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Racial Incidents in the Classroom: A Qualitative Study on Preschool Teachers' Perceptions

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the extent to which 35 early childhood educators' training and experiences influence their perception of and subsequent teaching strategies racial incidents that occur in a preschool classroom. The study used focus groups to explore the implications of a teacher's ability to a) perceive the racial situation; and b) act or intervene through curriculum or other choices to turn the situation into a "teachable moment". Using the theories of social learning, intergroup contact, perspectives on ethnic/race identity formation and foundations of multicultural education, the study addresses what role early educators and their strategies could play in reducing the formation of prejudices and negative stereotypes in preschool-aged children. The findings suggest early educators are not only reluctant to "label" children as being racist or discriminatory, but also largely believe children are incapable of these types of thoughts; young children are blameless in their actions. Furthermore, participants routinely asserted that external influences, namely parents, are to blame for children's thoughts and actions around race and gender. Participants also felt their teacher training around multicultural education was inadequate, making it difficult to know how to intervene in racial incidents in their classroom. Following teaching strategies were limited to books and songs or parent focused conversations. Implications for future study include assessing teacher perceptions of racial events when children are of the same race or gender and using videos of real-life examples or using ethnographic methods. Limitations are discussed including small sample size, and subject selection.

Racial Incidents in the Classroom: A Qualitative Study on Preschool Teachers'

Perceptions

by

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BA, Tufts University, 2002
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Dissertation
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Mom this dissertation is dedicated to you. You are not here to ever read this, but I know you would be proud.

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Chapter One: Background of the Study

Introduction

Imagine you are a teacher of young children age three to four years old. You've been in the classroom for several years as the lead teacher, responsible for curriculum and planning. During outside time on the playground, four-year-olds Ann and Elizabeth are using the climbing structure as a house. Four-year-old Kayla attempts to join their play by asking if she can "enter the house." Ann shakes her head, saying, "No, only golden hair girls can play here." Kayla, who is African-American, responds "But I want to come in." Ann asks, "Do you have gold hair?" Kayla shakes her head no. Ann responds, "Then no, you can't come in."

If you were a teacher witnessing this interaction, how would you interpret this event? Is it a simple disagreement between young children, or is it something more? After all, Kayla was not turned away because there was no room in the play structure, nor was she told that she simply was not liked. She was excluded because of her physical appearance, her lack of "golden hair." Maybe you will tell Ann and Elizabeth that it is "not nice" not to let Kayla play. Or, maybe to avoid further problems, you ask Kayla to play elsewhere. But what if you believe it was something more, what do you do? Perhaps ignore it. You don't want to make too much out of it. Maybe if it happens again, you'll do something. Is Kayla being discriminated against because of her race? If so, how might this make Kayla feel? But can preschool children even be discriminatory based on race? Is it developmentally possible? You don't think so, but you decide to sing "All Over This World" in the afternoon, just in case.

Calling the interaction discriminatory, especially between preschool children might feel like a huge leap, after all, behaviors or statements such as those described above can be viewed as "innocent" or unintentional events. But you are unsure. You might have had little experience talking about differences with young children. Even with uncertainty, researchers have shown that teachers play a central role in shaping young children's attitudes and behaviors including those involving race and ethnicity (Connolly & Keenan, 2002; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). As a result, early childhood educators have invested a considerable amount of effort trying to address the needs of young children in their race and ethnic understanding. Teachers' main strategy to support children is to implement multicultural or anti-bias education in their classroom (Derman-Sparks, LeeKennan & Nimmo, 2015).

One of the influential works to support teachers in addressing difference and building a collaborative classroom is the work of Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards (2010), *Anti-Bias Curriculum for Young Children and Ourselves*. Initially published as a first edition under the title of *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* (Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989), the book was designed to "support children's full development in our multiracial, multilingual, multicultural world and to give them the tools to stand up to prejudice, stereotyping, bias and eventually to institutional '*isms*'" (p. vii). The books give explicit instruction and strategies to teachers to support them in implementing anti-bias education. The first recommendation suggested is to "recognize this is an issue" (Derman-Sparks, LeeKennan & Nimmo, 2015). This strategy of "recognizing the issue" is dependent on the educator to see the harmful effects of stereotypes[1], prejudice, and biases for young children. It is in recognizing that this is an issue that teachers can then act, do something, and respond. The

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[1] For a complete list and definitions of terms used in this dissertation, refer to page 32.

responses outlined in *Anti-Bias Curriculum* are focused on creating an anti-bias learning community and environment. This includes explicit instruction through classroom materials (e.g., books, toys) and conversation that can promote an acceptance and appreciation of diversity (Aboud & Doyle, 1996; Bigler & Liben, 1992). Strategies like suggested in Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) include:

- Selecting and making learning materials: posters, pictures and art objects hung on the walls that should be diverse visuals of children from the family cultures reflected in the classroom and diversity outside of children's own background or community or family structure.

- Using children's books in the anti-bias classroom: Books should support every classroom child's family, racial identity, home language while also exposing children to differences outside of their family structures, community or background.

- Intentional curriculum planning: Teachers incorporate diversity issues in their day-to-day activities or ongoing themes (activities organized around a predetermined topic).

(pp. 33-48)

However, particularly in the case of young children, teachers can struggle to implement multicultural education in their classroom (Gay, 2000; Brown, 1998). Rather, some teachers prefer to be "colorblind" and emphasize the "sameness" of every child (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006; Hein, 2004; Norquay, 1999). Even when teachers are willing to engage young children in conversations about race or culture, they may feel ill prepared (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006). As a result, many early child educators remain "silent" in addressing cultural and racial differences,

which can inadvertently maintain inequality by not addressing race related events when they arise (Delpit, 1998; Norquay, 1999). This silence cultivates a classroom climate where discrimination occurs, stereotypes form, and prejudice thrives. Racial incidents in the classroom are acts that require attention from teachers (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006, Tatum, 1997).

Further, even when teachers are motivated to respond to racial incidents in the classroom, teachers can be stuck in their responses to racial situations in the classroom or what Derman-Sparks & Edwards (2010) refer to as "pre-prejudice and discriminatory behavior" (p. 33). They recommend for teachers to just "do something…don't let yourself believe that your intervention 'made things worse'" (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010, p. 19). Why are teachers stuck? With books with recommendations and specific teaching strategies, why do teachers still struggle to implement multicultural or anti-bias education? What prompts a teacher to decide to move from inaction or silence, about race and ethnic differences, to action? Teacher decision-making and teacher training seems key to the process. Implementing multicultural education in the classroom is a pedagogical decision. Teachers decide when, where and how they will integrate content and themes into their day-to-day lessons; the level or quality of the application of multicultural education in the classroom is a teacher training and coursework issue.

This dissertation is an investigation of teachers' perceptions of racial incidents in preschool classrooms. It is concerned with understanding the conditions under which teachers recognize "racial incidents" among young children. Once racial incidents are recognized, how does how might it influence their actions or implementation of anti-bias education in their classroom. My interest in this topic is rooted in my own professional experience. I was as an early childhood teacher for 3 years. As a teacher, I was responsible for implementing multicultural education strategies in the classroom. For the last 17 years, I have been a teacher

educator, as a trainer and faculty in various colleges and universities. In this capacity, I am responsible for supporting teachers as they learn strategies about how to build a developmentally appropriate multicultural classroom and the day-to-day struggles they might face in implementing multicultural education.

Despite contemporary understanding of children as active learners, who have purpose and intent, when it comes to racism or discrimination, children are perceived as fundamentally innocent (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). This belief has made investigating this topic challenging. It is difficult for educators to conceptualize and believe that young children are anything but innocent of the negative intent around differences we assign to adults (e.g., negative stereotypes about someone's ability based on racial or ethnic group membership). Furthermore, adults in the United States can face the same struggles teachers have in navigating race, ethnic conversations and interactions around differences. Society is as ill-prepared as teachers are to engage in this work. Similar to teachers, many in our society remain "silent" around cultural and racial differences. This dissertation seeks to stop the silence and examine the factors around teacher action around topics of race and ethnicity in an early education setting through the voices of teachers.

Personal Experiences in Early Childhood Education

Eighteen years ago, I entered the world of early childhood education as an AmeriCorps service member with Jumpstart for Young Children, a national early literacy non-profit organization. Jumpstart is an early childhood education enrichment program targeted for low-income communities. Its purpose is to strengthen young children's language, literacy, and social through the use of college student mentors. I worked with preschool children in Roxbury and

Dorchester, Massachusetts as a team leader and Corps member implementing an afterschool curriculum focused on language and literacy development during the academic school year, and as a classroom teacher over the summer months, totaling over 900 hours of direct service as an early educator to young children aged four to five years old. In this experience, I led educational activities, large and small groups, including implementing art activities, posing questions and facilitating conversations about concepts related to math, science, and society. This researcher saw firsthand the impact that quality early experiences could have on young children. Over time, I became increasingly aware of the racial and ethnic differences between Corps members, and members of other non-profit agencies, and the communities they serviced. While the vast majority of the children were African American or Latino, virtually all of the program administrators and volunteers were white. This gave me pause to consider how this disconnect may or may not play out in early educational settings.

I would observe children asking questions about each other, other Corps Members, or teachers in the classroom, like "Why is her hair so rough?" or "Why is one child browner than another child." Most of these questions were met with awkward response by the teachers such as, "that is just how they were born," or "everyone has different hair textures." Uncomfortable with the children's awareness of these differences, I observed teachers going as far as to pretend that they did not hear race related comments or questions.

Even as a Black female, matching the race of many of the students in my classroom, I would be stuck when children would point out racial or ethnic differences around skin tone or language. Without the extensive background knowledge at the time, I would say a simple, "we're all friends here" and quickly move on from the conflict. Despite my training, I did not know what to do. The focus of Jumpstart's training for new teachers was on language and literacy skill

acquisition in early education. Family and cultural background was viewed as important to the classroom, but as secondary, or tertiary, to the emphasis on other skills and activities in the classroom. Racial conflict made me uncomfortable as a new teacher and I needed more guidance and support to navigate these types of situations.

Upon graduation from Tufts University, I stayed with Jumpstart and eventually became a Site Manager in Chicago and Program Director for the Western Region located in the San Francisco Bay Area. I was responsible for supporting sites and Site Managers in implementing the Jumpstart program on university campuses. One of the main roles of my position was to train over 250 Corps members (college students) to support learning activities for multi-cultural, low-income child and families in various community preschools and Head Starts serving over 600 students.

In this role, I realized my early struggles as a classroom teacher around race and ethnicity, was something many teachers find challenging. In particular, I found myself drawn to the struggle preservice teachers, many times of different background from the students they were teaching, struggling to be culturally and linguistically responsive to their students and families. Many times, but not always, it was the teacher's own different socioeconomic and racial background that made it difficult to know what was, or how to be, cultural relevant. This cultural background mismatch and lack of pragmatic skills became obvious when early educators struggled to a) create multicultural learning environments; b) interact with families on cultural beliefs and practices and child rearing; and c) when race/ethnic conflict occurred between children in their classroom.

After 3 years with Jumpstart, I transitioned to teaching undergraduate college-level courses as an adjunct faculty. In this capacity, I taught psychology, child development, early

childhood curriculum, and educational theory and practice at various colleges in Upstate New York, New Mexico and San Francisco. For 8 years, I taught preservice teachers, where students received explicit instruction on race and culture and implementing multicultural or anti-bias education. In reflection on those courses I taught, I realized that teachers' confusion or uncertainty around issues of race and culture were not just due to a lack of training. Unlike my training with Jumpstart, preservice teachers were required to take a myriad of workshops, trainings, and materials on diversity and multiculturalism. Teachers are trained in anti-bias, multicultural curricula, such as culturally diverse songs, books, dolls, and holidays. Although useful, this information took a "we are the world approach" to multicultural education. Skills and techniques on how to work with children and families on more challenging aspects of "diversity" were nonexistent. Teachers were left to their own devices on how to have conversations with children when what appeared to be discriminatory actions occurred among the children. Nor were teachers prepared on how to effectively handle these situations with parents. There is rarely space in academic coursework to address these matters.

In the fall of 2007, I became a national trainer for Teaching Strategies, Inc. an early childhood education company that provides curriculum, assessment and professional development resources to programs serving children from birth through kindergarten. Since 1988, Teaching Strategies has published the Creative Curriculum® (Creative Curriculum). The Creative Curriculum is one of the most widely used curriculums for early education in the country (Creative Curriculum, 2016). The philosophy of the curriculum focuses on impacting child outcomes by improving teacher effectiveness through elements like establishing interest areas, environmental routines and adult-child interactions. As a national trainer, I instructed and coached educators, administrators, and staff in the early education best practices including

strategies to improve math and literacy, culturally appropriate classroom practices and developmentally appropriate assessment as it connects to the curriculum. I also monitored and provided feedback to programs implementing the Creative Curriculum, concentrating on developmentally appropriate adult-child interaction to improve early education literacy, math and social/emotional outcomes.

Now working with experienced teachers, many who, unlike Jumpstart Corps members or college preservice teachers, had racial or ethnic backgrounds that matched their students, I still observed educators struggling with implementing a developmentally appropriate multicultural education classroom. Although during professional development training, workshops and seminars, teachers reported the need to value the family and culture in the classroom, they struggled to move beyond the placing of different books or singing diverse songs in their classroom. The deeper teachings and recommendations, like conversations and challenging children's beliefs as espoused in Derman-Sparks, & Edwards (2010), Derman-Sparks & the ABC Taskforce (1989), Banks (1995) and others, went unfulfilled in the classroom.

Through conversations with early educators around the country, I quickly began to understand how complicated the role of an early educator is in a classroom. Early educators are caregivers and responsible for the foundational education of young children. They are asked to create meaningful and relevant content that engages children as individuals and as a group while meeting their early social emotional needs. However, we know very little about how the workforce views their role around race and ethnic socialization. It is difficult for adult society to have meaningful conversations about race, yet, due to the communal, caregiving nature of the preschool environment, situations around differences (racial, ethnic, gender) between children can and do develop. The complicated nature of the teacher's role in their classroom peaked my

desire to develop a deeper understanding of what teachers think about race and culture in their classroom. Thus, I developed a qualitative study to explore their experiences and capture their thoughts.

Much of my motivation for conducting a study focused on early educator students stemmed from the countless conversations I had with students and early educators as a trainer over the years around culture in preschool classrooms. Furthermore, during my first year in the doctoral program at Syracuse University, in a research seminar on race and structural inequalities, I studied intergroup contact theory and other ways to minimize discrimination and the development of stereotype threat. *Stereotype threat* is performance anxiety based on gender or race that has potential to suppress, alter, and negatively impact a student's performance in school and on tests (Steele, 2007). I was amazed to read how stereotype threat develops by five years old (Steele, 2007). However, I noticed that the research concentrated what teachers in K-12 schools can do to ameliorate the development of stereotype threat, early childhood education remained unexplored. Similarly, studies have been completed to address what children think about race and ethnicity or parents' role in race and ethnic socialization, but the role of the teacher is largely ignored, especially for those who teach our youngest children. It is unclear how teachers perceive or identify racial conflict or tensions, and if tensions are identified, how might they be dealt with, by the teachers.

The process of conducting this research study was incredibly valuable and insightful both personally and professionally. While conducting this study, there were often times when I felt as though I had to modify my current teaching content to address what seemed like a curriculum gap for students. I had to ensure that my role as researcher didn't impact my role as educator. It was often very difficult to not start editorializing during the focus groups, as frequently the

groups turned into discussions about the "correct answer" or what they should do or what the research says. After one focus group, participants spent another hour discussing with me young children's ability to discriminate based on race and ethnicity. They wanted more discourse around the topic, but expressed how rare it is to have these conversations in college or at work. As Fontana and Frey (2008) highlight, the "empathetic approaches take an ethical stance in favor of the individual or group being studied. The interviewer becomes an advocate and partner in the study, hoping to be able to use the results to advocate social policies and ameliorate the conditions of the interviewee" (p. 117). While this study was designed to help better understand teacher perception of racial incidents, I could not help but identify changes that might need to be made in current diversity, multicultural education coursework and field experiences.

Significance of the Study

This research study deliberately examines the perceptions of early childhood workforce's experiences in hypothetical scenarios around young children and potentially negative race/ethnic interactions between children in their classroom. It seeks to address the lack of information regarding early educators and their understanding and utilization of pragmatic skills to intervene in "teachable moments" that could minimize negative stereotype formation. The genesis of this study rooted in my experiences while teaching multicultural education coursework to preservice undergraduate students and training existing workforce in curriculum implementation. My experiences, as well as an earlier quantitative study conducted by the researcher, around the topic, brought to the forefront many of the complexities associated with teacher curriculum decision-making, including teacher efficacy around changing child behavior when they might feel less influential as compared with parents and media on the child.

Findings from this study include information on teachers' perceptions of children and their cognitive abilities regarding race and ethnic differences. Moreover, the study explores how these perceptions influence teachers' decision to act "in the moment" or respond to the incident at some later date that might include curriculum modifications (reading a story) or a discussion with parents, or establish parameters or conditions for action in the future ("if they do it three times").

Results from this study suggest that teachers are often reluctant or unsure of what to do given their perceptions of children's capacity to conceptualize race/ethnicity and engage in discriminatory behavior. Even when teachers identify incidents in the classroom as "racial" they are often at a loss on how to intervene with the child. This is, in part, due to where teachers "locate the problem" and whether or not they believe they have any influence to make an impact on children, given broader familial and cultural forces.

Collectively, the findings suggest that although multicultural education is valued and recognized as important, it appears to have fallen short in providing teachers with pragmatic real world skills and strategies to deal with these incidents as they occur in the classroom. Study findings also speak to the key role early childhood education schools or administration can play in supporting teachers to have difficult conversations with children around race and ethnicity.

This introductory chapter begins with an overview of racial incidents in the preschool classroom, followed by a discussion of the significant problem of discrimination and racism among young children, the role of teachers in socialization around race and ethnicity, definitions of terms, and finally a statement about the purpose of this study.

Racial Incidents in the Preschool Classroom

Simply defined, *discrimination* "involves harmful actions towards others because of their membership in a particular group" (Fishbein, 1996, p. 7). However, despite the simple definition, discrimination and discriminatory behavior is a complex phenomenon consisting of a wide array of acts ranging from explicit (e.g., physical assault), to subtle behaviors (e.g., social exclusion) (Bigler & Liben, 1993). One type of discrimination researched in young children is racial incidents. *Racial incidents* between young children include statements or actions that show peer play preference based on phenotype or language, and negative comments or actions based on differences between groups. It is not uncommon for these events to occur between one or more children in school settings (Connolly & Keenan, 2002). These interactions and comments can include statements like such as "your skin is brown because you drink too much chocolate milk." Statements such as this suggest that children are aware phenotypic differences, although they might not understand its origin. At the other end of the spectrum, these interactions can consist of physical altercations such as the one described by Tatum (1997), fights in a classroom because brown kids "cannot be good guys," implying that children are already associating brown, dark or black skin with negative or non-positive characteristics (pp. 31-51). What Tatum further describes are racial incidents; actions of exclusion by children based on phenotype or other physical characteristics. If uncorrected, these behaviors and associations can lead to the formation of stereotypical thinking and prejudice in young children. Discrimination can have a significant impact on a child's psychological functioning and can have lasting effects into adulthood (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006; Tatum, 1997).

Impact of Discriminatory Behavior

Whether intentional, or not, discrimination, negative stereotyping, and racial prejudice are associated with negative outcomes for children. Children who experience discrimination suffer from lower self-esteem, mental health issues, and lower academic achievement (Ambady, Shih, Kim, & Pittinsky, 2001; Hughes & Bigler, 2007; McKown, 2004; Phinney, 1990; Simmons, et al., 2002; Verkuyten, 1998).

Lower self-esteem. In the 1940s, psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark designed a series of experiments, frequently referred to as the "doll studies" to assess the psychological effects of segregation on Black children. In their study, Clark and Clark, used dolls that were identical in appearance except for the color of their skin (Clark & Clark, 1947, NAACP, 2016). Children ages three to seven were asked to identify the race of the dolls and play preference, answering the questions, "who looked nice" or "which doll would they like to play with" (Clark & Clark, 1947). They found that Black children preferred white dolls and rejected black dolls when they were asked to state a preference (Clark & Clark, 1947). The doll study helped to establish the need for desegregation in American schools with the authors concluding, that "prejudice, discrimination and segregation" had deleterious impact on Black children's self-esteem and caused feelings of inferiority.

Since the seminal Clark and Clark's study, there have been numerous studies exploring the connection between discrimination and child self-esteem. Self-esteem "refers to internalized feelings of mastery, value and self-acceptance that are derived from individual's assessment of their personal value based on implicit and explicit messages provided by significant others" (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002, p. 323). Self-esteem is seen as central to a youth's self-concept (Hughes et al., 2006). Empirical research suggests adolescents suffer from lower self-esteem

when they encounter discrimination (Rumbaut, 1994; Verkuyten, 1998). In his study of eighth and ninth grade children of immigrants in Miami and San Diego (n = 5000), Rumbaut (1994) found expected discrimination (i.e., "people will discriminate against me regardless of how far I go with my education", p. 785) was significantly correlated with low self-esteem. Also, Verkuyten (1998) in his research of Turkish and Moroccan adolescents living in the Netherlands found personal self-esteem was negatively correlated with perceived personal discrimination.

Mental health issues. Although there are no studies that focus on very young children specifically, a number of studies have demonstrated an association between discrimination, racism and children's mental health. In a longitudinal study, Brody et al. (2006) examined problem behavior and depressive symptoms in African American ten- to twelve-year olds over a 5-year period. They found that increased perceived racial discrimination led to later increased conduct problems (i.e., bullying, stealing, physical fights) and depression in the youths (Brody et al., 2006). Similarly, Simons, et al. (2002), in a sample of 810 African American children (age 10-12), found being a victim of discrimination strongly correlated with depressive symptoms. Revealingly, the majority of the target children in the study had experienced racial discrimination, with 67% reporting that someone had insulted them because they were African American and 46% reporting they had experienced racial slurs (Simons, et al., 2002). This exposure led to symptoms like feeling of sadness, trouble sleeping and even suicidal ideation (Simons, et al., 2002).

School Context (Lower academic achievement). Racial and ethnic minority children face negative cultural stereotypes that represent members of their similar ethnic background as less intelligent or less academically capable than their White counterparts (Schmader, Major, & Gramzow, 2001; Steele, 1997). Lowered expectations or belief of lowered ability has been

mostly studied in older children in the form of stereotype threat. As previously mentioned, stereotype threat is performance anxiety based on gender or race that can negatively impact student performance in school (Downey, et al., 2004; Tatum, 1997). In the classroom, stereotype threat looks like a change in student performance based on the level of awareness the student has for the positive or negative generalizations, like:

- Boys are better than girls in math

- Black children are less intelligent, not as smart as their non-Black peers

(Ambady, et al., 2001; Beilock, Rydell, & McConnell, 2007; Inzlict, McKay, & Aronson, 2006)

The activations of these types of negative stereotypes, decrease performance by producing anxiety and depleting working memory, inducing arousal, and increasing stress. (Beilock, et al., 2007; Inzlict, et al., 2006; Schmader, et al., 2001). When a child experiences stereotype threat, they have to try and suppress negative thoughts and emotions, which takes a large portion of cognitive resources (Schmader, et al., 2001). In the expenditure of these resources, performance in the classroom suffers.

It is hypothesized that repeated discrimination and prejudice in the early years of a child's development and schooling, along with teachers and administration either explicitly or implicitly affirming an ethnic and racial minority youth's academic ability, contributes to the development of stereotype threat in minority students (Steele, 1997).

Stereotype threat, has a variety of implications for minority students. As a risk factor, ethnic identity, the level of ethnic identity, how strongly you identify in-group or out-group, can influence the impact of discrimination on youth. Students, who are "highly identified" with school and are high achieving students, are most negatively impacted by stereotype threat

(Tatum, 1997, p. 62). Academic identification suggests that there is a "strong relationship between oneself and the domains of schooling such that one's self-regard significantly depends on achievement" (Steele, 1997, p. 616). To those who are highly identified with school, negative stereotypes about their ethnic group in turn negatively impacts their academic performance on standardized tests, for example (Steele, 1997; Tatum, 1997). In their study, Ambady, et al., (2001) found that young Asian-American girls and boys (5-7 years old) performed better on math tests when their ethnic superiority stereotype was activated, but girls did worse when gender stereotypes were activated. Although they focused on positive stereotypes, Ambady, et al. (2001) demonstrated that children as young as five to six years old, based on race, ethnicity and socio-economic background, are susceptible to stereotype threat in scholastic aptitude test. Their results suggest that socialization and exposure to sociocultural stereotypes begin to "exert their influence at a very early ages" (Ambady, et al., 2001, p. 389).

Another outcome of stereotype threat is that it can manifest itself as complete disengagement from the institution of school (Schmader, et al., 2001). African American and Latino student's academic performance has been linked to the perceived level of ethnic injustice and disengagement in the educational process (Schmader et al., 2001). Psychological disengagement from the academic area is a coping strategy used by minority students to protect their self-esteem from stereotype threat (Schmaderr et al., 2001). Minority students can disengage from the educational process to escape performance anxiety, which results from performing under the burden negative cultural stereotypes and societal beliefs of their intellectual inferiority (Schmader et al., 2001; Steele, 1997).

Relatedly, negative stereotypes have been shown to impede cognitive performance in young children and their academic motivation. In their study of Asian-American girls (grades K-

2; ages 5-7), Ambady, et al., (2001), found when the girls were exposed to subtle negative stereotypes through prompts about gender and math ability, they performed poorer on a test of math cognition. This finding was most pronounced in participants in lower elementary school (Ambady, et al., 2001). The youngest female children were highly susceptible to stereotypes and it had negative implications for their quantitative performance; the study participants had lower scores on the math cognition tests (Ambady, et al., 2001). This study highlighted how exposure to negative stereotypes begins to exert its influence at very early ages.

