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# Teaching About Race in Introductory Anthropology Courses: An Ethnographic Study

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Teaching About Race in Introductory Anthropology Courses: An Ethnographic Study

by

Jennifer Gilroy Hunsecker

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy of Anthropology  
Department of Anthropology  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

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## Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to those who suffer because of unjust systems. I pray that someday we can live in a world of true equality.

## Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance and support of my wonderful advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Bird. From shaping my interests into a researchable topic to supporting me through the writing process, Dr. Bird was with me for the long haul. I cannot say enough good things about her. She always holds her students' best interests at heart. I am also grateful for the guidance and mentoring of my co-advisor, Dr. Karla Davis. Her Teaching Anthropology course sparked my interest in approaching teaching in a scholarly manner; her desire to teach an outstanding Intro class inspired me time and again. I would be remiss without thanking the other remaining members of my committee. Dr. Jackson helped to reframe my perspective on the social construction of race early in my graduate career, while Drs. Mayberry and Cobb-Roberts have inspired me through their scholarship on teaching in the social sciences.

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## Abstract

American anthropology has focused on issues related to race from the start of the discipline. From past work designed to categorize humans into phenotype-based categories to current work to undo those categorizations, many anthropologists consider race to be one of the most important topics for students to learn. In this dissertation, I use in-depth ethnographic case studies consisting of interviews, observations, and focus groups, to learn about the way in which anthropologists at four institutions of higher education teach the topic to students in their introductory, four-field general anthropology class. I found that anthropologists are committed to sharing anthropological perspectives with the public through teaching, while their students look for engaging and interesting teaching. I discuss the general acceptance by instructors of introductory courses of the idea that race does not have a biological basis in humans but is in fact a social construction; that in general, professors find this topic to be a critical one for students to learn; that there are a variety of successful strategies that can be employed to teach race to students; and that while students grasp the basic message, they remain confused about the social context of race and racism. Additionally, I conducted interviews with experts on the topic of race to provide context for the current anthropological perspective. I conclude that there is more research to be done on the teaching of anthropology, that the anthropological message about race must be stated in a more nuanced way, that the four-field introductory course is valuable and should be preserved, and that anthropology needs to further incorporate racism (the systematic mistreatment of minorities that is built into the social structure of the United States) into the discussion on race. Future research directions include scaling the research up to observe

teaching practices across the country, conducting survey research to understand teaching practices and attitudes, further exploring the generalizability of these findings, and testing the effectiveness of teaching methods described herein using pre- and post- tests. Two potential study limitations include the majority White sample and that the study was confined to the American South.

## Chapter One: Introduction

One of my earliest memories of confusion over race stems from an argument on my school bus. Marco Torres, sitting at the front of the bus, had gotten into a heated discussion with two brothers, Dan and Brian Brown, about whether he was Black or Puerto Rican. Marco insisted that he wasn't Black, to which Dan would retort, "yes you are!" Marco said "My family is from Puerto Rico. I'm Puerto Rican." This went on for probably fewer than five minutes before Marco arrived at his stop and went in his house. I was silently sitting for this argument, never one to socialize with my bus mates, but my head was spinning. I was on Dan and Brian's side: how did Marco, who clearly had dark skin and wavy hair, think that he wasn't Black? Why was he trying to put himself in this other category and what was that other category anyway? I had only met one other person who said they were from Puerto Rico and that person looked nothing like Marco. Using that same logic, I was equally confused by Marco's sister who appeared to be of Middle Eastern descent rather than the Black background of Marco. I dismissed it, thinking that perhaps they had different fathers.

Years later, this incident popped back into my mind in my Physical Anthropology class after our discussion on race. Though I still didn't understand what had happened on the bus that day, I did understand that it really should not have mattered what group Marco belonged to. Reflecting on this now, I really cannot say for certain when I did make all of the complex connections I needed to contextualize this incident. I know that trying to explain that race didn't exist to people who hadn't studied anthropology was tricky for me. I learned, in my Spanish and Latin American studies courses, that many different groups settled in the Caribbean and this led

to a very diverse population. I remember learning about ethnicity in graduate school and the problem of self-identification often being ignored by the dominant society. At some point, it all came together: growing up in a mostly homogenous area of White people, the story I learned was that anyone who was “darker” or who didn’t look like most of the people around me (many of German or Northern European ancestry) was probably Black. Most of the Black people in my area were not wealthy and were talked about with derision by some people. I subconsciously knew this and rejected it, but was not sure what was supposed to take its place. Marco’s family being from Puerto Rico meant that a variety of ancestry options might be present in his family and that meant that he and his siblings might look different from one another, even with the same parents. Though in an ideal world it would be Marco’s decision to identify as he wished, the reality is that his identity is likely assigned to him by others who treat him according to their stereotypes..

I do not think I am alone in my years-long struggle to understand the meaning of the racialized thoughts and behaviors that are present in American culture. I have spoken to many other whites who seem to share similar confusion over what race is, what race isn’t, and how racism fits (or doesn’t) into all of it. My anthropology training was a critical component in my process of making sense of the racial issues facing this country today and is a large part of the reason why I became interested in studying how anthropologists taught about race. I believe that much of the nation (and not only whites) remain confused regarding race and racism and that anthropology has an important contribution to make in terms of lessening the confusion.

## Research Problem

As the racially charged events covered in the United States media over the past year show<sup>1</sup>, many Americans do not understand race, racism, or the continued relevance of the subject. This lack of understanding both beguiles and frustrates anthropologists (and other social scientists), who feel that they could provide clarity if anyone was willing to listen. Although the news media are reluctant to draw on anthropological insights, particularly on the topic of race, I argue<sup>2</sup> in this dissertation that anthropologists can effectively communicate their perspectives and change the dialogue through the teaching of introductory anthropology courses. Though other social sciences, such as sociology, have deemed an emphasis on teaching beneficial (as evidenced through the journal *Teaching Sociology*), anthropology has not followed suit.

The public's lack of understanding of the "race" issue is problematic for two reasons. First, anthropologists believe that their skill set provides them with a unique perspective on contemporary social conditions, and that if the public were more aware of this, many societal "problems" might be alleviated, or at least be discussed more constructively. Second, it is widely agreed that anthropologists are ignored as spokespersons on most of their areas of expertise (with the exception of the "glamorous" sub-disciplines, such as forensic anthropology). The classroom is one of the few places in which anthropologists have an attentive and potentially receptive audience to hear their message.

It is important to begin a systematic inquiry into classroom practices to ensure that teaching is effectively conveying important anthropological concepts to students. Doing so will

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<sup>1</sup> These events include (but are not limited to) the shooting death of Michael Brown, an unarmed African American teenager by a White police officer in Ferguson, MO and the subsequent protests; the racist remarks of Donald

<sup>2</sup> as Fuentes 2001 has before me

allow the discipline to reach more members of the American public and will help to propel anthropological thinking into the public consciousness.

The topic of race is an ideal starting place for the study of post-secondary anthropology instruction since it incorporates all of the sub-disciplines. The “problem” of race, while not confined to the United States, is uniquely configured in this country because of the combination of colonization, slavery, and early anthropological efforts to legitimize the biological basis of race. These three factors have firmly entrenched Enlightenment ideas about the biological immutability of race in the American popular consciousness. Because anthropology had a central role in the perpetuation of biological race, scholars have been working since the 1950s to change public conceptions. Since the mid-1990s, efforts have intensified, with the American Anthropological Association (AAA) making it a mission to reorient the public’s idea of the biological basis of race to one of social construction. The historical entwinement of anthropology and race makes a compelling case for beginning the anthropological study of teaching with this subject.

### **Definition of Important Terms**

One of the issues I, my participants, and many Americans have struggled with is the meaning of the word “race.” After conducting this research, I have concluded that the word is simultaneously filled with meaning and is meaningless. In the case of this dissertation when I use the word race, I am referring to the meaning commonly used: the supposed biological commonalities that cultural groups share. In the words of Mukhopadhyay and Moses (1997) “race becomes an emic European and American cultural term and construct, designating culturally constructed categories and socially (and to some extent reproductively) bounded

populations” (523). The AAA’s official statement on race effectively states that race is a cultural construct rather than a biologically useful categorization (Race statement 1998). This paper begins with the caution that “It [the document] does not reflect a consensus of all members of the AAA, as individuals vary in their approaches to the study of “race” (Race Statement 1998). I, like many other anthropologists, believe the word to be representative of cultural groups of people. It has no usefulness as a term to describe human variation.

In this dissertation, I define racism as the systematic and institutionalized mistreatment of groups of people(s) based on their minority status in a society. Rather than locating racism solely in individual actions, many scholars locate racism in the laws and rules that govern a society or culture. The dominant group enacts these laws to protect their own dominance; further work is done to ensure that the nature of the laws and their subsequent enforcement is viewed as the natural state of being (Castañeda and Zúñiga 2010, Hill Collins 2000, Tatum 2010). Crucial to the understanding of racism is the recognition that individuals belonging to the dominant group cannot be victims of racist behavior. Mistreatment of members of the dominant group based on racial identity would fall under another category such as bigotry or prejudice.

Ethnicity refers to groups formed around the idea, real or imagined, of shared ancestry. Criteria for inclusion in an ethnic group can include, but is not limited to: religion, language, and land of origin. The AAA RACE exhibit provides the following definition

**ethnicity:** an idea similar to race that groups people according to common origin or background. The term usually refers to social, cultural, religious, linguistic and other affiliations although, like race, it is sometimes linked to perceived biological markers. Ethnicity is often characterized by cultural features, such as dress, language, religion, and social organization. ([www.understandingrace.org](http://www.understandingrace.org), accessed March 22, 2015)

Cultural relativism is the idea that no particular culture is better than any other culture.

As a consequence, the standards of one culture should not be used to evaluate cultural practices,



behaviors, or norms of a different culture. Most anthropologists accept a form of cultural relativism with some limitations; they advocate the use of the concept to enable understanding of different cultures, while not claiming that all cultural practices, behaviors, or norms must be considered acceptable. A popular illustration is that while it is important to understand how the Holocaust came to be viewed as acceptable to some in Nazi Germany, this understanding does not condone the behaviors of the Nazis.

### **Research Questions**

My goal in writing this dissertation is to provide ethnographic examples to illustrate the teaching process in the post-secondary anthropology classroom. The primary research questions I attempt to answer are: How do anthropologists teach about “race” and how effective is their instruction at conveying key anthropological concepts? That is:

- What are the goals and objectives of instructors who teach introductory anthropology?
- How effective are introductory anthropology courses at conveying anthropological understandings of race?
- How much importance do instructors of introductory courses place on “the race concept”?
- What are the disciplinary understandings of the race concept and how it should be taught?
- How do student understandings of “race” change as a result of taking an introductory anthropology course?

The goal of this research is both to make the case for future research that methodically and empirically examines post-secondary anthropology education and to provide an ethnographic account of the general introductory anthropology classroom at a range of institutions. As I will discuss below, much anthropological work has been produced about teaching, though only a scant few anthropological researchers have systematically examined teaching of anthropology at the post-secondary level in the same way that has been done with other topics (e.g. teaching at primary and secondary levels, curriculum studies, nation-building projects).

## **Research Setting**

This research was primarily conducted in one of the most native places for an anthropologist---the post-secondary educational institutions in my home country. I observed the inner workings of four different institutions in the southeastern United States in order to provide this study of the state of teaching today. My sites included a community college, a small private liberal arts college, a medium size state-funded institution, and one of the largest (enrollment-wise) universities in the nation. At these four locations, I worked with a total of seven anthropologists who all held at least a Master's degree in anthropology. I commuted to the schools, navigated the traffic and the campuses, ate in the dining halls, and attended lectures at these schools in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of the processes at work. Conducting this research in the southern United States added an additional layer to this dissertation, since the South was the home of enslaved Africans and the ensuing battle over the dismantling of this system. Additionally, I conducted interviews with members of an advisory board for an American Anthropological Association (AAA) sponsored public education campaign on the topic of human diversity and variation (referred to in this dissertation as *RACE*).

## **Chapter Overview**

The next three chapters will provide an overview of the literature on teaching in anthropology (Chapter Two), anthropology and race (Chapter Three), and a review of the literature on teaching about race in the social sciences (Chapter Four). The goal of these three chapters is to provide a broad outline of the work that exists on teaching race, both within and outside of anthropology. I show that while many anthropologists have written about teaching,

particularly in their own classrooms, the majority of this literature has remained in this realm, rather than expanding to include studies of other classrooms or broader patterns of student learning across institutions and the country.. Anthropologists have written about race extensively and it appears that there is a dominant theme, that human variation does not fall into clear-cut racial groups, but rather is a continuum of varying traits..

Next, I explore the qualitative methods that I used to conduct this research in Chapter Five. These include focus groups, individual interviews, classroom observations, and a web-based survey. I also discuss ethical issues, my positionality as a White female and the impact my identity had on my study design, and limits of my study. These limitations include that the sample of instructors and students interviewed and surveyed was predominantly White individuals and that the observations took place at institutions of higher education located in the American South.

Chapters Six and Seven explore the data I gathered from my participants on their views of teaching introductory courses and the teaching of race, respectively. In Chapter Six, I show that the introductory anthropology class is considered a prime forum to introduce anthropological ideas to the public. Among the ideas that anthropologists want to convey are race, the importance of science, the validity of the theory of evolution, the importance of cultural diversity, and a broad understanding of what the discipline of anthropology is. Students shared their desire for interesting and engaging instructors. In Chapter Seven, I provide an overview of the development of AAA's *RACE* project, demonstrate that there appears to be an agreed upon message that anthropologists want to convey about race to students, and that there remains a lingering issue over what the lived reality of race means, both to students and professors.

Finally, I conclude with recommendations for anthropologists teaching about race in Chapter Eight. These findings include the need to keep introductory course in the four-field orientation, the need to improve upon race lessons delivered to students, the importance of maintaining a biocultural perspective on race, and the importance of incorporating ideas and theories of racism, as well as lived experiences, into the discussion on race. I conclude with future directions for research including further directions for research on teaching about race in the anthropology classroom.

## **Conclusion**

Anthropologists have begun to study their teaching practices, but additional study is needed. At a time when access to the public via media is undergoing rapid changes, anthropologists can use the classroom, especially the introductory classroom, as a location for public broadcast of the anthropological perspective and as a way to shape disciplinary values and goals, particularly in combatting the colonial origins of the discipline. To facilitate that process, anthropologists must focus more attention on research on teaching to illustrate where changes must be made to reach these goals. Since race is a topic that is salient to both the American public and to American anthropologists of all sub-fields, and because the impacts of living in a race-based system are still felt by all Americans, it is a compelling subject to start this line of research.

## Chapter Two: Review of the Literature on Teaching and Anthropology

Anthropological research on teaching falls into two categories: one that contains pedagogical reflections and one that consists of teaching strategies. The term “research” is loosely applied to these two groups; neither one reflects research in the traditional positivistic, empirical sense. Sample sizes, control groups, pre-/post- tests are non-existent. Scholarship is in fact a better term to apply to these two strands of anthropological work on teaching of anthropology. This condition is not limited to the current state of the art of teaching in anthropology but has an historical precedent. In fact, in conducting this literature review, I was struck by the fact that throughout its history, anthropology has grappled with many of the same issues with which it continues to struggle today. While these reflections and strategies for teaching are important to enhance teaching, they provide an incomplete picture of anthropological practice in the classroom on a broader scale and limit the process of critically examining disciplinary trends in teaching style or content.

### **History of Scholarship on Anthropological Teaching**

Anthropological scholarship on teaching has been produced from the beginning of the discipline in the United States, from early 20<sup>th</sup> century conferences on how to train anthropologists to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century gatherings of anthropologists concerned with how to handle the influx of scholastically, socially, and racially diverse students in institutions of higher education, to the concerted efforts by a core group of anthropologists to enter the discussion on

pedagogy at the end of the twentieth century. Going into the 21st century, there is more focus than ever on anthropology and pedagogy.

In 1919 Franz Boas, one of the founding fathers of anthropology, wrote an article concerning teaching the newly formed discipline of anthropology. Along with a group of 18 other anthropologists<sup>3</sup>, Boas discussed what the teaching of the burgeoning field of anthropology should look like. The group came to the following conclusions. First, the goal of anthropology is to understand and explain the “history of mankind as a whole” (1919:42), as well as to strive to understand that there are many ways in which people throughout the world live. Though he does not explicitly state it, this could be interpreted as an early call to cultural relativism. Second, in regard to the education of non-anthropology majors, the committee suggested that classes cover non-European groups since the students would likely be covering that material within their own disciplines. In a statement prescient to much of the future work on teaching non-majors, Boas also cautions that non-majors and students who do not intend to pursue further study would need additional attention and assistance from their professors. Third, they recommend that each department of anthropology provide the appropriate methods training to their students so that they are able to satisfactorily complete their research. Finally, they suggest that a proper department of anthropology maintain “a small teaching collection of anatomical materials, of ethnological illustrations, and, if possible, specimens should be available” (1919:48). Many of these suggestions, though different in tone or word choice, were to be echoed throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

While this article was important, particularly for establishing and disseminating teaching practices in the discipline, the foundational work on teaching anthropology was published in

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<sup>3</sup> The anthropologists were: Franz Boas, Roland Dixon, Pliny Goddard, A.A. Goldenweiser, George Gordon, F.W. Hodge, W.H. Holmes, E.A. Hooton, Walter Hough, Ales Hrdlicka, Albert Jenks, A.L. Kroeber, Robert Lowie, George MacCurdy, Bruno Oettking, Marshall Saville, Frank Speck, A.M. Tozzer, Clark Wissler (Boas 1919:41).

1963. In an edited volume, *The Teaching of Anthropology*, key figures within the American Anthropological Association (AAA) convened to discuss issues of importance in the transmission of anthropological knowledge. David Mandelbaum, Gabriel Lasker, and Ethel Albert edited this volume, which came about as the result of the Educational Resources in Anthropology (ERA) project at UC Berkeley, which was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and by the Wenner-Gren Foundation (1963:v). The purpose, much like the earlier meeting among anthropology's founders, was to draw together those who had devoted work to research and teaching (and were thus considered experts worth consulting on the direction that teaching should take). In a series of meetings held between 1960 and 1961, the big minds in anthropology met to discuss teaching the sub-disciplines (including applied anthropology) and graduate work. An overriding concern of these meetings was to produce comprehensive coverage of teaching so that anthropologists did not continue to "reinvent the wheel", but could refer to these materials as a common jumping off point (Mandelbaum 1963).

Among the issues discussed were concerns about students, what material was "necessary" course content, teaching logistics, and the overall goal of anthropology classes. One major concern regarding students was how to teach to classes that were a mix of majors and non-majors, particularly given the belief that the introductory class might be the only chance that anthropologists have to reach these students (Bruner et al. 1963, Du Bois 1963, French 1963, Firth 1963, Hulse 1963, Mandelbaum 1963, Nelson 1963). Many of the authors were concerned about how to best convey material: Was breadth or depth of material more important? How did students learn material in way that they retained it? And what types of learning aids would best illuminate a professor's point?

The consensus among the group was that depth of material was much more important than breadth (Lounsbury 1963, Rapoport 1963). Rather than trying to cover too much material and leaving students confused or overwhelmed, the anthropologists felt it better to cover fewer concepts, provided that the material was given sufficient treatment. Many authors stress the importance of making cultural relativism the key point of the introductory class (Albert 1963, Du Bois 1963, French 1963, Mandelbaum 1963).

The authors of this work also grapple with how to ensure that students retain key points from courses. Some authors, like Rapoport, an applied anthropologist, suggest that instructors engage students in role playing of scenarios, take students on field trips so that they could experience material first hand, and provide students opportunities to discuss material in small groups (1963). Others, like Mandelbaum, advocated for the use of daily class outlines, asking students for questions, providing adequate visual aids to illuminate points or concepts, and basing more of the students' grades on writing assignments than on tests (1963). Archaeologists agreed on the importance of using specimens, excavations, and slides with sample material so that students became well acquainted with the material they were studying (Baerreis 1963). Similarly, biological anthropologists wished to have students work with sample material so that they could study and come to their own conclusions, simulating the process of doing this work (Lasker 1963). Overall, this volume reflects the disciplinary desire to engage students in greater detail with material they were studying (and typically this meant students should be engaged with physical materials, since culture was believed to be capturable in these materials).

Finally, Firth (1963) notes that it is difficult to prepare for teaching since there were not materials or formal training available to anthropology professors. This point, while important, is likely to be missed since this volume is out of print. It seems important that this piece of



disciplinary history is kept accessible through the American Anthropological Association's (AAA) website in order to avoid "reinventing the wheel" in arguments about the purpose of teaching, to provide historical information for scholars to advance teacher training in anthropology, and to provide evidence of the attitudes of White anthropologists during this time period.

While this volume is beneficial, both for past anthropologists who were struggling with many of the issues at the time and for current anthropologists who are researching disciplinary attitudes toward teaching, this volume does present a few holes. First, as Mandelbaum states, "All three authors of the papers of this section on the undergraduate curriculum are more concerned with propounding objectives and themes than with reviewing current practice" (1963:25).

A second issue, which persists is that "there are no systematic data on the effects on students of the different modes of anthropological teaching" (Albert 1963:566). While Albert believed that the solution to this problem was careful examination of the literature on teaching and tempering interpretations with the understanding that students have varying capacities to take in information, these solutions ultimately do not do much to make this information any more clear or systematic.

There is also an underlying theme, among some of the work from this volume that suggests a paternalistic attitude toward students and their ability to learn. For example, Mandelbaum points out that student apathy is a source of instructor frustration that can lead to an unproductive classroom environment. He concludes that it should not be an issue for anthropology professors because of the inherently interesting nature of anthropology; he suggests that anthropology lends itself to connections to students' lives, though he does not provide ways

to test student interest or engagement (1963). Another problematic area is the discussion of how to handle differing “ability” levels in the classroom; a component of Mandelbaums’s discussion of the general curriculum in anthropology is where a professor’s attention should be directed: toward the smart students, because they have a higher capacity to learn or to the slower students because they are further behind? While presumably this debate was meant in the best of ways, it illuminates a question that continues to this day in writing on college education: is it better to focus attention on students who seem to be struggling or on the students who show the capacity for “success”? Similarly, Nelson asks how one is supposed to teach to a wide range of ability levels since community colleges accept “everyone” and often have “inferior” faculty (1963), while French asks how to handle students whose “aims ..are antithetical to those of teachers” (1963:172). Finally, there is the telling quote from Hulse who maintains that visual demonstrations can work with even the most reluctant of students: “Some students can almost always be persuaded to let themselves be blood-typed or measured (attractive coeds are, naturally, the best subjects to select)” (1963:71). While it would be presentist to suggest that such a quote should be removed from a printed paper (after all, sexism was much more visible during this time), it does illustrate a point of view that anthropology was a field for the serious, and those serious people were White males. Finally, completely absent from the volume are the voices of non-White anthropologists and their perspectives, concerns, issues, and scholarly traditions.

There is another viewpoint that runs counter to the emphasis on the deficit of students and faculty, one that emphasizes the capacity for learning of all students, anthropology major or not (Du Bois 1963, Firth 1963, Lounsbury 1963). From tailoring the class to suit the needs of the student to getting to know students as individuals, these narratives suggested that even in the

formative days of anthropological engagement with pedagogy, there were differing schools of thought on how best to teach. Although this volume was important for the growth of the discipline, it does not represent research on teaching. Such scholarship would not appear in the literature for many years.

The next major work was the 1985 article by Patricia Higgins, “Teaching Undergraduate Anthropology.” Higgins provides an overview of the work that has been done on teaching the discipline through the late seventies. In the article, she suggests that work on teaching has been fragmented and produced sporadically, particularly in comparison with other disciplines that have devoted more attention to the study of teaching practice, such as sociology, psychology, geology, and geography (Higgins 1985:318). As noted above, Mandelbaum et al. 1963 is one of the key sources in the teaching anthropology literature; though other efforts had been made at continuing the conversation on teaching in between the early sixties and the mid-eighties, none were successfully sustained. One such effort, a section of *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* (AEQ), was initially introduced in 1974 and titled “Teaching Anthropology at the College Level” (Moore). This series, which explored issues that concerned teachers of anthropology, lasted until 1976, and consisted mainly of articles that described teaching practices and strategies (Moore 1974, 1975, 1976).

The problems with this body of literature are several, according to Higgins (1985). First, much of the literature focused on how to deal with the rapidly rising college enrollments. Colleges and universities in the eighties suffered from the opposite problem, decreasing enrollment, and would have found literature on this topic to be of little use. Second, while in the past anthropologists who taught relied heavily on lectures, more and more anthropologists in the seventies and eighties were relying on inquiry-based learning, films, and fieldwork for their

students (thus making the past literature of little use). Finally, Higgins criticizes the teaching of anthropology literature as little more than magazine articles filled with tips. She states,

Even when writing about teaching, it seems anthropologists have treated the subject as more suitable for a personal philosophy essay, an isolated case study, or a collection of anecdotes---an extension of the oral exchange over coffee---than for a scholarly article (1985:319).

Indeed, similar criticisms can be made of the work done after Higgins' article. As the next section of this paper will show, the current work on teaching anthropology, while of value, is still limited in the forms it takes. While individual scholars have investigated their own practice (this will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter on methodology), the majority of the literature is comprehensive in its attempt to document individual practice but has room to be expanded to cover more types of investigation. The conclusion that Higgins wrote in 1985 still holds true today, 30 years later: "The time is right for anthropologists to take a more systematic, professional, scholarly approach to the study of the undergraduate teaching of anthropology and for all teaching anthropologists to make use of the insights of their colleagues and predecessors" (324).

### **Current Direction of Research**

Currently, the literature on teaching anthropology is in a state of growth. Over the last 25 years, AAA committees have formed around the teaching of various anthropological topics, curricula have been developed, and multiple collections of teaching strategies and reflections have been published.

In the early '90s, there were several moves made that started the current work on teaching anthropology. Both *AEQ* and *Transforming Anthropology* had theme issues devoted to the teaching of anthropology, though from different angles. The *AEQ* special issue was devoted to

the discussion of teaching strategies, or ways that individuals have found to effectively convey particular concepts to their students, while the *Transforming Anthropology* issue focused on teaching about race and gender (Erickson and Rice 1990, Johnston and Forman 1992). The *General Anthropology: Bulletin of the General Anthropology Division* newsletter published a new column devoted to the discussion of teaching strategies (entitled “Teaching Anthropology”) (Erickson 1994). These three developments were significant enough to spark movements to further disciplinary attention on the teaching of anthropology.

Erickson and Rice introduce their special issue on teaching by focusing on the wide applicability of teaching tips that are offered in the special issue; they then address ways that anthropology educators can structure their courses. While they do not reference the work by Mandelbaum, Lasker and Albert, they do reiterate several of the points made by many of the authors in that volume. The use of films as a teaching aid is suggested in both, though with more certainty about the educational value of film in the Erickson and Rice piece. Similarly, active learning is emphasized in both works, though by the ‘90s, educational psychologists had developed a name for learning by doing and had conducted research on the subject. Finally, the central focus on cultural relativism is found in both the Mandelbaum collection and Erickson and Rice’s piece. What Erickson and Rice focus on that was ignored in earlier work is ensuring that students learn critical thinking skills, trying to teach thinking skills rather than promoting rote memorization, and teaching students to think inductively rather than deductively. All three of these emphases reflect a change within the discipline of anthropology as a whole from a focus on establishing facts and generalizable theories to more exploratory research. The article ends by calling for a column in *AEQ* on the teaching of anthropology so that its readership can find the information in a central location (Erickson and Rice 1990).

While educational anthropologists turned their attention to how anthropology should be taught, members of the Association of Black Anthropologists and the Association for Feminist Anthropology (both sections of the AAA) held a series of sessions from 1990 to 1992 at the annual AAA conferences to discuss the topic of how to teach about race and gender. They found an overwhelming response from educators who were frustrated with their efforts to teach on the subjects. While the papers given created lively discussions and those in attendance had no shortage of fodder for conversation, Johnston and Forman lament the lack of practical solutions to the issues raised by the attendees as a common problem when teaching is discussed. They ask,

How do we go about defining race and gender issues, constructing curriculum, and facilitating a learning experience when our history as a discipline has in many ways been central to the social reproduction of inequality? How do we approach race and gender inequity when our personal experience is often that of the White mainstream, those born to power? Or, if we are one of the very few people of color, how do we move beyond the academic and classroom expectations that we should act as informants on the experience of victimization by "race/gender inequity." And finally, why must these questions be raised on the sidelines; why do we not find these concerns in the center of our discipline? (1992:41)

While they do not provide direct or even personal answers to these questions, they do recommend that the AAA study existing materials on race and gender in order to determine what types of biases exist in the literature, as well as to create material for new curricula designed to avoid the problems in the existing materials.

The third significant piece of literature in teaching anthropology was the 1994 Erickson article that initiated the "Teaching Anthropology" column. In his piece, Erickson critiques the AAA for failing to pay proper attention to teaching, particularly in regard to the work that has been done in other disciplines. He places the blame on the location of anthropological training in museums, rather than the development in universities that other disciplines had. Similarly, he

critiques the work produced by Mandelbaum, Lasker, and Albert as being too “top-down” in its approach (1994:13). He also indicates that in 1989, the Council on Anthropology and Education (CAE) founded a task force on the issue of teaching anthropology. In 1993, at the conclusion of the task force, AAA developed a teaching component in their department of External Affairs and the General Anthropology division decided to develop a teaching committee as well. Once again, though, the critique of Higgins was ignored as Erickson suggested that the column focus on teaching strategies.

The trend toward the discussion of teaching strategies and reflections on teaching continued to characterize the literature on teaching anthropology through to the present day. In 1998, two volumes of relevance to teaching in anthropology were published: *The Teaching of Anthropology: Problems, Issues, and Decisions* and *Anthropology Explored: The Best of Smithsonian AnthroNotes*. Both volumes contained work that had been started far earlier than the publication dates suggest. The *AnthroNotes* collection contains work written over the course of the publication (which dates back to 1979) (Kaupp et al. 2009), while the updated *Teaching Anthropology* book was a collection of papers given at AAA conferences from 1990-1992 (Kottak 1998). The similarities end there, though. *AnthroNotes*, edited by Selig and London, is a collection of informative chapters, designed to be used as a reader or textbook for an introductory anthropology course. In 2004, an accompanying teaching activities guide was published, providing instructors with an overview of the information in the corresponding chapter, discussion, essay and short answer questions, and a glossary of terms (Peterson and Selig 2004). The *Teaching Anthropology* book is designed as an update to the 1963 collection; in the same tradition as the first book, its authors discuss the teaching of anthropology from the instruction and curriculum design point of view. Thus topics such as the use of technology in the

classroom, the importance of teaching applied anthropology, teaching students to think anthropologically and scientifically, dealing with student feelings, focusing on holism and conducting ethnographies in introductory classes are addressed in the newest volume of this work (Borofsky 1998, Breitborde 1998, Ember and Ember 1998, Harris 1998, Kottak 1998, McCurdy 1998). While both of these works were significant in the teaching anthropology literature, they did not so much break new ground as integrate cultural change into the existing literature.

The teaching anthropology material that has been published within the last 10 to 15 years has primarily focused on teaching strategies, reflections on practice, and on providing teachers with specific curricula to use in teaching “difficult” subjects. Kottak, Rice, and McCurdy have been the most visible members of this movement, serving as editors of volumes like the *Strategies in Teaching Anthropology* series (Rice and McCurdy 2000, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2010), the *Joys of Teaching Anthropology* volume (Rice, Kottak, and McCurdy 2007), and articles in the *General Anthropology Bulletin* (Kottak 2007, Rice 2007). These three groups of literature provide reflections on the practice of teaching, suggestions on how to explore core concepts, and activities designed to promote active learning. Additionally, the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges (SACC) publishes a newsletter, *Teaching Anthropology*, twice a year. The SACC newsletter is filled with many teaching strategies and reflections on teaching practice, as well as four-field updates. These efforts show the dedication of a select group of anthropologists to answering the call to provide curricular material for disciplinary use.

While the focus within anthropology has been on what has worked for experienced educators and publishing curricular materials to share with other educators, more recently some scholars have begun to branch out. These new offerings include an examination of the



connection between educational theorists and anthropological practice (Barnes 1992), the disciplinary message communicated by textbooks (Shanafelt 2008), and the use of ethnographic films in the classroom (Bird and Godwin 2006). These three publications represent the beginning of a more scholarly approach to the study of teaching in the anthropological literature.

Most recently, the Royal Anthropological Institute (UK) began publishing the journal *Teaching Anthropology* in 2011. The goal of the journal is:

... to promote debates about pedagogy, to highlight the forms of reciprocity that exist in the teaching relationship, and to show how these are in turn defined by the wider social, political or economic forces shaping schools and universities. We begin with some questions. What can we learn from ethnographies of education about power within and beyond our own classrooms? What would it mean to adopt an ethnographic sensibility in our teaching? And what forms of ethical and moral practice would this sensibility nurture? Each of you will have different responses and we welcome your thoughts. To start this exchange, we propose three pedagogic principles.  
([www.teachinganthropology.org](http://www.teachinganthropology.org))

The five issues produced in the last three years cover topics including: issues surrounding the discussion of teaching anthropology in England (Mills 2011), viewing teaching evaluations anthropologically (Blum-Ross 2011), reflection on working within the English higher education system (Bastide 2011), the importance of teaching about emotions as part of anthropology (Spencer 2011), teaching in a global setting (Derges et al. 2012), development of the *Global Girls Project* (Hoefinger 2012), the learning taking place in a field school in Guatemala (Hall-Clifford and Frank 2012), the benefits of teaching the population with whom ones does their fieldwork (Marchand 2012), lived experience of Amazonian schoolchildren (Morelli 2012), the importance of playing “devil’s advocate” while teaching courses (Weston 2012), developing a senior seminar (Degnen 2013), teaching economic anthropology (Whittle 2013), and reflections on teaching practices (Pack 2011, Sainsbury 2011, Bennett 2011, Hurn 2012, Kaland 2012, Bennett 2012, Street 2012, Dufour 2012, Callan 2012, and Hendry 2012). As with work

produced in the United States, the majority of these materials are under the umbrella of teaching tips or reflections. Reynolds (2013) and Lange (2013) were the exceptions with pieces that focused on student choices when selecting texts to prepare for anthropology courses and the implementation of a change in a college's curriculum. These two pieces broaden the scope of research on teaching in anthropology, though the articles focus on the broader college educational context rather than on content unique to anthropology. In the case of Lange, the focus is on a college-wide change, while in the case of Reynolds, the focus is on literacy. Regardless, the research focus is an important addition for the teaching anthropology literature.

