk also suggested was that his hard work contributed to his success, which may be associated with commonly held beliefs about meritocracy. On the other hand, Rufus does



not say that hard work is the only thing that matters, and in the same utterance, acknowledged the complicating factors of racial stereotypes. Rufus appeared to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of success *within* a meritocracy. Not only do Black males need to work hard to succeed but also can benefit from having experiences provided by other Black males that challenge low expectations and deficit thinking about people of color.

Josh, who identified himself as “White” and “Jewish,” tutored a “Black” male and acknowledged that race most likely did play a role in education. He had difficulty, however, articulating exactly what role race played. When asked directly about whether race had a role in education Josh, without hesitation, replied, “Yeah, I mean it must make a difference” (Josh, Interview, line 1256). Although an apparent affirmation, Josh’s statement was followed by a phrase that included a pensive pause between each word. He stated, “Um, [pause] I [pause] feel [pause] like” (Josh, Interview, 1256). This string of pauses was followed by, “I mean most of the teachers there are White, too” (Josh, Interview, line 1256).

Josh’s next couple of statements in the same conversation reflected more pensiveness as he tried to articulate his thoughts on just how race mattered in schools. He stated,

Uh, so it's not like they [the predominantly Black students] it's something really different for them. I think to have that sort of relationship that, ...I'm Black, they're White. . . . there's got to be, you know, it must have an effect. Ya know, it must have some sort of communication effect and [pose a] communication barrier. (Josh, Interview, line 1244)

Josh’s long pauses during his attempt to articulate the role race played in education and his use of speech tactics to distance himself from the discomfort associated with talking about racism and White privilege by attempting to associate himself with the group of White teachers at the tutoring site, are consistent with McIntyre’s (1997) notion of “White talk” (p. 47) which, as

defined earlier, is a move by White people to disassociate themselves from having any personal connection to acts of racism. Josh's affirmation that race "must have an effect" suggests a low level of racial awareness and the fact that Josh could not articulate how race mattered suggests that his level of understanding cultural responsiveness was low as well. This has implications for teaching and learning. On the other hand, it is also possible that Josh just had difficulty finding his words and was not distancing at all.

Helen and Eden, who identified their races as "Caucasian" and "White" respectively, did not directly say that race mattered in schools. When Helen was asked how she thought her tutee's White race affected her educational experience at a school with a predominately African American student population, she seemed ambivalent. She replied,

I don't think, I don't know, I don't know if she felt left out at any point because of her race. I never got that from her but I don't know. I don't really think it would have too much to do with it. (Helen, Interview 2, line 328)

The quote above suggests Helen's colorblindness (Lewis, 2000) and her concern about her tutee possibly feeling left out suggested that Helen's conceptualization of race related more to the race of the African American students in the school as opposed to the White race that she and her tutee shared. This is consistent with other communications from Helen during this study.

Eden directly expressed the perspective that she did not believe race played a role in schools. She stated in her second interview that, "It's not about their race. . . . It's not about that" (Eden, Interview two, line 403). Her reasoning about how race did not matter was clarified in her next sentence where she expressed that it was not about race "because the... White kids are lazy, too" (Eden, Interview two, line 403). One could surmise from Eden's comment that, in addition to White youth, she was indirectly suggesting that youth who are not White are lazy

also. These comments suggest Eden's colorblindness (Lewis, 2000) in that she seems to be suggesting that all youth are the same no matter their race. It is also notable that she reached for a negative stereotype, and that laziness was the character trait identified. Are all youth lazy? Are any? (Lesko, 2001).

Eden openly expressed concern for her White tutee because her tutee's race differed from most of her classmates who were predominantly African American. In response to being asked how tutoring was going Eden stated,

Um, well... I have this girl named [Shawna – a pseudonym]. She, uh it's weird like, this isn't like a racist comment or anything, she's literally the only White girl in all of her classes. So I don't know if that's like affecting her at all. Like but I'm like trying to watch out for it. (Eden, Interview 1, line 1020)

The quote above suggests that race played an important role at the tutoring site, whether she realized it or not. Pointing out the race of her tutee and stating that she is "trying to watch out" to see if her race is affecting her schooling experience does seem to suggest that Eden was concerned about the influence of race on her tutee's schooling experience. This appears to run counter to her initial dismissive statement.

Eden's remarks about students being lazy, whether Black or White, might be considered racist or what Forman (2004) termed "colorblind racism" which has been used to describe how race is considered by some to be irrelevant in society. These remarks might also be considered by people of color as a type of racial microaggression (Pierce, 1970). As mentioned earlier, a racial microaggression is a term used to describe "negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue, et al., 2007, p. 271). Moreover, the micro-aggressor may or may not know he/she is micro-aggressing.

In general, Rufus, Helen, Josh, and Eden's plans, practices and talk seemed to prioritize tutor-tutee relationships as an important aspect of tutoring and completing the literacy across the curriculum course requirements. Relationship-focused tutors intentionally planned for and took time to greet their tutees, elicited and used student input in their lessons, and appeared open to learning from their tutees even when tutor-tutee perspectives differed. In addition, some tutors found the need to adapt their tutor-tutee interactions according to context, whereas, others had more consistent interactions across all contexts. In terms of their perspectives on whether race mattered in education, Rufus and Josh said that it did. Eden and Helen, on the other hand, appeared more ambivalent when directly asked, but additional communications suggested otherwise.

### **Relationship-Focused Participants' Ideas About Literacy**

The relationship-focused participants seemed usually to conceptualize the teaching of literacy in a non-essentialized way. Two main issues that relationship-focused participants wrote about and talked about centered on their ideas about what literacy was and how it might be taught. Josh, Helen, Rufus and Eden appeared to view literacy as dynamic, additive and linked to cultural and social milieu. To exemplify this, I present Eden and Helen's talk about possible benefits associated with literacy or what might be considered empowering characteristics. In contrast, I share Josh and Rufus' talk about the possible costs and consequences associated with not being able to adequately communicate in a literate way, a circumstance that they feared would have a disempowering effect.

**Benefits associated with literacy.** Eden suggested that literacy was more than a mere set of skills to be mastered but a way to facilitate communication with others, thus enhancing one's social network. She shared that, "Reading and writing are a really good way to express

yourself and identify with other people” (Eden, class). Since people typically identify with others whose backgrounds they share, it follows that Eden might be suggesting that she valued connecting with like-minded others.

Helen talked about literacy in relative terms and as something that might help facilitate gainful employment. She suggested one would need to attain some amount of competency in literacy, particularly if a specialized career or profession was the goal. For example, Helen said, “Most professions require basic literacy of some sort” (Helen, class). Helen’s assertion seemed to suggest that certain employers might require employees to demonstrate some amount of competency in literacy in order to become employed.

**Costs associated with lack of literacy.** In contrast, Josh and Rufus talked about the possible costs associated with a lack of literacy. For example, Josh appeared more concerned about the internal turmoil that a person who lacked literacy might endure. He stated that, “Having trouble with literacy can be detrimental to self-confidence with long term consequences” (Josh, class).

Similar to Josh, Rufus also appeared troubled regarding how a lack of literacy might affect a person. However, Rufus appeared particularly concerned about the methods and materials that were being used in K-12 schools with students who seemingly lacked literacy. He stated,

I don't necessarily think that if you can't read you have to read a children's book. You know, maybe that children's book is paired with a reading that is grade level reading . . . [and] the children's book gives you visuals and information for you to comprehend the grade level reading. It's not necessarily just if you can't read well then I have to go find you a first grade reading level book. That's not the way to do it. I mean cause at some

point once they leave here their job isn't gonna give em a 1st grade reading level book.

They're gonna have to know techniques and ways to gather information better. (Rufus, Interview 2, line 1546)

Since Rufus was a secondary preservice teacher, his comparison of children's books and grade level material suggested his philosophy that secondary students who might be reading below grade level should not be taught solely by using children's books at their reading level. Instead, he appeared to believe that children's books might be used to build some background knowledge, but should be paired with additional material. Rufus' philosophy of reading appears compatible to the newly adopted Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), which suggest that students should be encouraged to read complex text.

The relationship-focused participants in this study appeared to have a dynamic conceptualization of literacy that acknowledged its potential to empower and disempower (Freire & Macedo, 1987) its literacy learners. Eden and Helen communicated about the potential benefits associated with the possession of literacy, whereas, Josh and Rufus communicated about the potential costs. Possible benefits included gaining employment, social networking and learning something new. Possible costs included a lack of self-confidence, a lack of social networking, and the possibility of remaining behind in school, particularly if there was a wide discrepancy between reading level and chronological age and grade. When it comes to notions of literacy, the relationship-focused participants' racialized practices seemed to be compatible with understanding literacy as socially constructed and malleable.

### **Relationship-Focused Participants and the Teaching of Literacy**

In addition to expressing their assumptions about what literacy was including its associated costs and benefits, relationship-focused participants also expressed their assumptions about how to teach literacy. Participants asked questions, anticipated possible teaching related issues and pondered what challenges they might face in the classroom. Speculated challenges included those related to grouping students, choosing texts, and using technology.

Participants' moves in the university classroom also suggested that teaching literacy was not something that was intuitive but would need to be learned. Even though participants knew how to read and write themselves, they appeared to realize that teaching someone else how to read and write was something that they were going to have to learn how to do. In addition, some of their questions seemed to challenge essentialized notions of teaching.

**“Why is a ninth grade level a ninth grade level? Who decides?”** Some of the participant's communications in the university classroom around how to teach literacy came in the form of questions. For example, Josh inquired, “Why is a ninth grade level a ninth grade level? Who decides?” (Josh, class) He also expressed wonder about the directionality of fluency and comprehension. He asked, “I wonder if you need to be able to comprehend and then you get more fluent” (Josh, class). Josh appeared to wonder if understanding the words on the page might afford someone the ability to read with more automaticity.

Rufus also asked questions about fluency. For example, he asked, “How do you assess fluency?” (Rufus, class) Rufus' question appeared more procedurally driven as compared to Josh. It seemed that he wanted to know what the possible tools were to determine how fluent a person was reading. This question suggested that Rufus believed that fluency could indeed be assessed and wanted to know how to go about doing it. Since Rufus rarely talked in class, his

move to ask questions suggested his motivation to learn how to incorporate attention to fluency into his culturally responsive teaching.

**Anticipated teaching issues.** Relationship-focused participants also expressed assumptions about possible challenging issues that they thought they might face in the classroom. They appeared aware of the possible issues associated with designing and doing group work, using certain texts, using technology and issues surrounding unequal access to resources.

Eden appeared to have mixed feelings about grouping. On the one hand, she affirmed that there might be benefits to heterogeneous grouping, but her affirmation was tempered by her concern about possible unequal distribution of work within groups. She said, “I agree that it can help totally but one person ends up doing all of the work” (Eden, class). Her comment suggested that she was possibly speaking from experience. Indeed, unequal distribution of work within a group is something to be concerned about when having students work in groups. Eden’s comment suggests that left to make decisions on their own, individual students might take on more or less responsibility for the group work. This suggests that the teacher might need to play a critical role in scaffolding the group work for the purpose of more equal accountability.

Rufus suggested that texts should be well scrutinized before they are chosen and used in the classroom. He suggested that caution might be warranted when reading about individuals because depending on one’s background knowledge, some could make erroneous generalizations. For example, regarding the use of a book entitled *Black Potatoes* (2001) by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, Rufus suggested that students might benefit from some explicit instruction if they had no background knowledge. Rufus appeared concerned that students might make some wide ranging generalizations about people in the book if no explicit discussion took



place. Presenting his counter-narrative he cautioned, “You need to know differences between facts and stereotypes and that this is a point in time for the Irish” (Rufus, class).

In addition to cautioning his peers about promoting stereotypes, Rufus also cautioned his peers about the use of technology in the classroom. His concern was not because he questioned its benefit, but because he understood that the teacher does not have control over the school’s continuous connectivity of the internet. It appeared that Rufus might have been speaking from experience. He cautioned that a challenge to using a technology tool like polleverywhere.com for class is that the “system can go down, which happens a lot in schools” (Rufus, class). The technology tool polleverywhere.com is a web based application that allows people to use mobile devices to engage in a variety of activities such as responding to teacher made questions or leaving comments related to a topic.

Like Rufus, Josh appeared cautious about successfully utilizing technology in the classroom; however, he expressed concern about the influence of unequal student access to resources. For example, regarding the class use of an application like polleverywhere.com with phones – “What if a kid doesn’t have a cell phone?” (Josh, class) Josh also pondered, “What about the social implications of cell phones – who has them, who doesn’t, who has new, who has old?” (Josh, class) This line of questioning by Josh reflected his astute knowledge of inequitable access to resources by some students that may affect their educational experiences.

The relationship-focused participants verbalized their ideas related to challenges they might face in their future classrooms. It was evident from their questions and comments that they were comfortable asking questions and were critically processing the content that was presented in the Literacy Across the Curriculum course. They surfaced a number of anticipated teaching challenges that they were able to discuss with their peers and the university professor. These

actions are consistent with notions of culturally responsive teaching that interrogate notions that teaching is a neutral act that affects everyone in the same ways.

**What class participation and attire revealed.** In addition to direct interactions in the classroom that reflected participants racialized practices and notions of teaching literacy, participants' ideas about teaching literacy were also presented in indirect ways. For example, Josh, Eden and Helen raised their hand often during whole group work to offer answers to instructor questions or to ask questions. Rufus, on the other hand, rarely raised his hand during whole group discussions. Rufus was probably the least participatory of all participants during whole group discussions. On most days he sat in a seemingly relaxed manner in the middle of the room with his right elbow planted firmly on the desk surface and his chin resting on his right palm.

In stark contrast to Rufus' lack of participation, Josh was a consistent contributor to class discussions, rivaled only by Kristen who will be discussed in the next chapter. For example, Josh was the first person in the entire class to offer a phrase that would end up being the first line in the choral poem mentioned earlier that was developed by the class. On another occasion, Josh volunteered first to go up to the front of the room and show the class his drawing of the word "transgress." Josh drew a picture of a man with a boy picking his pocket. Josh's behavior is compatible with the idea that White males are often heard from most often in the classroom when compared to the participation of other identity groups.

In general, participants tended to speak most when paired or when working in small groups. The structured nature of the tasks and the shared accountability built into the group work most likely facilitated the consistency of participation across participants. During small

group work each person was assigned a role (e.g., time keeper, recorder) which made each member of the group accountable to the whole group.

In addition to raising their hands to answer questions and participating in class discussions, Helen and Eden both tended to twirl their hair with their fingers. Helen seemed to twirl hers constantly, whereas, Eden did not twirl her hair quite as much as Helen, but it was enough to make it noticeable. This apparent habit set them apart from the other participants.

Participants dressed much more informally as compared to how they dressed at their field placement. While dress at the field placement included attire such as dress pants, dress shirts, ties, skirts, vests, shoes and boots, it was not uncommon to see participants in the university classroom in much more informal attire. The least formal of the relationship-focused participants was Helen who was often seen wearing a t-shirt and jeans.

Although less formal than their attire at the field placement site, Josh, Rufus and Eden tended to dress in what could be considered more business casual when in the university classroom. Josh and Rufus most typically wore button down or polo type collared shirts, jeans or khakis and shoes. Eden often wore skirts, non t-shirt tops, designer boots and a designer coat. They would most likely be more distinguishable in a crowd of college students. Since Rufus and Josh were quite a bit older than their participant counterparts, it made sense that they might dress less college student like. Eden appeared to value designer brands.

Participants' talk in the university classroom suggested that they were trying to clarify how to teach literacy. They asked questions, considered alternative perspectives and anticipated possible teaching-related issues, although asking questions seemed to be the main source of gaining clarification. Consequences of treating teaching as a neutral act seemed to underlie

many of their questions. This is compatible with recommendations for culturally responsive teaching that takes students' perspectives into account when planning and teaching.

### **Backgrounds of Relationship-Focused Participants**

Eden, Rufus, Helen and Josh identified family and prior teachers as their main influences in their decision to pursue teaching. Josh and Rufus, the two graduate students in my study, entered teaching after completing their undergraduate programs. Helen and Eden enrolled in a teacher education program as undergraduates.

### **Relationship-Focused Participants' Decisions to Pursue Teaching**

Interestingly, none of the relationship-focused participants began their college careers as education majors. Eden and Helen, who were undergraduate English Education students at the time of the study, originally were majoring in Communications and Rhetorical Studies, and Human Ecology, respectively. Josh, who was an Art Education graduate student at the time of the study, and Rufus, who was a Social Studies Education graduate student, both obtained bachelor's degrees in non-education related fields before enrolling in teacher education. Josh obtained a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and Painting, whereas Rufus' earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science. Essentially, all four participants did not originally choose to pursue a career as educators. During the life history interviews with them, each revealed unique paths that led them to education. Major influences they identified in making the decision to pursue an educational career related to input from family members and meaningful experiences they had in their own schooling.

All of the relationship-focused participants grew up in White neighborhoods and attended schools where the majority of their teachers and peers in school were White. This limited

experience of racial diversity can be a restrictive factor for teachers who may work with students whose backgrounds and growing up experiences were different than their own (Howard, 1999).

Input from family members is described next. This is followed by other influences and the role of school experiences.

**Family influences.** A persistent influence on Eden's, Josh's and Rufus' decision to pursue teaching appeared to be family members. Of this group, only Helen communicated that no one person in particular was a driving force in her wanting to be a teacher. Eden revealed that both of her parents were active in recruiting her into the profession. Initially, Eden vehemently resisted their advice when she recalled,

My parents would push it on me all the time. Like my dad was like, either be a nurse or be a teacher. And I was just like no, like I didn't want to do it because he was telling me to do it. (Eden, Interview 1, 315)

Eden's mom used a different tactic to encourage her daughter to enroll in a secondary English Education program by making a financial proposition Eden found difficult to resist, Eden explained it this way,

It took an arm and a leg to get me into education . . . . But over the summer my mom was just like "you can't go to a school that costs \$50,000 a year . . . and be an English major." Like, "No," like, "You're not gonna do anything with that." (Eden, Interview 1, 338-341)

Eden reported that she succumbed to the pressure and enrolled in the secondary English education program at the university where this study took place. Seemingly making the best of it Eden stated,

I always figured like if I don't want to teach when I graduate, cause I'm gonna graduate when I'm twenty-one cause I'm young, and like, or if something works out like I could work on getting my masters and like get an internship, like. . . . There are a lot of options and I can always teach ya know, so. (Eden, Interview 1, 349-359)

Like Eden, Rufus had a family member who was an educator and influenced his decision to pursue teaching. Rufus' father worked in schools as both a teacher and a school administrator. Rufus revealed that it was his father who recognized a teaching potential in Rufus before Rufus recognized this quality in himself. Rufus stated in an interview,

My dad was telling me I should look into teaching and I'm like [dad it's like] as much as I struggled in school you really want to suggest that I go and teach? He's like, "Yes." (Rufus, I-1, 494). . . . You should look into it because you're good with kids; you're a people person. (Rufus, Interview 1, 1807)

This quote suggests that Rufus may not have had confidence in his abilities to teach. Rufus seemed genuinely surprised that he might have something to offer students in schools.

Rufus shared that teachers were not an inspiring force that led him to pursue teaching. He seemed to understand that his teachers could have been an influence, and perhaps should have been an influence, when he said "it's weird because they [should] stand out, but they don't" (Rufus, Interview 1, 1731-1741). I sensed that this lack of inspiration was related to a general dissatisfaction with teaching quality during his schooling when he sarcastically added, "Oh you know what, I wanna do what *you're* doing because you are *that* good at it. Ya know?" (Rufus, Interview 1, 1797-1807).

