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Teachers' Influence On Black/White Biracial Student Identity Development

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TEACHERS' INFLUENCE ON BLACK/WHITE BIRACIAL STUDENT IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful daughter, Kathryn, who brings the light to me. Her presence and story surrounds this work and provides continued inspiration. Her spirit and curiosity both challenge and sustain me.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Rhonda Jeffries, my faculty advisor, chair, and mentor for her on-going support, encouragement and guidance during this process. Her wisdom and expertise were sought regularly, and her commitment and patience were unwavering.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to report on what teachers and parents see as significant factors affecting Black-White biracial student identity development. Through a qualitative case study using individual interviews with parents and grandparents of a Black/White biracial child and the child's teachers, various factors affecting Black/White biracial identity development emerged. Historical laws, court cases, U.S. Census reports, theoretical data, and identity models were examined and explored to provide a clear argument that Black/White biracial individuals have historically been marginalized and that this marginalization within society has carried over into our current curricular and instructional practices within schools. This study examined the teacher's role in affecting Black/White biracial student identity development and found that teachers play a crucial role in the development of Black/White biracial student identities.

Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, D.

Campbell.

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Chapter One – Introduction

"The biracial child stands below whiteness and, by virtue of biraciality, in affirmation of black inferiority." – Lewis Gordon *Her Majesty's Other Children* (1997)

The Personal as Political

Recently my nine year old (Black/White biracial) daughter and I were watching a television series that we often watch together. She commented that there were "the same kind of people" on the show. I immediately paused the episode, and turned to her. I knew this was the beginning of an important conversation. I asked her what she meant by that comment. She said that there were mostly White people on the show. Then, she took the conversation to a really deep level. She said, "In school we've been studying about Rosa Parks and how she stood up for herself on a bus many years ago. I guess, mommy, if things were the same as before, me and daddy would be sitting at the back of the bus, and you would be sitting at the front of the bus." This statement from my beautiful, creative, intelligent, 9-year old was so profound that I had to take a couple minutes to collect myself. What she said made me think on a level that even my doctoral course of study had not. This was not theoretical. This was real. I think this was the first time that I truly was able to place myself in the situation of feeling racially marginalized, in a regulated sense of being separated from my daughter because of our race(s). I told her that she was right, and I asked how that would make her feel. She said, "I probably would have done what Rosa Parks did and come to the front to be with you." I posed a question to her. I asked, "If things were the same as back then, what do you think would happen if I, [being

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considered a White person even though I am one-quarter Native American – I "look White"] decided to go to the back of the bus to be with you?" She took a moment to think it over, then said "you would probably get into trouble." This made me think of the overt and covert messages that we all share, and how each group is conditioned to follow certain cultural guidelines without question. While I have taught in the field of Women's and Gender Studies for years, this candid conversation with my daughter helped me better understand the disconnect between theory and practice – how I was able to teach effectively about the intersected oppressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality; but, when it came to my own lived experiences, I was at a standstill. It also brought up memories of when I was pregnant and had both family members and friends asking if I was sure I was ready to "deal with" all of the discrimination I would encounter with having a biracial child. Until this question was posed by family and friends, I had not considered the discrimination/marginalization and invisibility that my child and I would experience. While it made me feel a sense of resentment towards the people who were asking, it also became instrumental in my navigation through life, as a White mother of a biracial daughter. What I have come to understand is it is not so much about race; it is about racism – the systematic, institutional, individual, and ideological forms of racism. Being the mother of a biracial child in the South, allows me to experience, on some level, the marginalization and intersections of oppression that my daughter experiences. I am consciously aware of the obstacles my daughter has/will face not only extrinsically but also intrinsically. I am concerned about her identity formation as a biracial child of a single, White mother. I am aware of the enormous pressure we both face, and I am aware

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that there is a larger socio-historical-political power at play. It is for these reasons that I have come to my dissertation work – as an educator, scholar, mother, and citizen.

This case study was an examination of Black/White biracial student identity development – it specifically addressed factors that influence Black/White biracial identity within a P-12 classroom environment. For the purposes of this study, one family along with the child's (past and current) teachers were interviewed. An exploration of teacher-Black/White biracial student relationships was implemented, with particular attention paid to teacher biases and stereotypes that are often reflected in curriculum and instruction.

Statement of the Problem

Past and present research shows that Black/White biracial students experience invisibility within curriculum and instruction. This invisibility often leads to marginalization and oppressive conditions within the classroom and beyond. The fact that biracial students were not officially acknowledged as U.S. citizens until the 2000 U.S. Census speaks to the undervaluing of biracial individuals. There continues to be a lack of representation of Black/White biracialism within literature, school staff and faculty. This leaves Black/White biracial students without proper role models to identify with, and leaves *all* students without diverse representations. "Role models are extremely important for biracial and monoracial individuals to develop their identity and succeed in school" (Udell, 2013, p. 5). Many researchers have suggested that racial identity development is most critical during the elementary school years (Wardle, 1992). Erikson's (1963) stage of initiative v. guilt focuses on the child moving aggressively into the wider social world, and how this initiative into the wider social world is supported or punished will have a

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deep impact on the child's healthy identity development (Wardle, 1992). Erikson (1963) expresses the critical need for accurate and serious responses and support by adults to the child's questions. Erikson's (1963) theory suggests that young children need to be able to ask questions about race, should be allowed to experiment with labels, ideas, and concepts, and do not have a fixed idea about racial identity (Wardle, 1992). This speaks to the fluidity of racial identity within elementary level children and the importance of elementary teachers acknowledging and supporting this fluidity surrounding racial identity development within curriculum and instructional practices. Unfortunately, as Morrison (2001) asserts, "educators typically have little to no knowledge of how to support identity development" (p. 134). This is true even in the few schools where biracial needs are recognized. Unfortunately, many teachers, particularly White teachers, practice colorblindness. It is crucial that teachers receive training that is conducive to Black/White biracial student development. The first step is for educators to reflect on their own racial biases and stereotypes. As James Banks (1993) acknowledged "Teachers must start with the process of self-transformation…" (p. 5). Through critical thought and reflection of self, teachers can learn to think critically about the power dynamics that perpetuate systemic racism and racial practices within districts, schools and classrooms.

Nature of the Study

This qualitative case study used individual interviews with one interracial family (parents and grandparents of a Black/White biracial child), the child's elementary school teachers, and one district administrator. All participants reside in South Carolina. The outcome was intended to discover how teachers experience and understand Black/White biracial students within the classroom environment, curriculum and instruction and how

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parents understand their children's experiences as Black/White biracial students in schools. Individual interviews provided candid, subjective feedback given from each teacher's, parent's and administrator's perspective to provide insight into how to offer comprehensively diverse curriculum and instruction to include Black/White biracial representation.

Past research reveals that Black/White biracial students experience invisibility within the classroom and that teachers are under-prepared to address the unique needs of Black/White biracial students' identity development. Many teachers' lack of knowledge and active practice of colorblindness becomes a part of the bigger problem immersed in the politics of education. "Without most people being able to experience the insider perspective on being of mixed parentage, a monoracial framework is usually the guide for interpretation of behavior and process" (Root, 1998, p. 238). Confining Black/White biracial students to a monoracial framework is problematic in that there is no acknowledgement of the subjectivity within a student's preferred identity. "Biracial identity development is a completely personal process" (Udell, 2013, p. 2). "Biracial individuals are not part of a homogenous group. [Like most people, they] choose many different paths in determining how they identify themselves" (Bracey, 2004, p. 123). These identities may be situational, simultaneous, or changeable throughout the life cycle (Root, 1998, p. 240). Given this information, it is imperative to provide an inclusive framework for Black/White biracial students.

Research Questions

Major questions that frame this study are fundamentally situated in policy that historically shaped racial identification in the U.S. The overarching concept of how the

U.S. Census' (2000) inclusion/acknowledgment of a biracial/multiracial category impacted ideologies surrounding race relations in public schools underlies the specific research questions which include:

1. How are teachers' ideologies of race reflected in S.C. elementary level classrooms?

2. How do teachers conceptualize and implement curriculum choices for their Black/White biracial students?

Related questions that were addressed in the study are: What are teachers' perceptions of Black/White biracial students and how do teachers' perceptions influence their expectations of these students? What is the best way for teachers to gain knowledge and understanding of a student's racial identity? What are the best ways to train teachers/educators self-analysis and awareness regarding Black/White biracial students' identity development?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to validate the significance of elementary level teachers avoiding colorblindness in school settings in order to support Black/White biracial student identity development. Colorblindness, the act of pretending that race does not exist or matter, is a common American practice which can negatively influence student outcomes when practiced by teachers and schools (Michael, 2012). Colorblindness hurts students because race is such a powerful part of the lives of all students, in ways that are most visible in the lives of minority students (Michael, 2012). Schools are places where race gets constructed, as teachers and students bring racial identities to school that impact how they relate to one another, to the school community

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and to the curriculum. Furthermore, while the student population is becoming more racially diverse, K-12 teachers remain predominantly White: "85% of the K-12 teaching force in the United States is White and middle-class" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). With student populations becoming more racially diverse, the need for teachers to self-analyze and reflect is at a critical point. This study demonstrates that when elementary level teachers actively practice self-analysis and reflection, they are better prepared to counter racial bias through inclusion of diverse curricula and instructional practices.

Conceptual Framework

A monoracial framework that is often applied to Black/White biracial individuals can be traced to historical influences. The historical-political forces at play within society heavily influence school and classroom dynamics. Racial politics, particularly in South Carolina, have been and continue to be an area of tension. Historically, Black/White biracial individuals have been excluded/marginalized and misunderstood. Both a legal and social principle of racial classification prominent in the U.S. in the 19th and 20th centuries, the *one-drop rule*, also known as hypodescent, classified any person having "one drop of black blood" as black/Negro (Bradt, 2010). This concept became codified into law in the 20th century and has heavily influenced how Black/White biracial individuals experience life – both internally and externally. According to Gordon (1997), "On the existential level, biracial people at least have the unique experience of living the racial realities of more than one group in the course of their innermost lives. That reality alone substantiates something unique, since among all other groups, "others" function anonymously" (p. 66). Gordon's argument is profound and very relevant to contemporary

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times. While theoretically Black/White biracial people have the unique "ability" to live in and experience more than one group, it is often the case that Black/White biracial people feel pressured to conform to one specific group, that group typically being the minority group.

"While biracial individuals of all backgrounds may share some commonalities in their racial identity development, different socio-historical conditions have resulted in varied experiences for these biracial populations" (Roberts, 2003, p. 22). In America, "blacks and whites continue to be the two groups with the greatest social distance, the most spatial separation, and the strongest taboos against interracial marriage" (Rockquemore and Brunsma, 2002, p. ix). Regionally, although the South has become increasingly diversified, this region remains less racially and ethnically diverse than other regions; and it continues to be segregated. Furthermore, Black/White biracial people have less identity options in the South (Root, 1999). It is important to examine the racial-political history of the South, with particular attention paid to South Carolina.

It is important for educators to understand Black/White biracial identity as fluid. "Studies on biracial identity development have moved from a rigid structure of all individuals developing in the same way towards a final "healthy" goal to a fluid varied process based on many aspects of the individual" (Udell, 2013, p. 2). While research studies situate biracial development as a fluid process, unfortunately, findings suggest that most teachers are unaware of the context of biracial people and therefore simply ignore biracial students' unique experiences (Williams, 1996). Classroom teachers' ideologies surrounding race often are linked to the general public's view of racial dynamics. Within an analysis of Black/White biracial student identity development, it is

important to note that people often "become confused when we are not able to easily categorize people as a particular race and that such an encounter becomes a source of discomfort and momentarily a crisis of racial meaning (Omi and Winant, 1994, p. 59). However, it is important to understand children are rapidly changing their concept of the world based on experiences and do not have fixed ideas about racial identity (Wardle, 1992). Therefore, elementary level presents an ideal time for children to learn to explore this fluid and dynamic sense of self and others.

Though Black/White biracial individuals are not a new group of people, they have for the most part been ignored in school curricula. With biracial individuals becoming one of the fastest growing populations in the United States in the last 10 years – "between 2000 and 2010, the number of white and black biracial Americans more than doubled" ("Multiracial in America," 2015) – there is no room for ignorance and avoidance within curriculum and instruction. It is important to support what Patricia Hill Collins' refers to as a both/and fluid approach to race, instead of the traditional either/or approach. "[T]eachers must understand the significance of racial categorization and racial identity and be cognizant of the fact that their initial perceptions of a student's race may not correspond to the student's own racial identity" (Williams, 1996, p. 200). "Teachers' support of any individual differences in their classrooms starts with their own understanding and comfort level with the variety" (Wardle, 1992, p. 167). Teachers must explore their feelings about Black/White biracial children. They must ask themselves if they believe myths surrounding Black/White biracial children and, if so, whether they are open to changing those beliefs (Wardle, 1992). It is for these reasons that this study is grounded in James Bank's (1993) continuum which consists of *Multiculturalism's Five*

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Dimensions. The following five dimensions represent where teachers and schools are situated and where they should aspire to be in regards to diversity and inclusion:

1. Content Integration – is the basic level and consists of an integration of minorities into the curriculum. There is diverse representation within picture books and on bulletin boards yet the classroom may not actually be void of racial bias.

2. Knowledge Construction – is when teachers help students understand, investigate, and determine the implicit cultural assumptions and frames of reference. Teachers may ask questions related to the values that underlie knowledge (i.e. challenging assumptions that underlie terms like "the westward movement").

3. Equity Pedagogy – is when teachers change their methods to enable kids from diverse racial groups to achieve. The outcome is to help all students learn. In this dimension teachers use a wide range of strategies and techniques (i.e. cooperative groups, simulations, role-playing, and discovery).

4. Prejudice Reduction – is when teachers are sensitive to the fact that all students come to school with their own prejudices toward different groups. Teachers use methods to help kids develop more positive racial attitudes. This dimension should encompass all teachers in all subjects.

5. Empowering School Culture and Social Structure – is looking at the total school culture to make it more equitable such as examining practices that lead to inequitable treatment which lead to a school culture that is not empowering. Banks' model addresses both the micro and macro levels of school cultures and

was used to frame this study.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined as:

1. *Biracial:* For this study, biracial students are Black/White biracial – having one parent who identifies as Black and one parent who identifies as White.