### **Trends over Time in the Teaching Anthropology Literature**

The origin of anthropological literature on teaching lies with those who were charged with establishing the discipline and determining the direction in which it should go. At two significant times, the early twentieth century and the mid-twentieth century, anthropology experienced rapid growth. This coincided with early writings on the goals of anthropology and the necessary components of the curriculum (Boas 1919, Mandelbaum et al. 1963). The tone of this literature was practical and concerned with solving problems faced by anthropologists for the first time.

The seventies and eighties continued on the journey toward developing a discipline-wide conversation about the teaching of anthropology. Anthropologists attempted to widen their range from the college classroom to community colleges and secondary settings. They also began concerted efforts to produce more literature that could be applied in the classroom and to integrate information from the discipline of education into their work.

Literature on the teaching of anthropology expanded greatly in the nineties and two thousands, with much energy devoted to producing practical strategies to implement in the anthropology classroom. Other areas of work concentrated on establishing where the discipline had been and where it ought to be going. Anthropologists examined the changing nature of society, new knowledge on how individuals learn, and changing college enrollment levels all the while grappling with how to incorporate this information into the discipline to enhance teaching. One area that has been discussed, but seldom addressed is how anthropologists plan reach a broader audience within anthropology. Much of the literature is divided among somewhat marginal publications (neither *SACC Notes* or the *General Anthropology Bulletin* are up-to-date via AnthroSource<sup>4</sup> or widely accessible for AAA members, let alone those who are simply looking for teaching aides but do not belong to AAA), books that are either out of print or cost-prohibitive, or scattered among topically specific journals that are not likely to be read by the majority of the discipline. This points to a gap in the anthropological coverage of teaching; namely that an open-access journal devoted to teaching is greatly needed. The absence of this journal illustrates that anthropologists as a group do not view work on teaching as important. A second gap, alluded to by Higgins (1985) and Johnston and Forman (1992), is that systematic research into the praxis of teaching anthropologists has been largely ignored or self-reported. While this gap may have varying degrees of consequence in terms of what students are taught by anthropologists, given the history of anthropological engagement with race, it is crucial that anthropologists begin to systematically study the teaching of topics with contentious histories to ensure that the correct message is sent.

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<sup>4</sup> AnthroSource is the AAA's web publishing platform.

## Chapter Three: Review of the Literature on Anthropology and Race

### **History of Anthropological Understandings of Race**

Anthropology has been engaged with the topic of race since the inception of the discipline in the United States. While scholars of the history of race in anthropology disagree about the motivating factors behind these developments, they all agree that anthropology played a crucial role in the development and perpetuation of the idea of human races that persist today. In order to understand where this idea came from, how it became entrenched in the collective North American consciousness, and the impacts of the race concept, it is necessary to trace the historical development of the idea. I will begin with the roots of racialized thinking in Europe, specifically England, move the discussion to the United States, and follow both American and anthropological thinking on race. In doing so, I will demonstrate that the idea was and is socially constructed, leaving room for the deconstruction of current folk understandings of human difference.

C. Loring Brace, in his 2005 book, *“Race” is a Four-Letter Word*, suggests that the concept of race did not exist until the Renaissance period of European history and was not fully integrated in daily life until approximately 200 years ago. Historical records that date before the Renaissance do not show the use of racial terms; rather travelers attribute differences in behavior to living in different locales (as opposed to being biologically different). When reports of these travelers became popularized, Europeans for the first time began to grapple with the reasons for

“different” people on the planet; ideas that directly challenged their ideas about the world as created by God and humans as created in God’s image (Brace 2005).

As Europeans moved into the age of Enlightenment a shift in thinking occurred, moving from accepting the Bible as the ultimate authority to beginning to rely on reason and logic as a way to understand the world. This behavior was in part driven by Western European world explorations in which they began to encounter difference of all living things. In their drive to make sense of new forms of life, they became focused on descriptions and categorizations. Linnaeus, a botanist, was one of the most important figures to the current understanding of race because he created the taxonomy of all living beings, including humans. This categorization most closely matches folk understandings of race in the United States today (though the idea was further developed by Blumenbach and expanded to include an additional race). He developed four categories of people based on the four quarters of the world: *Homo sapiens europaeus*, *H. sapiens asiaticus*, *H. sapiens americanus*, and *H. sapiens afer* (Brace 2005:27). Linnaeus and his taxonomy are particularly important because they reflect the incorporation of competing views: the idea of species immutability (that is, that all life was created in a perfect state by God) and the idea that life was different all over the planet and potentially changing over time (Brace 2005). Another idea that developed out of observations of species diversity was the idea of multiple original couples (or more than one “Adam and Eve”, the originators of human life according to the Christian Bible). This theory, of polygenesis, gained ground over time and became intimately linked to the idea of human physical differences in both scientists and in the general public.

While Brace traces the development of the concept of race to the development of science in Europe, Smedley’s 2007 work, *Race in North America*, locates the origin of the race concept

more narrowly. She pinpoints seventeenth-century England, with its movement into capitalism, as the precursor to the current race idea. As capitalism developed, so did social inequalities in a way that they had not previously existed. Whereas in the past, only the rulers were wealthy, capitalism changed opportunities for wealth so that it seemed possible for anyone to become rich. In the pursuit of wealth, some people were able to make money while many more people were relegated to situations that were often worse than would have existed in pre-capitalist times. In combination with the development of capitalism, Smedley indicates that the English had become accustomed to viewing other groups of people, particularly the Irish, as less-than-human. The combination of social inequity and a previous attitude of disgust toward an entire class of people made England a breeding ground for ideas about social worth based on a person's background. Thus, though the British initially found enslaved African to be superior to the much-hated Irish and Welsh indentured workers, over time attitudes began to shift so that Africans were viewed by colonists and colonizers alike as savages (Smedley 2007).

Regardless of whether one locates the development of racialized thinking in the move toward capitalism or the move toward science (or a synthesis of the two), both Smedley and Brace agree that the ensuing events culminated in racial-supremacy thinking. The Romantic period in Europe was equally problematic for the development of race-based thinking. During this time, leading European thinkers believed that reason was second in importance to feelings and experiences. Such thought led to the idea of physiognomy or the idea that a person's character could be determined by looking at their physical features. The direct impact that this line of thought had on American anthropology is that it led to the development of phrenology or the study of skulls to determine a person's capacity for intelligence and their behavior (Brace 2005).

The practice of phrenology became widespread in American biological anthropology because of Samuel Morton, a trained doctor and amateur anthropologist. Morton developed a private collection of skulls to study racial features and became an expert on the races living in America (Brace 2005, Baker 1998). He was one of the key figures associated with the ideas of race; he conducted a lecture series on Bluembach's five races and also developed measurements to compare human body parts (mainly the skull) that are still used in biological anthropology today (Brace 2005). The measurements were taken in part in an effort to link the size of body parts to intelligence (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997). While many view Morton as a particularly vile character, Brace defends his work as a product of his era; this is understandable given that Brace is a biological anthropologist and is likely less concerned with the social impact of his work than with his intellectual contributions.

The coalescence of racist practices, the growing proliferation of anthropologists and legislation that permitted social segregation, and a growing media presence in the United States led to the entrenchment of the concept of humans as racialized beings (Baker 1998). As the American Civil War came to an end and enslaved African Americans were freed, European-Americans worked to utilize science to continue to perpetuate the myth that non-whites were inferior. (Baker 1998).

With the onset of the Great Depression, White American scientists broadened their agenda from classification to linking categories of humans to various "defects" that they blamed as responsible for the financial downfall of the United States. Scientists, in keeping with the times, began to investigate the biological inferiority of races, including African Americans and Eastern Europeans (Baker 1998). Sir Francis Galton created the term "eugenics," which suggested that there were human traits that could be located in the newly discovered genetic

material and bred out of human populations (Brace 2005). This idea was embraced by Americans and Germans who blamed minorities and immigrants for their poor finances; some anthropologists similarly welcomed this venture into improving humanity (Baker 1998). Other social scientists, among them Boas and W.E.B. Du Bois, argued against the connection between human character and biology (Baker 1998, Brace 2005).

While arguments developed over the ethics of eugenics, Boas and his students began to study African American culture, biology, and race and class (Baker 1998:125-6). From the 1920's through the 1940s, students of Boas studied African American folklore in an effort to validate cultural practices viewed as inferior by the dominant White society (Baker 1998:143-4). Viewing it as a way to “shape and ethnic identity, carve out a heritage, and fight for racial equality” (Baker 1998:143-4), African American anthropologists contributed to these efforts as a way to illustrate their value and worth. Although more extensive work on African Americans' culture was conducted in other disciplines, Boas represents the first White anthropologist to support such work. Although his work was conducted in conjunction with African American scholars and intellectuals of the day, most notably W.E.B. DuBois, Boas has also been subject to critique for racial bias and having ulterior motives in his anti-racism approach (Lewis 2001).

However, not all anthropologists had rejected the idea that differences lead to deficits. Certain members of the AAA continued to push for the idea of separate races, though changes in American science suggested that using heads and other body measures (like skin tones) for racial classification was flawed and problematic (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997). One of these developments, population genetics, showed that populations had variability within them, making the concept of racial groups seem problematic. This idea was further complicated with the work



on clines, or gradual distribution of physical traits, particularly because clinal maps of various traits did not overlap (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997).

Once biological anthropologists had sufficient evidence that race was not a biological reality, but a cultural one, they began to speak against the idea in public forums. Perhaps the most famous statement was Ashley Montagu's work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which culminated in 1950 statement that concluded that "race is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth" (Montagu 1951: 14-17 in Brace 2005). Other biological anthropologists continued to test the hypothesis that race did not have a biological basis. In the 1960s, Livingstone, Brace, and Newman showed that human variation and traits are non-concordant (meaning that genetic traits vary, but not in any sort of discernable pattern) because of natural selection (Brown and Armelagos 2001:34). This finding was another devastating blow to the science of race, since it suggested that human appearance has very little to do with genetic make-up. Multiple scientists tested the idea of non-concordance in the seventies and eighties. All found the same thing: that non-concordance appeared regardless of the genetic trait that was measured (Brown and Armelagos 2001, Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997).

These developments combined with the Civil Rights Movement led to increased anthropological focus on the social impact of the race concept, though White Americans both inside and out of anthropology remained largely unsympathetic to the idea of changing racist systems that remained in place. (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997). Cultural and linguistic anthropologists began to examine ideas of racially and culturally based deficits in intelligence and learning abilities and flatly rejected them. Other anthropologists began to revive research done in African American communities in an effort to combat cultural ideas about the sub-

human status of non-whites (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997). The legacy of this work can be seen today in efforts to educate the public, particularly college students, about the social, not biological, basis of race.

### **Theories Used to Explain Differences Among Humans**

The ideas used to explain human diversity have changed over time. Whether the explanation of difference has been tied to geography, culture, race, class, religion, or biology depends on the group in question. As the above history of the race concept illustrates, the use of race as a way to explain human difference has gone through various permutations. Prior to the European expansion, most difference was regarded as being linked to a person's place of origin; that is, they looked and acted differently because they came from a geographically distant area. With the onset of expansion and the subsequent colonization of much of the world, new explanations were needed to match the disparities between widely varied physical appearance and the Christian belief that all people were created in the image of God. Over time, Europeans moved from the idea of believing that everyone came from one common ancestor to the belief that there were multiple founding "parents". Europeans also embraced the idea that there was a hierarchy of all living things, with humans at the top. Once Europeans came face to face with the fact that "human" could mean very different things, they began attempts to rank and classify the so-called groups in order to demonstrate that Europeans were at the top of the hierarchy and thus deserved to dominate and conquer other groups of people (Brace 2005, Smedley 2007). This idea continued to be perpetuated through the sciences of phrenology, eugenics, by some population geneticists, and some social scientists (Baker 1998, Brace 2005, Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997, Smedley 2007).

Along the way, the concept of race was born. While the term race was used in the past, it was not used to refer to groups of people who shared phenotypic characteristics, but rather as a synonym for a group of people who came from the same place (Brace 2005, Baker 1998). However, the concept came to be synonymous with discrete categories of people who could be grouped together based on their outward physical appearance. Today this idea is referred to as racialist thinking, or "the belief that there are inherited traits possessed by all members of a given group which they do not share with members of any other group" (Brace 2005:3) and is thought by some to be an inherent trait of the human brain to try to create categories when presented with new material.

If race-based groups do not exist, how do anthropologists explain phenotypic differences? The concept of clines, developed by Livingstone, along with advancement in population genetics, led anthropologists to believe that humans varied in ways that did not correspond to their outward appearance (Baker 1998, Brace 2005, Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997, Smedley 2007). One phenotype most used to classify people by race, skin color, has been demonstrated by Jablonski to be distributed in a clinal fashion (2004). Ultraviolet B (UVB) rays, which can cause skin cancer in humans, are most strong around the Earth's equator. Humans with the darkest skin are also located in highest concentration around the Earth's equator. The darker a human's skin is, the more melanin that person's skin contains. Melanin is important because it is a pigment in the skin that is designed to block dangerous UVB (Brace 2005). According to Darwinian theory, only the most reproductively fit individuals will survive to pass on their genetic material. Over time, the logical conclusion one reaches is that individuals with lighter skin were more likely to die of skin cancer than those with darker skin. As time passed and the

darker skinned individuals were more reproductively fit, more members of the population would share their darker skin.

The reverse is true as well. The further humans are away from the equator, the more they need to allow UVB rays to penetrate their skin. UVB is important in the body's production of vitamin D, a necessary nutrient for healthy bodies. Those who do not have a sufficient amount of vitamin D suffer from painful diseases such as rickets. Thus according to the idea of clinal distribution of skin color, those who live closest to the equator would have the darkest skin, while colors would eventually grow lighter and lighter until humans were as far away from the equator as possible, at which point skin would be very pale. However, as humans have discovered, this is not the case when looking at indigenous groups, particularly those in the New World (North and South America). Intervening factors such as heavy cloud cover and thick vegetation also impact the ability of the sun to reach human skin. Additionally, one might notice that such patterns are not the same in North and South America as they are in Africa, Europe and Asia. This has been explained as relating to the later migration of humans out of Asia (Jablonski 2004).

Among the biological traits that are now understood to be non-concordant are: tooth size, the presence of sickle cell anemia, and blood type (Brace 2005). Attempting to divide humans into racial categories based on any of the previous criteria as determinate for group membership would be impossible (though it has been tried according to Baker 1998). This is not to say that there is not variation of these traits in humans; however the variation is clinal, making it very gradual, and virtually impossible for anyone to distinguish if they were to try to locate beginning and ending points (Brace 2005). Thus, the current understanding of human physical differences is that if one uses few criteria, it becomes somewhat manageable to categorize people into

groups, but if one is rigorous and uses a sufficient amount of criteria, it becomes quite difficult to slot people into a race-based system (Brown and Armelagos 2001). Therefore, anthropologists have moved beyond the focus on the scientific basis of race as an explanation for differences into a two-part explanation based on the interplay between culture and biology.

### **Current Anthropological Understanding of the Concept of Race**

"The concept of "race," then, is a product of colonization and, as such, is a social construct."  
(Brace 2005:270)

The current stance of the AAA is that race, while socially real, does not have a biological basis (AAA 1998). There simply is not enough genetic variation between population groups to have race groupings no matter how the criteria by which people are grouped changes (Brown and Armelagos 2001). While that is the official stance of anthropologists, both the AAA statement on race and common sense suggests that not all anthropologists necessarily know the history of race, nor fully accept the social construction of the concept.

To address this issue, Lieberman (1997) conducted a content analysis of the use of the word race and the associated concepts used in anthropology textbooks. He found the following: in texts before 1970, three out of 20 texts rejected race; in the period of 1970-79, 14 out of 38 rejected it; and, in the period of 1980-1994, 13 out of 25 reject it. In a similar effort, he conducted a survey in which participants were asked to answer yes or no to this statement: "There are biological races in the species *Homo sapiens*" (Lieberman 1997:549). Among the respondents (separated into categories by sub-field identification), 42 percent of biological anthropologists answered "no", while 52 percent of cultural anthropologists answered "no"<sup>5</sup>. In

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the survey was conducted among schools that grant Ph.Ds. in anthropology.

contrast, 12 percent of biologists answered “no” (Lieberman 1997). The results of this study would seem to indicate that at the time the AAA statement was adopted, anthropologists were very mixed on their professional opinion on the biological basis of race.

This survey was not without its critiques. Among them, the term race is itself a term that has a plethora of meanings. Mukhopadhyay and Moses point out that:

The old racial paradigm, at minimum, includes a temporal premise (ancient races, at or near human origins), a spatial premise (worldwide groupings), a premise regarding discrete (versus continuous) categories and traits, a premise about numbers of races (three to five macro races), a causality premise (natural, whether through God or evolution), a permanency premise (stable and permanent until recent "race-mixing"), a homogeneity dimension (more variability between than within groups), an evaluative dimension (superior and inferior groups based on ranked traits), a power dimension (justifying dominance/subordinance), and a clustering premise (of physical traits and of physical with behavioral/mental traits and capacities). More innocuously, it includes a variability premise (that observable physical variability exists) and a categorization premise (that meaningful categories can be created out of observable variability). (1997:522)

Clearly it is problematic to continue to use a word that could have so many meanings. Not only do the multiple meanings confuse the lay public, the many meanings also make it nearly impossible to interpret the response’s to Lieberman’s “biological races” survey. A potential solution could be to amend the statement by first asking the informant to define what the word “race” means, and then ask if there were any situations in which they would change their definition. One avenue for future research would be to rework Lieberman’s study to address the concerns of Mukhopadhyay and Moses, which include the lack of current research into folk understandings of race as well as cross-cultural understandings of race.

This work could tie in with past work that has been done to push the adoption of the word “ethnicity” in place of the word “race” when referring to a cultural group (Mukhopadhyay and

Moses 1997). Mukhopadhyay and Moses write of their concern regarding efforts to provide new names for “old” concepts. This concern centers around the effort to remove the word “race” from anthropological and popular vocabulary and to replace it with ethnicity. While race has proven difficult to remove, ethnicity’s meaning is unclear to many Americans. These scholars are also concerned that the use of [continent of origin] – American points to the “Other”-ness of the person being talked about, particularly because European-American is rarely, if ever, used as a descriptor. The choice of color-based terminology such as White and Black are also troubling because the terms typically do not accurately describe one’s skin color, because it reinforces the biological basis to a cultural group, and because of the cultural associations that Americans have with the two words (in which White is seen to signify purity, peace, and happiness, while black is seen as signifying death, fear, and apathy) (Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997). The authors do not come to any concrete conclusions on what terms should be used, but rather suggest that a more detailed discussion is in order to determine how best to proceed. However, it should be noted that many people of color embrace and advocate for the use of terms linking their ancestral origins to the continent of their birth, such as African American (Hill Collins 2000).

It is clear that the anthropologists publicly having this conversation feel the need to gain consensus on definitions of key words and decide which terms are best used in describing different groups of people in place of race. In their efforts to root out biological determinism and race-based thinking, anthropologists have created quite the conundrum for themselves. The combination of a lack of agreement on how best to talk about human diversity, unfamiliarity with the historical reasons for the development of the term, and a failure to grasp completely the explanations of why biological race is not a scientifically supportable idea has led to the fragmentation of the discipline. While a strong anthropological stance has been articulated by

some anthropologists, and has gained public support of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) it is problematic that as an entire group, anthropologists cannot agree on next steps. In part, this relates to the failure of the discipline as a whole to engage in the colonial and racial attitudes that underlie the discipline in spite of the efforts of many anthropologists to name and critique these attitudes.

### **The Continuing Legacy of Race: Racism**

Mainstream (White) anthropology's role as a key player in perpetuating the idea of distinct human races and the superiority or inferiority of certain races has left the legacy of racism in its wake. Because of the large role that anthropologists vested in Eurocentric worldviews have had in the perpetuation of the idea of biologically based races, many anthropologists feel it is important to explore and understand the continuing role that race and racism play in shaping the lives of Americans. One place that racism continues to manifest under the guise of racial studies is through studies of intelligence.

Modern day efforts at intelligence testing have mimicked the drive behind the science to prove the biological basis to race: intelligence tests could be used as an objective measure justify unequal treatment of different groups of people. One problem with this sort of measure is that it is just as hard to measure intelligence as it is to measure race; neither one exists in some sort of bounded fashion. This, however, did not stop those who created intelligence tests from promoting their use to limiting the number of immigrants who could enter the United States and using the lower I.Q. scores of African Americans to suggest that intelligence was biologically based (Brace 2005, Mukhopadhyay and Moses 1997). Despite overwhelming anthropological rejection of the biological basis of race, or links between race and intelligence, the popular media



continue to perpetuate ideas from the early twentieth century regarding the racial inferiority of African Americans. The national popularity of *The Bell Curve*, a 1994 book that suggests that certain races are more intelligent, illustrated the lack of public understanding of biology and intelligence and a relative failure on the part of anthropologists at targeting the misunderstandings perpetuated in the book (Baker 1998, Mukhopadhyay et al. 2007).

In addition to failing to adequately explain the “new” position on race, many of the anthropologists in positions of disciplinary authority (such as journal editors and national organization leaders) have underestimated or ignored the need for disciplinary conversations about the continued impact of race-based behaviors and attitudes in society and in the academy. Such conversations continue to take place in the margins of anthropology: in conference sessions held in out-of-the-way rooms, in classrooms between teachers and students, and in publications of sections within the AAA. The very marginality of these conversations makes the topic of racism all the more difficult to discuss, seemingly by design; how can one join in a conversation if they do not know that it is taking place or who is participating in the conversation?

As noted by Johnston and Forman (1992:41), an anthropology that is serious about ending racism and other forms of inequality needs to make the discussion of inequity within the discipline a key component of the dialogue, as well as have members participate in the creation and implementation of diversity training for anthropologists. While attempts by anthropologists of color have been made at “decolonizing anthropology,”<sup>6</sup> (Harrison 1997) these attempts have largely been ignored by the majority of White anthropologists, and thus the impact of this effort is questionable. How have these efforts been reflected in the scholarship of teaching, particularly

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<sup>6</sup> Such decolonization entails incorporating the voices of those marginalized in traditional anthropology, particularly anthropologists of color and those from outside of the United States, as well as taking seriously other forms of knowledge production that go beyond the traditional use of Enlightenment-based methods to include more interpretive understandings of human experience, rather than solely relying on scientific methods (Harrison 1997:1-3).

teaching race? And how can the discipline be encouraged to engage in a more holistic way with the systematic and all-encompassing effects of colonialism?

Several scholars have more recently addressed the issue of continuing and under-acknowledged racism within anthropology. Mullings (2005) called for anthropologists to “name racism...[by] moving beyond noting that race is socially constructed to confront...the extent to which structural racism is pervasively embedded in our social system” (685). She also noted that anthropology’s approach to racism was to approach it “on the periphery” (679) rather than directly. Brodtkin et al. (2011) indicate that anthropology departments are complicit in the perpetuation of racism, writing that minority anthropologists in their study of department cultures “described White anthropologists who believe their training inoculates them against racism, assuming “that because they understood culture(s) intellectually, they weren’t racist/sexist/elitist”” (546). Both authors point to a great need within anthropology to address issues of racism in the discipline as well as in larger society. Not only is North American anthropology ignoring racism by failing to address how actions of US-based anthropologists perpetuate this system, it is also doing a disservice to the discipline by not promoting greater self-examination by White anthropologists. Beginning a discipline-wide conversation on White privilege would be of utmost benefit to people who face oppression due to this race-based system and would help anthropologists to become more critical of their own culture(s). Doing so can provide a model for teaching that demonstrates how to unpack racism and its mechanisms.

## **Conclusion**

The teaching of race in anthropology is a subject that is overdue for systematic study. As anthropologists have pointed out since the mid-twentieth century, anthropology has few

structures in place to study teaching, let alone the teaching of particular topics. While calls for increased focus on teaching have been heeded, the resulting materials, while helpful to the everyday practice of teaching, do little to determine the state of teaching in anthropology. Without such knowledge, it is impossible to know whether disciplinary goals of teaching the public that race is not biologically useful but is a social construction are being achieved. With a topic as essential to understanding modern humanity as race, it is vital to understand the teaching practices of anthropologists in order to continue to improve the resources and training that are provided to educators. Finally, with anthropology's history of engagement with race, it is imperative that educators are able to deconstruct the subject in a clear and understandable way in order to raise awareness of the continued inequality that behaviors based on folk understandings of race perpetuate and of the role of individuals in maintaining the American system built on White dominance.

## Chapter Four: Review of the Literature on Teaching Race in the Social Sciences

### **The Teaching of Race in Anthropology**

Anthropological scholarship on teaching race reflects disciplinary attention to and conceptions of the topic. In the 1960s, when anthropology was in a state of flux regarding the biological basis of race, the literature reflected disjointed recommendations on how best to teach the subject. In the 1990s, when anthropologists became more concerned with reflexivity and positionality, the scholarship took a postmodern turn. The current state of teaching race in anthropology focuses on combining active learning with information on the historical and biological validity of race.

As previously indicated, anthropologists were not in agreement over the biological validity of race in the mid-twentieth century. The diversity of attitudes toward race are reflected in *The Teaching of Anthropology*, in which one author, Lasker (1963) recommends connecting biological anthropology to cultural anthropology to prevent biological determinism, while two other authors, Laughlin and Hulse (1963) separately suggest that further study remains to be done on the subject of the biological validity of race before the concept can be disproven. If these papers can be viewed as indicative of the collective attitude toward the teaching of race, it appears that biological anthropologists were very much in disagreement about race and the message that they should send to their students.

Later scholarship addressed the cultural reality of race, as well as the difficulties of trying to teach students about the distinction between biological and social race. Between 1990 and 1992, the Association for Black Anthropologists and the Association for Feminist Anthropology

held a series of three joint sessions to explore the teaching of race and gender. The initial session was an open forum, while in the second and third year, a workshop and discussion were held. The goal of these sessions was to “share successful strategies and materials” (Johnston and Forman 1992:40). Several areas of concern were addressed. One was how to best convey the message that folk understandings of race were not grounded in scientific reality (Buck and D’Amico-Samuels 1991, Spears 1991). Another theme relates to dealing with the resistance and backlash that a professor of color faces from students particularly those who are White, when discussing the social construction of race (Bolles 1991, Casey 1991). While Johnston and Forman seem sympathetic to the frustration experienced by the participants, they point to the need for solutions and next steps. They suggest making inequality more of a central dialogue within the discipline of anthropology and focusing more efforts on teaching strategies and materials (Johnston and Forman 1992:41-2).

Two authors attempted to do just that. Between the early 1990s and the early 2000s, Shanklin and Lieberman et al. published several articles exploring race and teaching. Shanklin (1998) wrote of her concerns with the way that anthropologists wrote about race in textbooks, suggesting that the presentation of anthropology’s history was one that was a bit too sterile. She stated “an honest discussion in textbooks ... of anthropology's past errors and omissions, especially its failure to come to grips with racism, and the discipline's on-going efforts to redeem itself as a social science with a critical bent" (673) would be more beneficial for teaching students. She notes in a later article that the majority of texts geared toward an introduction to anthropology audience presented race in a way that was either confusing, wrong, or both (2000). Lieberman et al. (1989 and 2003) suggest a potential reason for this spotty coverage might be that anthropologists were not in agreement with what race was (or was not). That agreement

also varied greatly depending on whether an anthropologist identified as a cultural or biological anthropologist. The work clearly showed the need for more focus on race in anthropology.

The discipline answered these calls for more materials and strategies through a variety of mechanisms. *The Best of AnthroNotes*, the *Teaching Strategies* collections, *How Real is Race? A Sourcebook on Race, Culture, and Biology*, the *SACC Notes*, the *GAD Bulletin*, and the updated *The Teaching of Anthropology* book all contain suggestions on dealing with the teaching of race or lesson plans designed to deconstruct folk understandings of ideas like trait concordance. Additionally, the AAA in conjunction with the Ford Foundation and NSF has produced a multimedia campaign designed to educate the general public about issues of race. The project, *RACE: Are We So Different? (RACE)* consists of two museum exhibits; a comprehensive website that discusses the historical, biological, and social foundations of race; curricula for secondary teachers; and a DVD with video of the historical and contemporary impacts of racism ([understandingrace.org](http://understandingrace.org)). Produced at the same time was the documentary series *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, which addresses issues of history, biology, and culture of the race idea, similar to the RACE project but in video form. Missing from much of this material are more reflective lesson plans, and work on how anthropology's engagement with the subject of race and colonialism continues to carry over to this day in the lived experience of people of color. The *RACE* exhibit does devote space to exploring this lived experience, as do many scholars of color who publish both inside and outside of anthropology's journals.

Anthropologists have worked hard to make the dismantling of the race idea one of the key foci of the discipline; however, to what extent is the discipline engaged with critically examining the subtle ways in which race still operates, even among those who have been educated on the subject? The discipline also lacks research on the impact of such work. While it

may be difficult to measure the effect of viewing a museum exhibit or taking an anthropology class, anthropologists must try to research the way this information is received and processed if we are to continue the effort to teach against race.

One work that examines teaching race in anthropology is Morning's 2011 book, *The Nature of Race*. This book explores the way that professors of biology and anthropology teach about race through interviews with them and with students who have taken introductory classes in those disciplines. Morning's findings include a lack of consensus on "the nature of race" (104), whether it was biological, cultural, or both; suggests that cultural anthropologists were more likely to reject the idea of race than biological anthropologists; and that the idea of social construction of race was not well understood by students who had taken introductory anthropology classes (and not understood at all by introductory biology classes). This recent work shows that there remains much divergence among anthropologists regarding the meaning and impact of race.

In an attempt to address the lack of cohesion between various scientists regarding the meaning of race, Gravlee's 2009 article, "How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality", suggests that anthropologists would benefit from refining their message on race. Specifically, he suggests that while putting humans into a fixed number of racial categories is not ultimately helpful to the project of understanding human variation, these same social categories do have real consequences for human biology and human health that varies greatly by category (2009:47). In order to help non-experts understand these points, he suggests that anthropologists focus on the following: (1) teaching that "race is not human genetic variation", (2) teaching that "biology is not the same as genetics", and (3) teach that "race is not a myth" (50-53). He suggests a better way to state the message is that "the race concept is inadequate for describing

the complex structure of human genetic variation” (50), while pointing out that genetic variation occurs in different patterns, that there is more to human biology than genetic material, and that race, though a fiction, has real, tangible consequence for health and other indicators of well-being, showing that its effects are real. Gravlee’s article suggests a new direction in the study of race within anthropology: that of studying the biological impacts of a cultural idea.

Anthropology does not have a monopoly on studying or teaching about race. In the next section I discuss the ways that other social sciences have theorized about race, how it is taught, and the issues have arisen in other disciplines. I have found other disciplines have much to teach anthropologists about understanding and teaching race.

### **Teaching (Race) in Sociology**

*Teaching Sociology* provides a far greater depth of literature on teaching than what exists in anthropology. Not all of it falls neatly into the category of research on teaching; in fact, Macomber et al. (2009) and Atkinson et al. (2009) point out that sociologists need to take their examination of the classroom further. Macomber et al. suggest that using sociological theory to understand classroom dynamics would be a worthwhile endeavor. Atkinson et al. echo this sentiment, stating that they often look at individualistic explanations for student behavior rather than group level explanations (2009:233). The authors write writes that they are not alone in defaulting to this perspective and suggests “... the sociology of the college classroom—the application of sociological theory and/or concepts to understand social phenomena that take place at the level of the classroom and other sites of faculty-student interaction” (Atkinson et al. 2009:234).



Atkinson et al. delineate a four-part classification that would be useful for future anthropological studies of anthropology education to utilize. This system includes: SoCC, or sociology of the college classroom; SoTL, or scholarship of teaching and learning; the sociology of education; and the sociology of higher education (234-5). SoCC is precisely what was described above, that is, using sociological theory to understand what happens in sociology education (234). This is in contrast to SoTL, which studies “teaching and/or learning...presented in some form that makes it available for peer review” (235).

The literature that does exist on teaching race in sociology falls into the SoTL category but differs from the anthropological literature in a number of ways including the incorporation of data from students illustrating the effectiveness of the activity and a solid focus on addressing structural racism. For example, in Mueller 2012, the author describes an activity where students were assigned to trace the history of wealth in their families to demonstrate the impact that policies in the United States have had on different racial groups. The resulting qualitative data taken from student papers show that students were able to identify specific public policies that had hurt or helped their ancestors and were able to link those policies to their family’s current economic situation. Mueller notes that this activity is particularly effective because “such examples also helped challenge ideological, victim-blaming cultural explanations for racial disparities and break down the “bootstrapping” claims so common in family success stories” (178-79).