Josh also reported being influenced by family members to pursue a teaching career; however, unlike Eden and Rufus who had educator parents as influences, Josh gained inspiration

from his wife and young son. During the life history interview, Josh shared how his lack of qualification as an educator held him back from getting jobs in which he was interested. At one point he stated,

When we found out we were gonna have a child, I decided it was time for me to go back to school. I'd always thought about being an art teacher and had applied before that, for a position as an art teacher several times, and I never got it because I never . . . had any sort of certification. So I decided if I really wanted to do it, I was just gonna have to bite the bullet and go back to school and get, you know, get the papers, get the paperwork. So that's when I started applying to schools. (Josh, Interview 1, 42-53)

The quote above suggests that Josh's main reason to pursue teaching was economical. He wanted to be able to have a steady job that would be predictable and would provide the financial support to take care of his family. In addition, Josh may be selecting a career that welcomes the personal characteristics that he possesses. For example, it is well known that the teaching profession is predominantly White which gives Josh an edge over other racial groups that he may be competing against. It is also well known that more women go into teaching than men which would give Josh an additional advantage on the job market.

**Other influences.** Helen was the one participant who did not report being strongly influenced by family or any other specific person in reference to her pursuit of teaching. When asked why she pursued teaching, she replied, "I figured like I could do English Education, have that English degree and that education degree so if I do decide that teaching is what I really want to do I'm gonna have that option." (Helen, Interview 1, 449-451). When asked about other possible influences, she ended up mostly discussing what and who did not influence her by stating,

I never had anyone take a particularly special interest in me [in high school] or anything, really wanted to like guide me or anything. But I had a lot of teachers that I really liked and were memorable to me but none of them were like the driving force behind me wanting to be a teacher. Like it wasn't anything like that it was kind of like a lot of cool people that I met. (Helen, Interview 1, 493-497)

In Helen's life history and semi-structured interviews, she was able to articulate how experiences at her school-based field placements continued to provide motivation for her to pursue teaching, despite some ambivalence at the beginning. During the life history interview, Helen shared the following:

So, but I mean the more that I'm sticking with it, like I feel like, the thing that's really making me stick with it is, I mean especially after going to like to [the tutoring site] like it's, there needs to be so much work. Like there's so much that needs to be changed and like it's insane. I wanna be part of it because I think education is like hands down the most important thing in the entire world. . . .

And I just wanna be one of those people that is like really memorable in somebody's life and really helps them. (Helen, Interview 1, 462-471)

During the semi-structured interview, Helen returned to discussing her desire to help students who were potentially similar to those she was encountering in field placements. Her motivation to teach appeared directly linked to the need to "help those like really struggling schools and stuff" (Helen, Interview 1, 1408). The perspective of White people who focus on helping the disadvantaged is consistent with being a good White (Applebaum, 2004) to someone deemed needing to be saved. This notion of wanting to help supports a deficit (Valencia, 1997) interpretation of students which blames students for their perceived shortcomings without



exploring possible outside factors for these perceived shortcomings. In essence, a focus on helping in this situation presumes that the person is incapable of helping themselves.

### **Relationship-Focused Participants' Selection of Content Area**

As well as having reasons for why they chose to pursue a career in teaching, Eden, Helen, Josh and Rufus also shared reasons for why they chose to specialize within their selected content areas.

**“What I knew best.”** Eden chose English as a content area because it was the most familiar to her. Although English was not the major that Eden chose upon entering college, it could be inferred that her high school experiences, coupled with a positive English related college experience, propelled her to choose English as her content area of study. Familiarity and competence in English appeared to be important to her decision. She stated,

I went to English because that was what I knew the best. . . . And I took an [English] class, and I got like an A in it, and I thought it was great but it was, ya know, so then I went to English. (Eden, Interview 1, line 411)

Eden also described fond memories of some of her high school English classes and teachers, which she described as resurrecting when planning lesson ideas for her own teaching. She recalled,

Every time I have to think of lesson plans or something, I go back to my sixth grade, eleventh grade, and twelfth grade English teachers. And it just so happens that those are the ones with the best lessons. (Eden, Interview 1, 38-52)

Well my, um, eleventh grade English teacher was like hands down my favorite. And we became really close my senior year because I kept going back to him just for like letters of recommendation. But he would set up the classroom in a really relaxed environment

and at the time he was like it's college based, like this is what you do in college. And I didn't really like believe him but I just knew that it was fun and I had like four of my best friends in it. But what he would do is everyday he would be like, okay either circle up, or like we would break off into groups. But even when we circled up, like it was still like him leading the discussion but he was funny. So like he got everybody else into it.

(Eden, Interview 1, 61-69)

This idea of tapping into prior knowledge of your own schooling is related to what Lortie (1975) calls the apprenticeship of observation. That is, because people attend approximately 13,000 hours of schooling prior to enrolling at the university, Lortie suggests that this time in the classroom as a student causes some people to think that they know how to teach because they have observed and participated in so many hours of their own schooling. Of course, knowing by watching is short sighted because the observer lacks knowledge about what goes on behind the scenes of teaching in terms of planning and decision making. In addition, watching does not reveal the underlying societal discourses that drive interactions that exclude and include different groups of people. By tapping into her own positive schooling experiences, Eden is suggesting that what worked for her will work for other learners, regardless of their group membership.

**“Because it was cool.”** In my data analysis, Rufus’ and Josh’s reasoning for choosing their content areas was thematically coded as the “cool” factor. When asked about their content area specialty, each used the term “cool” in his response, although sources of related coolness were different for both participants. In Rufus’ case, he justified his selection of political science as a specialty by stating, “Uh, I did what everybody does when you go to undergrad and I did it because it was cool” (Rufus, Interview 1, 415-417), while Josh was influenced by a favorite art

teacher who mentored him and “definitely put it in my head that being an art teacher was cool” (Josh, Interview 1, 481).

Although the cool factor was acknowledged by Josh, he also acknowledged that art “was very unpractical [*sic*] to do” which probably contributed to Josh enrolling in a pre-med program at a state school when he was a college freshman. However, an interest in art resurfaced when he took an anthropology class as an elective in college. During his interview he recalled,

I wanted to be a veterinarian. . . . I wanted to do biology, or premed or whatever it was and then I got into anthropology and then I got into, then I got into art basically. So I ended up doing my fine arts and a minor in anthropology. (Josh, Interview 1, 118-122)

It appears that Josh initially wanted to be a veterinarian but as the quote below will demonstrate, his love of art was lying dormant.

I took a drawing class [during my college science program] just because, just as an elective. I think I needed a fine art, like an arts class. Uh, and I just was like it had been years since I did it and I was like, “Wow this is awesome.” And my, uh, the teacher was really, you know, was really very “oh you need to come back” and so I took another one, and I took another one, and then I was like, wow this is, being in these art classes is a lot more fun than being in biology class, like, ya know? (Josh, Interview 1, 511)

Josh seemed to rediscover his love of art that was hidden from view during his undergraduate studies until he decided to take some courses in college. He seemed pleasantly surprised and grateful for the discovery.

As Howard (1999) reminded us, “You can’t teach what you don’t know.” With the exception of Rufus, participants’ racial isolation and lack of experiences with people who differ from them was shown to influence their racialized practices.

## Conclusion

This chapter described the racialized practices enacted by four preservice teachers whose focus on building relationships with their students was easily detected. Examples of these practices identified in the data included the participants greeting their tutees in a personalized way, their engaging in numerous interactions with their tutees in ways that were clearly social, and their eliciting and using input they received from their tutees in planning these social interactions, planning lessons, and selecting materials to use with students. The relationship-focused participants also revealed in their interviews with me, in their talk in the university classroom and in documents I examined that they had a sense that people who identify as different racially bring with them different perspectives that need to be considered in reference to teaching about literacy and engaging in social interactions with students. Eden and Helen both taught their tutees explicitly about multiple perspectives, and Rufus taught his tutee to negotiate school power structures. This teaching is consistent with critical race theory and culturally responsive teaching.

With the exception of Eden who chose to put instruction aside on one occasion to debrief with her tutee about a discipline incident, the relationship-focused participants did not ignore their responsibility to teach literacy strategies to their tutees. All of the relationship-focused participants talked and wrote about their notions of what literacy was and how to teach it. They noted benefits of literacy and costs associated with not having literacy. Their communications were consistent with the sociocultural era that reflected social aspects of literacy. Observations from the university classroom showed that the relationship-focused participants were increasingly trying to better conceptualize how to teach literacy. This was heard in the types of questions they asked and comments they made.

Even though the participants who were relationship-focused clearly enacted positive racialized practices, they also engaged in negative racialized practices such as White talk (McIntyre, 1997) and racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1970). For example Josh used White talk during his interview during our conversation about race. Eden exhibited microaggressions during her second interview as well.

This reveals that positive and negative racial practices can be simultaneously present. This duality is best explained by connecting these enactments with what we know about critical theories related to race. Participants who identified their race as White or Caucasian appeared hesitant in talking about race, which is a subtle form of distancing (Case & Hemmings, 2005) from the topic. The nature of the racialized practices they enacted suggested they were unaware of the harm that these actions inflict. The participants appeared to have little trouble being positive with their tutees; however, they still seemed to struggle with how to retain this sensitivity outside of the tutor-tutee context.

The backgrounds of the relationship-focused participants' were very similar. All of them grew up in White communities and most attended schools with predominantly White peers and teachers. This gave the relationship-focused participants multiple opportunities to learn about the dominant discourse of White communities. It also gave them little experience in relating to students of color. It is difficult to conclude why the relationship-focused participants chose to nurture relationships with their tutees, particularly when their instructionally-focused peers grew up very similarly.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Racialized Practices and Instructionally-Focused Participants**

In this chapter, I describe my findings related to the racialized practices of three preservice content-area participants who prioritized literacy instruction during their interactions with their tutees, with less regard to building tutor-tutee relationships. Multiple data sources indicated that these participants, whom I refer to as instructionally-focused, enacted racialized practices that were more in line with the dominant discourse of schools that prioritizes subject matter learning with less focus on incorporating culturally-based pedagogies (Gay, 2000/2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Paris, 2012), as compared to their relationship-focused peers.

What follows is a description of the racialized practices of Randy, Kristen and Ann whose data sources included interviews, observation and course related documents, as with participants in the last chapter. My description below integrates how their racialized practices align with aspects of culturally-based pedagogies, critical race theory (Matsuda et al., 1993) and critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993). I also describe participants' notions of what literacy is and how it should be taught. I conclude by identifying the aspects of participants' backgrounds that might have influenced their racialized practices including influences related to their family, their K-12 school experiences and why they chose not only teaching in general, but also their specific content area.

#### **Prioritizing Content**

Randy, Kristen and Ann's lesson plans, interactions with their tutees and talk tended to focus first and foremost on the lesson and literacy strategy being taught that day and secondarily on building relationships with their tutees. This perceived role of the teacher to keep focused on content is consistent with Shulman (1987) and others (see, for example, Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008) who stress the importance of content knowledge. This emphasis on literacy strategy

instruction suggested that Randy, Kristen and Ann viewed teaching literacy as their primary role and nurturing relationships with their tutees as less important to the role of teaching.

Communications also tended to reflect an emphasis on the identification and remediation of tutees' literacy weaknesses or deficits (Valencia, 1997) with very little inquiry or acknowledgement of students' strengths or funds of knowledge (Moll et. al, 1992) acquired from prior learning experiences. In addition, instructionally-focused participants communicated a desire to control the tutoring sessions, with Randy expressing the most extreme version, seeming to believe he was the best to judge of what was in his student's "best interest" (Randy, Tutoring plan reflection).

Like their more relationship-focused peers, context appeared to mediate some aspects of the instructionally-focused tutor-tutee interactions and not others. In addition, although focused primarily on the completion of literacy lessons, instructionally-focused participants did communicate about the quality of their relationships with their tutees and the perceived quality of their tutees' relationships with other teachers at the tutoring site.

**"I'm there to teach him how to write and read."** Randy, Kristen and Ann's lesson plans, interactions with tutees and talk suggested they believed their primary tutoring role was to teach literacy strategies to their tutees. For example, Randy, a physical education major, talked about his understanding of the parameters of his role as tutor in his first interview. He stated,

I'm not there to teach him how to type. I'm there to teach him how to write and read and how to express his thoughts. . . . [While working with my tutee in the library,] I took over the keyboard and we talked and I threw stuff together and we read it back to each other and it worked out well. . . . 140 minutes, five paragraphs or so, well-constructed, his ideas. (Randy, Interview 1, line 838)

It is possible that Randy's choice to prioritize teaching literacy strategies and completing assignments and less on relationship building may have been born out of a sense of urgency about what he saw as a limited tutoring timeframe. For example, he stated, "I was realizing that my time there [at the tutoring site] was limited" (Randy, Interview 1, line 837). This sense of urgency is consistent with the perceived pressures of teachers in classrooms who may feel the pressure of covering the required content and getting students ready for standardized testing.

Randy also wrote about his understanding of his perceived role in the assessment section of lesson plans three and four. For example, in his lesson three plan he wrote, "I have noted in past lessons that it is very easy for [my tutee] to get overwhelmed and discouraged. I need to be sure I keep a positive fun mentality throughout the entire lesson. I believe my presence encourages [my tutee] to read" (Randy, lesson plan three). Randy seemed to believe that he was a good influence on his tutee, and this belief was reflected in his overall general confidence. Randy's self-assurance may stem from the experience he gained in prior field placements, or perhaps his confidence is more consistent with notions of White male masculinity perpetuated in some instances by athletes (Brown, 1999; Light, 2008).

Kristen's plans, interactions with her tutee and talk focused more on the lesson plan and less on her relationship with her tutee. At times, this seemed to set up somewhat of a tutor-tutee power struggle as Kristen's tutee appeared more interested in conversing with Kristen as opposed to engaging with her school work. During the time I observed, Kristen, an English education major, responded to her tutee's attempts to converse about non-school related issues by verbally re-directing her tutee back to the task at hand. For example, when I asked Kristen during her first interview how things were going with her tutee she replied,



They're going good. Um, my tutee and I finished our first lesson. Like we finished.

Like went through it and finished it for the ((laughs)) first time last week which was very exciting for me cause that's never happened before. (Kristen, Interview 1, line 876)

Having to constantly redirect her tutee appeared to frustrate Kristen possibly because it was viewed as a barrier to completing lessons.

Ann's plans, interactions and talk suggested that she too viewed her primary role as teacher of literacy strategies. Ann's field placement experience was unique in that she had to change tutees four different times. These changes occurred because Ann's tutees decided, for different reasons that will be discussed in later in the chapter that they did not want to be tutored.

Ann, a science education major, seemed particularly focused on time management and procedures to address her lesson objectives. For example, she wrote in her reflection for lesson one that,

I need to be sure to make activities time sensitive. I think I lose track of the time and am not able to get everything I want to accomplish, done. I need to get away from this habit and instead be able to stick to the time-specific agenda. (Ann, lesson plan one)

Ann's agenda-driven sense of her role remained with her for most of the semester. In fact, in her final reflective memo, she wrote, "I was so caught up in teaching literacy the 'right' way, that I caught myself thinking all students were going to have identical reactions to my method of teaching" (Ann, final memo). It seemed as if Ann viewed teaching as procedural, like following the steps of a recipe.

Ann's experiences may have been influenced by the fact that she had four different tutees during the semester which is explained later in this chapter. Most tutors taught ten different lessons to the same tutee. Ann, on the other hand, taught an introductory lesson four times to

four different tutees. The remaining six lessons were distributed among the four different tutees. Unfortunately, Ann was left with little time to get to know her tutee or get into a flow of what it is like to complete a series of lessons.

Randy, Kristen and Ann all appeared to view their primary role at the tutoring site as instructor of literacy strategies which overshadowed their tutor-tutee relationship building. A common theme associated with this focus appeared to be perceived time constraints. Randy communicated his concern that ten weeks was not enough time to teach his tutee how to read, write, and develop his vocabulary. Kristen communicated her concern that her tutee wanted to converse too much, which she believed restricted her ability to finish her lessons. Ann appeared particularly time sensitive due to her perceived time management issues and having to change tutees four different times.

**“I know she’s got something.”** In addition to prioritizing their role as literacy-strategy tutors, Randy, Kristen and Ann communicated about remediating the perceived weaknesses (i.e., deficits) of their tutees. As mentioned in chapter two, deficit thinking is a term used to describe a student’s perceived shortcomings as originating within the student with no attempt to consider outside sources for these perceived shortcomings (Valencia, 1997). For example, Randy wrote the following in his reflection after his second tutoring session, “I have realized that [my tutee’s] vocabulary is very poor & [he] does not exercise any techniques while reading. This must change” (Tutoring plan reflection). Randy’s words convey a deficient view of his tutee, and Randy’s perspective is not limited to the context of tutoring. For example, at one point Randy says, “These [urban] kids are problems . . . There’s a very different way that you approach students [in urban schools versus suburban schools]” (Randy, Interview 1, line 328). These and

other statements demonstrated by Randy show that his deficit views extend beyond his individual interactions to apply to students that he does not even know.

Randy did make what could be considered brief positive value statements about his tutee, such as, “He’s a good kid” and “He's perfectly capable,” however, this was often quickly attenuated by following his comment with a reference to his tutee’s perceived learning deficits (Valencia, 1997). For example he said things like,

His problem is . . . his reading is way behind his age...It's almost a language barrier where his common tongue or like language are like slur, I don't know, slang even. The way he speaks interacts with the way he reads and it ruins like the context of the sentence structure in language. . . . So I feel like when English was introduced to him either he didn't get it or it wasn't, ya know, pushed hard enough or something happened where it just skipped and he just, now he's in seventh grade and he's not where everybody else is.  
(Randy, Interview 1, line 759)

Randy’s references to his tutee’s “language barrier” and tendency to “slur” his words suggests that Randy viewed his tutee’s African American Language patterns as incorrect. This racialized practice is consistent with what are considered racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1970; Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2007). Randy also identified some of his tutee’s perceived literacy weaknesses during his second interview. He said, “It's when he's reading instructions, reading questions and trying answering them, that's where he struggles. So it's literally just his reading” (Randy, Interview 2, line 297). Randy’s focus on remediating his tutee’s deficiencies leave little time to explore his tutee’s conception of why he may be struggling in school. Given the chance, his tutee might reveal information that would be helpful in addressing his reading

challenges. Opportunities to elicit information from his tutee regarding his thoughts on literacy learning were predominantly absent from Randy's communications.

Although Randy stated that he did not blame his tutee's parents for his tutee's literacy weaknesses, stating, "Definitely has a lot of parent involvement. . . . well raised, parents are without a doubt involved" (Randy, Interview 1, line 532), he did place blame with his tutee's present and past teachers, which is interesting because it shows consideration for the academic environment in contributing to his tutee's literacy problems rather than simply placing blame on the child and his family, with this latter perspective being more typical of how preservice teachers assign blame for African-American students' academic problems (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). For example, in his second interview Randy said,

I feel that it's more or less a fact that somewhere along the way he missed something and everyone just kept shoving him along the ride and he shouldn't have been. I feel like it's definitely been an issue for him for years and I feel like 8th grade, reading like that, he, reading like a 4th grade level maybe. He's definitely way behind. (Randy, Interview 2, line 251)

In the above quote, Randy hints at the systemic nature of racism in schools and its cumulative effect by pointing out that many teachers failed to teach his tutee.