2. *One-drop rule*: social and legal principle of racial classification that was historically prominent in the U.S. in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is understood as any person having "one drop of black blood" is considered black/Negro. This concept became codified into law in the 20th century.

3. *Miscegenation:* The mixing of different racial groups through marriage, cohabitation, sexual relations, or procreation.

4. *Racial identity*: a group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group.

Limitations

The researcher identified the following limitations of this study:

1. The study is limited to a small sample of teachers and parents in the South.

2. The study is limited to interviews with White teachers.

3. The study is limited to interviews with White family members.

4. The demographic variables may not recognize other probable factors that might influence Black/White biracial student identity development (e.g. gender and class).

5. Limitations of this study also include my subjectivity as a parent of a Black/White biracial child. Obviously as a parent, I have personal biases

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regarding the content of this study. It was my intent to listen to each teacher and parent as he/she spoke and to remain as objective as possible.

Significance of the Study

This study is important for many reasons. Not only is Black/White biracial student identity development important to our communities and society at large, it is important to individuals as well. According to the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau, "between 2000 and 2010, the number of white and black biracial Americans more than doubled" ("Multiracial in America, 2015"), and the Census Bureau projects that the multiracial population will triple by 2060. With these changing demographics, however, it is projected that we will see greater explicit and implicit racial bias (Craig & Richeson, 2014). This projection of a "majority-minority nation" is a perceived threat to many Whites' societal status and is the cause of this predicted increase in racial bias. Though many biracial and multiracial youth feel proud to have a multiracial background and are more open to other cultures and diversity, in general, research shows that many single race groups will be less tolerant and less accepting of biracial and multiracial individuals (Craig & Richeson, 2014). In light of these projections, it is critical that classroom teachers practice and encourage Banks' fourth dimension of multiculturalism - prejudice reduction – within curriculum and instruction – in order to encourage students to be more accepting of themselves, classmates and society. However, as Banks (1993) argues, teachers must first start with the process of self-transformation. Prejudice reduction must begin with the teacher's self-awareness of his/her own racial biases.

Teacher educators across the state and country must promote critical multicultural education. Teaching and learning within a critical multicultural frame will help to combat

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liberal discourses that tend to encourage the rhetoric of equal opportunity which continue to plague our schools and classrooms (Choi, 2008). Encouraging pre-service teachers to confront their own biases and stereotypes through self-analysis/reflection can dispel the beliefs that many pre-service teachers hold regarding their own lack of bias. Teacher educators must advocate for student teachers not to practice colorblindness in school settings as a way to support equality but instead to understand how to value difference and advocate inclusion. This will ensure teachers are prepared to discuss race and racism, not in a passive way but in an assertive way that is sensitive and empathic towards all students.

In regards to Black/White biracial students, it is important for teachers to understand their identities are often fluid. Providing pre-service teachers with studies that include interviews with Black/White biracial students as well as other scholarly resources related to identity, could help teachers understand how and why identity is fluid for many students, particularly mixed race individuals. Critical multicultural strategies and approaches can help pre-service and veteran teachers resist static monoracial representations and categorizations within curricula and instructional practices in order to be more effective at recognizing implicit racial bias and promoting diversity and inclusion (Pollock, 2004).

Transition and Summary of Key Points

This study has examined, analyzed and identified some of the significant factors affecting Black/White biracial student identity development in South Carolina schools. Through individual interviews with teachers and parents, results emerged as teachers and parents candidly discussed what they believe to be true and needed for improving

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Black/White biracial identity development through biracial visibility efforts. With biracial individuals becoming one of the fastest growing populations in the United States in the last 10 years, there is no room for ignorance and avoidance within curriculum and instruction. It is essential to support a both/and fluid approach to supporting Black/White biracial students, instead of the traditional either/or approach which has been historically accepted.

In Chapter 2, a review of the literature was used to support this study. An inclusion of Black/White biracial visibility through curriculum representation is a significant component within multiculturalism and must be encouraged and practiced within all K-12 classrooms.

Chapter Two – Review of Literature

Introduction

This review examined significant factors contributing to Black/White biracial student identity development in South Carolina elementary schools. The literature review sought to examine Black/White biracial student development across the nation and specifically in South Carolina. This study used data from the years 1859 to 2016 and information gathered from various websites, articles, journals, reports, and research studies through the use of ERIC. Key words for the search were "Black/White biracial students," Black/White biracial student identity," and "Black/White biracial student identity development." Research is limited in this area. There are few studies that have taken on the invisibility of Black/White biracial representation within elementary level curriculum and instruction, and few studies have addressed the role elementary teachers play in Black/White biracial student identity development.

Organization of the Review

The literature review for this chapter began with the history of Black/White biracialism in the U.S. Literature related to the theoretical framework was discussed, and finally a review related to relevant studies was examined. The following subheadings were included: Historical Context of Biracialism, Legal Precedents and U.S. Census, Racial Identity Models, Studies Related to Black/White Biracial Identity, Family and Community Influence on Racial Identity and Teacher Influence on Racial Identity.

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Historical Context of Biracialism

Historical research surrounding the "biracial dilemma" points to several systemic and ideological influences. "Written at the height of the pseudoscientific eugenics movement that aimed to improve the quality of the human gene pool, early literature on biracial individuals postulated poor mental and physical outcomes for these "marginal" people" (Stonequist, 1937; as cited in Renn, 2008, p. 19). These assumptions can be attributed to the historical marginalization that Blacks (and Black/White biracial individuals) encountered due to U.S. slavery, hypodescent laws, and miscegenation laws. Events from American history show that during the period of slavery, society's view of race was radically dualistic, with Whites being the "pure" race advantaged by the system, and any other race or mix of race being the "Negro" race neglected by the system" (Reid and Henry, 2000). "These two types of classification (White/Negro) superimposed group attributes that in society transformed into power and privileges for Whites, while denying the individual rights of other races, thus implicitly supporting racially biased creationist and evolutionist views" (pp. 561-62). In this sense, race became naturalized, categorized, and dichotomized. According to Reid and Henry (2000):

> [T]he White/Negro dichotomy, implicitly carrying with it the connotations of "norm/deviant," "good/evil," or "superior/inferior" has served in American history to grant privileges and power to the White majority, while denying basic rights to anyone with non-White blood. Caught especially in this false dilemma of race and the implicit privileges granted or denied, were those biracial offspring of interracial heritage, whose fate in society would be governed by whether they could pass as White, or whether they would be identified as Negro, and thus be governed by societal constraints that limited their basic human rights. (p. 563)

Here, it is made apparent that "Blackness functions as the prime racial signifier" (Gordon, 1997, p. 53) – that everything is measured as anti-Black and pro-White – and "the historical specificity of blackness as a point from which the greatest distance must be

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forged…" (p. 53). This leaves Blacks and biracial individuals or the "inferior race" to ask

constantly not only who am I, but also, what am I? (Gordon, 1997). While Black/White

biracial individuals may not feel the pressure to "pass" (as White) in contemporary

society, they are met with an invisible veil that often defines them as "other" – caught in

between the subordinate and dominant groups – confirming that "biracial still means non-

White" (Roberts, 2003, p. 19).

The American Civil War had a profound effect on Black and White identities. "In

transforming governments, economies, and society, the war necessarily challenged the

very foundations of personal identity…" (Faust, 1996, p. 3). The South was profoundly

impacted by the Civil War, as categories of race, class, and gender began to crumble. As

Faust (1996) asserts:

> White men and women of the antebellum South had defined and understood
> themselves in relation to a number of categories: race, which marked the
> difference between bound and free, superior and inferior; gender, which was
> designed to distinguish independent from dependent, patriarch from subordinate;
> and class, more subtle and more hidden in a society that rested within a
> democratizing America but present nonetheless in distinctions of wealth, power,
> education, and refinement, in claims to honor and gentility. Southerners inevitably
> thought of themselves first in terms of blackness or whiteness, for these attributes
> did not just shape identities but dictated life choices and aspirations. (pp. 3-4)

Race relations were the very foundation of the South. "When the Civil War

undermined the wealth and political power of the planter elite, it necessarily threatened

and transformed each of the interrelated hierarchies [race, gender, and class] that had so

firmly placed white men at the apex of the social pyramid" (Faust, 1996, p. 4). Not

wanting to lose their place as superior patriarchs, White men responded aggressively to

these changing foundations.

Several theories during the 19th and early 20th centuries (eugenics movement)

attempted to create a biological determinant for race. Darwin's (1859) *Origin of the*

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Species presented ideas about survival of the fittest and natural selection and were used by Social Darwinians to explain away various political, social, and economic barriers to descendants of Africans and other Brown races as simply being a matter of their inability to adapt to their social environment – thus implicitly setting up the "dominant" or White race as superior and the "subordinate" or minority Brown races as marginal or inferior, placing them on the fringes of society (Reid and Henry, 2000). One of the more influential (sub) theories of Darwin's radical evolutionary theory was the hybrid degeneracy theory which was developed by social scientists. According to Harris (2013) degeneracy theory promoted the belief of white moral, mental, genetic, and racial supremacy over all other racial groups and labeled multiracial individuals as genetically inferior persons because of their unnatural genetic blend.

The hypodescent or "one-drop rule" was in response to the enormous changes taking place in American society. "The stigma carried by blackness is unique, and is affixed and perpetuated resolutely by the American practice of treating blackness as a monolithic identity that an individual either has or does not have on the basis of the principle that any African ancestry at all determines that one is simply black" (Hollinger, 2003, p. 1368). With this admonition comes social and cultural consequences for Black/White biracial individuals. According to Hollinger (2003), "One has not been able to say, "I'm one-eighth African American" without giving up socially, if not legally, the seven-eighths part of one's self that is not…if you are one-eighth black you are not likely to be counted as white at all" (p. 1368). The establishment of this social and legal principle still carries weight among those who posit Black/White individuals as solely Black. This positioning explains why many Black/White biracial individuals often

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identify with the Black community, leaving them to experience similar struggles for social, political, economic and cultural capital.

While other minority groups have and do experience oppression and marginalization, "only blacks inherit a multi-century legacy of group-specific enslavement and hypodescent racialization long carried out under constitutional authority in the United States" (Hollinger, 2003, p. 1384). "Some of the slave era and Jim Crow regimes did employ fractional classifications, providing that "Octoroons," "Quadroons," and "Mulatttos" be separately counted and allowed distinctive rights and privileges in some jurisdictions, but this fractional approach was hard to administer…and blurred lines that many whites wanted kept sharp" (p. 1369). After all, the "one-drop rule" was put in place to perpetuate a system of White supremacy. While criticism of the one-drop rule surfaced from time to time, it was not until the 1990's that critical discussion of hypodescent became widespread in mainstream media (Hollinger, 2003). Failure to critically recognize this issue until the 1990's represents the neglect that has and often continues to occur surrounding race and racism. Hollinger argues that the combination of hypodescent and miscegenation "ensured that the color line would long remain to a very large extent a property line and the dynamics of race formation…and class formation were…largely the same" (p. 1379). Hollinger's (2003) argument speaks to the interconnections between race and class, what Patricia Hill Collins (1990) postulates as *intersectionality*. Southerners understood the impact of these interlocking systems and though class was less rigid than race to White Southerners, "this very fluidity made attention to social status and its shifts all the more imperative, for class identity had to be constantly asserted and claimed" (Faust, 1996, p. 4).

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Emancipation brought about additional resistance from White southerners. While Emancipation abolished slavery from a legal standpoint, many white southerners found other ways to protect their "property." They prevent[ed] most descendants of black-white sexual unions from advancing inheritance claims…by legally marking all of the issue of their former slaves as permanently and exclusively black and by prohibiting any black person from marrying a white person" (Hollinger, 2003, p. 1379). Until 1967, anti-miscegenation laws made interracial marriages illegal. Essentially, this made "all children of black-white couplings…bastards…" (p. 1379). However, while these laws focused on marriage, they did not place legal boundaries on Black/White sexual relations and the production of offspring (other than legally labeling the offspring as black and socially labeling them as "bastard" – a term that still holds a negative connotation). This meant that White men could continue their legacy of using Black women for sex and points to Tocqueville's admonition, "To debauch a Negro girl hardly injures an American's reputation; to marry her dishonors him" (p. 1369). This statement sums up centuries of hypocrisy and generational rape of Black women. It also illustrates how Black/White biracial individuals were viewed during slavery and the post-Civil War era, and provides a window into the residual racism and discrimination of Black/White biracial individuals that often is apparent in contemporary times.

Legal Precedents and the Role of the U.S. Census

Racial segregation in the United States legally and socially enforced separation of Blacks from other races. This law applied to all public institutions including the military, education, employment, transportation, housing and medical care. Again, many Black/White biracial individuals were able to "pass" as White in order to benefit socially

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and economically; however, they had to keep their "true" identity hidden to avoid harsh consequences. Desegregation of all public institutions came with the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which declared that states were no longer within their legal rights to establish separate public schools for Black and White students. This case/decision launched the Civil Rights Movement. Though desegregation became a law throughout the U.S., the struggle for integration of schools has gone through many phases. There was major resistance towards integration, particularly in the South, where many state governments supported segregation and fought to continue segregated institutions.

Segregation was legally abolished by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and soon to follow was the 1967 *Loving v Virginia* Supreme Court case which legalized interracial unions. However, even with laws in place to protect interracial unions, still there was a collective aversion to Black/White unions.

The 1970 U.S. Census demonstrates the notion that White and Black were racial rather than ethnic categories, while acknowledging that "Hispanics can be of any race" (Hollinger, 2003, p. 1377). This statement is profound in that it was "designed to acknowledge that some people the government classified as racially black were socially and culturally identified with Latin America" and while "It subtly compromised the principle of hypodescent for blacks, it left intact the notion that white and black were racial rather than ethnic categories and that there was an important distinction between race and ethnicity" (p. 1377). This was a strategic move by the Census in that it "designat[ed] the white majority of the whole country not by a label designed specifically

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for it but by referring to what that majority was not" (p. 1377-78); hence, reinforcing the ideology that all non-Whites are naturally inferior individuals.