Furthermore, Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (2003) found that discrimination was correlated with student academic motivation. In their study of African American males in 7th and 8th grades (n = 389), they found that perceived discrimination by peers and teachers was strongly correlated to students' reports of lower academic motivation including a lowered value in the importance of school, value of school and beliefs about academic competence. Discrimination was also negatively associated with participants' overall GPA when controlling for socioeconomic status, gender and prior academic performance (Wong, et al., 2003). Prior to this study, much of the research on discrimination and academic outcomes has been conducted with older adolescents. Wong, et al., (2003) indicate that discrimination has an influence on development in early adolescence, potentially leading to long-term, life-long implications for those who are discriminated against.

Collectively, the findings suggest that discrimination can have a serious deleterious effects on children that is manifested in depressive symptoms and other negative outcomes. As a result, it has become increasingly important to prevent or minimize a child's exposure to prejudicial words and actions.

Children's Understanding of Discrimination and Race

As I will show, teachers' perceptions of racial incidents and their decision to intervene (or not) is determined by whether they believe children have the capacity to identify, understand, and discriminate on racial and ethnic lines. Thus, what is our current understanding of children's capacity to understand race?

From early on, children appear to recognize racial difference. Katz and Kofkin (1997) followed 200 black and white children from ages six months to six years. In their study, they found that infants were able to nonverbally categorize people by race and gender at six months of age (Katz & Kofkin, 1997). The infants in the study looked significantly longer at an unfamiliar face of a different race then they did at an unfamiliar face of their same race (Katz & Kofkin, 1997). According to Katz and Kofkin (1997), this "finding is very consistent in six-month-olds" (p. 55). Children's capacity to categorize others based on race further develops as children get older and start to develop language. By two years old, children can use racial categories to reason about people's behaviors, and several studies have found that preschoolers categorize people by race and can express race bias (Aboud, 2008; Hirschfeld, 2008; Katz, 2004; Patterson & Bigler, 2006). Children make clear distinctions among their peers and others along racial dimensions (Aboud & Doyle, 1996; Fagot, Leinbach, & O'Boyle, 1992; Levy, 2000). According to researchers, these distinctions are based on children's developing schemas. These schemas are the cognitive structures that develop as children attempt to make sense of and organize their environment (Bornstein & Lamb, 2005; Levy, 2000). As Fagot, et al. (1992) states, "[c]hildren organize environmental input schematically by 'chunking' or categorizing information the best they can" (p. 663). Schemas help children make sense of their world (Levy, 2000).

A child's understanding of race involves their conceptualization of self, cognitive abilities, and their engagement in society. The conceptualization of self, which includes components of race and ethnicity, is multifaceted. Children develop beliefs about race and ethnicity in a multi-step process. They have to develop a sense of their own racial group (in-group or own group) attitudes and a sense of others (out-group) or other group orientation (Chavous et al., 2008; Smith et al., 1999). The starting point for identity and own group orientation has been called the "precursor to racial-ethnic identity for children" (Spencer, 1983 as cited in Smith et al., 1999, p. 160). Self-schema development in children starts with a child's own group orientation, which in turn, impacts their views of others.

A child's growing brain development uses cognitive and social learning to make sense of the world. Experiences and environment, including parents, peers, school and media influences how categories about individuals develop into concepts about themselves and stereotypes and prejudices about others (Aboud & Doyle, 1996; Fagot & Leinbach, 1989; Levy, 2000; Oyserman, et al., 2003). These perceptions become self-schemes, or "organized generalizations about the self" (Osyerman, et al., 2003). These self-schemes are influential in how children view themselves, further building their identity and the identity of others including the later formation of stereotypes. This raises the question: what are the origins of child negative stereotypes based on race and ethnicity? To understand the roots of stereotype formation, one has to explore what children understand about race and ethnicity.

The Ethology of Prejudice and Race Stereotypes in Young Children. The ethology of prejudice in young children includes both cognitive and social components. In writings on prejudice, it was once believed that prejudice was a purely learned phenomenon, *tabula rasa* if you will. Discrimination and prejudice was strictly a function of their exposure to these practices

from larger society (Allport, 1954). However, it is now recognized that children's racial attitudes are also a function of active cognitive processes (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a). The cognitive perspective views a child's ability to classify based on race, as a simply cognitive process, which helps children make sense of their world (Aboud & Doyle, 1996b; Levy, 2000). One component of prejudice that, according to Bigler and Liben (1993), includes a cognitive factor is racial and gender stereotyping. Racial stereotyping is defined in this study as the general ascription of a set of personal characteristics to members of a racial/ethnic group (Aboud, 1988; Bigler & Liben, 1993). Some researchers have argued that racial stereotyping and prejudice are conceptually distinct. Specifically, racial prejudice involves negative affect and racial stereotyping involves cognition and cognitive classification (Bigler & Liben 1993, Fagot, Leinbach & O'Boyle, 1992). However, researchers who subscribe to a social learning perspective, maintain that a child's experiences and environment, including parents, peers, school and media, influences how those categories can develop into stereotypes and prejudices (Aboud & Doyle, 1996b; Fagot & Leinbach, 1989; Levy, 2000).

Regardless of which developmental perspective (cognitive or social learning) one takes towards race prejudice and stereotype formation, research shows that race and ethnic stereotypes emerge in the preschool years (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a; Bernstein, et al, 2000; Killen, Crystal, & Ruck, 2007). Furthermore, these stereotypes have been shown to influence children's memory (Bigler & Liben, 1993; Levy, 2000), peer preferences, including group inclusion and exclusion (Aboud & Doyle, 1996; Killen, Crystal & Ruck, 2007; Levy, 2000; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 1996), and other social cognitive abilities (Killen, Crystal & Ruck, 2007).

But Children Don't know What They Are Saying

A major distinction between racial and ethnic discrimination and other forms of classification is the negative emotion or affect, and hostile intentionality associated with it. Absent of such emotion and intention, young children incapable of discriminatory behavior. (Bernstein, Zimmerman, Werner-Wilson & Vosburg, 2000). Comments such as, "brown skin means you're dirty" are children's way of a) assessing difference and b) making connections to themselves. For example, in the previous comment, if a white child made that statement to a child with darker skin, the white child is noting a) that their peer is different than themselves and b) that when the white child's skin is darker that might mean they were dirty. To some parents and teachers, this situation is not prejudice, discriminatory or racist; the comment is "innocent" (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). The statement does not have the same meaning as if an adult made the comment (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Derman-Sparks and The ABC Task Force (1989) refers to these interactions as "pre-prejudice" or the beginning of prejudice behavior. The utterances of a child about race or ethnicity are not necessarily racist, but the "beginning of ideas and feelings…that may develop into real prejudice through reinforcement" (Derman-Sparks & The ABC Task Force, 1989, p. 3). Initially these thoughts are cognitive fallacies or misunderstandings based on inexperience or the expression of noticing differences or being fearful or concerned (Brown, 1998; Derman-Sparks & The ABC Task Force, 1989; Ramsey, 1998).

However, research conducted by Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) and others *(see* Killen, Crystal & Ruck, 2006) suggests that children under five-years-old are "less naïve and innocent about racial and ethnic matters" (p. 3) than adults would like to believe (Brown, 1998; Derman-Sparks & ABC Task Force, 1989). Children, as young as three-years-old, can exhibit racial

hostilities and discriminatory acts toward peers and make preferential evaluations of children (i.e., who is the nicer child or who they would like to play with) based on skin color (Brown, 1998; Mac Naughton & Davis, 20089, Van Ausdale & Feagin, 1996, 2001). Moreover, children use race and gender to make judgments, exclude or include children in peer interactions (Killen, Crystal, & Ruck, 2006; Hughes & Bigler, 2006). Therefore, the racially based comments made by children under the age of 5 that are viewed by teachers as "innocent" can have significant ramifications on later perceptions of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Strategies to Reduce Discrimination

Typically, strategies to reduce prejudice and stereotype formation occur in school. These interventions rely on teacher action either directly (discussion with the child) or at the classroom level (a story or lesson related to the incident). As I will discuss in the literature review *(see* page 29), multicultural/anti-bias education is a curriculum strategy promoted as a way to minimize racial and ethnic discrimination in young children (Banks, 2004). A teacher's understanding of curriculum, administrative support for multicultural education, and limited instruction during pre- and post- service coursework and trainings can lead to inconsistent implementation of multicultural education (Gorski, 2009).

To date, there is limited research that examines preschool teachers' perceptions of racial incidents in the classroom. For example, what types of behaviors or situations do teachers identify as discriminatory? How do these perceptions influence their actions, teaching strategies and interventions in the situation? Furthermore, what is the scope (range) and type of action the teacher takes?

Conceptual Framework

This study used conceptual frameworks that supported the influence of environment on attitude development, specifically around race and ethnic attitudes, i.e., Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Learning Theory.

Intergroup contact theory. Supporting the concept of the significance of the environment is Intergroup contact theory. In the past, researchers have tried to establish the context that would promote positive intergroup contact and ameliorate the development of negative stereotypes of the "other" (Bigler & Liben, 1993; Bernstein, Zimmerman, Werner-Wilson, & Vosburg, 2000; Killen, Crystal & Ruck, 2006). "There are short and long term benefits that result from interactions with others who are from different racial and ethnic backgrounds" (Killen, Crystal & Ruck, 2007, p. 57). Mixed or heterogeneous school environments have been shown to impact how children view others unlike themselves (Bigler & Liben, 1993; Bernstein, Zimmerman, Werner-Wilson, & Vosburg, 2000). Stereotypes can be changed or modified through intergroup contact.

Gordan Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis found four key conditions necessary for successful and meaningful intergroup contact: equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation and support of authorities, law or customs (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66). According to Allport's hypothesis, positive group interactions can occur when all four of these conditions are met (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Numerous reviews, meta-analyses, and studies support that it's only optimal conditions (i.e., all four conditions existing in a given setting) that reduce prejudice *(see* Pettigrew, 1998). Furthermore, the literature supports that without these optimal conditions or with unfavorable conditions (i.e., racial incidents or harassment), prejudice can increase (Pettigrew, 1998).

If you take two elements of Allport's hypothesis of the four key conditions needed for optimal intergroup contact, support of authorities and laws or customs, then the role of the school (considering the changing dynamics of the groups represented in the United States) becomes a key area of focus and concern. The support of authorities according to Pettigrew (1998) is the "explicit social sanction" of an institution to establish "norms of acceptance" (p. 67). These are the institutional level intentional or unintentional actions of organizations to foster understanding and appropriate interaction among diverse groups of students. If racial events occur and a school on an institutional level, and teachers on an individual level, do not address the event, then are they are not meeting Allport's conditions and instead reinforcing the behaviors and stereotypes. For optimal intergroup contact, as outlined by Allport, teachers and their strategies including interventions before, during and after racial events in the classroom become one of the "first lines of defense" in creating an institutional culture that supports "norms of acceptance" (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 67).

Social learning theory. Another theory that supports the role of individuals in influencing one's behavior is social learning theory. The social learning theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others (Kearsley, 2007). Kearsley (2007) quoted Bandura as stating, "Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action." (p. 3). Social learning theory is used to explain human behavior as a reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. Of primary importance in the definition of social learning theory is the understanding of the connection between models and imitators. Social learning theory posits individuals tend to imitate the models of those who

they view as prestigious (i.e., in a positions of power) and who control resources (Bornstein & Lamb, 2005). Common childhood models are parents, peers and teachers; these models can be influential in building cultural values and transmitting attitudes especially around race, ethnicity and stereotypes.

In 2010, twenty-four percent of children ages 3-6 spent the majority of their time in center-based care (preschool, Head Start or day care) (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, n.d.). Fifty-two percent of preschoolers of employed mothers spend at least 35 hours a week in a care setting (Capizzano & Marin, 2005). From a social learning theory perspective, with the high number of hours teachers spend with their children in the context of the classroom, children are using teachers as models of behavior to imitate. Jennings and Greenberg (2009), in their model of a prosocial classroom, found that social and emotional competency of a child hinged the level of social and emotional competency of the teacher. Children who had teachers who were more socially and emotionally competent had positive academic and social emotional outcomes (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). The teachers' own social competence influences the child's social emotional development. Teachers can have the same positive modeling power around other topics with children in their classroom like race and ethnicity, fostering an environment of inclusion.

Research Questions and Scope of Study

This study examines teachers' perception of racial events in a classroom setting. However, we know little about how teachers view young child with respect to racial and ethnic prejudice and child discrimination. When teachers' perceptions of child racial and ethnic cognition are discussed, the general consensus is that they view children as innocent and incapable of this negative thought (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Given the life long personal

and academic implications of discrimination for those who are discriminated against, it is important to examine early childhood educators, individuals at the advent of child categorization and social interactions, on their beliefs about children's thought and actions around race and the influences (training and education) on these beliefs. Specifically, the study examines:

- What types of classroom behaviors or events do preschool teachers identify as racial incidents?

- What do they believe are the causes of such incidents?

- Under what circumstance do teachers believe the incidents warrant action and what actions or teaching strategies might they employ?

- How do teachers feel teacher training prepared them to act in these situations?

Dissertation Structure

The dissertation has been organized into seven chapters. This chapter provides an introduction and overview to the research topic; presents the research rationale; includes a discussion on child conception of race, ethnicity and discrimination; and includes a discussion on my own position in the research, consistent with grounded theory approach.

Chapter Two provides a literature review in order to provide context for the research and set the stage for the research project; it presents a review of the research around the role teachers, specifically through curriculum decisions, can play in minimizing child negative stereotype formation, paying particular attention to the research around the challenges teachers can face making these decisions. The chapter highlights multicultural education as an intervention against negative stereotype formation and the role teachers can play in implementing the curriculum.

Chapter Three address methodology. The chapter includes an extensive overview of grounded theory and focuses on grounded theory as the approach used in this study as described

by Charmaz (1996) and others. The chapter also highlights a previous pilot study, which became instrumental to the construction and design of the current study.

Chapter Four outlines the methods used to the research including application and procedures of the grounded theory and the use of focus groups in the research with teachers.

Chapter Five presents the findings of the analysis of the focus group interviews. The synthesis of findings is presented under the four main themes culled from teachers' answers including the teachers' perceptions of children's ability to stereotype, the role of families in these perceptions and possible teacher action or intervention strategies.

Chapter Six focuses on the interpretation and theoretical model of the findings and presents the substantive theory of the role teachers' perceptions of racial events play in the actions they use before, during and after such events.

The final chapter highlights how the research question was answered and the broader implications of the study findings for early childhood education.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This study explores teachers' perception of racial events in a classroom and the possible influences on those perceptions. While research on teacher perception of racial incidents in a preschool classroom setting is scarce, the literature is rich in the possible connections between teacher, child, racial socialization, and prevention of the formation of negative stereotypes based on race or ethnicity.

In keeping with the grounded theory method, this literature review was done in two parts:

1. A preliminary literature review involved consideration of a range of issues surrounding the phenomenon of interest of the study, that is, children's conception of race, young child negative stereotype formation and teachers' role in race and ethnic socialization and multicultural education. The preliminary literature review relates to aspects of the broad and complex research topic.

2. After data collection, once teachers' voices and perspectives were collected, a subsequent literature review was conducted. Relevant literature around teacher decision-making and actions, and early childhood education curriculum were added. The literature discussed in this chapter serves to set the stage for subsequent chapters. In these later chapters, literature was included to inform theorizing of this grounded theory study.

The Methods Used in Identifying Literature for This Review

The method used for identifying literature for this research study included a review of published studies from peer-reviewed journals, empirical and theoretical works from academic sources, and seminal articles. Sources searched included ERIC; PsycInfo; Academic Search Premier and ProQuest Digital Dissertations. Key search words included: racial incidents, early

childhood education, teacher socialization, race socialization, early childhood stereotype formation, and multicultural education. The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles, books, and white papers.

Structure of review

This chapter begins with a review of the relevant literature and theories related to the influence of early educators on child development. Next, early childhood education, multicultural and anti-bias education are discussed. The literature selected for inclusion in this paper encompasses research focusing on the delineation and scope of multicultural/anti-bias education, and the use of multicultural/anti-bias education as an intervention strategy to minimize negative stereotype formation among children. The socializing role of teachers, including the importance of teachers as creators of the educational environment and their role in curriculum development, is also discussed. Lastly, relevant research and theoretical implications related to teacher training in multicultural education including the level of teacher preparation to recognize and intervene when racial incidents occur in the classroom and training as a possible barrier for implementation of multicultural education curriculum are presented. The chapter concludes with a summary of this literature review.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

This qualitative research study focuses on the experiences of San Francisco Bay Area early educators. Focus groups were conducted to identify the perception of child behavior around race and ethnic interactions in hypothetical scenarios (focus group question development addressed in chapter 3). In addition, focus groups identified teacher perceptions of the usefulness

of multicultural education coursework and workshops. This study aims to better understand the connection between teacher perception of child behavior to curriculum decisions, intervention and teaching strategies.

For purposes of this study, the following key terms require definition:

Racial Incidents is a term in this study that refers to statements or actions from children that show preference (like in play interactions) based on phenotype or language, and negative comments or actions based on differences.

Discrimination is a term used in this study to describe the treatment of or making a distinction in favor of, or against, a person based on the group or category to which that person is perceived to belong to rather than on individual accomplishment (Giddens, Duneier, Applebaum, & Carr, 2009). This typically includes negative treatment on an individual or group. It involves restricting or excluding members of one group from opportunities or privileges that are available to another group. There are various types of discrimination including gender, race and ability (University of Michigan, 2014). Discrimination refers to actions.

Prejudice is a term used in this study to explain negative beliefs not acted on but nevertheless that can contribute to conscious or unconscious bias. Aboud (1988) referred to *racial prejudice* as "an organized predisposition to respond in an unfavorable manner toward people from an ethnic or racial group because of their ethnic affiliation" (p. 4). Prejudice may be directed toward an individual because of their group membership or a group as a whole (Bernstein, et al., 2000). Prejudice is an affective component of stereotypes and discrimination (Blanton, Jaccard, Strauts, Mitchel, & Tetlock, 2015).

Stereotype(s) is a term used to describe a widely held and oversimplified image, idea of an individual, group or thing. Related to prejudice and discrimination, stereotypes differ because they are viewed as cognitive and reflect expectations and beliefs about characteristics about members of groups (Garcia-Marques, Santos, & Mackie, 2006).

Early Childhood Educator/Early Childhood Education Workforce in this study will be used to refer to childcare providers who work with toddlers and preschool-age children, approximately two to six years old.

Preservice Teacher is a student who is taking coursework to become a teacher. This individual is someone who has limited experience in the classroom directly working with children.

The Influence of Teachers in Young Child Development

> *Whether standing in front of the classroom…or sitting quietly in a corner…the teacher is the center of the activity. Directly or indirectly, she controls much of the activity of the classroom and is responsible for all that occurs for the children during the day* (Spodek, 1972, p. 1)

Research has shown teachers have a significant role in the development of the children in their classroom. Minuchin and Shapiro (1983) see the teacher as the first adult outside the family to play a major role in the child's development. In early child care and education settings, teachers foster child growth and development in cognitive, language, physical and social-emotional domains. Specifically, teachers have a direct and indirect influence on their students not only by how and what they teach (content) but also by how they model prosocial behavior

(social-emotional constructs), and manage the classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Morris, 1981).

Influence of teachers and environment on racial attitude development. The environment can influence a child's racial attitudes. Studies highlight how children's racial attitudes and preferences are malleable in context. In the Cameron, Rutland and Brown (2007) study, British white children (age 6-9 years old) experienced attitude change through extended contact and interaction with refugee children of various non-white backgrounds (out-group), children in the study were more likely to change their attitudes about the out-group to a more positive assessment (Cameron, Rutland & Brown, 2007). Stephan (1999) has explored the role school plays in child stereotype formation and the implementation of strategies to prevent and reduce prejudice is important. This malleability of child racial attitudes can be attributed not only a child's maturing classification system, but also to specific, intentional acts within a school environment by teachers (Banks, 2004; Cameron, Rutland, & Brown, 2007; Stephan, 1999). The school environment plays a significant role in the change in child perception. Specific strategies like cooperative learning groups where children of diverse background work together in a non-competitive environment and moral development training to children have shown to change stereotypes in children in various age groups (Stephen, 1999).

Foundation of Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers construct their knowledge as they develop professionally (Wood & Bennett, 2000). According to Spodek, "[t]eachers' actions and classroom decisions are driven by their perceptions and beliefs" (1988, p. 13). In addition, teacher knowledge includes "the teachers' personal stock of information, skills, experiences, beliefs and memories and the assumption that sets of knowledge (epistemology) of different aspects of their work combine to become a theory

or ideology" (p. 637). Teachers have a curriculum construct that is based on the results of different experiences and the interpretation of events. Their lived experiences influence the constructs and help to determine what actions take place in the classroom (Hamilton, 2006; Spodek, 1988). Through these constructs, early educators plan, develop and implement their classroom curriculum. This can create a situation where early education decisions are rooted in their personal practical knowledge rather than the knowledge of child development theories (Baum & King, 2006; Spodek, 1988; Wood & Bennett, 2000). These beliefs are often unconsciously held assumptions about child behavior and content to be taught.

These beliefs about teaching and learning are well established by the time future teachers get to college (Wilson, 1990). They are developed through observations that takes place during the many years students spend at school (Pajares, 1992). "They include ideas about what it takes to be an effective teacher and how students ought to behave, and, though usually unarticulated and simplified, they are brought into teacher preparation programs" (Pajares, 1992, p. 322). It is these beliefs that may be a key determinant of teacher behavior in the classroom (Fang, 1996; Isenberg, 1990; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). Teacher beliefs about people, objects, and events affect their planning, interactions, and decisions (Fang, 1996). As will be discussed in the section on multicultural education, teacher belief is salient to effective implementation of multicultural education strategies (Gorski, 2009).

Teacher Decision-Making

A large body of research in teacher decision-making (grown out of general research on human decision-making) has attempted to examine the link between teachers' intention and behavior and pedagogical instruction. In their comprehensive review, Shavelson and Stern

(1981) address pedagogical decision, judgment and thoughts involved in teaching. In their

decision model, they highlight some of the factors that contributed to teachers' pedagogical

judgments (Figure 1).
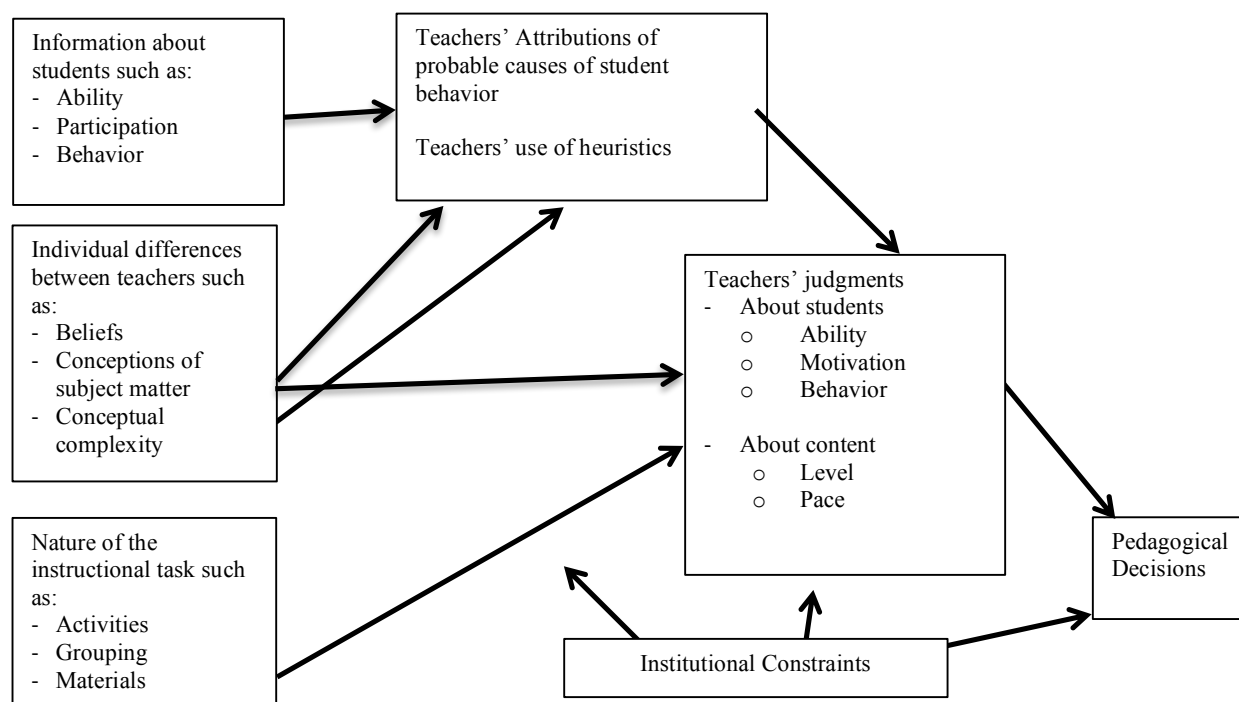
Figure 1: Some Factors Contributing to
Teachers' Pedagogical Judgments (after
Shavelson & Stern, 1981, p. 472)

One factor that contributes to teachers' cognitive process is based on attributions or how

they perceive the situation and the students (Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Teachers will draw

inferences or conclusions about students, instructional activities and institutional limitations and

chose a course of action (or intervention) based on these inferences. They will act based on how

they view the situation and similar to teacher efficacy research, how they think an outcome will

be achieved (Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Rohrkemper & Brophy, 1983). However, the majority of

the research on teacher decision-making has been conducted with teachers who work in public

K-12 educational settings. Two components of curriculum implementation are teacher thinking

and pedagogical decision-making. The role of teacher decision making around curriculum decisions are little explored for early educations. Research suggests that how teachers view a situation will influence their course of action (Shavelson & Stern, 1981). Is it possible that a similar relationship exists between the teaching strategies used in these racial situations based on the attributes early educators' assign to the situation?