Kristen focused on perceived deficits and the presumed incompetence (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012) of her tutee, while rarely acknowledging her tutee's strengths. For example she said,

I am pretty sure that she [my tutee] has some sort of ADD, ADHD kind of thing. I know she's got something. Like I can't wear nail polish to placement cause she started talking about my nail polish. . . . like the colors . . . and she got really distracted and wanted to

talk about my nail polish and I'm like, 'no we're looking at making connections today; we're not looking at my nail polish.' (Kristen, Interview 1, line 876)

In addition to perceived focus issues, Kristen also stated that she thought her tutee had "issues with writing" (Kristen, Interview 1, line 896), thus providing another example of Kristen's focus on her tutee's deficits. Kristen apparently became aware of these issues by accident. Kristen explained,

So I had her take a Shel Silverstein poem, cause I just love Shel Silverstein and she like highlighted it in like pink, purple, and blue or so for the three different kinds of connections. And then I asked her at the end I was like, "Okay now write down why you picked, why you highlighted everything that you highlighted. Like why did you pick those?" And she got really, really frustrated and she said like the work was too hard and I shouldn't expect her to do college stuff when she's not in college. So I think that there's definitely an issue when it comes to writing. (Kristen, Interview one, line 1206)

During her second interview, Kristen reiterated her tutee's issues with writing and her own coming to terms that this remained as an area of need. She said "she didn't really like to do writing. And I don't think I broke her of that because she still fights me, fought me, when I told her to write on the last day" (Kristen, Interview 2, line 151).

Kristen also communicated that she thought her tutee lacked confidence in her abilities. For example, in her second interview Kristen said,

She doesn't actually have the confidence to raise her hand in class and answer it [the teachers' question]. When the teacher's like, "What did you say?" She'll like kinda put her head down and like whisper it. Like she was really, didn't have much confidence. (Kristen, Interview 2, line 153)

Ann's plans, interactions and language choices during the first half of tutoring also identified the weaknesses of her tutees offering very little information on perceived strengths and funds of knowledge. For example, Ann's midpoint tutoring memo began with:

The first half of the semester has been quite enlightening in terms of understanding the importance of literacy in a student's education. Both of the girls I have tutored are struggling in school and it most likely stems from their weaknesses to read and write at an appropriate level. (Ann, midpoint tutoring memo)

After the opening paragraph above, Ann expanded upon some specific perceived literacy issues for each of the two tutees that she worked with during the first five weeks of tutoring. The following examples provide further examples of Ann's focus on her tutee's deficits. Like Kristen, Ann's word choices signify her deficit thinking and presumed incompetence of her tutee. She began discussing her first tutee and wrote:

I think that one of [tutee's name] greatest weakness as a literacy learner was her desire to rush through everything. This resulted in her not being able to comprehend what she was reading and not gather information while reading to help her think about it and analyze it after reading. (Ann, midpoint tutoring memo)

Although Ann did enact racialized practices that were similar to Randy and Kristen, Ann was more reflective in comparison. For example, after writing about her tutee's tendency to want to "rush through everything," Ann shared that "reading the words on the page was easy for her [tutee] to do and she had no issues tackling hard to pronounce words or even spelling words" (Ann, midpoint tutoring memo). Immediately following the acknowledgment of strength, however, Ann continued with more detail of her tutee's faults. She continued, "Another

weakness that inhibited [tutee's name] maximum potential in the classroom was her inability to form sentences with the correct grammar and spelling" (Ann, midpoint tutoring memo).

Randy, Kristen and Ann's talk and writing included a focus on their tutees' perceived literacy inabilities or deficits (Valencia, 1997) and revealed who they thought was "to blame" for their tutees' current literacy circumstances. Randy identified reading, writing, language and vocabulary as the biggest challenges for his tutee and admonished his tutee's past and present teachers for their part in his tutee's present demise. At times, Randy communicated about these perceived weaknesses using language that is consistent with what has been termed racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1970; Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2007). Kristen talked and wrote about her tutee's challenges with focus, writing and confidence and tended to place blame for these circumstances squarely on the shoulders of her tutee. Ann's talk and writing also tended to focus on her tutee's reading and writing weaknesses and, like Kristen, tended to blame her tutee for her own shortcomings.

The instructionally-focused participants all placed blame somewhere for their tutees' academic circumstances. Kristen and Ann centered blame on their tutees which is consistent with deficit thinking (Valencia, 1997), and suggests lack of insight about other systemic barriers to learning which affect students of color who attend urban schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). These barriers include restricted access to advanced classes (Oakes, 2005) and inequitable school funding (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Randy centered blame for his tutee's academic circumstances on his tutee's teachers. This also suggests a lack of understanding of systemic issues that affect schools.

**"In his best interest."** Kristen, Ann and Randy's plans, interactions with their tutees and talk suggested that they viewed their literacy practices as correct and as the only way to complete

assigned tasks. For example, Kristen took the lead role in reading during one of my observations of her and her tutee. The session had already begun by the time I sat down and as I approached their table, I could hear Kristen reading aloud to her tutee from a biography about President Obama. I also noticed that both Kristen and her tutee had a reading packet in front of them, as well as a colored highlighter. In looking at their packet, I noticed that some parts of the reading were already highlighted. Kristen continued to read aloud, stopping at the end of each paragraph. She then would look at her tutee and inquire, “What was the main idea of that paragraph?” After Kristen’s tutee replied, Kristen would repeat the response, give clarification as necessary, and then tell her tutee to highlight that information on her copy of the biography. This went on for a couple of minutes until they reached the bottom of the page. Kristen’s tutee then said that she needed to go to the bathroom. Kristen said “okay,” and her tutee disappeared through the cafeteria door. When her tutee returned, Kristen quickly redirected her tutee back to the literacy lesson and gave her own interpretation of the passage meaning, without regard to possible multiple interpretations.

Ann’s plans, interactions and talk also suggested a desire for control over the tutoring session. For example, in her midpoint memo Ann wrote about a tutee that she worked with for a couple of weeks. The student then decided that she no longer wanted to be tutored because according to Ann, her tutee said tutoring was “mad boring” (Ann, midpoint memo). Ann’s words below describe the needs of her tutee and reflect advice for her tutee’s teachers. Ann wrote,

I think [my tutee] would need someone to give her interesting literature, as a tutor, so that she actually has a desire to understand it and not hustle through it. Also, I think [my



tutee] needs to have someone to devote their time and effort into helping her and not treating her like a child. (Ann, midpoint memo)

Ann also offered hypothetical advice for her tutee's teachers. For example, Ann wrote, "I think that her [my tutee's] teachers should be more proactive in teaching her how to pick out important details in the literature that she's reading" (Ann midpoint memo). Ann seemed to be making some generalizations about what was or was not happening in the classroom and what the student needed from quite limited observations.

Ann's communications also suggested some of Ann's apparent assumptions about her tutee and her tutee's teachers. For example, Ann's words above insinuate that her tutee did *not* have a desire to understand. In other words, Ann assumed that her tutee's lack of engagement was due to her tutee's motivation. Similarly, to state that "teachers should be more proactive" suggests that the teachers are not being proactive. This line of thinking is consistent with the deficit thinking (Valencia, 1997) described earlier. Such thinking blames the person for their circumstance as opposed to reflecting upon other possible environmental or contextual factors that may be operating in front or behind the scenes which could explain the person's circumstances.

Randy had a more extreme need for control over tutoring as compared to Kristen and Ann. In addition to wanting to have control over the tutoring sessions, he communicated that he knew what was best for his tutee. For example, he wrote the phrase "in his best interest" multiple times across three different lessons, and "for his own good" in another lesson. The paragraph below exemplifies his use of the scheme. He wrote,

I believe it is in [my tutee's] best interest to begin looking at [making] predictions, as well as extending his vocabulary. Also with vocabulary I believe teaching him how to do so himself would be in his best interest. (Randy, Tutoring plan reflection)

Like Kristen and Ann, Randy also appeared to believe that what was good or what worked for him in school would be good or would work for his tutee. During an observation of a literacy lesson focused on editing for grammar and spelling in which Randy was teaching his tutee how to use a graphic organizer he said, "I've been using this since I was younger. I have found it to be very helpful" (Randy, Tutoring session). Later in the same lesson Randy pointed to the graphic organizer and said to his tutee, "I think this is going to be your best bet" (Randy, Tutoring session).

Other possible indicators that Randy believed he knew what was best for his tutee included tactics to take the lead on lessons and choose lesson-related texts. For example, I watched Randy take the lead on one of his last lessons, a vocabulary lesson, while his tutee attentively listened, observed and compliantly followed Randy's directions. It is difficult to know for sure why Randy's tutee was so compliant during the tutoring sessions. One possible explanation is that his tutee wanted to build a relationship with Randy by doing what Randy asked. It is also possible that his tutee saw Randy as knowledgeable and wanted to learn what Randy was teaching him. Critical race theory would suggest that Randy's tutee has probably endured so much oppression from the dominant group in his lifetime (including teachers in school) that he might feel defeated and has decided to just do what the culture of power wants.

Randy began the lesson by telling his tutee that he was going to begin reading aloud from Calvin and Hobbes (a text that was chosen by Randy) and to stop him if there was any word he did not know. Randy passed out a worksheet for his tutee to write down unfamiliar words,

definitions, and sentences for the unknown words. Randy then proceeded to read aloud for the next twenty minutes from a Calvin and Hobbes comic book entitled *Scientific Progress Goes Boink* (Waterson, 1991).

Periodically, Randy stopped reading to give definitions of the words that his tutee had identified as not knowing. Examples of words that needed clarification included: sophisticated, rebellious, subsistence, burden, and intellect. When his tutee identified a word he did not know, Randy would give his tutee a definition off of the top of his head and then ask his tutee to write down the given definition and a sentence using the word. At one point, as Randy's tutee was writing a sentence for the word, burdened, Randy turned to me and said that "[the instructor] told the class what *not* to do, but not what *to* do" (Randy, Tutoring session). I took this to mean that Randy was not quite sure how to effectively teach vocabulary. This surprised me because he had been assigned vocabulary related readings and the topic was explicitly covered in class two weeks prior to this session. I wondered why Randy did not use some of the strategies that had been discussed in these sources.

Randy did ask his tutee what types of books he liked, but chose to ignore what his tutee told him. For example, Randy told me,

He likes comic books. That's like his interest in reading. . . . He introduced me in the library to this, um, was like Paper Hat Underpants or something. It was like a comic book. . . . The book itself was structured to a point where it was just very like lower aged. So I kind of bumped it up a notch with the reading [and] went ahead and grabbed some Calvin and Hobbes. (Randy, Interview 1, line755)

Randy's tutee picked out a book and Randy disregarded his choice. Instead, Randy selected another text. Randy's actions of disregarding his tutee's input is inconsistent with

culturally-based pedagogies (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Paris, 2012) that support the notion that students will benefit most in the learning situation when their ideas are elicited and used. Randy had elicited his tutee's ideas, possibly because his assignment required him to do so, but then he disregarded the information in favor of his own ideas. Randy acted as though he knew what was best for his tutee and did not appear to value his tutee's input, at least in this case.

Randy, Kristen and Ann's plans, interactions and talk suggested that they believed they knew what was best for their tutees, and in some cases their tutees' teachers. Examples of this included Randy, Kristen and Ann taking the lead on lessons, making text choices, and quickly redirecting students when they appeared "off task." At first glance, the actions of these tutors may seem like a benign list of things that teachers do. However, these practices are also consistent with enactments associated with "the culture of power" (Delpit, 1995). The culture of power refers to differential relationships that advantage one group over another. For example, we know that in relation to power dynamics, teachers are more powerful than students. We also know that "the dominant face of the American teacher workforce is female, White, and English-speaking" (Marx, 2004, p. 31). Consequently, in schools the culture of power consists mostly of White females who expect students to enact middle class values that include things such as rewarding those who embrace meritocracy (i.e., if you work hard you will achieve your goals). These same values are also embraced by male teachers. Loomba (1998) would identify this as colonialism that appears to permeate schools.

Instructionally-focused teachers also appeared to enact practices having a goal of assimilating students into the dominant culture of literacy. According to Brown (2004a), when students experience a collision between their home discourses and academic discourses, how

teachers handle this conflict can have an influence on what is communicated to students in terms of the value of what they bring from their homes and communities into schools. When Randy decided to channel his tutee's interest in comic-book type texts like Captain Underpants into Randy's preferred texts of Calvin and Hobbs, and when each of the tutors took the lead in lessons without really knowing what their tutee's funds of knowledge were, these moments socially constructed the communication as, "I have the knowledge you need, I do not need to know what you bring to the situation, so let us get started in helping you know what I know." This sort of unstated dialogue is consistent with notions of assimilation where one's cultural membership is irrelevant to learning (Brown, 2004a).

**"[My tutee] doesn't mind leaving her classroom to come with me."** Randy and Kristen's interactions with their tutees appeared fairly consistent across all of the school contexts; however, context did appear to mediate interactions between Ann and her tutees. Randy visited his tutee in other contexts the least of any of his peers in this study. He observed his tutee in classes only a couple of times at the beginning of the placement. This was because he had already completed his required classroom observation hours prior to the commencement of the course. Consequently, he did not have as many experiences as his peers and did not have quite as much to say about his tutee in the classroom. He did, however, have a few things to say about what his tutee was like in the classroom. Randy described one classroom observation this way,

As far as in classrooms I watch him, um, he doesn't socialize, like I wanna say he's quiet but I almost think he's like a kind of popular kid. So like he has a lot of friends and like he behaves himself in class. Like I noticed today he was sitting at a table and it's a table of five where it's two people are facing each other and then a little table on the side of it,

like five desks grouped together. And the next thing you know he's the only one left at the desk because everyone keeps getting pulled off for talking and he's just sitting there doing his work (Randy, Interview one, line 911).

Randy also communicated that when he did push into his tutee's classrooms, he apparently was not allowed to engage in the class activities. He explained,

It stinks I have to sit there and watch. . . . I'm like ya know, "Can I take an active role in this? Can I like sit with them? Like I can even help out this whole table, [that's fine]" and she said, "No you can sit in the back and observe." And it's like, "Right." So I'm in the back and I have another, um, tutor with me and, you know, there's two of our tutees in the, um, same class watching. . . . Personally it sucks just to watch. (Randy, Interview one, line 980)

Although Randy had fairly consistent experiences with his tutee across the different school-based contexts, the example above accentuates the idea that context can influence interactions.

Kristen's interactions with her tutee across all contexts appeared consistent and seemed to mirror a more task oriented focus. It appeared that Kristen saw her role in the classroom similarly as she did her role in the tutoring sessions, namely, as a guide to help her tutee become more independent. This is suggested in the following description,

In math they were doing like angles and protractor kind of things. So like measuring, angles, and then drawing angles with this little protractor. And she gets it, I know that she gets it and I can see that she gets it. . . . Um, she wants help with a lot of it but when I help her I give her like the bare minimum, and then she can figure it out. Like I tell her I'm like, "Okay show me what you have to do." And then she'll show me and then in the showing me, she'll get the right answer kind of thing. (Kristen, Interview 1, line 983)

Kristen appeared to learn more about her tutee's work habits, strengths, needs, and sensitivities while observing and interacting with her in her classes. For example, in her midpoint memo Kristen wrote, "I have . . . learned that she [my tutee] is very uncertain when it comes to writing. In her classes, I have seen her teacher correct her grammar and when they do, she seems to become less confident about her writing" (Kristen, midpoint tutoring memo). Kristen also documented her learning while in classrooms on her observation sheets and sometimes in her lesson plan reflections. Unlike Randy's experience in classrooms, Kristen was allowed to engage with students much more. For example, in her fifth lesson reflection Kristen wrote,

I have come to realize that I never just sit and observe during her classes, but instead she and her classmates use me as a teaching assistant to come to for help and things like that. Today in social studies class she had to summarize an amendment from the Bill of Rights and then draw it, but she had some trouble summarizing it. When I would read with her and ask her to tell me what it meant, she would look down at the text and say one of the first words she saw. During our session in the library she looked like she was getting better at it, but we did a lot of guided practice" (Kristen, lesson plan five reflection).

While Randy and Kristen appeared to have somewhat consistent interactions with their tutees across the various school contexts, Ann's interactions were anything but consistent. Similar to Randy, Ann appeared to experience frustration while in her tutee's classroom. Ann seemed particularly frustrated with the context specific nature of her interactions with her first tutee. She explained,

[My tutee is] really, really motivated when we're working one-on-one, and she's interested in what we have to read and she's interested in being with me and doesn't mind

leaving her classroom to come with me. But, I feel like she's almost embarrassed of me when I'm with her in the classrooms. Like she'll blow me off, she'll ignore me. Like when she's actually with her friends and stuff. For, um, I feel like she has, she's like, has like a complete switch in the different environments that we're in. (Ann, Interview one, line 774)

Ann's discussion with me reflects a lack of understanding for why her tutee may have been unconformable in Ann's presence under some situations but not others. What is most interesting is Ann's statement that her tutee "has like a complete switch in the different environments that we're in." Ann seemed to realize that the conditions in which she encountered her tutee were changeable but did not realize that her own responses needed to change accordingly.

Kristen and Randy appeared to have rather stable experiences with their tutees across the different school contexts. On the other hand, interactions between Ann and her tutees appeared to fluctuate depending on the context. All expressed that tutees seemed fairly receptive to tutoring. It was the other school contexts that were more unpredictable. The racialized practices that Randy, Kristen and Ann enacted were generally consistent with practices associated with the White culture of power (Delpit, 1995) that tends to produce and reproduce its standardized values using pedagogy that is based on the dominant group. Their practices were generally inconsistent with values supported by culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995b) that have been suggested to optimize engagement of students of color who are struggling in the classroom. None of the tutors appeared to see the different contexts as cause to intentionally modify their approaches using feedback from the students as a guide.



Randy spent far less time in the school hallway or in classrooms compared to Kristen and Ann. This was because Randy's observation requirements were less than his peers due to the abundance of hours that physical education preservice teachers were already required to do. When in the hallway, Randy appeared to give his tutee space so that he could interact with his friends. During the times that he did observe in classrooms, Randy communicated that teachers basically refused to let Randy interact with students. This frustrated Randy.

Randy's observations of his tutee were very behavior oriented suggesting that how his tutee handled himself in the classroom was important to Randy. Since Randy was not allowed to interact with students in the classroom, it does suggest that the teachers who were in these classrooms had an authoritative style (like Randy) and used their culture of power (Delpit, 1995) to control Randy's participation.

Kristen and Ann had many more opportunities to be in the hallway and in classrooms with their tutees. Collectively, each instructionally-focused participant appeared focused on keeping their tutees on task during the tutoring sessions, as well as in the classroom. Kristen and Randy appeared to have more success with this, whereas Ann's tutees resisted her efforts.

### **Relationships and Instructionally-Focused Participants**

Although Randy, Kristen and Ann's plans, interactions and talk were predominantly literacy-strategy driven, their communications did reflect some attention to their tutor-tutee relationships in keeping with their assignment, although on a much lesser scale compared to their more relationship-focused peers. For example, Randy wrote a tutee greeting in each of his ten lesson plans. The greetings in six of his ten lesson plans, however, were very generic. The greeting below is an example of the type of generic wording that Randy used. He began a number of his procedure sections with,

I will begin by greeting [my tutee] as I remove him from his physical education class. I will ask him how his week has gone so far and ask him how his classes are going. I will review his extracurricular activities he took part in over the following weekend. (Randy, lesson plan five)

Randy's greeting was somewhat more specific in two of his lessons. For example, in the procedures section of lesson four he wrote, "I will ask how his practice standardized test have been going and what he did on his snow day off" (Randy, lesson plan four).

Randy also talked about his relationship with his tutee during his first interview. As I was summarizing my understanding of his tutoring situation, it appeared obvious that Randy wanted to tell me about his tutee. Our exchange went like this,

K: Now . . . you had placement today.