U.S. Census 2000 was the first time biracial/multiracial individuals were able to choose a "multiracial" category. While the U.S. has seen an overall rise in individuals identifying as "multiracial" post-2000 Census, there is an obvious discrepancy among Black/White biracial individuals identifying as multiracial. According to U.S. Census 2010, the multiracial population in the U.S. was overwhelmingly young and comprised approximately 7 million, or 2.9% of the population (Harris, 2013). However, among all racial groups, it was found that Blacks and Whites were least likely to report belonging to more than one race (Harris, 2013). It is clear that these statistics speak to the continued stigma associated with the intermixing of Black and White which stems from historical factors surrounding the devaluing of Black and Black/White biracial individuals.

Racial Identity Models

Through qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies, educational scholars, sociologists, and psychologists have created and used several models that represent the process of racial identity development. According to Helms (1990), "racial identity theories generally postulate a common thread of historical experiences; however, whether or not group identification is assumed to result in "a sense of group potency" depends on one's manner of identifying" (p. 4). This highlights Helms' (1990) definition of racial identity as a group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group. As Helms (1990) asserts, "Major racial identity theories propose that, within racial groups, various kinds of racial identity resolutions can exist" (p. 7). This revelation underscores racial consciousness as

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multifaceted and fluid which connects with Hitlin, Brown, and Elder's (2006) assumption that racial identification is fluid, particularly among bi- and multi-racial youth (Quintana, et al., 2006).

The racial identity theories that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s relied heavily on developmental scales derived from psychology, implying that identity construction has a beginning and an end (Udell, 2013). Building on Cross' (1971) Racial Identity Models, Helms (1990) discusses two different Racial Identity Models: *Type* and *Stage.* Type models propose that potential racial identity resolutions can be grouped into one of several or a few categories. With this model, the person's category membership must be correctly diagnosed in order to understand the person's behavior. This model is fairly stable/fixed. The Stage model (which Helms attributes to Cross and Thomas (1971)) describes racial identity as a developmental process where a person can potentially move from one level of identity to another. This model as a process presents a more fluid, dynamic model of identity development.

In response to the Civil Rights Movement, Black racial identity theories and models emerged. In the early 1970's Black racial identity theories and models appeared in counseling psychology and psychotherapy literature (Helms, 1990). Two of the major Black racial identity theories were Black Client-as-Problem (CAP) Perspective and Nigrescence or Racial Identity Development (NRID). CAP was the first attempt at explaining intra and inter-racial dynamics – mostly from the viewpoint of how White therapists should handle Black patients (Helms, 1990). The NRID model attempted to separate aspects of Black identity development that occurred primarily in response to racial oppression from those aspects that occurred as a normal part of the human self-

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actualization process (Helms, 1990). In other words, the attempt was to separate "normal" everyday influences and changes from historical and current racial denigration and oppression.

According to Root (1998), racial identity theories describe a stage in which an individual seeks immersion in the socially assigned racial group as refuge from the oppression and racial assaults dealt by society. "Unfortunately, this almost guaranteed refuge in one's racial group is not guaranteed for multiracial individuals," (p. 242) as history has created a suspicion of biracial or light-skinned Black people within the Black community (Daniel, 1992). Therefore, "A mixed heritage…requires a more active negotiation for acceptance" (Root, 1998, p. 242).

Root's (1998) mixed-methods study involving biracial siblings uncovered unique experiences and processes affecting biracial identity. Root (1998) frames her study as an ecological model of racial identity development which is grounded in racial identity theories. This "ecological model relies on the contextual macrolenses and intersections of gender, class, and regional history of race to filter the meaning of situations and experiences to which people are exposed" (Root, 1998, p. 238). The model acknowledges that "there are many different ways people of mixed racial heritage may identify themselves. These identities may be situational, simultaneous, or changeable throughout the life cycle" (p. 240). A multiracial person's identity may not be the same as how others identify them. "Thus, the private identity may be different from the public identity assumed or validated by others" (p. 240). This connects with Helms' (1990) concepts of personal identity (how a person identifies individually), ascribed identity (how others identify an individual), and reference group orientation (one's identification with a

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particular group). Results of Roots (1998) study reveal that persons of mixed-race heritage appear to experience a more variable identity process than persons who identify as monoracial. These results posit biracial identity development as a complex, fluid, personal process and demonstrate how "studies on biracial identity development have moved from a rigid structure of all individuals developing in the same way towards a final "healthy" goal to a fluid varied process based on many aspects of the individual" (Udell, 2013, p. 2). Roots' (1998) study contradicts Tajfel's (1974) study which structured biracial identity development research in line with the social identity theory which homogenized biracial identities. Modern research findings are more in line with Root's research, as they postulate "biracial individuals are not part of a homogenous group and choose many different paths in determining how they will identify themselves" (Bracey, 2004, p. 123).

In 2008, the literature on biracial identity development "broadened substantially to include psychological, sociological, and ecological models for understanding the identities of mixed-heritage [individuals]" (Renn, 2008, p. 13). There has been a shift from minority identity development models to ecological models, as many scholars claim that the existing models do not accurately reflect the experiences of biracial individuals (Renn, 2008). For instance, many theorists, including Poston, fail to include or emphasize the *racism* biracial individuals often encounter. "Also missing is the possibility of multiple healthy identity outcomes for the diversity of multicultural people, an exclusion that formed the basis of future inquiries by other researchers who observed an array of apparently healthy identities in biracial adults" (p. 15). Similar to Root, Renn (2000) used a human ecological approach to her study in order to understand multiracial identity. In

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Renn's (2000) grounded theory study of students from three postsecondary institutions, she identified five patterns of identity among biracial and multiracial college students: 1) Student holds a monoracial identity; 2) Student holds multiple monoracial identities; 3) Student holds a multiracial identity; 4) Student holds an extraracial identity by deconstructing race or opting out of identification with U.S. racial categories; and 5) Student holds a situational identity, identifying differently in different contexts. "The tendency for students to identify themselves across patterns persisted throughout the data" (Renn, 2008, p. 17). Renn (2008) identifies Rockquemore and Brunsma's (2002) study as particularly useful but also limiting as they surveyed only (177) Black/White biracial individuals. However, as Renn (2008) notes, data from these studies suggests there are at least five ways that multiracial young people in college may identify themselves. Kerwin, et al. (1993) found that "young children can naturally become bicultural and begin to establish a sense of biracial identity, given opportunities and an open environment" (p. 229). Furthermore, they found that younger (biracial) participant children expressed comfort in the fact that people are different colors and races and that they can identify with more than one racial group. Contemporary researchers are mostly in agreement that biracial/multiracial individuals cannot be homogenized, as there is diversity across and among biracial/multiracial individuals' lives resulting from lived experiences.

Studies Related to Black/White Biracial Student Identity

Over the past two decades researchers have made a connection between race and class when conducting studies involving biracial identity development. Though thorough studies have been conducted on the older biracial student population, there are limited

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studies involving biracial students at the elementary grade levels. Root's (1998) mixed-methods study involving experiences and processes affecting racial identity development found that "a family class standing of at least middle class seemed to color code class so that [biracial] individuals may identify themselves as White" (p. 246). Townsend et al. (2012) conducted two quantitative studies which focused on comparing mixed-race individuals from three distinct biracial backgrounds and two social class backgrounds to determine how status may be related to claims of biracial identity. Their major research question – what factors determine whether mixed-race individuals claim a biracial identity or a monoracial identity – speaks to the historical stigmas associated with race that often permeate current perceptions. Through surveying 90 mixed-race undergraduate students Townsend et al. (2012) initial study concluded that "the majority of mixed-race individuals identified as biracial/multiracial (70%) with a substantial number identifying with their minority heritage (30%)" (p. 93). These numbers demonstrate potential changes in racial identity development. In Study 2, Townsend et al. (2012) chose mixed-race participants who varied by status as a function of social class. Participants included Black /White students from several universities across the country. The second study produced interesting results: "participants whose neighborhoods and high schools had larger numbers of Whites, relative to Blacks, were more likely to claim a biracial identity [and] middle-class participants were more likely than working-class participants to identify as biracial than monoracial-minority" (p. 94-95). From these results, more questions arise. For instance, why are middle-class biracial individuals more likely to claim biracial identity than working-class biracial individuals? Within the studies it is mentioned that middle-class individuals were selected based on parents holding a 4-year

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college degree. Do parents with college degrees discuss race/ethnicity more openly with their children? Townsend et al. (2012) studies present many questions and indicate that additional research is needed in this area.

Terry and Winston (2010) use a Race Self Complexity theoretical framework within their mixed-methods longitudinal study to demonstrate the fluidity of multiracial adolescents' racial self-identification. They posit Race Self Complexity as "a…narrative theory of personality that seeks to explain how the meaning of race in American culture can add complexity to an individual's identity construction and overall personality development" (p. 435). The study focused mainly on factors connected with racial self-identification within biracial individuals. Many of the factors include family, peers, and social myths. Terry and Winston (2010) assert, "[The] process of racial self-identification is an aspect of personality development that intersects the centrality, regard, and ideology of racial group membership. This intersection is shaped by individuals'…adaptations to the social and cultural demands of living in a society where race and living in a universal context of racism matter" (p. 433). Here, they are providing context for all identity development but also establishing the dual complexity that Black/White biracial individuals experience when self-identifying. Another important point that Terry and Winston (2010) acknowledge is that racial self-identification is not explicitly incorporated within most theory and research on multiracial adolescents' racial identity development. Results from Terry and Winston's (2010) study conclude:

> Identity is conceptualized as an internalized and evolving narrative of self. Seventy-three percent of the multiracial adolescents changed their racial self-identification in the form of two time change patterns with a number of consolidating and differentiating racial self-identification variations. There was no change for the monoracial adolescents. These results suggest that within the lives of multiracial adolescents, the process of racial self-identification may be a

personality characteristic adaptation to the meaning of race in American society that may change across time, place, and role. (p. 432)

Terry and Winston's findings underscore the great need for administrators and educators to ensure diversity and inclusion goals are met. James Banks' research on multiculturalism within education highlights the complexity of ensuring all schools and classrooms encompass diversity and inclusion. Banks' (1993) Five Dimensions of Multiculturalism is an effective model for districts, schools and teachers. Within this model, Banks presents a continuum for educators to aspire to. Unfortunately research shows that while many districts, schools, and teachers aspire to diversity and inclusion, many are still on the theoretical or surface level. Banks' model provides a detailed way of how to move through the continuum to reach the final dimension – Empowering School Culture and Social Structure. Though individual departments and teachers can assume responsibility for dimensions I-IV, the final dimension is a team effort which encompasses a commitment from administrators, teachers, and staff.

Family and Community Influence on Racial Identity

For some mixed-race Americans, the pressure to identify as a single race is a significant part of the multiracial experience. About one-in-five (21%) say they have felt pressure from friends, family or "society in general" to identify as a single race ("Multiracial in America, 2015"). These statistics speak to the enormous influence that family and community have on racial identity development. Stone and Dolbin-MacNab's (2013) study on parent and community influences on the development of Black/White biracial identity development found that most families share the perspective that families co-create meanings about race and racial identity. Many mothers in the study talked about the significance of acknowledging, teaching and talking about both sides of their child's

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racial heritage at home as well as advocating for their family and children in the community and the larger American society. According to Stone and Dolbin-MacNab (2013) it is crucial to consider the impact of multiple family relationships including parents, step family members, siblings, grandparents and great-grandparents as well as to explore the values and beliefs of the parents who are raising the biracial children regarding race and racial identity. All family elements intersect to help (or hinder) a child's racial identity. Stone and Dolbin-MacNab (2013) acknowledge:

> In order to approach issues such as managing differences or tension between both sides of the family or not having parental support or parental understanding of experiences associated with the biracial identity development process, it has been suggested by Poston (1990) that therapists encourage interracial parents to talk about their own racial heritage as well as to acknowledge that their child's racial heritage is different than their own. When working toward a better understanding between parents and children, Poston recommends forming a family identity as an interracial unit, which signifies coming together at all times, but especially during times of difficulty and challenge. Coming together as a family unit and establishing open communications and a shared belief system about race and racial heritage allows families to succeed together in the face of family of origin and parent-child conflict. (as cited in Byrd & Garwick, 2006; Poston)

Stone and Dolbin-MacNab's (2013) study reveals that a supportive family environment and strong parent-child relationships contribute to a positive and healthy biracial identity development process. There was a correlation among supportive families and a strong sense of pride in belonging to this unique (Black/White biracial) sub-group of the population.

While a supportive family unit can produce positive, healthy outcomes for Black/White biracial individuals, other societal influences are not always as supportive. Although the Census now allows a multiracial choice, many other formal documents, such as birth certificates, school enrollment forms and identification cards, still force multiracial individuals into racially categorical limitations throughout their lifetimes

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(Root, 1990). According to Stone and Dolbin-MacNab (2013), when parents and children are forced to choose one racial identity, they are forced to deny one racial identity and also one parent, which devalues the existence of interracial families. One of the most significant implications of Stone and MacNab's (2013) study, in regard to social change, is that the general population is still not aware that…biracial people want a choice about their racial identity rather than having it assumed.

Current research shows that Black/White biracial youth are at the cutting edge of social and demographic change in the United States. Black/White biracial youth are proud, tolerant and growing at a rate three times as fast as the population as a whole ("Multiracial in America, 2015). Many Black/White biracial youth see their identity as fluid and in doing so "bend" race categories (Pollock, 2004). Pollock asserts, "Racial groups are more genetically diverse within than between themselves" (p. 30). This speaks to the heterogeneity of race as experienced by Black/White biracial individuals. It also speaks to race as a social construct – the myth that race is homogenous. "An increasing number of U.S. youth proudly claim "mixed" parentage, in the process hinting that supposedly distinct "race groups" have always had blurred boundaries" (Pollock, 2004, p. 30). However, while many Black/White biracial youth understand and value their biracialism and proudly self-identify in many different ways, research demonstrates that many teachers do not understand how to teach biracial individuals in a non-monolithic way.

Teacher Influence on Racial Identity

Racial socialization is an important component of education. Racial socialization processes are occurring in schools all the time (Michael, 2012). It is for this reason that

teachers have a responsibility in helping students make their personal racial identities compatible with what happens in the classroom. While some teachers have expressed not feeling equipped to discuss race and racism – not knowing enough to teach about it – there are many teachers who practice the philosophy of colorblindness and simply dismiss the importance and need to practice racial socialization.