Harlow (2009) and Braa and Callero (2006) both note that experiential activities combined with critical theory help students to effectively learn lessons about racial inequality in the United States. Harlow played games called “The Vanishing Dollar” and “Bittersweet Candy” with students to illustrate how race and class are structural, rather than individual,

concerns. In a self-reported survey, there was a 51 percent increase in the number of students who felt they had a “very good” understanding of institutional discrimination after the “Candy” exercise (201-2). Townsley (2007) also indicates that her students were “more likely to develop a critical race perspective if they exercise their sociological imaginations; that is, when students connect their biographical experiences directly with new and/or different information about race as a collective, social phenomenon” (224).

In the same article, Townsley describes the results of assigning her students to estimate how many members of each racial group lived in their town. Later in the semester, students checked their estimate against data on the Census website. The data taken from this activity illustrate that students often guess there are far more minorities in their community than there are in fact which is used to begin a conversation about perceptions of race.

Similarly, Laundra and Sutton (2008) discuss the use of an intelligence test titled, “You Think You Know Ghetto?” designed to illustrate the cultural nature of intelligence testing and the dominance of White perspectives in these tests. The students are given attitude assessments before and after the lesson. Laundra and Sutton have demonstrated that students show a change in perspective toward the biased nature of testing. Finally, Khanna and Harris (2014) discuss the use of a television watching assignment that illuminates the continuing racial nature of American society. Students are assigned to watch prime time television on ABC, CBS, NBC, or FOX network and then to answer a series of questions about racial representation in that segment. The authors found that all students were able to pick out stereotypical treatment of minorities on television, while whites were depicted in a more positive light (Khanna and Harris 2014).

Although there are many similarities between the experiential nature of teaching material on race in sociology and anthropology, the sociology teaching literature differs in its presentation

of data on the effectiveness of the activity and the emphasis on structural racism. Additionally, as will be explored below, sociology and other social sciences has focused on more critical theories when addressing race than many anthropologists.

### **Theory and Literature on Teaching Race in Anthropology**

With the exception of a few sources to be discussed below, the literature on teaching race in anthropology is largely concerned with conveying anthropological ideas by utilizing theories of learning from the field of educational psychology. Exceptions include the work done by Foster (1997); the work from the sessions described by Johnston and Forman (1992); Moses and Mukhopadhyay (1997); Mukhopadhyay and Moses (1997, 2007); Mukhopadhyay, Henze and Moses (2007); and Nanda (1997). While it is beneficial to draw on knowledge about the way in which people learn, anthropologists must be careful to also draw on theories that take into account social and cultural contexts in which people are learning in order to ensure that we are teaching what we intend. Anthropologists must also include other cultures' perspectives on race to illustrate the arbitrary nature of the category.

A review of theory in educational anthropology and critical education studies shows an emphasis on the social and cultural context in which learning takes place, as well as an explicit emphasis on the social and cultural effects of the race concept. Whether it is the focus on how inequalities are produced and reproduced in school (Yon 2003), the role of state and national leaders in narrowing the curriculum (Lipman 2005), the role of laws and legal institutions in upholding inequality (Crenshaw et al. 1995), how the oppressed come to realize their oppression (Freire 2007), or the importance of broadening what is considered legitimate "knowledge"

(Crawley et al. 2008), these theorists focus on the role of social and cultural exchanges in perpetuating or challenging the concept of race.

The sessions held on teaching race and gender in the early nineties produced work that struggled with how to incorporate theoretical awareness about the causes of racialized beliefs into teaching practice (Bolles 1991, Buck 1991, Buck and D'Amico-Samuels 1991, Colen 1991, Francis-Okongwu and Pflaum 1991, and Spears 1991). Writers spoke of the tendency of students to project their racist beliefs onto the professor (Bolles 1991), the lack of texts that link the idea of race to the reality of racism (Spears 1991), and the difficulty students had with understanding the oppression of racism unless it was linked to oppression that they had experienced (Buck 1991). This is not to suggest that the session participants were unable to develop teaching strategies to implement their theoretical approaches to teaching, but that many struggled to do so and viewed their teaching strategies as works-in-progress.

More recently, Mukhopadhyay and Moses have almost single-handedly dominated the discussion on teaching about race. Their most relevant article linking theory to teaching practice, "Using anthropology to Understand and Overcome Cultural Bias" (Moses and Mukhopadhyay 1997) discusses the issue of how to handle the topic of race once the biological basis has been removed from the conversation. They recommend, much like critical pedagogy and feminist pedagogy practitioners, that students dialogue in the classroom to uncover the basis of their beliefs about race. Nanda (1997) recommends the introduction of readings, activities, and films that deconstruct American society to show the unnaturalness of our social and cultural behaviors. Finally, Foster (1997) discusses her own positionality as an African American professor teaching about diversity, a position that often places her directly in the face of race-based interactions with students who refuse to accept her authority.

It is clear that teaching anthropologists have made connections to the literature on the social impacts of race and racism. The work that remains to be done is to integrate work done by educational psychologists on learning into work done by critical theorists and educational anthropologists, for there are several potential disconnects even from learning theory that focuses on the social nature of learning.

One issue that Johnson (2005) points to is the strong feelings that discussing issues such as systemic or societal inequality can invoke in students. If students accept the argument that their instructors make, they then can feel helpless or inadequate to do anything about a seemingly powerful system, effectively taking away their sense of agency and the agency of others around them (Johnson 2005). To counter these problems, Johnson suggests that equal amounts of time must be applied to uncovering the historical and structural reasons for the “social problems” and to devising solutions or developing steps of action for students to take to become change agents (2005).

Another area of concern is the role of the instructor in reproducing inequalities in the classroom (Yon 2003). This can happen through lack of critical awareness of one’s place in the world (lack of theorizing one’s positionality) or through the implementation of external standards of learning (as discussed in Bartlett et al. 2002, Hamaan 2003, and Lipman 2005). Educators must make conscious decisions of how to incorporate multiple understandings of learning into classrooms that are increasingly being governed by external forces while balancing their commitment to promoting cultural understanding.

## Other Theoretical Approaches to Understanding Race

### Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) began in the field of legal studies as a way to expose the underlying racial and political tones to laws and legal practices that are typically hidden under discourses of fairness and equality under the law (Crenshaw et al. 1995, Valdes et al. 2002, West 1995). It looks at the ways in which legal practices are established to continue the dominance of White Americans at the expense of people of color. Specifically it aims to understand and expose how White "rule" happened and continues to happen in the US under the law, even when the law is written/interpreted to be in favor of emancipation and to figure out how to change the laws to end White privilege (Crenshaw et al. 1995: xii). In general, adherents to this theory hold three main ideas. First, they suggest that ignoring the concept of race (otherwise known as acting colorblind) will not make it go away. Second, they hold that racism is perpetuated in a systemic fashion and while it can manifest in individual actions, holding individuals responsible for racist acts will do little to solve the underlying structural racism. Finally, they believe that racism, as well as discrimination based on other identity markers, is the product of laws that favor whites and that racism can be made visible by analyzing power relations (Valdes et al. 2002:1-2).

According to Taylor (2009), within the field of education, CRT holds to more specific ideals. First, that racism continues to exist and is ubiquitous but is often invisible to whites (much like the central point of McIntosh's 1988 formative article) because they take their privileged position for granted. When racist acts are pointed out, whites tend to dismiss the behaviors as aberrations rather than illuminations of a larger trend (Taylor 2009:6). Second, is Bell's idea of interest convergence (Taylor 2009:6). This idea holds that the only room for racial changes occurs when the change will benefit whites or matches the goals of the person in power

(Taylor 2009:6). Third, they believe that attitudes and behaviors must be viewed within a historical context. That is, issues such as racial disparities in cancer mortality rates, while possible to present as having unclear causes, when looked at in a historical context will make sense, as they stem from the historic mistreatment of minorities in the United States (Taylor 2009:7). Finally, CRT adherents utilize the value of narratives as a source of data. Precisely because of the continued, but invisible to whites, tradition of racism, it is necessary to present a different version of reality in order to confront them. Narrative also allows for expressing one's positionality, which is important because it shows where the scholar is situated within society. Giving accounts such as these from people of color allow the illustration of the lived experience of racism (Taylor 2009:7).

Key figures in the development of CRT indicate that the movement has two underlying goals that bind it together. They are: to understand, in order to expose, how the law came to privilege whites and continues to do so currently in the United States in spite of rhetoric of equality and to attempt a solution to change unjust laws to put an end to White privilege (Crenshaw et al. 1995, Solorzano and Yosso 2009, Valdes et al. 2002, West 1995). The major actors in this movement have been law students and professors of color, many of whom were the first to receive tenure or integrate their departments of law. As "outsiders" they brought with them a new perspective that was not reflected in the literature or among their colleagues' concerns (Crenshaw et al. 1995).

The development of CRT occurred in the 1980s, with most authors (Crenshaw et al. 1995, Taylor 2009) pinpointing its origin to an incident at Harvard University in which the first tenured African American law professor, Derrick Bell, quit his job because of his colleagues' refusal to hire female faculty of color (Taylor 2009:2-3). It was preceded by work done in legal studies

called Critical Legal Studies (CLS). CLS is rooted in the writing of Oliver Wendell Holmes, who, in the 1880s suggested that legal decisions were based on positionality rather than complete impartiality (Taylor 2009). In other words, CLS grew out of the observation that who a person was, or their identity, was just as influential, if not more so, on a person's legal decision-making process as the laws in the United States. CLS scholars drew upon Holmes' work to develop the field in the 1970s and 1980s. This development followed the Civil Rights Movement in the United States; CLS scholars perceived public antagonism toward the legal decisions and subsequent integration of American society. In response, they wrote critically about the decisions in an attempt to combat these attitudes (Taylor 2009).

CRT's founders, aside from Bell, were his students and colleagues at Harvard. Students refused to take Bell's race and law class with a White professor, instead organizing their own seminar with other scholars of color and receiving credit from other professors who enrolled them as independent study students (Taylor 2009). This action-oriented attitude toward systemic inequalities continues to characterize the field today.

Contemporary educational researchers believe that race is still salient as a variable for analysis in educational achievement research because it is still a pervasive and persistent factor in the lives of people of color living in the United States. One suggestion that Taylor (2009:10) makes is that the use of narratives from people of color is beneficial to educators because it helps them to "better understand the experiences of their students of color through deliberative and mindful listening techniques." One fault of this point is that it fails to provide a precise way of ensuring that appropriate listening techniques are developed. Additionally, Taylor fails to operationalize the concept of narratives, instead utilizing vagaries. What constitutes a narrative, how the narratives are to be collected and disseminated, who will guide the reading and



interpretation of the narratives and how resistance to the narratives (such as those who produce counter-narratives to reinforce White domination) should be dealt with.

This is one area in which anthropology could provide its expertise, by asking and attempting to answer these questions. Participant observation in classrooms where issues like race are discussed would allow for the documentation and analysis of CRT-suggested pedagogical practices, such as the use of narratives from people of color. With sufficient documentation of the ethnographic context, researchers would have a database of sorts from which to work. The pragmatic and definitional questions, asked above, would be answered through such observations. Additional ways to complement these data include interviews and focus groups with instructors and students. Understanding the classroom context from the instructor, student<sup>7</sup>, and observer's perspective will allow for triangulation and point to possible disjunctures in the experiences providing further room for examination.

Chaisson (2004) writes about her efforts to incorporate CRT in the (sociology) classroom. She did this by asking her (majority White) students to write a paper about the role of race in their lives, discussing the socially constructed nature of race, having students read the book *Black Like Me* to gain an understanding of what it means to be Black in America, then concluding with unpacking White privilege (348-353). While Chaisson found that some student attitudes were changed, she struggled that not all students accepted her lived experience. She also describes student resistance, anger, disrespect, and disregard for her knowledge during her attempts at exposing the systematic dominance of race in American society, concluding that while she was not able to change all students' outlook on race, she felt that "planting the seed for growth" (355) was an important step in changing attitudes about race among White Americans.

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<sup>7</sup> Recognizing that "the student" perspective is problematic since the student body of most modern universities is not monolithic, nor homogenous. This, of course, would (and should) be taken into account by the anthropologist undertaking the research design and data collection.

## **Feminist Pedagogy**

Feminist pedagogy can be viewed as an extension of critical race theory, in that its followers typically incorporate ideas into the conceptualization of pedagogy (Crabtree et al. 2009). Feminists and critical race theorists share a concern for uncovering structures that serve to systematically oppress particular groups of people. However, the field of feminist work is divided on how much of their orientation is toward issues of female empowerment, while how much is directed toward empowerment of all marginalized groups. Consequently some feminist educators differ in their approach in that they focus more of their emphasis on issues of gender equality rather than race or class issues (Crabtree et al. 2009), while others focus on all types of inequalities inherent in the patriarchal world in which we live (Crawley et al. 2008).

The goal is not simply for students to become critically aware of themselves, their situatedness, and their surroundings, but for educators to become more critically aware as well. Therefore, it is not uncommon to see reflection pieces in work on feminist pedagogy, for an important part of understanding and remaining committed to the practice is to continue to practice it regardless of the level one is at (Crabtree et al. 2009).

Toward that end, Crawley et al. (2008:2) suggest that feminist scholars and educators are bound together by the framework of “reflexivity, action orientation, attention to affect, and use of the situation at hand” to develop and define their feminist practice in their classrooms (and research). In order to engage in reflexivity, both educators and students reflect on their positionality in life, as well as the academy. One suggestion Crawley et al. make toward enhancing reflexivity in the classroom is to incorporate journaling activities for students; another is to teach through critical questioning, rather than through lecture. The goal of action

orientation refers to the goal within feminism to create “positive social change” (Crawley et al. 2008). That is, scholars and educators must work toward improving conditions collectively identified as problematic. One way to have classes focus on this goal is to make courses service-learning based. In service learning, students engage with community-based groups in order to collaboratively solve problems; in doing so, the students learn through action and experience (Giles and Eyler 1994). Finally, feminist pedagogy suggests that scholars and educators must focus on the situation at hand. That is, they must incorporate locally significant topics into courses in order to draw students in to the material and to make it meaningful (Crawley et al. 2008).

Similarly to the dearth of anthropological work on teaching, Crabtree et al. point out that “the actual practices of feminist scholars and women’s studies teachers in relation to these definitions of feminist pedagogy are in need of continued study,” (2009:2) and that “more empirical research on what feminist teachers actually do in their classrooms, as well as about the theories and assumptions that underlie practice, is needed” (2009:17). It is clear that this is not a problem unique to the work of anthropology.

### **Critical Race Feminism**

Critical Race Feminism (CRF) is a response to the development of CRT and Critical Legal Studies (CLS) in legal studies, as well as to feminist theory. These theoretical orientations were viewed as neglecting the impact of gender, race, and other categories on a person’s experience in the legal system and in the rest of society (Wing 1997). CRF also represented a response to limitations of feminist theory that claimed to speak for “all women” but left many women of color feeling unrepresented. Beginning with the foundational work by Wing (1997), CRF has

focused on five main components. First, recognition that identity is “multiplicative” (Wing 1997:32), meaning that theories of oppression should not focus solely on race, but on all aspects of a person’s identity. In the case of CRF, this means understanding that oppression is experienced differently by Black women than by Black men (Berry 2009, 2010, 2014; Berry and Stovall 2013; Few 2007; Harris 1997). Wing states, “I am an *indivisible* black female with a *multiple* consciousness” (1997:30). Second is the recognition that it is possible to hold multiple identities (intersectionality) and to occupy multiple roles simultaneously (multi-dimensionality) (Berry and Stovall 2013:590). Third, CRF holds that feminist theory does not adequately represent the experience of women of color (CRF has been particularly focused on Black women and their experiences) (Berry 2009, 2010, 2014; Berry and Stovall 2013; Croom and Patton 2015; Few 2007; Wing 1997). Fourth, CRF incorporates components of CRT with specific emphasis on “anti-essentialism/intersectionality, normalization and ordinariness of race and racism, and counter- storytelling” (Berry and Stovall 2013:590). Finally, CRF is focused on the desire to cause positive change through the application of theory and knowledge to practice (Berry and Stovall 2013:590, Few 2007).

CRF can inform, to varying degrees, the presentation of the work. Berry, for example, publishes many of her articles in a format that guides the reader to focus on the anti-essentialism, ordinariness of race/racism, and counter-storytelling aspects of CRF. Of particular difference from more “traditional” models of work is the technique of counter-storytelling to change the way race-related incidents are portrayed. The goal of counter-storytelling is to shift the perspective from that of the dominant White culture to a perspective located in the experience of people of color (and ideally incorporating all of their identities). An example of this work is Berry and Stovall (2013)’s counternarrative of the Trayvon Martin shooting incident in which

the authors reimagine that Martin and George Zimmerman are able to converse with police about the incident, with the end result being that Martin is told to carry documentation showing his legitimate presence in the community and Zimmerman being arrested for “interfering with police activity” (2013:600).

## **Challenges of Teaching About Race**

### **Resistance of White Students**

Work on the subject of “sensitive issues” tends to focus on diversity courses because they are taught at (and required by) many universities. Commonalities in these discussions are the question of how to handle difficulties with students who resist the official curriculum and are often in line with the sort of reflective practice methodology discussed earlier.

For example, Meacham (n.d.) writes of the time a White male student emailed the entire class (including Meacham) to express his disgust at the content of the recently concluded course which included readings by Henry Gates Jr. and Jonathan Kozol. While thinking over the best way to respond to the student, Meacham was pleasantly surprised to find that two other students replied with carefully worded rebuttals. His own struggle was how he, as a White male, might further the inequalities that led to his student questioning whether there was any merit to reading and discussing works critical of the racial climate in the United States, given his own positionality. For Meacham, this experience led to the conclusion that he needed to solicit more anonymous feedback from all class members so that those who felt uncomfortable to approach him were able to provide input into the shape of the class (n.d.). Pittman (2010) writes that female faculty of color often deal with the greatest amount of resistance from White male

students. The faculty experienced these challenges as disrespectful and undermining their sense of authority and teaching competency (187).

McFalls and Cobb-Roberts (2001) discuss leading a multicultural education course for pre-service teachers (the majority of whom are White women). They write that students in the course, when confronted with racism in society, engage in resistant behaviors for a variety of reasons, including finding the ideas in contrast to their self-conception. They suggest the psychological idea of cognitive dissonance to frame understanding of why students become resistant to sensitive issues. This idea suggests that when information is introduced that contradicts with previously held ideas and beliefs, an individual goes through a period of mental turmoil. Individuals try to reduce the stress either by denying the new information, trying to connect the new information to the previously understood information, or by changing their mind about the idea (McFalls and Cobb-Roberts 2001).

The authors conducted a study in which two undergraduate classes were assigned an article about White privilege. One class was given a lecture on the theory of cognitive dissonance, in conjunction with a lecture on discrimination as well as a discussion period. Students in both classes were asked to write responses to questions asking about their degree of agreement with the article. McFalls and Cobb-Roberts found that students who received the lecture on cognitive dissonance were less resistant to the ideas put forth in the article when compared with their peers who had not received the article. They recommend that such information be shared with students during discussions on sensitive issues in order to raise their awareness of their own resistance (2001).

Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) point out that another way to look at this resistance is to view this as a phenomenon of White students. The contemporary White student is practiced at

discussing racial matters in non-racial terms. The authors refer to this as “color-blind racism” (69) because this form of racism operates by suppressing the importance of color (race) while still targeting people of color. They state that

the crux of the post-civil rights racial ideology is twofold. First, Whites resolutely deny that racial inequality is structural and, second, they explain it as the result of Blacks’ “cultural deficiency” (e.g. they are lazy, their families are in shambles, their communities are bursting with crime). (77-8)

It is evident that there are a number of challenges that educators face in dealing with student resistance to messages related to race and racism from White students. Students of color also face concerns in lessons on race and racism.

### **Impact on “Minorities” of Living in a Racist System**

Sue et al. (2009) discuss the concept of “racial microaggressions,” which are comments, gestures, or behaviors that denigrate another’s “racial” identity. These microaggressions lead to feelings of frustration on the part of the person who is being put down; they often occur between people who have power over those they are disparaging (Sue et al. 2009). While the person on the receiving end is able to resist or reply, it is often the case that the offender shifts the blame back to the target of their comment or behavior, effectively reproducing the symbolic violence again within the interaction. Those in power making the offensive gesture tend to be whites, while those on the receiving end tend to be minorities. In the classroom setting this can become quite difficult to deal with because of the tensions felt by all: the individual(s) accused of behaving in a racist manner can become defensive and feel threatened; the individual(s) who point out the deleterious impact of the comment can suffer negative emotional and social stresses caused by the reliving of the racialized violence.

Obviously studying this issue tends to be difficult since, as the name suggests, these are small occurrences, often not noticeable except for those who are looking for them (and as previously discussed, many anthropologists are not aware enough to be on the lookout). One potential way to get at these issues is through the use of focus groups of students, collection of demographic information, and semi-structured interviews as Sue et al. did when examining microaggressions (2009). They report that students of color find it beneficial when professors accept different racialized experiences, are to the point in their discussion of the racial topic(s), and lend support to the feelings and viewpoints of the students of color. What students found less than helpful was when professors were not in direct control over class conversations, when professors ignored racialized statements, and when they expected minority members of the class to act as cultural brokers (Sue et al. 2009: n.p.). They recommend that instructors, particularly those who are White, receive training on how to handle racialized discussions, though they caution that “comfort in facilitating difficult dialogues on race requires a strong experiential component that cannot be simply achieved through in-service training or classroom experience” (Sue et al. 2009: n.p.). What the researchers found particularly successful with the focus group format was that students felt comfortable in discussing a sensitive issue among others who had similar experiences.

Another example, though not in an American university setting, discusses student resistance to the hidden curriculum (or the unspoken agenda of the university or professor). Yüksel (2006) researched student resistance to teaching through the use of student demographic information classroom observations (on a structured form using note taking) and structured interviews with students who were observed engaging in resistance behavior. Yüksel found that the more structured nature of Turkish universities in comparison with American universities



limited the amount of resistance and he or she cautions that the lack of quantitative measures limited the study's ability to link the observations to causations. However, this study is beneficial in that it lends support to the idea that direct observation of a classroom is one technique that can be used to study the role of student-teacher interaction in the classroom.

While this research overlaps with only a fraction of the topic area of anthropology, it suggests additional analyses and lenses which may be of use to anthropologists conducting systematic research on the anthropology classroom experience. Focus groups with students, classroom observations, and individual interviews with students can shed light on the behaviors and interpretations of the curriculum in a way that an educator's reflective practice alone cannot. Incorporating critical theory approaches from sociology and feminist theory will aid anthropologists in deepening their teaching of the race topic.

## Chapter Five: Methods

I have been eager to conduct classroom-based research for many years. In part this eagerness stems from the year I spent sitting in an elementary school classroom as a behavior aide to a child with emotional needs. I observed on a regular basis the difference between her educational experience as a child with special needs and my own experience as an above average student. I also remember the advice given to me early in my graduate career: to pay attention to how the professors I assisted taught their classes. Doing this, I was told, would make it easier for me to teach my own class when the time came. I remember one session where the professor, who I think is incredibly smart and has a lot of interesting things to say, said to the class, “You know, it’s hard to stand up here and look at the way you all are looking at me. I wish I could turn the document camera on you so that you could see your faces. I’m a human being and I have feelings, too.” The speech didn’t seem to have much of an effect on the students, who continued to read the newspaper and whisper to each other (this was before smart phones and laptops were ubiquitous). Walking away from the classroom, the professors and I would talk: what were the students getting, if anything, from the class? Was there a better way to teach the material, I wondered? What was a person supposed to do with students who said offensive things out of ignorance (or what we hoped was ignorance)? Both of these experiences led to my interest in studying how anthropologists taught about any of the core “anthropological” concepts.

### **Other Research on Teaching in Anthropology**

What kind of research methods have anthropologists used to study post-secondary level teaching? This is a question that I still struggle to answer, years after I first began to investigate

this topic. As discussed in the introduction, anthropologists have talked about teaching for the past 100 years. They have held conferences, created publications, and developed teaching materials ranging from lesson plans to museum exhibits. While there has been a lot of material published in which anthropologists reflect on their teaching practice, this content tends to be more oriented toward documenting and sharing their pedagogy, rather than for the development and growth of a field of research on classroom practices at the college level.

A review of the first three issues of *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* published in 2012, the primary educational anthropology journal in the United States, shows the following types of methods were used in conducting research on education, broadly construed: participant observation, interviews, collection of artifacts, videotaping activities, and surveys (Bucholtz et al. 2012, Chikkatur 2012, Dyrness 2012, Khurshid 2012, Razfar 2012, Warriner 2012, Woolley 2012). These use of two or more of these methods forms the basis for what educational anthropologists refer to as “ethnography”, even though their version may be quite different from what other sub-fields of anthropology include in their own ethnographies (Eisenhart 1988). Similarly, one of the few studies of an anthropology college classroom utilized participant observation and interviews, in addition to focus groups and a survey (Bird and Godwin 2006). In my own research, as I outline below, I, too aimed to develop an ethnographic portrait of the teaching of race in anthropology classrooms using participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and a survey.

## Research Questions

I chose these methods in the hopes that they would best provide an answer to the following research question: How do anthropologists teach about race in introductory anthropology courses? That is:

- What are the goals and objectives of instructors who teach introductory anthropology?
- How much importance do instructors of introductory courses place on “the race concept”?
- What are the disciplinary understandings of the race concept and how it should be taught?
- How effective are introductory anthropology courses at conveying anthropological understandings of race?
- How do student understandings of “race” change as a result of taking an introductory anthropology course?

## Research Design

My goal with this project was to conduct exploratory research with a small sample size. My hope is that doing so has illustrated the cultural context of teaching anthropology to the general public. I chose my methods in order to maximize my ability to write rich, descriptive details about the classrooms, professors, and students who were part of my study. Traditionally, cultural anthropologists have used the methods of participant observation and interviewing to gather such data about their area of study. In addition to these two methods, I added focus groups and a survey to contextualize and triangulate the data that I gathered. I will explore these methods in greater detail below.

I chose to visit four types of institutions of higher education: a community college, a private liberal arts college, a small public liberal arts college, and a large public research institution. Since these types of institutions represent the majority of post-secondary educational options available to today’s student, I felt it would provide a basis for comparison and also provide a more holistic perspective than if I had chosen to focus on one or two types. Examining

a variety of types also allows for exploration of similarities or differences between or among types of institutions.

To organize my thinking, I created a table (Appendix B) with the questions I intended to ask, the method(s) I would use to answer the question, the participants utilized to answer the question(s) and which broader topic the question(s) would answer.

### **Sampling and Recruitment**

H. Russell Bernard, regarded as the expert on anthropological methods, states that when a researcher's aim is to conduct a small, in-depth study and when a researcher is interested in a cultural phenomenon, it is best to use nonprobability sampling (2011:143). In this dissertation project, I chose to use purposive sampling (a form of nonprobability sampling), which he defines as when "you decide the purpose you want informants to serve, and then you go find some...you take what you can get." (2011:145) This type of deliberate picking of research participants is done when there are small populations that fit within the research study's scope, when a researcher's goal is to describe a cultural phenomenon, when populations are hard to find, and when one is doing a pilot study (2011:145-6). My goal was to provide an in-depth view of teaching in the anthropology classroom, which fits within three of these four examples.

I was interested in three populations: professors at post-secondary institutions, students in those professors' classes, and members of the AAA *RACE* exhibit advisory board, since the *RACE* initiative represents the official face of the discipline in regard to the race issue. First I will explore my initial focus on the professors. Then I will discuss student sampling and recruitment, followed by that of the *RACE* advisory board members.

My sampling plan for the first group was to contact anthropologists, preferably department chairs if the school had a separate anthropology department, at institutions in which I

was interested in working. I sent emails and made phone calls to potential research participants at institutions that offered Introduction to Anthropology, a class that provides an overview of all four sub-fields of anthropology. The text of each email followed a script that I submitted to the University of South Florida's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The telephone calls were based on the script. In each case, I identified myself as a doctoral candidate in applied anthropology at the University of South Florida. I indicated that I was interested in conducting research with their department, primarily with their professors, though a small amount of student time would be requested. I identified my major professors and provided contact information if the person reading the email was interested in participating. Of the six institutions that I contacted, four agreed to participate. In part this was due to connections that individuals at USF had with individuals at the other institutions. Once I was in touch with an individual who was either the department chair or the head anthropologist at the institution, I was able to gain informal permission to conduct my research. Every anthropologist at the four institutions that gave permission agreed to work with me, either because they were convinced of the need to conduct research of this type or because they wanted to aid me in earning my degree. In the end, my sample contained seven anthropologists. In this regard, I know that I was extremely lucky, since most anthropologists have at least a small degree of difficulty in gaining research participants.

The demographics of my instructor sample (as defined by them) are as follows:

Table 1: Instructor Demographic Information

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>
Female	White	None
Female	White	Caucasian
Male	Human	Native American
Male	Human (Northern European-American), Caucasian, Pink	American (German-American)
Male	White	(blank)
Male	White	American
Male	White	Italian

My second sample, college students in the participating professors' classes, was limited to students who were enrolled in the classes I was observing. In order to recruit these students, I announced my presence to the students in the class, explained that I was an anthropology doctoral student at USF studying how anthropology professors taught their classes. As part of my study, I wanted to understand what students thought of the class and specifically about the session or sessions on race. I passed around a sign-up sheet for students to volunteer to attend a one-hour focus group. I asked students to indicate potential times they would be available and told them that in exchange for participating, they would receive a \$10 gift card. This recruitment also followed a script that was approved by the IRB. Most of the time, I received a list with at least 10 students who were interested in participating. Students who were interested were contacted through telephone, email, or both and invited to come to a focus group on their campus at a time that was convenient for the majority of the participating students. Students who attended the focus group were also provided with snacks and water. Student demographics are presented in the table below.

Table 2: Focus Group Demographics

<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Victorino1	19	White	(blank)	Female
Victorino2	20	White	(blank)	Female
Victorino3	19	White	Irish, German, Polish, French	Female
Victorino4	18	Hispanic	Argentina	Female
Victorino5	20	Caucasian/ White	Caucasian	Female
Werth1	19	White	Spanish	Female
Werth2	24	Mutt	(blank)	Female
Werth3	25	Caucasian	(blank)	Female
Werth4	20	White	White	Female
Werth5	30	Arbitrary	Italian/Irish American	Male
Werth6	21	African American	Haitian	Male
Blanton1	22	Caucasian	(blank)	Female
Blanton2	18	American	Native American, Irish, Jewish	Female
Blanton3	20	Black	Black American	Female
Rollins1	18	White	Italian	Female
Rollins2	19	White	Mixed (Heinz 57)	Female
Rollins3	18	Hispanic	Hispanic	Female
Rollins4	19	Caucasian	White	Female
Rollins5	42	White	White	Female
Rollins6	20	Caucasian	Mixed (Jewish, Russian, Cuban, Italian)	Male
Rollins7	22	White	Unknown	Female
Rollins8	18	Mixed Caucasian/ Hispanic/ Asian	Mixed Caucasian/Hispanic/Asian	Female
Rollins9	19	White	German	Female
Utley1	19	Caucasian	Native American, Northern European	Female
Utley2	18	Caucasian	Caucasian	Female
Utley3	20	White	White	Male



Table 2 continued

<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Hamels1	19	White Caucasian	American Born, Bahamian Raised	Female
Hamels2	20	White	Us	Male
Hamels3	20	White	Irish, Scottish	Female
Hamels4	20	White	Irish, Italian, Scottish, German	Male
Hamels5	19	White	White, Jewish	Female
Howard1	18	Caucasian/ White	American	Female
Howard2	18	African American	African American Gangster 24/7	Female (Gender is crossed out and sex is written in its place)
Howard3	18	Multicultural (White and Hispanic)	Puerto Rican and Italian And American	"Professor Howard says it's sex!", Gender crossed out, sex written in place, female
Howard4	18	White	American?	Male
Howard5	18	Hispanic	Mexican-American	Male
Howard6	22	Asian	Pakistani-American	Woman
Howard7	18	Black	Bahamian-American	Female
Howard8	19	Brown :-)	West Indian	Female

The next table, Table 3, illustrates the demographics of each of the four institutions. In order to protect the identity of the institutions I have modified total numbers and percentages as well as provided pseudonyms.

Table 3: College and University Demographics for Undergraduate Students, Fall 2011

	<b>Newville College</b>	<b>Shippensburg Area Community College</b>	<b>Carlisle University</b>	<b>University of Chambersburg</b>
Total number of Undergraduate students	2,500	30,000	50,000	5,000
% men	40.0%	43.0%	45.0%	40.0%
% women	60.0%	57.0%	54.0%	60.0%
% Asian	1.5%	3.0%	5.5%	4.0%
% Black	7.0%	19.0%	10.0%	7.0%
% Hispanic	7.5%	24.0%	19.0%	13.0%
% White	76.0%	40.0%	61.0%	72.0%
% 2 or more "races"	3.0%	1.0%	2.0%	2.0%

The third sample consisted of eight academics and other professionals who made up the advisory board of the AAA *RACE* project<sup>8</sup>. Again, due to constraints on the number of people who participated in the project, the sample was one of convenience. I sent a scripted email that contained information similar to the emails that were sent to professors and asked if the recipient would agree to participate in an interview over the telephone or through Skype. Those who replied to me were informed of my IRB approval and asked to schedule an interview at their convenience. The demographics of the sample were as follows:

<sup>8</sup> With one exception; an additional academic who is at the top of her field of biological anthropology was also interviewed.

Table 4: *RACE* Advisor Demographic Information<sup>9</sup>

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Race</b>
1	Female	African American
2	Female	African American
3	Female	African American
4	Male	African American
5	Female	Latina
6	Female	White
7	Male	White
8	Male	White

This sample was smaller than I had hoped because of the difficulty of convincing busy people to participate in an additional activity that some may have viewed as unnecessary. Those who did participate were helpful, gracious, and willing to share information with me.