Randy: I did.

K: Um, orientation . . . ? /Is this your second?/

Randy: /This my second time/ . . . or my third time..., second time with my, uh, tutee.

Um, want me to talk about him for a minute?

K: Sure. (Randy, Interview 1, line 724)

After Randy told me a little about his tutee such as he was "thirteen" and a "great kid," Randy described his perspective of their relationship and interactions up until this point. He said, "We get along really well" (Randy, Interview one, line 547). He elaborated by saying,

Like first day I talked to him I was like, "I don't want to embarrass ya, I don't know if it's weird thing for you to be tutored?" He's like, "No. Like everyone, like lots of kids get em. It's not like, it's not something I'm embarrassed about." I was like, "Alright well I'm gonna be following you around so how about like I like stay behind you in the hallway a

little bit so I'm not like up your, you know, breathing down your neck or anything”

(Randy, Interview one, line 548).

Although admittedly “nervous” initially about meeting his tutee, Randy appeared to establish himself as an authority figure rather quickly when it came to interacting with his tutee. He stated in his first interview,

I was so nervous going into this about how I was gonna get along with this kid and [my supervisor] just picked the best one out of the hat that he ever could have and I just got led with a perfect connection with this kid. I don't want to say buddy-buddy but we see eye to eye. Like if he starts to go, like today he starts teasing [this] girl. . . . [I] shot him one look, back to the paper. Didn't say anything. He's a good kid, he knows better  
(Randy, Interview one, line 790).

Although I can't be sure why Randy was nervous about meeting his tutee, critical race theorists might suggest that Randy's nervousness in meeting his tutee might be connected to stereotypic notions of African American boys as trouble makers. This premise is also reflected in Randy's description of his perceived need to control his tutee's potential energy in the classroom that may erupt unless it is curtailed quickly and firmly. Randy's relationship appeared to stay rather steady throughout the rest of the field placement time. In his second interview he stated,

I feel like there was progress made during our sessions. I feel that he was engaged and, you know, wanted to be there and wanted to like, you know, get to where he needed to be and I think /it made a big difference for him/ (Randy, Interview two, line 259).

Like Randy, Kristen's communications suggested some attention to nurturing her tutor-tutee relationship. For example, she wrote greetings in three of her ten lesson plans. In lesson two she wrote,

I will start by asking [my tutee] about how her week has been going and explaining the lesson and why I chose the text. I hope that by showing her other things that the author has written will show her that I was paying attention to what she was saying in her last session (5 mins)” (Kristen, Lesson plan two).

This attention to relationship is in contrast to lessons six through ten that made no mention of an attempt to consider her relationship with her tutee. Lesson six is an example of a lesson where attention to relationship was lacking. Instead of planning to greet her tutee in some way at the beginning of the lesson, Kristen by-passed this and planned to launch immediately into a task. For example, Kristen’s procedures for lesson six began with,

I am going to begin by handing her back her packet of questions and quickly review what we talked about in our last session to see how much of it she remembers and how much I have to go back over (Kristen, lesson plan six).

Although Kristen was largely literacy-strategy driven, she did notice that her tutee seemed to bond with her and was amenable to tutoring. She explained,

She’s pretty pumped that she gets a tutor actually. Like she gives me a hug before I leave every day and its like, on the one hand it’s kind of inappropriate, I probably shouldn’t be hugging my students, but I don’t really see the harm in it. (Kristen, Interview 1, line1001)

Greater attention to literacy strategies suggests that Kristen appeared to see teaching literacy strategies as a higher priority than relationship building with her tutee. On the other hand, when her tutee expressed frustration, Kristen did at times modify her approaches. For example, in response to her tutee’s frustration over her perception that she was being asked to do “college stuff,” Kristen adjusted her assessment procedures. Instead of demanding that her tutee

write down her reasons for her choices, Kristen acted as a scribe. She explained, “And then I just, I did it orally with her, and I just jotted down what she said (Kristen, Interview one, line 1206).

This negotiation makes sense since they would have to continue to work together. If Kristen did not bend, it is quite likely that her tutee might have shut down completely and refused to cooperate at all. Kristen may have been trying to gauge where her tutee’s frustration level was so that she could keep expectations as high as possible, but just shy of her frustration level.

Ann did consider her relationship with her tutee by including specific information learned about her tutee into some of her lesson plans. In lessons two, three, four, and seven, Ann’s greeting was very tutee specific. For example, in lesson four Ann wrote, “Greet each other and ask her about her week off. Ask her how track practice is going since I haven’t spoken to her since before they started and track will be the focus of the lesson” (Ann, lesson plan four). Ann’s communication to ask about specific happenings in her tutee’s life are consistent with culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995b) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010) that promote the idea that teacher-student relationships are an important component to learning.

Although Ann had good intentions (Applebaum, 2004) and planned for positive interactions with her tutees, her actual interactions did not always emulate her plans. This seemed to put a strain on their relationship. For example, her first tutee appeared amenable to the tutoring sessions, but was quite dismissive with Ann in the hallway and classroom. Ann talked about this in her first interview. She said,

So I've been trying to think of ways for me to like be, like cause I . . . noticed this change and like I've told her I've been like, “Hey what's going on? Like you completely

blow me off when we're in the classroom.” She's like, “No, no I don't.” Um, she's kind of like denying it. She's like, “No”...I was like, “You ignored me.” And she's kind of like, “No, no I didn't, I didn't hear you.” And I was like, “I know you heard me.” (Ann, Interview 1, line 774)

Ann's negotiation of providing literacy-strategy instruction and nurturing tutee relationship continued through most of the semester. This tension appeared most visible in Ann's ninth lesson plan. Ann began her procedures section of lesson nine with, “Greet [my tutee] and ask him how he's doing” (Ann, lesson plan nine). This was immediately followed by, “I want to make sure I start quickly because I don't have a good sense of the speed in which he does things so I don't want us to be pressed for time” (Ann, lesson plan nine).

Randy, Kristen and Ann enacted literacy-strategy driven practices with a lesser amount of attention to their relationships with their tutees. Lessons and reflections focused predominantly on literacy strategies with generic or non-existent tutee greetings, and minimal flexibility or adjustments to tutees' needs unless it seemed critical to continue the lesson. Randy gave his tutee some personal space in the hallway so he could socialize with friends and Kristen modified her assessment on the spot on at least one occasion because her tutee appeared overwhelmed. Ann appeared to have the most difficult time establishing relationships with her tutees. This may have been partly due to her having four tutees over a ten week period. On the other hand, her lessons and reflections talked mostly about the lesson tasks and procedures and less about establishing relationships.

### Does Race Make a Difference in Teaching and Learning?

“Race didn't really make a difference. Which was nice.” Randy, Ann, and Kristen appeared to concur that race did not play a role in their own tutor-tutee experience at the field placement site. Their reasons as to why they came to that conclusion, however, varied greatly.

Randy, Kristen, and Ann all self-identified as White or Caucasian, and tutored one or more students of color. Randy appeared to believe that race did not affect his tutee's educational experience, ostensibly because his tutee's race was the same as the majority of the student body (New York State School Report Card, 2010-2011). When directly asked about this Randy replied,

I don't think it I don't think it [race] influences so much as because of the atmosphere he's in. I feel like if his race were to be part of the problem, I don't think it would be a problem in [this district]. Um, he is an African American student and he's predominantly amongst his peers that are African American. I don't think his race has much to do with it. I feel like if he was in like a [suburban] school or something I believe then then if we looked at like maybe someone was like a *this is an odd question to answer*. Um, I feel that-I don't feel [that his race has to do with]. . . . I feel like I don't know I feel like there could be a biased involved. I feel like it could be like a, uh, um, generality being made by it. I don't think the race has anything to do with it. I think that perhaps, I don't think at least to him I know that and to myself, to the teachers in the classroom I have no idea. But I feel like *that's a sensitive one and I don't wanna come off the wrong way saying that* but I don't think, I don't think race has anything to do with his literacy. I think it has to do with the fact that someone just didn't care and just passed him along instead of taking the hit on failing a kid. (Randy, Interview 2, line 465)

Although Randy seemed to dismiss the idea that race had anything to do with literacy as suggested in the quote above, he clearly differentiated the teacher's role at an urban versus a suburban school as noted below. I think it's worth noting that even though his tutee is an "urban kid," I think that Randy would say that his tutee is an exception to the first statement below.

These [urban] kids are problems. . . . There's a very different way that you approach students [in urban schools versus suburban schools], how you conduct the class. . . . how you control the class and the methods that you use. . . . It's not so much a control thing but it's a, uh, well I guess it is actually . . . it's an authoritative thing . . . everyone's gonna listen to me . . . I'm on front stage. (Randy, Interview 1, line 328)

Randy views his teacher identity as being an authority figure who has to keep order. This suggests he believes that youth, particularly youth in urban schools, need discipline. This type of thinking is inconsistent with culturally responsive teaching because responsibility among educators and students strives to be shared and transactional. His statement seems based more on stereotypic notions of what urban schools are like rather than actual experiences with students whose culture and needs are different from his own.

Kristen acknowledged that it is very likely that race has an impact on the education of African American students in general. However, she appeared fairly confident that the fact that she was White and her tutee was African American in no way affected her tutor-tutee interactions at all. Instead, she seemed to believe that her tutor-tutee interactions were an exception. When asked directly about cross-race education she said,

I think it [race] could very easily [have an impact] because they are so completely different. But I feel like because I am from the city and I told her [my tutee] that I went to [an urban high school] and I told her where I go, like we had a little bit more to go off



on then like somebody who comes from like a small town in New Jersey. . . . [Like] I'm from her city, I know the places that she, like when she talks about things, I know what she's talking about. When she says the pool I know what pool it is. . . . so I don't think it was an issue for us at all. I mean it very well could have been for some of the other kids in the class like in our class, but it wasn't for us. I mean it didn't really make a difference. Which was nice. (Kristen, Interview 2, line 326)

Kristen's perception that race played no role in her cross-race relationship with her tutee is consistent with what Thompson (2003) called "exceptionalism." Thompson (2003) asserted that White people have a "desire to be known as a *good* [emphasis added] White person" (p. 407) when it comes to talk about racism. Simply put, if you believe that you are a *good* White, it is thought that you believe that you have status as a nonracist. Good Whites believe that *other* Whites are racist, but not them. Additionally, good whites may have very good intentions and believe that their actions are helpful. It is also possible that Kristen's actions were her way of trying to connect and build a relationship with her tutee. Kristen appeared to believe that her time attending an urban high school exempted her, or erased her whiteness, and what that whiteness might mean to her African American tutee.

Ann appeared to believe that "who the person was" (the teacher) impacted teaching and learning more than what race they were affiliated with. Her perspective seemed to be highly influenced by anecdotal and "observational" data that she collected at the tutoring site. When asked about the impact of cross-race teaching she replied,

I feel like...from like an observational standpoint, um, I feel like they [students] related more to like [well]...when I was in one of the math classes, um, math teacher was like an older, uh, White lady and she was like kinda like cranky. But, . . . I asked one of the kids,

he wasn't my uh, tutee or anything. And I was like, . . . “What do you think of your teacher?” Like, um, “Like I've never met her before. Like what do you think?” He's like, “Oh she's a crazy old White lady”. . . . I was really unsure about what that meant. But. . . . I felt like some of the comments that students made that they related more to people of the same race. But at the same time it was kind of like it kind of depended on who the person was. Like if the teacher made like an effort to like really connect with them and have like a relationship with them then I guess that was the thing that mattered the most. . . . Um, the teacher who taught [health] was, um, she was also a Caucasian lady and she was, um, probably . . . in her fifties or her early sixties. And she like had the one of the closest relationships I've seen with like anyone else . . . who I've observed. (Ann, Interview 2, line 1314)

Later in her second interview, and unprompted, Ann appeared to momentarily reflect on her own notions about race. She said,

I don't know if I relate more or less to someone who's White versus someone who's a different race. Um, I don't, maybe subconsciously, but not like outwardly. I definitely don't make that . . . distinction like with my students. Like I would never, like it's never been like an issue. Like it's been more of like, uh, emotional attachment or like a, um, I got to really know this student better than whether, what race they were. I kind of guess it would depend on like situations, a situation, it was kind of like circumstantial, kind of thing. And but given like two identical teachers who had like the same kind of style, um, or like it would like if they didn't have a good relationship it didn't matter whether they were Indian or Native American [or] White or, African American. It didn't matter like if they were, if . . . the kids were turned off they were turned off. Like it didn't matter. Like

maybe initially, but if they [the teachers] didn't like make the effort then it didn't make a difference. (Ann, Interview 2, line 1404)

The quote above makes reference to deficit thinking and blaming the student. It also reflects an acknowledgement of meritocracy as being valued. What this quote does not reflect is an acknowledgement of students' funds of knowledge. Instead, it suggests that effort is all that is required to succeed in school. This is a narrow view and disregards inequities of opportunity in school and in society.

Randy, Kristen and Ann enacted racialized practices that appeared driven to steer their African American tutees into learning what they saw as important in the school curriculum in ways that privileged task more than relationship. They enacted whiteness in the form of racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1970) including colorblindness (Lewis, 2000; Schofield, 2010), White talk (McIntyre, 1997), and declarations of exceptionalism (Thompson, 2003). These practices run counter to culturally responsive (Gay, 2010) teaching practices that emphasize the importance of eliciting and incorporating students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) into the school context. With that said, Tatum (2000) and Ladson-Billings (1995b) remind us that culturally based pedagogy should not take the place of instruction. It should complement it. This point is particularly important because it sometimes appears that promoting cultural responsiveness is interpreted by some to be at odds with instruction or should replace instruction. This is a misinterpretation of the goal of culturally responsive teaching. You will not find anywhere in the literature where it is suggested that culturally responsive teaching should replace instruction. Culturally responsive teaching advocates for considering students in the planning and implementation of lessons.

Randy, Kristen and Ann each self-identified their race as White or Caucasian. With the exception of Kristen's urban high school experience where her peers were mostly African American, each of the instructionally-focused participants grew up in suburban or rural communities and were schooled with, and by, people who looked like them. In contrast, their tutees, mostly of African descent, lived and attended school in an urban community populated predominantly with people who looked like them. What the tutors and tutees had in common is that they were both taught by a mostly White teaching force. However, the literature appears clear that White students and African American students are not treated the same in classrooms (Michaels, 1981). Additionally, like many other students of color, African American students are consistently not given the same opportunities to excel because they are often tracked into lower level classes (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Oakes et al., 1990). Since tutors and tutees grew up and were schooled in different types of environments, tutors and tutees might find it difficult to relate to each other. Critical race theorists such as Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Gay (2010) suggest that this is particularly important when the identity markers of teachers and students do not align.

### **Instructionally-Focused Participants Ideas about Literacy**

Like their relationship-focused peers, the instructionally-focused participants communicated orally and in writing about what literacy was and how it is taught across the curriculum. Ann, Kristen and Randy appeared to view literacy as both malleable and additive. Their conceptualizations seemed to diverge somewhat, however, in relation to who the recipient of literacy advantage might be. For example, Ann and Randy seemed to view the individual as a literacy beneficiary, whereas, Kristen conceptualized literacy as potentially benefitting the wider society.

**Literacy as reading and writing.** In addition to viewing literacy as potentially beneficial and capable of being extended, Ann, like Helen, appeared to view literacy in relative terms suggesting that one could possess more or less of it. For example, Ann defined literacy as an ability to “read and write well enough to communicate and gain knowledge in a context” (Ann, class). Like Eden, Ann identified both reading and writing as components of literacy. She also appeared to view literacy as a conduit for additional learning and suggested that literacy may shape, or be shaped by, the context with which it appears.

Randy communicated that literacy was about acquiring certain skills. When asked to write a definition of literacy early in the semester, Randy wrote, literacy is “proper language, spelling, [and] punctuation is involved” (Randy, class). Randy’s use of the words language, spelling and punctuation suggested that he believed literacy was associated with reading and writing. His use of the word proper implied that literacy was either correct or incorrect, suggesting that there was only one way to do it. He appeared to view literacy as an end in itself. This seemingly constricted and technical conceptualization of literacy is consistent with what Street (1984) referred to as an “autonomous model of literacy.”

**Lack of literacy can restrict access.** Although Kristen appeared aligned with Ann and Randy regarding the potential benefits of literacy, she went further to suggest that literacy might have cost affiliation as well. As a benefit, Kristen appeared to view writing in particular as a way to produce new knowledge. She wrote, “One of the main ways that people get new ideas out is by writing” (Kristen, class). Kristen also talked about the possible costs associated with literacy. Her view appeared most similar to Josh’s in that they both suggested that a lack of literacy might have harmful associations. Their thinking diverged, however, in relation to where these consequences might materialize. While Josh appeared more concerned with internal

ramifications, Kristen appeared more concerned about possible external consequences associated with a lack of literacy. She appeared most concerned that one's credibility might be negatively affected by a lack of writing skills. She stated that "if you can't do that (write) in an organized way, people won't pay attention to you" (LAC class). The "people [who] won't pay attention" might include college admission personnel, potential employers, or anyone who would judge someone based on the quality of their writing. Although Kristen viewed writing as a way to get new ideas out, she also was concerned about the costs associated with not being able to write.

While Randy's definition of literacy suggested individual value, his definition appeared most focused on the skills associated with literacy. Ann and Kristen's views on literacy aligned best with that of Eden and Helen who, like them, also communicated about the potential benefits associated with the possession of literacy. Ann and Kristen suggested that benefits included gaining new knowledge and acquiring a social network. Kristen extended her definition to include how a lack of literacy might be detrimental.

### **Instructionally-Focused Participants and the Teaching of Literacy**

While in the university classroom, Kristen, Ann and Randy also communicated about issues related to teaching literacy. Kristen appeared confident in the quality of her teaching plans, but appeared to question her agency to teach issues that might be considered too controversial. For example, Kristen expressed during her second interview that she wrote "a good unit" on gender roles. Her excitement was tempered however, when she thought about the conservative nature of some schools. She said,

Like I really hope that one day I work in a school that is liberal enough to let me teach it. Cause it's about gender roles, kind of a dicey subject but, I mean, I hope that one day I work somewhere where I can teach it. (Kristen, Interview two, line 510)

Ann appeared to see the connection between her university classroom experiences and her field placement. She said, “I like being able to observe [at the tutoring site] . . . . I'm taking the literacy class [and] I get to see how it's like more applied by someone who knows what they're doing” (Ann, Interview one, line 946).

Randy's questions about literacy instruction appeared to support his notion that being literate meant speaking and writing accurately. For example, when fluency was discussed in the university classroom, Randy asked, “Are you talking about poor English when kids don't pronounce words correctly?” (Randy, class) By suggesting that English could be “poor” or pronounced “correctly” suggested that Randy might be using normatively middle class dialect as a standard with which language and literacy were being judged. Randy's inquiry regarding the teaching of fluency aligned most with Josh and Rufus who expressed interest in knowing the rationale behind literacy conventions and the procedures associated with implementing them. Randy's inquiry, however, diverged from his peers in that he was the only one of the three who suggested that there might be a universal way to do it.

Like the relationship-focused participants, the reading and alternative perspective writing activity done in class associated with Jane Yolen's (1992) historical fiction book *Encounter* appeared to make an impression on some of the instructionally-focused participants. Critical race theory suggests that stories and historical representations are often one-sided and privilege the perspective of the dominant group. The perspective writing activity and subsequent group constructed poem seemed to provoke reflection and ideas for application. For example, Kristen appeared to see the flexibility and value in using this type of activity with a variety of learners, particularly English language learners. She commented that, “even the shortest, simplest sentence can be used. This can build confidence in writing for ESL” (Kristen, class). However,

like their relationship-focused peers, Kristen, Randy and Ann did not appear to gain an understanding that a main reason to consider multiple perspectives is to recognize that often the messages we receive are often told from the perspective of the dominant group which can portray a limited and biased view.