Research surrounding teacher influence on racial identity supports two predominant philosophies. These philosophies encompass critical multicultural education (which encompasses culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy) and colorblind ideology. Choi (2008) acknowledges "critical multicultural education brings the significance of race to the fore in its analysis of social relations whereas liberal discourses tend to disguise racial inequality by employing the rhetoric of equal opportunity and fair treatment" (p. 54). Colorblind ideology is often practiced by White teachers and reflects the difficulty in locating and discussing race. This is a significant point to consider, as 85% of U.S. K-12 teachers are White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). White teachers rarely see themselves "as a part of a racial group" (Tatum, 1994, p. 404); indeed their Whiteness becomes raceless, and they pay little attention to other races. According to Ladson-Billings (1994) "White teachers, both pre-service and veteran, indicate that many are uncomfortable acknowledging any student differences and particularly racial differences. Thus some teachers make such statements as "I don't really see color. I just see children. I just treat them all like children" (as qtd in Choi, 2008, p. 54). This naïve view of equality does not acknowledge diversity across nor within racial groups. Choi (2008) acknowledges her own difficulty in teaching against colorblind ideology, as she writes, "What I found most vexing was that colorblind

ideology seemed so well-intentioned that it was hard to fight against" (p. 56). This statement speaks to the unconsciousness of colorblind ideology. Most teachers who practice this ideology actually believe and make a good argument for why they "don't see color." In King's (1991) study, findings support reasons why student teachers' thinking "reflects internalized ideologies that both justify the racial status quo and devalue cultural diversity" (p. 134). Many of King's (1991) student teachers believed that affirming cultural difference is equal to racial separatism, that diversity threatens national unity, or that "social inequity originates with sociocultural deficits and not with unequal outcomes that are inherent in our socially stratified society" (p. 133). It is often difficult to get teachers to act as Critical Race educators who question the colorblind norm and see that treating all students the same, neglecting racial disparities, actually ends up marginalizing racial minorities who have only limited access to resources (Choi, 2008). Unfortunately many teachers favor the view that students' personal or environmental deprivations, not racism, hinder learning. They tend to view learning as individual and fail to see the systemic racism within schools and classrooms.

Race discourse has been complicated by an increasing number of mixed race youths who blur racial boundaries and constructs. Contrary to many teachers' continued use of colorblind ideology, many mixed race youth make comments such as "it all depends on individuals (not on race)" (Choi, 2008, p. 64). This cultural practice provides a context where diversity is easily translated into "difference," which has helped to shift race discourse away from equity and social justice (Choi, 2008). Though the influx of mixed race youth is a demographic paradigmatic shift, many teachers still hold ideologies and practices which deny diversity and inclusion. According to King (1991) many

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(White) teachers "foresee a diminution of their own identity, status, and security. Regardless of their conscious intentions, certain culturally sanctioned beliefs [teachers] hold about inequity and why it persists, especially for African Americans, take White norms and privilege as givens" (p. 133). King (1991) terms this "dysconscious racism" which denotes the limited and distorted understandings pre-service teachers and veteran teachers often have about inequity and cultural diversity. According to King (1991) dysconscious racism is not the absence of consciousness but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to critical consciousness.

Race discourse has been complicated by intersecting oppressions surrounding gender, class, sexuality, etc. Fortunately these intersections of oppression are being explored in many teacher education programs and classes and are leading to more critical thinking and practices (Choi, 2008). According to Choi (2008), "colorblind ideology is a product of the pre-service teachers' own socialization in K-12 education through both explicit and hidden curriculum" and through what Kincheloe (2004) describes as educational programs being built on a foundation of normative knowledge as opposed to critical knowledge. Promoting critical thinking within teacher education programs can counter normative thinking and practice. As King (1991) asserts:

> Teachers need both an intellectual understanding of schooling and inequity as well as self-reflective, transformative emotional growth experiences. Most [teachers] are …unaware of how their own subjective identities reflect an uncritical identification with the existing social order. Teachers need opportunities to recognize and evaluate the ideological influences that shape their thinking about schooling, society, themselves and diverse others. Unlearning racism through reflexivity, examining and reflecting on one's own complicity in racism and one's own racial identity can be a valuable and successful way for teachers to learn how to counteract racial bias and promote racial diversity and inclusion. (p. 135)

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A focus on relationship building is an important way for teachers to recognize and evaluate misconceptions. Relationship building is a huge part of culturally relevant pedagogy – how teachers think of themselves and others, how they structure social relations and how they conceive of knowledge (Michael, 2012). Ladson-Billings (1994) emphasizes that culturally relevant teachers do not necessarily share common strategies or techniques developed to target a particular conception of "culture," but rather a common approach to student-teacher relationships, classroom relationships and how they conceptualize knowledge. Here, it is clear that relationships, particularly relationships between students and teachers are at the center of culturally relevant teaching. Culturally relevant teaching encompasses a personal connection which enables teachers to become well versed in diversity and inclusion.

Transition and Summary of Key Points

The studies and research reviewed in Chapter 2 strongly validate and confirm that historical influences involving racial discrimination of Black/White biracial individuals within society carry over into Black/White biracial identity formation. The studies reviewed highlight the invisibility that Black/White biracial individuals often experience due to social, cultural, and political influences and lack of knowledge surrounding Black/White biracial individuals. However, though research demonstrates that society and institutions often impose a racial identity on Black/White biracial individuals, current studies reflect a shift in how Black/White biracial individuals self-identify. It is clear from the research that Black/White biracial children challenge the assumption that racial identification is fixed and that most view race as fluid. Chapter 3 presented the Research Design and Methodology.

Chapter Three – Research Design and Methodology

This chapter discussed the methods used to conduct the research. The purpose of this study was to determine direct influences affecting Black/White biracial student identity development within school settings. Teachers' influence was examined through one-on-one interviews with three elementary teachers who teach Black/White biracial students within a large suburban school district in South Carolina and with one Black/White biracial students' parent and grandparents who live in South Carolina. Additionally, one interview was conducted with a district administrator and curriculum artifacts were collected as part of the data set. The study examined teachers' perception of how curriculum and instruction influence Black/White biracial students' identity development as well as parents' perceptions of how teacher-student relationships contribute to Black/White biracial students' identity development. This study will contribute to the literature on Black/White biracial student identity development within districts, schools, and classrooms. Specifically, this case study is significant because this school district has an initiative engaging in issues on multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion which is unique to the state. This chapter addressed the study design, the role of the researcher, questions, context of the study, measures for ethical protection, participation criterion, data collection, trustworthiness, and data analysis.

Introduction

In this qualitative case study, the researcher interviewed, studied, and interpreted how teachers influence Black/White biracial student identity development through

curriculum and instructional strategies. Through the study, the researcher gained a better

understanding of how teachers and parents of Black/White biracial students interpret a

teacher's role in Black/White biracial student identity development. Qualitative methods

were important in this study to capture the teachers' and parents' individual points of

view through personal interviews. The primary goal was to discover their own

distinguishing factors to Black/White biracial student identity development; therefore, it

was advantageous to use a qualitative case study to discover the authentic factors

affecting Black/White biracial student identity development from the experiential

perspectives of the participants.

Qualitative Design – Paradigm

Few studies have been conducted on Black/White biracial identity development at

the elementary level. Most of the studies that have been conducted in the area of

Black/White biracial students have either centered on biracial/multiracial college students

and the factors that influence these students' identity within the college environment or

have focused on school counselors' influence on biracial identity development. This

study differs in that the focus was on elementary level Black/White biracial students and

on the specific role elementary teachers play in Black/White biracial student identity

development. Interviewing teachers and parents was the best choice for collecting candid

and useful responses.

This study was designed to examine and interpret the perceptions of what teachers

and parents of a Black/White biracial child see as factors regarding successful identity

formation; therefore, a qualitative case study approach was used. Through the process of

data collection and analysis through interviews with teachers and parents of the

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Black/White biracial child, determination of theory emerged. Determining factors were discovered and collections of data gathered through descriptions of the participants' experiences – as they see them – within their natural setting. Through personal interviews, which displayed detailed descriptions, themes were identified, coded, and analyzed. Teachers' and parents' personal and professional views captured through interviews allowed the researcher to interpret and discover more meaningful information into the problem in order to provide the community with possible solutions.

Role of the Researcher in Data Collection

For this study, the researcher was the primary instrument for data collection, interpretation, and analysis. The researcher as this human instrument mediated the data. Through personal interviews, discussions surrounding the major research question of significant factors affecting Black/White biracial student identity development emerged.

The interview questions were developed by the researcher based on information from evolutionary theories, racial identity theories and models, and state and federal court cases – with special attention paid to information surrounding South Carolina. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information and draw meaningful connections and discussion – from teachers' and parents' perspectives to identify significant factors that contribute to Black/White biracial student identity development.

Questions

To better understand the significant factors affecting Black/White biracial student identity development, the researcher used the following questions to guide the focus of the study:

1. How have teachers' ideologies of race evolved in S.C. elementary level classrooms?

2. How do teachers conceptualize and implement curriculum choices for their Black/White biracial students?

Because of the varied experiences of the teachers and parents and the nature of the questions, teachers and parents were interviewed individually. Through the interviews, the researcher gathered authentic data and identified common factors related to successful and unsuccessful Black/White biracial student identity development. The researcher interviewed the teachers and parents in a comfortable environment both inside and outside the school setting.

Context of the Study

The researcher began the data collection process through the use of the school district's demographic database to locate parents of elementary level Black/White biracial students. Since this is a case study, teachers were chosen after the Black/White biracial elementary student/family was chosen.

To begin the data collection, an introductory letter was sent to three sets of parents of children who identify as Black/White biracial. The letter explained the purpose of the study, the details of the interview with the researcher, the nature of the study, and the guarantee of confidentiality (Appendix A). Of the three sets of parents, one responded and agreed to come for interviews. The researcher developed open-ended/semi-structured questions for the interview. It was the intent of the researcher to invite discussion based on the focus of the questions – curriculum, instruction, classroom climate, teacher-student relationships, teacher-parent relationships and parent-child relationships.

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After parents were identified and agreed to be interviewed, the researcher contacted the child's teachers to ask for individual interviews. Interviews were conducted and transcribed by the use of a tape recorder application. With regard to the research questions listed earlier, the following questions were asked during interview sessions with parents/grandparents:

Mother – Interview 1

1. What is your racial identity?

2. What is your husband's racial identity?

3. What is Brittany's racial identity?

4. What is your age?

5. What is your educational level?

6. What is your husband's educational level?

7. What is your profession?

8. What is your husband's profession?

9. Do you consider yourself the primary parent of Brittany?

10. Does Brittany have any siblings?

11. Has Brittany attended the same school since Pre-K?

12. How much contact have you had with Brittany's teacher(s) over the course of her elementary school experience? How do your child's teacher(s) communicate with you? How do you communicate with your child's teacher(s)?

13. Do you think Brittany's racial identity is a factor at school/within a classroom?

14. Has your child/you experienced any racial bias from your child's teachers?

15. How does Brittany relate to other children?

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16. Is Black-White biracial representation within classroom curriculum and instruction (e.g. textbooks, independent reading books, videos, guest speakers, online learning platforms, projects) important to you? Do your child's teachers teach a curriculum with B/W biracial representation? Are there ways this representation could be improved? If so, how do you envision these improvements?

17. What do you think is the best way for teachers to gain knowledge and understanding of a student's racial identity?

18. What are the best ways to train teachers/educators self-analysis and awareness regarding Black-White biracial students' identity development?

Mother – Interview 2

1. In the first interview, you mentioned that you do not have a "good relationship" with your mother-in-law and that because of this distant relationship you do not visit your in-laws – that you do not join your daughter when she visits with her paternal grandmother. Do you think the disharmony with your mother-in-law stems from any racial tension? Have discussions/disagreements with your mother-in-law ever been about race? If yes, please explain.

2. Do you think Brittany is aware of the tension between you and your mother-in-law? If yes, please provide an example.

3. What is Brittany's relationship with her father, paternal and maternal grandfathers?

4. How much contact have you had with Brittany's special services teacher (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly contact)? How long have you known her?

5. Did you ever have a conversation about your child's racial identity with her special services teacher? If yes, what do you remember about the discussion?

6. Has the special services teacher ever discussed social studies curriculum (i.e. lesson plans, book choices, etc.) with you? Was there any Black/White biracial representation in any of the materials (i.e. books, homework, etc.) that were sent home with your child?

7. How much contact have you had with Brittany's second grade teacher? Did you ever have a conversation about your child's racial identity with her? If yes, what do you remember about the discussion?

8. Has Brittany's second grade teacher ever discussed Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, etc. curriculum (i.e. lesson plans, book choices, etc.) with you? Was there any Black/White biracial representation in any of the materials (i.e. books, homework, etc.) that were sent home with your child?

Mother – Interview 3

1. In previous interviews you said that Brittany has mentioned on a couple of occasions that the "brown" kids teased her. Is there something specific that the "brown" kids teased her about? Please provide as many details as you can remember.

2. In the second interview you said that when you addressed the issue of Brittany being teased by the "brown" kids that the teachers did not believe the teasing was related to race (to her biracialism) because they believed there was a thorough amount of biracial representation within the school and classes. Could you

elaborate on your thoughts when teachers told you that they did not believe child being teased had anything to do with race? Did you see things a different way?

3. Research shows that, in our society, there are intersections of oppression at play such as race, class, and gender. During the special services teacher's interview she said that from her teaching experiences she believes Black/White biracial girls are teased/harassed more than B/W biracial boys – that "biracial girls have a harder time." Do you think Brittany's gender also plays a part? Please be as specific as possible. Include any experiences that are relevant.

Mother – Interview 4

1. Does your husband have siblings? If yes, how many, and are they close/distant?

2. How is Brittany's father engaged in her life? In other words, what role does her father play?

3. How is your husband involved in Brittany's school life? Does he communicate with teachers? Does he attend any school-related events? Does he drop her off or pick her up from school? Does he help with homework/projects? Does he wake her up for school, make sure she is dressed and ready for school? Please elaborate as best you can.

Maternal grandmother – Interview 1

1. How would you describe your relationship with your granddaughter?

2. Karen mentioned that Brittany sometimes becomes physically aggressive with you – perhaps for attention. Why do you think she acts this way towards you? How do you handle this aggressive behavior?

3. Have you ever had a conversation with Brittany about her or your racial identity? If yes, could you discuss the details of the conversation?

4. Have you helped Brittany with homework or school projects? If yes, could you describe some details of the homework/projects?