### **Data Collection**

The majority of the data collection for this dissertation took place between 2011 and 2012, with participant observation taking the bulk of the time.

### **Participant Observation**

My primary method of data collection was participant observation. Anthropology's beginnings are in participant observation, and it continues to be one of the hallmarks of cultural

<sup>9</sup> Please note that these numbers do not correspond to the advisor pseudonym numbers utilized in subsequent chapters.

anthropology. Largely, participant observation consists of showing up and being present for whatever activity one is interested in, no matter how mundane or quotidian it may seem. Of course, observing activities that people participate in, whether regular or unusual, is not of value without documenting these behaviors and activities. These observations, along with hunches and reflections on what was observed, are placed in the anthropologist's field notes.

In order to document teaching practices, I conducted participant observation in each of the four institutions included in my sample. After gaining department and professor permission (in addition to IRB approval), I attended approximately three or four classes for each professor in my sample. In some instances, I spent more time in classrooms than others. This was largely dictated by how open each school was to me attending more than three classes, which is the number that all agreed were acceptable.

Table 5: Courses and Hours Attended by Instructor

<b>Professor's name</b>	<b>Number of classes attended</b>	<b>Number of hours attended</b>
Utley	6 classes	8 hours
Hamels	6 classes	5.5 hours
Victorino	5 classes	5 hours
Howard	5 classes	8 hours
Werth	6 classes	9 hours
Blanton	3 classes	8.5 hours
Rollins	6 classes	10 hours

In each class, I took a seat near the back of the room. In most cases, I was in classrooms sitting next to students. I believe many were unaware that I was not a student in their class, particularly when I sat near students who did not attend class on a regular basis. I took notes in a notebook, using a pen. Though I typically feel that typing is a more efficient way of taking

notes, I did not want to bring in technology that was out of place in a classroom, nor did I want to deal with trying to find a power cord in the event that my laptop battery died. I also wanted to get a real sense of being in the class, and I knew that if I had access to the internet, I would be tempted to do work or otherwise distract myself when the class became boring or when my mind began to wander. My near constant writing was the only thing that caused other students to look at me out of the corner of their eyes, particularly when I wrote down every word of a Power Point presentation that other students had printed out. I paid attention not only to what the professors taught, but to my surroundings, including the physical environment and students. I looked at what students were doing while professors were teaching. I noticed how the set-up of the classroom helped or hindered their behavior. I also noted student interactions before, during, and after class. I did the same thing with professors as well.

Although I was interested in all of the classes I attended, and my attendance at multiple classes was valuable for learning about the institution, the professor, and the students, I took particular care to take close notes during the class period(s) on race. These observations helped to inform my other methods of data collection.

One issue that researchers worry about is that their presence in a setting will change the nature of the otherwise “naturally occurring” event. This is known as reactivity. I am not clear on the extent to which my presence as an observer changed the teaching behavior of the professors, with one exception. One professor told me that my presence in the room caused her to rewrite her entire lecture on race to ensure that it was well done. I will speak more about this issue in the chapter seven.

## Semi-structured Interviews

The second method I employed was semi-structured interviewing. This is a form of interviewing that follows a pre-determined interview script, or list of questions, to provide a sense of continuity from interview to interview (Bernard 2011). The benefit of this type of interview are that each interview tends to cover the same material but the interviewer has some freedom to explore other issues that come up on a case-by-case basis.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with two different groups of professionals: college professors who teach introductory anthropology classes and members of the AAA *RACE* advisory board project. In both cases, I followed interview guides that I wrote and that were approved by the USF IRB. These interviews, because of the nature of the people with whom I spoke, went very differently.

My interviews with college professors followed the interview protocol fairly closely. These interviews focused on the interviewees' experience with teaching, their understanding of the race concept in anthropology, and their thoughts about teaching race to students. The list of interviewees and the length of each session is listed below.

Table 6: Length of Professor Interviews

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Length of interview recording</b>
Utley	1 hour 12 minutes
Blanton	45 minutes
Howard	54 minutes
Rollins	1 hour 44 minutes
Hamels	49 minutes
Werth	1 hour 20 minutes
Victorino	1 hour 7 minutes

I found that, during these interviews, I was able to follow the interview guide closely.

While there were topics that I chose to explore in greater detail, and these varied by interview, I

did not find it necessary to completely deviate from the guide. I believe this was in part due to my familiarity with anthropological teaching and anthropology's stance on race. Having spent many years informally observing teaching and participating in learning how to teach helped me to have a basic level of understanding about teaching. These interviews were held on the campus of the professor, either in their office, a nearby classroom, or in the campus dining hall. They were recorded with a digital recorder, so that they could be transcribed. In addition, I took notes during and after the interviews, which were turned into field notes. I also collected demographic data about each participant before the interview began.

On the other hand, my interviews with advisory board members frequently strayed from my interview guide. In part, this was due to varying levels of involvement and familiarity with the project. While some members of the *RACE* advisory board project attended large group meetings a few times a year for a few years, others had been instrumental in conceptualizing the project, soliciting funding, and overseeing the continued development of the project. When I interviewed members who had been very involved in the project, I was able to follow the guide with a fair amount of fidelity. However, members who attended several advisory board meetings were less able to talk about the details of the project. In those cases, I asked interviewees to share their area of expertise with me in greater detail. In all cases, this was related to some aspect of the race concept. These interviews lasted from 45 minutes to two hours.

Table 7: Length of *RACE* interviews

Interviewee	Length of interview recording
Advisor1	1 hour 17 minutes
Advisor2	1 hour 20 minutes
Advisor3	48 minutes
Advisor4	50 minutes
Advisor5	31 minutes
Advisor6	1 hour 54 minutes
Advisor7	57 minutes
Advisor8	58 minutes

Six of the seven interviews were conducted over the telephone and recorded using a call recording service, after permission was given. Because my interviewees could not see me in most cases, I took many notes while they were speaking. These were later used to form the basis for my field notes. I also conducted one informal interview with a person intimately familiar with the project who declined to be part of my research project.

In both cases, the interviews were a key component of my efforts to understand how anthropologists thought about teaching, what they thought about the topic of race, and how they thought it best to communicate that information to non-experts.

### Focus Groups

To assess student learning and perceptions of their professors' teaching and teaching priorities, I conducted focus groups with students in each of the observed classes. A focus group is "a carefully planned series of discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment" (Kruger and Casey 2009:2). These groups typically contain five to ten members, but the optimal number is considered to be six to eight members. Focus groups are a beneficial method when the researcher is "looking for the range of ideas or feelings people have about something," and when the researcher "want[s] ideas to



emerge from the group” (2009:19). My purpose in conducting these interviews was to gather the impression students in each of the classes held of race.

While I had initially hoped to conduct two focus groups per class, with the same students in each group (one before the race lesson and one after), I found that this proved to be quite difficult. My hope had been that gathering a group of students to talk about race before their professor taught the lesson would provide a baseline of what their knowledge of race was. If I could talk to those same students after the lesson, I reasoned, I would be able to gain some sense of how their understandings of the concept might have changed. Unfortunately, because of IRB concerns over student involvement and excessive demands on their time, I decided to conduct one focus group per professor. My goal was to enroll six to eight students in a focus group that would last between an hour and two hours. The reality of recruiting students in introductory classes, where students may not have an opinion on the subject or any incentive to join the group, or are extremely busy, did not occur to me until I experienced difficulty in recruiting students. In the table below, I show how many students attended each group and how long the group lasted.

Table 8: Number of Participants and Length of Focus Group by Instructor

<b>Professor</b>	<b>Number of students present</b>	<b>Length of focus group recording</b>
Utley	3	40 minutes
Blanton	3	58 minutes
Werth	6	1 hour 13 minutes
Hamels	5	46 minutes
Rollins	9	1 hour
Howard	8	57 minutes
Victorino	4	49 minutes

I chose not to have the professors introduce me until the lesson on race occurred.

Because of advice from my advisor, I elected to hold the focus groups as soon after that lesson

was taught as possible. In some classrooms, the professor announced that I was studying race. In others, I described myself as studying how anthropology professors taught about anthropology. For the first recruitment, I asked students to come up to me after class if they were interested in joining the group. I also announced that if they completed the focus group, they would receive a \$10 gift card. I chose this amount because I felt that it was enough to adequately compensate them for their time, but not excessive enough that people who weren't interested would be unduly influenced to join. I also worked with constraints from my own funds because this project was not externally funded.

Although this worked in one class, I quickly found two problems in other classrooms: very few students approached me after class and the few that did had completely different schedules. Trying to coordinate schedules turned out to be one of my least favorite parts of data collection because of the sheer difficulty of finding a time to meet all interested parties' schedules and because the turn out rate was often low. After speaking with a colleague, I changed my recruitment strategy to include a sign-up sheet with contact information, such as email addresses and telephone numbers, as well as a column for when the student would be available to meet on campus. This proved to be much more effective and yielded higher numbers of students. Additionally, with this contact information, I was able to call the students the night before the interview to remind them to attend. Students were also able to call me to tell me that they were running late or that they would not be able to attend. This allowed me to start the groups on time and to have an accurate idea of who was attending

The focus groups were held on campus, outside if the weather permitted, or in a classroom, if we were able to locate one that would be free during the meeting. I provided the students with snacks as an additional effort to thank them for their time. I also picked one student

up and drove her to the meeting because she did not have access to a car. Though I found that many students were wary when they first began the meeting, many of them remarked at the end that they had really enjoyed talking about their class. I found that I, too, greatly enjoyed the focus group process because of the student learning that took place.

### **Survey**

I developed a survey based on the qualitative data that I gathered through my observations, interviews, and focus groups. The survey questions related to information about the individual's teaching experience, their preparation to become an instructor, the institution they taught at, their goals for their introductory anthropology students, and their perspectives on teaching about race. The survey was approved by the USF IRB and was distributed electronically through posting to the following listservs: USF Anthropology department, the Council on Anthropology and Education (part of AAA), and the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges. The survey was also emailed to department chairs in the US through a privately maintained list by the USF Anthropology Department's office manager, as well as posted on my Twitter feed.

The survey was uploaded on SurveyMonkey. It went live on January 31, 2013 and closed February 13, 2013 because I had reached an adequate number of attempts. The table below lists the number of responses by date.

Table 9: Number of Surveys Attempted by Date

<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
1/31/13	152
2/1/13	50
2/2/13	11
2/3/13	5
2/4/13	55
2/5/13	19
2/6/13	11
2/7/13	3
2/8/13	4
2/9/13	0
2/10/13	3
2/11/13	1
2/12/13	2
2/13/13	3
Total	319

The only issue I faced with the survey was that I had underestimated the response rate and had only requested IRB permission to enroll 100 participants. The results show that I received more than that the first day of responses. I had to submit two modification requests to ensure that I was in compliance with the allotted number of enrollees. Luckily, the IRB staff were responsive to my requests and approved my modifications quickly.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Ethnographic Data**

The process of analyzing my ethnographic data was an iterative one. I chose to read through my interviews, focus groups, and field notes first to develop codes. Next I printed my documents, read through them and mark down ideas and themes. If an idea for further

explanation struck me, I jotted it down in a notebook that I kept with me throughout the dissertation process. My initial code list was too long, a fact that I did not realize until I attempted to use it. Once I discovered that its length made it unusable, I condensed many codes into broader topics and settled on 5 major areas for each of the three interviewee categories.

I chose to use MAXQDA as my qualitative software program because it seemed more intuitive than other programs I had previewed. I imported all of my qualitative documents (field notes, interview and focus group transcripts) into the program and worked my way through them. I am not sure how many additional revisions my codebook underwent, but I found myself making changes almost every time I worked. I have attached my codebook in Appendix C.

### **Survey Data**

After the survey was closed, I downloaded the all of the data from SurveyMonkey's website onto my computer in an Excel file. SurveyMonkey provides the data separated with a unique identifier for each respondent. Initially, I manipulated the data to look for patterns in the data, such as responses to the questions from cultural anthropologists versus responses from other types of anthropologists. Eventually I decided to remove any respondent who had not taught Introduction to Anthropology or the equivalent course at the individual's institution in the past 5 years. This left me with 239 respondents, the majority of whom were White women with Ph.D.s in anthropology. I will say more about the demographics of this sample in Chapter 6. In addition to creating tables or charts summarizing the responses to individual questions, I also created cross-tabulations, or cross-tabs, to compare the responses to one question stratified by respondent characteristics, such as how people with PhDs responded to a question as compared to how people without PhDs responded to a question.

## **Ethical Concerns**

According to the American Anthropological Association, anthropologists conducting research have an ethical responsibility to the people with whom they work, to the development of science and scholarship, and to the public (AAA statement of ethics). These ethical responsibilities seek to ensure that people are not harmed in the research process, that peoples' identities are kept hidden or are made clear (depending on their preference), and making sure that anthropologists share their findings with the public and with those who participated in the research process. They also recommend that anthropologists are honest about their intentions and clear about the implications (or lack thereof) of their research and findings (AAA statement of ethics). In the case of this dissertation, the ethical concerns broadly centered around accurately representing the teaching that occurred, protecting informant identities, and ensuring that participants were not harmed because of their participation.

Because I was clear about the fact that I was conducting research to earn my doctorate in anthropology from the beginning of my contact with research participants, I believe that participants were able to make an informed choice to take part (or not). I did begin to worry after my research began that my participants, especially professors, took the fact that I was a doctoral student to mean that I wouldn't ask anything hard or challenging. When those conversations took place, I felt tension in what had otherwise been a cordial relationship until that point. I also felt concern that my stated purpose of researching teaching was somehow not transparent enough. It sounded innocuous and I thought it was fairly value neutral until I first observed a professor teach in a way that I strongly disagreed with. I struggled with feeling that teaching is an evolving practice and that criticizing a professor in my dissertation would do more

harm than good. Alternately, I felt that it would be better to point out to this professor that some people (including me) might find his or her method of teaching about certain topics to do more harm than good to his or her students.

I also struggled with ensuring that students and professors who participated would not face any negative repercussions as a result of talking with me. In the case of students, I wanted to be sure that what they said about their professors and their knowledge of anthropology's stance on race (or lack of knowledge) remained in the group. In many cases this was possible, but in some cases, professors were well aware of the students who volunteered to participate and even asked me if certain students participated. This happened in the smaller classes, where professors knew their students well and apparently observed which students approached me. I suspect, but do not know for certain, that this was so that they could share their pride about their "promising" students with me. In these cases, if a certain student's name was mentioned, I would indicate that they had participated, but would not say more than that. I also assured students that their professors wouldn't know what was said about them by individual students, that what they said in the focus group would not have an impact on their grade, and that there would be a significant amount of time that passed between when the focus group was conducted and when the professor learned the results.

Regarding professors, I worried that instructors who were seemingly honest with me, both in their interviews where they expressed vulnerability and insecurity over their teaching abilities, and in allowing me to see their teaching on a regular basis, would later regret sharing. As I will discuss in greater detail later in this dissertation, teaching is a relatively solitary activity. Professors have varying degrees of autonomy over their classes, students, and their classroom. This gives them the freedom to focus on areas they find important, as well as in how

they choose to present their abilities to their colleagues. If someone at the college level taught one or two classes that were poorly executed it is unlikely that anyone would have to know other than students. More than one person expressed concern during the interview process that their teaching ability or their knowledge of anthropology's view on race would not hold up to my scrutiny.

Finally, I worried that my attempts to disguise the identities of the participants might not have gone far enough. I have chosen to be deliberately vague about the geographic area in which these schools were located. I changed details about the locations, while still trying to preserve the feeling of each of the schools. I have also been deliberately vague about the professor recruitment process to avoid identifying the schools. I created pseudonyms for the schools and the professors. I hope that the schools where informants were concerned about keeping their identity hidden will find this account to be accurate but not easy to identify to outsiders. At least one research site asked me to make sure that the school was not identified.

Ensuring that participants understood my work, keeping identities hidden, and attempting to prevent harm from coming to research participants were my primary ethical dilemmas. Relative to other studies these concerns were less significant, although they did impinge on the research process and were brought up at the beginning of my contact with each research site. I am grateful to all of the participants and hope that they find that I have protected them, while still sharing what they shared with me in a respectful and accurate manner.

### **My Positionality**

Another issue that shapes my project is my identity as a White female American. As I shared in the introduction, race was not a topic that I felt remotely comfortable with for many



years. I was raised in a rural part of southern Pennsylvania that was predominately populated by lower-class whites of Northern European descent. In my graduating class of 200, there were fewer than 20 students who did not identify as White and race relations were not an integral component of my high school education. I first heard the term “White guilt” in a college class on Latinos in the United States but I would say that I really did not start to understand race and racism in the United States today until two or three years into my graduate school program. I now understand that it will be a life-long process for me of examining ways in which I am privileged because of my skin color.

The fact that I am White has influenced the way that I conceptualized the research, the assumptions that I made about sampling, and the way that I analyzed my data. My initial thinking on this topic was that it was important to study because it was “interesting” to me. However, as one of my committee members has pointed out to me, living life as an oppressed person under a racist system can only be viewed as “interesting” by a person who has the luxury of being at the top of the system. When I created my sampling plan, I did not consider that it would be important to include or attempt to recruit people of color who teach Introduction to Anthropology; instead I naively believed that using a convenience sample would be adequate for an exploratory study. Finally, in conducting my analysis, I hesitated to point out attitudes and practices that my gut told me were racist, for fear of being challenged.

Another component of this process has been reading materials written both for scholarly and general public audiences that explicitly discuss whiteness and how it manifests (e.g. Croll 2013, Leigh, n.d., Perry and Shotwell 2009). These pieces, especially when written by people of color and in relation to current events, allow me to pinpoint ways in which my racialized experience in the world influences my perception of and reaction to particular events. This

process continues to challenge me, particularly because it is in contrast to how I have been taught to view the world and is in contrast to the way that many people in my social circle view it as well. Though I was aware of some of the influences of my whiteness before doing this dissertation, the process has been and continues to be a process of peeling away layers of privilege.

I have also begun to see the ways in which I privilege my experience and my good intentions over the lived reality of people of color. This is not an easy recognition and is one that I push back against constantly. This process has been iterative and I recognize that it will continue to be this way for the remainder of my life. I continue to realize the gaps in my education within anthropology, specifically that I am unaware of the contributions of many anthropologists of color to the discipline (St. Clair Drake's "Anthropology and the Black Experience" has been one of several articles that have helped me to become aware of these shortfalls). I acknowledge that my privilege has an impact on the process of conducting my research as well as on what I have presented. Specifically, this privilege becomes clear in looking at my sample selection, which I will discuss in greater detail in the next section on study limitations.

### **Study Limitations**

I did not purposefully attempt to recruit anthropologists of color for my survey and case studies; consequently there were a lack of minorities in my sample of instructors. In future research, it will be important to look at how anthropologists of color teach about race, since there is the strong possibility that their experience as a minority in the United States would have shaped their teaching focus. Studying the lessons of anthropologists who identify as scholars of

color and/or feminist scholars would be of particular importance because their lessons may provide model lessons for White or Western-focused anthropologists who are not as conscious of the impact of racism on lived experience of minorities in the United States.

An additional limitation is that the study was conducted in the southeastern United States. It will be important for future studies should look at teaching practices in other parts of the country. Because of the long history of racism and slavery in the American South, it is likely that my sample was affected by regional factors that may not be present or may present differently in other parts of the United States. It is reasonable to assume, for example, that there would be more of an emphasis on the role of Asians and Latinos in classes taught on the west coast of the United States. It is also reasonable to assume that the legacy of slavery and segregation has impacted populations in the American South differently than in other locations in the country.

### **Anthropological Difference**

Qualitative research has become an acceptable form of investigation in the field of education research. While I locate anthropologists outside of this field because their training comes from a different intellectual tradition than those trained by educational researchers (who tend to gain their heritage from psychological work) there is a considerable amount of overlap. Anthropologists, particularly applied ones, tend to focus on the human experience in a critical fashion. That is, they tend to look at how people are treated and how that experience might be improved. This is not exclusive to the discipline of anthropology, but it does tend to be more of a focus than studies that focus on learning outcomes and testing. Anthropology is also more interested in showing experience, allowing the reader to feel like they have had the experience for themselves, rather than describing the situation from a clinical, outsider perspective.

## Chapter Six: Research Results: Views on Teaching

### Introduction

In this chapter I examine the views of anthropologists and students regarding teaching practices. My approach to understand their views was to explore the goals and objectives of instructors who teach introductory anthropology. To gain an overall perspective, I explore responses from a 2012 web-survey of anthropologists who have taught Introduction to Anthropology in the past 5 years in the United States. Then I explore the responses of the seven professors who participated in my case study. I follow that with student perspectives on valuable teaching practices, garnered from focus groups. By exploring more broad disciplinary trends and comparing those results with ethnographic findings, I will illustrate that the introductory anthropology class is considered to be an important opportunity to introduce a subset of the American public (in the form of college students) to the discipline of anthropology. Specifically, anthropologists surveyed and featured in the case study want the public to increase their understanding of “race”, science and evolution, cultural diversity, cultural relativism, and what anthropology as a discipline is. Students taking introductory classes indicated their interest in taking courses from teachers who were dynamic, excited, and utilized multiple methods of instruction.

## Survey Information

Though I spent most of my time working with seven professors in-depth, I begin by presenting information gathered from a web-based survey, which provides a broad picture that helps to put the case-study findings in context.

Three years ago, I created a 22 question survey which was administered through SurveyMonkey.com. The survey was designed to gather demographic data on respondents, questions related to teaching introductory anthropology courses, and questions designed to gather information about the teaching of race. This chapter will focus on the first two areas; the information about teaching race will appear in a subsequent chapter.

Of the 319 people who attempted the survey, 239 respondents fit the criteria for inclusion. These criteria were that the respondent: (1) indicated that they had taught an introductory course in anthropology in the past five years, and (2) provided an answer to the question “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The anthropological perspective on race is one of my priorities when I teach Introduction to Anthropology or Sociocultural Anthropology.” The survey respondents were overwhelmingly White female cultural anthropologists with doctorates in Anthropology teaching at either a state funded research school or a state funded teaching school. Previous survey efforts associated with the American Anthropological Association (AAA) indicate that anthropologists who have responded to recent surveys tend to identify as female (69 percent in Brondo et al. 2009, 66 percent in Fiske et al. 2010) and as White (84 percent in both surveys). With those data in mind, I believe it is safe to say that my population is representative of American anthropologists who respond to surveys. This population of survey respondents also points to overwhelming representation of White females in the discipline of anthropology and the need for anthropology as a whole to

expand its ranks. The next section will provide specific information on the respondents and their characteristics.

### **Survey Respondent Demographic Information**

The majority (n=133), or 56 percent of the people taking the survey identified as cultural anthropologists. Archaeologists (n=38) and biological anthropologists (n=36) were the second and third most common subfields, with 16 and 15 percent respectively, falling into those categories. Four field generalists (n=24) followed, with 10 percent of respondents selecting that category. Finally, eight people chose the category of linguistic anthropologist for a total of three percent of the study population.

While the initial survey asked participants to indicate whether they had a bachelor's or master's degree in anthropology, I combined those responses into one category labeled "Not Doctorate." This category was in part created because of feedback from a participant who was a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology but did not have any degrees in the field at the time of the survey. More than half of the respondents had earned a doctorate in anthropology, with 156 of the 239 responses selecting doctorate (65 percent). In each subfield, there were approximately twice as many respondents with doctorates as those without them. Many of the respondents (41 percent) had earned their last anthropology degree within the past five years. The second highest number of respondents, 28 percent, earned their degrees more than 15 years ago. The remaining respondents were evenly split between earning their degree within the past six to ten years (17 percent) and between ten and 15 years ago (14 percent).

Respondents were given six categories from which to choose their primary teaching role: graduate teaching assistant (GTA), adjunct professor, instructor, associate professor, assistant professor, and professor. One potential problem with this categorization is that people who are

GTAs could also be adjuncts or instructors at another institution(s). The responses were distributed evenly between the six categories. The category with the most responses was adjunct professor, with 23 percent of the respondents selecting this option. This was followed closely by the professor category, with 20 of the respondents selecting this category. Assistant professor had the third highest percentage of respondents, with 18 percent of the responses. This was followed by associate professor and instructor, both with 15 percent of the responses and GTAs with nine percent of the responses. These findings establish that the survey respondents have a wide range of teaching experience, but that the majority have a terminal degree in anthropology and some sort of permanent teaching position. This illustrates that the responses can be viewed as being of concern to White career anthropologists.

The categories for the type of institution where respondents had their primary teaching responsibility were:

Table 10: Research Institution Categories

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
State-funded research institution	research institution, state funded (institution engaged in extensive research, awards graduate degrees, funded in primarily through state dollars)
Four year state-funded institution	research institution, privately funded (institution engaged in extensive research, awards graduate degrees, funded in primarily through private dollars)
Two year community colleges	four year, state funded institution (institution engaged primarily in teaching undergraduate students, funded primarily through state dollars)
Four year privately funded teaching institution	four year, privately funded institution (institution engaged primarily in teaching undergraduate students, funded primarily through private dollars)
Privately funded research institutions	four year, state college (formerly community college)
Four year state colleges	two year, state college/community college

State-funded institutions were very well-represented in the sample with 39 percent of the respondents in this category. The second highest amount of responses, with 29 percent, was four

year state-funded institution. Together, the two categories made up 68 percent of the respondents of the survey. Two year community colleges had the third highest number of responses, with 14 percent, followed by four year, privately funded teaching institutions, with 12 percent. Privately funded research institutions made up 5 percent of the responses and four year state colleges made up less than one percent of the responses.

165 of the 239 respondents identified as White, making up 69 percent of the sample population. The second highest category of individuals (n=24) identified as belonging to more than one race, making up 10 percent of the sample. Fifteen and twelve people (6 and 5 percent) identified as European or Euro-American and no race respectively. People identifying as Asian made 4 percent of the sample with 10 individuals selecting that category. Latinos (n=4), “other” (n=3), and Black (n=1) individuals made up 2% or less of the survey respondents. The “racial” identity of the participants is important to consider, especially when examining how race is taught. The identity of anthropologists can have an important impact on their priorities when teaching (Harrison 1990) and there is clearly a lack of non-White instructors in this sample.

Finally, more than half of the sample identified as female. 150 of the 239 respondents identified as female (63%), while 84 identified as male (35%). Two percent (4) provided no response, while one person (less than one percent) identified as “other.” In the next section, I will present information on the variety of introductory courses and teaching goals of the survey respondents.

### **Introduction to Anthropology Courses**

This section provides data on entry level courses including the purpose of the course, and the most important concepts for students to learn. Overall, Introduction to Anthropology (4-



field) or Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology were considered the entry level courses, the most often selected purpose of the course was to convey anthropological concepts, and understanding of culture was the most often cited goal of introductory anthropology course instructors.

Figure 1 shows the responses to the entry level anthropology course at the respondent's institution. Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology was the most commonly selected introductory course, with 100 of the 239 individuals selecting it (42 percent). The four-field Introduction to Anthropology course followed closely with 80 individuals selecting it (33 percent). The other 60 responses primarily indicated that there were two or more introductory anthropology courses within their institution.

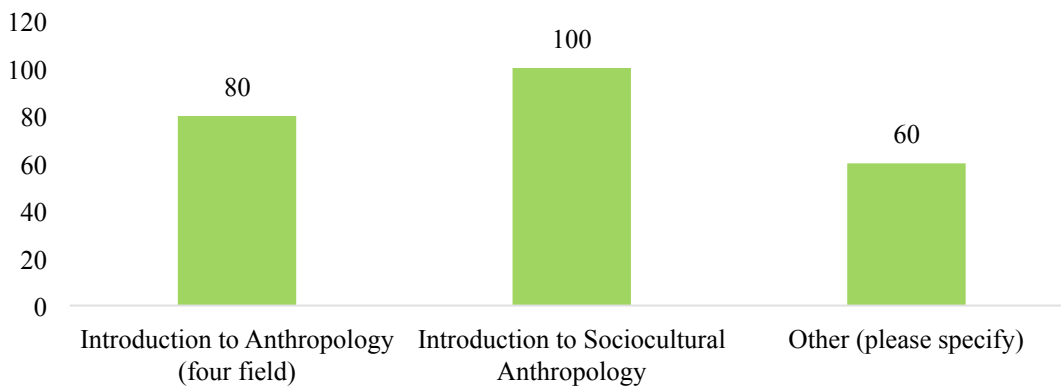


Figure 1: Name of Entry Level Course at Respondent's Institution (n=239)

The 60 others were as follows:

Table 11: Other Introductory courses

Introduction to each subfield (separate classes)	7
Introduction to two or more subfields (separate classes)	22
Both of these classes are considered introductory level	12
Introduction to Cultural Anthropology	8
Introduction to Biological or Physical Anthropology	4
Introduction to Sociology	2
Miscellaneous	9
Total	64

In 89 percent of the sample (n=211), the course considered “entry level” for the discipline is also a general education course, which suggests that at least some of the people taking the course are not students who enter with the intent to major in anthropology. Not surprisingly, most (198, or 83 percent) of the survey respondents indicated that the most important purpose of the introductory course was to “convey important concepts” to the general student body.

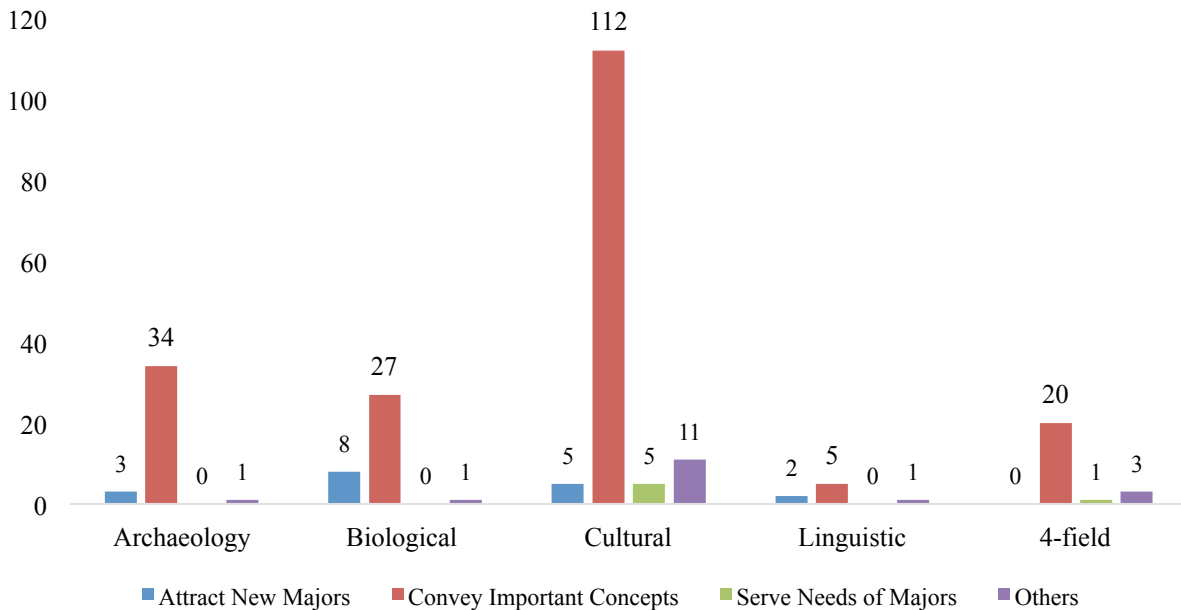


Figure 2: The Most Important Purpose of the Introductory Course by Respondent Sub-field (n=239)

As Figure 2 illustrates the overwhelming majority of the respondents (198) indicated that the most important purpose of the introductory course was to convey important anthropological concepts to the general student body. This perspective was most evident in the cultural anthropologists, though it was listed as most important by most respondents, regardless of subfield.

Eight of those answering “other” indicated that the purpose was all three of the choices, two of the respondents indicated that it was to attract new majors and convey important concepts to non-majors, four people indicated that the class served as a general education course, and three individuals indicated a response that fell into one of the three options on the survey. The data from Figure 2 illustrate the belief of anthropologists that the introductory course is viewed as a vehicle for delivering important anthropological concepts to the general student body. One reason that many anthropologists view this course as important may be because of the relative scarcity of anthropology courses at the elementary and secondary level in the United States. Another reason may relate to the general lack of familiarity of the general public with the discipline of anthropology. The importance of this course as an entryway to these key concepts will be explored in greater detail in the qualitative portion of this chapter.