**Anticipated teaching issues.** Instructional challenges were also discussed in the university classroom. Participants appeared aware of the possible issues associated with designing and doing group work and issues related to using certain texts. Ann's concern about group work seemed focused on issues related to peer-to-peer social connections. For example, she said, "If students are assigned to explore different materials, as opposed to assigned to a group there is less peer stigma" (Ann, class). This communication suggested that Ann had concerns about how a student might feel about being assigned to a group. She seemed to understand that students want a sense of belonging to their peer group and anything that might single a student out would not be received well. She suggested that students could still be assigned to do group work, but care needed to be taken by the teacher in deciding how that would happen.

Like Ann, Randy appeared to understand the strong attraction of youth to be with their desired peer group in any way that they could during the school day. He suggested that if you give youth choices regarding what group to work in, "kids will get into the groups that their friends are in" (Randy, class). It is hard to know if Randy thought this was a good or bad idea. On the one hand, the reinforcement of being with their friends might make a group work harder. On the other hand, it is possible that little work would be accomplished because more conversing about issues not associated with the task might occur. This suggests the critical role of teachers



in knowing their students and setting up appropriate expectations to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome.

Like Rufus, Randy appeared aware of the possible challenges associated with language and using certain texts in the classroom. However, their reasoning behind these challenges differed. For example, during a class discussion specifically on the challenges a student might encounter when reading the text *Black Potatoes* (2001) by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, Rufus appeared concerned about the interpretation of the content as supporting stereotypes. Randy, on the other hand, appeared more concerned that students might struggle with the language because, “It’s not traditional modern English” (Randy, class). On one level, it appeared that Randy was communicating that language might be an obstacle if a person is not used to its style. Concomitantly, his words suggested that modern English was the benchmark with which to measure one’s language proficiency. His comment is also consistent with his notion of literacy that he said had a correctness to it. It is also consistent with a norm based philosophy that is often associated with the dominant group.

Ann and Randy also appeared to understand that knowing one’s students is important for instructional purposes. For example, Ann suggested that when students’ background knowledge on a topic varies widely that the teacher could strategically “put people in different groups who can act as experts” (Ann, class). Ann also appeared to believe that the teacher should take the lead when needing to “assess and determine if students are ready to move on” (Ann, class).

Randy suggested that explicit instruction is sometimes necessary such as when teaching students whether websites are credible or not. He suggested that the teacher should teach students to “check the url” and domain name in a web address to let students “know that .net might suggest it would be less credible than say .edu” (Randy, class).

Like Rufus and Eden, Kristen also talked about the teacher's role in reference to addressing certain situations in the classroom. For example, Kristen appeared to believe that it was the teacher's role to intervene during class discussions if one or more students were monopolizing the dialogue. She shared that sometimes it is appropriate for the teacher to "put pressure on everyone who's been talking already to be a little more quiet, to give space to those who've been more silent" (Kristen, class).

**Meeting the needs of diverse learners.** Although addressing the needs of diverse learners was integrated into all aspects of the literacy across the curriculum course, portions of activities at times had participants narrow their focus temporarily to certain groups of learners. For example, one activity required students to work in small groups to design a lesson with English language learners in mind. Kristen's lesson focused on using a specific text. She suggested that students could read "Lord of the Flies and talk about Utopia" (Kristen, class).

Participants' verbal and written communications in the university classroom also appeared to reveal some of their notions of who they thought adolescent learners were. Some expressed that they were aware that one should not make assumption about people and treat them according to those assumptions. However, perspectives and practices did not always mirror each other.

When students were asked to identify salient quotes in in their literacy textbook , Randy chose to discuss a quote about the multiple commitments students have, in addition to tutoring. During class, he stated

These kids have a lot going on; the 40 minute session might not be the most important thing that happens to them; see if you can be sensitive to when something else is going

on; note what you see, and try not to pass judgment on that; be flexible. (Randy, class, 2-1-13)

Like Eden, this quote suggested that Randy had some awareness about adolescents' full lives. Because he did not give an example of a student facing these obligations, it is difficult to know if he had a particular middle school student in mind (like his tutee), or if he was thinking about his own middle school experience. Did he have a lot going on during middle school? Were his teachers understanding and flexible? At the time of the study, Randy attended classes, tutored once a week and also worked a job. He had a lot going. Was he drawing on his own circumstances?

Kristen also appeared to be aware that just because she learns in a particular way does not necessarily mean that her students will. For example, she stated that she believed that "some kids need movement, or need pictures to learn (Kristen, class). In addition, after doing a class assignment that required her to simultaneously read a short English related text while also being metacognitive about of what literacy strategies she was using along the way, she recalled:

I realized when I did the thinking strategies option that I never paid attention to my strategies—in particular, I realized I have a pattern of skimming over confusing material and hoping to figure it out later—this works for me but might not for my students; I want to make sure I pay attention to kids who seem like they're getting it but might not.  
(Kristen, class)

These quotes suggested that Kristen learned some things about her own learning and thinking style as a result of some class assignments that caused her to think about her thinking. It also seems somewhat apparent that Kristen was at least aware that adolescent learners may learn in a completely different way than she does.

**What class participation and attire revealed.** Participation in the classroom can also be viewed through a racial lens. For the purposes of this study, I defined participation liberally to include hand raising, speaking and writing in the university classroom. Each participant participated in the classroom to varying degrees and in various ways.

For example, Kristen and Randy's participation in the classroom did appear consistent with the normative notion that the dominant group participates widely in activities. Indeed, Kristen and Randy often raised their hand during whole group work to offer answers to instructor questions or to ask questions. This behavior is consistent with a valuing of meritocracy (McNamee & Miller, 2004) that purports that hard work will pay off. In contrast, Ann, rarely raised her hand during whole group discussions.

Kristen was often one of the first of the seven participants to raise her hand and participate in whole group activities. Of all of the participants, only Josh participated as evenly. For example, Kristen's hand almost always shot up in the air when a question was posed to the whole group or when the instructor was looking for a volunteer to share. In contrast, Ann rarely raised her hand in class.

Randy tended to raise his hand a lot as well. The area that Randy differed most from his peers was in his writing engagement in the class. Randy often had nothing on his desk to write with or write on. He also at times brought a laptop to class. I noticed on at least one occasion that he had his Facebook page open during class. In contrast, Kristen and Ann were often seen writing in a notebook.

Kristen, Ann and Randy all dressed very informally in the university classroom. They were often seen in t-shirts, baseball caps, hooded sweatshirts and jeans. Kristen often dressed in jeans, t-shirts or sweatshirts that displayed the Greek symbol for the sorority that she belonged

to. Randy was often seen in a sweatshirt, sweatpants and boots with untied shoelaces. He also tended to wear a baseball cap backwards and typically rested his sunglasses on the back of his head. These types of clothes mirrored the types of clothes that many college students wore on and around campus in 2011. If in a crowd on campus, these aspiring teachers would most likely be impossible to distinguish from their non-teaching peers if university classroom dress were the deciding factor.

Like the more relationship-focused participants, Kristen, Ann and Randy communicated in the university classroom about their perspectives on literacy and the challenges associated with providing literacy instruction. Agency, application and clarification of new learning seemed important to these instructionally focused participants. Kristen questioned her future freedom to introduce a controversial contemporary topic into the classroom. She also appeared to grasp the application possibilities of activities such as alternative perspective writing. Ann seemed to find value in observing literacy across the curriculum being applied by more experienced teachers. Randy seemed focused on understanding how to do things accurately. All seemed to learn something from their university classroom experiences.

Haddix (2010), Tatum (2000), and Brown, et al. (2010), would most likely concur that Randy's philosophy of literacy supported the racialized practices of the White dominant teaching force that undergirds our hierarchical educational system. Race scholars would most likely view Kristen and Ann as aware of the value of alternative perspectives which is consistent with one of the premises of critical race theory that suggests that more can be learned by investigating the counter-narratives or alternate perspectives of events. These additional perspectives often reveal possible power dynamics of situations that the original story tellers may not have been aware of or intentionally left out of the account.

### **Backgrounds of Instructionally-focused Participants**

My instructionally-focused participants included Ann, Kristen, and Randy. Like their relationship-focused peers, family and prior teachers appeared to be the main influences on the instructionally-focused participants' decisions to teach. Ann had an additional similarity to her relationship-focused peers in that she did not initially enroll in teacher education. Kristen and Randy, on the other hand, made teaching their first choice as a major.

### **Instructionally-Focused Participants' Decisions to Pursue Teaching**

Ann did not begin her college career as an education major. Instead, she began her college studies in pre-med before transferring internally into the Science Education program at the same institution that this study took place. Kristen and Randy, on the other hand, were unique participants, in that, of the seven participants in this study, they were the only ones who enrolled in a teacher education program immediately following high school. Kristen enrolled in a secondary English Education program at the university where this study took place. Randy attended a K-12 Physical Education program at another four-year school before transferring into the Physical Education program at the university where this study took place.

In their life history interviews, Ann shared that a family member was a driving force to pursue teaching. Kristen and Randy, on the other hand, communicated that previous teachers inspired them to become teachers. All three appeared influenced by some of their K-12 teachers.

**Family influences.** Although Ann and Randy both grew up in households with a family member who was an educator, only Ann revealed this to be an influencing factor to go into teaching. Ann shared in one of her interviews that her mom was a positive contributor to her decision to enroll in a teacher education program. Her mom appeared to recognize a teaching potential in Ann before Ann saw it herself. Although Ann's mom discussed teaching with Ann,

she made a point to encourage Ann to carefully select her career, whether it be teaching or not, and ultimately left the final decision up to Ann. Ann recalled her communication with her mom in this way:

My mom always said that I was gonna be a teacher. She's like, "You're gonna be a teacher." She's like, "I don't wanna like persuade you in any way." She's like, "I just think that you're gonna be a teacher." She's like, she's like, "I'm not gonna tell you what to do." She's like, "It's up to you. It's your decision. It's what you have to do for the rest of your life." So she just thought I had like the teacher mentality the whole time. (Ann, Interview 1, lines 242-246)

Although the teaching "seed ... was [always] planted in the back of [Ann's] head" (Ann, Interview 1, line 241), Ann did not come to college with a primary focus on becoming a teacher. Ann did arrive with a background and continued interest, however, in helping others. She stated in her first interview that, "I tutored a lot in high school. I tutored when I came here. Um, I liked the tutoring business ((laughs)) [a lot.]" (Ann, Interview 1, lines 342-343) She went further to state that:

I came to college not thinking I was gonna do education. I came in pre-med thinking I was gonna go that route. And then, um, I decided that med school was not the path that I was intended in going [on]. Um, and I switched to be a, and still a science major. I'm a bio and earth science major but I'm also doing now the five year science teaching program. So that's landed me here. (Ann, Interview 1, lines 72-82)

Although Randy's sister was a teacher, he did not mention that she was instrumental in providing inspiration to pursue teaching. Instead, Randy identified his high school PE teacher as

being a big influence on his decision to teach. Kristen also communicated that multiple prior teachers in school inspired her.

**Other influences.** Teachers who were not family members also appeared to influence some participants' decision to pursue teaching. For example, a driving force who Kristen credited in her decision to enroll in a secondary English education program was a high school English teacher who she had for both 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Kristen identified relevant texts assigned for class coupled with strategic discussion-based pedagogy as igniting strong interest in teaching for Kristen. She recalled:

I liked the books that [my 10th grade English teacher] had us read. He had us read Mitch Albom books . . . Tuesdays with Morrie, [and] Five People You meet in Heaven. . . . You had to read Romeo and Juliet...Of Mice and Men...[and] Lord of the Flies. . . . but . . . the Mitch Albom one seemed so much more relevant. (Kristen, Interview 1, lines 287-310)

I think that's what made me want to be an English teacher eventually was the way that this guy like taught and discussed things in his classes and how we would go off on these random discussions but then he would somehow manage to bring us back to the book. (Kristen, Interview 1, lines 303-306)

In addition to her high school English teacher, Kristen's high school music teacher also was identified as an influential role model. Similar to her English teacher, Kristen noted relevancy as being an inspiring component of her music teacher's pedagogy. Other role modeled characteristics were mentioned by Kristen as well. During her first interview, Kristen stated:



I liked how my chorus teacher managed to not only stick to like music and chorus, and he kind of like branched out and taught like things that are valuable for the rest of your life too. I think that's where I got my work ethic and my responsibility. (K, I-1, 374-376)

Two teachers seemed to influence Randy's decision to pursue teacher education. One was a high school physical education (P.E.) teacher and the other was a college professor. During his first interview Randy recalled, "[As] far as like what got me in the direction [of teaching] in the first place was . . . [that] I had a great P.E. teacher in [our high school]." (Randy, Interview 1, line 195)

Although Randy's high school P.E. teacher seemed to propel Randy toward teaching, constraining forces of no less consequence also affected Randy's decision to teach. Constraints included financial concerns, and lack of support from at least one professor in his major who, after Randy failed a course, questioned Randy regarding his commitment to his studies. Below is an excerpt from a transcript of Randy's first interview where he described this situation:

R: [For] Intro to Phys. Ed. . . . my uh, I received numerically a 77, however was failed in the course. I was, uh, bartending and the Intro professor asked me if I really thought college was the right thing for me. And that's what really kind of set me straight after my first semester and really put me over the edge as far as I was concerned with him. So I immediately aced his course the next semester . . . [And] the first thing I plan on doing when I graduate is photocopy that diploma and stapling it to his front door. [That's my plan.]

K: [So he motivated ya.]

R: He put some gas in the tank. (Randy, Interview 1, lines 176-193)

This question of commitment certainly had the potential to adversely affect Randy, but instead, the professor's words fueled Randy to want to rise up and prove this teacher wrong. It is difficult to know why Randy did not do well in the Introduction to Physical Education course the first time, but since he did better the second time indicates that he was capable.

### **Instructionally-Focused Participants' Selection of Content Area**

Personal interest and familiarity with content appeared to be the main driving forces for the instructionally-focused participants' content specialty choices. This makes sense because people are drawn to things that interest them or are familiar. Although this is natural, teachers need to be careful to not always rely on teaching in ways that are in concert only with their own interest and familiarity. The things that interest teachers or the ways teachers learn best may not be in line with the students in their classroom.

Kristen, an English education major, recalled her high school English classes where talk about relevant books captured her interest. She stated in an interview "I don't know I just loved it. . . . hence the major." (Kristen, Interview 1, line 303) Kristen's excitement about her English classes in high school came out in more than her words. I could hear the excitement in her voice when she reflected on her experiences.

A personal interest in sports including the "politics" associated with sports appeared to be the impetus for Randy choosing physical education as his major content area of study. Randy identified himself as a "jock" who played a number of sports in high school and college including, track, football, rugby and lacrosse. As he described it:

R: I'm a Phys. Ed. major. I, in high school was a track, um, athlete as well as football. I, um, excelled in track and went to Empire State Games for discus, shot put, and the 400.  
(Randy, Interview 1, lines 27-29)

K: [W]hat . . . got you interested [in physical education]?

R: Um, well, like I said I was a very I'm gonna use the stereotype of saying “jock” in high school. I was a, um, like I said a big track star, played football. Um, I had, I saw a lot of politics in my, um, in the coaching as far as who was getting on the field when I was playing football, who was doing what, where and why. And it irked me a lot cause I was seeing, ya know, his dad he holds the chains and goes out for beers after the game with the coach, da, da, da. And he's on the field, and so this kid like, I know who's playing better, I know who's faster, I play with them.

K: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

R: It just, [the politics of the sports] got to me. And then when I started realizing like my actual personal interests and such, I thought this would be a good idea for me. (Randy, Interview 1, lines 153-166)

Although Randy excelled in sports, the politics that he witnessed on and off the field appeared to agitate him. It seemed to be a fairness issue that he was upset about. This same theme seemed evident in his discussion about his college teacher for his Introduction to Physical Education course. Randy seemed to see the world, at least the sports world, as not treating him fairly.

Ann appeared to be driven by a strong personal interest in science. During her second interview she stated:

After I get my master's in education, um, I feel like I'm gonna definitely, I still see myself teaching in a high school. Um, because I do *like* the content a lot. I do like earth science and biology. (Ann, Interview 2, lines 1105-1107)

This quote supports the idea that Ann was strongly drawn to the content of science. This high interest in science content and concern related to time management of her lessons was why Ann

was included in the instructionally-focused group. This does not negate, however, Ann's apparent sensitivity to student's feelings as illustrated in her earlier communication about peer stigma.

Personal interest and experiences with teachers seemed to be the main driving forces for the instructionally-focused participants' choices in selecting the content areas they are pursuing in their teacher certification programs. Ann and Kristen appeared to have positive experiences in school. Randy on the other hand, seemed to have a mix of positive and negative experiences.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the racialized practices enacted by three participants (Randy, Ann and Kristen), who prioritized instruction over relationship in their tutoring and classroom learning. It was not the instructionally-focused preservice teachers' prioritization of instruction that was problematic but their relative neglect in building relationships designed to bridge the cultural gap that often exists among people whose life experiences may be vastly different from one another compared to relationship-focused participants.

Although instructionally-focused participants did exhibit positive racialized practices with their tutees, such as not blaming tutees for their perceived deficits and considering the implications of cross cultural interactions, the frequency and the depth of these practices were qualitatively different from those of the relationship-focused group. For example, instructionally-focused participants did explore their tutees' literacy interests by interviewing them, however; they largely neglected to use the information they gathered about their tutees' preferences in their literacy lessons. Simply getting to know students is not necessarily in line with the kind of relationship building promoted by culturally-based pedagogies, since relationship building on the part of teachers should, in theory, lead to benefits to students'

learning. Therefore, it is argued that although both groups engaged in positive racialized practices with their tutees, one group's practices more often stopped short of being compatible with the spirit of culturally responsive teaching. Although instructionally-focused participants occasionally exhibited behaviors that reflected some level of racial awareness and which were consistent with culturally responsive teaching practices (Gay, 2000/2010), they did not necessarily prioritize relationship building and included these positive practices when there was time to do so rather than making time to do so. Consequently, even though the participants who were instructionally-focused enacted some culturally responsive practices, they more often engaged in racialized practices that were more teacher-centered and consistent with the traditional school system. Importantly, like the relationship-focused participants, this duality revealed that positive and negative racialized practices were exhibited by the same preservice teachers working with the same students. Racialized practices enacted by instructionally-focused participants included distancing strategies (Case & Hemmings, 2005), racial stereotyping (Solorzano, 1997), the use of microaggressions (Pierce, 1970), and the use of White talk (McIntyre, 1997). Consistent with their relationship-focused peers, the instructionally-focused participants often appeared unaware of the harm that their racialized practices can impose.

Based on the findings from data gathered with instructionally-focused participants, it may be tempting to associate being instructionally-focused with a tendency to engage in more racist or deficit thinking. Nevertheless, when findings from both groups of participants are joined, it becomes clear that this is not the case. Each of the instructionally-focused participants who identified their race as White or Caucasian consistently enacted negative racialized practices. Accordingly, it is not the participants' lack of relationship focus that is associated with negative racialized practices, but consistent with race-based critical theories, it is their race. Because

White participants did not have a critical consciousness of the meaning of their own race, they tended to construct their tutoring sessions and discuss their tutees based on a world view of White dominance. When Randy dismisses his tutee's literacy preferences or defines his tutee's dialect as being deficit, these marginalizing practices are almost predictable, given what is known from previous research.