5. Have you had any contact with Brittany's teachers? If yes, could you discuss the level of contact and the nature of the contact? In other words, how often have you had contact with her teachers, and what did you all discuss? Please be as specific as possible.

6. Do you think a child's racial identity is important for teachers to know? Why/why not? Please explain.

7. Should school curriculum (i.e. books, lessons, etc.) be reflective of racial diversity? If yes, please explain.

Maternal grandfather - Interview 1

1. How would you describe your relationship with your granddaughter, Brittany?

2. Your wife mentioned that she thinks Brittany should have extra or special attention because she is biracial. Do you think Izzy should have special attention as well because of her biracialism? If yes, please explain.

3. Have you ever had a conversation with Brittany about her or your racial identity? If yes, could you discuss the details of the conversation?

4. Have you helped Brittany with homework or school projects? If yes, could you describe some details of the homework/projects?

5. Have you had any contact with Brittany's teachers? If yes, could you discuss the level of contact and the nature of the contact? In other words, how often have you

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had contact with her teachers, and what did you all discuss? Please be as specific as possible.

6. Do you think a child's racial identity is important for teachers to know? Why/why not? Please explain.

7. Should school curriculum (i.e. books, lessons, etc.) be reflective of racial diversity? If yes, please explain.

   The following questions were asked during interview sessions with teachers:

1. How long have you been an elementary school teacher?

2. Do you think a student's racial identity is important to know? How do you gain knowledge of a student's racial identity?

3. What do you think is the best way for teachers to gain knowledge and understanding of a student's racial identity?

4. Is racial identity important to discuss with elementary level students?

5. Studies have proven that historically there has been little to no Black/White biracial role models/representation within curricula and instruction and that teachers do not know how to address the unique needs of Black/White biracial students. Why do you think this is the case?

6. How do you ensure inclusion of Black/White biracial representation within your classroom? Do you feel that you create a safe space for racial dialogue?

7. Do you think representation and inclusion of Black/White biracial students within curricula and instruction has changed/shifted (since you first began teaching)?

8. Does your school/district support your methods/pedagogical approach to racial inclusion?

9. Has Brittany ever asked questions or made comments about her racial identity?

10. Have you noticed any incidences with Brittany and other children (i.e. teasing)? If yes, did you feel it was racially motivated? How did you handle this situation?

11. What communication have you had with Brittany's parents?

12. Do you believe a district, school, and classroom that is racially diverse actively practices diversity and inclusion?

13. What are the best ways to train teachers/educators self-awareness to counter racial bias?

14. Have you participated in training which reflects the district's goal of seeing diversity and inclusion as a state of mind instead of an event?

The following interview questions were asked during interview sessions with a district administrator:

1. Why/how did the Diversity and Multicultural Inclusion Department come about? Who made the decision to create the Department?

2. Who are the members of the Department?

3. What is your role as Officer?

4. Was this Department/Program based off another district model? If yes, which one(s)?

5. What are the specific needs of this district? Are these needs unique to the state?

6. Are teachers' perspectives valued/taken into account when making decisions involving diversity/inclusion?

7. Why/how did district community meetings come about? Needs? What are these meetings designed to do?

8. Have you gained valuable data from community meetings? What do you all plan to do with the data? Will data (i.e. parental feedback, teacher feedback, etc.) from meetings be incorporated into curriculum and instruction? If so, how?

9. Do you see a unique need for Black/White biracial students' visibility within curriculum and instruction?

10. Are there Black/White biracial role models/representations within curricula?

11. What is the best way for teachers to gain knowledge and understanding of a student's racial identity?

12. What are the best ways to train teachers/educators self-analysis and awareness regarding Black/White biracial students' identity development?

13. Do you think the (U.S. Census' 2000) inclusion/acknowledgement of a biracial category changed/improved ideologies surrounding race (relations) in S.C. public schools?

Reponses to interview questions were audio tape recorded and transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

Measures for Ethical Protection

To ensure confidentiality, an introductory letter was sent out to three sets of parents identified as parents of Black/White biracial children on Monday, May 9, 2016 (Appendix A). Once the family was chosen, the child's teachers were identified and sent introductory/participatory letters. The teachers and parents were asked to come for the interviews if they wished to participate. Participation was voluntary. Participants were free to refuse to answer any interview questions at any time; they were assured that they could withdraw from participating in the study at any time. The researcher assured

teachers and parents of anonymity. Excerpts from the interviews are part of the final research report, but under no circumstances have names or identifying characteristics been used, other than participants' racial/ethnic status, socioeconomic status, and gender (included in the analysis).

The data from interviews was held secure through various means. Before and during interviews, teachers and parents were reminded of confidentiality and were asked to try as much as possible not to mention particular names, but to use phrases such as "my student" or "my child." When transcribed, names and identifiable information was omitted. A pseudonym was used for each participant. After audio taped interviews were transcribed and coded, the files were housed in a secure location. These files will be destroyed after a period of several years. Permission letters are housed in the same secure file.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

As demonstrated in the literature, Black/White biracial individuals have remained virtually invisible in curriculum and instruction. While measures have been taken in certain districts, schools, and classrooms to provide a more "diverse" curriculum, the teacher's role in self-reflecting to avoid racial bias within instruction of Black/White biracial students is an area that needs more attention and action.

Parents and grandparents provide a window into the child's lived experiences. Questions were asked that relate directly to the parents' and grandparents' interactions with the child and child's teacher(s).

In order to address the original problem of Black/White biracial student identity development, factors were identified as distinguishing Black/White biracial identity

development within the classroom among this group. With the use of three teachers, one administrator, one parent and two grandparents of a Black/White biracial student, a proper sampling of this subgroup was studied and themes emerged. With one-on-one interviews (both inside and outside the school environment), teachers and parents spoke candidly as they discussed their experiences, insights, and recommendations.

Participation in this study was voluntary, and each participant's confidentiality was promised. Anonymity was ensured as a measure of protection to parents and teachers. Participants were selected based on availability and access for interviews both outside and inside the school setting.

Data Collection

Once the study was approved, the researcher began meeting with teachers, parents and the administrator for interviews. The interviews followed an in-depth, semi-structured format where discussion was welcomed and encouraged. The interviews were audio tape recorded and transcribed and analysis was on-going throughout the study. Interviews were conducted both at school and at agreed upon locations outside the school setting. Interviews with the child's mother were held at her home and at a restaurant. The interview with the district administrator was held at the district office. Interviews with the grandparents were held at their home. Teacher interviews were held at school after school was dismissed. Each initial interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Follow-up interviews varied in duration. After I conducted initial interviews, I analyzed the information in order to create follow-up questions. Follow-up questions were designed to prompt in-depth, detailed responses. Curriculum artifacts including pedagogical techniques as described on lesson plans, selected texts used in the classroom, and the

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mission statement and policy directives from the district level were collected from participant educators for document analysis.

Positionality

As the researcher, I hold a personal stake in this study, not only as a mother of a Black/White biracial child, but also as an individual who has a racialized, traumatic past. I grew up in a small southern town that was – and still is in many ways – racially divided. I grew up in a family that displayed overt prejudice and discrimination towards Blacks. As a child, it felt strange to me to hear racial slurs against people who I thought were just people like us. I remember when we would see biracial children, members of my family would say, "I feel sorry for those children. They don't deserve such a life. I blame the parents." As an impressionable child, this made me think I should feel sorry for interracial children and think badly of their parents.

I attended a Baptist Christian school through the fourth grade. It wasn't until years later, upon self-reflection, that I realized all the kids there were White middle-class, like me, and that I had not been immersed in a racially diverse culture until I entered public school in fifth grade. As a kid, I understood public school was different, but it did not dawn on me what that difference meant – until halfway through my fifth grade year. Public school represented freedom for me. No more wearing dresses to school. No more mid-week sermons. And, I liked the diversity of kids. Like many kids my age, I had a best friend who was in the same class as I. My best friend and I used to talk on the phone for hours after school and on weekends. We discussed each other's different ethnic and cultural practices such as her washing her hair twice a month and my washing my hair every other day. It was a mutual friendship of growing, learning and discovering. The

friendship came to a halt when one day my father answered the phone and realized that my friend was Black. He scolded me and forbid me from having anymore contact with her. This event was both hurtful and confusing. As a 10-year old child, I was getting a real life lesson in racism. This was a turning point in my life. From that moment on, I was on high alert. I knew my father had violent tendencies, in general, and particularly towards Black people. I got an even clearer picture of my father's overt discrimination towards Blacks when I was 11 years old. Our neighborhood was located across the railroad tracks from two HBCU's - a mid-sized public university and a small private college. There was a wooded path between the schools and our neighborhood, and many of the college students would use the path to get to our neighborhood in order to get to the local grocery store. I never thought much about it until my father started ranting and raving about the "n's" walking through our neighborhood. We were out raking leaves one day when suddenly my father put down his rake and stared across the yard at the opening of the path. I stopped and stared too. There were two Black students heading down our road. They said nothing and made no gestures toward us. My father watched them closely – contemplating his move. He left the yard and went into the carport and came out with an axe handle. He then proceeded to chase the two guys back down the path and across the railroad tracks (My father was on the track team in high school and could run like the wind). It was as if all the racial tension within him exploded in that moment. I remember thinking, I wonder how my father's actions made the students feel? I felt embarrassed, disgusted, and ashamed. I could not make sense of what my father had done. I felt it was a negative reflection on our family. I knew from the moment he tried to teach me to be racist that we would never see eye to eye.

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Years later when I married outside my race and had a Black/White biracial child, I knew my father did not approve. Still, I wanted my father's love and approval, and I wanted him to know his granddaughter. I thought meeting his granddaughter would finally change his views on race. But, there was part of me that did not want him around my child for fear he may say something racially biased towards her or pity her – harm her in some profound way.

I decided to take my daughter to visit my father in Florida when she was four years old. It would be his first time meeting his only grandchild. I drove 700 miles for him to meet his granddaughter. When we arrived, he saw her and could not stop crying. He was bursting with emotion. I could tell he was battling an internal struggle. It has been many years since then and my father has chosen to withdraw from all of the family; however, he does call a few times each year and ask about my daughter. He sends birthday and Christmas cards filled with nice sentiments – but he chooses not to be fully IN our lives. He never met my (ex) husband, and blatantly told me he did not want to meet him. I find it interesting that he could half accept my daughter but would never accept her father – someone he chose not to get to know because of his skin color. It has become clear to me that my father is a product of his environment. I think of all he has missed out on – birthdays, holidays and everyday life with his family – all because of his internal struggle with prejudice and pride.

Racial discrimination is not something I had to deal with directly until I started dating a Black man. Both in public and in our neighborhood, we would get stares and scowls from both Black and White folks. When we built a house and moved into a predominantly White neighborhood, we were shunned from neighborhood gatherings.

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When our daughter was old enough to play outside in our neighborhood, she would come home and say the other kids said she was not allowed in their homes. (Black) teachers have made comments to my daughter regarding her hair and skin – how her mom should not allow her to straighten her hair and how she should put this product in her hair and that product on her skin. This speaks to the continued tension between Black and White women and to the cultural norms that support Black women as more knowledgeable in regards to raising children. While these microaggressions bothered me on a personal level, they also provided insight into my own White privilege. Now, as a White, single mother of a biracial child I notice how my privilege is fluid depending on context and outside perceptions. When my daughter and I are around my side of the family, it is apparent that many family members have never had a Black or mixed person in their home. They do not really know how to act. They seem nervous and many try to overcompensate by "trying too hard." They want to make us feel welcomed but often, in the process, make the situation awkward. We have had similar experiences with friends, neighbors and teachers.

The lesson learned from all of this is it is not a single race issue. Racism is everyone's issue, and this is what brings me to my work. These incidences represent the racial divide – the prejudices and cultural norms that shape society today. It also speaks to the uncertainty that many people feel. Many people are unaware of how to approach the subject of race. It is uncomfortable and anxiety-provoking for many. As a White woman doing race work, I am keen to the microaggressions that come with the job. Many believe a White person cannot possibly critique race culture and racism accurately. I argue that my insider/outsider perspective, as a White mother of a Black/White biracial

child, places me in a unique position to expose new facets of knowledge to the body of race work.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

As the researcher, I was the primary instrument of the study. To ensure trustworthiness of this study, I was attentive to the actions and reactions of the participants during interviews. I actively sought to establish and maintain trust between participants and me in order for participants to speak freely – sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences. I spent sufficient time with each participant in order to ensure there was an environment of trust and comfort.

It was my intention to achieve credibility by triangulating the data across sources – parents/grandparents, teachers, and an administrator. Including a variety of sources within this study provided a clear understanding of the interconnectedness of teachers, parents and administrators in regards to Black/White biracial identity development.

Confirmability of design, technique and validity was assured through scholarly research including Sharan Merriam's (1998) *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education.* Merriam's chapters dealing with analyzing and reporting qualitative data were especially helpful in the analysis, coding and synthesis of the data.

How and When Data will be Analyzed

Informational data were transcribed from the interviews and compared and organized on the basis of common answers and factors teachers and parents deemed important to Black/White biracial student identity development. The researcher identified specific factors among participants' responses during the interviews in order to develop a system of coding. Through this coding process, the researcher labeled and grouped on a

matrix factors affecting Black/White biracial student identity development as stated by participants during interviews. Data analysis was on-going throughout the study. Themes emerged as the data was analyzed. The researcher included all relevant information in the research study including recommendations for further study. The researcher sought to confirm relationships in the model and develop the theory behind Black/White biracial student identity development. It was the intent of the researcher to discover distinguishing factors affecting Black/White biracial identity development. Theory arose from the analysis and interpretations of teachers' and parents' perceptions of those distinguishing factors affecting Black/White biracial identity development.

Transition and Summary of Key Points

This chapter described the theory design and methodology used to identify significant factors affecting Black/White biracial student identity development. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and common themes developed. From this data analysis, recommendations to improve Black/White biracial representation within curriculum and instruction were explored. Chapter 4 will describe the process of obtaining, gathering, and recording data. Through the interviews with teachers and parents, patterns, relationships, and themes will be described as the findings were supported by the data.

Chapter Four – Data Analysis and Synthesis

Introduction

This qualitative case study was conducted in a large suburban school district in South Carolina. The district's median household income is $45,000 and 46% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The district has a total of 28,000 students among the 39 schools and centers. The district's racial breakdown of students is: 59% African American; 29% White; 3% Asian; 6% Hispanic; and 3% Other or Multiracial. This chapter is organized as follows: Teacher and Parent Demographics, Family Dynamics, Teacher Dynamics, District Initiatives, Banks' Multiculturalism's 5 Dimensions Continuum, Synthesis of Findings, and Transition and Summary of Key Points.