Teacher Efficacy

Self-efficacy "refers to perceptions of capabilities for performance within a given situation, activity, or domain" (Cervone & Scott, 1995, p. 360). Derived from the term introduced by Albert Bandura, *teacher efficacy* is the belief teachers have regarding their ability to affect student performance, learning, or behavior (Teschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Research has established that a teacher's level of efficacy influences student learning (Parker, Guarino, & Smith 2002) and affects the teacher's feeling of teaching preparation (Darling, Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002; Ingvarson, Beavis, & Kleinhenz, 2007). Moreover, according to self-efficacy theory, it involves perceived capability rather than actual capability and differs from the person's belief they can do a behavior versus their willingness to perform a behavior (Bandura, 1992). Self-efficacy is situationally dependent, for example "people's self-efficacy to resist cake is independent of their self-efficacy to solve math problems" (Willams, 2010, p. 418). In a more salient example from the educational realm, a teacher's belief that they can intervene in a child's problematic behavior is independent of their self-efficacy to guide a child art project; in one instance they might feel competent in the other, they might feel ill-equipped to act. Again, it is the belief that you can that will impact a situation or outcome through a performed behavior.

Soodak and Podell (1996) went even further to define teacher efficacy as a multifaceted construct. In their study of 310 New York area teachers (elementary, middle, and high school), they found teacher efficacy is comprised of three types of efficacy: 1) personal efficacy - a teacher's belief about their ability to perform specific behaviors; 2) outcome efficacy - a teacher's belief that student outcomes were attributable to their actions; and 3) teaching efficacy - a teacher's beliefs about the influence of external factors like television violence and parents on the impact of teaching (Soodak & Podell, 1996). Specifically, the factor of teaching efficacy had an external element or influence so even if they felt confident in their abilities, the teacher still might "give up trying" because they expect their behavior will not have an impact on the environment (or student) (Soodak & Podell, 1996). Teachers hold a distinction between their efficacy expectations and outcome expectation ('OE'). Soodak & Podell (1996) further posit that this distinction may "underlie teachers' decision-making behavior. Perhaps teachers…low in OE look to others (i.e., special educators) when working with difficult-to-teach students because, although these teachers feel skillful, they do not believe their actions will be effective with this population." (p. 409). Teachers, who have a view that they have little influence on a situation, might not intervene. There is scare research on how teacher's efficacy influences their implementation of multicultural education in their classroom. Perhaps, teacher self-efficacy and intervention strategies around racial incidents operate through a similar mechanism as suggested by Soodak and Podell (1996).

Early Childhood Curriculum

Curriculum "refers to a conceptual framework and organizational structure for decision making about educational priorities, administrative policies, instructional methods, and

evaluation criteria" (Goffin, 2000, p. 2). Curriculum in early childhood education is a roadmap, helping teachers operationalize local, state and/or federal standards deemed necessary for children to learn and a framework on how to interact with children in a developmentally appropriate way (Dodge, Heroman, Colker, & Bickart, 2012: Goffin, 2000). Components of curriculum consist of planned opportunities for education experiences including content to be taught (e.g., literacy, math) and general teaching strategies (e.g. using interest areas) (Dodge, Heroman, Colker, Bickart, 2012). Some well-known curriculums in early childhood education are High/Scope Curriculum, Creative Curriculum, The Bank Street Approach and Montessori (Roopnarine & Johnson, 2004). "Curriculum may be viewed as a capacity builder due to its potential to influence what teachers say and do" (Dickinson, Barnes, & Mock, 2012, p. 167). Most formal curriculum has an element or elements that focus on appreciating differences and inclusion in a classroom (Dodge, Heroman, Colker, & Bickart, 2012). However, adoption of curriculum can be rife with inconsistency of implementation. Domitrovich et al. (2009) found that the quality of implementation of a curriculum is higher when a curriculum's philosophy is congruent with the teachers' beliefs. As a result, curricula that are not consistent with teachers' beliefs and current practices may be more difficult to implement (Dickinson, Barnes, & Mock, 2012). In the next sections, I will discuss the theories and conceptual frameworks that support the role teachers play in socialization and child stereotype development as well as specific strategies early educators can do to implement multicultural education as part of their curriculum in their classrooms and the challenges they face in implementation including the role of teacher attitude about diversity and training.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural Education ("MCE") is a well-established practice in the field of education, and has been for decades. MCE was established during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s to address the concern that racism and discrimination are learned (a corollary of normative child cognitive development). Typically, Multicultural Education is conceptualized as the specific curriculum implemented in a classroom, school or district to recognize and support the ethnicities of all children in that classroom, school or community (Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997; ERS, 2000; Bernstein, Zimmerman, Werner-Wilson, & Vosburg, 2000). Anti-Bias, Anti-Racist or Social Justice pedagogies are conceptually related to multicultural education. Sometimes viewed as their own distinct concepts with their own extensive body of research, the pedagogies are closely related to their overall goal of trying to reduce the formation of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination to create an equitable society. In order to be comprehensive and inclusive of all potential literature that discusses curriculum, theory and themes, Multicultural education, Anti-Bias and Social Justice will be discussed as complementary concepts under the term Multicultural Education.

Dimensions of multicultural education. Banks (1995, 2004) has conceptualized multicultural education to include five dimensions. These dimensions are established to help facilitate the implementation of multicultural education. The dimensions are: a) content integration, b) knowledge construction, c) prejudice reduction, d) equity pedagogy, e) empowering school culture. James Banks (2004) gives an extensive overview of the dimensions and typology. I will briefly describe each dimension.

Content integration is the type of information (e.g., examples, data) incorporated into all subject areas or disciplines. Teachers should use a "variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations and theories" (Banks, 1995, p. 392). Knowledge construction is an extension of content integration. It is a process that consists of the activities teachers use to help students explore biases and cultural assumptions within a subject. Knowledge construction challenges students to think critically about how knowledge is created and could be influenced by race or social class of an individual (Banks, 1995, 2004; Banks, et al., 2001). Prejudice reduction deals with the extent to which children develop and maintain racial attitudes. Concerned with the interventions, prejudice reduction attempts to address the teaching methods and materials needed to modify racial attitudes (Banks, 1995, 2004). Equity pedagogy focuses on the academic achievement of all students (Banks, 2004). Teachers should modify their techniques (e.g., teaching styles, assessment) to ensure all children, regardless of race, ethnicity or class background are successful in the classroom (Banks, 1995; Banks, et al., 2001; Banks, 2004). The last dimension in Banks' typology (1995) is the empowering school culture. An empowering school culture is one that recognizes schools are social systems, comprised of more than just curriculum or teaching materials (Banks, 1995). Schools can be intentional in their restructuring of culture and organized to institutionalize multicultural education. Race, class and gender are explicitly addressed (with labels group norming, staff to student interactions) to ensure the achievement of all (Banks, 2004).

Multicultural education as an intervention to reduce prejudice. Multicultural Education was established help prevent the formation of stereotypes and help children "unlearn" formed stereotypes (Banks, 1995). As an intervention, multicultural education specifically addresses the ethnic and racial differences between children and attempts to foster understanding of these

differences. A number of studies suggest that long-term multicultural education interventions including talking to children about race and ethnicity can reduce prejudice (Aboud & Fenwick, 1999; Bernstein, Zimmerman, Werner-Wilson & Vosburg, 2000; Stephan, 1999).

Others question the effectiveness of multicultural education as a general intervention strategy. In a meta-analysis Bigler (1999) found that, as an intervention, multicultural education curricula can contribute to moderate attitudinal change, but had weak long-term effects in the reduction of child prejudice. According to Bigler (1999), in order for multicultural education curricula to be effective, materials should focus on counter stereotype group models (e.g., women fireman). However, Banks (2004) argues that empirical studies on multicultural education effectiveness are beset with implementation and methodological issues, which is why effects are moderate. Teachers and schools are not fully implementing multicultural education; "practices within schools that violate sound principles" (Banks, 1995, p. 392). Multicultural education conceptualized only as content integration without knowledge integration or the other elements, leads to a tourist approach (Banks, 2004). The tourist approach is where race and ethnicity are treated as an additive or special component of the curriculum (Mac Naughton & Davis, 2010). This approach, where classrooms "visit" a different culture and ethnicity, focused on food and/or holidays, leads to the exoticizing of the other and not the meaningful integration needed to change prejudice thought (Mac Naughton & Davis, 2010). Putting multicultural education into practice could be difficult for teachers due to multiple elements, including the necessity for a level of self-awareness (i.e., about their own bias), and discomfort with having these conversations with children, especially young children (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006).

Other research on reducing out-group bias suggests that classroom interventions for young children can influence a child's behavior, thoughts and actions. According to Patterson

and Bigler (2006), in an experimental classroom where teachers assigned young children to novel social groups, children stated they preferred their in-group versus the out-group (highlighted in-group bias). However, observational data indicated that children did not spend less time with the out-group. Researchers hypothesize this is due to previous acquaintance of children in the sample (Patterson & Bigler, 2006). Children are most sensitive to environmental messages about groups and group differences especially when race is salient to the children (Levy, 2000; Park, 2011, Patterson & Bigler, 2006).

Role of the Teacher in Multicultural Education Implementation

The role of the teacher in multicultural education is multifaceted. The literature is in general agreement that several elements are necessary to implement multicultural education curriculum in early childhood education. These conditions include: a) teacher awareness of their own biases; b) developmentally appropriate books and materials; c) communication around similarities and differences; and d) fostering intergroup contact and cooperation (Banks, 2004; Bigler, 1999; Brown, 1998; Derman-Sparks & ABC Task Force, 1989; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Gay, 2004; Perkins & Mebert, 2005; Ramsey, 1998). The role of the teacher is to infuse their classroom environment with these elements to reduce prejudice and helps build a more equitable society (Banks, 1995).

Teacher self-awareness. Teachers need to become self-aware of their own race/ethnic background and biases to effectively implement multicultural education (Brown, 1998; Derman-Sparks & ABC Task Force, 1989; Ramsey, 1998). As Moya (2006) suggests "our identities provide us with particular perspectives on shared social worlds… thus shape our interpretive perspectives and bear on how we understand both our everyday experiences and expert

knowledge we encounter" (p. 102). Multicultural education literature for teachers recommends individuals start their journey to implementing multicultural education by first examining their own background or by doing consciousness-raising activities (Bernstein, Zimmerman, Werner-Wilson and Vosburg, 2000; Delman-Sparks & The ABC Taskforce, 1989; Gorski, 2009). Ramsey (1998) refers to the process as "challenging assumptions" (p. 99). To "challenge assumptions," teachers need to engage in extensive reading and writing of critical education and multicultural education texts, reflect on their own experiences, and dialogue with others to uncover the biases they might have of the children, families and communities where they work (Derman-Sparks & ABC Task Force, 1989, Mac Naughton & Davis, 2010; Ramsey, 1998). A teacher's self-awareness through their educational training and own experiences therefore becomes essential to making multicultural education successful with young children. However, while teachers can acknowledge the importance of diversity, how and if they implement diversity ideology in the classroom is related to the personal and experiential background including own cultural location of teachers (Fong & Sheets, 2004).

Books and other materials. To implement multicultural education teachers need to equip the classroom with books and other materials that environment with appropriate materials. In an early education classroom, these materials include age-appropriate books, images of different race/ethnicities, art materials for diverse representation (skin color crayons), and culturally diverse items in the music, manipulative and dramatic play area (Brown, 1998; Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Ramsey, 1998). These items provide an environment for children to explore concepts of race and ethnicity, along with gender and children with special needs. However, not all materials are created equal. Early educators need to ensure they pick stories and images that depict people from various backgrounds in non-

biased and non-stereotypical ways (Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989). Furthermore, research has shown that specifically counterstereotypic materials (e.g., on African American Scientists) have been found to be most effective at modifying child stereotypes (Bigler, 2005; Perkins & Mebert, 2005).

Communication around Similarities, Differences, and Race

Educators are responsible for communicating about similarities and differences. Communication can be explicit or implicit. Explicit strategies include activities about different cultures, but explicit strategies also includes asking children open ended questions, telling stories, working with children on categorizing on multiple categories and using intentional grouping of children based on differences (Araujo & Strasser, 2003; Brown, 1998; Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Educational Research Service, 2003). Another explicit strategy is the conversations teachers have around similarities, differences, and race with children. Conversations about race and ethnicity with children can be difficult (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006). Therefore, sometimes adults are silent on the issue of racial prejudice and inequality, many times because the adult is uncomfortable or thinks the child does not understand race or racism.

Katz and Kofkin (1997) found in their study that parents of very young children talk freely about gender, but not about race or race inequality. When confronted with their child noticing race, the parents shut down conversation instead of engaging in "open, age appropriate conversation about race and racial differences." "Open" conversations would include challenging child perception of race through asking open-ended questions (Katz & Kofkin, 1997; Tatum, 1997). Silence about race does not keep children from noticing race or potential developing

racial bias, it just keeps them from talking about it (Aboud, 2005; Tatum, 1997). Katz (2003) in her study longitudinal that followed 200 infants and their families (half of the families were African American, and half were European American) till first grade, found that open conversations about race with preschoolers were associated with lower levels of bias in young children. Avoiding these conversations only encourages potential stereotypes to remain unchanged (Katz & Kofkin, 1997).

If teachers discuss race and ethnic discrimination in their classroom, how a teacher engages in these conversations is important in the implementation of multicultural education. With younger children, Hirschfeld (2008) argues that when adults do discuss race, they often dilute the discussion (minimizing differences, avoiding physical description) because they believe young children cannot understand the complex issue. In classrooms of older children (e.g., middle school and high school), these difficult conversations might only happen when a racial incident occurs (Bell, 2002).

Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, and Rivera (2009) examined the dialogues about race in schools, specifically what made a teacher successful in facilitating conversations, the implications of these difficult dialogues, and the ramifications of the discussions on racial minority students. In their study, they found teachers struggle to facilitate these conversations in meaningful ways (e.g., showing sensitivity to race). This failure can reinforce minority student's lower self-esteem and increase their level of discomfort in the classroom. Furthermore, children might imitate their teacher's behavior around these difficult conversations (Bell, 2002; Sue, et al., 2009). A teacher's discomfort with discussing race and ethnicity can be transmitted to her students, sending the message that these topics either should not be discussed or it is something to be uncomfortable about (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006; Sue, et al., 2009). Although the Sue, et

al. (2009) study focused on older children, it highlights the role teacher's ability to discuss race and ethnicity in the classroom, especially when a negative racial interaction between students occurs. These difficult conversations about race, ethnicity, similarities and differences need to happen in a multicultural education classroom. However, how an educator deals with the conversations both in racial incidents and every day interactions can have a significant impact on child outcomes.

   Fostering intergroup contact. Intergroup group contact in a multicultural classroom should foster collaboration and not competition. Through collaboration, children from diverse backgrounds learn to minimize differences and be inclusive of all children. Teachers can facilitate a collaborative approach by encouraging children to work and play in small groups (Brown, 1998; Gay, 2004; Derman-Sparks & ABC Taskforce, 1989). Mixed groupings allow children to work together, appreciate, recognize and respect variations of skills and to work on conflict resolution if issues occur (Brown, 1998). Intergroup contact and collaboration "can help children to recognize the individuality of others and thus contribute to breaking down stereotypes and prejudices" (Brown, 1998, p. 91). Teachers need to create these opportunities for children in multicultural education classroom.

Teacher Challenges to Implementing Multicultural Education

   Teachers can struggle to implement multicultural education across various age groups and classrooms. There is a disconnect between multicultural education theory and the essential tenets of multicultural education (as previously discussed), and teacher practice. Implementation differences seen in multicultural education in the classroom can stem from the various teacher attitudes around the value of multicultural education, variability in teacher preservice training, an

overall lack of definition of multiculturalism, and a perception of a lack of support at the school or organizational level.

Teacher attitudes about diversity. Teachers might resist acknowledging race or racial differences within their classroom in an attempt to be "colorblind" or race neutral (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006; Hein, 2004; Norquay, 1999). In a teacher's attempt to foster equity and "sameness" within their classroom, they might maintain inequality by not addressing race-related comments when they arise (Norquay, 1999). Gay (2000) determined that to be effective multicultural educators, classroom teachers must possess skills to create a classroom environment that validates diversity, addresses students' needs and advocates equity to access educational opportunity for all students. However, students might be overtly resistant to implementing multicultural education curriculum, especially in their teacher training. Brown (2004) suggests that students, especially white students, "enter multicultural foundations courses in various stages of resistance" (p. 327). Resistance seen in teacher education comes in the form of reluctance to engage in discussions or activities, inadequate preparation and general dismissive attitude of content (Brown, 2004). However, these attitudes can change and preservice teacher training can have an impact in modifying attitudes. Brown (2004) found in her study that there is a relationship "between the instructional methods used in stand-alone cultural diversity courses and changes in the cultural diversity awareness of students" (Brown 2004, p. 335).

Teacher preservice training. To understand what influence a teacher's perceptions, attitudes and implementation of multicultural education practice, including resistance teachers might have, one needs to examine the context of teacher training programs. The educational philosophy of the institution where a teacher receives training can have an impact on their

awareness of multicultural education (Zimmerman, 2003). Some research has shown that student teachers might enter training at various stages with various perspectives on multicultural education, including resistance, but that they frequently exited the course with the same point-of-view; student teachers stay with the same viewpoint of MCE as when they entered (Brown, 1998, Brown, 2004). However, there are certain teacher preparation programs that can make a difference in attitude. Garmon (2004) addressed preservice teacher attitudes regarding multicultural education and the influences that can change in these attitudes. In his exploratory study of a white female teacher candidate, he found six factors that appeared to play a role in positive multicultural development. Of the six factors, three were dispositional including openness to diversity, self-awareness/self-reflectiveness, and a commitment to social justice. The three other experimental factors included intercultural experiences, support group experiences and educational experiences (Garmon, 2004). Specifically, educational experiences, class-related experiences and in-class activities helped raise student awareness and sensitivity to multicultural education; the student's beliefs around multicultural education changed. However, Gannon's study was of one teacher and further investigation would need to be done to examine the generalizability of his findings.

In another study of preservice teachers' perceptions and awareness of multiculturalism and diversity, Milner et al. (2003) found that, although teacher preparation programs are helping to improve teacher attitudes about cultural diversity, there is room for improvement because teacher attitudes around multicultural education have been shown to change given the right circumstances. The authors advocate infusing diversity and multiculturalism throughout the curriculum, not offering only one or two stand-alone courses. "The low numbers of courses available to preservice teachers in this regard point to obvious barriers and shortcomings among

teacher education programs across the country" (Milner, et al., 2003, p. 67). They also state that teacher preparation programs should increase the number of "opportunities [for preservice teachers] to interact with diverse groups of students" (Milner, et al., 2003, p. 67).

Although researchers are in agreement that preservice teachers need to experience more multicultural education courses, the quality of the courses is also important. What is taught to preservice teachers can vary significantly and that variation can lead to inconsistencies and mixed messages when teachers attempt to apply multicultural educational practices in their classroom. In a recent analysis of multicultural teacher education curriculum in teacher preparation programs around the country, through a content analysis of course syllabi, Paul Gorski (2009) found significant variability in the theories, philosophies and approaches used in classes. Although the syllabi appeared designed to prepare teachers for cultural diversity, "most syllabi did not appear to be designed to prepare teachers to practice authentic multicultural education" (Gorski, 2009, p. 317). Authentic multicultural education includes practices and information that matches multicultural education paradigms as conceived by Banks (2004), Grant and Sleeter, (1998) Nieto (2000), and other theorists. Instead, as Gorski (2009) and others have found (Cochran-Smith, 2004), multicultural education teacher training programs and workshops tend to focus on celebrating diversity or understanding the cultural "other"— only the first developmental stage of multicultural practice (Grant & Sleeter, 1998).

The variability and difference of multicultural education teacher preparation curriculum challenges a successful implementation of multicultural education. If the philosophies and expectations that are underlying the official curriculum in multicultural education vary, then how are teachers, from preservice to veteran, able to implement multicultural education in their classrooms?

Even if a teacher has a strong commitment to implementing multicultural education in their classroom, a teacher's commitment to diversity and multicultural education can be stymied by different messages about "what is multicultural education" in formal teacher preparation. In Fong and Sheets's (2004) qualitative study on teachers' conception and implementation of multicultural education, found "definition fragmentation" was a major barrier to implementation. "Definition fragmentation" included teachers' inability to describe multicultural education, its' components or how one would implement it (Fong & Sheets, 2004). Without a clear understanding, teachers can be confused about what to incorporate into their curriculum and that can cause teachers to minimize multiculturalism in their classroom (Fong & Sheets, 2004).

A teacher's efforts to implement multicultural education can further be hindered by an unsupportive school administration. As previously discussed, one of the major tenets of multicultural education as outlined by Banks (2004), is an empowered school culture. It is vital to the success of a teacher's multicultural education implementation to have an organizational culture within the school that supports diversity and fosters critical thinking and classroom innovation around multicultural education for the success of all students. Teachers who perceive a lack of school organizational support, believe they are not given the resources (i.e., books) or their ideas related to multiculturalism are a "forced sets of standards" (Fong & Sheets, 2004).

Killen, Crystal, and Ruck (2007) acknowledged, "if we are to reduce racial, ethnic, and gender stereotyping in our culture, it has to happen in childhood before discriminatory attitudes are firmly entrenched in an individual's social knowledge and concepts" (p. 58). Therefore, early childhood and early childhood educators become a potentially powerful contact point in the life of a child to help reduce the levels of stereotyping and prejudice seen in society. As children develop and mature their classification schema, early childhood education is potentially a perfect

intervention point to minimize the building of negative stereotypes in children and contribute to the building of positive attributes about differences (Parker, Ambady, & Apfelbaum, 2010). However, as previously stated, many teachers often ignore race related comments and maintain a race neutral stance, which might be harmful to children in minority groups (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006; Hein, 2004; Norquay, 1999). Copenhaver-Johnson (2006) quotes Ana Garcia as saying, "By acting 'as if' we do not see color, we reinforce the distance between us, rather than the similarity" (p. 13). Furthermore, conversations about race can be difficult (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006). Not knowing what to say or how to engage children in these conversations in the moment can limit what you say. It has been suggested that the scope, structure and underlying philosophies espoused in multicultural teacher education courses (taught throughout the United States), did not prepare them with pragmatic strategies to implement multicultural education (Gorski, 2009).

Landscape of Multicultural Education in California

Schools and teaching do not exist in isolation. They are shaped by and reflective of the larger society. Therefore, it is important to describe the context of the early child care educational system as it exists in California, where participants from this study were recruited. A number of state educational policy initiatives have been passed that explicitly affect teacher training around multicultural education. This section describes the Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP), which aligned and standardized all lower division coursework early educators in community colleges in California receive around child development specifically multicultural education courses.

California Community College Early Childhood Educators (CCCECE) worked with Community College faculty across the state to develop a common lower-division program of study in early care and education teacher preparation statewide, as well as derive recommendations for alignment and articulation with the California State University System. In an initial attempt to align and articulate curriculum within the ECE teacher preparation system, CCCECE convened 103 community colleges to form the CCC Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP). CCCECE's goal is to better prepare students with the skills, abilities and competencies that best support the success of young children, by offering a consistent educational core across the state's Community Colleges. The culminating work of the group produced the "Lower Division 8," [2] which includes eight unit-bearing college courses intended for all early childhood professionals. The Lower Division 8 is attached to the California Development Permit, which is the credentialing early educators need if they want to teach in most center-based programs in California.

One of the classes in the "Lower Division 8" is Teaching in a Diverse Society. Teaching in a Diverse Society is a course that

Examines the development of social identities in diverse societies including theoretical and practical implications of culture, ethnicity, stereotyping and bias as they apply to young children, families, programs, classrooms and teaching. Various classroom strategies are explored emphasizing culturally and linguistically appropriate anti-bias

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[2] The CAP 8 Courses include: 1) Child Growth and Development; 2) Child, Family and Community 3) Introduction to Curriculum 4) Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children 5) Observation and Assessment 6) Health, Safety and Nutrition 7) Teaching in a Diverse Society 8) Practicum

approaches supporting all children in becoming competent members of a diverse society

(Cañada College Early Childhood Education Department, 2016).

The CAP 8 alignment project has streamlined the coursework needed for working in the early childhood field in California. The CAP 8 courses, including Teaching in a Diverse Society, are offered at the 113 state community colleges, 23 California State Universities, and other accredited 4-year institutions highlighting how California has placed a value in teachers being prepared to teach concepts of anti-bias, multicultural education to the state's youngest students. This focus on multicultural education is also reflected in the California Early Childhood Educator Competencies (CA ECE Competencies). Established in 2011, the CA ECE Competencies outline the "knowledge, skills and dispositions that early childhood educators need in order to provide high quality care and education to young children and their families" (California Department of Education, 2016). The California ECE Competencies are organized into twelve overlapping areas: (1) Child Development and Learning; (2) Culture, Diversity and Equity; (3) Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance; (4) Family and Community Engagement; (5) Dual-Language Development; (6) Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation; (7) Special Needs and Inclusion; (8) Learning Environments and Curriculum; (9) Health, Safety, and Nutrition; (10) Leadership in Early Childhood Education; (11) Professionalism; and (12) Administration and Supervision (CA Department of Education, 2016). The ECE competencies represent a step in creating a well-designed, coordinated plan to prepare early childhood educators and to work toward building a coordinated system of high quality early childhood education in California, (CA Department of Education & First 5 California, 2011),

Within the area of Culture, Diversity and Equity, teachers are asked to show competence in "Respect for All Differences and Similarities," using "Culturally Responsive Approaches," to create a "Culturally Inclusive Learning Environments" (California Department of Education, 2016). The competencies ask teachers to view early development and learning within a cultural context, occurring through social systems such as families and communities (California Department of Education 2009a). Cultural perspectives of children, families, staff, and colleagues vary widely on issues such as differences in individual children's learning, strengths, and abilities; gender identity and gender specific roles; family composition and member roles; generational experiences and perspectives; communication styles; regulation and discipline; coordination and physical development; and acquisition and synthesis of information (California Department of Education 2009b). The idea is that early educators who learn to think from a "multicultural perspective are better able to provide opportunities that reflect each child's culture and family experiences" (California Department of Education, 2011, p. 21). The competencies ask teachers to create learning environments that reflects children's individual characteristics and values and shows an understanding cultural perspectives of self and others and helping children form a positive cultural identity.