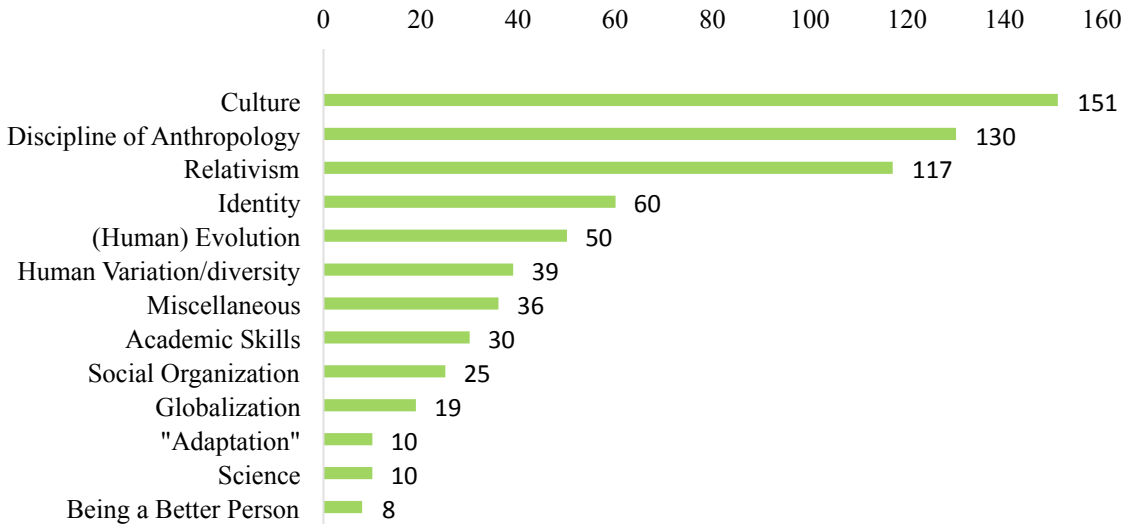


Figure 3: The Most Important Concepts for Introductory Anthropology Students to Learn (n=238)

Participants were asked to list the three most important concepts for students in the introductory anthropology course to learn. The results of this open-ended question were 685 concepts that were sorted into 13 categories. Details on each of the categories is included in Appendix C. As Figure 3 illustrates, the three most important categories were teaching students about culture (22 percent), about the discipline of anthropology (19 percent), and about the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism (17 percent). Identity (9 percent), evolution (7 percent), human variation (6 percent), academic skills (4 percent), social organization (4 percent), and globalization (2 percent) also appeared often enough to appear important to a number of anthropologists. The remaining areas (science, adaptation, being a better person, human-environment interaction) are potentially areas of importance but due to the low representation among this sample, will not be considered. The miscellaneous category is also not included because of the varied nature of these items; the responses coded with this label have been presented in Appendix C.

It is clear from the results of this question that the respondents felt strongly that an overview of anthropology and understanding culture and cultural relativism were the most important concepts for students to learn. It is not surprising that a survey taken primarily by cultural anthropologists would show that the concept of culture is important; it is considered foundational to the discipline, as well as the sub-field of cultural anthropology. Similarly, the concept of cultural relativism and background on the field of anthropology are the major components of the first one to three chapters of most introductory textbooks. I would also argue that the categories of identity and human variation include two different sides of the concept I have been calling “race”, with identity exploring the social and cultural aspects of race, and human variation exploring the biological variation present in humans<sup>10</sup>.

In the next section, I discuss teaching development activities reported by the respondents.

### **Teaching Development Activities**

In an effort to understand practices anthropologists engage in to enhance their teaching ability, the next portion of the survey asked participants whether they had participated in professional development related to teaching, if they had utilized teaching materials created by fellow anthropologists, and if they had ever taken a course on how to teach. Although most of the participants had participated in professional development related to teaching, most of the participants did not review teaching materials produced by anthropologists, nor had they taken a course on how to teach.

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<sup>10</sup> Human variation is the term used most often by biological anthropologists to refer to differences in physical make-up among humans around the world. Identity is a concept often used by cultural anthropologists to incorporate aspects of a person’s sense-of-self. It is conceivable that individual scholars would utilize these two words to indicate the importance of talking about variations in human form, both physical and cultural. Though I cannot know for certain, I am assuming that these words both get at the concept(s) that anthropologists want to explore when discussing the idea of race.

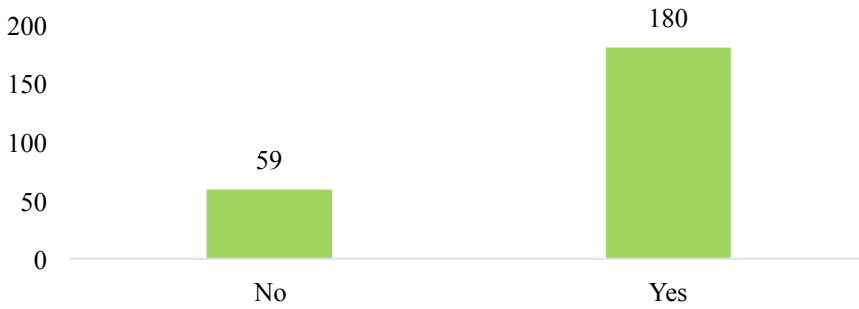


Figure 4: Responses to the question “Have you ever attended professional development related activities to improve your teaching practice?” (n=239)

75 percent of the respondents had attended teaching professional development; 25 percent had not. Due to the broadness of this question, it is impossible to know whether participants considered the same sorts of activities as related to their teaching practice. It might be reasonable to assume, however, that at least one source of these activities would be located at the college or university where the respondent taught, as short classes are offered by the institution to introduce instructors to new teaching methods and tools.

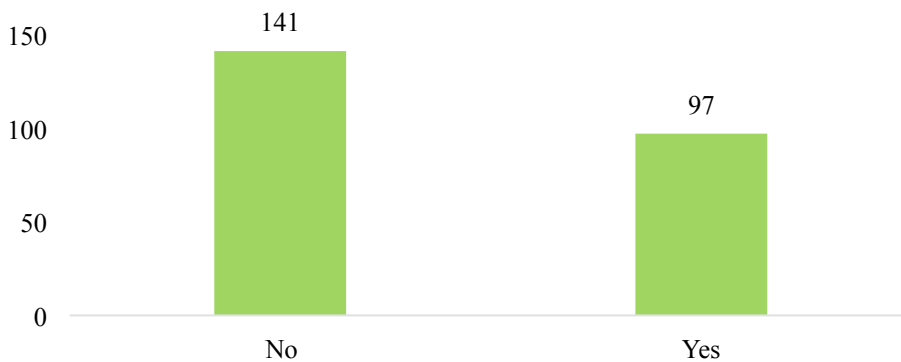


Figure 5: Responses to the question “Have you ever used teaching suggestions from sources like *Teaching Strategies in Anthropology* or the *General Anthropology Newsletter*?” (n=238)

59 percent of the respondents had not used teaching suggestions from anthropological sources, while 41 percent had utilized these strategies. Although slightly more than half of the respondents had not used teaching suggestions, it is again difficult to suggest whether that is due to lack of familiarity with these teaching materials or due to perceived lack of utility of these materials.

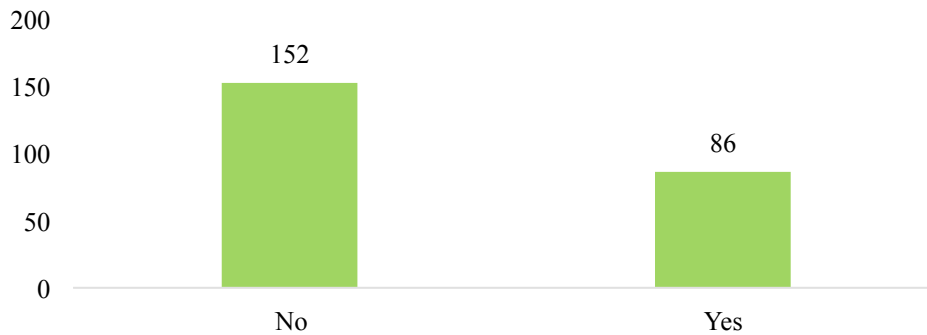


Figure 6: Responses to the question “Have you ever taken a course on how to teach (e.g. How to teach anthropology or How to teach college students)? (n=238)

Finally, 64 percent of the respondents had not taken a course on teaching, while 36 percent had. It is likely that one reason the majority had not taken one of these courses is because they were either not offered such a course or because it was not required by their academic training program.

What the responses to these three questions suggest is that while anthropologists have participated in “professional development” activities, which tend to be short-term and provide hands-on training, many anthropologists are not investing time in taking courses on teaching or in reviewing teaching materials from other anthropologists. Although the survey did not ask why participants made the choices that they did, it does suggest a lack of importance placed on the knowledge contained in education science relative to the other demands of an instructor’s career.

The role of the introductory anthropology course in shaping student perspectives, as well as broader public understanding of the discipline, is explored in greater detail in the next section. After an introduction to the anthropology instructors who participated in this study, I explore the instructors' opinion on teaching introductory courses, the experience of being "ambassadors for anthropology" and their key learning goals.

### **The Instructors**

I worked with seven anthropology instructors at four different institutions in the Southeastern United States. All seven taught Introduction to Anthropology, a course that surveys the four subfields of anthropology. Three hold master's degrees in anthropology; the other four hold Ph.Ds. in anthropology. Two are women, and one male identified as an ethnic minority. Each had a strong commitment to teaching anthropology, though they varied in their approach to the discipline, the subfield with which they identified, and their goals for students in their classes. This biographical information was current for the 2011-2012 school year; since then, at least one instructor has moved to another institution. The names for the institutions and for the individuals working at them are pseudonyms.

#### **Professor Rollins**

Professor Rollins has a tenure-track position at University of Chambersburg (UC) and has taught for 12 years. He has taught introductory courses in four field anthropology and in archaeology, as well as courses in archaeology ranging from methods to topical areas. Rollins expresses a strong commitment to social justice; during every class I attended, I observed him make at least one comment that indicated he was aware of the power imbalances in the world



and wanted to communicate those to his students. Rollins was also committed to providing his students with the information in a variety of formats and in an approachable way. I observed him walk around the room while lecturing, emphasize to students what should go in their notes from the class (an especially important skill for first year students to learn) and state “this will be on the test.” During lectures on human anatomy, he used cranial molds to demonstrate human evolution. He also linked topics discussed in the course to current events, such as gender inequality and the current gap in pay between men and women. These were all practices that help students to focus and that guide them to pay attention to important material.

### **Professor Victorino**

Professor Victorino teaches at Carlisle University (CU). She has been teaching for six years, and is currently enrolled in a doctoral program at a nearby university. She earned her undergraduate and master’s degrees from CU. Beyond Introduction to Anthropology, she teaches an overview course on human evolution, an archaeology course on South America, and an introductory course on sex and gender. Victorino is a very practical, down-to-earth teacher who wants to ensure that her students learn and have fun, and to continue to improve her own skills. Her preferred information delivery style is through lecturing. She notes: “I am personally a lecture person; I need to go and watch a lecture in order to understand the information. If you were to send me home with the same information in a book form, it would be really difficult for me to grasp everything, so I try to in this class [do] video lecture recordings because my student reviews, they just love it...” In this case, she mentioned her video lectures because the majority of the courses that she teaches are online. She also discussed her efforts to improve the content of the course she teaches by enrolling in faculty training programs offered by CU.

### **Professor Howard**

Dr. Howard also teaches at CU and, like Victorino, has been teaching for six years; teaching is his second career. He has taught various archaeology courses, including a field school, as well as introductory courses on the history of human evolution and an introductory course on sex and gender. Howard's emphasis in teaching this class is on getting his messages across clearly and in an enjoyable fashion. When observing his classes, I frequently saw him move around the entire room, talk in a wide variety of tones and voices, and involve students in his lectures. He lectured without the use of notes. During the first lecture I observed, he illustrated that there was a culturally correct way to teach by walking to the back of the classroom and sitting down, while continuing to lecture, much to the delight of his students. Howard was probably the most entertaining and engaging professor that I observed.

### **Professor Werth**

Professor Werth has taught at Shippensburg Area Community College (SACC) for 35 years full time, with two additional years of part time experience. He holds the only tenured position in anthropology at his institution, and he teaches Introduction to Anthropology and Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, with Introduction to Anthropology taking the majority of his five course teaching load. Werth's teaching style is a blend of humor and social critique. In the first lecture I observed, I overheard this representative exchange during a lecture on primates: "There are no water primates. There used to be ones that flew. I saw a documentary about this called *The Wizard of Oz*." This statement was greeted with laughter because this film is actually

a work of fiction. His teaching style resembles a performance, as he blends physical humor, information presentation, and thoughtfulness in responding to questions.

### **Professor Blanton**

Professor Blanton also teaches at SACC and where he has taught there 17 years full time. Prior to that, he had two and a half years of part time teaching experience; currently he splits his time between the departments of anthropology and political science, teaching Introduction to Anthropology, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology and American Government to make up his five-course teaching load. Blanton's approach to teaching was to combine his love of anthropology with a structured style that he feels suits students at the community college. He told me that he tried to teach like professors whose classes he enjoyed, but with less focus on discussion and more emphasis on structured lectures. Blanton presented an extraordinary amount of information in his lectures with a mixture of dry humor and social commentary, particularly on topics he viewed as injustices.

### **Professor Utley**

Professor Utley teaches at Newville College (Newville) and serves as a senior member of his interdisciplinary program. He has taught there for five years, with previous teaching experience at a community college when he was in graduate school. His primary teaching responsibilities are Introduction to Anthropology and various courses that fall under the umbrella of biological anthropology. Utley was the professor most dedicated to hands-on activities. He told me that "I like to think that the time spent on hands on method makes students grapple with it at a deeper level than some other ways, maybe or at least face some of their preconceptions

without me just forcing a different one down their throats...” He felt strongly that students learned better by doing and that if he was to succeed in his goal of teaching critical thinking in the area of scientific research, he needed to both model the skills and allow the students an opportunity to practice them as well.

### **Professor Hamels**

Dr. Hamels also teaches on a tenure-track position at Newville, and has eight years of teaching experience there and at another liberal arts college. She teaches Introduction to Anthropology and to Cultural Anthropology, as well as theory, methods and electives in cultural anthropology. Her teaching style includes lecture and active student involvement, presented with an approachable personality. Students clearly felt comfortable with Professor Hamels and engaged with her in a lighthearted manner. One of my last memories of her class was when Hamels passed out the course evaluation sheets and a student asked if she was nervous. She replied that she was not and laughed. The students laughed and teased back that she should feel scared.

### **Teaching Introductory Classes**

#### **Opinions on Teaching Introduction to Anthropology**

Every instructor enjoyed teaching Introduction to Anthropology, while having different degrees of satisfaction with teaching the course repeatedly. Each agreed that the course was important for educating the general student body about the subject of anthropology, particularly

given the perception that most Americans are only vaguely aware of what anthropology is or what anthropologists do.

Rollins stated that his main goal was to create student interest in anthropology, and hopefully to encourage some students to consider an anthropology major. He felt that while it was unfortunate, reality dictated that the survival of the anthropology program depended on continued enrollment of new majors. He also felt strongly about the importance of tenured faculty (such as himself) teaching introductory level courses. In defining a quality education for undergraduates, Rollins believed it was important that students receive face-to-face instruction.

Utlely focused on his comfort level with the material and his enjoyment of exposing students to new ideas. When he first taught the class, he felt much less comfortable but now he enjoys sharing anthropology with new groups of students.

Similarly, Victorino enjoys teaching introductory classes because of the lack of student knowledge about the discipline, which presents a challenge that pushes her to be a better instructor. She said, "I actually like teaching them 'cause you're getting them where they have no idea what it is so you can make it exciting for them and basically what I call roping them in to come be anthropology majors." Much like Rollins, her focus in these classes was to recruit students to major in anthropology.

Werth, who teaches Introduction to Anthropology almost exclusively, said that he never grew tired of teaching it. Because he teaches at a community college, he is limited in the number of new courses he can offer and has focused his career on developing material in the two courses he teaches rather than developing new courses (as faculty at larger schools may have to do). In many ways, he is able to maintain his love of the Introduction class by providing different

experiences to each section of the course, tailoring his presentation to the group dynamic. He also enjoys the class

because this is going to be for most people the only exposure they'll ever have to anthropology in school and if I can let them know a little bit about what anthropology is and what it's not, dispel misconceptions about a lot of things along the way and again, try and help them realize the relevance in their education, in their life and how much it's out there around them all the time, then that's all I can ask.

Watching him teach the class, I noted that he was perhaps uniquely well suited to teaching the same course five or six times a semester, for two semesters a year, because he seemed to be able to make material that he had been teaching for years seem fresh.

Similarly, Blanton seemed quite enthusiastic about teaching Introduction, stating, "I love it. Really, I do." He also mentioned that he felt that class was invaluable for introducing students to anthropology, particularly for students at the community college where he teaches. His one concern with the course was the amount of material that instructors must cover in one semester.

Echoing some of the others, Howard indicated that he enjoyed teaching the class because "...I get to be an ambassador for anthropology because most of the people in these classes are taking it to meet the general education requirement, they didn't want to take chemistry [the other option for students in this general education category], and so they sign up for this." To Howard, it is a privilege to be anthropology's representative, both because he is very comfortable teaching the material and because he enjoys sharing his knowledge with students. He concluded: "I can give them a very basic grounding in these things and be a good ambassador for anthropology so that they leave with a positive feeling. That's the biggest reward for me."

Hamels was the least positive about teaching the four-field survey class, noting "I love it and I hate it. I think it's a really great opportunity to talk to students who may not major in anthropology and so you get your only chance to say "this is anthropology" and hopefully instill

respect for other cultures, you know, diversity, that sort of thing...I also want a break. So I'm excited next spring, I don't have to teach it. I'm like "ohh!!" Just because it gets redundant." Unlike Utley, for whom familiarity brought an increased sense of competency, Hamels felt that teaching the material over and over leads to a sense of boredom and a desire for new challenges. Unlike Rollins, she felt that adjunct faculty at Newville, frequently graduate students from a nearby university, should be assigned entry level courses to allow tenured and tenure track faculty the opportunity to teach upper level courses.

Whatever their levels of enthusiasm, all seven instructors agreed that the introductory class was an important vehicle for sharing the anthropological "outlook" with the general student body, offering a great opportunity to share anthropological ideas with previously unaware students. Rollins specifically mentioned recruiting new majors by playing up the interesting aspects of anthropology. Victorino indicated that her goal was to "get them interested in it [anthropology]", while Hamels stated that this might be her one chance to teach students about the importance of diversity. Howard indicated that he wanted to give students a positive view of anthropology so that when they came across anthropology outside of the class, they would have a positive association with the discipline. Thus all see themselves in a kind of "ambassadorial" role for anthropology.

### **Ambassadors for Anthropology**

As mentioned above, the introductory class is typically seen as a way to spread basic anthropological knowledge to a wide range of students. This same impulse tends to lead anthropologists to believe they have an important role in teaching the public through outreach. For that reason, I discussed the public role of anthropology with my participants, including the

areas they felt were most important, and also why anthropologists may not be as successful as hoped in addressing these topics more broadly. Participants generally agreed that anthropologists could make a unique contribution toward public (non-university, non-academic audiences) understanding in three main areas: race/ethnicity, science, and cultural diversity.

Four of the professors, Utley, Hamels, Werth, and Victorino, mentioned race as an important “public” topic on which anthropologists have a responsibility to share their knowledge. Utley, Hamels, Howard, Rollins, and Victorino mentioned the importance of teaching the public about cultural difference. Howard summed up the importance of teaching about cultural diversity:

You know, here’s the diversity of human behavior on the planet today, you know, a lot of us hate each other ... maybe if we worked to try to understand a little bit from the other people’s perspective about how they, how that operates, why do people in this country that we want to attack think a certain way? You know, they still may deserve it. We can understand everything about why the Taliban supported Osama bin Laden and I’m still all in favor of throwing the Taliban out of Afghanistan, okay? But we should at least understand the reasons why we’re doing these things. And anthropology can inform that, you know, all too often the media and the politicians, well, these are the evil-doers. And you know, they’ve got a side of the story, too. We still may need to do something about it, but we should at least understand the people that were doing this and what their reasons or rationale are.

Two professors, Utley and Howard, indicated that anthropologists could make a contribution to public understanding of science, especially on the topic of evolution. Utley stated, “we’ve allowed some small segments of society to dominate the debate on evolution and...[they] tend to be least informed about evolution...” Anthropologists, they indicated, could help to counter that narrative by sharing information about human evolution and the evidence from the fossil record.

Indeed, both Victorino and Werth shared their belief that if anthropological knowledge and perspectives were more widespread, the world would be a better place. Professor Victorino



said, “Maybe anthropology will take over the world...It would be a much better place. Much more understanding.” Similarly, Professor Werth said,

I think the more people understand about others...that if people took the time to understand about others they'd be less likely to judge them as inferior and more likely to at least accept them as different and that's okay and possibly to respect those differences and even appreciate those differences. You never know. But hopefully at least the understanding of why people are different I think can lead to more peace in the world. If everybody would take an anthropology course, it'd be a peaceful world. And you can put that in your paper!

At the same time, anthropologists as a group have lamented a lack of public awareness of the work produced by the discipline (Vine 2011). Five of the professors agreed, mentioning a gap between what anthropologists do and what the public perceives anthropology to be. Werth, Blanton, Rollins, and Howard all indicated that people outside of the discipline of anthropology are generally not familiar with the body of work done by anthropologists, Rollins stating:

Well, anthropologists need to, we do a terrible job in dealing with the public and it's easy for, especially academics, just to sit in our offices and do our thing and close the door and play with data and publish in esoteric journals and the public has no clue about what we do...we do a terrible job in dealing with the major issues that are happening in the world and giving it an anthropological point of view. There's so many things in the world that would be fascinating to talk about as an anthropologist, but you never see, hardly ever, anthropologists on the news, talking about this or that and that's where we could do a better job...

Indeed, four of the professors shared their ideas about increasing public knowledge of anthropology, including writing pieces for popular media, increasing the reach of the AAA statements on various topics, and giving public presentations on “interesting” topics. Specifically, Howard and Victorino shared that they gave public lectures on archaeological finds as a way to pique the public's interest about anthropology.

At the same time, Hamels pointed to one of the reasons that anthropologists may be reluctant to share their expertise with the public, in mentioning an invitation she and several

colleagues received to speak on a television show about medical tourism (people who travel to another location in order to participate in medical services). She indicated that all the anthropologists declined “because if you’re going to be interviewed on TV, you get a two minute blurb and...I just don’t want to be turned into like a little segment or like a sound bite.”

### **Key Learning Goals**

All seven professors talked extensively about their learning goals for their students, which could be summarized as achieving understanding of a) cultural relativism, b) what anthropology is, and c) evolution.

An understanding of anthropology, what anthropologists do, and how anthropology can be applied was listed as an important component of the Introduction class. Five of the seven instructors (Utley, Hamels, Howard, Rollins, and Victorino) mentioned that it was important for students to have a broad understanding of the discipline and its applications.

Four of the professors (Rollins, Werth, Blanton, and Victorino) indicated that cultural relativism was one of the important “takeaways” for the Introduction class. Cultural relativism is the idea that one should not evaluate cultures based on values and perspectives from one’s own culture. Rollins stated:

...I tell them up front that it’s very easy when they hear about different cultures, the easiest thing to do as human beings is say “Oh, that’s so stupid.” If you don’t understand it and you don’t know it, it’s the easiest thing to do. It’s much harder to try to understand the differences that we have, culturally, around the world and try to understand why people do the things that they do ...just try to understand it as best they can and to be open minded.

Four of the professors stated that an understanding of evolution as well as science more broadly was important to impart to students. Utley, Werth, Howard, and Victorino discussed the

value of students understanding the idea of evolution as central to receiving a well-rounded education. Professor Werth indicated that

...not only in terms of biological evolution, but linguistic evolution and cultural evolution... having them come away with some different perspectives, perspective of time in terms of human development, although that took millions of years, it's very quick compared to the history of primates.

The other learning goals of the professors varied. These included: critical thinking, human universals, the nonexistence of biological race, understanding the perspective of the "other", gaining a "global" perspective, gaining a good "feeling" about anthropology, and that anthropology is a science.

In seeking to achieve these learning goals, five of the seven participants referred to the moment when "the light bulb goes off," when students seem to have "got it" -- "it" being a level of awareness about anthropological thinking.

Rollins stated that he wanted to "make sure that I get through just the basic levels and then hopefully some time to do something controversial. Just to open, just kind of slap them around, not literally but figuratively to wake them up and go "wow, I didn't know that that was going on in the world."

Uteley said that he enjoyed teaching introductory classes in anthropology because people often don't have a firm grasp on the subject matter, so

What they learn, at least in some of my classes, is often contrary to the popular conceptions they may come in with and so I enjoy exposing people to the new ideas and other cultures and that I do find enjoyable. Including the topic that you're studying, race. That's one that students, they really aren't prepared for it, it seems, in the classroom and it's nice to be able to address topics like that but also issues like the origins of domestication and the changes, the dramatic changes that it's made in the way humans live, and in many cases in ways that student could not imagine and so you see the light bulb go off and you realize that you've changed the way that someone thinks and really opened their eyes.

According to Professor Blanton,

just beyond loving the discipline and opening people's eyes, I like to see the light bulb go off over their head, to me anthropology is such a, as it was for me when I was exposed to it, it's such an enlightening discipline and I have students, so many of them come up after the end of the semester or subsequent semesters and say "Your class blew me away. I look at everything different now than I did before your class." That's very gratifying.

Howard mentioned increased student understanding three different times. He said,

there are always some of them in there [the introduction class] that will, that will walk out of there, you know, with that idea of "Wow! That's different. I didn't think it was like that." And I think that that's profound....I find that very rewarding and I get good feedback on my evaluations and stuff that says "This class really opened my eyes." And that's great.

Although there is overlap between the survey and interview results, it is clear that there is a more wide ranging view of the important topics for students to learn than about the discipline, relativism, and culture. Whether this divergence is due to the skew in the survey sample toward the cultural sub-field, while the case studies skewed more toward the "hard science" side of anthropology is unclear. However, it does do two things: point to the strong desire of anthropologists of any orientation to share their knowledge of the discipline and cultural relativism; and suggest that further research into anthropologists' views on the foundational concepts of the discipline is warranted.

The professors also pointed to the importance of engaging teaching. In the final section of this chapter, I introduce the students who participated in focus groups as well as their perspectives on what constituted quality teaching.

### **Student Perspectives on Teaching**

A total of 39 students participated in one of the seven focus groups. Most of these students (n=31) identified their sex as female, identified their race as White (n=25), or were

between the ages of 18-24 (n=35). Close to half of the participants (46 percent) identified as all three. A full listing of all of the participant demographics can be found in Appendix C.

Students indicated that the following qualities were important in teachers who make subjects easy to understand: that they are funny (Werth, Howard, Victorino), dramatic (Howard, Werth), have a passion for their subject (Victorino), provide real life examples or illustrative examples of concepts (Rollins, Victorino, Blanton, Hamels), utilize visuals (Rollins, Victorino, Werth, Blanton, Hamels), ask for student input and feedback (Howard, Rollins, Blanton), facilitate class discussions (Rollins, Blanton, Utley), are knowledgeable (Howard, Victorino) and offer hands on activities (Victorino, Werth, Utley). The following conversation between students of Howard illustrates the impact of providing a dramatic and funny example of the importance of stereoscopic vision in primates.

I: That's what I was going to bring up I forgot one of the lectures but do you guys remember when like there was a balled up paper and he threw them out you know and caught it and then he covered up one eye and then ...his hand was over here, and then the ball like hit him

I2: Something about why humans developed eyes in the front and how we have four dimensional vision and how dogs don't have that, their eyes are on the side and that's how you can usually tell predators from prey and whatnot.

I3: And how monkeys had this

I4: They could reach branches.

I8: That could help with depth perception.

Another student shared that he found learning with Professor Werth enjoyable because

he's funny, he can be so funny sometimes and he likes to show a lot of pictures you know the comics in the beginning of the class just you know gets you ready to learn. He has so many different methods um and it's not even about what kind of, how you learn, whether you're a visual student, hands on because he gives you a little bit of everything so you know there's no reason why you know you can't like learn or progress in that class you know. I think that's why everybody likes him cuz he fits every kind of learning style.

As these two examples illustrate, students enjoyed when professors explained the material without solely relying on lectures, as well as when they utilized humor to make their points.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have explored the views on teaching practices in introductory anthropology courses through the use of a web-based survey, interviews with seven anthropology instructors, and focus groups with their students. From these data, several points can be made. First, students want to be engaged in learning the material and enjoy remembering these moments. Similarly, professors want their students to provide such recall, especially hoping for “light bulb” moments, when students understood the often complicated point the professor was trying to make. Second, both the survey and the case study show that anthropologists have an interest in spreading knowledge of the discipline with the public. Survey respondents indicated that the most important point of the introductory course is to “teach important concepts” to the general student body. Instructors in the case study talked about the importance of raising public awareness of the anthropological stance on race, enhancing their awareness of the scientific process, and the value of cultural diversity. Finally, both the survey and case study showed that anthropologists view teaching about cultural relativism and the discipline of anthropology as critical components of the introductory course. Teaching about culture (for the survey) and evolution were the third categories for the survey respondents and the case study instructors.

## Chapter Seven: Research Results: Teaching Race in Anthropology

In the previous chapter, I presented views on teaching introductory courses from survey respondents, the seven case-study instructors, and their students. In this chapter, I will talk specifically about how these groups view the teaching of race. I will demonstrate that there is a general consensus on the importance of discussing race, both within the discipline as well as with the broader American public. I also demonstrate that there is a prevailing anthropological message that experts and introductory instructors generally agree upon; however confusion among students and anthropologists remain over the lived experience of race, including the “touchy” nature of the topic and the continuing divisions that living in a highly race-conscious society entails. First I present an overview of the American Anthropological Association’s *RACE* project, followed by expert opinions on race. Next I explore results from the seven study professors’ interviews on teaching about race, followed by results from my observations of their classes. I conclude with student responses to the lesson and some final thoughts on racism.

### **AAA *RACE* Project**

In the mid-2000s the American Anthropological Association (AAA) launched the exhibit *RACE: Are We So Different?* (*RACE*) The following paragraph taken from the exhibit’s website describes the purpose and intent of the exhibit.

The exhibition *RACE: Are We So Different?* brings together the everyday experience of living with race, its history as an idea, the role of science in that history, and the findings of contemporary science that are challenging its foundations. Interactive exhibit components, historical artifacts, iconic objects, compelling photographs, multimedia presentations, and attractive graphic displays offer visitors to *RACE* an eye-opening look

at its important subject matter. Developed by the American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota, *RACE* is the first nationally traveling exhibition to tell the stories of race from the biological, cultural, and historical points of view. Combining these perspectives offers an unprecedented look at race and racism in the United States. ([www.understandingrace.org](http://www.understandingrace.org))

The exhibit and website were created by the AAA in conjunction with a 22-member advisory board. I interviewed seven members of the advisory board and one scholar who declined to join the advisory board. This section will discuss the reasons why the project developed, the history of the project development, how the advisors defined race, the impact of racism in the United States, and the development of materials associated with the exhibit. The advisors illustrate the importance of race to the AAA, the range of ideas regarding what race is (and is not) and the critical nature of continuing the conversation on race in hopes of ending racism.

Three of the advisors had been involved with the American Anthropological Association for 25 years or more (Advisor2, Advisor3, Advisor1). At least one of these advisors has held a high level position within the AAA. Three of the advisors were not anthropologists by training and were only involved with the AAA during the process of developing the exhibit.

Advisor1 held a high-ranking position in the American Anthropological Association. During the time that she held this position, the AAA's mission was to "become more engaged in ...current social and policy issues." She indicated that the organization held an interest in creating a public outreach project and discussed several topics including race, immigration, health disparities, and globalization. She also had an interest in "social inequality" as part of her research agenda. Advisor2 was invited to join the project because of his association with Advisor1. He remembers working on it for approximately 8 years from the inception until the exhibit and website were finished. Advisor3 had social connections with several people involved in the project and conducts research on race, racism, and racial identity and their impact on



health. Advisor4 was invited to join the project because she knew Advisor1. Advisor5 was invited to join the project but turned down the invitation. Advisor6 joined the project because of her connection with Advisor1 and because of her work in the civil rights movement and interest in multicultural education. Advisor7 was on the advisory board and was a prominent scholar on the subject of race. He has not been in contact with the other members of the advisory board for “years”. Advisor8 was invited to join the project because of his work on genetics and race. He recalls being very involved on the project for several years; since it has completed he has not had contact with the group.

The advisory board members indicated that this project began for a number of intersecting reasons relating to the need for public outreach and for a public, anthropologically informed discussion about race. The interviewees shared their conviction that anthropologists have a special perspective on race that places an emphasis on studying human variation (rather than classifying humans into immutable categories) and the impact of social constructions of race, rather than the “typical” view that emphasizes a closed set of fixed traits. Several also emphasized the importance of ensuring the conversation explored racism and its impact. A second theme was the obligation of anthropologists to conduct public outreach regarding anthropological viewpoints. The participants used different words to talk about outreach, with one advisor calling it public anthropology and other calling it scholar activism, but all agreed that people who study important topics needed to share their information with non-experts. The advisors emphasized that the call to reach out to the public with anthropological knowledge was not new or unique to them or this project, but that it had a long legacy within anthropology, particularly through museums and among African American anthropologists. They spoke of the need to start a conversation or dialogue in the public particularly about the topic of race because

of the difference between popular understanding and anthropological knowledge. The advisors shared that this sort of effort had been undertaken in the past but that efforts to maintain the conversation have not succeeded in changing the conversation or have faded away. Finally, the advisors mentioned that developing teaching materials was an important part of this project's public outreach effort.

### **History of Project**

This section will provide a history of the AAA race project as shared primarily from Advisor1. Members of the AAA formed a policy commission to focus on putting anthropological knowledge out into the public. There was a sense at that time that the media focused on the knowledge of experts from different disciplines but not anthropologists. This, in turn, led to a lack of public knowledge of anthropological perspectives and of the discipline in general. There was also a presidential panel on race from a four field perspective held by the AAA. Around the same time, the AAA was contacted by the Office of Management and Budget to ask for assistance with the Census categories<sup>11</sup>. Around the same time, the AAA was also beginning to connect with other world anthropology associations. Advisor1 said AAA members perceived American ideas of race and ethnicity as different from other countries. This observation, combined with growing interest in the anthropology of postmodernism and also in critical race studies in the 1980s and 1990s were integral in the project's early momentum.