As defined earlier, racialized practices are practices that suggest one's view of the world as seen through their racial lens, and many of the marginalizing practices enacted by my participants make sense, given what they shared with me about how they were raised, their general lack of socially meaningful experiences with people of color in their schools and communities, and their general unawareness of their own privilege in society. Problems that stem from these negative racialized practices are not just that students may feel disregarded or sidelined by their teachers but that these practices serve to maintain the power structure of the historically hierarchical color line (Du Bois, 1903/1989). While other practices, such as those that are in line with culturally-based pedagogies may be more designed to disrupt these power structures, based on what I learned from the current study, it is not enough to prepare preservice teachers' to enact more positive racialized practices but to disrupt their negative practices as well.

In general, instructionally-focused communications tended to emphasize tutees' literacy deficits (Valencia, 1997) with very little acknowledgment of their tutees' funds of knowledge (Moll et al, 1992). In addition, it appeared that these individuals viewed direct teaching with teacher oriented decisions as superior to involving students more in the learning process.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **Discussion**

The major aims of this study were to use aspects of critical race and critical whiteness theory to explore the racialized practices of seven preservice content-area teachers who were enrolled in a field-based literacy across the curriculum course. An over-riding theme in these practices was that some participants used a variety of strategies to form caring relationships with tutees and attend to tutees' interests and insights in their lesson planning and interactions. Other participants completed their tutoring requirements with less strategic attention to tutees' well-being and interests, and focused primarily on completing planned literacy lessons. Regardless of whether they were more relationship-focused or instructionally-focused, all participants exhibited both positive and negative racialized practices across multiple data sources and settings. Threads of family background, prior schooling and elements of the literacy across the curriculum course were woven into these practices.

### **Summary of Findings**

In Chapter 4: Racialized Practices of Relationship-Focused Participants, I described how Eden, Helen, Josh and Rufus formed supportive relationships with their tutees and used what they learned about their tutees to plan and teach literacy lessons. A focus on teacher-student relationships is supported by a number of scholars (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995b) as a key component to student motivation and success in school, particularly for students who have been disenfranchised in schools. The relationship-focused participants' style of teaching literacy was in line with notions from the Sociocultural Era (Alexander & Fox, 2004), which highlighted the importance of creating interactive instructional opportunities for students

to learn by addressing their funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), backgrounds and insights in both planning and instructional process.

Some practices enacted by the relationship-focused participants were consistent with aspects of Gay's (2002) foundations of culturally responsive teaching. Her model of culturally responsive teaching specifically stresses the importance of teachers' actions to establish relationships with students in the classroom, and particularly students of color. My relationship-focused participants were observed taking time to greet and interact with their tutee regarding their most recent lived experiences, eliciting interests and background knowledge from their tutee, and incorporating student input into tutoring sessions including choice of instructional materials. Evidence of racialized practices consistent with culturally-based pedagogies were found in participants' lesson plans and during interviews in which selected participants explicitly discussed their ideas for how to bring their tutees' funds of knowledge into tutoring sessions.

Relationship-focused participants chose texts that were likely to interest their tutees, since the texts were directly related to the tutees' preferences discovered when tutors interviewed their tutees. Relationship-focused participants also demonstrated flexibility during tutoring sessions by adjusting plans. The best of example of this was when Eden and her tutee discussed in-school suspension consequences resulting from the ill-fated utterance "*you* get the damn book" (Eden, Interview 1). In addition to enacting culturally responsive practices, Rufus also enacted practices that were consistent with culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012) teaching such as talking to his tutee about systems issues related to race and power in education.

Although relationship-focused participants exhibited a number of racialized practices that were consistent with culturally-based pedagogies (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Paris,



2012) as explained above, participants also exhibited racialized practices that, although well intentioned, reflected aspects of critical race theory (Delgado, 1997) and critical whiteness theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993) that critique the racial hierarchy of society, including schools. Negative racialized practices enacted by participants that marginalized their tutees included communications of colorblindness (Lewis, 2000) and racial microaggressions (Solorzano et al., 2000). For example, Eden and Helen directly communicated their colorblindness when they said they did not believe that race impacted teaching and learning. Analysis of additional data associated with Eden and Helen provided counter evidence to their original claim; however, each seemed to be oblivious to its influence. Rufus and Josh, on the other hand, directly affirmed that race mattered in teaching and learning.

An example of a racial stereotype tied to a microaggression was when Eden rationalized her colorblind perspective during one of her interviews by vehemently stating, “It’s not about that [race]. . . . White kids are lazy, too” (Interview 2, line 403). This example is important because it represents an indirect microaggression of which Eden seemed to be unaware. The literature on whiteness is replete with examples of well-intentioned White people using microaggressions with absolutely no awareness of what they are doing or what negative effects might result to their targets.

The relationship-focused White participants grew up isolated from having direct contact with people of color. Each grew up and attended elementary and secondary schools in White neighborhoods with predominantly White peers giving them significant practice in learning the meritocratic values of their White communities. Only Rufus had firsthand experience of what it was like to be African American in a White dominant world. He in turn mentored his tutee to navigate this culture of power.

In Chapter 5: Racialized Practices of Instructionally-Focused Participants, I described how Ann, Kristen and Randy focused almost exclusively on teaching literacy content and used far fewer relationship building strategies. Their enactments did not reflect understanding of class discussions and readings explaining how designing instruction with attention to tutees' interests and insights could promote greater student engagement, interest and learning. Instructionally-focused participants' style of teaching literacy was fundamentally consistent with the pre-sociocultural notions of literacy teaching in which focusing on practicing literacy skills was emphasized. Like their relationship-focused peers, they grew up in White communities and attended schools with predominately White peers. However, they focused mostly on addressing tutees' deficits (Valencia, 1997) and did not generally incorporate insights about students' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) or even their preferences into their teaching. Perhaps because they felt pressured to get through complete literacy lessons, some tutors skipped the course-required greeting of their tutee entirely, moving right to the main idea of their literacy lessons as they sat down to work together.

Instructionally-focused participants did exhibit some positive racialized practices such as asking their tutees questions about their interests; however, only the relationship-focused participants used the knowledge they gained to make instructional decisions specific to their tutees' background and personal preferences. When the instructionally-focused participants enacted negative racialized practices, it seemed to make sense because of their lack of relationship building strategies. Furthermore, their generic approach to teaching was more easily associated with stereotyping or colorblindness to which participants seemed oblivious. Critical theories helped explain why participants were largely unaware when they were exhibiting negative racialized practices and why they seemed confused when trying to articulate the

meaning of race in education. Based on critical whiteness and critical race theories, these practices are not unique to my participants or even to preservice teachers but are characteristic of many White people who have lived with and have been schooled in White dominated communities, where the discomforts of racial hierarchies may be distant.

### **Discussion**

Perhaps some participants were overwhelmed with being asked to focus on literacy instead of the content-areas, which was the major focus of their preservice content studies. Perhaps, like the other mostly White teachers in the Bakari (2003) study and Castro (2010) review, they too held latent but largely negative attitudes toward teaching students of color. Critical race theory and critical whiteness theory suggest that all reflected racialized practices from the racist society in which they were raised, with some variations in enactments resulting from variations in their own experiences, including experiences associated with their family and prior schooling.

Both the relationship-focused and instructionally-focused White participants exhibited negative racialized practices that were potentially harmful in the environments in which they were teaching. The fact that racialized practices can be well-intentioned but may still be based on stereotypes makes their exploration complicated because it is nearly impossible to determine intentionality of an act using research strategies designed to respect explanations given by participants.

A unique and important finding from the current study was that the relationship-focused participants, who clearly enacted numerous positive racialized practices, nonetheless also enacted negative racialized practices. These negative practices are in line with literature on critical race theory and critical whiteness theory, which predict that White people have certain

assumptions that serve as sources of their racialized behavior, such as the assumption that working hard is all that is required to succeed. The fact that Rufus embraced meritocracy is interesting because critical race theory suggests that because Rufus is Black that he most likely experienced, or was aware of someone who experienced oppression and marginalization. His advocacy of meritocracy suggests that he had not been deterred from reaching his goals because of his race. It is quite plausible that his self-discipline and individual work ethic helped him reach his goals. Eden also communicated her negative assumptions through statements suggesting colorblindness and White talk by adamantly proclaiming that “it’s not about that [race].” Unfortunately, her proclamations were microaggressions, although it did not appear that she was aware of that. Exhibiting negative racialized practices without being aware that they are harmful is particularly problematic and is one reason to address these issues proactively in teacher education.

Directions on the literacy across the curriculum syllabus and procedures outlined in readings served as proximal sources of positive racialized practices for my participants, and for over half of them, these sources appeared to help them move along a culturally responsive continuum. Scholars such as Tatum (2000) have emphasized that culturally responsive teaching is necessary but insufficient in itself to assist students of color in attaining academic success. According to Tatum (2000), teachers must also grapple with how to use culturally responsive teaching methods, even when their students may lack necessary basic reading skills. He cautions that taking an isolated skills approach is unwise because it bypasses cultural competence and does not nurture students’ identities. He states that “economically disadvantaged African American adolescents in low-level tracks need reading instruction that incorporates a culturally relevant framework with explicit strategy and skill development” (pp. 53-54). In other words,

Tatum suggests that to be an effective teacher of economically disadvantaged students, what is needed is cultural responsiveness coupled with demanding curriculum and instruction. These recommendations are in line with what Paris (2012) has termed culturally sustaining teaching. The move by Eden to take tutoring time to discuss the circumstances surrounding her tutee's in-school suspension might be considered being flexible and attending to relationship, however, I wonder if Tatum might argue that it was ignoring instruction. Was this the best time to debrief about this? Was it worth setting instruction aside to prioritize the relationship?

The backgrounds of my participants, such as where they grew up, how they were raised, and what school they attended, served as distal sources of the extent to which they grasped the meaning of race in education. How they constructed race can be linked to perspectives that were likely formed based on experiences with their families and in the schools they attended. As stated previously, the communities in which my White participants grew up included mostly White people, with the exception of Kristen, who did attend a racially diverse high school. In theory, the context of her schooling could have provided opportunities for her to develop racial awareness and critical consciousness; however, because she was mostly separated from students of color in her high school via being tracked into AP classes, her learning experiences likely reinforced racial stereotypes and colorblindness as opposed to challenged them.

The biggest exception to the colorblind patterns identified within my participant sample were perspectives and racialized practices related to Rufus, whose teaching was the most culturally responsive, with his deliberations about the meaning of race evident in his lesson plans, tutoring sessions, and interviews with me. I cannot assert that Rufus' perspectives were completely devoid of colorblindness because even he struggled with articulating the meaning of race in education; however, I also must consider that he was the only participant I interviewed

whose race was dissimilar to my own. Given his knowledge of the White education system that he himself attended, there is every chance he was sharing a perspective intended to be familiar to me rather than sharing a perspective inherent in his own deliberations. Given the rest of the evidence from the multiple data sources I gathered, my conclusion is that Rufus is quite aware of the meaning of race not only in education but in society, and his discretion in discussing these dimensions with me may be related to his sophisticated knowledge about how Whiteness works. The source of this savvy is likely tied to his own background. Rufus grew up in a predominantly White neighborhood and attended schools populated mostly by White students and White teachers. He is not unfamiliar with systems of dominance and oppression and appears to have learned the flexible negotiation skills to acclimate to a variety of environments. Rufus used this knowledge in teaching his tutee about how systems work, as well as how to negotiate these systems effectively.

A possible source of participants' racialized practices that I would like to tentatively mention that emerged from the data was related to the primary epistemology of my participants' content area disciplines. Epistemology "refers to the study of knowledge and sources of knowledge" (Marra & Palmer, 2008). Epistemologies are thought to be linked to academic disciplines (see, for example, Hofer, 2001; Schommer, 1993), with individuals in the humanities being different from those in the math/sciences.

I did not include epistemology as a possible source of racialized practices in my findings because the evidence for this link is relatively weak; however, I have chosen to raise the issue in the discussion because I believe it could act as an enabler for future research. During my data analysis, I observed that my participants whose content areas were associated with the humanities exhibited more positive racialized practices related to culturally-based teaching

methods compared to participants whose content areas were associated with math and sciences. In sum, all of the relationship-focused participants were enrolled in humanities programs. I noticed this theme when I realized that with one exception, my groups were divided not only according to the relationship-instructionally-focused theme but somewhat coincidentally separated according to whether participants were humanities or math/sciences majors. Kristen was the only participant in a humanities program who was not classified as being relationship focused. Based on theories related to epistemologies, as an English major, one would think that Kristen's epistemology would align with the humanities, and she would have engaged in some of the same positive racialized enactments as other participants who were humanities centered. Inconsistently, she actually exhibited behaviors more in line with the sciences, and a possible explanation for this discrepancy is her own admitted love of science both during her schooling and during her field placements, plus, she shared that her closest friends were Biology majors.

If stronger evidence were found relating discipline specific epistemologies with the use of culturally-based teaching methods, this would have important implications for how teacher education could prepare groups who are less likely to consider the importance of race and culture when teaching and is an interesting topic for future research.

### **Teacher Education**

Teacher education has struggled to address issues of race and diversity. Teacher education programs have responded to the need to address race and diversity issues in the preservice classroom by adding multicultural education courses, infusing diversity issues throughout already existing courses and adding a variety of field placements (Sleeter, 2001). Despite the added emphasis on diversity in teacher preparation programs, this study, like others, revealed that White preservice teachers lacked insight into their racial privilege and how students

of color continue to be marginalized (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano, 1997).

As has been shown in other studies (McIntyre, 1997; Milner, 2006), participants' varying lack of racial insight inadvertently contributed to their use of negative racialized practices when they ignored valuable counter-narratives from African American students and explained how African-American students should learn literacy skills needed to join the dominant culture (Banks, 1993). Such lack of awareness is particularly problematic in relation to literacy teaching because literacy is culturally laden and something that students will need not only to be successful in school but in life.

### **Literacy**

Literacy and literacy teaching have also evolved over the previous decades, due in large part to the realization that literacy is socially constructed, and therefore, grounded in the influences of society. The way experts see literacy has grown to address social context in more nuanced ways that acknowledge power including who has it, who is denied it, and why persistent states of inequity exist in reference to literacy learning opportunities. These same insights have begun to be addressed by including the role of cultural and racial aspects of literacy within methods courses. Preservice teachers, like those in this literacy across the curriculum course, learned some things about how race and culture in education are related specifically to literacy; however, participants in this study enacted insights about this aspect of their studies in uneven ways.

Despite a greater focus on teaching literacy more responsively and in relation to power and culture, much remains unknown about when, how and why responsive teaching methods can and should be enacted by teachers. Much of what drives discussions of culturally responsive or



sustaining literacy teaching is based on theory (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Paris, 2012) or case studies (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), with only some studies furthering insights using data gathered based on the experiences of students and their teachers. Insights gleaned through studies like this one teach us how preservice teachers view literacy teaching and learning so that eventually literacy teacher education can be designed in a way that will enhance teachers' abilities to embrace and address the needs of diverse students to know that people care about them, to see how their funds of knowledge matter, and to engage in the sophisticated literacy practices needed in the twenty-first century.

### **Critical Theory**

Critical race theory (Delgado, 1997) and critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993) describe the dynamics behind racial stratification that is hierarchical and marginalizes people of color. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) suggested that critical race theory could be used as a lens with which to view this stratification in schools. To gain a better understanding of how preservice teachers conceptualize literacy teaching and learning in settings that include students whose race the teacher does not share, this study used aspects of critical race theory and critical whiteness theory to explore the racialized practices of preservice teachers. Critical race theory and critical whiteness theory acknowledge society's racialized culture of power that advantages Whites, often at the expense of people of color. Understanding preservice teachers' racialized perspectives and practices can inform teacher education and contribute to transforming educational practices that maintain a culture of power (Delpit, 1995) and disadvantage youth of color.

Critical whiteness theory helped to further explain why White people, including my participants, tended to minimize the importance of race by making colorblind statements in the

well-intentioned attempts to promote egalitarianism. The problem is that colorblindness – the denial of race – is a denial of sociopolitical structures that promote inequity. The denial of the meaning of race is the denial of oppression and marginalization, and in the case of my participants, is a denial of the sociopolitical inequities that exist in the very system of education they have been preparing to join.

Some of the White preservice teachers in this study loosely agreed that race mattered in education but had difficulty articulating why. None mentioned how systems factors mattered in oppressing students of color, and of the White participants who thought race did matter, all discussed the race of the other rather than the meaning of their own race. This lack of awareness is consistent with critical whiteness theory in the fact that White people do not perceive themselves as racial beings, with the source of this obliviousness stemming from the fact that they often come from backgrounds where they lack meaningful experiences with people of color.

The one person of color in this study exhibited elements of dominant, meritocratic, colorblind discourses at the same time he hinted at what Du Bois (1935) called double consciousness. In Du Bois' writing, he discussed how being American brings forth an identity with an inherently negative perspective about Black people. Being Black and American creates a double struggle in that to identify as American, there is pressure to distrust Black people, which is terribly difficult when the people who must be distrusted include oneself and anyone connected to one's racial identity. In Rufus' case, his enactments reveal that he is a Black man who is both racially aware and critically conscious; however, joining a largely White teaching force that has traditionally minimized race and reinforced stereotypes may cause him to want to share views that help him fit into the system, while knowing full well that there is more to the story than what he feels comfortable sharing. A White woman showering him with questions

about race may not have been the optimal context to gain a full understanding of Rufus' perspectives or experiences, since I was the most likely person to trigger any double consciousness that may exist for him.

### **Limitations**

Limitations of this study included the potential impact of my subjectivities, the impact of my incomplete knowledge of racism due to my lack of direct experience (i.e., I am not a person of color) and the inability to generalize these findings beyond my seven participants. I recognize that my research strategies, design, data collection, data analysis and write up of this study may have been affected by my subjectivities and bias. For example, I reflected upon the possible influences of my 50+ age, White race, female gender and possible bias connected to my profession, prior schooling and family background. I also struggled with a number of questions throughout my study including whether I can ethically use critical race theory to explore topics of race without inadvertently colonizing the field that is more traditionally occupied by scholars of color. Did I privilege whiteness by having had mostly White participants? To respond to these limitations, I wrote observer comments in my field notes and interviews and a number of memoranda to make my subjectivities as transparent as possible in this dissertation; however, I do recognize that like my participants, I may be unaware of aspects of myself that have influenced my findings related to my own well-intentioned negative racialized practices.

One bias that I know I brought to this study was my belief that race and culture overlap but are different. I wonder if scholars of color use the term race more often than scholars who are White. It does seem that way. This makes sense as it has been asserted that people of color talk more easily about race than their White counterparts. I can relate to this and know that my own discomfort with discussing race, although better than it was a few years ago, continues to evolve.

Other questions that I wrestled with throughout this study included: What is the difference between being culturally responsive and racially responsive? How can one be sure whether practices are culturally or racially-laden? The questions that I asked participants during their interviews reflected my understanding of racialized practices at the time. As I re-read my transcripts, I recognize where I could have asked certain questions differently or followed up on participants' responses to gain more precision and clarity of answers. I also wonder what influence my subjectivities had on my participants.

It is possible that additional valuable insights could have been gained about Rufus' perspectives and enactments by an interviewer who was Black. It would be interesting indeed to compare what is learned about both White and Black preservice teachers' perspectives using multiple interviewers of the same and different races. While I want to be included in such efforts, I must be cautious that my own White privilege does not suppress the counter-narratives of individuals whose messages must likewise be received or that my work is not privileged over that of scholars' of color. I plan to address these issues by always seeking literature by a diverse group of researchers and will not solely rely on who is cited more to determine the value of his or her contribution to the literature.