All educators with permits to teach in California, must take at least one multicultural or diversity class. Most community colleges, state-wide, only offer one course in multicultural diversity (Cañada College Institutional Data, 2016).

Summary

In this chapter, the research regarding the role of teachers in racial ethnic socialization was explored. The literature supports that teachers can and do play a socializing role in a child's

development with respect to ethnic/racial diversity. Multicultural education research revealed that early childhood educators must be deliberate in their implementation of the curriculum for it to be successful with students. In order for multicultural education to work, teachers need to integrate all components of optimal multicultural education including books and materials, as well as conversations with children about similarities and differences. Teacher implementation of multicultural education can be challenging. Part of the difficulty in implementing curriculum, is teachers deciding when to intervene or modify curriculum. Research suggests that a teacher's perception of the situation will impact their course of action (Shavelson & Stern, 1981). A teacher's perception of the situation coupled with incongruent messages about the role and purpose of multicultural education espoused in coursework and a potentially unsupportive school administration, leaves educators at various levels of implementation. Research around multicultural education and child cognition around race has thus far focused on the child. We know little about how teachers view young child cognition around racial and ethnic prejudice and child discrimination. When teachers' perceptions of child racial and ethnic cognition are discussed, the general consensus is that they believe children are innocent. Young are incapable of this engaging in intentional racial/ethnic discrimination (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Furthermore, little is known about how teachers view their role in implementing multicultural education in their classroom and the role their perceptions of these behaviors (the child as innocent perspective) might play in overall teaching strategies. As previously mentioned, it is important to examine early childhood educators' beliefs about children's race and ethnic thoughts. Teachers play an important socializing role in a young child's development.

This study's goal is to bridge the gap in the literature by conducting focus group interviews with private- (n = 3), public- (n = 30), and family- (n = 2) based child care program staff serving

children age 3-5 years old in the San Francisco Bay Area. Specifically, the research aimed to

answer four research questions drawn from the literature provided above:

- What types of classroom behaviors or events do preschool teachers identify as racial incidents?

- What do they believe are the causes of such incidents?

- Under what circumstance do teachers believe the incidents warrant action and what actions or teaching strategies might they employ?

- How do teachers feel teacher training prepared them to act in these situations?

Chapter Three: Research Design

Introduction

This chapter gives a detailed description of the research design, strategies, and methods that were used in this study to investigate early childhood educators' perceptions of racial incidents in preschool classrooms and how their beliefs influence whether or not they identify various scenarios as a racial incidents, if teacher action is necessary, and if so, what is the nature of the action. Critical social science (CSS) theoretical perspective provides the general orientation for the work. CSS and its links to grounded theory are described. A discussion of grounded theory is presented with a summary of why this method was used in this study. Research rigor and subjectivity are also discussed.

Research Focus

This study was designed to explore how teacher action is shaped by their beliefs around children's capacity to understand and engage in behaviors that relate to race and ethnicity, and the potential mediating affect of teacher multicultural education coursework and training. Although studies speak to the importance of multicultural education to help children to minimize the formation of negative stereotypes, the voices, experiences and perceptions of educators are seldom captured (Mac Naughton & Davis, 2009). Focus groups data were collected and analyzed in an effort to develop a deeper understanding about what teachers think about young children's ability to discriminate and teacher action to address racial incidents in a classroom setting.

Early childhood educators with a wide range of educational and professional experience were included (see chapter 4 for recruitment strategy). All participants worked with young

children in preschool classroom settings at the time of the study. Their participation provided valuable insight into their beliefs and actions on racial incidents scenarios.

Given the study's intent to understand human interactions, grounded theory was selected for the potential to provide insight into complex phenomena (Glaser & Strass, 1967; Charmaz, 1996). Grounded theory method requires the researcher to consider the influence of structure and processes, contextual factors, in the design and outcomes of the study.

A Critical Social Theory Paradigm

We do not have to think of truth as something that can be established absolutely,

but merely that we can achieve improvements in understanding and explanation

in terms of their adequacy, their ability to make sense of their objects. (Sayer,

2009, p. 783)

Critical social theory (CST) paradigm is an approach to social research that focuses on combating surface-level distortions, multiple levels of reality and activism for human empowerment (Neuman, 2006). Versions of critical social science are called structuralism, and the approach can be applied to topics of race and education.

As a perspective, critical social research's purpose is not simply to study the social world, but to change it; transform social relations and interactions by revealing underlying sources, reveal hidden "truth" and work to empower people (Neuman, 2006; Sayer, 2009). In CSS, the purpose is "to explain a social order in such a way that it becomes itself the catalyst which leads to the transformation for this social order" (Fay, 1987, p. 27). This study recognizes that the topics explored including racism, discrimination and young children is complex and at its genesis

was designed to explore the thoughts, beliefs and actions of early educators around race, ethnicity and teaching practices. When discussing race and young children, CSS was selected as the paradigm for this study because of this perspective's ability to address "sensitive and loaded" topics like racism and social justice (Neuman, 2006; Sabia & Wallulis, 1983). In addition, critical social science was chosen for this study due to the paradigm's view on human agency. *Bounded autonomy* is the CSS approach to human agency that assumes human action is based on subjective choices and reasons (Neuman, 2006). People make choices, but the choices are confined by cultural-subjective schemes like values and beliefs and material factors (like physical abilities). People act on what they believe is possible (Sewell, 1992; Neuman, 2006). In researching teacher action around the topic of race and ethnicity in the classroom, it became important to capture the underlying myths, beliefs and ideals that shape behavior to build towards a theory of action.

The major elements of critical social science were incorporated into this research, including:

- Social reality has multiple layers and those layers can be uncovered through research and theory application to probe interconnections and reveal myths and contradictions. In this study, multiple layers are uncovered through the voices of teachers in the focus groups. During the focus groups, the researcher asks probing questions to illuminate possible contradictions and get at the connections between teachers, their perceptions and action.

- Scientific inquiry is transformative, focused on change and improving the conditions of people's, in this case, teachers and by extension children's, lives. In this study, exploring the under-researched topic of racial incidents in the classroom and subsequent grounded theory has possible, transformative implications for teacher training and implementation

of multicultural education in their classroom and to children modifying or preventing the

formation of negative stereotypes.

An account of my background and worldview was provided in Chapter One. This perspective

shaped the approach to the study in the following ways: they influenced the choice of research

topic; the choice of research paradigm guiding the study; the choice of theoretical frameworks;

and the data collection and analysis methods and the way findings were presented (Schwandt,

Guba & Lincoln, 2007).

Critical social science perspective views human agency as key to choices and behavior. It

is through uncovering the reasons for behaviors that help us understand decision-making,

uncovering the myths and beliefs that underpin decisions to transform society. This study

incorporates both perspectives as theories and frameworks to fully explain the complex processes

around teacher perception of racial events in the classroom. This study is trying to uncover how

perceptions (meaning) of racial events (the critical topic of racism and discrimination) influence

intervention strategies (human agency and action); probing the interconnections and revealing

myths and contradictions of these thoughts and behaviors along the way.

Grounded Theory

Classic grounded theory was used in this study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded

theory as a systematic methodological approach to qualitative inquiry that generates theory

"grounded" in the data themselves (Richards, 2009; Saldana, 2009). It presented a method that

enabled the study of early childhood educators and their perspectives of racial incidents in their

classroom. The data was generated as part of an iterative process, incorporating an exploratory

study to inform the questions and facilitation strategies used in this current study.

The grounded theory method is an approach for conducting inquiry for the purpose of constructing theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). This study is looking to construct a theory of teacher action and to describe how teacher perception of racial events in a classroom could possibly influence action taken by the teacher in an early education classroom setting.

The roots of grounded theory are in Chicago sociology, symbolic interactionism and pragmatist philosophy (Charmaz, 1996). Sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss originally developed the grounded theory method, described in the seminal work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967). Classic grounded theory allows the problem emerge from the participants' perspective while also allowing for a latent pattern of behavior to emerge (Glaser, 2005). Grounded theory is an inductive research approach and the substantive theory that was developed in this study was "grounded" in data from the field because the goal was "to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior which is relevant and problematic for those involved" (Charmaz, 1996).

Discovery is fundamental to grounded theory and includes discovering first the world as seen through the eyes of the participants and then through the "basic social processes or structures that organize that world (Sherman & Webb, 2001, p. 124). The generation of grounded theory relies on the analytic mind of the researcher who is charged with discovering and conceptualizing the essence of specific interactional processes. The resulting theory provides a new way of understanding social situation from which the theory was generated (Sherman & Webb, 2004).

Grounded theory was selected for this study based on the theory's ability to generate new theory or reformulate or clarify an existing theory from an applied perspective (Charmaz, 1996; Denzin, 1970). Grounded theory is especially useful when very little is known about a topic and

few adequate theories exist to explain or predict a group's behavior (Sherman & Webb, 2004). There is no know theory established to describe how early childhood educators' behavior during racial incidents in a classroom setting. Further, Rennie et al. (1988) propose that grounded theory methods can offer a systematic approach for discovering aspects of human experience that remain inaccessible with traditional verification methods. As discussed in Chapter 1, many of the concepts in this study are hard to quantify through traditional methodology. Grounded theory enables the researcher to study "the development, maintenance and change of individual and interpersonal processes" (Charmaz, 1996).

Grounded theory was also selected for this study due to its practical and applied implications. Research generated using grounded methodology can be classified as applied research; offering a new approach to old problems (Hutchenson, 2001). Grounded theory is uniquely situated to provide intervention due to the theories that are generated from the research. Interventions suggested from grounded theory work include curricular or programmatic change. Although this work focused particularly on the actions, interactions and decision-making processes of early childhood educators around racial events in a classroom, critical social theory and grounded theory were blended in the study, in light of the potential intervention opportunities, and situations where a change in behaviors was possible.

To accomplish the aims of CST and grounded theory in this study, specific characteristics of grounded methodology were incorporated. In the next section, I elaborate on those characteristics and explain how they were incorporated into the current study.

Six Characteristics of Grounded Theory Research

In Charmaz (1996) review of grounded theory, she outlined six distinguishing characteristics of grounded theory. Methodologically, this study generated the foundation of its

theory from these six characteristics (Table 1). In this section, I incorporate each characteristic

and highlight how each was satisfied in the methodology and creation of the study.

Table 1: Six Distinguishing Characteristics of Grounded Theory Research

1. Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis phases of research
2. Creation of analytic codes and categories developed from data, not from preconceived hypotheses
3. The development of middle-range theories to explain behavior and processes; Memo-making
4. Theoretical sampling for theory construction to check and refine the analyst's emerging conceptual categories
5. Delay of the literature review

Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis phases of research. In

grounded theory data is inductively developed during the study. As will be discussed in the data

coding section, my development of theory to explain teacher perceptions of racial events, was

rooted in the data and analysis happening simultaneously. Through analyzed data, emergent

categories were established and those categories developed into central or core categories.

Analyzed data were also used to inform future focus group prompts and questions.

Creation of analytic codes and categories that develop from data. Teacher's voices in the

focus groups were important and there is scant literature around teacher's perceptions of racial

events in a preschool classroom. Therefore, subsequent coding methodologies were based on an

emerging conceptual framework, rooted in or emerging from the teachers' own voices and

reactions to the vignettes discussed in the focus groups. Researcher analytic field notes from the

focus groups were also included in the analysis to help connect categories and dig deeper into

participant meaning. However, this researcher had no preconceived hypotheses of what the themes would be until the focus groups. As focus groups were completed and transcripts coded, my understanding of racial incidents and teachers' perspectives of these incidents emerged.

Develop middle range theories. From the analytic codes, more focused codes were established to describe the process of teacher perception and action around racial events in preschool classrooms. The aim was to analyze the data on multiple layers to get at meaning and make that explicit. Through ongoing transcription of the focus group data, I paid close attention to the language use of the participants and recognized the complexity of the decision-making processes teachers must engage in when deciding to intervene in racialize events. To further uncover the complexity of the thought processes, direct questioning was needed. Specifically, focus group questions had to be modified to explicitly ask if teachers thought a behavior as discussed in the hypothetical vignettes was "discriminatory" because just asking "what do they believe is happening in this situation" or "describe this situation to me," yielded responses that touched on the surface of their thoughts and beliefs. The specific coding of focus group data was done to gain a thick description of concrete behaviors while enabling me to make theoretical connections.

Memo-writing. Memo-writing is the intermediate step of creating analytic notes during the research process (Charmaz, 1996). These notes are then used in addition to participants' data to explicate and fill out categories; to discover patterns between individuals (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Memo-writing "consists of taking your categories apart by breaking them into their components" (Charmaz, 1996, p. 44). It is a preliminary free form writing process that helps the researcher explore ideas from the study before engaging in concrete analysis. Memo-writing is researcher conjecture about what they think it happening during their data collection process,

comparing one respondent and one focus group to another in relation to the established categories. In this study, memo-writing began early to start the process of digging into implicit and unstated meanings from the teachers.

Theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling in grounded theory is collecting more data to clarify the ideas generated from the study (Charmaz, 1996). The goal is of theoretical sampling is not to achieve generalizability of the study results, but to support the emerging theory of the study. In this research, theoretical sampling was achieved in 3 ways: 1) The qualitative study was based off of a preliminary, pilot quantitative study of teachers and their perceptions of racial events in a preschool classroom. The study, described below, generated clear insight into the need to probe deeper into teacher conception of child knowledge around race and ethnicity and their ability to discriminate as well as intervention strategies; 2) As data for this current study was being collected and after memo writing, I reflected on and compared the responses teachers were giving specifically around teacher reluctance to label a child as discriminating, so that in subsequent focus groups, more pointed questions were asked around this belief. Theoretical sampling helps further fill out categories and supports refinement of analysis, adding complexity to the research (Charmaz, 1996). In this study, theoretical sampling helped inform the development of concepts that ultimately went into the larger, grounded theory established in this study. As Charmaz (1996) discussed, theoretical sampling is best done later in the research process. In this study, theoretical sampling occurred after the fourth, out of seven, focus group. Further, more pointed, data was collected in this research related to the conception of a child's ability to discriminate and intervention strategies.

Delay of literature review. Typically, in grounded research, the literature review is delayed and done after data collection has begun (Charmaz, 1996). However, for this study, the

bulk of the literature review was done before the data was collected. The literature review was comprehensive against recommendations of classic grounded theory due to the limited research conducted around teachers and racial socialization. There were no frameworks or models that existed that explained or helped me to understand the phenomena (Charmaz, 1996). In situations where there is limited foundational information for the phenomena and because this is a study for a dissertation and had to go through a proposal phase, literature was reviewed to show merit in the study. Furthermore, this grounded research was based on an earlier pilot study as described towards the end of this chapter.

Subjectivity in Grounded Theory

One of the concerns of qualitative research is the notion of researcher subjectivity that may bias the study. Research bias is the inclusion of data based off a researcher's preconception of the phenomena (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Undeniably, every researcher has his or her own biases. However, in a qualitative study, rigorous and careful data analysis supports the generation of a less-biased understanding of the phenomenon.

As previously stated, I have worked in the field of early childhood education for over 18 years as a preschool classroom teacher, trainer for the Creative Curriculum® and as faculty of early childhood education at institutions of higher education. The various roles I've held in early education allowed for an intimate knowledge of the successes and challenges preservice teachers face in implementing multicultural/anti-bias education in their classroom. This knowledge, from three different perspectives, allows for a deep understanding of the issues discussed in this study. This connection to the topic also meant I had to check for preconceived ideas about the explored phenomenon. As Charaz (1996) suggests, "grounded theorists [can] use their background

assumptions, proclivities and interests to sensitize them to look for certain issues and processes in their data" (p. 32). Indeed, I used my guiding interest in teacher training and multicultural education as a starting point in the study. While staying mindful of my potential biases, through reflective journaling before the study and after each focus group, I used my perspective as a point of departure for developing my ideas. Through the research process, specific concepts were developed from the data. The study utilized focus groups to get a more in-depth understanding of the research questions for which there is little existing data to predict what the study participants would say to help minimize researcher bias. Using the previously mentioned focus group data analysis, transcripts were methodically coded and recoded to pull all emerging themes and not just the themes interesting to me as the researcher.

My experiences as an educator and trainer arguably have given me insight into the challenges and thought process of teachers as they plan and implement multicultural education. Oftentimes early educators are not autonomous actors in their classroom, they have to incorporate the ideas and input of co-teachers, and consider the thoughts and opinions of parents and administrators. Although I have thoroughly discussed teacher curriculum decision making, and the challenges of implementing multicultural education in Chapter 2, when I was conducting the study and doing the analysis, it was important for me to recognize that my professional background might influence my interpretation. I have always felt teacher training around pragmatic skills related to multicultural education was not enough. If and when conflict arouse between children especially around matters dealing with race and ethnic differences, I empathized with participants when, for example, they reported, "not knowing what to do." However, I did not want to assume that this was the case for all participants. To ameliorate bias, I tried to follow-up on all responses with further queries and prompts to get as much detail as

possible to assure a clear understanding of meaning. The focus group data, truly was reflective of the perceptions of the teachers and not what I think they mean around the topic. Member checking of data collected was check periodically after member statements and during the clarifying of meaning and probing.

Another factor in my subjectivity in this study is the fact that I am a college professor of child development in the San Francisco Bay Area. I am very familiar with the training early educators receive. Because of that familiarity, I may have asked fewer clarifying questions regarding scope of coursework or types of teaching strategies. Nonetheless, the data regarding these aspects are accurate to the best of my knowledge for all focus groups and teachers involved in this study.

The Use of Focus Groups and Vignettes

Vignettes in a focus group setting were used in this study. Vignettes are short stories or snapshots of hypothetical situations (Barter & Renold, 2000). "Vignettes highlight selected parts of the real world that can help unpack individuals' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes to a wide range of social issues" (Hughes, 1997, p. 384). The vignettes used in this study allowed for detailed responses to teachers' own ideas about young child behavior and how that impacted their intervention strategies. Vignettes were used in a focus group setting due to their ability to capture significant and representative moments to prompt discussion around racial incidents in the classroom focusing on teachers' practices and beliefs (Barter & Renold, 2000; Hughes, 1997; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014; Spaulding & Phillips, 2007). Out of these focus groups, a substantive theory of the role teacher perception around racial events plays in teacher action was

developed. In the next section, I will elaborate on the use of focus group and how vignettes were constructed and used in this current study.

Focus Groups

To capture the voices of teachers, focus groups were employed. Focus groups were considered the most appropriate method of data collection for this topic because they allow participants to openly discuss their thoughts and beliefs without feeling targeted, which can occur in a one-on-one interview (Lara-Cinisomo, Fuligni, Duagherty, Howes, & Karoly, 2009). Also, focus groups enable researchers to gain insight into complex issues like in this case, perceptions of racial events and possible discrimination in a preschool classroom (Keim, Swanson, Cann, & Salinas, 1999). The use of open-ended questions and probing techniques allowed for participants to dictate the content and direction of the discussion, within the broader framework provided. Furthermore, focus groups were used due to their ability to achieve a large amount of discussion on a topic; focus groups allowed for group interaction (Morgan, 1997). Group interaction allowed me to see similarities and differences in perceptions. Moreover, as early educators rarely teach alone in a classroom setting, focus groups allowed not only for contrast, but also allowed for the type of group interaction that can provide insight on participants' opinions and experiences similar to how the research topic would be discussed or challenged in a real life work situation (Morgan, 1997).

Vignettes

This research employed the use of vignettes as the main prompt or probe for study participants to explore racialized events in a preschool classroom. The use of vignettes in

developmental research is not new. However, the technique has been used more and more in developmental psychology qualitative research to "activate respondents' imagination and interest…to stimulate discussion…and promote reflection" (Angelides & Gibbs, 2006, pp 113-114). Previously, vignettes have been used to explore adolescent risk-taking behavior (Jenkins, 2006); work and role strain in female caregivers to older people (Rahman, 1996); to explore the issue of promoting unhealthy foods and beverages to children and adolescents (Jackson, Harrision, Swinburn, & Lawrence, 2015); school improvement (Angelides, Leigh, & Gibbs, 2004); cultural norms and moral and ethical frameworks (Barter & Renold, 2000); and in use with teacher professional development (Angelides & Gibbs, 2006).

As a methodology, vignettes allow for a dialogic interaction allowing participants to speak from the perspective of what "ought" to happen from a character perspective as well as what they would actually do in the situation (O'Dell, Crafter, de Abreu, & Cline, 2012). This shifting in perspectives can cause some analysis issues including confusion as from which voice the study participants speaking from and how does their narrative connect to actual, real action? To minimize this perspective shift, the vignettes for this study were written without a named teacher, or character, and allowed for the study participants to place themselves directly into the action *(see* Table 3). Furthermore, the aim of using vignettes in this qualitative study was not to get at accurate teacher action, but as a probe to achieve insight into the participants, in this case early educators, perceptual framework and thought process.

For vignettes to be effective, they must be a plausible and vivid story, while staying brief, yet complex enough to give context (Angelides & Gibbs, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994; O'Dell, Crafter, de Abreu, &Cline, 2012). The key assumption when using vignettes is that the researchers have constructed vignettes that could happen in real life or are realistic to the

participants. This is a key consideration in the design of vignettes and a familiar aspect of critiques of the method. The most usual critique leveled at vignettes is usually along the lines of: Can such brief written narratives adequately capture the reality of the context, and thus elicit responses that would be similar to reactions to real world situations? (Sleed, Durrheim, Kriel, Solomon & Baxter 2002). Some researchers who use vignettes acknowledge that they cannot always "fully capture the elements of reality under study" (Hughes & Huby, 2004 p. 45). However, researchers still suggest that the method is useful precisely because of the lack of detail. The schematic nature of vignettes means participants are left to fill in the gaps, "which may reveal important data for the research project" (O'Dell, et al., 2012, p. 704). Thus the participants' interpretation of the vignette material becomes valuable material for study rather than a methodological weakness (O'Dell, et al., 2012). For the purposes of this study, the brevity, but plausibility of the vignettes *(see* Table 2 and 5) allowed for the participants to fill in the gaps of their perspective on racial events in a classroom setting.

Developing the vignettes. To develop appropriate vignettes, researchers are encouraged to consider the topic, participants and relevance (among other factors) (Hughes & Huby, 2004). Researchers can modify existing vignettes or develop their own. Due to the lack of examples of qualitative vignettes on this particular topic, this study looked to practical examples in relevant literature including anecdotal stories and personal experiences (e.g., Derman-Sparks and The ABC Task Force, 1989; Van Ausdale & Feagan, 2001; Tatum, 1997). Teachers' perception of racial events was evaluated through a series of 4 vignettes (Table 5). The vignettes were all set in a realistic preschool context. The vignettes were drafted to take place in the classroom, building or playground and occur during normative routines in a preschool day like lunch time, and circle or group time.

Ultimately the decision to apply the vignette technique was based on the suitability of the method for researching sensitive subjects and their ability to capture opinions and perspectives (Barter & Renold, 1999). In Barter and Renold's (2000) qualitative study on peer violence in children's homes, they used vignettes to engage young people, facilitate deep discussion and responses about personal experience with violence; explore interpretations and meanings different actors ascribed to different situation and course of action; and to allow the young people with greater control over the research interaction. Through vignettes, Barter and Renold (2000) were able to gain a deeper understanding of the sensitive topic of violence recognizing adolescents do not always feel comfortable talking about themselves. The indirect nature of the vignettes allowed participants to share their insight about situations in a non-threatening way. The nature of the current study and an earlier exploratory study around race and ethnic discrimination in the classroom setting and teacher practices were deemed similarly sensitive, that talking about race and racial incidents in an open way would make teachers uncomfortable, and difficult to capture perspective in quantitative methods. A quantitative, preliminary pilot study (discussed in the next section), supports this assumption. In the study, teachers expressed being uncomfortable with the topic to the researcher. Furthermore, direct questions about the topic could be uncomfortable in a direct interview method, with teachers searching for the "right" answer instead of giving their own thoughts. In the following section, I will discuss the 2008 preliminary, exploratory quantitative study that led to the evolution of the study to qualitative focus groups.

Pilot Quantitative Study

This dissertation and current study were an iterative process, rooted in grounded theory. The first part of the iterative process was a pilot quantitative study. That study was designed to examine the extent to which early educators' ethnic identity, as measured by the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), and teacher self-efficacy influenced their perception of and intervention in racial incidents that occurred in a preschool classroom. Launched in the Spring of 2008, the goal of the study was to explore the connection between an early educator's ethnic identity, their perception of these incidents and how the level of their intervention might change based upon a) their perception of the event and b) their level of teacher efficacy, or belief that they can intervene to change behavior or classroom dynamics.

Data came from 14 early educators recruited during the Syracuse chapter of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (SNAEYC) conference. Criteria for participants were they had to be over the age of 18 and currently teaching (as lead, head or assistant teacher) preschool-aged children (age 3 to 5) in a family, group, center-based or school (state pre-k) childcare program. To explore the relationship between teacher ethnic identity and their perception of racial events, the study measured several constructs:

Teacher Demographic: Background information was collected for each participant. Educational background, gender and household income were collected. Respondents also reported information specific to the center where they were currently employed like the number of children in their center, type of preschool program, if the program was licensed and if the program had National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation. Teachers also reported the number of years they have been teaching and the

number of multicultural, race, or language-based courses, workshops or other trainings they had taken during the course of their career (Appendix A).