A staff member from AAA approached the Ford Foundation to request funds for the exhibit through the foundation's initiative on affirmative action. AAA was awarded \$500,000 to hold preliminary conferences to organize the project. The original goal was to create a website,

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<sup>11</sup> One outcome of this contact was the AAA "Statement on Race". A second was that Americans were given the option to choose more than one "race" on the 2000 Census for the first time in its history. Documents on the AAA stance on race and on the Census are located on the RACE website at [www.understandingrace.org](http://www.understandingrace.org).

teaching materials, and a documentary on race. Because California Newsreel was given a grant from the Ford Foundation to produce a documentary, the AAA was asked to reformulate their idea. From this request, the *RACE* project became an exhibit. Once the project was solidified, the National Science Foundation was broached for funding the scientific explanation aspect of the exhibit. They were awarded funding that amounted to close to 3 million dollars for the project and meetings were held between 2004 and 2007 for planning purposes. An important aspect of the project was the requirement that the project be interdisciplinary; not just limited to anthropologists. Because of this requirement, there were representatives of 16 different disciplines represented on the 22 member board. Not all of the advisors met on a regular basis, however. A smaller group of core members called key advisors attended meetings in which the form and content of the exhibit and website were created.

The goal of the project was to

provide information that would allow the largest segment of the public to learn about race and racism, to help them question any misconceptions that they had, to understand race as socially and culturally constructed, to understand how and why race and racism had emerged. (Advisor1)

To deal with the slippery nature of terminology surrounding race, the advisory board developed a glossary of terms for the exhibit. Additionally, the group worked with California Newsreel to incorporate clips from their documentary into the exhibit since the two projects were similar in nature.

There were a number of issues that the board dealt with. The first was regarding how to avoid a polarizing exhibit for fear that it would turn off visitors, making them not receptive to the exhibit's messages. The advisors and exhibit planners were aware that the material was a very sensitive subject in American culture. They held a conference on "difficult or controversial exhibits" to find out how to best handle the exhibit. Doing so provided clarity on the group's

goals of wanting to

explain the science and... to explain the social construction and ... to explain it in a way that kids understood... And so just taking the position that race was no longer a biological construct was only half of the equation... we're only doing half the job if we just focus on that. The other half is showing how they connect. What's the connection between the two? And how did it happen? (Advisor1)

Another area of concern, according to Advisor6, was

... Clarifying what anthropologists, ... mean when they say that race isn't real because ... that's such a complex statement to make and we have not been very good at explaining what we mean ... We haven't been able to give people the language that will help them explain what we or anybody else means when they say race isn't real.

Advisor3 concurred with the difficulty of discussing race among members of different disciplines, stating

... it was sort of like we were talking past one another. We had to develop a glossary of words and meanings so that we could say the same thing ... we did have some heated discussions. And I think those discussions and one in particular I remember with the geneticist, actually I think he was saying the same thing as the cultural anthropologist but they didn't know how to talk to one another. You see and sometimes it was because we couldn't talk to one another, we would use the same language, sometimes because we had different views on it so as a group then we had to come to consensus on certain things and over time we did, we talked it out ...

Advisor8 echoed those sentiments, saying that not everyone agreed all the time, but that people were open to discussion.

The advisors elected to form the exhibit around three key themes: the science of human variation, the history of the idea of race, and the experience of living with race and racism. The goal was to communicate that race was a cultural construction, so it is a cultural idea, not an idea about biology. It was also to show that "it is embedded in our institutions and in our everyday life and in ways many times we don't see" (Advisor1). Advisor2 indicated that that focus on three separate but related areas was what made the anthropological perspective on race particularly important.

One impact was that the exhibit has had is that it has created a public conversation space to discuss race and related issues, according to Advisor3 “... also it created relations between these museums and the community where after the exhibit leaves they’re still connected and there’s ongoing discussion about race and racism. Civic and community groups want to continue that discussion and I think that’s a big part that grew out of it.”

### **Definition of Race**

The core of the project was that the advisory board members developed a shared perspective on the nature of race to present to the public. Of the advisors I spoke with, six of the eight agreed that there is a prevailing stance on race in anthropology that they share. The generally accepted stance is the rejection of the idea that it is a biologically useful way of classifying or organizing people but that it is real in the social sense. However five advisors said that beyond that simple answer, there was a great deal of division among anthropologists, particularly in different sub-fields. Some questioned whether all biological anthropologists were on board with the idea that race was not useful, while other advisors questioned whether everyone had switched from grouping people into classifications to the view that looking at the evolution of genes and traits was a more beneficial approach to studying human diversity. Advisor1 suggested that there needed to be more emphasis on connecting the cultural idea of race with the biological aspects of human diversity. Advisor5 agreed that there was a large gap between the beliefs of anthropologists according to their sub-discipline. She shared

I think there’s general consensus. You know, it’s a cultural construct, et cetera et cetera, but the truth of the matter is that the divisions are huge. So, no, even within biological anthropology ... there some tensions. I mean, we have forensic anthropologists who by necessity have to use the term, because they’re working with police officers. They have to do it. And so that causes the cultural anthropologists to call them racist. ... Within biological anthropology, I think some people would prefer, perhaps, some people are

doing very typological work with crania and some people who want to typological work even with genetics, so typology versus evolutionary views of species.

Advisor8 said

... Race is sort of a, you know, it's a way of classifying things and in a sense, when we classify things, we're trying to use our classification sort of as a proxy that we can generalize from so that if I tell you that such and such an organism is a mammal, you have some idea about how it's different from reptiles and birds and fish. You know, and things like that or, but you don't know a lot of details, either, other than some of these basic features. I think it's important more to teach about how we would use information, how we would use information as a proxy for other things, some of which I don't think that race is ever a very good proxy, for anything.

Advisor1, Advisor8, and Advisor5 indicated that not all anthropologists had an adequate understanding of biology and genetics to understand the biological argument against using races to classify or study groups of people. Advisor8 shared

I would also say, maybe I'm outspoken about this, but I think anthropologists are poorly trained in biology and of the things that you could do in biology, one of the things, classification, you don't really need any real biological training to do, it's sort of like, can I make this arrangement into groups, can I make that arrangement into groups, you know, if two people make groups, will they do it the same? It's not really using any principles of biology to do it. And so I think given the background, sort of where the field came from [this is understandable]...

Two of the advisors (2 and 8) also felt that anthropologists were reluctant to discuss race in depth, though their reasons were different. Advisor 2 felt that anthropology had failed to examine the role of White privilege in race and race relations in the United States. He shared that

... White people are not studying race and racism and anthropologists are predominately White people. And then if you look at the fact that race and racism, racism especially, was not being studied or taught about in any serious way in the 70s or 80s by anthropologists ... I wrote something years ago about Euro-American denial of race and racism, White privilege of Euro-American denial being manifested as anthropology, that much of how anthropologists describe the world circumvented any, represented a kind of denial of the real importance of White racism.

Advisor8 attributed the reluctance of anthropologists to talk about race to a lack of understanding of biology and the evolutionary process, as well as a desire to keep the concept of race alive.

Additionally he stated that he detected “...Fear, yeah, I think that the prevailing stance is kind of an undercurrent, is this idea that we don't want to embrace the concept of race but we don't want to give it up, either.”

Four of the advisors believed that the public’s understanding of race differed from the anthropological explanation of race in that members of the American public believe that race is a useful way to categorize people and that differences between people can be attributed to their racial makeup. Advisor6 also suggested that because of the complexity of the message combined with the deeply held nature of people’s beliefs, it was also difficult for members of the public to grasp.

... [with my] understanding [of] culture, how profoundly deeply held beliefs can be, how real they can feel, how they can alter our perception so we really think that the most salient, deepest, profound thing in the world biologically is skin color... I think all of those things are really, really important to understanding race and how it has shaped US peoples’ version of reality.

To think about race differently, Advisor7 suggested that the best thing would be to focus on the fact that phenotypical differences accounted for a very small amount of genetic difference between humans.

... in the human context, it’s meant to be a social discriminator but it uses some kinds of physical and ancestry information to delineate that. It makes the social differences coincidental with some kind of biological difference even when that biological difference is very small or trivial or it can even be one gene.

Several of the advisors mentioned that the need to broaden the conversation about race to include explicit discussions of racism and privilege were one of the key motivations for developing the project. Advisor3 shared that

Well in the mid-1990s as a group we didn't feel that we were doing the research on racism that anthropologists should be. I mean there was a whole beginning, a push for multiculturalism so multiculturalism was the big thing but anthropologists weren't involved in that. You know which is kind of, it's kind of shocking at this point and you know there's a whole history of early in I guess the mid-1900s and the 1950s, 1960s race was given over to the biological anthropologists because they thought race was biological. ... anthropologists were trying to move away from race because no one wanted to deal with racism and it was sort of like if you studied racism were you a racist or were you trying to find racists? You know people weren't studying racism. ... so there began to be a call to study racism ... through informal discussions people decided well maybe we need to put together a project and the whole point of that was to engage the public in a discussion about race and racism, something we hadn't been doing but the multicultural people [were talking about racism]. That's when we really started working on and also we had a statement on race that came out, written by Audrey Smedley ... so with all of that happening anthropologists realized we need to be in the forefront, not in the background because this is about an idea that was created and cultural transmission of it, we needed to be at the forefront of discussing it, discussing racism and from that the exhibit developed.

Five of the advisors mentioned the need for further conversation to broaden the public's understanding to link the idea of race as biology to racism still present in the United States.

While Advisor8 focused on the misunderstanding of human variation, the other advisors pointed to personal experiences, either as people identified as minorities, because of experiences in the Civil Rights movement, or both, as the impetus for trying to end racism through increasing public understanding of race. Advisor2 summed it up by saying that the need for public outreach is still strong because

I think many Americans believe there's too much talk about race; that individuals advance themselves by their individual efforts. According to the polls most whites don't believe there is a, don't believe in structured institutional racism, don't believe that that exists, at least two-thirds feel that way, of Blacks it's the opposite so it's another way of seeing variation for different groups of people with different experiences, they understand race and racism in different ways.

One of the additional forms of public outreach beyond the exhibit and website was the creation of teaching materials. Four of the advisors mentioned the importance of developing teaching materials as part of the public education experience. Initially the advisory team intended to target materials at the high school level, but by the end of the project realized that



their intended audience was much larger: K-12 education as well as graduate students in anthropology. Advisor1 shared that

this was all pitched for teachers in high school but what I'm finding is I get as many emails from grad students who are teaching this in the intro courses as I do from anybody else who are asking me questions about what does this mean, what does that mean in the exhibit and the website and I was thinking wow. I didn't even realize, initially, that this was being used in universities.

Similarly, Advisor2 shared his belief that anthropologists needed education from the exhibit as well as the rest of the public.

The *RACE* exhibit serves as the most prominent piece of the AAA's public outreach to date. While the process of the exhibit and website development were not always easy the scholars assembled as part of the advisory board share a commitment to educating the public about the lack of usefulness the race concept has in understanding human variation. Along with that dedication, to varying degrees, they are committed to challenging race-based thinking, and its offspring, racism. In the next sections, I will explore the views of respondents to a web-based survey on beliefs and practices related to teaching race in the introductory anthropology classroom.

### **Introduction to Anthropology Instructor Views on Teaching Race**

The following sections will explore the importance of the topic of race to anthropologists teaching the general introductory class(es). First, the survey responses will describe anthropologists who teach introductory courses regarding: their understanding of what race is, their comfort level with the topic, the current anthropological understanding of race, what they want students to learn about race, and sources consulted to teach race. Second, interview data on how instructors conceptualize race is presented. What these sections show is that there is general

agreement among anthropologists who teach introductory courses that race is not a useful way to describe human variation, but is instead a social construct. Anthropologists believe that it is an important topic, though not all agree that they enjoy teaching about it.

### **Survey Responses**

The majority of the survey participants (83 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “The anthropological perspective on race is one of my priorities when I teach.” Similarly, 83 percent of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I feel comfortable teaching about race.” Taken together, these data suggest that anthropologists believe that the race topic is both important to convey to introductory students and one that they are comfortable with.

The two tables below show categories that represent the responses of participants to two open-ended questions: “In one sentence, state what you believe is the current anthropological understanding of race.” and “What do you think is the most important point that students in an introductory class should learn about the concept of race?” Because the questions were open-ended, participants were able to provide more than one response, which resulted in more than 239 total answers.

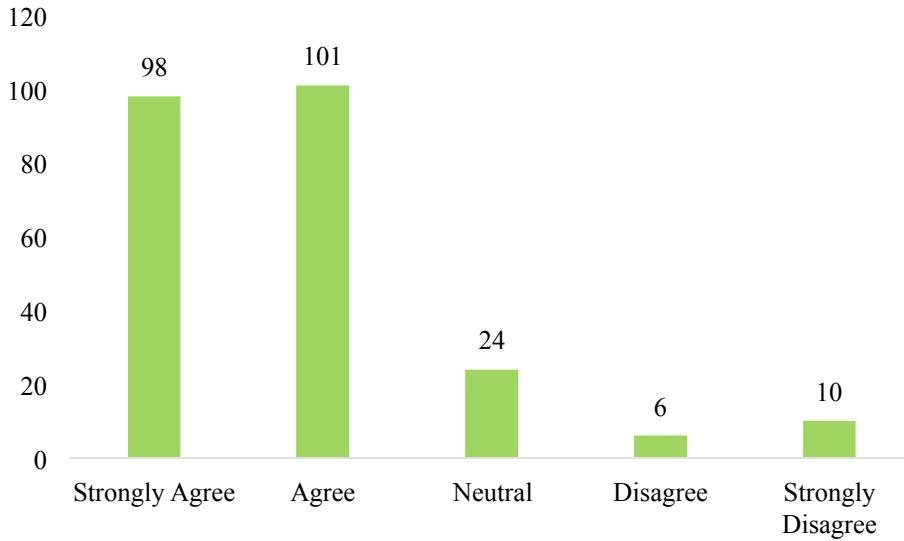


Figure 7: Extent of Agreement with “The Anthropological Perspective on Race is One of My Priorities When I Teach.” (n=239)

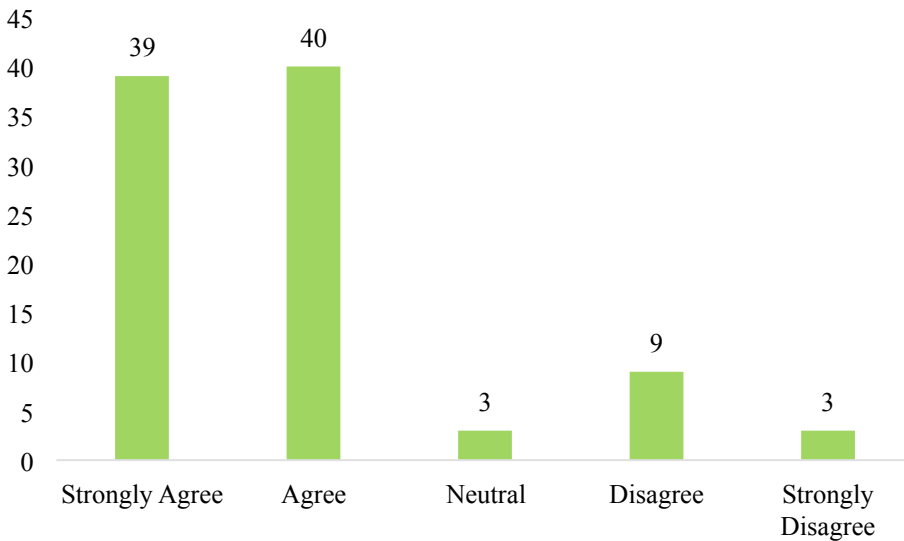


Figure 8: Extent of Agreement with “I Feel Comfortable Teaching About Race.” (n=239)

Again, the results between the two tables were similar, with the majority of participants indicating that anthropologists believe race is a cultural construction and not a biologically useful way of understanding human variation and that these two points were the most important ones for their students to learn.

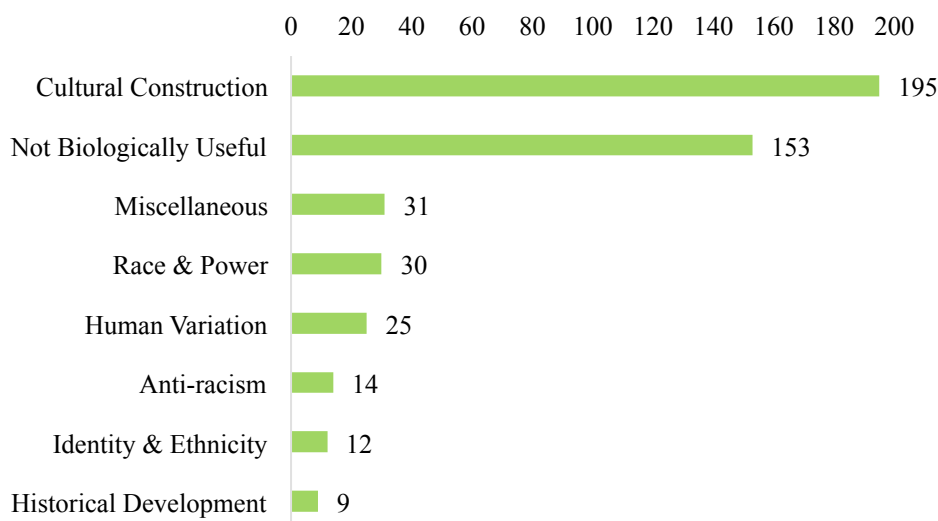


Figure 9: Responses to the question “In one sentence, state what you believe is the current anthropological understanding of race.” (n=233)

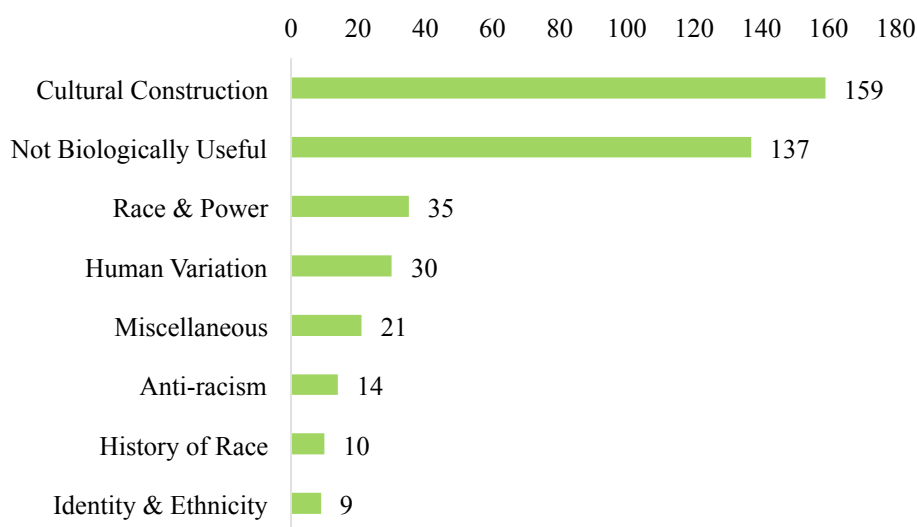


Figure 10: Responses to the question “What is the most important point for introductory students to learn about race?” (n=233)

The last two questions asked participants to share the source of their teaching material on the topic of race. One question was intended to ask participants where they found information to educate themselves on the topic of race. After reviewing responses, I realized that some participants read this question as what sort of materials they used with students to teach the

subject. The responses were fairly evenly distributed among colleagues, course textbooks, non-course textbooks, and AAA resources. The majority of the participants chose “other”; the most popular choices among this category included videos (20 people), articles (19 people), knowledge they had gathered or “self” (16 people), and academic training (14 people)<sup>12</sup>.

Finally, 60 percent of participants indicated that they had used materials from the *RACE* exhibit in their teaching, demonstrating that the majority of anthropologists taking the survey were familiar with the project and were using it to help inform their teaching.

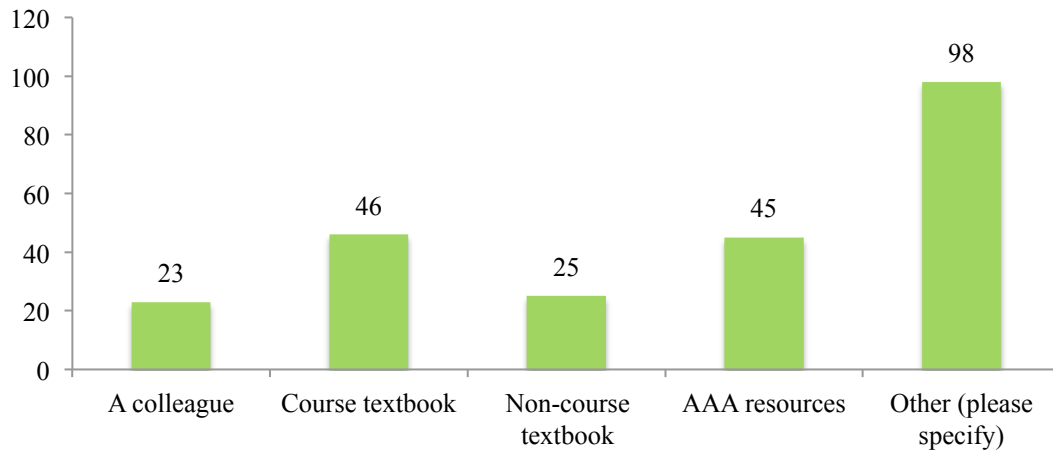


Figure 11: The most important source of information on teaching about race (n= 237)

<sup>12</sup> This “other” category had the most responses fall into “other”. For brevity’s sake, I have attached the responses that fell into this category in Appendix C.

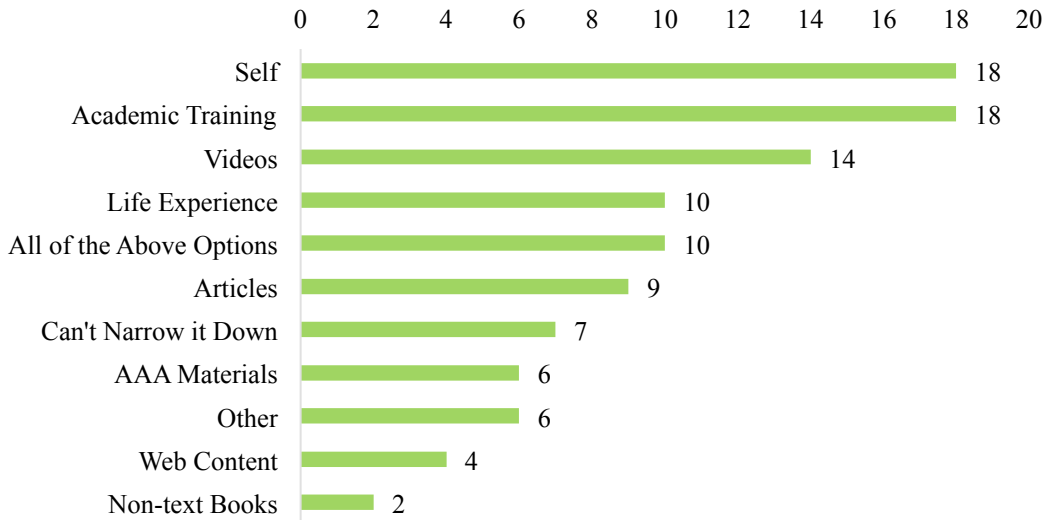


Figure 12: Responses That Fall Into the “Other” Category for Most Important Source of Information on Teaching About Race.

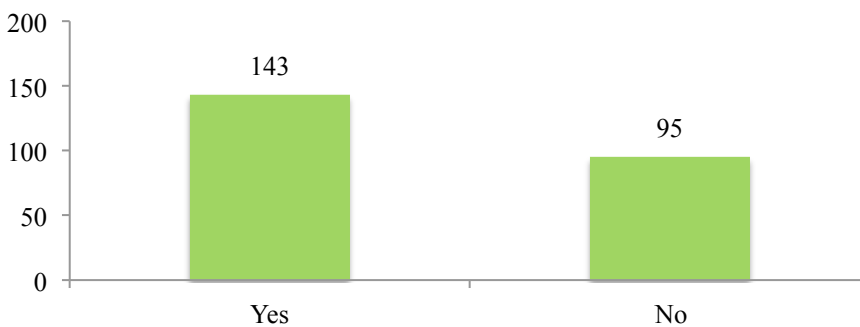


Figure 13: Responses to “I have used material from the AAA RACE project in my teaching.” (n=238)

What these survey results show is that many White anthropologists who teach introductory classes have similar mindsets about teaching race: they feel that it is an important topic to cover and one that they feel comfortable teaching. They believe that anthropology indicates that race is a cultural construction that is not a useful way of characterizing human variation, and they want their students to leave their class knowing that as well. They consult a variety of resources to aid in their teaching, and slightly more than half have used material from the AAA *RACE* project.

These results suggest that there are commonalities shared between lessons on race that is taught by White anthropologists across the United States in their introductory anthropology courses.

### **Professor Understanding and Teaching of the Race Concept**

The introductory class is generally perceived as crucial in bringing anthropological understanding to a broad range of students, many of whom will not become anthropology majors. “Race isn’t real” is one of the core topics that has long been considered important for anthropologists to impart to non-anthropologists. This leads to one of my central research questions---how anthropology instructors address this complex issue in the introductory class. To contextualize this, I first asked the seven professor participants to define the term “race,” following with a discussion of their own learning experiences surrounding the topic, and ending with a conversation on the “official” anthropological stance on race.

All seven agreed that race is a cultural construct that lacks biological usefulness. Their responses ranged from Werth’s statement that “...it’s a vague, misunderstood, arbitrary term that has, in my opinion, lost its scientific validity,” to Blanton’s simply stated, “Biological fallacy.” They varied more in their descriptions of how they learned about race. Victorino, Howard, and Blanton had vivid memories of learning about race either as part of their graduate school experience (Howard and Blanton) or in their first anthropology class (Victorino). According to Howard,

It was in anthropological theory and we talked about Tylor and you know, those old guys, the early, Morgan and the founding patriarchs... and how they viewed it, how they talked about it, and how that concept of race kind of evolved over time... then eventually we got to the part where we discussed how it is cultural and there is no real biological way to categorize people, so that was all the biological aspect of it was all reinforced in physical anthropology class as well. At the same time, the idea that race is still a cultural unit and has significance from that perspective was something that was the first semester [‘s focus].

The other professors indicated that they relied more on knowledge they had gained through self-directed learning completed after graduate school. Werth, Hamels, Utley, and Rollins indicated that they either did not learn about race in their anthropology graduate education or they could not remember learning about it. Hamels and Utley both stated that they learned most about the topic from teaching others about it, while Rollins and Werth believed that they taught themselves.

Most of the instructors in my study were not familiar with the *RACE* project, having only heard of it in passing or glanced over the website. One exception was Werth who was acquainted with an individual who had worked on the project and spoke highly of its aims. In spite of this lack of familiarity, each professor was able to speculate with varying degrees of certainty what other American anthropologists thought of the topic of race, and indeed the participants generally agreed with the official position.

They differed, however, in their opinions on how widely held this perspective was. Two interviewees, Werth and Blanton, stated that they were uncertain about the perspectives of others in the discipline, though they assumed most held the same perspective. Howard, Hamels, and Rollins indicated a lack of certainty about how anthropologists in different sub-disciplines viewed race because of the tendency of biological anthropologists to explain human variation in terms of conventional public understandings of race. Utley stated that some anthropologists interpreted the data on human variation as evidence for races, though he stated that view was not widely held. Only Victorino stated definitively that anthropologists did not view grouping humans into races as biologically useful.

Having established the context for the participants' understandings of race, my goal was to explore how they actually teach the topic in the introductory course, which I did by attending



their classes and discussing the issue with them directly. (See Appendix A for a list of questions used in interviews). I will present data from the interviews before moving to classroom observations.

### **How Race is Taught in the Classroom: Interview Data**

In these interviews, the professors discussed how they teach about race, including effective and ineffective approaches; the rewards and challenges unique to this subject; their learning goals for students; and perceived student learning derived from the introductory class. Overall, professors indicated their commitment to teaching about the history, biology, and cultural aspects of the race concept. They stated their belief that they were teaching the topic as well as they could, recommended that others teaching the topic use lectures and hands-on activities while avoiding simplistic explanations of the issue. Most shared that the topic can be rewarding, particularly because of the sense of contributing to making the world a better place and when students “get it”. It can also be frustrating to deal with constraints and worries over offending students. Overall, these seven professors demonstrated a great deal of thought and effort put into their teaching and thinking about teaching race.

Here, Howard encapsulates his experience of teaching race:

And then by the end of that [race lecture], their head’s swimming and they don’t know what to think. And ... they leave with more questions than answers after a race lecture, that’s a good thing. Because then they start wondering and they start thinking about this. None of what they think will actually be confirmed in that lecture, you want them to leave confused, befuddled, upset. Because then they’ll have to come to terms for what it is they just heard. It doesn’t reaffirm, what you say in that doesn’t reaffirm anyone’s notion of race. From, you know, the Black Panthers to the KKK, they’re all going to be unhappy and that’s exactly what you hope for, exactly what you hope for. You want to completely, completely dismantle that entire house of cards and leave them scratching their heads.

I shared this quote because I believe his desire to “dismantle that entire house of cards”

appropriately describes the anthropological orientation toward the topic of race. As the Spindlers have stated, “the purpose of anthropology is to make the familiar exotic and the exotic familiar” (1988). Framing the teaching of race in this way gets at the heart of what is anthropological about the approach of Howard (and the other instructors as well).

I asked the professors to describe the way they taught about race, while also asking them to describe the ideal way to teach students about anthropology’s view on race. The participants focused on three areas when teaching about race: history, biology, and culture. All, with the exception of Blanton<sup>13</sup>, stated that they discussed biology, but there was a wide range in terms of the amount of time spent on this. Utley indicated that the primary focus of his lesson on race was to teach students that human biological variation was hard to group into races, noting

I try to get them to categorize people based on physical characteristics and then they answer some questions and then I, in a sense, debrief them about how we actually look at variation and how the variables that they use, for example like skin color, are so plastic and they’re environmentally determined and not distributed as neatly as they think, and then I try to basically show that what they’re doing is, has issues with it and then try to tell them how we approach the variation.

Other professors, including Victorino, Howard, Werth, and Rollins, talked about human variation, though the discussion was not the primary or sole focus of their lesson. At the other end of the spectrum, Hamels indicated that, while she did discuss a limited amount of biological information with students, she did so with great discomfort.

The thing that makes me confused, because I’m not a biological anthropologist, is talking about the out-of-Africa and the multi-regional [hypotheses]. Don’t tell them [the students] that....That confuses me, that totally confuses me, so I used to try to talk about it and then when I was talking about it, I didn’t understand myself and so it was confusing and I would, the students would just be like “What?” That’s why I cut it and re-wrote the lecture. I kind of get it, if I reread it and carefully thought about it. I could do it but that part, like the genetics vs.

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<sup>13</sup> Though Blanton did not discuss teaching about the biological aspect of this lesson, I observed him cover this material when teaching.

the whatever just confuses me, so it's not my strength. That would be bad...I get really uncomfortable teaching the whole biological section....So that's why I cut that from my race lecture, just because I didn't understand it myself.

The majority of the participants indicated that they discussed history when teaching about race. Rollins, Hamels, Blanton, and Victorino all stated that history was part of their lecture, though the historical facts incorporated into their lessons varied. Blanton stated that he talked about the history of the development of the race idea in anthropology by talking about "linear evolutions" and eugenics as movements that helped to develop the race concept, and about the work of Boas and Montagu as anti-race scholars. Hamels focused more on how the idea of race changed over time in the United States, while Rollins stated that he began with the Great Chain of Being and discussed the history of science and efforts to classify people.

All except Utley included culture in the lesson on race, specifically in relation to race in the contemporary world. Topics ranged from affirmative action to the eugenics movement, with a focus on efforts to link race to intelligence, to genocides, to the view of race in other cultures. Howard's approach was to talk about race in Japan, Brazil, and the United States. He said

Then you say, okay, anthropologically, let's look at other cultures, this is the way we experience race, how many people think that this is the way everybody experiences race? ... Okay. How many people think that's the way it works in other countries? And, you know, that's the way it works because that's just the way you do things. Now they don't know that that's an ethnocentric view because they never see anything else and then you start talking about other countries. I talk about other extremes, that's why I use Japan, which is extreme almost to the point of xenophobia, as to the way they define race. Then I talk about Brazil, which is totally 180 degrees. We're somewhere in the middle. And so with those two extreme examples, then they kind of get a feel for like "Wow, this really is a pretty fluid thing." And that hammers home the idea that race is, it depends on where you are and who you are as to how you define race. So then they start going "Gee, what's going on with that?"

The participants did not see the "ideal" race lectures as varying greatly from what they did in practice. The main difference was that ideally, professors would have more time to devote

to teaching about race or would cover more content. They shared materials they had located but were at times unable to incorporate, such as “alternative” IQ tests, like the Dove Counterbalance<sup>14</sup> Intelligence Test, the material from the *RACE* website, specifically a quiz that asks participants to guess a person’s race based on a photograph, and covering race in each of the sub-fields. Another ideal way to teach about race, according to Rollins, was to have students participate in an organized debate in which they argued for or against grouping humans into races.

To delve more deeply into teaching practices on race, I asked the professors to share what they felt was the most effective way to communicate the anthropological stance on race to students. The responses fell into a few categories: the discussion or lecture, “my way”, and hands-on activities.