Table 4.1

Educator Demographics

Name	Years Taught	Education Level	Type of College Attended	Race & Gender
Ms. Clark	23	Master of Education	Large, Traditionally White research institution	White Female
Ms. Birch	12	Master of Education Elementary Education	Large, Traditionally White research institution	White Female
Ms. Downs	30	Master of Education	Undetermined	White Female
Ms. Price	21	Master of Education	Small, private, liberal arts women's college	White Female

Table 4.2

Family Demographics

Name	Age	Race	Education Level	Occupation
Mother – Karen	40	White	High school diploma – some college	Administrative Assistant
Father – Ron	43	Black	High school	Heavy equipment operator
Maternal grandmother - Patty	67	White	High school diploma	Retired
Maternal grandfather – Phil "Papa"	70	White	High school diploma	Retired
Paternal grandmother - Celia	61	Black	BA degree	Manufacturing company supervisor

Child "Brittany"

The child represented in the study is nine years old and a third grade student. To ensure anonymity, the child was referred to as Brittany. She was held back a grade due to developmental delays. Brittany has improved; however, she has not reached grade level with reading and math. While the child's receiving special services is an important factor, for the purposes of this study, her special services were not a primary focus. Brittany is a Black/White biracial child with her father being Black and mother being White. She has 1 sibling, a half-sister who is 19 years old. She has no direct contact with her half-sister; therefore, for the purposes of this study her half-sister was not interviewed.

Family Dynamics

Mother and Father

Brittany's mother, Karen, and father, Ron, have been married for 12 years. Karen was interviewed 4 times – 3 face to face interviews and 1 follow-up interview via email.

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Ron declined to be interviewed; therefore, all information included in this study related to the child's father comes from Karen's perspective. Karen said Ron works 60-65 hours per week and would not have time for an interview.

Karen was raised in a traditional two-parent household in rural South Carolina. Ron was raised in a single-parent home in South Carolina. Karen describes Ron's father as "absent." Karen has 1 older sibling – a brother. Ron has a total of 8 siblings – 1 full sister; 4 half-brothers; and 3 half-sisters. The half-siblings are by his father. Ron has a distant relationship with his father and with his half-siblings which Karen contributes to his lack of involvement when Ron was growing up. Ron is close to his mother and full sister. Ron has an older daughter, Ashley, from a previous relationship. She is 19 years old and does not live with Ron, Karen, and Brittany. Karen says Ashley used to have a close relationship with her but has never bonded with Brittany. According to Karen, the times that she has been around Brittany, she has ignored her.

Ron works long hours (60-65 hours/week) as a heavy equipment operator. Karen says Brittany "is definitely a daddy's girl;" however, since Ron works long hours Brittany does not get to spend much time with him. He cannot be as involved as he would like because of his work schedule. Karen says "Ron is normally really tired when he gets home [from work] and has a short temper with [Brittany]. Karen says Brittany "tends to do things just to get a rise out of him (hitting on him)…because it gets his attention. [Brittany] wants to be on him and he doesn't want to be bothered."

Karen is the sole contact with teachers. Ron has had no communication with Brittany's teachers. Ron has participated in NASA Night at school which occurs once every couple of months. He helps Brittany with school projects but not with homework

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and reading, as his work schedule does not allow him to help with homework on a regular basis. He recently began helping Brittany get ready for school (i.e. making her breakfast and making sure she is dressed and ready for school), and Karen says this is a time when they can bond.

Grandparents

Brittany's maternal grandmother, Patty, and grandfather, Phil, have been married for 45 years. They have strong religious principles and believe strongly in traditional gender roles. They believe it is best for a child's mother to stay home and be the primary caretaker of the child/children and the home while dad works outside the home. The maternal grandparents' beliefs conflict with the child's parents' practices, as both Karen and Ron work outside the home. Patty believes her daughter should stay at home with Brittany so she does not have to attend daycare/afterschool care. When asked to elaborate on this response, Patty said, "I do want [my daughter] to be able to stay at home and have [Brittany] come home after school and not go to daycare. Daycare is not always the best place for children." Patty believes Brittany will have a harder time than other children because she is Black/White biracial. She feels the child "needs more love because of her family being biracial." She considers the child's racial identity as Black because the child's father is Black. Patty's beliefs reflect the one-drop rule that still resonates with many people. Karen is upset that her mother feels Brittany needs special/extra attention and love because of her biracialism. Karen does not feel Brittany needs "extra attention" because she is "part Black." She does not want her child to feel singled-out because of her racial identity.

Within the initial interview with Patty, she mentioned Brittany "hitting her to get attention." When asked to elaborate on this physical aggression, Patty said she believes she is "too easy on her" and lets her get away with too much. She said she should be stricter and not allow Brittany to hit her.

Patty admits she finds it hard to discuss race with Brittany and has not had a conversation about race with Brittany. When asked whether or not she sees race as an issue in the family, Patty responded:

> We all had a rough start with [our daughter] marrying a black man. I was brought up in a poor white family in the country. We had people to work in the yards, garden and whatever my mom and dad needed done. It was unheard of to marry someone out of your own race. When we found out our [daughter] was dating a black man, everyone was devastated-never done in the family. We grew to love her husband. We treat him as a son.

Patty says of Brittany's racial identity: "We thought she was the prettiest little girl. We fell very much in love with her. I kept [her] a lot. She was so beautiful we didn't concentrate on her race. No one really talked about her racial identity, although it was hard to tell everyone [my daughter] was marrying a black man."

Patty and Phil have not had any contact with teachers; however, Patty says Brittany has a "great resource teacher" and would like for the resource teacher to continue working with Brittany so that she is performing at grade level. She believes it is important for teachers to know a child's background and racial identity. Patty says she has tried to help Brittany with her homework, but Brittany is reluctant and unruly at times.

Brittany visits her paternal grandmother, Celia, every few weeks. Karen does not go with Brittany to visit her grandmother, as they do not get along. There is tension between them which Karen attributes to her being White. Within our second interview,

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Karen was asked to elaborate on her feelings towards her mother-in-law. Karen responded, "I believe the reason my mother-in-law does not like me is because I am white. She actually treats me now and did treat my stepdaughter's mom the same way who is white. She has never made any comments to me stating so but it is apparent. My husband has always dated white women which is why I tend to believe it is due to our race." Karen also made many comments in interviews regarding her husband's collective family. She said, "My husband's side of the family is very loud and yell more than my side of the family. [Brittany] is more hyper when around her dad's side of the family because how they talk/interact with each other." Karen also mentioned that when Brittany returns from visiting her paternal grandmother, she talks about her hair and how her grandmother says "her hair is dry and that her mother needs to get her hair straightened." Karen seemed insulted by her mother-in-law's comments. When asked whether or not Karen believes Brittany notices or is affected by the tension between her and her mother-in-law Karen said she does not think Brittany is aware of the tension.

There have been noticeable instances when Brittany code switches. For instance, when asked whether or not Brittany is physically aggressive with her paternal grandmother, Celia, as she is with her maternal grandmother, Karen responded:

> Whenever she is around my family, she has a tendency to want to hit and you know I mean I've been told it's because she's just trying any attention she can get that's what you know – she's getting that attention, so she likes to not like punch or anything my mom, but you know, she'll hit on her, if she wants her attention she'll hit on her, you know, and she does that with my mom, but her African American grandmother she does not touch, she doesn't talk basically out of turn, and you know my husband has even told her, you know, if you did this to your grandma [Celia], you know, she would tear your butt up…and I don't know if that's just because she is too scared to, but she…does act differently when she's around my side of the family, you know compared to what she is to my husband's side.

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Karen also said Brittany is more hyper when she comes back from visiting her dad's side of the family "because of the way…that they talk and they interact with each other…."

Brittany rarely visits her paternal grandfather. Karen says this is because Ron's relationship with his father "has been strained for many years." There was no way to contact Ron's father for an interview.

Brittany has a close relationship with her maternal grandfather, Phil, whom she refers to as "Papa." While Phil agreed to 1 interview, his responses were short and concise. He did not elaborate. Brittany and Papa see each other several times a week and have "dates" on Saturdays. Phil says Brittany is his "special granddaughter, who is very much loved." Unlike his wife, he does not believe Brittany should have "special" attention because she is biracial. Phil has not had any conversations about race with Brittany but believes "that may need to come up in the near future." Phil has not had direct contact with teachers; however, he has been present at PTA meetings in the past. He has not helped Brittany with homework/projects. Phil believes it is important for teachers to know a child's racial identity "to avoid difficult situations" but does not believe school curriculum should be reflective of racial diversity. He believes "school curriculum should present to all students the same information in the same way to produce equal opportunity." Phil's views are reflective of a more collective approach to curriculum instead of a focus on individual differences.

Teacher Dynamics

Ms. Clark has been Brittany's special services teacher for three years and has had the most contact with Karen. She has taught elementary, middle and high school levels

within her 21 years of teaching. Prior to this study, I knew Ms. Clark, as she was a teacher in my daughter's school. Within our first interview, Ms. Clark advised me not to use this particular child for my case study, as she has "multiple issues." It seemed as though Ms. Clark felt comfortable sharing this insight with me, perhaps due to the fact that we had known each other somewhat prior to the interview. This response could have been about the child's special needs or it may have been about her being Black/White biracial since Ms. Clark passively discussed race within our two interviews. She did follow with explaining how she feels Black/White biracial girls have "a harder time" than Black/White biracial boys. When asked specifically what she meant, she said that many boys are proud of it (their biracialism) and want to talk about it, but the B/W biracial girls she has taught never talk about it.

When Ms. Clark was asked how she comes to know a student's racial identity, she responded, "I mean sometimes I would never ask them, because of course I don't care, you know, it doesn't matter to me, but sometimes I learn it just in talking to the parents – a lot of times parents will share, or other teachers might share information." She does believe it is important to understand where a child comes from. She said, "The family background is important." When asked specifically about curriculum and her pedagogical practices, she said she uses picture books that show all races and cultures. She added, [There is] "broader representation in social skills curriculum such as book studies…these help all kids relate and empathize. They may not be specifically identified as Black/White biracial but there are people of different colors – particularly in picture books." Ms. Clark does not think there is a need for representation within curriculum and instruction that is specific to Black/White biracial students.

Ms. Birch was Brittany's first grade teacher. She has taught less than other teachers interviewed – 10 years. Ms. Birch's responses were similar to Ms. Clark. When asked whether a child's racial identity was important, Ms. Birch responded, "I see all children the same. I like to know their background, their interests, but discussing their racial identity is not important, particularly for elementary children." When asked about curriculum and pedagogical practices, Ms. Birch also mentioned picture books that represent a diversity of races, ethnicities and cultures. Ms. Birch does think diversity training helps teachers to value all children. She did not recall having any conversations or incidences with Brittany surrounding race. She did recall the conversation with Karen involving the "brown" kids teasing Brittany, and she did not feel the teasing was related to Brittany's biracialism. She said it was just a case of "kids being kids."

Ms. Downs was Brittany's second grade teacher. She refused an interview, so only the parent's perspective of Ms. Downs is included in this study. Ms. Downs retired this year, and according to Karen, she rarely communicated with her. Karen said Ms. Downs "would not return emails" and rarely returned her phone calls. Karen said it was most likely because she was an older teacher and was retiring. Karen says Brittany never brought home books or other homework materials that had any Black/White biracial representation.

Ms. Price is Brittany's third grade teacher this school year. Ms. Price offers a unique perspective, as she was the diversity coach for many years at the school and many of her instructional practices connect with the district's initiatives. Ms. Price believes the "most effective technique to ensure inclusion of all students is to build a classroom community of students who respect and care about one another." When asked about

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specific teaching strategies she uses, she included specific examples. She tries "to ensure bulletin boards, displays, instructional materials, and other visuals in the classroom reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds represented by students." She includes daily morning meetings, the use and display of words in students' heritage language, and activities such as "Commonalities and Differences" to help students find three things they have in common with others and one thing that makes them unique. When asked about teacher bias and self-awareness, Ms. Price said, "It is important to have open conversations/dialogue about race with teachers, especially new teachers – we need strategies to help teachers." When asked about diversity training, Ms. Price responded that she has recently participated in required professional development training at the school and district level and that the training reflects the district's philosophy of practicing diversity and inclusion as a state of mind. She elaborated that the "training was focused on improving the quality of education for children of poverty and on the value of relationships for all students." Ms. Price could not recall any training specific to the needs of Black/White biracial students.

District Initiatives

Dr. Glover is the first Diversity and Inclusion officer in this district and one of the few in the country. She spoke candidly in the interview. I began the interview by asking her what prompted the development of her department. In 2014, the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force was created as a result of the superintendent recognizing diversity and inclusion as one of the nine focus areas for the district. The Task Force is comprised of district employees and community members. The Task Force members started meeting "to think and talk about what kinds of things might be included as part of the goals…to

make sure that the district was including all of the students." Dr. Glover added, "We're naturally diverse. I think everyone recognized that the diversity was already there." One of the most important recommendations the Task Force made was the need for someone whose sole focus was diversity and inclusion, so the decision was made and the position started in August 2015. What is unique about this position is that while most districts have administrators/teachers/staff who advocate and address diversity and inclusion training, this is the only district to have someone on staff whose *sole function* is diversity and inclusion. Dr. Glover says of the district, "I think they were forward thinking in terms of looking at how we develop diversity and inclusion as a state of mind as opposed to an event. It's not just go to a professional development and hear something and then go back to your classroom and do – but it is a state of mind of constantly thinking in terms of every aspect of what you do…."

When I asked Dr. Glover specifically about the role teachers play (i.e. their experiences and perspectives) in ensuring diversity and inclusion, she responded:

> The teachers are the heart of what we do…really it's all about teaching and learning, and so we have to look at our teachers' experiences, what they have learned through their time…we look at it in terms of our new teachers coming in, what experience do they have already? Where do we need to build into them skills that will help them deal with our diverse student population?