Ethnic Identity: Participants' ethnic identities were assessed using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Appendix B). Developed by Jean Phinney in the early nineties, the MEIM is an instrument widely used to assess the subcomponent of an individual's general identity: ethnic identity (Phinney, 1991; Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Saya, 2003). The measurement was designed to be used across racial groups. The MEIM has 23 questions and asks respondents to rate their level of agreement on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree) to questions like "I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to." The MEIM's questions separate into two subscales, Ethnic Identity (EI) and Other-Group Orientation (OGO). A recent review of the MEIM found that the two subscales have satisfactory levels of internal consistency (.80) and moderate levels of construct and criterion-related validity (Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Saya, 2003). The MEIM also asks respondents to self-report, in write-in form, their ethnic group, "In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be" at the beginning of the survey. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked again to report the ethnicity of themselves and their mother and father using nominal provided by the measurement (e.g., 2 = African American, 5 = American Indian). Ethnic identity scores were derived for respondents by reversing negative items, summing across items and obtaining means (as discussed in Phinney, 1996). Subscales of affirmation and belonging, ethnic identity achievement, and ethnic behaviors were similarly scored and calculated. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the total ethnic identity scale in the pilot study was .603.

Teacher Efficacy: Teacher efficacy was evaluated through the long version Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) (Appendix C). Invented at Ohio State University by Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy (2001), to evaluate a teacher's belief in their ability to measure, the scale teacher efficacy. The long version of the TES has 24 questions and asks teachers to evaluate their opinions on various statements on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = Nothing, 3 = Very Little, 5 = Some Influence, 7 = Quite a Bit, 9 = A Great Deal). Teachers were asked to think, "How much can you do?" on statements like "How much can you do to help your students think critically?" and "How much can you do to foster student creativity?" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Mean scores were obtained for the subscales of teacher engagement, teacher instructional strategies, and classroom management.

Teacher perception of racial events: In the pilot study, teachers' perception of racial events was evaluated through a series of 6 vignettes (Table 2) I created. The vignettes were all set in a preschool context; the vignettes take place in the classroom, building or playground and occur during normative routines in a preschool day like lunch time, and circle or group time. The vignettes were constructed from the observational research done by Van Ausdale and Feagin (1996), anecdotal evidence provided in literature by Beverly Tatum (1997) *(see* additional discussion of vignettes above).

Table 2. Quantitative Vignettes and Concepts

Vignette Scenario	Concept or Issue
Scenario 1 You are watching as two children are in the bathroom. While watching, Doug turns to Sam and says, "Why are you so dirty?" Sam says, "I'm not dirty, I took a bath this morning." Doug responds, "Your skin is darker than mine. You're dirty."	Skin color difference
Scenario 2 At lunchtime Amita, who was born in India, bought a lunch of homemade Indian dishes to school. Taylor, who is sitting next to Amita, asks, "What is that?" Amita replies, "Food for Indians". Taylor responds, "That smells funny." Amita answers Taylor by saying, "you probably wouldn't like it anyways because you are not Indian."	Ethnic difference
Scenario 3 During circle time you are singing a song native to Kenya and sung mostly in Swahili. During the song several children laugh. The children also make more than one comment on how the words in the song sound funny.	Language difference
Scenario 4 On the playground, Ann and Elizabeth are using the climbing structure as a house. Kayla attempts to join their play by asking if she can "enter the house". Ann shakes her head, saying, "No, only children with blond hair can play here." Kayla, who is African-American, responds "But I want to come in." Ann asks, "Do you have blond hair?" Kayla shakes her head no. Ann responds, "Then no, you can't come in."	Phenotype difference Skin color difference
Scenario 5 Two children are playing in the block area of the classroom. A new assistant teacher, who has been in the classroom for four weeks, comes over to the area where the two children are playing and tries to engage them in play. One child turns to the assistant teacher and says, "I don't like you because you are black." The second child says, "yeah, me too"	Skin color difference Teacher as target of behavior
Scenario 6 Gabriel has just come to your class from El Salvador and he speaks limited English. During choice time, a teacher is singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star with Adam. Gabriel walks over and sits down with the teacher and Adam to listen to the song. Mid-song Adam says, "I don't want to play with him, he speaks funny and will mess up the song." Adam gets up and walks away from the teacher and Gabriel.	Language difference

Participants were asked to read each vignette and rate them on a "Strongly Disagree" to a "Strongly Agree" 1- 4 Likert scale. They were asked if they a) believed race was a factor in the situation and b) do the feel the situation to be prejudice or discriminatory. Teachers were also asked to evaluate the type of intervention they would take from a predetermined set of options. Respondents could "Strongly Agree" (coded as 4) to Strongly Disagree" (coded as 1) to a) talk with the student(s); b) talk with the whole class/incorporate issue into classroom curriculum; c) Talk with the child's or children's parents or guardian; d) talk with their administration; and e) talk with their teaching team or other teachers in the building. Vignettes were analyzed individually to see if perception changed based on the scenario. Respondents received a mean score for their evaluation on the statements "I believe race is a factor in this situation" and "I feel this situation is prejudice or discriminatory." Respondents also received a total score on the vignettes as a group. This total score was obtained by summing across the 6 vignettes for "I believe race is a factor in this situation" and "I feel this situation is prejudice or discriminatory" and taking the mean of each summed score (race as a factor and situation is prejudice).

To examine the strength of the relationship between ethnic identity, teacher self-efficacy and intervention strategies employed by teachers, Spearman Rho technique was used calculate correlations (Appendix D). Due to the scope of the correlation matrix, only statistically significant correlations were reported. Education level had a strong, negative correlation in several of the vignettes for talking with parents and talking with the whole class, with high levels of education being associated with lower levels of agreement in using both parents or the whole class as an intervention strategy.

The relationship between the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Scale (MEIM) and intervention type was correlated using the MEIM subscales of Affirmation and Belonging,

Ethnic Identity behavior and Ethnic Identity Other. There were strong positive correlations between the Ethnic Identity Affirmation and Belonging subscale and teachers intervening by incorporating the incident into a lesson or speaking with their administration in several of the vignettes. The Ethnic Identity Behavior subscale also showed strong, positive statistically significant correlations with all of the vignettes. Teachers who had higher scores on this subscale were more likely to intervene using a variety of techniques including talking with students, their whole class and their administration. The Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSE) showed little correlation with intervention types with two exceptions: 1) the TSE Efficacy in instruction was shown to have a strong, negative correlation with intervention through speaking with the whole class in Vignette 2 ($r = -.594$, $n = 14$, $p < .05$) and 2) a strong, positive correlation with incorporating the scenario in Vignette 3 into classroom curriculum ($r = .575$, $n = 14$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, the TSE subscale of efficacy in classroom management showed a positive correlation with speaking with administration in Vignette 3 ($r = .545$, $n = 14$, $p <.05$).

Connection to Current Study

Although the results of the 2008 exploratory study suggested some relationship between teachers, their background, their efficacy, and whether or not they would intervene, I observed an interesting phenomenon. Upon completion of the questionnaire, every participant approached me and wanted to know, "what was the right answer?" Furthermore, they expressed frustration, struggling to complete the questionnaire, being uncomfortable completing the questionnaire and wanting to talk with me about the situations in the vignettes. Specifically, participants discussed not knowing what to do in the situations and how they were unsure if children could be

discriminatory or racist at this age. They not only expressed wanting to add more detail to their answers, but also a desire to explain themselves and their thoughts and actions to me in more detail.

As I conclude the study and reflected upon the experience, I began to view the study questions as difficult to answer through the use strictly quantitative methods. The goal of the preliminary study was to explore the connection between an early educator's ethnic identity, their perception of these incidents and how the level of their intervention might change based on a) their perception of the event and b) their level of teacher efficacy, or belief that they can intervene to change behavior or classroom dynamics. However, it became clear that the data and study questions needed reconceptualization. The participants in this earlier study were trying to share their perspectives, but a quantitative approach did not appear to be the "best fit." The quantitative study questions and research aims were missing the phenomenon and were failing to capture the complex nature of race and ethnicity in early education.

Through conversations with my dissertation advisor, qualitative methods, including focus groups, were determined the best way to explore teacher perceptions, attitudes and intervention strategies, because of their ability to gain insight into complex issues and the way they allow for open discussion (Keim, Swanson, Cann, & Salinas, 1999; Lara-Cinisomo, Fuligni, Duagherty, Howes, & Karoly, 2009). To fully exploit the benefits of qualitative methodology, and derive a true understanding of teacher thinking around young child conception of race, ethnicity and discrimination, a grounded approach was needed. From this grounded approach, an inductive theory of the phenomenon can be built.

The current study, discussed in Chapter Four, builds off of this earlier study, but with significant revisions in methodology including data collection strategy, vignettes, and

underlining theory. Classic grounded theory enables this phenomenon to be explored through the teachers' own voices. Their narrative and dialogue becomes the basis for understanding the role teacher perception plays in intervention around racial events in a classroom.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher gave a detailed overview of the methodology used in the current study. The research focus of this study was presented with an overview of classic grounded theory and other methodological and analytical methods like focus groups and vignettes. The rationale for using grounded theory was provided, and as the rigor and ethical considerations raised by the study were laid out. The background, construction and research findings of a previous quantitative study were presented, subsequent to the discussion on qualitative methods to highlight a) the appropriate nature of doing qualitative research on this topic and b) the intensive, iterative process, rooted in grounded theory, of the current study. In Chapter 4, the specific research design for the study will be addressed, including a description of participants, data collection and analytic methods.

Chapter Four: Study Methods

Design of Current Study

As Maxwell (2005) describes "in a qualitative study, you are interested not only in the physical events and behaviors that are taking place, but also how the participants in your study make sense of these and how their understanding influences their behavior" (p. 22). Moreover, qualitative research provides an avenue for interpretation of the research participants' social world by allowing a focus on their "experiences, perspectives and histories" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 3). Thus, a qualitative study was designed, in order to develop a deeper understanding of early educators' perceptions of racial events in preschool classrooms and intervention strategies. Specifically, focus groups were used to capture early educators' perceptions of hypothetical situations in a preschool classroom.

The current study incorporated lessons learned and data gathered from an earlier quantitative study (discussed in Chapter 3). Modifications were made to the pilot study's questionnaire and a focus group protocol was developed to elicit responses and conversations the participants *(see* Appendixes B and C). Grounded theory provided a framework where results and subsequent focus groups emerged from the teachers' voices and reactions to the study's vignettes. Using the grounded theory as highlighted in Chapter 3, teacher beliefs, perceptions and actions became clearer.

Research Questions and Objectives

As previously mentioned, in the state of California, early educators are required to take a least one class in multicultural education as part of their credentialing. This coursework about teaching in a diverse society is part of CA Early Learning Teacher Competencies, state standards

that focus on the knowledge and dispositions all educators in California should have. However, implementing multicultural education is more complex than one piece of coursework. Generally, teachers implement multicultural strategies by reading multicultural books at story time to a large group of children, selecting and displaying books with multicultural themes and pictures of diverse children and/or incorporate themes of diversity into their curriculum content. Teachers are taught in their diversity coursework and non-unit bearing coursework to build a classroom environment that is responsive to all cultures (Gorski, 2009). In teaching and training preservice teachers and the early education workforce, I was routinely confronted by the challenges faced in implementing multicultural education and working in a diverse setting. Teachers who finished multicultural coursework, but were unsure how, beyond posters or books focused on diversity, they were how to engage children who comment or note differences based on race or ethnicity. Observing the level of unease and indecision educators faced around issues of race and ethnicity in their classrooms, I was interested in what happens when the educators were challenged by child behavior involving race and ethnicity. This interest led to the 2008 pilot study, which utilized a quantitative approach. As previously stated, this earlier study helped to uncover the complex feelings teachers had around matters related to race and ethnicity in their classroom. Although, the earlier study allowed for some insight into the topic, there was a gap. Research had yet to discover what happens when there was a cultural conflict in an early childhood education classroom. Teachers' voices needed to be heard around these racial incidents. Their perspectives could illuminate what needs to be included in future teacher training and ongoing professional development. Thus, I sought to examine the extent to which teacher perception influences teacher decision-making around intervention and curriculum development. To this end, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1) What types of classroom behaviors or events do preschool teachers identify as racial incidents?

2) What do they believe are the causes of such incidents?

3) Under what circumstance do teachers believe the incidents warrant intervention?

4) How do teachers feel teacher training prepared them to intervene in these situations?

Throughout this process, the study participants identified some of the thought processes and driving factors influencing their intervention strategies.

The Participants

The study recruited 35 early childhood educators who currently teach children age 2 to 6 years old and work in the San Francisco Bay Area. Participant teachers were from a variety of ethnicities, and classroom configurations (i.e., child demographics) *(*see Table 3). Thirty-five participants was the saturation number, where I would hear the same things from new groups that have been heard in other groups (Morgan, 1997). Recruited teachers were placed in focus groups of 5 to 7 participants. A total of 7 focus groups were held during the spring and summer of 2014.

A purposive sample was used to identify individuals for the focus groups. Specifically, early educators were recruited from the EDvance SF program. EDvance SF seeks to support early childhood education quality by focusing on early educator continuing education. Through community workshops and case management, EDvance SF participants receive continuous access to an intentional network of student support services designed to address barriers to continuing education and professional development. EDvance SF serves over 400 diverse early educators who live and work around the Bay Area.

A letter of intent was drafted by this researcher, reviewed by the research committee and signed by the Director of the EDvance SF program. The letter of intent was submitted concurrently with this study's submission to Syracuse University's Internal Review Board (IRB).

When the proposal was approved by Syracuse University IRB, individuals were contacted

through preschool site visits, and emails to verify their eligibility for inclusion in the study (i.e.,

they provided child care for preschool-aged children).

Description of Participants

The study participants were a diverse group of early educators. Strauss and Corbin (1990)

suggest that samples in grounded theory are better when they reflect as much variation as

possible. All of the study participants were female and the average age was 39 (max = 62, min =

21). The teachers worked in a variety of center-based classroom settings including Head Start

programs (9.5%), and university laboratory schools (4.8%), with the majority of study

participants working in an "other center-based" program (85.7%). "Other center-based"

programs include community-based child-care centers not affiliated with a school district or

college/university. A majority of the teachers had some college 52.4% (Table 3). The average

years of classroom experience was 8.98 years (max = 28 years, min = 1 year). The participants

were not new to the field or preservice teachers, but individuals who have worked with children

before even if they did not have a college bachelor's or an associate's degree. The racial/ethnic

background of the participants was also diverse *(see* Table 3).

Table 3. Participant Demographics (n = 35)

Race/Ethnicity		Education		School		Classroom Role	
White	14.3%	Some College	52.4%	Other Center Based	85.7%	Assistant Teacher	71.4%
African American	28.6%	Associates	42.8%	Lab School	4.8%	Lead Teacher	23.8%
Asian	14.3%	Bachelor's	4.8%	Head Start	9.5%	Site Supervisor/Center Director	9.5%
Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	42.9%						

At the beginning of the focus groups, participants were asked, "what type of curriculum was used in their current classroom" (Table 4). Teachers reported a variety of curricular frameworks used in their classroom. The majority of the teachers described a non-specific "play-based" curriculum. Other responses ranged from the Creative Curriculum® to "following children's interests." None of the teachers used an explicit anti-bias or multicultural education curriculum. Although, the specific named curriculums like Creative Curriculum® and Project Approach provide guidance on how teachers should create a culturally appropriate learning environment.

Table 4. Type of Curriculum Used in Classroom

Type of Curriculum	n	%
Creative Curriculum® A curriculum where teachers follow the environmental framework (interest areas) and adult-child interaction philosophy of the creative curriculum. The curriculum is play-based and emergent (based on child interest)	7	20.0%
Play-based Play-based curriculum in this study is a generic term for classrooms that follow the belief that play is best. Teachers subscribing to this philosophy have a classroom where children spend a majority of time in play either engaged in interest areas (e.g. blocks, dramatic play), free negotiation of the classroom or outside	15	42.9%
Project Approach Curriculum that focuses on long-term studies or investigations	4	11.4%
Children's interests Curriculum based on what children are interested in (may or may not be play based)	9	25.7%

Ethics and Protection of Human Subjects

All participants were told that a risk in participating in the study was a potential loss of privacy. Risk was minimized, however, by keeping all research data in an encrypted document,

on a password-protected computer. All focus group participants were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

Also, because the focus groups included discussions of personal opinions, extra measures were taken to protect each participant's privacy. I began each focus group by asking the participants to agree to the importance of keeping information discussed in the focus group confidential. Each participant was asked to verbally agree to keep everything discussed in the room confidential, and was reminded again at the end of the group not to discuss the material outside. Participants were further told that they were free to skip any question that made them uncomfortable. They were also informed that they could withdraw their participation at any time, without penalty. My advisor and I were the only people who had access to the data collected. For confidentiality purposes, no participant names were used. The pseudonyms given to all the participants and centers were used in my notes as well. Finally, data codes linked to person's name will be stored after one year.

Procedure for Data Collection

Each focus group met for approximately 1.5 hours in a room in the community or the teachers' center and place of work. In an effort to facilitate productive group discussions, and based on the earlier focus group pilot (Morgan, 1997), participants were assigned to groups according to position or role in the classroom (e.g., assistant teacher, lead teacher, or center director). All focus groups were led by a moderator, and with the permission of the participants, all focus group discussions were video recorded. The video for each focus group was transcribed in its entirety.

Focus Group Protocol

As discussed in Chapter 3, the focus group protocol followed a moderately structured group format (Morgan, 1997), which uses prewritten questions and vignettes, but allowed for deviations and additional probing questions where appropriate. A summary of the focus group questions and activities is provided in the Appendix B. The initial questions were "warm-up" questions to get individuals discussing how long they've been in the field of early childhood education and to explain the type of curriculum was implemented at their current place of work. The next series of questions used the vignettes to guide thought and answers. A vignette was read and each participant was asked to answer questions, initially round robin style, to assess if they believed the interaction in the vignette was discriminatory, if they would intervene in the situation and how. In instances where teachers express this viewpoint, probing questions were asked to ascertain why they have this belief (Appendix C). After the initial round robin reponses, teachers were welcomed to speak freely and interject as they pleased.

The use and modifications to vignettes. Teachers' perceptions of racial events was evaluated through a series of 4 vignettes (Table 5). The vignettes were all set in a realistic preschool context and adapted from the earlier quantitative study. The vignettes were drafted to take place in the classroom, building or playground, and occur during normative routines in a preschool day like lunch time, or circle or group time. Modifications made to the vignettes from the original quantitative study included a variety of situations educators might face in the classroom. Instead of focusing on just race or language, the vignettes were modified to include scenarios about gender and an explicit vignette that used a racial epithet, "nigger" in context because it is a loaded, negative term.

The modifications to the vignettes were made to better understand teacher perception and/or intervention strategy. Research shows that gender discrimination is seen as easier to discuss with children (Hirschfield, 2008). The difference in participant responses to gender versus race vignettes was not the primary goal of the study. However, a gender scenario was specifically added to see how participants would view possible child prejudice or exclusion based on a non-race or ethnic characteristic and if intervention strategies would vary based on the type of prejudice being displayed in the scenario. Similarly, "nigger" was used to better understand teacher thoughts and response in a situation where the language was harsh, overtly negative, and less ambiguous than the other scenarios. The scenarios looked at overt negative racial language (Scenario 4), less obvious "questioning" of a child's skin color (Scenario 2), language differences (Scenario 3), and a gender interaction (Scenario 1).

 Participants were asked to respond when a vignette was read aloud during the focus group. All participants had the opportunity to respond to each vignette. When each focus group participant gave their opinion on a vignette, the moderator followed up by asking, "What do they think is happening in the scenario," "Why do you think this interaction is happening?" and "how would you respond in this situation?" This was follow by an additional question, , "do they feel the situation is racist or discriminatory?". Although this is a leading, closed-ended question, previous experience made it clear that, most groups needed to be explicitly prompted to discuss terms like racism, discrimination or prejudice. From a grounded theory perspective, this was done not to shape participant responses, but to build an understanding of how teachers view these incidents. Part of the findings and discussion will address how teachers did not view every situation as discriminatory. Part of the grounded nature in this study is the teachers' perception of

young children and their ability to discriminate. Therefore, the leading, closed-ended questions

were to prompt discussion as well as examination of these types of situations.

Table 5. Qualitative Vignettes and Concepts

Vignette Scenario	Concept or Issue
Scenario 1 Two boys are playing in the block area of the classroom. Annie comes over to the area where the boys are playing and after watching for a few minutes asks if she can join in. One of the boys says, "No, girls can't play in here." The second boy says, "yeah, girls shouldn't play with blocks"	Gender difference
Scenario 2 You are watching as two children are in the bathroom. While watching, Doug turns to Sam and says, "Why are you so dirty?" Sam says, "I'm not dirty, I took a bath this morning." Doug responds, "Your skin is darker than mine. You're dirty."	Skin color difference Colorism
Scenario 3 Gabriel has just come to your class from El Salvador and he speaks limited English. During choice time, a teacher is singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star with Adam. Gabriel walks over and sits down with the teacher and Adam to listen to the song. Mid song Adam says, "I don't want to play with him, he speaks funny and will mess up the song." Adam gets up and walks away from the teacher and Gabriel.	Language difference
Scenario 4 On the playground, Ann and Elizabeth are using the climbing structure as a house. Kayla attempts to join their play by asking if she can "enter the house". Ann shakes her head, saying, "No, only children with blond hair can play here." Kayla, who is African American responds, "But I want to come in." Ann responds, "You're a nigger so you can't come in."	Racially discriminatory language

To explore the relationship between teacher training and their perception of racial events,

as part of the focus group protocol, information also collected on participants included:

Teacher Demographics. Demographic information was collected for each participant.

Information collected included the educational background, gender, and age of the teacher

participants. Teachers also stated in the focus groups the number of multicultural, race, or language-based courses, workshops or other trainings they had taken in the course of their career (Appendix B). Courses are defined as a class taken at a university or college where the individual received college credit toward a degree. *Workshops and trainings* are defined as professional development opportunities or seminars that meet once for a few hours and do not have college credit attached upon completion.

Teacher Efficacy. The study attempted not only to examine whether a teacher intervened, but their type of action or intervention. It was important to study action in racial events because to reduce racial and ethnic stereotypes in young children, some type of intervention is needed (Killen, Crystal, & Ruck, 2007). Teacher efficacy was evaluated through focus group questions asking how prepared participants felt to intervene in specific situations in the classrooms (as discussed in the vignettes). Unlike the 2008 pilot study, intervention strategy was not predetermined. Teachers were allowed to answer intervention strategies in an open-ended format.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Using grounded theory, an inductive approach in data analysis described by Strauss and Corbin (2008), was particularly appropriate for this study since the goal was to develop connections among the emergent themes in the data and build theory rather than apply existing theory to the data I collected. A number of procedures for coding and memoing were used in order to develop analytic categories from the data. The following procedure was used to organize and combine the codes and themes that I identified. The objective was to use the descriptions derived from this analysis to develop a deeper understanding about teachers' perceptions of

racial incidents and gain insight into their intervention strategies.

Transcriptions of the focus groups were analyzed using a modified long-table approach where transcripts were categorized based on questions and answers (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Using the long-table approach, in vivo codes were inductively generated from the transcripts using the grounded theory method. According to Charmaz (1996), one hallmark of grounded theory is that data collection and analysis happen simultaneously. As data was collected in this study's focus groups, questions and responses were briefly analyzed to see if modifications were needed. This enabled the research's early pilot study, with the emerging themes of the challenges and struggles participant teachers faced in responding to the vignettes, to inform later data collection including questions and the themes of the focus groups. As focus groups were conducted, transcripts were briefly analyzed using a long-table coding methodology, searching for common themes. Follow-up questions were then established as prompts to further explore a theme, following up on topics that were, or were not, explicit in the focus groups. For example, in the first focus group, the participants mentioned how the "child does not know what they are saying." Out of that focus group, I started to ask the follow up question of "why do you think the child is saying this?" *(see* Appendix C).

Themes and theory were inductively developed during the study and emerged from participants' responses to the vignettes. (Maxwell, 2013; LaRossa, 2005). From these processes, an index of themes was developed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). As patterns or themes are identified, "dimensionalization" was carried out. *Dimensionalization* allows for differentiation of perceptions and strategies (or identification of the properties of categories) that emerge from the focus groups (LaRossa, 2005). The dimensions of the concepts classified from the focus groups allowed for further categorized, or clustered, as needed with similar concepts, "subsumed under a

higher level heading" (LaRossa, 2005, pg. 843). Additionally, data was analyzed to see

commonalities and differences among the groups interviewed for this study. To make sense of

the themes, the collected data was connected to the research questions (Table 6).

Table 6. Data-Planning Matric for a Study

Questions	Why I need to know this?	Data that will answer the question
What types of classroom behaviors or events do preschool teachers identify as racial incidents?	To assess teacher perception of "racial incidents"	Teacher focus group vignettes
What do they believe is the cause of such incidents?	To discover what early educators attribute to the child behavior and interactions	Teacher focus group vignette follow up questions
Under what circumstance do these incidents warrant intervention?	To assess the relationship between belief of an issue and intervention strategy.	Teacher focus group vignettes and follow up questions
What is the role of teacher training or multicultural education workshops in intervention?	To assess the impact of teacher training or workshops on perceptions and/or interventions	Teacher focus group vignette follow up questions

Grounded theory was used in this study due to the ability of grounded research to

understand what people are doing, which can lead to understanding the meaning in action

(Charmaz, 1996). The codes in this study emerged in vivo from the data. Each line of the data

was examined. This line-by-line coding was done on over 7000 lines of transcript data allowed

for the analysis to be built from the ground up. The initial line-by-line coding offered a wide

range of topics, but progressively, in each new focus group, informed follow up questions or

prompts (Appendix C). The advantages of using in vivo coding was it allowed that the analysis

to be focused on participants' accounts and on eliciting their perspective, then the perspective of

existing literature (Elliot & Higgins, 2012). The perspective of the participants accounts and the perspective of existing literature was synthesized by the researcher through a review of collected literature and with conversations with the researcher's advisor after focus groups 3 and focus group 5.