Rollins, Hamels, Victorino, and Howard all mentioned that the material delivered during the lecture or discussion was most important to delivering an effective race lesson. Howard and Victorino both stated that the key to an effective race lecture was the delivery. Victorino stated that a non-judgmental stance, with an emphasis on the adaptation aspect of race was crucial, while Howard stated that comfort and a willingness to bring culturally sensitive topics up for discussion in class were important. Howard shared the following:

... And so I tell them, I say “Why didn’t you check White, ‘cause you’re half White?” Then we talk about hypo-descent, okay, Obama, he’s half-White. He’s our first Black president, well, he could be just our 43<sup>rd</sup> White president. 50-50 take your pick, but he’s not because of the way it’s structured. I just call out that ludicrousness and when they see me talking to a minority student, Hispanic kid, Asian kids are fair game because they’re always good sports, I’ve never really had anybody [unclear] or or or a Black, African American student and challenging them to explain to me why these structures are the way they are. I don’t do it to be a bigot or to be racist, but I do it to be poignant, I do it to be poignant. You ask a White kid, “Why are you White?” “I don’t know, ‘cause I just am.” “I’m just

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that Werth stated that an ideal race lecture included the alternative IQ tests and I indeed observed him incorporate the material into his in class lessons.

White ‘cause I’m not anything else. I’m none of the above.” The default is kind of White, you don’t get as far... but the idea of asking a minority about his or her race scares people and that is entirely my point. Never had anybody complain about it, never had anybody get offended, and God willing, I never will. But you know, even if they do, I’ll just be like “This is part of the exercise. The fact that you are offended, that can be a teaching moment, too, because culture told you to be.”

Rollins suggested that highlighting the way different cultures categorized people into race-based groups was most important. This discussion follows the technique of the textbook he uses, written by Conrad Kottak, in which the race groupings in Japan and Brazil are contrasted with that of the United States. Hamels mentioned discussing affirmative action.

Two of the professors, Werth and Blanton, stated that their own teaching practices were most effective. Both stated this in jest, but then followed the statement by indicating a lack of familiarity with other ways of teaching race, as well as more effective ways of teaching it than their current practices<sup>15</sup>. Utley indicated that using hands-on methods were the most effective, because this forced students to deal with preconceptions. His hands on activity for the introductory class involved providing students with pictures of people, then having the students sort the people into groups based on skin color, hair texture, and a few additional variables. He explained that he found this activity worthwhile because it points to the contradictory nature of the categories.

The participants also had opinions on ineffective ways to teach about race, specifically mentioning that “simple”, uncritical, and “stereotypical” approaches were not effective ways to change student perceptions. Hamels described this way of teaching as “when people keep throwing it out there as a real, biological category.” Rollins suggested that this way of teaching was too simplistic and lacked cultural relativism. Blanton described this type of teaching as

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<sup>15</sup> Werth and Blanton both teach at SCC. Both teach at minimum two course more per semester than the other five instructors.

coming from those who were unfamiliar with the body of information on race in anthropology and suggested that social scientists from outside of anthropology were at times guilty of this. Other ineffective methods included: not talking about both the cultural and biological components of the construct, discussing it as though it was “innate” and “monolithic”, and sharing with one’s class that they did not agree with the discipline’s teaching on the subject. One professor, Utley, stated that he was unsure of ineffective ways of teaching about race.

Participants also spoke of the rewards of teaching about race, particularly in terms of contributing to a more just world; seeing the “light bulb” go off; and student demonstration of concept mastery. Rollins and Werth indicated that teaching about race was rewarding because of its potential to change student perceptions of the world for the better. For Rollins, the lesson provided a chance to share what living under an oppressive system, such as the racial system in this country, was like for minorities. According to Werth,

Helping people understand anything about anthropology is rewarding and dispelling misconceptions that people have about others and hopefully they’ll leave the course being less judgmental and more understanding of why people are different physically, culturally, linguistically, and that diversity is okay. ...If everybody would take an anthropology course, it’d be a peaceful world.

Utley and Hamels both named the “light bulb moment” as the most rewarding part of teaching about race, often experienced when students discuss material in class with their peers or the professor. Utley elaborated that this allowed him to have “the illusion that maybe I’ve opened up their minds to something new.” Similarly, Blanton, Victorino, and Howard all indicated that student understanding of the material was rewarding. Blanton noted that a large number of students choose to write a required paper on the topic of race, which signals to him that the material had an impact on students. Victorino shared an example of changes in student perceptions, saying “...when I hear a student come up and say, “I went and applied for a job and

it said ‘race’ on my application and I scratched it out.” Howard stated that the reward of causing some students to change their ideas about a hot topic like race was “profound.”

Nevertheless, professors also faced challenges when teaching about race, most notably in terms of constraints, lack of comfort with the material, concern over offending students, and issues with language and reification.

Rollins, Blanton, and Utley all discussed constraints that limited what they were able to accomplish. Rollins spoke of the difficulty of teaching about a broad topic when faced with a limited amount of time and large class sizes, while Blanton described the difficulty students had in grasping the material:

[Students] sometimes have difficulty grasping the idea that the race concept is a biological fallacy because if they didn’t really understand genetics and how it works and the principal of independent assortment and those things when we talk about them the first time ... so I think they may be a bit perplexed when we get to this specific topic later on because they didn’t get what they needed to know to understand it completely...

Additionally, these three professors spoke of students actively resisting the message that they were teaching. Utley said that students were resistant often because they had “entrenched preconceptions” and that “anthropological perspectives generally don’t mesh well with popular conceptions,” particularly in the case of race. Blanton attributed the resistance of students as being related to racist ideas that students held, while Rollins felt that students lacked the understanding of the experience of minorities. He described what happened one time when he showed the film *In Whose Honor?*

And so it’s a great film about how this one portion of the Native American population was, is, against this [the use of Native Americans as mascots] ... and Native Americans don’t think of themselves as big nosed with eagle feathers and we’re much more complicated than that ... what I try to show is these individuals around the world, they’re trying to make a difference, you might not agree with them, but at least they’re standing up for their rights ... So one time about three semesters ago, the film ended and the guy

in the front row said “Well she’s just stupid.” ... And, you know, that’s just tough because then it’s just hard to lead a discussion when it starts off like that ... there’s always some “I don’t see the big deal.” Because you’ve never been a minority so it’s not a big deal to you...

Professors spoke about lack of comfort with the material that they included in the section on race, both because it is a controversial topic in the United States and because the topic covers both biological and cultural anthropology. Hamels, Victorino, and Howard all shared that they had concerns about teaching race at some point in their careers. Hamels suggested that she did not know much about the topic because she did not take a biological anthropology course in graduate school. This caused her to spend less time on the material in order to avoid presenting potentially confusing material, and she often skipped teaching about heavily biological topics because she felt ill equipped. She felt so uncertain about her teaching that she admitted to me that she rewrote her lecture before my observation of her class. Howard said that although it has taken him a while to feel comfortable teaching about race, it is now one of his favorite lectures because of the cultural construction aspect of the lesson. He said that the concept of cultural construction was new to him and helped him to explore a different area within anthropology. Victorino stated that the material was difficult to teach because it is considered a sensitive subject within the United States and she was at times unsure of how to avoid upsetting students while getting her point across.

Many of the professors mentioned that they were concerned with offending their students. Blanton explained that he has had students of different ethnic groups who were “outrageous racists” and were not capable of changing their way of thinking. Victorino said that she worried that she might “imply something that isn’t necessarily what I mean...it’s the way in which I’m sharing it that I worry about the most.” She described the following experience:



...every class has a different feel, so for instance, in one class I refer to African Americans and one student raised their hand and said “We’re not African Americans, we’re Black.” So I started referring to Black, and then I had a student say “No, no, we’re African Americans.” So you have to kind of tread lightly in some respects because it’s interesting, maybe their backgrounds, that built them to understanding what they are as an ethnicity and how, in some instances, they might be offended by certain terms and the basis of the term “Black” or “White” comes from a racist individual that, in history, developed this and it’s just built into our language, so I try to somewhat keep even footed and balanced in class, as best as possible. No matter what you do, you might offend somebody, so it is, I do get a little nervous when I have to give the diversity lecture, cause you don’t know how students will react to the information.

She also described a student having a negative reaction to a discussion about the Holocaust due to losing a grandparent in it. Because of that experience, she removed the mention of past “racist acts” such as events that occurred during the Civil Rights movement in the United States.

Similarly, Howard shared that before he gave his first race lecture at CU, he worried that someone might complain about him or his lecture, causing him to lose his job.

Two of the professors, Werth and Hamels, discussed the difficulty of talking about race without reinforcing student preconceptions. Werth spoke about his concern that he was reifying student ideas about race:

...in teaching about race, I’m trying to dispel the idea that people are classified commonly into racial categories by skin color, White, black, yellow, red and so forth but then ... I commonly use White and Black or African American and European American interchangeably a lot of times as it’s the emic vernacular, so I find it difficult sometimes when I’m teaching and having to use those words when I’m trying to dispel the idea that they’re associated with how you classify people... trying to make people understand the vagueness of the concept can be challenging.

Similarly, Hamels felt the alternative term, “ethnicity,” was also problematic:

Like is ethnicity really a better term? You know? I think people are trying to define ethnicity so it’s not so concrete and it’s more fluid and complex and all that but I guess, people are still using the term race interchangeably with race....

Part of this uncertainty probably derives from the fact that participants do not really know how students think about race when they enter the classroom, although most suggested that students viewed it as a “valid” term. Utley elaborated:

Oh I think they, they think like the vast majority of non-anthropologists and non-biologists think and so I think they have exactly the popular conception that we described at the outset, that there are clear races and they are clear, because I can see them, clearly. And so I think ... frankly they're shocked that anyone would suggest otherwise. It's a fact of life just as much as the sun is going to come up tomorrow morning. And so it's one of the two topics that I think I deal with in some of these introductory, both four field and biological anthropology classes. It's one of the few topics where I think students are really quite surprised and some would even try to argue against what they think in this area. ...they think I'm crazy, I think, when I first start kind of playing devil's advocate with all these things they bring up....They're really quite, probably taken aback, it just can't be.

Professors also expressed their uncertainty regarding student learning. Rollins, Utley, and Werth mentioned assessments in which students were able to correctly answer questions or write about the concept of race from an anthropological perspective. Yet all three also indicated their lack of certainty that students had changed their thinking. Rollins noted:

... the paper that I have them do which talks about “Is race culturally constructed?” Now a big chunk of them probably believe that it is culturally constructed but there might be some that say that it's culturally constructed but actually don't believe it, they just think that's what I want to hear, so that's what they write and I realize that, but occasionally, I've had one, I've only done this I think maybe four or five semesters, this paper, maybe four. I've had one student say “I don't think it is culturally constructed, I think there are true races.” And I didn't count off for that. ... but I realize that some of them are going to be just saying that. But I don't know what percentage....they're pretty damn convincing that they do believe that it is culturally constructed.

What the data from these interviews show is that the topic of race is both important and difficult for instructors teaching introductory classes. While the seven instructors that I interviewed demonstrated a great deal of consideration regarding their lessons, they also showed a degree of uncertainty that they were effectively communicating the message or, if certain in their delivery, were uncertain that the message was having the desired change

in perception from students. The next section of this chapter will discuss findings from classroom observations of lessons on race from the seven instructors.

### **How Race is Taught in the Classroom: Observational Data**

Each lesson that I observed on race had two basic components: a segment that deconstructed the idea of race as a useful system of categorization and a segment that discussed the cultural meaning(s) of race. This finding is not surprising given the emphasis placed on these two areas by the instructors in their interviews, in the survey results, and in the advisory board experts.

#### **Arguing Against the Perceived Biological Basis for Race**

One theme in the biological argument against race was that skin color was not a good indicator of racial categories. Victorino, Blanton, Utley, and Werth discussed reasons why humans display a range of skin colors. Each used skin color to make the point that this was not a useful way to categorize people into groups. In part because it is a minor part of human genetic make-up and in part because it is a response to where a human's recent ancestors evolved, it has been removed from "racial" criteria by most scientists.

Another theme was the problematic nature of categorizing people into race-based groups. Utley and Werth engaged students in participatory activities designed to illustrate the problem. Werth's activity consisted of asking students to define "race" and to write down how many races exist. Students were asked to share their answers with the class with the result that nearly every student provided a different answer from their

classmates; the results were discussed, after which Werth said that race was not a useful way to group people and that all humans were the same species. Utley's activity began in a similar way: he asked his students to explain how many races existed, pointing out that there were many different ways to categorize people. Then he provided students with 30 small photo squares, a four page worksheet, and instructions to sort the photos into groups listed on the second page of the worksheet. The categories included skin color, head size, and face shape. Once the class completed this activity, students compared their results with others and discussed whether race was a useful way to categorize biological variation. Utley stated "If race is truly biological, people in race A would be more like each other than people in B or C; instead 90 percent of biological variation is within and 10 percent between groups."

Six of the seven professors (Howard, Victorino, Blanton, Werth, and Utley) explored the definition of race to illustrate the non-biological nature of the concept. Howard and Hamels stated that race did not have a biological basis though it was assumed to have one by people. Victorino, Blanton, Utley, and Werth all discussed that the understanding of race in biology was no longer considered useful as a tool for understanding diversity. Essentially all stated that, to paraphrase Blanton, race refers to a geographically isolated population in a species that has had little or no gene flow with other populations for a long time. Victorino pointed out that races did not adequately represent the true nature of biological variation, while Utley pointed out that humans of different "races" were able to successfully produce viable offspring (which ought not be the case according to biology). Werth read definitions of race from textbooks and asked students how those definitions could practically be applied to people. For example, he

read the definition of “interbreeding group of people whose gene pool is different from all other groups of people.” He asked his class how many races that definition would create and he suggested the answer would be thousands.

After they had discussed reasons that race was not a useful way to explain human variation, most of the professors discussed its cultural use (and abuse).

### **Arguing for the Cultural Nature of Race**

The other approach to the discussion of race was to address the cultural nature of the idea. However, the amount of time spent discussing culture was greatly diminished for professors (Utley in particular) who spent a lot of time discussing the biological aspects of race. The topics that professors discussed included the social construction of race, the historical development of modern ideas about race (including attempts to link abilities to race), the concept of hypodescent, ethnicity, racism, theories about belonging in multicultural societies, and notions of race in other cultures.

All the professors discussed the idea of race as a social or cultural construction. This idea suggests that rather than race being an objectively real thing it is an idea that has been created and is maintained by humans. The nature of the creation and maintenance of this idea is dependent on people to perpetuate the naturalness and taken-for-grantedness of the concept. Two professors also stressed the importance that they placed on students understanding this aspect of the lesson. Blanton told his class “Quite honestly, I hope by the end of the semester if I had to pick one thing you’d remember for the rest of your lives it would be chapter seven. We still have issues we’re dealing with in our own society about what some would call race.”

Howard told the class that the lesson on race was “one of my favorites.” Hamels pointed out that

while humans could not be classified into races, most Americans believed that they could. She used examples of a newspaper article that interchanged the terms “race” and “ethnicity” when referring to Latinos. Werth stated that race was typically used when referring to a group’s culture with a supposed biological basis and suggested to his class “Use the appropriate term, culture, not race.”

The historical development of the idea of race was another topic. Victorino, Rollins, and Werth explained that current understandings of race grew out of the Western European efforts to develop classification systems for all life and to hierarchically rank the importance of those beings. The contribution of various scientists including Carl Linnaeus, Johann Blumenbach, and Samuel Morton were linked to the development of the idea. Werth and Victorino pointed out that classification was used to justify the mistreatment of certain groups of people, while Rollins stated that “science was not immune to [racist] thinking.”

Three professors also discussed the movement to link abilities, particularly mental abilities, to racial groups. While Victorino mentioned that Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests were used as a tool to show some races were smarter than others (a claim that she refuted by stating that scores on IQ tests were linked to experience rather than intelligence), Werth and Blanton spent quite a bit more time discussing the topic. Blanton discussed the work of Jensen, Murrary, and Herrnstein, three scientists who have written about the link between IQ scores and race as an example of those efforts that continue to persist in American culture. He suggested that cultural biases were to blame for disparate scores on intelligence tests and stated that American society was not a society of equal people. Werth discussed the tendency of whites to score higher on IQ tests but that those scores “have nothing to do with creativity, musical ability, street smarts” and that those were all kinds of intelligence as well. He provided his students with the *Black*

*Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity (BITCH)* to illustrate the point that tests are culturally bound. This test was written to demonstrate the examinee's knowledge of items specific to African Americans in the 1970s. Additionally, Werth asked, "You people from the North, how many types of palm trees can you name?"

Three of the professors discussed the term hypodescent. This term is used to describe the idea that any individual who has "minority" (i.e. non-White) ancestry is considered part of that group, regardless of their White ancestry. This type of thinking stems from laws and practices designed to keep slaves separate from non-slaves. By designating that any person who had an African or African American ancestor (the one-drop rule), slave owners were allowed to keep the offspring of their "property." Howard talked about hypodescent using Tiger Woods and his children as an example of the difficulties in assigning a race to individuals with ancestry originating from many places. Werth used a similar, though hypothetical example, when he asked what the race would be of a person with one White and one Black parent. He then asked what that person's child's race would be if they had a child with a person from the Philippines. He pointed out that it would quickly become difficult to assign a race. Hamels talked about the historical case of a woman who was assigned the "Black" race on her birth certificate but considered herself White and was not aware of her classification until she was an adult.

Another topic that was touched upon was that of multiculturalism. Both Howard and Hamels talked about different metaphors that have been used to describe the process of creating a multicultural society. Melting pot was the first; this refers to the idea that immigrants from different cultures join together in one giant "pot" and all their cultures blend together to become one. The second term, presented in contrast the melting pot idea, was referred to as an "ethnic salad" by Hamels and as a "fruitcake" by Howard. The idea behind these terms is that people are

all brought together but are able to keep their culture while existing in the same society. Rollins and Werth discussed issues related to multiculturalism in a less direct way. Rollins showed his class the documentary *In Whose Honor?*, a film that follows the journey of a Spokane Indian woman and her efforts to end the use of Native Americans as sports team mascots. After viewing the documentary, he discussed the problematic nature of using the identity of a group of people as a mascot. In a similar vein, Werth conversed with his students about a t-shirt he was wearing. This shirt showed a Pilgrim head in a similar style to that of the Cleveland Indians mascot and said “Invaders” on it. A student asked “Are you anti-White?” to which Werth replied “No, I’m just pointing out a different perspective. Unless you are Native American, you are an illegal immigrant. My ancestors were illegal immigrants. Some of my Facebook friends are White. Just kidding, I don’t have Facebook.” The student retorted under his breath “Or White friends.”

Racism was also discussed, though in much shorter duration than the other topics. Howard, Victorino, and Blanton all mentioned racism. Blanton suggested that members of any group could be racist by stating “One does not need to be a White American to be a racist” and that racism was imbedded in this country stating “We have had slavery for 250 years. That’s longer than we’ve been an independent country.” Howard asked if members of his class knew someone racist and then shared that racism was “discrimination against a “racial” group.” Victorino’s definition of racism was “A doctrine of superiority by which one group justifies the dehumanization of others based on their distinctive physical characteristics. Not just about discriminatory ideas, values, or attitudes but is also a political problem. Racial conflicts results from social stereotypes, not known scientific facts.”

Howard and Hamels covered much of the same material in their lessons; of the seven professors, their lessons were most similar in terms of content covered. Additional parts of their



lessons not covered by other professors included a discussion of ethnicity and a look at views of race in Brazil and Japan. Both taught that ethnicity was tied to self-identification, whereas race was imposed by others. They also illustrated the cultural nature of race by examining views of race in Japan (where a minority group whose status is linked to ancestors belonging to a class of workers conducting “dirty” jobs appears to be physically similar to other Japanese people) and Brazil (where there are reportedly more than 500 racial labels). I suspect this similarity is due to the use of the same textbook, having used one that covered these same topics in my own teaching.

Rollins taught about race in the most distinctly different manner. Rather than one lesson where he explicitly talked about the topic of race, his teaching on race was woven into his lessons on the status of Native Americans and other indigenous peoples as a result of colonialism. Though I conferred with him regarding when to attend his “race” lecture, it is possible that I missed another lecture in which he covered the scientific data related to human diversity.

Similar to that data from the survey and the race experts, the most important topic was the socially or culturally constructed nature of race. This topic was stressed in greater detail and by introducing more types of supporting evidence (historical legacy, hypodescent, racism, the idea of ethnicity) by five of the seven anthropologists when compared with their teaching against the biological basis of race. The next section will explore how the students viewed the lesson their professors taught.

## **Student Understanding of Race After Attending the Lecture(s)**

Students who participated in the focus groups generally agreed that their professors were effective at teaching about race. They demonstrated that the essential anthropological message regarding race was effectively communicated but that lingering confusion over the larger social and cultural meaning of race remained.

Students in each of the seven classes cited six ways that their professors made the concept of race easy to understand. Students in these classes found both lecture and activities helpful. Rollins', Werth's, Blanton's, Howard's, and Hamel's students all mentioned that the lecture helped to clarify what race was. Students of Hamels, Utley, Rollins, and Werth pointed to an activity or discussion about race that helped them to understand the topic. They also mentioned that "helpful" (as in examples they could relate to their own life) examples made race easier to understand (Hamels, Howard, Rollins, Utley). Most focus group participants stated that their professors taught that race was not a natural, biological division among humans (Rollins, Werth, Victorino, Blanton). Individual students were able to state that race was a social construction and to explain what that meant, but they were in the minority. As a result of the lesson, students in several focus groups mentioned that they felt that their professors were "good" at changing their perspective on race. A student described Werth as "He's kind of like a kaleidoscope; he makes you see things way differently than you'd actually see them." Rollins', Howard's and Blanton's students said similar things about them as well. Victorino's students were the exception, stating that they felt the lesson on race was too short to aid in their understanding of the topic.

Though the students I spoke with largely understood the "Race isn't biology, it's a social construction" message that anthropologists promote, there remained several areas of confusion

about the topic. The two most mentioned sources of confusion related to the difference between race and ethnicity and regarding how race was not “real” when students could see differences between people (and saw that those differences were passed on to children). The following exchange occurred among Blanton’s students as they tried to fill out my data forms (which asked for race and ethnicity)

I3: I know for me I have like the opposite problem. For me I see the race and ethnicity and it’s like okay, when they ask you know what’s my race, I’m like okay I’m Black. And then they ask me my ethnicity, I mean I’m guessing they’re asking for like a list of what I am and it’s kinda like how the hell do I answer that?

I: Well like okay would race be like you’re Black because that’s a color so my race would be White, my ethnicity is Caucasian American because I’m White American, you would be African American or is that your race?

I3: Well technically the

I: Jennifer? [The student looks to me for clarification.]

I3: Well technically speaking ethnicity would be I think cultural so technically I wouldn’t put Black for race, I really wouldn’t be able to answer that.

I: But I don’t know which is which.

I3: I actually don’t know my background, my full background, I wouldn’t know it at all I mean, considering historically speaking they actually didn’t keep um

I2: I’m just putting question marks next to it

I3: They didn’t keep records on that for like basically Black people.

I: Well I mean okay I’m German European whatever but is that, I mean is that my ethnicity?

R: Put down what you think best answers the question.

Rollins’ students indicated some of their confusion was related to how “race” was explained at a museum they went to.

I7: Well apparently they had at the museum um race includes more than just your skin

color, it could be ethnicity is still but political and a list of other things I think [unclear]

R: So it sounds kind of confusing actually now that we talk about it a little bit more.

I7: Cuz that doesn't seem like a race if race is a biological skin color then how could it be all of these other things also? ”

Howard's students concluded that race referred to four groups (commonly associated with skin color in the US) and ethnicity was a person's lineage, while Blanton and Utley's students said they wished there was “one definition that everyone would have to use to talk about race or ethnicity or things like that.” Hamels' students indicated that they felt they understood race and ethnicity as being about a difference between “appearance” and “culture”.

The second issue, of race not being “real” also perplexed students. One student of Rollins' said

Oh I was so confused in doing that paper because you know in the beginning I was like you know well for example in Africa you know a dark skinned toned mother you know she has a child, what is he gonna look like? It's gonna look like her right? It's not, to me that's biological, skin tone ...you know it [the child] grabs the genes from the mother. To me that's biological, that's not cultural. So if someone has you know a certain skin tone that they've received through you know their family to me that's biological not cultural and like that was so hard for me to understand.

Their confusion was compounded by their study of genocides and fighting between “People of the same color that I've learned in this class hate each other for racial reasons too and they look exactly the same but they'll come at each other with swords, we're different. That's confusing.” They also mentioned their confusion regarding their professor's statement that humans were all one race but yet people did things in groups that seemed to be based on their appearance, “like gangs and stuff that focus solely like on their race...”

Another student of Victorino's questioned a statement she heard in class that was seemingly nonsensical “what we learned in class, she said that there's a bigger variation between a population of the same race than there is between two different races which kind of confused

me cuz I don't see how that works.” This student continued

...if two individuals of the same race, okay if they have a very big variation in genetic differences and then you take two people in another race and they have a wide variation, how is it that these people who are in different have like not like even times two, it just doesn't make sense in my head....

Similarly, a student from Rollins' class stated “Well people are biologically different but it's based on genetics, there's no such thing as, I mean there is no such thing as race it's just people like with dark skin perceive each other as Black, so they make a community and they breed within that community so there kinda becomes a Black race but in reality it's just genetics.”

Although I believe from the context of the focus group that he meant the *Black race* statement in quotes, it is unclear from his comment exactly what he was trying to express, which would seem to indicate a degree of confusion in his thinking.

In spite of the fact that their professors indicated that anthropologists did not believe race to be “real”, nearly all of the student focus groups discussed the continuing social significance that race played in their lives or the lives of people they knew. In particular, students in Werth's and Blanton's classes discussed the social “racial” divisions people maintained as the “real” issue with race. Another theme among students related to confusion (though not expressed as confusion by the students); this was the idea that race was not personally significant to the student and that racism was dying with past generations. One student from Rollins' class stated “It [race] doesn't matter to me, like all my friends, they're all different and you know, you accept them for who they are...” while one of Victorino's students said “I think definitely with our generation it [race] just really doesn't matter anymore...there's still kids that are raised in...racist atmospheres but I think as a whole our generation is becoming way more tolerant.”

Regarding the importance of the race topic to professors, students were asked to rate the importance of the topic of race to their professor on a scale of one to five, with one being not

very important and five being very important. For the purpose of this section, I classified the response as an average; if the average was above a four, I placed the responses in a category called “very important.” Averages below a four were placed in a category called “not as important”. Rollins’, Howard’s, Blanton’s, and Werth’s students felt that the topic of race was very important to their professors. Utley’s, Hamels’, and Victorino’s students felt that race was not so important to their professors. Reasons that students provided for their perception of the importance of the topic to their professors included that the professor had spent a lot of time discussing the topic before the lecture date, professors conveyed the idea that the information they were presenting on race would be different from what students had heard in the past, and the professor covered the topic thoroughly. It should be noted that some of Werth’s students disagreed about his level of interest in the topic and felt that he was “really quick” in his coverage of race. Students of Utley, Hamels, and Victorino all agreed that their professor did not delve as deeply into the topic as they could have, although students of Utley and Hamels indicated that they felt aspects of the lesson were important (showing human variation for Utley and the idea of cultural construction for Hamels).

Again, students were asked to use a scale of one to five to rate how well they understood race before the class on race. A self-assigned score of one meant that they did not understand it well at all, while a score of five meant they felt they understood it well. The intent of this question was to ask students to consider their understanding of the topic before the class and to consider how much it had changed. Students who rated themselves highly, with a five, likely did not feel that they learned much, if anything, in the lesson on race. The exception to that was with students who indicated that before the class they thought they understood it very well, so they

assigned themselves a five, but that now they knew their understanding should have been at a one. In other words, they were overestimating their understanding.

Rollins' students rated themselves as understanding race fairly well before the class. One student shared that they hadn't thought they had any issues with race or racism until Rollins showed the video *In Whose Honor?* This video led two of the students to question the impact of Native American mascots on race relations. Howard's students were middle of the road, sharing that they did not realize race was not biological, but cultural, before taking the class. At least one student indicated their lingering confusion over race, ethnicity, and nationality. Victorino's students indicated that their pre-class understanding of race was low (with one exception who indicated that she assigned herself a five because she thought she understood it until she had the class). These students indicated that their ideas about race had not changed, though from the content of the focus group, it seems their ideas have shifted from the popular understanding of race as biological to an uncertainty regarding what race is. Blanton's students felt that they had a middle level understanding of what race was before the class. The students agreed that they had a grasp on the social aspects of race before the class, but that the biological aspects of race were new to them. Werth's students indicated that their understanding of race was low before the class. The students shared that their ideas about race had changed from the class, especially one student who said previously he thought

Because like I looked at race you know Black and White you know she's White, I'm Black, done, stick a fork in it, it's finished. Like that's all I cared about. I'm what I am, she's what she is, the president's what he is and nothing's gonna change that. But like leaving the class I feel like it's a lot more than that.

Other students said that there was lingering confusion regarding race and how people separated themselves out. Utley's students had average-to-low understanding before the class and said that they learned that race "can't really [be] define[d] biologically and all that other

stuff” but that they were still perplexed as to what it was if not a biological category for people. Finally, Hamels’ students had mixed understanding on race before the class with three students feeling confident before the class that they understood it and three feeling middle of the road. The students mentioned the difference between race and ethnicity as a new concept to them, particularly the component of culture as having an impact on a person’s identity, rather than simply skin color.

Every group, except for Utley’s students, suggested that it would be beneficial to have an activity where people were sorted into groups as a way to problematize race. This shows how ingrained the idea of sorting people into categories is. Rollins’, Howard’s, Victorino’s and Hamels’ students suggested having the class sort themselves into different racial groups, while Werth’s students suggested having students take pictures of different “races”, and Blanton’s students suggested using just two students, one White and one not White as examples. In each situation, the students suggested that these activities would elicit stereotypes and then give the professor material to help disprove ideas students held. This suggestion was also met with resistance from other students who suggested it could be offensive either because students would not take the exercise seriously enough and would put themselves into the “wrong” group on purpose or because students would find the exercise offensive. It is likely that Utley’s students did not suggest this because they participated in an activity where they sorted photographs of people based on their physical characteristics.

Another common suggestion was that professors continue to teach the lesson as it was taught to the students, but with additional elements. The most requested element was to add a discussion (from Rollins’, Victorino’s, Hamels’, and Blanton’s students). Students also mentioned showing videos or documentaries to explore race, use examples they were familiar



with, and deal with the issue of the implications of race, including racism. Utley's students suggested that a discussion of the meaning of race in society would be beneficial. A student said "why race is an issue 'cause if it's like yeah we're all different but there are similarities here...we're all intermingled...so it's kinda like why does race even really matter? Like why do they have it on job applications...if we can't define it, why does it matter so much?"

Finally, one unexpected finding from these focus groups was that students in each of the focus groups commented that they had enjoyed the process of participating in the focus group because it enabled them to spend more time thinking about the topic and learning about what other students in the class had taken from the lesson. This finding was similar to what Bird and Godwin (2006) found.

As this section has demonstrated, students grasped the essential message from anthropologists, which is that race is not "real" in the biological sense. Beyond that message, however, students were still quite confused about what their folk understandings of race mean in light of this new information. Perhaps most tellingly, students expressed confusion over how this message could be true when they could see human variation and how the idea of ethnicity differed from race.

This chapter has illustrated the perspective on race and how that perspective ought to be taught using data from interviews with experts on the subject, introductory course instructors' survey responses, interviews with introductory instructors, observations of those instructors, and focus groups with students from their classes. While there is broad agreement that the general message of "Race is not biologically real, but is socially constructed" is what should (and apparently is) be shared, there are a multitude of ways to convey that message. Additionally, the "supporting evidence" that is used to lend

credence to this argument varies widely depending on one's level of expertise, subfield, and comfort with the topic. In the final chapter, I will discuss the implication of these findings, as well as provide recommendations for further research.

### **Postscript: Continuing Issues with Racism**

My research design did not originally cover the issue of how to address racism in teaching. However, the legacy of racism is inextricably bound up with the idea of race in this country. It would be a disservice not to address it here, especially because of the confusion among students, who may grasp the concept that "race" does not exist, and yet every day they experience the reality of the social construction of race.

The professors interviewed also understood the complexity of this issue, believing the topic of race to be both important and fraught with problems. Although all committed to the importance of dismantling racist ideas, there were a few instances in three of the lectures that were potentially problematic. Two of the professors discussed historical scientific terms that are now considered offensive. In one instance, a professor told their class that people used to believe there were three races, "Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid." As they moved along to the next point, a student near me said "Did [professor's sex] say that [Negroid]?" Though I did not speak to the student, I assumed from his demeanor that he was not pleased at the use of the word. Though I did not see or hear any students complain in the other professor's class, it is not difficult to imagine that students with African ancestry might be made uncomfortable to read a list of items stating that they were believed to have "relatively thick noses and lips" by scientists in the past. I did, however, hear a student from a different class share the following

Well what I learned in high school was that there was three races, Caucasian, Asian and Negroid, which I was kinda like am I part robot, like what is that? I was kinda offended, I was like why did we get the ugly name? I was like Negroid, I'm a Black robot.

One professor's technique of involving students in the lecture became problematic when the lecture was about race. Twice, when discussing the topic of race, the instructor pointed to a non-White member of the class to illustrate a point. In the first instance, the professor pointed to a student with dark skin and stated "You, many people would say, are of a different race than me." In the other case, during a discussion of discrimination and racism, the professor said "How do you define a racial group? I look at people, you [points to a student in the class] are beige, I'm guessing you are Hispanic and I don't like them." The following conversation from one of the focus groups supports the problematic nature of instructors singling out students to represent their race or ethnicity.

I2: I'll throw in a last comment ... Do you really get pissed when the teacher in the classroom picks you as like the national speaker for your whole race?

I3: Oh God yes

I2: I hate that. It's because I'm Jewish and because like my teacher when we were talking about the Holocaust she singled me out and had to speak only to me and had me speak about it, like dude I wasn't alive... Yeah she singled me out kind of a thing and was like, oh how do you feel about the Holocaust? I'm thinking like how did your family do? Like I have family stories, I mean my great-grandma was in the Holocaust but like I gotta single out the Jew.