Dr. Glover also acknowledged that while many things are in progress it has not come to a point where everyone is doing [diversity and inclusion as a mindset] yet. She is hopeful that the summer institute training sessions and beginning of next school year training sessions will be places where the "new" diversity and inclusion plan will be incorporated. She also mentioned that the district is looking at bringing back diversity teams in every school – modifying them according to current diversity and inclusion needs.

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When asked about her thoughts on the best ways for teachers to gain knowledge and understanding of a student's racial identity, Dr. Glover responded:

> I think teachers have to build relationships with their students and in order to do that they have to have relationships with their parents. We have to be careful when it comes to racial identities, that we don't offend anyone, and for teachers that can be a little difficult trying to figure out how do I approach this issue, what can I say, how do I ask a question in such a way that I don't offend anyone, but at the same time that I get enough information that I am able to pull in resources so that when I put a poster up on my wall, if I've got 5 Hispanic students, a Korean student, a Vietnamese student, I've got mixed heritage students that I want my classroom to reflect all of that.

Dr. Glover's response directly correlates with Ms. Price's responses regarding the importance of building relationships with students and being aware of and reflective of the racial and ethnic diversity within one's classroom.

When asked about teacher bias and self-awareness in regards to students' racial diversity, Dr. Glover made it clear that this is an important area that needs more attention. She seems to take a practical approach to addressing teacher bias. When asked to elaborate on what she had done specifically to address these issues, she responded:

> Part of what I've done so far…is talk with teachers about biases and try to help [them] understand it is natural to have biases. We all have them. If [a teacher] tells me she does not have any, then I really need her to do some self-reflection. But if you can acknowledge them, then you're better equipped to be able to put them in the appropriate perspective and not let it impede the work that you need to do with your students.

Dr. Glover says she prefers to work with smaller groups when discussing biases so that there is room for open discussion. She says that she will raise issues related to bias and will notice looks which indicate they have never thought of it that particular way. She elaborated, "That means I've said something to them that will cause them to think…and on the ride home they'll think about it again, and when they start looking at their lesson

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plan and thinking about what they're going to do for their students, it will come up in their minds again, and that's when you see their minds have changed."

Synthesis

Interviews conducted with parents and grandparents display conflicting ideologies. Interviews with the child's mother indicate that she feels her child should not be teased or singled out as a biracial child; however, she does believe there should be more diversity within curriculum and instructional practices that reflect her daughter's biracialism. She also believes that there is an issue with teachers' colorblind practices such as them not thinking the child was being teased because, according to them, the child's class has a large biracial representation. The child's maternal grandfather connects with a colorblind philosophy, as he feels his granddaughter should not be treated any differently than the other kids at school. The child's maternal grandmother believes her granddaughter should receive special, individualized attention due to her biracialism, not necessarily in terms of curriculum and instruction.

The three teachers interviewed say it is a changing world in the sense that we see broader representations of family structures and of racial structures in families in terms of curriculum than we did 10-15 years ago; however, Ms. Price was the only teacher to give specifics on how she ensures diversity and inclusion within her classroom. Again, this could be because of her experience working as a diversity coach. Ms. Clark and Ms. Birch do not see race as a primary issue to be addressed or discussed unless a child brings it up. They have no methods of actively addressing or discussing race other than through the use of picture books. They clearly practice colorblind ideology. Ms. Clark and Ms. Birch's actions or absence of action reflects a surface-level, passive approach to diversity

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and inclusion which aligns with the first dimension of Banks' Multiculturalism's Five Dimensions continuum- Content Integration – integrating minorities into the curriculum (i.e. picture books). While this dimension is important, it is the base level dimension. Based on Ms. Price's responses, her level of diversity and inclusion instruction falls under the fourth dimension – Prejudice Reduction – acknowledging all students come to school with their own prejudices and using methods to help kids develop more positive racial attitudes. Ms. Price's practices reflect this dimension, as she ensures all classroom visuals (i.e. bulletin boards, displays, etc.) reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds represented by all students. She also uses thoughtful activities which encourage students to value each other's commonalities and differences. Her philosophy involves recognizing and celebrating each child's uniqueness. She understands the importance of valuing both individual and collective identities. Ms. Clark's and Ms. Birch's approach reflects the belief that acknowledging collective identities is enough to ensure diversity and inclusion. They made no reference to actively recognizing and celebrating individual student's identities.

Regarding the importance of building relationships with students and parents, only Ms. Price had a clear method for building teacher-student, student-student, and teacher-parent relationships. While Ms. Clark and Ms. Birch acknowledged the value in knowing a student's family background and cultural practices, neither could provide a detailed response as to how they build these relationships other than listening to parents and students who "want to talk about it." Ms. Price and Dr. Glover practice the philosophy that race matters – that difference matters- and that practicing colorblindness is not best practices.

An important issue – Brittany being teased at school – which Karen discussed within all four interviews addresses the consequences of teachers practicing colorblind ideology. Karen mentioned several occasions when Brittany came home from school upset because the "brown kids" were teasing her. The child elaborated to Karen saying they teased her about her hair and skin color. When Karen asked the child's teachers, Ms. Clark and Ms. Birch about these incidents, both teachers said the child was not being teased because of her Black/White biracialism – that it was a case of "kids being kids." Specifically when Karen approached Ms. Birch about this issue, Karen said, "It really wasn't much of a discussion other than she didn't believe the child's race was an issue with those kids as there were many biracial children in her class." These teacher responses underscore the myth that having a racial diversity of students within a district, school, or class is a strong indicator that Black/White biracial students do not get teased/bullied because of their race. However, as research shows, a class may be racially diverse and still not reflect an anti-racist classroom. Karen does not believe racial diversity within a district, school, and class correlates to teachers, staff, and district administrators actually supports inclusion. She believes this gives teachers an excuse not to acknowledge racial bias. Although Brittany continued to complain to Karen about being teased at school, according to Karen, none of the teachers attempted to resolve the issue – likely because they did not feel there was an issue.

Another issue with Ms. Clark's and Ms. Birch's responses to Karen's concern over Brittany being teased is their grouping of biracial children. When they said there is an ample amount of biracial representation within the class, they did not specify what kind of biracial representation. They do not distinguish *Black/White* biracialism from

other biracial representation which is a problem in itself. They are homogenizing biracial students which leaves little room for addressing unique needs of Black/White biracial students.

Acknowledging race matters because children have complex lives outside of school in which their race is one of the primary lenses through which they see themselves, their families, the world and countless other aspects of their identities (Tatum, 1999). When teachers were asked specifically about conversations surrounding race with Brittany, none of the teachers could recall discussing race with her. While all teachers interviewed feel strongly that it is important to understand where a child comes from – their family and cultural background and values – only Ms. Price had a particular method for acknowledging (and celebrating) a student's racial identity. Ms. Clark and Ms. Birch were open to passively listening to students who want to discuss their racial identity but had no clear method of actively discussing race with students. As education researcher, Michael (2012) acknowledges, "As teachers work at "not seeing race," students suffer the consequences of growing up in a racialized society without the tools and support they need to be successful" (p. 3). Schools and classrooms provide an opportunity to address individual and collective racial bias.

As Dr. Glover acknowledges, it can be difficult trying to figure out how to approach the issue of race. Teachers are often scrutinized and need to be careful how they approach the topic of race with parents and with students. Yet, obtaining this information is an important component of teaching. What Dr. Glover and the district are attempting to do is situate programs and resources that will help teachers move beyond thinking of diversity and inclusion as an event and instead practice diversity and inclusion as a

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mindset. Dr. Glover encourages teachers to participate in webinars and to visit TeachingTolerance.org which teaches teachers how to use the toolkit to determine whether or not a text is multiculturally inclusive. For new teachers, there are programs such as Induction Teachers and Lead Up which deal specifically with how to discuss and address biases and the development of relationships. The district's goals are in direct line with Banks' 5th dimension of multiculturalism; however, it is clear that many of the district's teachers' levels of addressing diversity and inclusion fall within the first dimension and that there is more work to be done in the areas of addressing teacher bias through training, small group discussions, reflexivity, self-reflection, as well as other program initiatives. By addressing teacher bias, encouraging self-awareness and reflection, as well as promoting culturally relevant pedagogy, all teachers can begin to build important, meaningful relationships within departments and most importantly, with students and parents. As Banks (1993) acknowledges, "Teachers have to engage in a process of self-transformation. Teachers must start with the process of self-transformation, a process of reading, a process of engaging with the other, a process of understanding that the other is us and we are the other" (p. 47). Without addressing individual teacher bias to begin the process of self-transformation, there is little hope for collective transformation regarding diversity and inclusion initiatives. Table 4.3 provides a detailed overview of the ways in which Banks' five dimensions were addressed by the participants of this study.

Table 4.3

James Banks' Multiculturalism's Five Dimensions

Five Dimensions	Explanation	Examples	Teachers' Pedagogical Techniques	Document Data
Content Integration	Integrating minorities into the curriculum – diverse representation	Show African Americans and Asian Americans in picture books. Show bulletin boards of famous women scientists.	This dimension is valued and implemented by all teachers interviewed.	Picture books: -- *Nasrene's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan* -- *Climbing Lincoln's Steps: The African American Journey* -- *My Language Your Language* *Rosa Parks*
Knowledge Construction	Teachers help students understand, investigate, and determine the implicit cultural assumptions and frames of reference. Questions teachers may ask: What are the values that underlie knowledge? How do historians or scientists construct knowledge?	Look at the values and assumptions that underlie terms like "the westward movement." This was relative to one group of people – the Anglo Americans.	Mrs. Price illustrates this dimension to students when she teaches S.C. history. She offers the students different perspectives as she asks questions such as, "How do you think Native Americans felt when Columbus came to America?" This level was not explored by the other teachers	-- 3rd grade – South Carolina History -- Native American History – Columbus' Role as colonizer

Five Dimensions	Explanation	Examples	Teachers' Pedagogical Techniques	Document Data
			interviewed, as they do not feel elementary level students are ready for deeper analysis.	
Equity Pedagogy	Teachers change their methods to enable kids from diverse racial groups to achieve. Outcome - should help all students learn.	Teachers using a wide range of strategies and techniques (i.e. cooperative groups, simulations, role-playing, and discovery)	All teachers seemed concerned with helping all students learn but not sure all teachers know how.	Ms. Price uses "Sharing Circle" and "Role Playing" daily.
Prejudice Reduction	Should encompass ALL teachers from all subjects.

Teachers must be sensitive to the fact that all students come to school with their own prejudices toward different groups. | Teachers use methods to help kids develop more positive racial attitudes. | Ms. Price uses bulletin boards, displays, instructional materials and other visuals in the classroom to reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds represented by all students. | Ms. Price uses a Technique she refers to as "Commonalities and Differences" to help students value Commonalites and Differences. Students discuss one thing they all have in common and two things that make them different/unique. This Technique is a great representation of not seeing all students the same – of recognizing and celebrating difference. |

Five Dimensions	Explanation	Examples	Teachers' Pedagogical Techniques	Document Data
				Ms. Birch and Ms.Clark mention that they use picture books to help kids develop more positive racial attitudes; however, they do not discuss how they assess to determine if this strategy alone works.
Empowering School Culture & Social Structure	Looking at total school culture to make it more equitable. Questions to address: What does the school staff look like racially?	Practices that lead to inequitable treatment which lead to a school culture that is not empowering.	Racial representation of teachers in the district - All child's teachers interviewed are White, middle-class women. The district administrator interviewed is a Black, middle-class woman.	According to the district's diversity and inclusion officer, this is the level that is the ultimate objective for teachers, staff and administration within the district – viewing diversity and inclusion as a mindset instead of an event – and having a diverse representation among administrators, staff and teachers.

Transition and Summary of Key Points

This chapter discussed data analysis and synthesis. Specific data taken from interviews were grouped and coded to reveal patterns and new insights related to Black/White biracial identity development. Compatible with past and present research, it was discovered that two out of three of the elementary teachers interviewed did not understand how to address the unique needs of Black/White biracial students through curriculum choices and pedagogical practices. They, in fact, actively practiced colorblindness. All teachers interviewed grouped all biracial students together and did not seem to know how to discuss and address Black/White biracial students as a unique group. It was also discovered that two out of three teachers believed having an "ample" biracial representation within the class correlates to diversity and inclusion within the class.

Parents' perspectives on the child's experiences at school were mixed. There was not much involvement with the child's father and grandparents regarding communication with teachers and presence at school. The child's mother expressed her concerns with the child being teased by other children at school as well as her concerns with teachers "brushing it off" as "kids being kids" and not looking deeper into the potential racial tensions. Though the child and mother have had positive experiences with individual teachers, their concerns were not always addressed.

Chapter 5 captures the relevance of the data to the two research questions by connecting the data to what the questions actually mean. Implications regarding where we need to focus our efforts was discussed, and recommendations for future research was explored.

Chapter Five - Conclusion

Introduction

While diversity and inclusion efforts have been adept at producing theoretical approaches for classroom teachers, there still remains disconnection among theory, policy and practice. This disconnect is evident based on data retrieved, coded, analyzed and synthesized for this study. While one Black/White biracial student's experiences do not reflect all Black/White biracial students' experiences, based on both parent and teacher interviews, it is clear that there is still work to do to address teacher bias and colorblindness by applying culturally relevant pedagogy. The district's initiatives discussed in this study reflect a clear progressive mindset which needs to be implemented consistently within teacher professional development training. Dialogues on race need to be included in teacher training so that teachers feel more comfortable and better prepared to individualize students' needs and to recognize and reduce racial tension within the classroom.

Connecting the Data

In addressing the two major research questions for this study:

1. How are teachers' ideologies of race reflected in S.C. elementary level classrooms?

2. How do teachers conceptualize and implement curriculum choices for their Black/White biracial students?

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Based on data collected and analyzed, it is clear that teachers' ideologies of race is an important issue to address. Existing literature demonstrates reasons many teachers still practice colorblind ideology including lack of knowledge/understanding, desire to create equality and fairness, and failure to reflect on their own contributions to racial inequality. Two out of the three teachers interviewed expressed a strong desire to create equality by seeing "all kids the same." They actively practiced colorblindness while passively dismissing real student concerns (i.e. student, Brittany, being teased repeatedly for the color of her skin and her hair). The teachers' reluctance to discuss Brittany's specific needs as a Black/White biracial student highlights research findings relative to teachers not knowing how to address the unique needs of Black/White biracial students. Consequently, two out of three teachers interviewed did not see race as an issue when the child was teased at school – even though the mother voiced her concerns that it was racially motivated. Though the child was repeatedly teased by the "brown kids" because of her skin color and hair, the teachers would not discuss the issue seriously because according to them, the class consisted of several biracial students. The teachers' dismissal of the students' and parents' concerns reflects a deeper, systemic issue in regards to racial bias. The teachers believed that since the student's class was racially diverse, including several other biracial students, in general, it must be concluded that the class was indeed void of racial bias. This mindset is incongruent with district standards and initiatives and underscores the disconnection between theory, policy and practice.