Out of the line-by-line coding, more focused coding was established. Focused coding is "less open-ended" and more directed than line-by-line" (Charmaz, 1996, p. 40). Focused coding allowed for a re-analysis of the earlier focus groups, with larger conceptual coding categories in mind. Analytically, the goal was to create a larger category to encapsulate many subthemes. For example, the first major finding, out of the focus groups, was the "child as blameless" of their action. However, that category encompasses the subthemes of "child as curious," "child as innocent" and "exclusion as developmentally appropriate." Those subthemes moved from a code within a transcript to the level of category. Categories allow for the synthesis of data and allow for the uncovering of the possible processes at play in the hypothetical vignette scenarios.

As a researcher I had to be careful not to allow the earlier literature review to color my analysis of the data. In grounded theory, the categories should not be presupposed. As researcher, I should not have an idea of what I expect participants to say (Charmaz, 1996; Elliot & Higgins, 2012). In the beginning of the data analysis, I did a review of my field notes from the pilot study to check to see if there was a link to the literature. I then reviewed my codes and field notes after the focus groups were completed. I timed this review to be completed after I had the grounded theory generated. Very few of the codes were linked to the earlier literature review, which focused on teacher socialization practices and the foundation of young child concept of race and ethnic awareness. The literature review, although comprehensive, was further expanded after data collection to incorporate more research around teacher decision-making. Specifically, due to

the earlier quantitative study in 2008, the basic conceptualization around child understanding of race/ethnicity, negative stereotype formation, teacher role in socialization and multicultural education was compiled before the current study data collection. Literature on teacher decision-making, early childhood curriculum, and teacher's specific role in multiculturalism implementation and teacher training was added after data collection in this current study. The first part of the literature review preceded the 2008 quantitative study and the second part of the literature review was conducted as part of this current dissertation study.

Data Analysis Procedural Steps

My procedures for data analysis included the following steps.

1. As previously mentioned, I reviewed the data for each focus group before the next focus group. I did this review by transcribing video from the focus group and reviewing the field notes made during each group, making notations and line-by-line coding to refine my questions. In doing so, my preliminary data analysis influenced subsequent data collection by modifying questions (as needed) and adding prompts. This relationship between data collection and analysis is a hallmark characteristic of grounded theory.

2. At the completion of data collection from all focus groups, I reread the transcribed interviews and field notes, some for the second or third time. This provided an opportunity to understand teachers' perceptions of racial incidents overall. I also started to move the line-by-line coding into broad categories. These categories were: opinions on child behavior; intervention strategy; external influences; teacher training. These categories, developed inductively, were very broad and in

a subsequent rereading, I expanded the coding categories. The list of expanded

coding categories is included in Appendix D. After focus group 3 and focus group

5, members' perspective of the codes were checked for validation. Occurring at

the end of the focus groups, as part of the fieldwork, participants were given a

chance to give their perceptions on a summary of the preliminary codes. This was

done to check my understanding of the phenomenon and to check for accuracy

and to improve study validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3. Using the expanded list of coding categories, I reread the transcripts in

    chronological order for a third and fourth time. At that time, I started to pull

    representative excerpts of data from each coding category. Through this reading

    of the coded data, connections between the data and study questions became more

    apparent. Some of the data from a coding categories were collapsed into the main

    themes or subthemes addressed as the findings in Chapter 4. Table 7 lists the 4

    themes (and 7 subthemes), grouped to highlight the codes for each theme and

    subtheme.

Table 7: Themes and Corresponding Codes

Theme	Coding Category
1. Blameless Child *Subtheme: Curiosity and Confusion	Child as Innocent Child is Curious Child is Confused
*Subtheme: Exclusion and Developmentally Appropriate *Subtheme: Difficulty Identifying Discrimination	Typical Child Behavior Unsure/Unclear What is Happening Conflict in What is Happening/Revision of Previous Belief
2. External Influences on Child Attitudes and Behavior around Differences *Subtheme: Fault of Family	Parents to Blame Parental Negative Language Parents as Major Influence Other Family Members as Problem Family Values
*Subtheme: Media and Community Exposure	Television/Radio/Video Programs Community Exposure (to Negative Behavior)
3. Role of Schools on Child Behavior	Role of Teacher Role of School Support of School Participants Could Not/Did Not Teach This Content Experience of Participant Class Diversity
4. Action or Intervention Strategies *Subtheme: Intervention with Families	Materials in or Added to Classroom Conversations Between Teacher and Child Conversations Between Parent and Teacher Pattern of Behavior
*Subtheme: Influence of Coursework	Content Knowledge Skills Needed to Intervene What Was Learned in Coursework

Saturation in Grounded Research

Grounded theory is a highly iterative methodological approach to data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 1996). One of the consequences of employing such an approach is deciding when to stop collecting data. In the creation of grounded theory, the data leads to the analysis and collection of more data and drives further investigation, revisions of research questions spurs new directions. In the process of employing grounded theory, it is possible to end data collection early (before true theoretical insight has been achieved) or maintain data collection in perpetuity, constantly searching for the next idea or insight thinking that will lead to a better explanation of the research question at hand. The point at which theoretical saturation is achieved is the point at which diminishing returns are obtained from new data analysis, or refinement of coding categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Diminishing returns are when the theoretical constructs fit with existing data and the comparison of theoretical constructs with new data yields no significant new insights. In this study, theoretical saturation was reached during the seventh focus group. The teachers in that group gave similar answers and no significant new insight was gained towards the study questions.

Summary

This chapter provides a description of the design of this qualitative study on teachers' perception of racial events in a preschool classroom that was conducted in the San Francisco Bay area with 35 early childhood educators. Data for this study was gathered using focus groups that centered on participants' responses to racial incidents vignettes. This chapter, along with Chapters 1, 2, and 3 provide the basis for understanding the findings of this study. The findings of the data are reported in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, I offer an analysis of the focus group findings, highlighting the overarching themes. The four themes that will be discussed are: 1) children are

"not to blame" for their actions and their behavior can be explained as developmentally

appropriate or due to curiosity/confusion; 2) there are external influences, such as parents and

media, which contribute to the attitudes and behaviors children have about differences; 3)

schools play a minimal influence on child behavior and they are learning these attitudes

somewhere else; and 4) intervention strategies are varied and teacher training ill-prepares a

teacher to act. In Chapter 6, I suggest a theoretical model describing the role teacher perception

of racial events has on teacher action. In the final chapter, I discuss the implications for practice,

limitations of the study and suggests areas of further research.

Chapter Five: Report of Findings

Overview

As this chapter will reveal, with the use of the study's vignettes teachers reflected and speculated on a child's ability to form stereotypes and act on those stereotypes. From the teachers' view, children simply do not have the capacity to engage in stereotypes, discriminatory behavior, or racism. According to the study participants, children at this age (2-6 year-olds) don't know what they are saying and therefore, are "innocent." This belief that the child is blameless in their words and actions, contributes to the second theme of educators focusing on the role parents and family play in the formation of negative child attitudes and opinions about race and ethnicity. Since the child is not the source of the issue, due to their innocence, the study found teachers place the behavior on culture, community and family. Additionally, in this chapter, insight was gleaned on participants' suggested intervention strategies and the role multicultural education courses, training and workshops play in that decision-making. I conclude this chapter with a theoretical model suggesting how teacher action around racial events in the classroom is influenced by many factors including their perception of the child, their teacher training and other external influences.

The Findings

The Blameless Child

In every vignette, regardless of the theme of race, gender, or language, participants mentioned how the child was not at fault for the statements they made. Participants explicitly stated that children as young as three do not have the concept of discrimination or race and that the child is innocent of their behavior. Children do not understand their behavior for example as

racist or sexist. Pat[3], an African-American early educator for over 8 years, gave what became the typical focus group sentiment regarding the potentially discriminatory behavior, *"if you're that young it is not intentional."* Participants felt that children as young as three do not have the concept of discrimination or race yet and that the child is innocent of their behavior. Melissa, a Latina early educator for over 10 years, stated, *"Kids haven't developed enough to figure out what they believe."* Therefore, according to some participants, the child has not reached a developmental threshold, presumably cognitively, to be aware of what they are saying and are therefore not responsible. Samantha (White, teacher 4 years) takes it a step further and remarked, "You cannot blame the child for what they've learned from home." Thus, in the teacher's own language, not only is the child "blameless," but also the source of the root of the behavior resides in the household.

Brenda, an Asian teacher of 15 years, was adamant that children are incapable of prejudice thought processes and discrimination. In an interaction around the language vignette (Vignette 3), Brenda felt *"A child saying something like that has to have heard it somewhere like why would they even think this because their brains aren't developed enough to think there is something wrong with this person because he speaks a different language."* I probed to better understand what Brenda meant. The following interaction highlights an interesting paradox around child cognition and accountability of actions:

Researcher: *'You were saying how brains aren't developed at this age [to discriminate or to be prejudice]. Would you say their brains are developed enough for children to get mad at each other or deceive at this age?'*

---

[3] All names are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of study participants.

Brenda: *'Well I think being mad is, what do they call that- the reptilian brain, it takes a while for children to self-regulate and being angry is part of being a child, throwing a tantrum, crying, screaming at the other child, that's just their way of, because they don't know how to control themselves yet and I've seen them.'*

The child does not have the cognitive capacity to act in an intentional way about matters such as race, gender, or ethnic differences. According to Brenda, they operate with an "animalistic brain;" they don't know how to control themselves. Therefore, the words they are using in these racial incidents are not conscious choices; they don't know what they are saying. This innocence can be attributed to the subthemes of curiosity and confusion, and exclusionary play as developmentally appropriate.

Curiosity and confusion. Cindy, a White teacher for 3 years, gave more insight to why children are blameless in their actions. When discussing what she felt was happening in the gender vignette, she intoned,

I feel like children aren't necessarily born with the innate reaction to discriminate or leave people out, I think it's a learned trait so with that being said, it could be argued that they are discriminating against this girl that she couldn't play because she's a girl but I think that that's just something that they have learned to say but not necessarily mean it to be discriminatory.

Children do not mean to behave as they are acting. There is this innocence or naiveté to their behavior. This innocence was not only attributed to age, but lack of cognition around right and wrong and social norms, specifically speaking out of turn because they are learning what is "okay" to say in public.

> *At this age, they don't really have a filter about what is a nice thing and what is a not nice thing to say, they are just saying what they think out loud and just trying to gauge what the reaction is going to be and that's how they learn what is right and what is not right to say.* Megan, Latina teacher 3 years

Furthermore, participants' echoed a belief that young children might act in a discriminatory manner, not because they are truly discriminating, but because of a child's natural curiosity or confusion of differences. This curiosity comes from a lack of exposure or mixing up words. "*They are curious at that age and I don't think they're coming from a negative place, I just think that it's curiosity*" (Lola, Latina teacher 18 years). The lack of exposure to different ethnicities explains behaviors as described in the vignettes like walking away from a situation as described in the third vignette where a child leaves a situation where a different language was spoken. "*Yeah, he could have never been exposed and it's just scary for him*" (Karen, African American teacher 28 years). Ruth (Latina teacher 3 years) elaborated:

> *I think like they were all saying, 'it's something different' and he didn't know how to react to that and to express it, that was his only way to express it, like I'm going to go since I don't really know how to say what is that language he is speaking,*

you know where is he from, he didn't know at that moment to be like, 'let me ask

him'.

As Megan (teacher 3 years) stated, "*I think he's just confused, he didn't understand the*

language, maybe he never heard a different language before; it's like baffling to him".

Therefore, the behavior of walking away, like in the vignette, is understandable.

Exclusion as developmentally appropriate. Another subtheme highlighted in the focus

groups to support participants' belief that children are innocent was the concept of exclusion as a

normal part of young child development.

> *[This is] exclusionary play, because I think that's what I view this more as*
>
> *instead of like discrimination or something like that, it's always going to come up*
>
> *I think especially with the 4 year olds… I really think that developmentally it's*
>
> *totally appropriate.* Samantha, White teacher 6 years

Children are "*choosing [their] friends based on similarity, it's not that the child is being*

discriminative" (Sue, African American teacher 11 years). It isn't until children are older that

these statements and actions are not "normal." In one focus group, when probed to discuss when

a child can have negative intent, participants expressed that we can't see negative intent until a

child is older "*7 or 8*" (Melissa, Latina teacher 10 years) or until they are going to "*public*

school" (Justina, Asian teacher 3 years).

Identifying discrimination is difficult when children are innocent. Participants went so far

as to contradict themselves in their answers even when they thought an interaction could be

discriminatory, underscoring a belief that the child is still somehow naïve of their actions, or

innocent and blameless for their behavior. In vignette 4 where a child used the word "nigger" toward another child (…*You're a nigger so you can't come in*), some teachers thought that the event was discriminatory because the child used a derogatory word in context or an "intentional way." However, participants struggled to identify this vignette situation as discriminatory. In vignette 4, participants still would excuse the child's behavior. One participant, when discussing possible intervention strategies, when speaking to the child who was called a "nigger," she went as far as to apologize for the "offending" child's actions, "*Sometimes there are kids who don't understand the words that they are saying. And they probably didn't mean to say it, it just came out at first.*" (Mary, White teacher 8 years) Even to the insulted child, teachers still view the child as blameless.

In one focus group, two teachers' had an exchange that shows their struggle in identifying these situations. Marni (Latina teacher 3 years) and Lola (Latina teacher 18 years) identify discrimination in vignette 4.

> Marni: *For me I feel that the little girl, the blond girl feels superior to the African American girl because she's telling her straight up you cannot play with me because you're black.*

> Lola: *And it's obvious that the other little girl is not black. So she knows, it's not like she's going around calling everyone a nigger.*

However, quickly, the conversation moved to the child's behavior as not intentional. Lola stated,

Discrimination is parenting…Because if you're that young, it's not intentional, but

at the same time you are associating that word to another child, you're like kind

of discriminating against someone else because of their color and how you look

so for me I see it as discrimination.

The behavior is discriminatory, but not intentional. However, there are external influences on these negative behaviors. The behaviors and thought process do not originate from the child. The behaviors come from parenting practices. As the next section will highlight, these practices are an external influence on child attitude and shape child behavior, including language and actions around race and ethnic differences.

External Influence on Child Attitudes and Behavior around Differences

Somewhere, somehow the child has come into contact with an adult who has

made a comment or has shown some sort of discrimination and children listen

and pick up on everything. They don't understand what they are saying and

repeat it. - Katherine, Asian Teacher 9 years

Of the 35 participants, all of them in the first four focus groups placed some responsibility of the child's actions on the parent, family members, or media. Again, to many of the participants, children lacked awareness of differences and knowledge. Therefore, any comments where children recognized racial, ethnic, gender or language differences were because the child was *"repeating racist comments that was overheard."* (Marni, Latina teacher 3 years) The racist language had to come from somewhere else. As discussed by Teacher Anne (Asian

teacher 4 years), "*They are just like a blank canvas…probably they heard all of these things from the parents.*" As discussed next, parents as the root of child behavior was a pervasive theme among the focus group participants.

The Fault of the Family

> *Children are very much reflective of their parents and the environment*
>
> *they come from.* – Tammy, African American teacher 10 years

Regardless of the situation, teachers were adamant that any discriminatory or racialized comments made by a child were "not their fault". If that is the case, then where is these behaviors or attitudes coming from? According to the participants, the parents. The parents have exposed, or allowed their children to be exposed, to discriminatory behavior, and attitudes. This exposure came through direct instruction, indirect instruction (child imitates behavior parent is modeling) or through allowing certain media like television or music in their house. It is believed that this interaction leaves children hearing words or modeling behavior that might seem racist or discriminatory, but because children are doing this devoid of knowledge and context; they are doing it unknowingly.

> *[I]t's the family members who they are with, older sisters and brothers and little*
>
> *ones, even though they just play around, they pick up on their environment. They*
>
> *learn and remember and sometimes amazingly use the words at the right time –*
>
> Priti, Asian teacher 5 years

Similar to teacher Brenda's belief of a child's innocence, if children discriminate, it is an *amazing* coincidence. This amazing coincidence makes it hard to know what to do in these situations.

Talia (Latina teacher 7 years) shared her own personal anecdote that further highlights the challenges early educators face when dealing with preschoolers and racial incidents.

> Talia: *"I had a really bad incident when I was with one of the preschoolers and she called me a wetback and I said " What does that mean? " The child said, 'I don't know, that's just what my mom says all the time'. I didn't know what to do. I was like, "Okay".*
>
> Researcher: *So what did you do?*
>
> Talia: *I was just, 'Okay so what does that mean?' and she said, 'I don't know.' Of course she doesn't know. I was just like, 'Okay.' I didn't do nothing. Because of course, she's just a kid and she probably doesn't know. She gets everything from her parents and everyone around her.*

In this shared anecdote, the parent is the source of the behavior. Furthermore, several teachers in Talia's focus group went on to express their own lived experiences with racial incidents like discriminatory language directed at them. However, they still put the focus of blame, the reason for the child uttering words, on the family. Children "*don't know it is disrespectful*" (Melissa, Latina teacher 10 years) and in turn are not at fault for behavior or actions. Therefore, they are reluctant to do something. There is no intervention or conversation with the child(ren) involved in the interaction.

In a different focus group, when the vignette was modified during a researcher probing question and the target of the vignette child's discriminatory words became directed at the teacher, the situation warranted an intervention to the family and children. Paula (African American teacher 15 years) discussed how she would intervene if a child called her a "nigger".

Researcher*: So what if instead of it [the word nigger] being said to Kayla the child, it was said to you the teacher?*

Paula*: Then I would say 'No, I'm not a nigger, I'm a black woman and that's what I am just like your mom is a white woman and we don't call people that name because that's a nasty word'. You know they have a lot of different words for different cultures that are really nasty and it hurts people's feelings and when you call me that that hurts my feelings and I don't like it.*

Teacher as a target made the situation unacceptable to participants in this focus group. Alexa (Latina teacher 5 years) quickly jumped in to discuss the need to stop the "teasing" right away, but to describe the role of the parents in this situation.

Alexa: *I think Paula is spot on with just telling them straight up that it's not something you say… you wouldn't like it if someone was calling you not your name and that typically works for my kids. But, I feel in that situation, the first thing I would have done is asked her why she said it because of course I know it's the parents but I just want justification like 'where did you hear that?'*

Researcher: *What if it is not the parents? What if the child says, 'I don't know where I hear it" or says something else?*

Alexa*: I'm going to bring it back to the parents because I feel like it could have been an extended family member, but the parents are the only ones who are going to know where their child has been outside of here or outside of the school because I'm pretty sure unless a whole bunch of them had said it, it's something she had to pick up at home because I know in my classroom I wouldn't be walking around saying it and I wouldn't allow anybody else to be walking around saying it or using it.*

It is still the family as the influence in child language development. A child's behavior serves as a mirror of the parents and family. Therefore, what teachers witness in the classroom, or in the case of this study, heard in the vignettes, were snapshots into a child's home culture.

It is like it's the child projecting the parents so maybe the parent expresses themselves about the race, like you're dirty, you're color is not the same as mine, and is just internalizing that. Ruth, Latina teacher 3 years

I think kids always reflect their parents a lot or they can like, not that they're always going to be like their parents, but they are influenced heavily by whoever is caregiving for them. Connie, teacher 4 years

I just feel like kids always pick up on things and parents aren't perfect…I don't want to say it's like intentional discrimination but I just feel like the child is heavily influenced, she's just way too young but she's definitely seen it in action like in her family or someone close to home or community. Melissa, teacher 11 years

Many participants echoed the belief that if children are learning the behaviors in the vignettes from home then it might be because this is what parents believe. Ami, Asian a teacher of 6 years, in response to the gender vignette, felt like "*it's instilled in their culture and in their everyday life…it is not discrimination because the child is representing what he has been taught from the family*." Therefore, saying something to the child or parents might be construed as disrespectful to the parents' home culture.

Media and Community Exposure

Media exposure was also viewed by many of the participants as an important influence to children's discriminatory behavior. Katia, a teacher for 14 years echoed many participants' belief, "*Media has to be a lot of this too. I find that the media has a lot of not the right language.*" However, even that media exposure was blamed on parents.

I would say that 90% of the children are not supervised with what they watch even at the preschool age…so they use a lot of language and the children have no idea of what it means…They copy a lot of what they watch or what they hear. (Katia, Latina teacher 14 years)

Parents, media and community further contribute to the confusion children might have around race and ethnicity. Specifically, in the vignette where one child called another child "nigger," the general consensus was the offending child did not know what they were saying. This possible negative behavior is coming from a media and community that use negative words sometimes loosely. In one focus group, participants, Marni, Sue and Alexa, describe the potential definition conflict children face around the term "nigger" and the term "nigga":

> Marni: *I don't feel that she is discriminating I just feel that she is acting out what she has experienced and she doesn't have the definition of it and she doesn't know the true meaning of that word, I just think that she's heard it over and over. I see everybody calling people that now a days. I see Chinese people calling each other that, Filipinos calling each other that, black people calling each other that.*

> Alexa: *But that's not nigger, it's nigga. It's not really that different.*

> Sue: *So I think the word is so loose now that it's crossed that barrier but I would not say that child is discriminating, I don't think she's coming from that intent, I think she's just acting out what she's heard.*

Again, using the word, "nigger" in context is still happenstance, based outside the control of the child.

The Role of Schools on Child Behavior

Hopefully, they are not learning this from the school (Tanya, White teacher 5

years)

A pervasive theme in the focus groups was a belief that schools, namely teachers, are not

the place where they learn racist or discriminatory behavior. Contrary to their beliefs on the role

of parents, family members and media having a large impact on child (possibly racist or

discriminatory behavior), participants viewed schools as not having the same level of influence

on young children's prejudicial beliefs.

I think one of the greatest things that we are able to do as teachers with young

children is teach them and shape the way that they view the world… there's so

much power in what teachers can do to influence and support that child to shape

their view (Samantha, White teacher 6 years)

When pressed to elaborate on what is a teacher's role in the classroom around these

behaviors, the participants described their power.

What is the teacher's role? I feel that we as teachers, we're like the secondary

primary for them because their family is their primary while we are the secondary

because most of their time there with us like 8 plus hours under our care so we're

responsible by teaching them and motivating them to have a better life for

themselves. We give them the skills and the confidence so they can excel in

whatever they want to do but at the same time we don't want to take the primary

role, which is the mom or the dad or grandma, whoever is taking care of the

child. But we have to support the child so they can be confident and ready to face

the world because most of the time you know the child is neglected and we have to

make sure that we guide them through a nice path. (Karen, African American

teacher 28 years)

Teachers have power in their classroom to promote good behavior, manners and

prosocial skill development children exhibit, but they cannot necessarily compete with what the

child is bringing from home. Educators believe the good behaviors are because of explicit

instruction. Teacher Tanya, from the earlier quote, highlights this belief. If the behavior children

are exhibiting is discriminatory, Tanya believes, "*they're getting it somewhere else…. I find most*

children I've worked with [at] that age are color blind and gender blind."

Teaching Strategies

When asked, participants discussed several types of teaching strategies they would

employ based on the situations presented in the vignettes. Common strategies discussed by

participants included modeling and using books or songs. Modeling of behavior extended from

"sitting down" while children are playing to directly using other languages and community

interactions to expose children to differences. However, what the participants focused on

modeling was acceptance and respect or the concept that "we are all friends here." Some teachers

discussed activities, but most of the activities they on skin color projects, even when vignettes

focused on discrimination of gender or language. For example, many teachers spoke about

activities using different skintone color crayons to discuss hue, or playdough to discuss color light and dark change, or using puppets with different skin colors.

The strategies discussed by teachers did not seem deliberate; frequently the teachers articulated a disjointed, uncoordinated approach, oscillating between saying a one sentence statement (i.e., we are all friends here) to "maybe" doing something in the moment or "reading a book or something."

A few teachers were able to articulate deeper strategies. When they did discuss in depth curriculum, they viewed it as part of a larger purpose of their class like a "true intervention." This true intervention is a purposeful action on the part of the teacher to minimize or stop the formation of negative stereotypes.

> *...we're going to be talking a lot about diversity and a lot about culture*
>
> *and we could branch off of that for days or months in curriculum and go deep into*
>
> *many different things and I think it would be important. I feel like it would almost*
>
> *be like an intervention.* (Connie, African American teacher 4 years)

However, the least frequent strategies employed included discussing the situation with children, administration and parents. Most of the study participants could not articulate a strategy including having conversations with children and lesson plans that fully or completely addressed the behaviors in the vignettes.

Strategies involving families. If parents are to blame for the behavior, participants struggled to understand the role of parents to change the behavior. Several participants viewed parents as the way to modify the behavior, while others were reluctant to engage families in a

conversation. Some participant felt that it is the responsibility of the teacher to have a conversation with the parents. That these behaviors described in the vignettes, if left unchecked, can lead to future discrimination. Parents, in conversation, will realize the error of their ways:

> *I would talk to the parent because for me, that is actually singling out a culture and that for me can definitely lead to discrimination if not handled appropriately… the parent has to get involved right away.* (Connie, African American teacher 4 years)

> *I think it is important for us to talk to the parents, because…maybe the parents don't know that they're saying these words and the children are going to hear it and come to school and say these words. So having a conversation and saying this is happening and talking about suggestions of how to help the child.* (Jaylen, teacher 8 years)

However, actions or interventions focused on parents left many participants feeling conflicted. A majority of the participants felt that they needed to say something to the parents. However, because they believed that the child's language and behavior originated in the family, they didn't want to disrespect the parents or give the impression they viewed the parents "as a horrible people " (Samantha, White teacher 6 years). Pat, an African American teacher for 8 years, elaborated on the respect for home life when trying to intervene, "*I would probably say something like, well those words may be okay at home, but here at school they're not.*"

Other participants did not think the vignettes rose to the importance of telling the parents or administrators until it became frequent or a pattern of behavior. Of those reluctant teachers, they did not want to discuss vignette situations with parents if it was a "one-off" situation. When asked to define what constituted a pattern of behavior, in several focus groups the consensus was if a child had these interactions "*frequently*" (Laura, Latina teacher 4 years) or more than 3 times. Sarah (Latina teacher 9 years) elaborated on what constituted a pattern, "*Three strikes and you're out*". Out in this case involves the teacher intervening at a level beyond using general statements about inclusion (we're all friends) or singing songs.