### **Implications for Future Research and Literacy Teacher Education**

Researching race is controversial (Milner, 2007; Tillman, 2002), and there appears to be little agreement regarding whether researchers of one race can or should research participants of another race (see, for example, Milner, 2007; Tillman, 2002). Some of this controversy stems from the pervasive deficit views of students of color that is sometimes portrayed by White educators and White researchers. This invites a pernicious bias into the field, which understandably, many sociocultural researchers would prefer to separate from their research.

Given the concerns raised about White educators and researchers, I must reflect on my role as a White researcher in this field. While a diverse research force that includes diverse participant samples is theoretically of most value to determine how to best address positive and negative racialized practices of educators, perhaps White researchers should contribute differently. It is a difficult task to engage preservice teachers in discussions about race, let alone negative racialized practices. After doing this research, I have developed some degree of confidence that I have a place within the research community because there was evidence that at least some of my participants were attempting to disclose their perspective about race openly with me. This realization became most salient during an interview with Eden in which she remarked that she did not want a comment she made to seem racist. The fact that Eden was comfortable enough to experiment with making a potentially racist comment to me meant that her verbalizations had yet to be overly polished into political correctness.

Some trends in the literature made it difficult to discern whether preservice teachers' attitudes about teaching students of color were becoming more positive or if new cohorts of students were simply improving in their use of politically-correct discourse strategies. Eden's concern above provides justification for conducting qualitative research that enables sufficient contact among White researchers and their White participants to build rapport to facilitate honest communication. Therefore, White participants will likely disclose differently to White researchers than to Black researchers, just as Black participants will likely disclose differently along these racial parameters. In reflecting on my experience with Eden, it made me wonder if she would have used this same wording if her interviewer had been someone whose race she did not share. Perhaps she would have completely distanced herself from the conversation or even refused to be part of a study exploring race.

Researching how to teach literacy across the curriculum is also controversial because there is still disagreement about how it should be taught. Some embrace the teaching of generic literacy skills and strategies (Block & Pressley, 2002), whereas others embrace the teaching of disciplinary literacy strategies (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Still others embrace more culturally-based literacy pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1992). My belief coincides with Tatum (2000) and others who assert that literacy can and should be taught in a way that is equally culturally responsive and academically challenging. Where my philosophy departs from some scholars (e.g., Block & Pressley, 2002) is that I embrace disciplinary literacy (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008) to teach literacy across the curriculum that suggests that each content area has its own discourse that students need to be explicitly taught, preferably by the content area teacher to optimally understand each discipline-specific discourse. This should be done using materials that reflect cultural, racial and gender diversity.

Although connecting literacy and race-based research in teacher education is relatively new (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), it seems as though we may be at the point in which intervention studies are needed to observe what happens with literacy instruction with varying efforts to interrupt preservice teacher whiteness. Studies employing combinations of interruptive strategies, such as multicultural education classes that explicitly teach critical whiteness theory, methods courses that explicitly teach culturally-based teaching practices and that include field placements in urban schools, would be especially interesting to conduct, since this design strategy is capable of addressing each of the components found to hold promise in studies featuring only a single strategy. Studies that include interruptive strategies to promote critical consciousness are especially intriguing, if the field of education is moving toward the goals of culturally sustaining literacy teaching (Paris, 2012).

According to critical race and critical whiteness theories, the dominant White community continues to enact practices that reflect its historical legacy. This keeps racism firmly in place, which is one reason why antiracist literacy education (Kailin, 2002) work may move so slowly. Sleeter (2001) has argued that studies on race tend to be marginalized in terms of funding and the value placed on them. There is a sad irony to the fact that the systems in place to address educational and equity issues related to race suffer from the effects of systemic, negative racialized practices of funders and other researchers.

Like Aveling (2004), part of my goal for doing this study was to better understand myself so that I can do anti-racist work. In doing this research I have deepened my knowledge of critical race theory and critical whiteness theory and have gained additional knowledge about culturally responsive practices. The only participant who consistently enacted the most critically conscious positive racialized practices was Rufus. It is no coincidence that he was the only tutor who identified racially as Black. It appears to be common knowledge that people who are marginalized more easily see the power differentials in the world that are often race-based (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Some might think that because Rufus grew up in a White neighborhood and attended schools with predominantly White peers that he may have been insulated from racism, but I doubt that was the case. It is difficult to know how someone in Rufus' life circumstances experienced racism, but the way in which he interacted with his tutee, including his teaching about racialized power differentials in society, implies that his experiences may have been infused with more negative racialized experiences than perhaps, what he was comfortable revealing to me, given my background and position within the study. Critical race theory specifies that racism is ubiquitous in American society, which means that whether certain acts of racism are directly acknowledged is not the sole determinant of whether racism exists.

In addition to the need for additional research using the interruptive strategies outlined above, research and teaching strategies like that used by Marx (2004), seem particularly promising. She used the transcripts of her participants as a mirror to reflect back what participants were saying, along with gentle prodding to surface negative racialized perspectives. Although this sort of intervention is not standard in teacher education, perhaps teacher education could take up the task of experimenting with these strategies to explore what effects might result from these facilitated self-reflections. One departure I would make from Marx's methods is to research preservice teachers whom I am not teaching. This is research in which I would especially like to engage because these kinds of interactions with preservice teachers are gentle enough to potentially inhibit the use of strong distancing strategies while still directly addressing the need to promote critical consciousness that includes interrogating White complicity along with the promotion of strategies for teaching students of color.

Along these same lines, it would be interesting to study the effects of the race of the teacher educator on preservice teachers' distancing and engagement while participating in an intervention like that mentioned above. Also, what might be the effects of a co-taught literacy course with one teacher educator of color and one White teacher educator? I am not sure how much of this type of teaching occurs in higher education. It seems like an interesting idea to explore.

Teacher educators and researchers have to keep searching for methods to promote culturally responsive teaching and address the implications of whiteness. One important tenet of culturally responsive teaching is cultural caring (Gay, 2002) that is active and observable, rather than caring merely connected to positive feelings of individuals. A good example of the kind of cultural caring that reflects genuine reciprocity and mutual respect was when preservice teachers



in the current study not only took time to get to know their tutees, but they went one step further and used that learned information in their teaching. According to Gay, cultural caring requires teachers to get to know what is culturally important to their students, while also expecting students to experience success in the classroom. Study participants who enacted these positive, culturally responsive racialized practices were demonstrating the kind of cultural caring proposed by Gay that can better meet the needs of African American students.

Although participants in this study did enact many practices considered culturally responsive, participants also enacted a number of negative racialized practices, and it is this paradoxical combination of racialized practices that necessitates additional discussion. Preparing preservice teachers to solely enact culturally responsive practices potentially leaves schools with a hidden imbalance, since focusing on the delivery of culturally responsive teaching fails to address underlying acts of racism that continue to undermine the achievement of students of color. The provision of using more positive racialized practices with students of color cannot cancel out the harm caused by negative racialized practices, and for this reason, teacher education must address both issues. According to racially-based critical theories, racism and White complicity are so ingrained in our culture that many White preservice teachers remain oblivious to the harm caused by negative racialized educational practices. This lack of awareness is particularly insidious because it contributes to the repeated marginalization of the very students they are assigned to teach. Based on what is known from critical theory, the race and literacy education literature, and findings from the current study, to address the above mentioned paradox, teacher education must not only encourage enactments of positive racialized practices but must also teach methods designed to promote critical consciousness, as well as methods to decrease occurrences of negative racialized practices in schools.

## Conclusion

This study provided evidence that preservice teachers can enact many positive racialized practices, including relationship building strategies recommended as culturally responsive pedagogy. Less clear is how to enable content-focused literacy teachers to be more relationship focused—without, of course, giving up on their literacy instructional goals, which are also important. In addition, the current study provides evidence that negative racialized practices are ubiquitous, consistent with what is specified by critical race theory, and these negative practices are often so subtle that those who enact them fail to realize how they are perceived by others. Silence, denial and other forms of colorblindness (Schofield, 2010) hail from the same racialized perspectives as overt acts of racism, such as stereotyping and the use of microaggressions. It is a persistent hazard in that negative racialized practices are enacted by educators, lingering unrealized by those who enact them and eroding their other efforts to increase student achievement among marginalized student groups. Judging from participants' descriptions of the extent to which race matters in education, it appears that most participants still are not clear as to how to answer this question without offending anyone, and this means teacher education has some additional work to do to make the meaning of race in education clearer.

This study began with assumptions that race and literacy are socially constructed and that people view both and their implications differently, depending on their experiences. Analysis of multiple data sources across participants revealed that their assumptions about race, literacy and teaching served as sources for how they engaged in literacy teaching in an urban middle school. These distal influences are so ingrained that it will be difficult for teacher education, including literacy teacher education, to power through early barriers that establish and reinforce White thinking. Multiple positive racialized practices cannot undo even one act of racism. When

subtle acts are systemically exhibited by White people in literacy instructional settings, they may become the source of the system's failures to address everyone's literacy needs. We must find ways to interrupt this process, and preservice literacy teacher education would seem to be a good place to start.

## References

- Alexander, P. A., & Fox, E. (2004). A historical perspective on reading research and practice. In R. B. Ruddell, & N. J. Unrau (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 5-32). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Ambe, E. B. (2006). Fostering multicultural appreciation in pre-service teachers through multicultural curricular transformation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22, 690-699. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.03.005
- Applebaum, B. (2004). Social justice education, moral agency, and the subject of resistance. *Educational Theory*, 54, 59-72. doi:10.1111/j.0013-2004.2004.00003.x
- Applebaum, B. (2008). 'Doesn't my experience count?' White students, the authority of experience and social justice pedagogy. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 11, 405-414. doi:10.1080/13613320802478945
- Applebaum, B. (2010). *Being white, being good: White complicity, white moral responsibility, and social justice pedagogy*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Aveling, N. (2004). Critical whiteness and the challenges of learning to be a 'White ally.' *Borderlands e-journal* [online], 3. Retrieved from [http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol3no2\\_2004/aveling\\_critical.htm](http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol3no2_2004/aveling_critical.htm)
- Bakari, R. (2003). Preservice teachers' attitudes toward teaching African American students: Contemporary research. *Urban Education*, 38, 640-654. doi:10.1177/0042085903257317
- Ball, D. L., Thames, M. H., & Phelps, G. (2008). Content knowledge for teaching: What makes it special? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59, 389-407. doi:10.1177/0022487108324554
- Banks, J. A. (1993). The canon debate, knowledge construction, and multicultural education. *Educational Researcher*, 22, 4-14. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1176946>

- Banks, J. A. (1995). Multicultural education and curriculum transformation, *The Journal of Negro Education*, 64, 390-400. doi:10.2307/2967262
- Banks, J. A. (2002). *An introduction to multicultural education* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (Eds.). (1995). *Handbook of research on multicultural education*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Bartoletti, S. C. (2001). *Black potatoes: The story of the great Irish famine, 1845-1850*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Barton, D. (1994). *Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. New York, NY: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203448885
- Bell, D. (1980). Brown v. board of education and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93, 518-533. doi:10.2307/1340546
- Bell, L. A. (2003). Telling tales: What stories can teach us about racism. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 6, 3-28. doi:10.1080/1361332032000044567
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Bernal, D. D. (2002). Critical race theory, Latino critical theory, and critical raced-gendered epistemologies: Recognizing students of color as holders and creators of knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8, 105-126. doi:10.1177/107780040200800107
- Block, C. C., & Pressley, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2006). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Bondy, E., Schmitz, S., & Johnson, M. (1993). The impact of coursework and fieldwork on student teachers' reported beliefs about teaching poor and minority students. *Action in Teacher Education*, 15, 55-62. doi:10.1080/01626620.1993.10734410
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). Rethinking racism: Toward a structural interpretation. *American Sociological Review*, 62, 465-480. doi:10.2307/2657316
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: Colorblind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bonilla-Silva, E., Lewis, A., & Embrick, D. G. (2004). "I did not get that job because of a Black man . . ." The Story lines and testimonies of color-blind racism. *Sociological Forum*, 19, 555-581. doi:10.1007/s11206-004-0696-3
- Brayko, K. (2013). Community-based placements as contexts for disciplinary learning: A study of literacy teacher education outside of school. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54, 47-59. doi:10.1177/0022487112458800
- Brooks, W. (2006). Reading representations of themselves: Urban youth use culture and African American textual features to develop literary understandings. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41, 372-392. doi:10.1598/RRQ.41.3.4
- Brown, B. (2004a). Discursive identity: Assimilation into the culture of science and its implications for minority students. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 41(8), 810-834. doi:10.1002/tea.20228
- Brown, E. (2004b). Brown, E. (2004b). Overcoming the challenges of stand-alone multicultural courses: The possibilities of technology integration. *Journal of Technology and Teacher*

- Education*, 12, 535-559. Retrieved from  
<http://search.proquest.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/docview/200087070?accountid=14214>
- Brown, D. (1999). Complicity and reproduction in teaching physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*, 4, 143-159. doi:10.1080/1357332990040203
- Brown, P. (1980). How and why are women more polite: Some evidence from a Mayan community. In S. McConnell-Ginet, R. Borker, & F. Furman (Eds.), *Women and Language in Literature and Society* (pp. 111-136). Westport, CT: Preager Publishers.
- Brown, S., Souto-Manning, M., & Laman, T. T. (2010). Seeing the strange in the familiar: Unpacking racialized practices in early childhood settings. *Race and Ethnicity*, 13, 513-532. doi:10.1080/13613324.2010.519957
- Castro, A. J. (2010). Themes in the research on preservice teachers' views of cultural diversity: Implications for researching millennial preservice teachers. *Educational Researcher*, 39, 198-210. doi:10.3102/0013189X10363819
- Case, K. A. & Hemmings, A. (2005). Distancing strategies: White women preservice teachers and antiracist curriculum. *Urban Education*, 40, 606-626.  
doi:10.1177/0042085905281396
- Charbeneau, J. M. (2009). *Enactments of whiteness in pedagogical practice: Reproducing and transforming white hegemony in the university classroom*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- Cho, G., & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, D. (2005). Is ignorance bliss? Preservice teachers' attitudes toward multicultural education. *The High School Journal*, 89, 24-28.  
doi:10.1353/hsj.2005.0020

- Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K. M. (Eds.). (2005). *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., McIntyre, D. J., & Demers, K. E. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group and the Association of Teacher Educators.
- Cook, L. A. (1947). Intergroup education. *Review of Educational Research*, 17, 266-278.  
doi:10.2307/1168325
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dalton, H. (2005). Failing to see. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *White privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 15-18). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.
- DeCuir, J. T., & Dixson, A. D. (2004). "So when it comes out, they aren't surprised that it is there": Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education. *Educational Researcher*, 33, 26-31. doi:10.3102/0013189X033005026
- Delgado, R. (Ed.). (1995). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Critical white studies: Looking behind the mirror*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York, NY: New York University.



- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: New York University.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 1-42). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Deschenes, S., Cuban, L., & Tyack, D. (2001). Mismatch: Historical perspectives on schools and students who don't fit them. *Teachers College Record*, *103*, 525-547. doi:10.1111/0161-4681.00126
- Dixson, A. D., & Rousseau, C. K. (Eds.). (2005). And we are still not saved: Critical race theory in education ten years later. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*, 7-27. doi:10.1080/1361332052000340971
- Donnor, J. K., & Brown, A. L. (2011). The education of Black males in a 'post-racial' world. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *14*, 1-5. doi:10.1080/13613324.2011.531975
- Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2000). Aversive racism and selection decisions: 1989 and 1999. *Psychological Science*, *11*, 315-319. doi:10.1111/1467-9280.00262
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903/1989). *The souls of Black folk*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1935). *Black reconstruction in America*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace.
- Edwards, S. (2011). Developing diversity dispositions for White culturally responsive teachers. *Action in Teacher Education*, *33*, 493-508. doi:10.1080/01626620.2011.627038

- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers College Record*, 103, 1013-1055. doi:10.1111/0161-4681.00141
- Feistritzer, E., & Haar, C. K. (2005). *Profile of teachers in the U.S. 2005*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncei.com/POT05PRESSREL3.htm>
- Ferri, B. A., & Connor, D. (2006). *Reading resistance: Discourses of exclusion in desegregation and inclusion debates*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishers.
- Fine, J., Robbins, H., Miller, L., & Yribarren, L. (2013). *Content and methods of teaching literacy: The effect of one-on-one tutoring in preservice clinical education in two low-performing, diverse school settings on the effectiveness of preservice teachers' reading instruction*. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1089&context=sferc>
- Flores, A. (2007). Examining disparities in Mathematics Education: Achievement gap or opportunity gap? *The High School Journal*, 91, 29-42. doi:10.1353/hsj.2007.0022
- Frankenberg, R. (1993). Introduction: Points of origin points of departure. In R. Frankenberg *White women race matters: The social construction of whiteness*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Furman, J. S. (2008). Tensions in multicultural teacher education research: Demographics and the need to demonstrate effectiveness. *Education and Urban Society*, 41, 55-79. doi:10.1177/0013124508321440

- Gay, G. (1983, April). Multiethnic education: Historical developments and future prospects. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 64, 560-563. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20386805>
- Gay, G. (1993). Building cultural bridges: A bold proposal for teacher education. *Education and Urban Society*, 25, 285-299. doi:10.1177/0013124593025003006
- Gay, G. (1994). *A synthesis of scholarship in multicultural education*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Urban Education Monograph Series.  
Retrieved from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrsHP/le0gay.htm>
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53, 106-116. doi:10.1177/0022487102053002003
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G., & Kirkland, K. (2003). Developing cultural critical consciousness and self-reflection in preservice teacher education. *Theory into Practice*, 42, 181-187.  
doi:10.1207/s15430421tip4203\_3
- Gee, J. P. (1989). What is literacy? *Journal of Education*, 171, 18-25.
- Gee, J. P. (1990/2008). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in Discourses* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Giroux, H. A. (1992). Post-colonial ruptures and democratic possibilities: Multiculturalism as anti-racist pedagogy. *Cultural Critique*, 21, 5-39. doi:10.2307/1354115
- Glaser, B. G. (1965). The constant comparative method to qualitative analysis. *Social Problems*, 12, 436-445. doi:10.2307/798843

- Gomez, M. L., Khurshid, A., Freitag, M. B., & Lachuk, A. J. (2011). Microaggressions in graduate students' lives: How they are encountered and their consequences. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*, 1189-1198. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2011.06.003
- Gorski, P. C. (2009). What we're teaching teachers: An analysis of multicultural teacher education coursework syllabi. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*, 309-318. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2008.07.008
- Gorski, P. (2010). The scholarship informing the practice: Multicultural teacher education philosophy and practice in the United States. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 12*, 1-22.
- Greene, S., & Abt-Perkins, D. (Eds.). (2003). *Making race visible: Literacy research for cultural understanding*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Grossman, P., & McDonald, M. (2008). Back to the future: Directions for research in teaching and teacher education. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*, 184-205. doi:10.3102/0002831207312906
- Gutiérrez y Muhs, G., Niemann, Y. F., González, C. G., & Harris, A. P. (Eds.). (2012). *Presumed incompetent: The intersections of race and class for women in America*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Haberman, M., & Post, L. (1992). Does direct experience change education students' perceptions of low-income minority students? *Midwest Educational Researcher, 5*, 29-31.
- Haddix, M. (2009). Black boys can write: Challenging dominant framings of African American adolescent males in literacy research. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 53*, 341-343. doi:10.1598/JAAL.53.4.8