All teachers interviewed grouped all biracial students into one single category in regards to curriculum choices. They did not distinguish *Black/White* biracialism from other biracial representation. In fact, even when asked specific questions related to

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Black/White biracialism teachers responded with a homogenizing effect. When asked about diversity within the curriculum, two of the teachers felt that biracial/multiracial representation through picture books was sufficient, while one teacher utilized multiple approaches to ensuring diverse representation within all curriculum and instructional choices. Though all teachers interviewed used textbooks, none mentioned the importance of textbooks and racial identity. As Banks (1991) acknowledges, "textbooks are embedded with Eurocentric ideology, which results in Anglo immigrants to the West being called 'settlers' rather than 'immigrants'…calling the Americas the New World subtly denies the nearly forty thousand years that Native Americans have lived in this land" (p. 128). Banks 2nd dimension of multiculturalism, Knowledge Construction, offers a way that teachers can help students understand, investigate, and determine the implicit cultural assumptions and frames of reference that are prevalent in textbooks and other curricula. However, before teachers can reach beyond the 2nd dimension, they must address the fundamental problem first. This fundamental problem is that minority cultures, lifestyles, etc. are represented in curriculum (i.e. textbooks) that is written largely by White people and thus from the White cultural perspective (Banks, 1991). This knowledge production must first be recognized and unpacked by teachers. Teachers must understand the importance of teaching students how to ask questions about how knowledge is constructed. Banks (1991) refers to this as disrupting "epistemological racism." When teachers disrupt epistemological racism, they question who participated in knowledge construction, whose way of knowing is legitimized as official, scientific, and value-free, and whose interest is being served and they encourage students to disrupt these constructions as well. Prior to any of these stages, however, it is crucial for teachers

to recognize and evaluate the ideological influences that shape their thinking (King, 1991).

None of the teachers interviewed expressed a clear need for self-awareness and reflection in regards to understanding how their role as a White teacher may affect their teaching. As Banks (1991) notes, "developing and clarifying White [teachers] own ethnic and cultural identities is the best way to develop more positive attitudes toward other racial, ethnic and cultural groups" (as cited in Choi, 2008, p. 61). While all of the teachers interviewed identified as White, none discussed an interest in or need to address her own racial/ethnic/cultural identity.

While existing literature supports my findings, my research introduces new facets of knowledge to the body of scholarship because of its treatment of a younger student population. My data suggests that there is a widespread belief that young kids do not need to talk about race – as if elementary level children do not know race exists. For instance, Ms. Clark commented that she believes kids notice color (i.e. brown kids and light kids, and if a parent is a different color than the child); however, she did not think kids have an understanding of race. The child's parents and grandparents supported this opinion when they said they had never discussed race with the child and did not think it is a topic to discuss with children.

Implications

In light of these findings, it is clear that our efforts should be focused on teacher development training for new and experienced teachers to combat racial bias and to support Black/White biracial identity development. Awareness and self-reflection must be instilled in teachers through interactive, discussion-based training. Dialoguing about

race and reconciliation is a good way for all teachers to gain empathy and understanding of the diversity of students within schools and classrooms. Dialoguing should be particularly helpful for teachers who have minimal experience working with children outside of their own race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. Often this is where the disconnection occurs. Relatability is difficult to teach. Stereotyping/grouping is difficult to overcome. However, it is imperative that teachers break down personal barriers to connect with individual students and families. One way of breaking through barriers is negating an "us/them" mentality – breaking with traditional binary systems (i.e. Black/White, woman/man, rich/poor) – to begin to see the "other" as us. An educator's first step at achieving self-transformation is to acknowledge personal biases which often is the most difficult step. As the district's diversity and inclusion officer indicated, one of the most difficult challenges for teachers is acknowledging personal bias. Many of us are taught and conditioned to resist discussions on race. We are taught either one extreme or the other – to be prejudice against certain groups and individuals and therefore place ourselves above them or to deny that we have personal prejudices/biases. What is left out is the gray area. This is the area where real change can happen particularly when we are taught how to confront personal bias in a healthy way.

In regards to ensuring better communication between teachers and families, there must be ample opportunities for teachers to interact with families – not only in formal settings but also in informal settings. Meet and Greet meetings at the beginning of a school year is a good start; however, there should be other opportunities throughout the school year. Each grade level could have its own family-centered activities each month. Also, within each classroom, teachers could include activities to celebrate students'

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similarities and differences. This would provide an opportunity for the teacher to understand better where each child comes from and would allow students to understand better their classmates' racial, ethnic and cultural background and practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study offers great potential in fostering how teachers understand and actively practice diversity and inclusion – particularly in regards to elementary level Black/White biracial students. While there are other studies that address biracial student identity, there are few studies that are specific to Black/White biracial elementary students and the role teachers play in their identity development. There are broad issues of power and social justice that are impacted by the prevailing attitudes and practices related to racial identity for Black/White biracial students. Viewing curriculum as a socially constructed practice discloses systems of power and privilege. As Popkewitz (1997) asserts, "An interrogation of curriculum knowledge (including categories, distinctions, and differentiations) exposes social patterns of power…" (p. 151). Curriculum choices often reflect a Eurocentric view which gets perpetuated as the canonical norm – just as Whiteness functions in U.S. society. This Eurocentric "norm" becomes the primary, the superior, while all non-Eurocentric curriculum becomes "othered." Even when minorities are included in curricula, they often are positioned from the dominant White perspective and often are misrepresented and left without agency. An example of the pervasiveness of this "norm" within curriculum (and indeed society) is found in U.S. history. Within historical texts, etc. there often is one narrative, one story being told as fact; however, "making the construction of knowledge central to historical study raises questions about the relation of

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methodology, intellectuals as a social group, and social change" (Popkewitz, 1997, p. 132).

Advocating for teacher awareness of their own identity through personal coaching and group dialogue and discussion surrounding race and identity, as proposed in this study, will help dismantle power dynamics and injustice. When teachers are able to see themselves as raced, when they realize that race matters, they can begin to form meaningful relationships with students and parents – which is the cornerstone of race and reconciliation. Also, once teachers begin to think critically about themselves they will be better prepared to understand and dismantle social constructions of race and other forms of social injustice.

In relation to this study, it could be beneficial to do a cross comparison to examine where teachers received their teacher education training and where they fall on the diversity spectrum. A larger sample of teachers would be needed for this research.

It would be interesting to develop this research as a longitudinal study comprised of interviews with individual elementary level children who identify as Black/White biracial. The children could be interviewed through middle school in order to get a clear picture of how/when/if racial dynamics change for this particular sub-group.

One of the teachers interviewed discussed what she saw as a gendered component to biracialism. It would be interesting to develop this study with an intersectional approach – perhaps interview an equal number of Black/White biracial girls and boys and teachers and parents of these children – to determine what these differences mean.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent for Participation in Research Project

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Dawn Campbell. I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Curriculum & Instruction, and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying Black/White biracial student identity development and the role teachers play in developing Black/White biracial student identity development. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to meet with me for an interview about the role you believe teachers play in developing Black/White biracial student identity. In particular, you will be asked questions about experiences you have had with 1 Black/White biracial student and her parents. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. The meeting will take place at a mutually agreed time and place and should last about 30-45 minutes. The interview will be audiotaped so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tapes will only be reviewed by members of the research team who will transcribe and analyze them. They will then be destroyed.

Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at the University of South Carolina. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed.

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also quit being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 803-665-4447 and dawnc145@gmail.com if you have study related questions or problems. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at the University of South Carolina at 803-777-7095.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please sign and date this letter. When you are done, please contact me at the number listed below to discuss participating.

With kind regards,

Dawn M. Campbell

803-665-4447

dawnc145@gmail.com

Sign _____

 Date _____

Appendix B: Informed Consent for Participation in Research Project

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Dawn Campbell. I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Curriculum & Instruction, and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying biracial student identity development and the role teachers play in developing biracial/multiracial student identity development. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to meet with me for an interview about the role you believe teachers play in developing biracial student identity. In particular, you will be asked questions about experiences you and your child have had in school/classroom settings – paying particular attention to curriculum and instruction. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. The meeting will take place at a mutually agreed time and place and should last about 30-45 minutes. The interview will be audiotaped so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tapes will only be reviewed by members of the research team who will transcribe and analyze them. They will then be destroyed.

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Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at the University of South Carolina. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed.

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also quit being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 803-665-4447 and dawnc145@gmail.com if you have study related questions or problems. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance at the University of South Carolina at 803-777-7095.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please sign and date this letter. When you are done, please contact me at the number listed below to discuss participating.

With kind regards,

Dawn M. Campbell

803-665-4447

dawnc145@gmail.com

Sign _____

Date _____

Appendix C: Cross-Analysis (Teachers and Parents)

Table C.1

Cross-Analysis (Teachers and Parents)

Category	Participant Narrative
Teachers and Parents	Ms. Clark, has taught for 21 years
Racial Identity	"I mean I would never ask them, because of course, I don't care, you know, it doesn't matter to me." I learn racial identity just from talking to the parents or sometimes the child will want to talk about their racial identity.
	Racial identity must come from the home – from the terminology mom is using.
Family Dynamics	It is important to understand where a child comes from – the family background is important.
	Parent had most contact with Ms. Clark –she was child's special services teacher for 3 years.
	During first interview, Ms. Clark told me I should not use this particular child for my case study, as she has "multiple issues."
Curriculum & Pedagogy	Uses picture books that show all races and cultures.
	Sees broader representation in social skills curriculum Example: book studies – believes these help all kids relate and empathize.
	They may not be specifically identified as biracial but there are people of different colors – particularly in picture books.
Teacher bias and Self-Awareness	Teacher self-evaluation must be "purposeful."
Other	Confirms other studies:
	"the littlest kids don't think about race as much, although when they see it, when they see parents that are different, that look different colors to them, they will talk about it then."

Category	Participant Narrative
	Was only teacher who discussed gender as issue for B/W biracial girls – "boys are more open to talking about it. It is a point of pride to them. Girls don't really talk about it…I don't know why."
Teachers and Parents	Ms. Price, has taught 21 years, was diversity coach for FLE 3rd grade for 3 years – may be reason she is more aware and understanding of how to "do" diversity work
Racial Identity	
Family Dynamics	It is important to understand where a child comes from – the family background of what they value is important.
Curriculum & Pedagogy	Uses picture books that show all races and cultures.
Teacher bias and Self-Awareness	It is important to have open conversations/dialogue about race with teachers, especially new teachers – we need strategies to help teachers…. Ms. Price seems to be more aware than other teachers interviewed of the micro aggressions that occur within the school and classrooms.
Other	
Teachers and Parents	Ms. Birch, Taught less than other teachers interviewed
Racial Identity	
Family Dynamics	It is important to understand where a child comes from – the family background is important.
Curriculum & Pedagogy	Uses picture books that show all races and cultures.
Teacher bias and Self-Awareness	
Other	
Teachers and Parents	Ms. Downs, Older teacher – retired this year Not good communication with mom, L.J.- would not return emails
Racial Identity	

Category	Participant Narrative
Family Dynamics	Mom, L.J. expressed her frustration that Mrs. S would not communicate with her.
Curriculum & Pedagogy	
Teacher bias/ and Self-Awareness	
Other	
Teachers and Parents	Mom – Karen
Racial Identity	There is much racial tension between mom and mother-in-law but mother does not think child is aware.
	Child has asked why skin color is different
Family Dynamics	
Curriculum & Pedagogy	
Teacher bias and Self-Awareness	Child expressed to mom that she has been teased by the "brown" kids at school. When parent confronted Mrs. E.B. and Mrs. L they dismissed the teasing as "kids being kids" and did not feel it was related to child's B/W biracialism b/c the school has a diverse population of students. Mom disagrees.
Other	Mom is concerned with child being teased.
	May discuss child being teased b/c of her hair.
	How does gender play into all of this?
Teachers and Parents	Father – Ron
Racial Identity	Father identifies as African-American but does not like to be labeled.
Family Dynamics	Distant relationship with his father. Has 8 siblings – 1 full and other half. Has a good relationship with full sibling but distant with other b/c of distant relationship with father.

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Category	Participant Narrative
	Loves child but after a long day at work, gets aggravated with child wanting his attention.
Curriculum & Pedagogy	
Teacher bias and Self-Awareness	Has had no communication with teachers.
	Has attended NASA Night at school – which occurs every couple of months.
	Helps the child with school projects but not with homework or reading.
	Recently began helping child get ready for school (i.e. making breakfast, helping her get dressed for school).
Other	Declined to be interviewed – all information about him comes from child's mother, L.J
Teachers and Parents	Maternal Grandmother – Patty
Racial Identity	Considers herself, husband, and daughter as White and child as Black b/c father is Black (speaks to one-drop rule)
	Believes it is important for teachers to know child's racial identity.
Family Dynamics	She and her husband are religious and consider themselves country people. Believe in traditional gender roles where father goes outside home to work while mother stays home with children and takes care of home.
	Admits to having a hard time with daughter marrying a Black man.
	Loves the child no matter her race but believes child will have a harder time than monoracial children b/c of her biracialism.
Curriculum & Pedagogy	Believes curriculum should reflect diversity of all children.
	Did not elaborate much on this issue.
Teacher bias and Self-Awareness	Does not have contact with child's resource teacher but believes she is a "great resource teacher" and would like for teacher to continue working with child to bring her to grade level.
Other	

Category	Participant Narrative
Teachers and Parents	Maternal grandfather – Phil "Papa"
Racial Identity	Has not had an actual conversation with child about racial identity but admits it was difficult for him to accept that his daughter was pregnant with a biracial child.
	He does not believe child should be treated any differently because of her biracialism – believes all children should be treated equally.
Family Dynamics	Has a close relationship with daughter and granddaughter. He believes in traditional gender roles and family values.
Curriculum & Pedagogy	
Teacher bias and Self-Awareness	
Other	