Pattern of behavior seemed to be more meaningful to the study participants and indicated a problem behavior. Interestingly, many of the participants were reluctant to involve parents because they did not want the parents to get mad at them or the program. Does parental perception of the teacher's handling of a situation impacts whether or not a teacher would do a type of intervention? The study seems to suggest parent response to teacher statements round race and ethnicity could impact the conversations and interventions in a preschool classroom.

Influence of coursework and workshops on intervention strategies

Study participants' felt their Multicultural Education (MCE) coursework or workshops had a minimal influence on their ability to handle situations like discussed in vignettes. All of the study participants had taken at least 1 course or training around multicultural education and diversity. Most of the participants had attended at least 1 workshop (non-unit bearing) on multicultural education, anti-bias or diversity. While all of the participants discussed doing some type of intervention in the study vignettes, when asked what has prepared them to intervene,

although the general sentiment was that the courses had a positive impact, most listed experience as being the sole support in helping them deal with these types of situations.

Overall, early educators in the study viewed their unit-bearing coursework in multicultural education or diversity as having a positive impact on their teaching strategies. Several participants felt that they "*became more aware of differences*" (Lucia, teacher 6 years) and "*more aware of myself*" (Maria, Latina teacher 2 years). Study participants describe how MCE coursework helped them in understanding which books, puzzles and pictures to have in their classroom to foster diversity. When asked to elaborate on some of the content of these courses or workshops, participants described coursework that modeled a "tourist approach" to multiculturalism (Banks, 2004; Mac Naughton & Davis, 2009). Courses focused on teaching about different skintones, how "*not to discriminate against food or any race or religion*" (Betsy, White teacher 9 years). Again, most of the interventions discussed in the focus groups focused on "skin color differences" or "food" differences.

However, many teachers felt that their coursework did not prepare them for these situations because the courses did not tackle how to have difficult conversations. Elana, a Latina teacher for 12 years, highlighted the limitations of her multicultural coursework,

> *I don't think it does prepare you… because I never discussed the things you can do. I mean, they talk about differences more like broad like 'we're different' and you're going to approach [situations] like this. But they never go into what you can do or will do…I think a majority of teachers will go into the classroom not knowing what to do at that moment.*

This lack of preparation makes it difficult for teachers to know what to do or say "in the moment" and overtime to address discriminatory behavior with young children. Participants felt that experience helped ameliorate the lack of practical teacher training. Debbie (White teacher 12 years) felt education and work experience were both necessary to dealing with the types of situations as described in the vignettes.

I don't think that in my teacher education [I got support on what to do], but I think that I got some of that in my personal work experience. It is very valuable to have that work experience. The education and work experience go hand in hand because they back each other up and support each other. There is a lot to be said from actually dealing with these experiences and situations and learning how to deal with them. (Debbie, White teacher 12 years)

The mechanisms of the informal training from on the job experience was hard for study participants to articulate. You just "*watch what others do*" (Melissa, Latina teacher 10 years). Most of the passed on strategies included many of the activities and songs discussed in intervention strategies.

Summary and Synthesis

A qualitative approach, focus groups, was used to collect data regarding early educator perceptions of racial incident vignettes including their perceptions of child behavior, origin of behavior and intervention strategies. Focus groups included early childhood educators who taught preschool ages children at a variety of levels from assistant teacher to site supervisor. Data

was collected from individuals involved in teacher training and workshops in the San Francisco Bay Area. The relationship between the perception and action were explored. Themes were pulled from focus group conversations and commonalities, differences and struggles were analyzed to give voice to participants' lived experiences.

Chapter Six: Theoretical Model

Grounded Theory of the Influence on the Teacher Perception

As a professor of early childhood education and as a national trainer around curriculum implementation, this topic was close to me both personally and professionally. I used my knowledge of preservice teacher training, as well as my experience supporting the ECE workforce in curriculum development, to design a qualitative study to explore early educators' perceptions around race, child cognition and intervention strategies. The study presented here, which was based on focus groups conducted in the spring and summer of 2014, is an attempt to develop a deeper understanding of how teachers "experience" race/ethnic conflict in the classroom and what they might do about it to address the issue. The literature review and research design derived from the conceptual and theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 and follow the premise:

- Children have a conception of race and ethnicity. This conception can contain positive and negative attributes about others.

- Racial incidents that occur in an early child care setting are not as innocent as they are believed. If left unchallenged, children can continue to build negative stereotypes. However, this perception is not fixed and if there is appropriate intervention, opinions can change.

- Early educators, as suggested in social learning theory, are important socializing agents of children around many topics, race and ethnic stereotypes being one of them.

- Early childhood education, given both the amount of time young children spend in care (intergroup contact theory) and the amount of foundational information learned

in these years, is an important and opportune time to discuss race and ethnic differences as they arise. Educators can also act proactively, before issues arise, through intentional implementation of multicultural education curriculum that addresses child differences, similarities and positive stereotypes. This study focused on racial incidents in the moment, but multicultural education curriculum is not just an intervention. MCE is a curricular approach for teachers to incorporate on a day-to-day basis before potential negative interactions occur (Banks & Edwards, 2010). Educators educated in multicultural education and diversity would use receive training on MCE as an ongoing teaching strategy (Banks, 2005; Gorski, 2009).

The Model

After the identification of categories/elements of the "paradigm model" (causal condition, context, intervening condition, action/ interaction strategies and consequences), the final step of analysis is selective coding, i.e., to connect phenomenon with other categories and establish relationships (Charmaz, 2006). Out of the focus group data, it became clear that teacher action in this research was influenced by many factors, specifically teacher perception of racial events, teacher training, and teacher understanding or belief of the power of external influences like parents or media. Out of the repetition of themes and concepts in the focus groups, a preliminary theory or integrative framework was able to be established. This resulting theoretical conceptualization (figure 2), came from the voices of the early educators in the study and is not to be representative of the population, but was to help shape and refine the conceptual categories highlighted in the emerging theory. The theoretical conceptualization came from the patterns of actions, process of decision making and interactions between the teachers and children in the

vignettes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These influences dictated subsequent action, or inaction, the teachers took when addressing study vignettes. *Teacher action* is defined as either curriculum implemented into the classroom including conversations with child or children, materials added to the classroom, and/or environmental changes. Teacher action could also be conversations or interactions (i.e., newsletter, memo) with parents, co-teachers or administration. Action can also be referred to as a teaching strategy or intervention strategy.
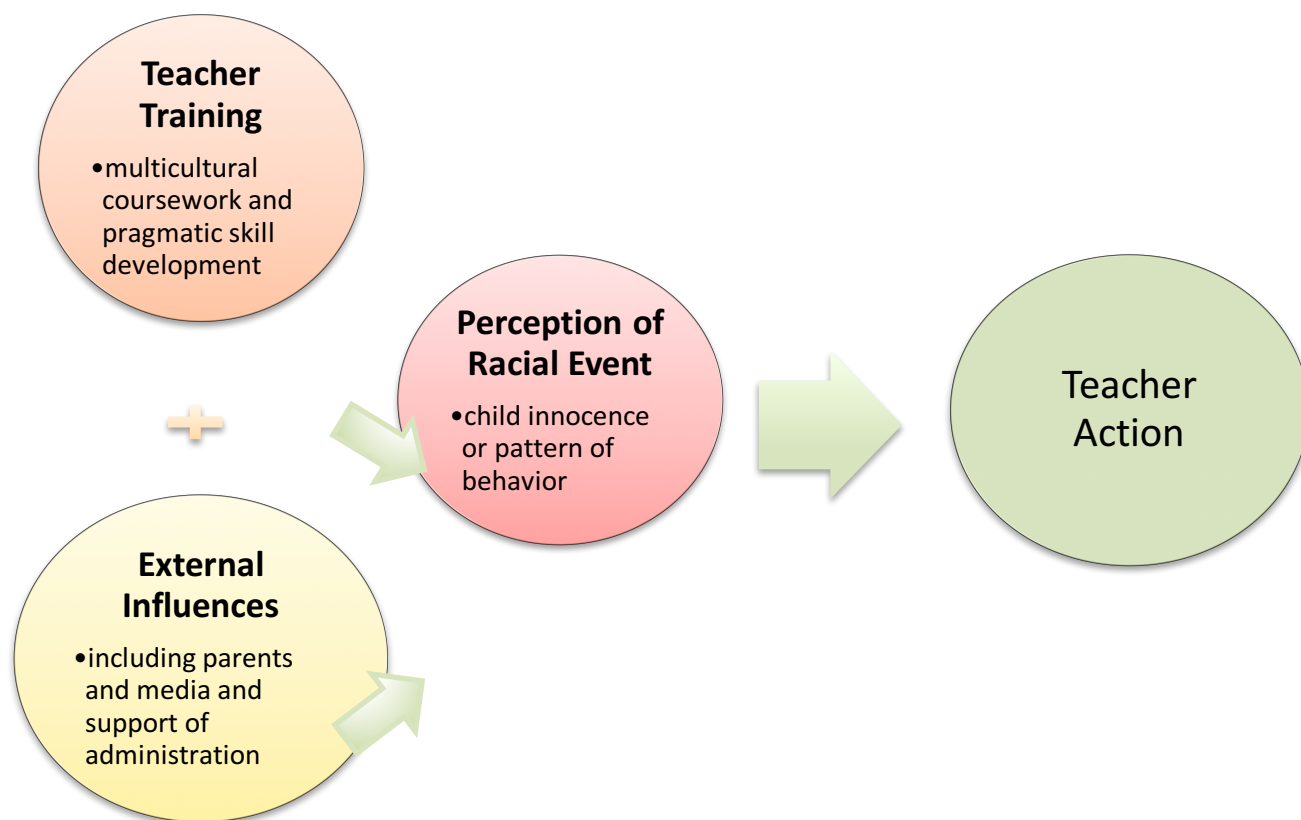
Figure 2: Theoretical Conceptualization of Influences on Teacher Action

Teacher action around racial incidents involves a complex analysis by the teacher. Figure 2 represents that analytical thought process. This analysis includes how they view the role of children in the action. Are children innocent or is there a pattern of behavior? Participants struggled to assign blame around the sensitive topic of race and ethnicity. If the child is blameless, then how is it a problem that needs action (like correction) by a teacher? As participants suggested, these hypothetical situations did not necessarily warrant a behavior modification. Relatedly, the participants' own background and training around multicultural education and the acquisition of foundational, pragmatic skill development seemed to have some role in the decision to act. At the crux of teacher action is "do they know what to do" in a given situation. Are they prepared to employ teaching strategies that support children who made the biased comment(s)? As study data suggests, participants expressed how their teacher training did not prepare them to make decisions in situations like in the vignettes. Lastly, a potentially powerful influence on teacher action was the role of external influences. According to participants, parents and other external influences, are major contributors to the behaviors seen in the vignettes.

This model connects to the earlier discussed Shavelson and Stern's 1981 model on factors contributing to teachers' pedagogical judgements by elaborating on the "teacher judgement" and "teacher attributions of probable causes of student behavior" sections of their model. In that model (Figure 1), Shavelson and Stern (1981) espoused how a teachers' decision making is based on the inferences made about students. This research supports and elaborates on that these inferences might be on the part of teacher. As previously stated, early educators in this study, did not act because they did not necessarily view the racial incidents as a "problem" or an issue. Even in situations where they viewed the scenario (attribution) as problematic, study

participants, like described in Shavelson and Stern (1981), made pedagogical decisions or, in this case, did not act, because of the strengths of these external influences. Teacher action and the role of this model on decision making will be further explored in Chapter 7.

Chapter Seven: Discussion and Recommendations

The general intent of this study was to uncover early childhood educators' perceptions of racial events in the classroom. Specifically, the study sought to better understand:

- What types of classroom behaviors or events do preschool teachers identify as racial incidents?

- What do they believe are the causes of such incidents?

- Under what circumstances do teachers believe the incidents warrant intervention or action of some type?

- How do teachers feel teacher training prepared them to act in these situations?

Focus group discussions were used to gather study data and qualitative methods were used to analyze the collected data. The study's aim was achieved by taking teachers from a variety of backgrounds including age, classroom type, ethnicities and experience levels to respond to hypothetical vignettes containing instances of racial, gender or ethnic discrimination. Results revealed four major themes: 1) reluctance to put negative intent on young children even when discriminatory words were used in context; 2) assigning blame of child behavior to parents or family; 3) children as passive learners in their understanding and acquisition of knowledge around race, ethnic and gender differences; and 4) reluctance to act, when based on a single incident or vignette when they witnessing what could be a discriminatory situation unless it became a pattern of behavior. These results will be discussed in relationship to the study's questions.

Classroom Behaviors or Events Identified as Racial Incidents

Racial incidents are statements or actions between young children that show peer preference or exclusion based on phenotype, language or other difference (Connolly & Keenan, 2002; Tatum, 1997; Troyna, 1991). One goal of this study was to determine whether early childhood educators would identify overt or covert "racial incident" behaviors between children as discrimination. In this study, vignettes highlighting gender, language and phenotype differences were used to explore these perceptions. The focus group findings suggest early educators struggled to identify racial incidents, as described in the four vignettes as discriminatory behavior.

Similar to previous research, there were few teachers in this study who believed that children could be prejudice or act in discriminatory ways (Aboud, 2008; Hirschfeld, 2008, Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). In the focus groups, exclusionary behavior was deemed, "*developmentally appropriate*" (Samantha, White teacher 6 years) and common in early childhood. Sue (teacher 11 years), echoed the sentiment of many in the focus groups, "*Children are choosing their friends based on similarity; it's not that the child is being discriminative.*" Educators in the study did not believe the behaviors in the vignettes contained negative intent. Children this young, according to participants, are not capable of this type of negative intentionality. Some of the study participants also felt the vignette interactions were a display of natural curiosity. The study findings support earlier research that found people underestimate what children are capable of understanding when it comes to racial and ethnic differences (Hirschfeld, 2008). According to focus group participants, young children (age 2-6) are incapable of discriminatory thoughts and the racial incidents in the vignettes were just an unfortunate misunderstanding between confused or curious students. Children would not have

negative intent until they are older; defined in the focus groups as "*7 or 8*" (Melissa, Latina teacher 11 years) or in "*public school*" (Justina, Latina teacher 3 years).

An alternative explanation for study participants struggle to identify racial incidents is the possibility the vignettes did not capture racial incidents in a way that was identifiable to them; racial incidents in the classroom look different. Unlike typical grounded research, the vignettes were pre-generated for the participants. However, focus group interactions and member checking suggests this was not the case. In almost every focus group, participants shared their own experiences of racial interactions, mostly between teacher and child. Even in these participant shared scenario, teachers held the view that children were not capable of this type of negative thought.

The study highlights the struggles teachers face implementing Multicultural Education (MCE). If teachers cannot "recognize it is a problem," then how can they act (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010)? For teachers to do the work of multicultural education, opportunities or teachable moments like a racial incident occur and be ignored as teachers do not believe they have to "do something in the situation" (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). This perception, discussed in the next section, had an influence on their decision making and subsequent action.

What Teachers Believe Caused Such Incidents

The second goal of the study was to better understand what teachers view as the origins of the behaviors describe in the vignettes. The study participants were unwilling to "label" young children as discriminatory or racist. This reluctance to assign intent in behavior to children, even when hate words were used in the context, seemed to have led teachers to place the locus of control or blame of the child's actions to external forces, specifically parents. The pervasive

theme among participants was that children are innocent and, if a child is acting in a way that could be perceived as discriminatory, it is because they learned it from somewhere and are just parroting back what they have heard from their families.

Families as cause of incidents. Where are children learning about race and ethnicity? What is the cause of these hypothetical situations? Study participants viewed families as being the main influencer of child behavior in these scenarios. "*Discrimination is parenting*" (Lola, teacher 18 years). Parents and family members bring their negative statements about "the others" or "outgroup" and pass it on to their children. According to study participants, children are just repeating what they've heard from home. It is not the child's fault that they exhibit behavior like in the vignettes. We "*cannot blame the child for what they've heard from home*" (Samantha, White teacher 4 years).

Passive versus active learning. Study participants felt families were the source of misunderstandings in these racial incidents. This belief is similar to the social learning theory perspective of how children form ideas about race and ethnic prejudice and stereotypes (Aboud & Doyle, 1996; Fagot & Leinbach, 1989; Levy, 2000). The behavior children exhibited in the vignettes were due to a social learning process, not a cognitive one. The cognitive developmental (or constructivist) approach views learning as an active learning process (Berger, 2014). Children construct their schema (unit of knowledge) through a hands-on, engaged interaction (Berger, 2014). Most early childhood educators are trained in the constructivist approach to learning. In this study, participants ascribed a cognitive learning perspective when it came to anger or deception like in the focus group conversation with Brenda describing a child's animalistic brain; they believed that children learned these behaviors through active learning. However,

participants viewed race and ethnicity as different; they believed strongly that learning about race and ethnicity follows the social learning perspective.

Social learning perspective argues that a child's experiences and environment, including parents, peers, school and media, influences how child categorization can develop into stereotypes, prejudices, and behaviors (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a; Fagot & Leinbach, 1989; Levy, 2000). Study participants agreed with this perspective. Somehow child understanding about race and ethnicity is a more passive learning process. A child is a "*blank canvas*" (Anne, teacher 4 years) waiting for family and media to fill it up with their culture, even if that culture is discriminatory. Tangentially, there is no settled explanation why study participants view child acquisition of knowledge about race and ethnicity as only a social learning process when they believe other information is learned through cognitive, constructive processes. The following section will discuss how this belief in the power of external forces potentially shaped teachers' decision making around intervention in the vignette scenarios.

Decision Making Around Teacher Action

The study sought to examine the thought process of teachers around racial incidents in the classroom. The findings suggest several influences in teacher decision-making, which ultimately led participants to make certain curriculum and intervention choices (teacher action). Researchers Shavelson & Stern (1981) have a framework for understanding how study participants might make decisions about instructional activities and courses of action based on their perception or attribution of a situation. As highlighted in Figure 1 *(see* Page 22), teachers can draw conclusions about instructional activities based on perceptions. Subsequently, teachers act on these conclusions. Study findings support this research. Figure 2 highlights how

participants' perceptions of child intent and ability influenced their curriculum including choices around conversations and other curriculum interactions, a direct influence of their pedagogical judgment. The educators in the study perceived the child's behavior as innocent; therefore, if or when they intervened, it was rarely focused on the child. Furthermore, participants' perception of children as innocent lead to varied, mostly parent focused, interventions in the hypothetical scenarios.

Part of early educator pedagogy is to teach proscocial behavior, and academic skills (Dodge, Herman, Colker, & Bickart, 2012). However, few teachers in the study explicitly have as part of their lesson plans teaching how to include or not to discriminate base on race, ethnicity or gender. Why did study participants omit explicit teachings about differences? Furthermore, why were other strategies like having difficult, developmentally appropriate, challenging conversations as a way to engage students after racial incidents also excluded from their answers? The study findings suggest implementation of multicultural education including having difficult conversations is "risky" for teachers. Risk-taking in educational instruction is rarely researched in early childhood education. Risk-taking in a learning environment involves uncertainty or mistakes (Grotzer, n.d.). For teachers, this risk-taking, or engaging in "risky pedagogy," in their classroom involves a level of uncertainty that might make them uncomfortable. Participants expressed discomfort in informing parents and administration of racial incidents in the classroom, only viewing the need to do more if it became a "pattern of behavior." Most child care programs and centers do not have explicit policies around when to intervene in behavior situations specific to race or ethnicity. However, implicitly, administration might send the message not to "bother" parents unless an issues becomes an problem for example, one time incident not worth notification with classroom teachers getting the directive to

"watch out" for the behavior in the future. Furthermore, out of "respect for the home culture," many of the study participants did not feel it was their role to intervene, or counterprogram, if children were only expressing beliefs from what their parents teach at home.

Soodak & Podell (1996) posited, external influences strongly impacted participants' teaching efficacy. Although the study participants did not "give up trying" to modify student behavior, their outcome expectation in the situation was that not much will change if home life supports negative racial and ethnic stereotypes (Soodak & Podell, 1996). Therefore, to the teacher, why engage in the risky educational practices, if the external influence is so strong and behavior might not change? More research would need to be done to examine the role risk plays in early educators' instructional decision making especially around sensitive issues like discrimination and prejudice.

The existing literature in teacher decision making, focuses on teacher of older children, K-12th grade. Early childhood educators do not work in isolation. Most early educators have multiple people co-teaching or assisting them in the classroom. As part of the risk involved in pedagogical decisions could include what your co-teachers think of your behavior or if they will support your actions. It is possible that the decision not to act, which was not explored in this study, is influenced by the school culture, specifically classroom culture. Positional power in the classroom (classroom role) would need further research to better understand its impact on teacher action.

Teaching strategies. The perception of a child's innocence contributed to disjointed, often classroom-only based interventions in the hypothetical scenarios. Teachers in this study faced the challenges to implementing multicultural education and fostering intergroup contact. To implement multicultural education, educators need to incorporate 5 dimensions: a) content

integration; b) knowledge construction; c) prejudice reduction; d) equity pedagogy; and e) empowering school culture (Banks, 1995, 2004, Banks, et al., 2001).

Content integration is the type of information incorporated into all subject areas or disciplines. Knowledge construction are the activities teachers use to help students explore biases and challenges students to think critically about race, ethnicity and social class (Banks, 1995, 2004; Banks, et al., 2001). Prejudice reduction focuses on the methods used to modify racial attitudes. Equity pedagogy focuses on the academic achievement of all students (Banks, 2004). The last dimension in Banks' typology (1995) focuses on the empowering school culture as one that recognizes schools are social systems, comprised of more than just curriculum or teaching materials (Banks, 1995). The intentionality of teachers and schools and the inclusion of these dimensions are integral to Multicultural Education as an intervention to reduce prejudice.

Intervention strategies discussed in the study's focus groups included using books and modeling behavior. These strategies addressed parts of the dimensions of multicultural education as conceptualized by Banks (1995, 2004). Participants discussed content integration; several teachers mentioned adding content to their weekly curriculum plans. Few teachers in the study focused on knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, or prejudice reduction when they would modify their teaching to address inequality and change minds or prevent young children from forming stereotypes or help children "unlearn" formed stereotypes (Banks, 1995, 2004). There was no focus on critical or complex thinking exercises with children. Participant solutions focused on how the parents were wrong.

Teachers in the study, when confronted with children noticing differences around race, ethnicity, and language were reluctant to have age appropriate conversations with children to question the intent or challenge beliefs. The literature on multicultural education as an

intervention strategy notes that the most effective educators need to have counter stereotype models and challenging conversations with children (Bigler, 1999; Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006, Hirschfeld, 2008). None of the teachers in this study mentioned having these types of conversations as a strategy. It is this lack of conversation that leaves children to navigate their concept of racial and ethnic difference on their own, potentially to negative outcomes. This reluctance to engage or have difficult conversations results in the "superficial multicultural education" Hirschfeld (2008), Banks (2004) and others discussed as an issue to teaching true diversity. Again, the consequences of risk taking for educators includes things like upset parents and/or lack of administrator support possibly leading to what educators can perceive as limited, safe actions or teaching strategies. It is easier to add diverse books, songs or pictures then to have the complicated and somewhat messy task of conversations and direct instruction around race and ethnic differences.

Interestingly, study participants were more likely to have a conversation with children when the teachers became the target or victim in the racial incident. In two focus groups, participants either retold a real life example or a participant changed the vignette target to teacher. In both scenarios, the teachers started questioning the study more, trying to assess "where they heard that from?" or "what did they mean?" Participants highlighted the "nasty and hurtful words" of the student's behavior. When the scenarios were child-to-child, similar interventions were not mentioned. Did changing the scenario to be adult focused, personalize the situation for participants? Did the changes influence how teachers viewed the situation and ultimately changed their course of action (Shavelson & Stern, 1981)? There is evidence to suggest teachers made different intervention decisions based on who was involved in the situation (adults versus other children). Future research would be needed to explore to what level

the age and position of the target influences intervention strategies and perceptions of racial events in the classroom.

Another missing intervention strategy was the role of school culture. None of the teachers discussed the school culture as a possible intervention strategy and additional questions could have been included to gain a better understanding of the role of the school. In focus groups where school culture or administration came up, participants distanced themselves and their school as being a contributor to negative stereotypes or a solution to discriminatory behavior. Study participants focused on the power of external forces more than using school culture as an intentional strategy to combat discrimination and prejudice. More research is needed to better understand how teachers view the role the larger school community in situations like presented in the study vignettes.

An alternative explanation for the disjointed intervention strategies could be the nature of the study. Vignettes are static snapshots of hypothetical events in a classroom. Classroom instruction is dynamic. It is possible, teachers were not able to articulate what they would actually do in a real situation. However, the nature of focus groups allowed for participants to share their stories and add to the vignettes.

Lastly, teaching intervention strategies never addressed the targeted child of the negative behavior. None of the participants in the study discussed how they would check in with the child on the receiving end of the racial incident. The targeted child's feelings were largely ignored and only in one focus group interaction, where one child called the other child a "nigger" did a teacher (Melissa, Latina teacher of 10 years) express needing to say something to the targeted child. However, Melissa was worried that the parents of the child would be "mad" and not that the child's feelings would be hurt. Given the negative implications of discrimination to young

child self-esteem and self-concept development, even if an act was not discriminatory by intent, the child at the receiving end of the behavior might not know that and lives with the statements made by peers. Further research would be needed to better understand how a teacher would act during racial events to the targeted child regardless of intent of behavior.

Teacher Training and Preparation to Act

Teacher training around multicultural education are too few (Milner, et al., 2003) and tend to focus on celebrating diversity instead of the pragmatic strategies to implement multicultural education (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gorski, 2006; Gorski, 2009). The findings in this study support the previous research. Study participants felt that their coursework or workshops on multicultural education was not as helpful as experience to understanding how to handle situations like those presented in the study's vignettes.