- Haddix, M. (2010). No longer on the margins: Researching the hybrid literate identities of Black and Latina preservice teachers. *Research in the Teaching of English, 45*, 97-126.  
Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40997086>
- Hall, S. (1992). The west and the rest: Discourse and power. In S. Hall & B. Gieben (Eds.), *Formations of Modernity: Understanding Modern Societies an Introduction* (pp. 275-331). Cambridge, UK: Open University/Polity Press.
- Hall, J. D. (2005). The long civil rights movement and the political uses of the past. *The Journal of American History, 91*, 1233-1263. doi:10.2307/3660172
- Hall, L. A. (2005). Teachers and content area reading: Attitudes, beliefs and change. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*, 403-414. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2005.01.009
- Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review, 106*, 1707-1791.  
doi:10.2307/1341787
- Herber, H. L., & Sanders, P. L. (Eds.). (1969). *Research in reading in the content areas: First year report*. Syracuse, NY: Reading and Language Arts Center.
- Hofer, B. K. (2001). Personal epistemology research: Implications for learning and teaching. *Educational Psychology Review, 13*, 353-383. doi:10.1023/A:1011965830686
- Hollins, E. R., & Guzman, M. T. (2005). Research on preparing teachers for diverse populations. In M. Cochran-Smith & K. M. Zeichner (Eds.) *Studying Teacher Education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (pp. 477-548). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Howard, G. R. (1999). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Howard, T. C. (2013). How does it feel to be a problem? Black male students, schools, and learning in enhancing the knowledge base to disrupt deficit frameworks  
*Review of Research in Education, 37*, 54-86. doi:10.3102/0091732X12462985
- Howard, T. C., & Flenbaugh, T. (2011). Research concerns, cautions and considerations on Black males in a 'post-racial' society. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 14*(1), 105-120.  
doi:10.1080/13613324.2011.531983
- Kailin, J. (2002). *Antiracist education: From theory to practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Kea, C. D., Trent, S. C., & Davis, C. P. (2002). African Americans student teachers' perceptions about preparedness to teach students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Multicultural Perspectives, 4*, 18-25. doi:10.1207/S15327892MCP0401\_4
- Kearns, T., Ford, L., & Linney, J. A. (2005). African American student representation in special education programs. *The Journal of Negro Education, 74*, 297-310. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40026730>
- Keene, E. O., & Zimmerman, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2002). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research: the roots of critical theory. In Y. Zou & E. T. Trueba (Eds.), *Ethnography and schools: Qualitative approaches to the study of education* (pp. 87-138). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Kinloch, V. (2009). Suspicious spatial distinctions: Literacy research with students across school and community contexts. *Written Communication, 26*, 154-182.  
doi:10.1177/0741088309332899

- Kirkland, D. E., & Jackson, A. (2009). "We Real Cool": Toward a theory of Black masculine literacies. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *44*, 278-297. doi:10.1598/RRQ.44.3.3
- Krathwohl, D. R. (2009). *Methods of educational and social science research: The logic of methods* (3rd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press
- Kumar, R., & Hamer, L. (2013). Preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward student diversity and proposed instructional practices: A sequential design study. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *64*, 162-177. doi:10.1177/0022487112466899
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Liberatory consequences of literacy: A case of culturally relevant instruction for African American students. *Journal of Negro Education*, *61*, 378-391. doi:10.2307/2295255
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995a). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, *34*, 159-165. doi:10.1080/00405849509543675
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995b). Toward a culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*, 465-491.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*, 7-24. doi:10.1080/095183998236863
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1999). Preparing teachers for diverse student populations: A critical race theory perspective. *Review of Research*, *24*, 211-247.

- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35, 3-12.  
doi:10.3102/0013189X035007003
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2011). Boyz to men? Teaching to restore Black boys' childhood. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 14, 7-15. doi:10.1080/13613324.2011.531977
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate IV, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97, 47-68.
- Laframboise, K. L., & Griffith, P. L. (1997). Using literature cases to examine diversity issues with preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13, 369-382.  
doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(96)00034-0
- Lakoff, R. T. (2004). *Language and woman's place: Text and commentaries*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Larke, P. L. (1990). Cultural diversity awareness inventory: Assessing the sensitivity of preservice teachers. *Action in Teacher Education*, 12, 23-30.  
doi:10.1080/01626620.1990.10734396
- Lastrapes, W., & Negishi, M. (2011). Foundational field experiences: A window into preservice teachers' cultural consciousness and self-efficacy for teaching diverse learners. *Southeastern Regional Association of Teacher Educators Journal*, 21, 37-44. Retrieved from <http://apbrwww5.apsu.edu/SRATE/JournalEditions/211/6lastrapes.pdf>
- Learned, W. S., Bagley, W. G., McMurray, C. A., Strayer, G. D., Dearborn, W. F., Kandel, I. L., & Josselyn, H. W. (1920). *The professional preparation of teachers for American public schools: A study based upon an examination of tax-supported normal schools in the state of Missouri*. Boston, MA: The Merrymount Press.



- Lesko, N. (2001). *Act your age! A cultural construction of adolescence*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Lett, J. (1990). Emics and etics: Notes on the epistemology of anthropology. In T. N. Headland, K. L. Pike, & M. Harris (Eds.), *Emics and etics: The insider/outsider debate*. *Frontiers of anthropology*, 7. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lewis, A. E. (2000). *Race in the schoolyard: Reproducing the color line in school*. (Order No. 9977200, University of Michigan). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304610558?accountid=14214>. (304610558).
- Light, R. (2008). Complex learning theory: Its epistemology and its assumptions about learning: Implications for physical education. *Journal of Teaching Physical Education*, 27, 21-37. Retrieved from [http://repository.intralibrary.leedsmet.ac.uk/open\\_virtual\\_file\\_path/i391n58484t/Complex\\_Learning\\_Theory.pdf](http://repository.intralibrary.leedsmet.ac.uk/open_virtual_file_path/i391n58484t/Complex_Learning_Theory.pdf)
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Loomba, A. (1998). *Colonialism/postcolonialism*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lorde, A. (1983). There is no hierarchy of oppressions. *Bulletin: Homophobia and Education*, 14(3/4), 9.
- Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lowenstein, K. L. (2009). The work of multicultural teacher education: Reconceptualizing White teacher candidates as learners. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 163-196. doi:10.3102/0034654308326161

- Lynn, M., & Parker, L. (2006). Critical race studies in education: Examining a decade of research on U.S. schools. *The Urban Review*, 38, 257-290. doi:10.1007/s11256-006-0035-5
- Machery, E., & Faucher, L. (2005). Social construction and the concept of race. *Philosophy of Science*, 72, 1208-1219. doi:10.4324-9780203821060
- Marra, R. M., & Palmer, B. (2008). Epistemologies of the sciences, humanities, and social sciences: Liberal arts students' perceptions. *The Journal of General Education*, 57, 100-118. doi:10.1353/jge.0.0017
- Martino, W., & Rezai-Rashti, G. M. (2010). Male teacher shortage: Black teachers' perspectives. *Gender and Education*, 22, 247-262. doi:10.1080/09540250903474582
- Marx, S. (2004). Regarding whiteness: Exploring and intervening in the effects of white racism and teacher education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 37, 31-43. doi:10.1080/10665680490422089
- Massey, D. D., & Lewis, J. (2011). Learning from the "little guys": What do middle and high school preservice teachers learn from tutoring elementary students? *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 50, 120-132. doi:10.1080/19388071003725705
- Matsuda, M. J. (1991). Voices of America: Accent, antidiscrimination law, and a jurisprudence for the last reconstruction. *The Yale Law Journal*, 100, 1329-1407. doi:10.2307/796694
- Matsuda, M. J., Lawrence, III, C. R., Delgado, R., & Crenshaw, K. W. (1993). *Words that wound: Critical race theory, assaultive speech and the first amendment*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc.

- McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies*. Retrieved from <http://www.nymbp.org/reference/WhitePrivilege.pdf>
- McIntyre, A. (1997). Constructing an image of a White teacher. *Teachers College Record*, 98, 653-681.
- McKenna, M. C., & Robinson, R. D. (1990). Content literacy: A definition and implications. *Journal of Reading*, 34, 184-186.
- McLaren, P. (1989). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education*. New York, NY: Longman.
- McLaren, P. (2000). Paulo Freire's pedagogy of possibility. In S. Steiner et al. (Eds.), *Freirean pedagogy, praxis and possibilities: Projects for the new millennium* (pp. 1-21). New York, NY: Falmer Press.
- McNamee, S. J., & Miller, R. K., Jr. (2004). The meritocracy myth. *Sociation Today*, 2(1), 1-12.
- Medley, D. M. (1977). *Teacher competence and teacher effectiveness. A review of process-product research*. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.
- Michaels, S. (1981). "Sharing time": Children's narrative styles and differential access to literacy. *Language in Society*, 10, 423-442. doi:10.1017/S0047404500008861
- Milner, H. R., IV (2006). Culture, race and spirit: A reflective model for the study of African Americans. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19, 367-385. doi:10.1080/09518390600696893

- Milner, H. R., IV (2007). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. *Educational Researcher*, 36, 388-400.  
doi:10.3102/0013189X07309471
- Milner, H. R., IV (2008). Critical race theory and interest convergence as analytic tools in teacher education policies and practices. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59, 332-346.  
doi:10.1177/00224871083211884
- Milner, H. R., IV, Flowers, L. A., Moore, E., Jr., Moore, J. L., III, & Flowers, T. A. (2003). Preservice teachers' awareness of multiculturalism and diversity. *The High School Journal*, 87, 63-70. doi:10.1353/hsj.2003.0018
- Moje, E. B. (2007). Developing socially just subject-matter instruction: A review of the literature on disciplinary literacy teaching. *Review of Research in Education*, 31, 1-44.  
doi:10.3102/0091732X07300046001
- Moje, E. B. (2008). Foregrounding the disciplines in secondary literacy teaching and learning: A call for change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52, 96-107.  
doi:10.1598/JAAL.52.2.1
- Moje, E. B., & Hinchman, K. (2004). Culturally responsive practices for youth literacy learning. In T. L. Jetton & J. A. Dole (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice* (pp. 321-350). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31, 132-141. doi:10.1080/00405849209543534

- Morrison, K. A., Robbins, H. H., & Rose, D. G. (2008). Operationalizing culturally relevant pedagogy: A synthesis of classroom based research. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 41*, 433-452. doi:10.1080/10665680802400006
- Mosley, M. (2010). 'That really hit me hard': Moving beyond passive anti-racism to engage with critical race literacy pedagogy. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 13*, 449-472. doi:10.1080/13613324.2010.488902
- Mosley, M., & Rogers, R. (2011). Inhabiting the 'tragic gap': Preservice teachers practicing racial literacy. *Teaching Education, 22*, 303-324. doi:10.1080/10476210.2010.518704
- Nathenson- Mejía, S., & Escamilla, K. (2003). Connecting with Latino children: Bridging cultural gaps with children's literature. *Bilingual Research Journal, 27*, 101-116. doi:10.1080/15235882.2003.10162593
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2008). *Professional standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions*. Washington, DC: NCATE.
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2010). *Panel calls for turning teacher education 'upside down,' centering curricula around classroom-ready training and increasing oversight and expectations* [press release]. Washington, DC: NCATE.
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers (2010). *Common core state standards*. Washington D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers.
- New London Group (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*, 60-92. Retrieved from

- [http://www.jenjenson.com/courses/literaciesandculture/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Pedagogy+of+Multiliteracies\\_New+London+Group.pdf](http://www.jenjenson.com/courses/literaciesandculture/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Pedagogy+of+Multiliteracies_New+London+Group.pdf)
- New York State Education Department (2012). *The New York State school report card: Accountability and overview report 2010-2011*. Retrieved from <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2010-11/AOR-2011-421800010020.pdf>
- Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Oakes, J. (2005). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Oakes, J., Ormseth, T., Bell, R., & Camp, P. (1990). *Multiplying inequalities: The effects of race, social class, and tracking on opportunities to learn Mathematics and Science*. Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation.
- O'Brien, D. G., & Stewart, R. A. (1990). Preservice teachers' perspectives on why every teacher is not a teacher of reading: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 22, 101-129. doi:10.1080/10862969009547699
- O'Brien, D. G., Stewart, R. A., & Moje, E. B. (1995). Why content literacy is difficult to infuse into secondary school: Complexities of curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30, 442-463. doi:10.2307/747625
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1993). On the theoretical concept of race. In C. McCarthy and W. Crichlow (Eds.), *Race identity and representation in education* (pp. 3-10). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Owen, D. S. (2007). Towards a critical theory of whiteness. *Philosophy Social Criticism*, 33, 203-221. doi:10.1177/0191453707074139

- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41, 93-97. doi:10.3102/0013189X12441244
- Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84, 85-100.
- Pearson, P. D., & Gallagher, M. C. (1983). The instruction of reading comprehension. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 8, 317-344. doi:10.1016/0361-476X(83)90019-X
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity - one's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17, 17-21. doi:10.3102/0013189X017007017
- Pierce, C. (1970). Offensive mechanisms. In F. Barbour (Ed.), *The Black seventies* (pp. 265-282). Boston, MA: Porter Sargent.
- Rogers, R., & Mosley, M. (2006). Racial literacy in a second-grade classroom: Critical race theory, whiteness studies, and literacy research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41, 462-495. doi:10.1598/RRQ.41.4.3
- Rogers, R., & Mosley, M. (2008). A critical discourse analysis of racial literacy in teacher education. *Linguistics and Education*, 19, 107-131. doi:10.1016/j.linged.2008.02.002
- Schofield, J. W. (2010). The colorblind perspective in school: Causes and consequences. In J. A. Banks and C. A. Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 259-284). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.
- Schommer, M. (1993). Epistemological development and academic performance among secondary students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85, 406-411. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.85.3.406

- Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Teaching disciplinary literacy to adolescents: Rethinking content-area literacy. *Harvard Educational Review, 78*, 40-59.
- Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2012). What is disciplinary literacy and why does it matter? *Topics in Language Disorders, 32*, 7-18. doi:10.1097/tld.0b013e318244557a
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Assessment of teaching: An initiative for the profession. *Phi Delta Kappan, 69*, 38-44.
- Skiba, R., Simmons, A., Ritter, S., Kohler, K., Henderson, M., & Wu, T. (2006). The context of minority disproportionality: Practitioner perspectives on special education referral. *Teacher College Record, 108*, 1424-1459. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9620.2006.00699.x
- Skinner, B. F. (1974). *About behaviorism*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*, 94-106. doi:10.1177/0022487101052002002
- Sleeter, C. E. (2011). *The academic and social value of ethnic studies: A research review*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.
- Solorzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 24*, 5-20.
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *The Journal of Negro Education, 69*, 60-73. Retrieved from <http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity/pdfs/CRTMicroaggressions.pdf>
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.



- Stewart, R. A., & O'Brien, D. G. (1989). Resistance to content area reading: A focus on preservice teachers. *Journal of Reading, 32*, 396-401.
- Stovall, D. (2006). Forging community in race and class: Critical race theory and the quest for social justice in education. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 9*, 243-259.  
doi:10.1080/13613320600807550
- Street, B. V. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. New York, NY: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist, 62*, 271-286. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271
- Tatum, A. W. (2000). Breaking down barriers that disenfranchise African American adolescent readers in low-level tracks. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 44*, 52-64.
- Taylor, K. (2003). Civil rights and civil wrongs: Racism in America today. *International Socialist Review, 32*. Retrieved from <http://www.isreview.org/issues/32/racism.shtml>
- Temple, C. N. (2010). Communicating race and culture in the twenty-first century: Discourse and post-racial/post-cultural challenge. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 5*, 45-63.  
doi:10.1080/17447141003602288
- Thompson, A. (2003). Tiffany, friend of people of color: White investments in antiracism. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 16*, 7-29.  
doi:10.1080/0951839032000033509
- Tillman, L. C. (2002). Culturally sensitive research approaches: An African-American perspective. *Educational Researcher, 31*, 3-12. doi:10.3102/0013189X031009003

- Turner, J. D. (2007). Beyond cultural awareness: Prospective teachers' visions of culturally responsive literacy teaching. *Action in Teacher Education*, 29, 12-24.  
doi:10.1080/01626620.2007.10463456
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2006). *Understandings of literacy*. Retrieved from [http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6_eng.pdf)
- U.S. Department of Education (2014). *Guiding principles: A resource for improving school climate and discipline*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education, Institution of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2009a). *National assessment of educational progress: Trial urban district Assessment*. Retrieved from <http://nationsreportcard.gov/tuda.asp>
- U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2013). *National assessment of educational progress (NAEP), various years, 1990–2013 mathematics and reading assessments*. Retrieved from [http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_math\\_2013/#/student-groups](http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/student-groups)
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (2009b). *Public school teacher, BIE school teacher, and private school teacher data files, 2007-2008*. Retrieved from [http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009324/tables/sass0708\\_2009324\\_t12n\\_02.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009324/tables/sass0708_2009324_t12n_02.asp)
- U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics (2010). *Contexts of elementary and secondary school education*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/section4/table-tsp-1.asp>

- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2013). *Fast facts: Race/ethnicity of college faculty*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>
- U.S. Department of Education, National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). *A nation at risk*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education (2013). *Preparing and credentialing the nation's teachers: The secretary's ninth report on teacher quality*. Retrieved from <https://title2.ed.gov/TitleIIReport13.pdf>
- Valencia, R. R. (Ed.). (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*, 20-33.  
doi:10.1177/0022487102053001003
- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2007). The culturally responsive teacher. *Educational Leadership, 64*(6), 28-33.
- Watterson, B. (1991). *Scientific progress goes "boink."* Kansas City, MO: Andrews McMeel.
- Winn, M. T. (2010). 'Betwixt and between': Literacy, liminality, and the celling of Black girls. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 13*, 425-447. doi:10.1080/13613321003751601
- Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The miseducation of the negro*. Washington, DC: Association Press.
- Xu, H. (2000). Preservice teachers integrate understandings of diversity into literacy instruction. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*, 135-142. doi:10.1177/002248710005100207
- Yolen, J. (1992). *Encounter*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc.

Yosso, T. J., Parker, L., Solorzano, D. G., & Lynn, M. (2004). From Jim Crow to affirmative action and back again: A critical race discussion of racialized rationales and access to higher education. *Review of Research in Education*, 28, 1-25.

doi:10.3102/0091732X028001001

Zumwalt, K., & Craig, E. (2005). Teachers' characteristics: Research on the indicators of quality.

In M. Cochran-Smith and K. M. Zeichner (Eds.), *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education* (pp. 157-260). Mahwah,

NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

## VITA

NAME OF AUTHOR: Kathleen A. Cullen

PLACE OF BIRTH: Oswego, New York

DATE OF BIRTH: September 10, 1959

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

Syracuse University

State University of New York College at Oswego

DEGREES AWARDED:

C.A.S., Educational Administration and Supervision, 2000

M.S. in Education, Major: Reading Education, 1984

B.S., Major: Elementary Education, 1981

AWARDS AND HONORS:

Graduate Assistantship with Tuition Scholarship, 2007 - 2013

Future Professoriate Certificate of University Teaching, 2010

William D. Sheldon Fellowship, 2009

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Assistant Professor of Education, Utica College, 2013-present

Director of K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, Mexico Academy, 2004 – 2006

Reading First Coordinator, Fairley Elementary, 2003 – 2004

K-6 Assistant Principal and Curriculum Coordinator, Fairley and Kenny Elementary Schools, 2002 – 2003

Oswego County PDS Coordinator, Oswego County BOCES, 1999 – 2002

Special Education Teacher, Oswego County, 1986 - 1999