Participants intervened by reading books and singing songs, strategies learned through their teacher preparation coursework. Preservice training did help them identify the types of books and pictures to have in their room to support cultural diversity. However, books, songs and pictures follow the "tourist approach" to multiculturalism Banks (2004) and others described. The "tourist approach" to multiculturalism is when race and ethnicity are treated as an additive or special component of the curriculum (MacNaughton & Davis, 2009). Many teachers in the study described this type of approach in their intervention strategies. Courses focused on skintones and food differences, exactly what Banks (2004) warned about with content integration without knowledge integration or the other elements in teacher instructional methods.

Study participants reported one area of teacher training that might support them in fully implementing multicultural education curriculum. They reported learning more about themselves

and they had an increase awareness of cultural diversity. The level of self-awareness (understanding one's own bias) is important component to putting multicultural education into practice (Copenhaver-Johnson, 2006; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). Although the need to address issues of culture and bias are acknowledged in coursework, the strategies beyond placing out books and stories, real strategies for dealing with these events are limited. As the study underlines, teachers reported that their coursework gave no practical skills to support them when confronted with similar situations like the study vignettes. They felt ill prepared to engage children in conversation through their classes. They had no strategies other than what they learned on the job to confront racial incidents in the classroom.

It is important to note that the study participants, all educators from the San Francisco Bay Area, expressed struggle with the concepts of race and ethnicity, specifically intervention strategies. The State of California has the Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) and the CA ECE Competencies, both are large scale efforts to increase the quality of early childhood providers with a focus on Culture, Diversity and a teacher's ability to implement a multicultural education or anti-bias curriculum. However, in closer reflection on these standards, it is unclear the training given to teachers to acquire the skills needed to successfully implement this type of curriculum. The current study only asked about how "helpful" educators thought their preservice training was in these situations. Further research would need to be conducted to better understand the influence teacher training had on awareness of multicultural education and attitudes towards implementing the curriculum, and child race and ethnic stereotype formation. As the research suggests, not all multicultural coursework or workshops are created the same (Gorski, 2009). The study did not assess the quality of the coursework by looking at syllabi or assignments assigned in the courses or how comprehensive participants' multicultural coursework was? As mentioned

in the focus group findings, participants suggested that their courses focused mostly on the first developmental stage of multicultural practice, which Grant and Sleeter (1998) describe as just a focus on celebrating diversity.

Implications

The findings of this research build on a variety of research regarding early childhood education, racial incidents and multicultural education (Banks, 1995; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). This study expands the discourse around the role of early educators in racial socialization and also highlights the challenges they face in pedagogical decision-making and development of pragmatic skills through teacher training.

> *Racial and ethnic discrimination remains a serious and persistent problem in all areas of life from de facto school segregation, access to health care and housing…* (Amir, 2014)

The United Nation Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (C.E.R.D.) Vice Chairman, Noureddine Amir highlighted in a recent talk how racial and ethnic discrimination is still a serious issue. The ability to recognize and ameliorate the formation of negative stereotypes in young children is important in the short term; we can minimize prejudice and outgroup bias by preventing the formation of negative stereotype and bias.

Children who face discrimination suffer from lower self-esteem, mental health issues and lower academic achievement (Brody, et al., 2006; Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Wong, Eccles & Sameroff, 2003). The individual implications for the child contribute to a larger societal issue. For example, African Americans across the country, bear a disproportionate amount of the burden associated with economic and social disparity (Amir, 2014). Racial and ethnic

discrimination is an issue that impacts all parts of our society. Teaching young children to think in complex ways about race and ethnicity can reduce prejudice (Aboud, 2008).

Since the first edition of *Anti-Bias Education* (Derman-Sparks & The ABC Taskforce, 1989), we as a field of early childhood educators have had guidance as to how to support teachers in implementing multicultural/anti-bias education. However, somewhere the system has failed. Teachers need more support to acquire the pragmatic skills in their preservice and ongoing training to better understand how to engage children in meaningful conversation around race and ethnicity. Furthermore, Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) emphasized that teaching children about these issues requires that we "retain our ideas about several dimensions of everyday life, including the nature of racial and ethnic oppression, the intellectual capacity of children and our willingness to effect changes in oppressive social conditions and the extent of children's social skills" (p. 199). Early educators can be an important part in the struggle against racial inequity and discrimination in our society (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). The willingness to effect change means educators have to start understanding child cognitive ability. Effecting change also means an unknown risk on the part of the early educator.

Limitations

> *Qualitative research [...] ventures into realms that are new and unknown, plotting unchartered courses in stark contrast to the conventionally accepted approaches [...] Embarking on such voyages requires [the] researcher ... to venture into unfamiliar territory, to experiment with different ways of thinking and representation...* (Parker, 2007, pp. 179-180).

In this study, qualitative research was employed as a method to explore the beliefs and teaching practices of early educators around the sensitive topic of race, stereotypes and young children prejudice. The rigor of the study comes from the interactive nature of the focus groups. In each group, teachers were allowed to grapple with four situations via vignettes that, while not factual, were real and salient enough to facilitate discussion. Threats to validity and reliability will be addressed in the limitations section of this study.

The use of qualitative vignettes in this study enabled me to effectively explore the issue of racial events in a preschool classroom setting in a more in-depth fashion. In addition to responding to the scenarios, the vignettes provided valuable insights into the way participants approached addressing the situation in their classroom practices. However, several challenges were revealed. This study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the data. Although the teachers were forthcoming and responded in detail in the focus groups, limitations in the study include distinct threats to validity like deception, interpretation, theory and influence of researcher. Below I discuss these limitations and validity issues and explain how the findings were validated. Overall, the methods discussed in the previous section helped control for validity threats through checking for alternative explanations with members after select focus groups and comparing the findings with existing research.

Description. Viewed as a main threat to validity, description is related to the accuracy or incompleteness of the data (Maxwell, 1996). All focus groups were videotaped and transcribed verbatim. The verbatim transcription of all focus groups should prevent the issue of description validity. Furthermore, the hypothetical nature of the vignettes could make it difficult for teachers to give an accurate description of how they would intervene as if it were a real life situation in

their classroom. Teachers might have different perceptions and intervention strategies if the situations were more salient to them (i.e., real events from their classroom).

Interpretation. Another threat to validity was imposing researcher meaning or interpretation onto the findings instead of representing the perspectives of the study participants (Maxwell, 1996; Morgan, 1997). This study is trying to better understand early educators' perceptions of racial incidents. It is important that the study participants' thoughts, beliefs are understood and not co-opted or corrupted by my preconceived explanation of the phenomena in question or shaped by the vignettes. To prevent interpretation validity issues, open-ended focus group questions were used. The moderator started each focus group by clearly stating the ground rules of there are no right or wrong answers." Furthermore, the moderator allowed participants unlimited time to answer the focus group questions (average 2 minutes), giving each participant time to be heard. Relatedly, the study contained a relatively small sample of women from the San Francisco Bay Area. This requires that the findings be read with caution. A larger sample, containing a variety of teachers from different areas in the country, might produce a different perspective on the vignettes and where they could employ different intervention strategies.

Vignette limitations. The use of vignettes poses their own limitations. Researchers using vignette methodology can struggle with participant belief of what they would do in a given situation versus how they would actual behave. This is a complex limitation as research gives contradictory findings. Some studies indicate using that belief in answers to vignettes does not match action (Hughes, 1998), However, several other studies suggest that responses to vignettes do mirror how individuals act in reality (Rahman, 1996). Hughes (1998) suggests "…we do not know enough about the relationship between vignettes and real life responses to be able to draw parallels between the two" (p. 384). To address this limitation, future studies should employ mix

methodology like questionnaires, video or ethnography to better ascertain the connection between teacher perception of racial events and real life action. The goal of the study was to achieve insight into the participants' interpretive framework and perceptual processes. Moreover, through the grounded research, participant action or behavior was also gleaned from questions that specifically asked about hypothesized teaching strategies and action to the scenarios. The vignettes served as perceptual stimuli, one to prompt reflection on a situation that the participant might not have viewed as a problem to begin with (Jenkins, Bloor, Fischer, Berney, & Neale, 2010).

Social desirability is also of concern when using vignettes. Are teachers answering based on what they think the researcher wants to hear? Given the sensitive nature of the topic explored in this study, a participant giving a socially desirable answer was possible (Barter & Renold, 2000). However, the study tried to minimize this limitation by 1) utilizing focus groups so people feel more anonymous in their group thought, and b) using follow up probing questions to reveal how participants truly believed they would act in a situation and why. Both strategies allowed for a level of honesty with sensitive subjects but does not completely remove the potential influence of social desirability on answers. However, it is important to note, the probes also could have communicated the researcher's values. Probes that used language like "do you think this is discriminatory" or "why are parents to blame" can be viewed as loaded language. The probes were used as infrequently as possible and only if the participant used language that denoted blame or causality.

Theory. A serious threat to the theoretical validity of any study, as explained in Maxwell (1996 p. 90), is "not collecting or paying attention to discrepant data or not considering alternative explanations." To minimize theoretical validity issues, I checked for alternative

explanation by a) probing for alternative explanations in the focus groups *(see* Appendix C) and b) comparing findings with existing, similar research. However, theoretical validity is challenge as few studies address this topic in the population of interest.

Researcher influence. The last threat to validity was my influence on subjects. One weakness of focus groups is the potential influence the researcher might have on the data produced (Morgan, 1997). I am African American female. It is possible that me being in the room while discussing sensitive, race-specific vignettes could have made participants answer in a certain way to be more socially desirable or politically correct. Multiple researchers of various backgrounds, and further opportunities to establish rapport and probe further may improve findings.

Furthermore, race, discrimination and stereotypes can be difficult for teachers to discuss. Is what is being said in the focus groups true? Do people feel comfortable being honest and sharing their thoughts and perceptions? Focus groups were long enough and the vignettes were varied enough to get multiple perspectives on the study topic. A pilot was done to provide clues about the appropriateness of focus groups for the topic and potential researcher influence on study participants. However, as previously mentioned, one cannot completely remove the influence of the researcher from the results in an interview setting.

Conclusion

Children are aware very young that color, language, gender, and physical ability

are connected with power and privilege. They learn by observing the differences

and similarities among people and by absorbing the spoken and unspoken

messages about those differences. Racism, sexism…have a profound influence on

their developing sense of self and others… All children are harmed (Derman-

Sparks & A.B.C. Task Force, 1989)

Children are aware of differences in their environment; it is a cognitive developmental

reality (Bornstein & Lamb, 2005). Children are not colorblind and recognize race and ethnicity

from a very young age (Katz & Kofkin, 1997). As children are building a conception of their

world and themselves, there is a potential for those early schemas on race and sex roles to be

influenced (Bigler & Liben, 1993). In order to prevent the formation of prejudice and

discrimination, interventions in the youngest of children need to be multifaceted and intensive;

teachers need to take action. One possible avenue to reduce the formation of race and ethnic

stereotyping and strengthen intergroup contact is through the teachers in preschool classrooms.

As highlighted in the research on multicultural education, for the curriculum to be

effective, there needs to be more than integrated books or toys and materials. To be effective,

teachers need to communicate, foster critical thinking and intergroup contact and deal with

discriminatory behavior as it occurs (Derman-Sparks & ABC Task Force, 1989; Gay, 2004,

Ramsey, 1998). Early educators need to engage children on multiple levels, especially in

addressing behavior they feel is discriminatory (Derman-Sparks & ABC Task Force, 1989).

However, little research has been done to explore how teachers interact with children around

racial comments and racial incidents, potentially discriminatory behavior or prejudicial thinking

that can occur in a preschool classroom.

The main goal of this study is to add to the lack of literature that explores the potential

relationship teachers have to child racial stereotype development and multicultural education.

This study and supporting theoretical conceptualization provides evidence that early educators

are stuck on what to do in their classroom, what action to take, around incidents concerning race and ethnic differences and to support the reduction of negative racial and ethnic stereotype formation, be inclusive in their classroom, and to support children during racial incidents or what Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) and others refer to as "pre-prejudicial" thoughts and actions. Teachers "struggle" to identify racial events as an act of discrimination not because a child's behavior is negative, but because their conception of children in this age range is one of innocence. They believe that children this young are incapable of discriminating due to their immaturity. Furthermore, this study shows that teachers believe children exhibiting discriminatory behavior do so because of influence from their parents or media. Due to this belief, that children do not have the capability to discriminate and out of a desire to respect home culture, teachers wanted to address the issues with parents, but little to directly minimize child negative stereotype formation at the classroom level.

Future directions of research should include exploring what type of teacher training would prepare teachers to engage in these conversations, including an understanding of the role of race, identity formation and discrimination in young children (child development content). Future studies can also be created around vignettes that are not as explicit as the vignettes used in this study. The ones used in this study were crafted specifically to have obvious race, gender and ethnicity connotations to prompt discussion. One question to be answered could be, would teacher perceptions change if the vignettes were not so explicit or if the race and gender of the children were the same? Moreover, how would teacher perceptions change if they saw videotaped interactions of racial incidents? Will more real interactions prompt a different response? Future naturalistic studies could also be done to see how teachers handle "racial incidents" as they occur in their classrooms.

Appendix A: Participant Background Questionnaire

1. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy):_____

2. Gender: Male   Female

3. The type of program I currently teach in is a (pick the one that best describes your center):

☐ Family Day Care   ☐ School District Preschool (State Pre-K)
   ☐ Other Center-Based Program ☐ Head Start ☐ College/University Laboratory School

4. Highest level of education completed:
☐ High School Graduate or GED
☐ Some College, but no degree
☐ Associates Degree (for example, AA, AS)
☐ Bachelor's Degree (for example, BA, BS)
☐ Master's Degree (for example, MA, MS, MBA)
☐ Professional Degree (for example, MD, JD)
☐ Other: _____

5. What is your race or ethnicity?

☐ White
☐ Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino
☐ Black or African American
☐ Asian
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
          ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
          ☐ Other: _____

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

<u>Opening Questions:</u>
1. How long have you been a teacher in ECE?

2. Since beginning your career as a teacher, what were your initial expectations and how have your perception changed (if at all)?

   a. What have you found most rewarding?

   b. What has been the biggest challenge?

3. How would you describe the curriculum used at your school?

<u>Vignette 1</u>
Two boys are playing in the block area of the classroom. Annie comes over to the area where the boys are playing and after watching for a few minutes asks if she can join in. One of the boys says, "No, girls can't play in here". The second boy says, "yeah, girls shouldn't play with blocks"
- What do you think is going on in this interaction?

- Why do you think this interaction is happening? (follow up as needed: Do you think the event is racist or discriminatory? Why or Why not?)

- How would you handle this situation if you witnessed it happening your classroom?

• Probe to ask about interventions like notifying parents, incident informing curriculum, talking to administration

<u>Vignette 2</u>
You are watching as two children are in the bathroom. While watching, Doug turns to Sam and says, "Why are you so dirty?" Sam says, "I'm not dirty, I took a bath this morning." Doug responds, "Your skin is darker than mine. You're dirty."
- What do you think is going on in this interaction?

- Why do you think this interaction is happening? (follow up as needed: Do you think the event is racist or discriminatory? Why or Why not?)How would you handle this situation if you witnessed it happening your classroom?

• Probe to ask about interventions like notifying parents, incident informing curriculum, talking to administration

<u>Vignette 3</u>
Gabriel has just come to your class from El Salvador and he speaks limited English. During choice time, a teacher is singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star with Adam. Gabriel walks over and sits down with the teacher and Adam to listen to the song. Mid-song Adam says, "I don't

want to play with him, he speaks funny and will mess up the song." Adam gets up and walks away from the teacher and Gabriel.

- o What do you think is going on in this interaction?

- o Why do you think this interaction is happening? (follow up as needed: Do you think the event is racist or discriminatory? Why or Why not?)How would you handle this situation if you witnessed it happening your classroom?

- Probe to ask about interventions like notifying parents, incident informing curriculum, talking to administration

Vignette 4

On the playground, Ann and Elizabeth are using the climbing structure as a house. Kayla attempts to join their play by asking if she can "enter the house". Ann shakes her head, saying, "No, only children with blond hair can play here." Kayla, who is African-American responds "But I want to come in." Ann responds, "You're a nigger so you can't come in."

- o What do you think is going on in this interaction?

- o Why do you think this interaction is happening? (follow up as needed: Do you think the event is racist or discriminatory? Why or Why not?)

- o How would you handle this situation if you witnessed it happening your classroom?

- Probe to ask about interventions like notifying parents, incident informing curriculum, talking to administration

Closing Questions

How many courses* have you taken focused on diversity, multicultural, race, or bilingual education?
*A course is a class taken at a university or college where you received college credit toward a degree

How many trainings or workshops* focused on specifically related to diversity, multicultural, or bilingual education?
*trainings and workshops meet once for a few hours and do not have college credit attached upon completion

How do you feel your preservice multicultural teacher education prepared you for handling these situations? Why or why not?
- Probe: Do you think your teacher education program has or will prepare you to have conversations with children about racial and ethnic similarities and differences?

- Probe: Do you believe workshops or other professional development trainings on multicultural education has strengthen your knowledge around race/ethnicity

- Probe (if no): What else prepared you to have these interactions with young children?

- Probe: What do you think would have prepared you for situations like this?

Appendix C: Follow Up Probing Questions

Child as Innocent Follow Up Questions:

If participant mentions:

"The child doesn't know what they are saying" or

"They are just mimicking what they heard" or

"They don't know what they are talking about" Or similar child as innocent statements

<u>Follow up Sample Questions</u>: "Why do you think the child is saying this?", "Why do you think the child is not to blame?" and/or "When is the child at fault?" (used depending on which above statement used by participant)

Parents at Fault Follow Up Questions:

If the participant mentions:

"The child was probably taught that at home"

"The parents think this"

Follow up: "Why are the parents the cause of these beliefs?" or "What influence do you think parents have on these behaviors?"

Appendix D: Expanded Coding Categories

Child as Innocent

Child is Curious

Child is Confused

Typical Child Behavior

Unsure/Unclear What is Happening

Conflict in What is Happening/Revision of Previous Belief

Parents to Blame

Parental Negative Language

Parents as Major Influence

Other Family Members as Problem

Family Values

Television/Radio/Video Programs

Community Exposure (to Negative Behavior)

Role of Teacher

Role of School

Support of School

Teachers Could Not/Did Not Teach This Content

Experience of Teacher

Class Diversity

Materials in or Added to Classroom

Conversations Between Teacher and Child

Conversations Between Parent and Teacher

Pattern of Behavior

Content Knowledge

Skills Needed to Intervene

What Was Learned in Coursework

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	BA in Child Development *Tufts University*, *Medford, MA*	*2002*

Teaching Experience	**Cañada College** *Early Childhood/Child Development* *Redwood City, CA* *Assistant Professor*	*January 2015 - Present*

- Instruct undergraduate students in early childhood education courses including Child Development (ECE 201), Early Childhood Curriculum (ECE 211), Observation and Assessment (ECE 333) and Health, Safety and Nutrition (ECE 313).

- Created syllabus, exams, assignments and final projects for individual student evaluation.

- Counsel students on CA Child Development Permit and ECE pathways in careers and higher education.

	San Francisco State University Child and Adolescent Development Department San Francisco, CA *Faculty of Record*	*January, 2012 - December, 2014*

- Instructed undergraduate students in Applied Child and Adolescent Development (CAD 410), Professionalism in ECE (CAD 685), Internship Seminar (CAD 600/CAD 601) and Leadership and Adult Supervision in ECE (CAD 510)
- Created syllabus, exams, assignments and final projects for individual student evaluation
- Utilized techniques and technology to facilitate student learning including the use of the Blackboard online system
- Advised and assist students in educational and career development

University of New Mexico
Department of Individual, Family and Community
Education Albuquerque, NM
Instructor

- Instructed undergraduate students in Youth and Adolescent Development in the Family (FS 315)
- Created syllabus, exams, assignments and final projects for individual student evaluation
- Utilized techniques and technology to facilitate student learning including the use of the Blackboard online system
- Advised and assist students in educational and career development

*January, 2010 –
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Syracuse University
Department of Child and Family
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- Instructed undergraduate students in Issues and Perspectives in Early Childhood Education (CFS 335) and Introduction to Health and Wellness (HTW 121)
- Created syllabus, exams, assignments and final projects for individual student evaluation

*January, 2008 –
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State University of New York, Oswego
Psychology Department
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Instructor

- Instructed undergraduate students in Principles of Human Behavior (PSY 101)
- Created syllabus, exams, assignments and final projects for individual student evaluation

*August, 2008 –
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Syracuse University
Department of Child and Family
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Assistant Teacher

- Conducted additional discussion classes and review sessions for students enrolled in Principles and Practice in Work with Parents (CFS 447) with professor Irene Kehres, PhD

*January, 2007 –
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Syracuse University
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- Assisted in two courses, Contemporary American Family and Community (Fall 2006) Children in Black Families (Spring 2007) with professor Norma Burgess, PhD

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May, 2007*

Career History	**Promoting Achievement Through Higher Education (PATH)** **Associate Director, San Francisco State University** San Francisco, CA	*January, 2012 –* *Present*

- Coordinate the PATH program. PATH is a 900k grant funded program through the San Francisco City funded program designed to support professionals and individuals interested in working in the field of early childhood education to get a Bachelor's degree. PATH hopes to eliminate many of the challenges and barriers for early childhood educators to graduate from a four-year institute.

- Recruit a cohort of 40 students each Fall semester to enter the Child and Adolescent Development Department upper division coursework

- Design curriculum and curriculum pathway for students in the program

- Hire and train instructors to teach courses in the cohort (approximately 8 courses a semester are offered through PATH)

- Facilitate Early Childhood Workforce Development Initiative workgroup, which provides guidance and support to PATH and additional program in the Initiative

- Motivate and retain students in all cohorts (80 students a year) to accomplish their academic goals

- Supervisor SF SEED Academic Advisor. SF SEED is a $400k stipend program that provides financial incentives to San Francisco early childhood educators who are taking coursework towards professional development, CA Teacher Permit upgrade and/or college degree.

	Teaching Strategies, Inc. *Staff Development Network Trainer- Consultant* San Francisco, CA.	*June, 2007-* *December 2015*

- Create professional development workshops for early educators across the country in The Creative Curriculum®.

- Instruct and coach educators, administrators and staff in the early education best practices including strategies to improve math and literacy, culturally appropriate classroom practices and developmentally appropriate assessment

- Monitor and provide feedback to programs implementing the Creative Curriculum on developmentally appropriate adult-child interaction to improve early education literacy, math and social/emotional outcomes
- Created curriculum connecting state of New Mexico educational standards with interactions and activities for the Growing UpRight and Tewa Language Program Summer staff

Wu Yee Children's Services SF
CARES Program Manager
San Francisco, CA

December, 2010 -
October, 2011

- Managed 5 staff to ensure that timely and accurate information is given to all applicants
- Develop, implement, and monitor program CARES' $3.5 million budget and maintain relationship with funding sources and submit all necessary reports in a timely fashion
- Developed external communication for city-wide distribution
- Collaborate with the SF CARES advisory work group, Wu Yee board, staff and community members to guide program policy development
- Developed program responses to new trends in the field and adjust systems to ensure a smooth flow of information/documentation
- Ensured target participation level of teacher-applicants and that outreach strategies are established for low participating sites and neighborhoods
- Expand and strengthen linkages with training institutions, local higher education and other organizations focused on the professional growth of child development workers

Acelero Learning
Connecticut Managing Director
New York, NY

August, 2005–
November, 2006

- Supervised staff and volunteers on project activities that increased child recruitment and staff retention for Head Start programs in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Ohio
- Analyzed Head Start partner program data to help inform and improve partner program practices for the upcoming years including detailed analysis of child outcomes, enrollment and recruitment data and community assessments
- Collaborated with community agencies to help expand the services provided to the children and families through combining resources and identifying available state and federal funding opportunities
- Prepared tools and resources for Head Start partner programs, such as financial models and data for ongoing monitoring of performance
- Created the system and forms for family advocates to use in the Head Start required strengths and needs assessment and family partnership agreement process used in the network of Acelero programs and available to all Head Start programs in the country
- Provided training and technical support to teachers and staff on a variety early education and management topics

Research Experience	**Syracuse University** · Conducted a pilot study of preschool teachers to assess how their ethnic identity and teacher efficacy impacts their perception of racial events in the classroom and their level of intervention during and after the event · Constructed quantitative measure which included the construction of vignettes	*Spring, 2007*
	University of Illinois-Chicago School of Public Health · Assisted in the collection of literature for review for Noel Chavez, PhD on her evaluation on food availability, food security and food deserts a Westside Chicago community	*Fall, 2002*
	RESOLVE: National Infertility Association · Assisted in the data base management of the Physicians Information Resource · Duties included co-constructing and disseminating physician surveys, collecting data and entering the information into an Excel database	*October, 2001 – May, 2002*
Presentations, Publications, Exhibitions	**Society for Cross- Cultural Research** February 2016 <u>Paper Presentation in Session</u>: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity **Society for Research in Child Development** March 2015 <u>Poster Presentation Title</u>: Racial Incidents in the Classroom: A Qualitative Study on Preschool Teachers' Perceptions and Intervention Strategies **American Educational Research Association** April 2014 · <u>Paper Presentation in Session:</u> Big Topics in Education **Girl Scout Council of Central New York** March 2008 · <u>Title:</u> Child and Adolescent Development: The Developmental Stages of Girls **Acelero Learning Management Institute** July 2006 · <u>Title:</u> Effective Meetings: Facilitation Skills, Prevention and Interventions **Jumpstart National January Leadership Institute** January 2005 · <u>Title</u>: Jumpstart as an Agent for Social Change	
Honors and Awards	· Golden Key Honor Society, Syracuse University Spring 2007 - present · Dean's List, Tufts University Spring 1999 – Spring 2001	