I: So great examples on how not to teach race, don't single out a Black person or a Jewish person or a White person.

I2: I can understand asking them like you know cuz it is a different you know because you want their cultures

I: Would anyone like to speak or

I2: Yeah but just to single somebody out because you know that they're that race, just like you know hey you're Black, do you like fried chicken?

I3: That's kinda how it was, especially in history classes

I2: Exactly they like kinda pull that thing out, you're Black, how do you feel about picking cotton? Like isn't that racist for you?

I3: Yes they really do this.

Finally, when discussing hypo-descent and affirmative action, an instructor suggested that White students who had a great-grandfather who was Black would be eligible for affirmative action and encouraged students to look into their background to determine if they were eligible for more services. This suggestion could be viewed as problematic because it suggests that affirmative action is a "game" to be played rather than a well-intentioned policy designed to correct historical mistreatment and subjugation of certain groups of Americans.

Finally, students from one focus group had the following to say about racism and teaching about race and diversity

I3: Yes, lecturing is pretty good. I'd probably introduce more topics on racism, simply because you know it's still like a hot topic in you know try not to just rely on this idea that it's still kind of like this guy in a Ku Klux Klan outfit is like waiting outside with a burning cross. I mean it's kind of evolved now into like something that's just very you know insidious. It's just there but like nobody really recognizes it...

I: It's there but it's so subtle and we're all way too scared to accuse somebody too because of the ramifications in our society now if you're a racist, no I'm not a racist like

I3: Yeah you feel more, it's like people feel more bad about being called a racist than actually you know being racist.

I... I hate that they glaze over that like yeah, everyone is equal but everyone is different and we have different cultures and we came from different places and I think when it comes to like accepting other people and learning about race you have to learn it all. You can't just learn that people are different colors but we're all the same on the inside and the outside. Like we are physically but we're not culturally and we're not emotionally. But that's great, like that's what makes America so diverse and so wonderful is that you can be surrounded by all these things and they don't teach you that early on. They just teach you like everyone's equal and everyone's the same and you have to like everyone just like, that's not right, that's not what we should be teaching. And like I feel like if they cleared that up that would be better. *That would be a better way to teach.* " (my emphasis)

## Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In this final chapter, I summarize my research findings, followed by analysis of the significance of those findings; I then offer recommendations and suggest steps for future research on teaching in anthropology and on teaching about race (in particular).

My research findings fall into four categories: teaching in anthropology, how to teach race, the continued importance of the four-field anthropology class, and the legacy of racism. First, I show that there is a consensus among the anthropologists in my sample regarding the importance of teaching, specifically about the importance of race. However, there remains room to improve anthropological teaching about race, especially if the goal is to end racism. Second, I discuss the need to enhance lessons on race in anthropology to effectively reach students. Third, I cover the importance of maintaining a biocultural perspective on race so that the lesson is comprehensible to students. Fourth, I touch on the need to address racism and the continuing impact it has on the lives of many Americans. Finally, I provide suggestions for future research on teaching, especially about race.

### **The State of Teaching in Anthropology**

One of the themes of the survey and case studies was the lack of formal focus on teaching development or training. While 75 percent of respondents indicated that they had attended at least one professional development activity, over 60 percent had not taken a course on how to teach and 59 percent had never used materials designed to assist in lesson planning, such as the *Teaching Strategies* or *Anthro Notes* series. The majority of anthropologists are not taught to

teach, nor do they devote a great deal of time reflecting on their teaching practice; figuring out how to teach and how to improve one's teaching is not something that is systematically addressed within anthropology, nor is it a high priority of many of the people teaching, even though it seems that people take teaching seriously.

All instructors in the case study agreed that race is a cultural construct that lacks biological usefulness. From self-directed learning to anthropology courses, instructors shared that there was not one uniform way in which they had learned about race. Only one was familiar with the *RACE* project, though all knew the basic stance of many anthropologists on race and generally agreed with that stance (though most expressed some degree of doubt that all sub-disciplines agreed with that perspective). This shows that while many people can say the same thing, they are not certain that they all do agree on that stance, and that anthropologists do not communicate about what they are teaching to other anthropologists (obviously with some exceptions, like at conferences).

There have been movements within anthropology, noted in the literature review, to focus attention on teaching specifically through the production of teaching materials. However, these have not received a great deal of attention across the discipline and the discussions of teaching tend to be reserved for smaller interest groups within anthropology, such as the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges (SACC), "teaching tips" sessions during conferences, or in less "scholarly" media such as listservs or blogs. The lack of a major teaching journal in the American Anthropological Association's repertoire shows the lack of emphasis and importance given to teaching within the discipline in the United States.

It is known that good teaching is paramount for engaging students and passing along the messages that teachers find important (Feldman 2007). Students clearly expressed that engaging

professors who used a variety of dynamic teaching styles were most likely to hold their attention. When students spoke of memorable teachers and lessons, they were most likely to remember the key message if the professor conveyed information in an “unusual” ways, that is, not via a standard lecture. Professors said that effective ways to teach were to use discussion or lectures, hands on activities, and to continue doing what they did because it worked. Ineffective ways of teaching were ones that used simple or uncritical approaches to race.

Anthropologists owe it to the discipline and to their students to focus attention on research on teaching. Additionally, there is a wealth of information generated from education research (and other disciplines that research education) that discusses many of the issues outlined in the findings section regarding measuring and improving teaching effectiveness. I am not advocating a full switch to the public K-12 education model, but rather to begin to pay attention to some of the valuable lessons that many researchers in other fields have gathered.

In addition to creating space for research on teaching anthropology, anthropologists need to take advantage of another valuable resource: their colleagues. Collaboration is recommended and celebrated in research. It is puzzling that it would be looked down upon when it comes to teaching. It is understandable that many busy professors would not have time to collaborate, but if programs were put into place that made collaborating easier and if the result was learning about teaching practices of others, this would be a great benefit for those who spend time in the classroom.

Another idea to take from the pre-collegiate education world is that of a standardized curriculum<sup>16</sup>. If the AAA were to create or (even just publicize ones already in existence) something like this, and provide it, free of charge, it could be of great benefit to those who are

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<sup>16</sup> Although *AnthroNotes* produced by the Smithsonian filled this purpose, it appears the program has ended. Sustainability, visibility, and rigor of this sort of project are critical components if highly educated individuals, such as people with masters and doctorates in anthropology, are going to benefit from this undertaking.

not familiar with the wide variety of topic areas that introductory courses cover. This curriculum could provide background information on a topic, suggested activities, preferably ones that have been done before and found effective by multiple instructors, and a reading list for more ideas or more information. Something like this would provide beginning instructors with a huge number of resources and would be customizable. It would provide a basic outlook on a topic but allow instructors to deviate from that topic if they chose. It would be beneficial to continue to update curriculum. One potential option is to have the AAA devote a section to curriculum development in addition to sharing of syllabi effort that is already under way. It would be of utmost benefit to have the curriculum reviewed by experts in each topic area so that the veracity of the information is correct.

Along with this curriculum, I suggest that there should be an effort to conduct a systematic and exhaustive review of the resources related to the teaching of anthropology and make them accessible digitally, if not to the general public, at least to members of the AAA. While individual sections have reading lists, and the AAA is collecting syllabi, in order to create a more thorough study of the work that has been done on teaching, the resources need to be gathered and reviewed for themes. A secondary measure might be for editors of individual journals in AAA to pull together work that has been done on teaching in their publications into a discipline-wide edited volume on teaching reflections. Both of these archival measures would provide repositories of both institutional memory and resources to ensure that work is built upon, rather than reworked because it is out of print or inaccessible to researchers.

Finally, professors should incorporate current events into their introductory courses. Doing so allows students to connect with the material and to see the continued relevance of



anthropology to understanding the world. It also challenges professors to stay connected to issues of importance to their students.

### **How to Teach Race**

I was not sure what I would find regarding “the anthropological perspective on race” in part because I am a cultural anthropologist and thus at times unaware of the perspective of the other sub-fields. What I found is that instructors who responded to the survey, the case study participants, and the experts all agreed on the basic stance that race is not useful to study human variation, but it continues to carry significant social weight. This was also the essential message that they wanted to convey to introductory students and the public.

They also agreed that this lesson was one of the most important ones for students to learn from the discipline of anthropology. In part, its importance was linked to anthropological conceptions of folk understandings of race. Anthropologists seem to believe that Americans believe race is rooted in biology and because of that, there is a valid reason that members of different racial groups have different levels of success, health, and wealth. However, it is not known for certain if this is truly how all Americans view race. This is an area for further research, specifically within students of introductory anthropology classes. By understanding the views that students hold on race, professors can more accurately target their lessons to address misconceptions that students hold.

Regarding the components of the lesson, there is a degree of divergence that is driven by unknown factors (possibly textbook use, sources consulted, outside knowledge, academic training, level of consultation with colleagues are all options for factors). Experts, survey respondents, and instructors in the case study mentioned the importance of discussing the history

of the race idea, the biological argument against using race to understand human variation, and the continued cultural and social impact of race. What specific instructors used to highlight their points varied. Some focused on applying the point that race didn't work to the idea of IQ tests. Other talked about the problematic nature of trying to classify people in which science has engaged in the recent past. Others talked about affirmative action, genocides, and the view of race in other cultures, racism, and multiculturalism.

Instructors found race a rewarding topic to teach because it has the potential to open student minds and to create more justice in the world. However, there were a number of challenges, including: handling constraints, resistant students, lack of comfort with material, concern over offending students, and issues with language and reification of the concept. These challenges created varying amounts of frustration for instructors and some found themselves to face a certain amount of stress due to these issues.

Students found this lesson to be generally of importance or at least interest. Some stated that it provided them with new information. As a group, they remained confused about the difference between race and ethnicity and about how race wasn't real when they could see physical difference between people that corresponded with social differences. As a few students noted and I observed, there is more work to be done on the issue of racism and that is the direction that anthropology needs to develop more of its focus in regards to teaching this message.

Students seem to grasp the basic message to varying degrees (similarly to Morning 2011's findings). Nevertheless, they are still confused how the lesson on the biological unreality of race maps onto the social reality they see in which people separate themselves by "race," or are judged by "race," determined by visible physical characteristics, such as skin color. They

also did not understand the difference between race and ethnicity, and were uncertain if anthropologists are suggesting that the concept of race should be completely thrown out or not. This confusion has the potential to lead students to more tightly embrace their preconceptions about race if they do not receive additional guidance. Additionally, the lingering confusion creates difficulty with the intended message, which is that discrimination based on these types of social categories should end.

The race concept encompasses a wide range of academic disciplines and topic areas. Anthropology, sociology, history, and biology all contain content that is relevant to a teacher trying to unpack the concept of race. This tremendous range of information can make it difficult for instructors, particularly beginning ones or those whose expertise is in a different area of anthropology. The other problematic aspect of the enormity of this topic is that most introductory courses do not have an adequate amount of time to devote to cover all aspects of it. Consequently, I observed that most instructors were able to cover the topics but that their coverage tended to fall more toward the cultural aspect of race rather than covering biology as it relates (or does not) to race. Specifically, the concept of cultural or social construction was emphasized above all other points.

While it is important to talk about the idea that race is a social construction, instructors might be losing sight of the idea that there clearly are biological differences in humans, and that those differences can be acknowledged and studied – but that the concept of “race” is not useful in that regard. One recommendation is to expand the lessons on human biological variation, particularly in classes taught by cultural anthropologists. If students understand that humans do vary in appearance and in other characteristics, but that this does not correspond to races of human beings, some of the misunderstandings expressed by students in focus groups will be

addressed. One potential way to address the confusion is to incorporate the work of Gravlee (2009) into introductory textbooks. Another recommendation is to expand the lesson on the cultural meaning of race, particularly by adding in a discussion guided by the professor. If students are allowed to bring up aspects of the lesson that they find confusing with their professor it will give the professor an opportunity to address the source of that confusion. Additionally, if the professor is better able to contextualize the current situation regarding race in the United States, it might make students more able to understand the nuanced nature of the anthropological stance on race.

Another recommendation is to make sure that the message is understandable. Critics have pointed out that the message of “there is no such thing as race, it’s a social construction” becomes circular very quickly and leads to an enormous amount of confusion (Zack 2001). There must be a concise, yet understandable way to make the message stick. While saying that “race isn’t real” is an attention getter, it does not properly explain what anthropologists are talking about. Rather than saying race isn’t real (when in daily life it so clearly is experienced as real), it might be better to address the fact that racial categories are not useful when studying the ways that human beings vary because racial typologies do little to explain the variation. Another idea is to say something along the lines of "race was the old way to understand why humans were different from one another. Now we know that humans are different in more ways than just in their skin color/hair texture/etc."

Key components for race lessons include expanding beyond lectures. Hands on activities and discussion are important to student learning, especially in regards to race. The students who participated in Utley’s people sorting activity were not confused about why putting humans into races was a bad idea. Likewise, students who discussed issues of race and racial tensions during

the focus group seemed to have a greater understanding of why race was still relevant. Both of these activities are important. In addition, lessons on race need to continue to provide information on historical events that led to the current state of affairs. History is an integral part of anthropology and to understanding why race continues to be an issue in the United States and around the world. Historical differences help to show why certain places have more racial conflicts than others. Focusing on lived experience of people of color is also important; although Rollins incorporated this perspective through showing the documentary *In Whose Honor?*, the remainder of the instructors did not.

Though many teaching materials for race have been produced in conjunction with the *RACE* project, there is not sufficient knowledge of these materials among anthropologists. These materials should be gathered in a central location that provides easy access for those who teach. Suggestions for this repository were discussed in the previous section.

### **Continued Importance of Four-Field Introductory Courses**

This study shows the continued importance of teaching four-field anthropology classes. Without both the biological and cultural aspects of this lesson, it is difficult for students to fully grasp the anthropological argument. Critical to understanding the “anthropological stance on race” is a good understanding of the biological explanations that support the non-usefulness of the race concept, and the reality of the cultural construction of race that defines the way so many people see the world in their daily lives. Even in the absence of a four-field class, anthropologists need to make an attempt to better integrate both biological and cultural dimensions of the “race” argument in order for it to make sense to students. Hearing only part of the explanation leaves many unanswered questions for students, as was evidenced in the focus group portion of this

study. Race is certainly not the only topic in which students benefit from the integration of both biological and cultural perspectives on understanding human behavior, though it does illustrate the importance of both integrating each subfield into understanding humans.

## **Racism**

Finally, this study shows the importance of incorporating discussions of racism when discussing race. For a brief period in recent history, there was a sense of optimism among White America that the United States was in a “post-racial” period due to the election of an African American president (Schoor 2008, Steele 2008). However, as more recent events demonstrate,<sup>17</sup> racism is alive and well and the impact of race continues to be a reality, especially for minorities in the U.S.

Many anthropologists experience a version of the colorblind ideology expressed by their students, who suggest that if individuals ignore the “color” of others, they will have absolved themselves of racism. This perspective is common among younger Americans today (as noted by Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000). Instructors teaching about race experience this approach as one of the difficulties of the lesson, because it is difficult to hold a discussion on racism when some students do not believe they contribute to the problem. There were many students in the focus groups who told me that racism was not the fault or the problem of their generation. The implication with this statement was that once older generations passed on, so would racism. A small number of students (tellingly, students who did not identify as White) discussed the continuing problem of racism, saying that it was still present in American culture, but that it was less obvious than before.

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<sup>17</sup> Such as the Trayvon Martin shooting, the NBA’s decision to force Donald Sterling to sell the LA Clippers, and the police shooting death of an unarmed Black youth in Ferguson, Missouri

This fact - that racism still exists but that it is less obvious than in previous generations -- needs to be integrated into anthropological discussions on race, both in the classroom and in the broader discipline. Many anthropologists (Committee on Minorities and Anthropology 1973 and 1996, Hutchinson and Patterson 2010, Smedley and Hutchinson 2012, Harrison 1997, Mullings 2005) have critiqued the discipline as being racist or, at minimum, ignoring issues of race repeatedly. The *RACE* exhibit grew from a meeting of individuals concerned about the status of non-whites in American anthropology. The fact that many American anthropologists are White women does little to bring issues of race to the forefront. To paraphrase one of the *RACE* project advisors, anthropologists are “people” too. In other words, anthropologists possess issues and concerns with racism in much the same way that larger society does. Simply being educated about and sympathetic to other cultures does not make one immune to racism or racist thoughts, feelings, or actions.

So while my case studies and survey results indicate that White anthropologists who teach about race find it to be a worthwhile and important topic, and that they are optimistic that their efforts will help make the world a better place, this does not translate into addressing issues of racism head on. This becomes an additional dilemma when taken with student confusion over the difference between race and ethnicity, as well as how race was not “real” when physical difference was visible. If professors are uncomfortable addressing racism, as would be expected from living in a society that is simultaneously obsessed with the subject but denies that any wrongdoing occurs, how are students expected to feel comfortable in bringing up their questions and lack of understanding? If students are not able to sort through their confusion about race and why race matters even though it is not “real” (and that reason is racism), how will anthropologists begin to have the important, but very difficult conversations with their students

to help them understand why many African Americans feel that Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown were murdered and that the justice system is complicit in that murder?

One recommendation is for a more explicit discussion in anthropology classes and in anthropology textbooks about the benefits of the North American racial system to whites. While I observed and noted many references to racism in the recent American past, it was less explicitly discussed in the present moment. Professors mentioned examples of racism in newspaper reporting, in sports team mascots, and in IQ testing, but they did not connect those events to a larger discussion of racism as a systematic and institutionalized force that benefits whites at the detriment of other groups. Without that connection clearly drawn, students who are unaware of current scholarship on race and racism will remain confused regarding the charges of racism that they hear. Including written or video narratives of individuals who are not White would also be of benefit to students because it increases the diversity of voices and enhances student understanding of groups of people or perspectives they may not have previously encountered.

Instructors need to incorporate the theory of colorblindness into their lessons on race. This ensures that students who believe themselves to be tolerant understand that simply being tolerant is not enough to end the system of racism. One way might be to incorporate colorblindness theory into the discussion of Native Americans as sports team mascots. Making the explicit connection between seeing no harm in making a minority group a mascot and being part of a majority group would challenge students who say that they do not see color to think about how that belief impacts their perceptions. Teaching this theory also directly connects the lesson with student experience in the world and helps students to understand why groups of Americans continue to feel the impact of race. Additionally, it bolsters the argument of



anthropologists by incorporating more recent critical work done on the issue of race outside of anthropology.

The discipline of anthropology is also long overdue for honest discussions about race and the role it plays in American anthropology. While the *RACE* project was a start, more sustained and member-engaged actions need to be taken, including discipline-wide dialogue on the state of race in anthropology. As Johnston and Forman (1992) asked, why has the discipline not taken the charges of racism in anthropology seriously? It would seem that the only explanation is a large-scale desire of those in power to avoid uncomfortable insights in what has persisted as a White dominated discipline. Additionally, incorporation of the principles of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Feminism (CRF) into anthropological work on race, ethnicity, and racism could be the catalyst for change to the discipline if properly applied.

In both the classroom and among anthropologists, discussions that draw in current events and the seemingly polarized perspectives on race-related issues are a good starting place for learning to begin. In these cases, it is also critically important that non-White voices become more integrated into these conversations so that these perspectives are presented and contextualized. Doing so will allow better understanding for instructors, in turn allowing those (often White) instructors to guide their students in applying the concept of cultural relativism to race-related matters in their own country.

### **Regarding future research**

There are innumerable directions that future research on teaching could take. I will limit my suggestions to work that comes from the research and findings I have conducted for this dissertation.

One area of particular interest is to examine student attitudes and beliefs surrounding ideas about race before, during, and after the lesson(s) on race in the anthropology classroom. A variety of methods could be utilized to explore these ideas ranging from a survey created by the professor to focus groups held with students to asking students for written responses to questions regarding race. An expansion of this sort of work would be to follow up with students who have taken an introductory anthropology class at some future date to determine the impact of the lesson.

Additional work with anthropology instructors is also needed, particularly on a broader scale. While the instructors who participated in my study generally indicated the importance of this topic to them, it is likely that there is an untapped group of anthropologists who are dissimilar to my sample. Aside from the obvious need to work with anthropologists of color to document all teaching approaches to race, additional studies in other parts of the United States will be useful to determine the generalizability of this study. It would also be of value to compare the teaching of race across cultures to determine what, if any, similarities exist across the world.

The priorities of anthropology instructors when teaching about race are another area to be explored. Do most anthropologists tend to focus on the “social construction” message? Are there additional methods that professors have implemented to demonstrate the difficulty of classifying people into races? How have professors successfully engaged their students in this topic so that students have been able to shift their thinking on the nature of race? Along those lines, what materials would most benefit instructors who teach about this topic and how can those materials be made more accessible to those who teach? Many materials were generated with the *RACE* project, however, at least half of the anthropologists who responded to my survey were unaware

of any of the materials. Lastly, what impact do textbooks have on the material covered by professors? For example, I noted that two of the professors in this study covered much of the same material. I have covered that material when teaching race as well---and it is not a coincidence that the three of us, at three different institutions, are covering the same topics. Rather, we are all pulling material from the same textbook author. The impact of these choices would be an interesting study.

Another issue that arose in this dissertation was the discussion of “sensitive” or “uncomfortable” topics. Further investigation of the relationship between discomfort with topics and the effectiveness of instructors at teaching those lessons, as well as an examination of the cause of their discomfort, could yield potentially valuable information regarding additional ways to improve teaching. In the case of this lesson, it is likely that discomfort arises due to the contentious nature of race in American culture. Identification of reasons could, at the very least, show instructors that they are not alone in their struggle over teaching this topic.

A project exploring the value of exposing whiteness to students and providing students with the tools to address it would be a valuable undertaking. It is likely that some professors teach in the manner already; working with those instructors to document their work and the subsequent student outcomes would help to move research on race in a new direction for anthropology. Utilizing tenets of CRT and CRF would help to contextualize this work.

Finally, it would be interesting to research how to more effectively conduct public outreach with anthropological ideas. AAA has made some information available on conducting public outreach (such as instructions on writing op-ed articles) but more assistance is needed and it needs to be better dispersed. Additional training on how to convey complex ideas to non-experts would also be beneficial to anthropologists, including myself. One of the areas I initially

struggled with when I began to teach was how to express what was in my head to students. Though I have improved a great deal in this area, I know that I still have room to grow and I have gathered through doing this research that others feel similarly.

There is more work to be done on the topic of teaching in anthropology and on the teaching of anthropology specifically on the topic of race, specifically on teaching by anthropologists of color. This dissertation was an exploratory study to determine where anthropology lies in regards to teaching practices and beliefs around the topic of race. I have shown that there is a general consensus that “There is no such thing as race, it is a social construction;” this is a statement that has the support of many White American anthropologists. They attempt to communicate this message to their students and generally, students understand the basic message. However, this does not mean that the intricacies of the argument are well understood by the majority of students or by the general public. If anthropologists are serious about addressing the issue of racism that the discipline is in part responsible for perpetuating in the United States, they must continue to study the message that is communicated to students through introductory classes and the perceptions with which students leave the course.

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## Appendix A:

### IRB Approval and Approved Instruments



DIVISION OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE  
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669  
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799  
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-5618

January 19, 2011

Jennifer Hunsecker  
Anthropology  
4202 E. Fowler Ave  
SOC 107

RE: **Expedited Approval** for Initial Review  
IRB#: Pro00002970  
Title: Teaching race in anthropology

Dear Jennifer Hunsecker:

On 1/18/2011 the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above referenced protocol. Please note that your approval for this study will expire on 1-18-12.

Approved Items:  
Protocol Document(s):

[Hunsecker Protocol IRB.doc](#) 1/17/2011 4:45 PM 0.04

**Consent/Assent Documents:**

Name	Modified	Version
<a href="#">Hunsecker Adult IC minimal risk.doc.pdf</a> (students & faculty)	1/19/2011 9:17 AM	0.01
Telephone Interview IC with Waiver of ICD (AAA members)		

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:



(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note, the informed consent/assent documents are valid during the period indicated by the official, IRB-Approval stamp located on the form. Valid consent must be documented on a copy of the most recently IRB-approved consent form.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.116 (d) which states that an IRB may approve a consent procedure which does not include, or which alters, some or all of the elements of informed consent, or waive the requirements to obtain informed consent provided the IRB finds and documents that (1) the research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects; (2) the waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects; (3) the research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and (4) whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,



John Schinka, PhD, Chairperson  
USF Institutional Review Board

Cc: Various Menzel, CCRP  
USF IRB Professional Staff

## **RACE Expert Interview Questions**

### **Background info**

1. How long have you been involved with AAA?
2. How did you become involved with the Race Project?

### **Development of the race project**

3. What is the significance of the Race Project?
4. How is the Race project like or different from other AAA efforts?
5. What was the process of developing the Race project like?

### **Important topics in anthropology for the public**

6. What are the goals of the Race Project?
7. What is important for the public to understand about race? What do you believe they currently understand about it?
8. What impact has the Race exhibit had on the public's understanding of race?

### **Anthropological understanding of pedagogy**

9. What do you think instructors at the college level could learn from the project? From the exhibit?
10. How important do you think introductory anthropology courses are at changing public perception of race? What might make them more effective?

### **Anthropological understanding of race**

11. What is your understanding of race? How did you come to that understanding?
12. Do you think there is a prevailing anthropological stance on race? If so, what do you believe that is? If not, how would you characterize different conceptions of race in the anthropological community?
13. Is it important that anthropologists contribute to public understanding of what race is and is not? In what ways?
14. Is there anything else that you think I should know about the Race project?

## **Interview Guide for Ant 2000/Intro Instructors**

1. To get started, will you tell me your name, where you teach, what courses you teach, and how long you've been teaching?

### **Teaching/Important topics in Anthro for the public**

2. We're going to talk a bit more about your teaching experiences. I'm curious about how you learned to teach. Have you continued to develop your teaching skills? In what way?
3. Do you read teacher development materials or participate in instructor training sessions? Can you tell me more about these?
4. Thinking only about teaching anthropology, how do you feel about teaching introductory level courses?
5. What are three key messages you want student from your intro class to come away with?
6. Do you think there are any topics that anthropologists should bring into public discussion? Have they? In what ways?

### **The race concept/importance of/anthropological understanding of race**

7. What is your understanding of the race concept?
8. What do you think most anthropologists think about race?
9. Do you remember learning about race as a student? If so, would you describe how you learned about it? If you don't remember, please tell me how you came to your current understanding of race.
10. Are you familiar with the AAA race project? What can you tell me about it?
11. If you were going to design a race curriculum guide for other anthropologists who aren't as knowledgeable about how to teach this topic, what would you put into it? That is, what kinds of things should be included in a lesson about race?

### **Teaching about race (effectiveness of instruction, change in student understanding)**

12. When you teach, are you able to talk about race in a similar way? In what ways is it the same/different?
13. What do you think is the most effective way of teaching race?
14. Do you think there are ineffective ways to teach race? If so, would you share some examples with me?
15. What do you think has been most difficult about learning to teach this subject?
16. What do you find particularly rewarding about teaching this topic?
17. What do you find particularly challenging about teaching race?
18. How do you think your students think about race when they enter the classroom? Do you think it changes as a result of taking this class? If so, how?
19. Is there anything else you think I should know about teaching, race, or teaching race?

## Question Route for Student Focus Groups

1. I'd like everyone to tell the group their name, major, and something they like to do in their spare time. (5 min)
2. What made you decide to take an anthropology class? (5 min)
3. Think about a time when a teacher or a professor made a topic easy to understand. Describe what they did that helped you learn. (10 min)
4. What was it like for you when the teacher or professor made the topic clear? (10 min)
5. Now thinking about your anthropology class, can you tell me some of the ways your professor has helped you to understand the topic of race? (10 min)
6. What are some of the ways your professor makes the topic of race confusing? (10 min)
7. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all important and 5 being extremely important, how important do you think teaching about race is to your professor? What gives you that impression? (10 min)
8. Again, using the scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not very well and 5 being extremely well, how well do you think you understood race when you entered this class? What made you pick your answer? (10 min)
9. Once more using the scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not very well and 5 being extremely well, how well do you think you understand race now that you have taken this class? What made you pick your answer? (10 min)
10. If you were going to teach about race to another anthropology class, how would you do it? (10 min)
11. Of all the things we discussed, what to you is the most important? (5 min)

## Web Survey Questions

1. Do you define yourself as a:
  - a. Archaeologist
  - b. Biological Anthropologist
  - c. Cultural Anthropologist
  - d. Linguistic Anthropologist
  - e. Four field generalist
2. What is the highest degree that you have earned in anthropology?
  - a. Doctorate
  - b. Master's degree
3. When did you earn this degree?
  - a. 1-5 years ago
  - b. 6-10 years ago
  - c. 10-15 years ago
  - d. 15 or more years ago
4. Is your primary teaching role as a:
  - a. Adjunct professor
  - b. Associate professor
  - c. Assistant professor
  - d. Professor
  - e. Instructor

- f. Graduate teaching assistant
5. Is your primary teaching responsibility at a:
    - a. Research institution, state funded (institution engaged in extensive research, awards graduate degrees, funded in primarily through state dollars)
    - b. Research institution, privately funded (institution engaged in extensive research, awards graduate degrees, funded in primarily through private dollars)
    - c. Four year, state funded institution (institution engaged primarily in teaching undergraduate students, funded primarily through state dollars)
    - d. Four year, privately funded institution (institution engaged primarily in teaching undergraduate students, funded primarily through private dollars)
    - e. Four year, state college (formerly community college)
    - f. Two year, state college/community college
  6. What ethnic/racial group(s) do you identify with? (open ended response)
  7. What is your gender? (open ended response)
  8. In your program, what class is considered the entry-level anthropology course?
    - a. Introduction to Anthropology (four field)
    - b. Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology
    - c. Other (please specify)
  9. Is this class also part of the general education program?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  10. Have you taught this class in the last 5 years?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No (if no was selected, the respondent was closed out of the rest of the survey)
  11. What is the most important purpose of this class?
    - a. To attract new anthropology majors.
    - b. To convey important anthropological concepts to the general student body.
    - c. To serve the needs of current anthropology majors.
    - d. Other (please specify)
  12. What are the 3 most important concepts you want students to learn in this class? (open ended response)
  13. Have you ever attended professional development related activities to improve your teaching practice?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No

14. Have you ever used teaching suggestions from sources like Teaching Strategies in Anthropology or the General Anthropology newsletter?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
15. Have you ever taken a course on how to teach (e.g. How to teach anthropology or How to teach college students)?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
16. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The anthropological perspective on race is one of my priorities when I teach Introduction to Anthropology or Sociocultural Anthropology.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
  
17. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I feel comfortable teaching about race.
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
  
18. 3. In one sentence, state what you believe is the current anthropological understanding of race. (open ended response)
  
19. What do you think is the most important point that students in an introductory class should learn about the concept of race? (open ended response)
  
20. What has been your single most important resource when teaching about race?
  - a. A colleague
  - b. Course textbook
  - c. Non-course textbook
  - d. AAA resources
  - e. Other (please specify)
  
21. I have used materials from the AAA RACE project in my teaching.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
22. Any additional comments or notes to the survey author: (open ended response)

Appendix B:

Organizational Table for Dissertation Research

Table 12: Organizational Table for Dissertation Research

<b>Question</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Topic addressed</b>
1. What are the goals and objectives of instructors who teach introductory anthropology?	a. Observation b. Interviews	a. Myself, instructors b. Instructors	“Important” topics in anthropology for the public
2. How much importance do instructors of introductory courses place on the race concept?	a. Observation b. Interviews c. Focus groups	a. Myself, intro classes b. Intro instructors c. Students enrolled in Intro courses	Importance of race concept to instructors, message conveyed to students by instructors
3. How effective are introductory anthropology courses at conveying anthropological understandings of race?	a. Observation b. Interviews c. Focus groups	a. Myself, intro classes b. Instructors/discussion leaders c. Students enrolled in Intro courses	Effectiveness of instruction
4. How do student understandings of race change as a result of taking an introductory anthropology course?	a. Observation b. Interviews	a. Myself, intro classes b. Instructors c. Students	Change in student understanding
5. What are the disciplinary understandings of the race concept and how it should be taught?	a. Interviews	a. Board members of Race	Anthropological understanding of race, anthropological understanding of pedagogy

Appendix C: Categories for Web-survey and Interviews

Table 13: Codebook

<b>Interview type</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>
Advisory board		
	Teaching race	
	Anthropology and race	
	Racism	
	Public outreach	
	Race project	
Focus group		
	Reason for taking class	
	Professor's teaching ability	
	Professor explains race	
	Student understanding of race lesson	
	Importance of race to professor	
	Change in ideas about race	
	How students would teach race	
	Student perspective on social implications	
	Most important thing learned	
Interviews		
	Overview of ideas about teaching	
	Teaching introductory courses	
	Anthropology and public outreach	
	Understanding of race	
	Teaching about race	
		Challenges of teaching race
		Ideal way to teach race
		Actual way race is taught



Table 14: Student Focus Group Demographics

<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Victorino1	19	White		Female
Victorino2	20	White		Female
Victorino3	19	White	Irish, German, Polish, French	Female
Victorino4	18	Hispanic	Argentina	Female
Victorino5	20	Caucasian/ White	Caucasian	Female
Werth1	19	White	Spanish	Female
Werth2	24	Mutt		Female
Werth3	25	Caucasian		Female
Werth4	20	White	White	Female
Werth5	30	Arbitrary	Italian/Irish American	Male
Werth6	21	African American	Haitian	Male
Blanton1	22	Caucasian		Female
Blanton2	18	American	Native American, Irish, Jewish	Female
Blanton3	20	Black	Black American	Female
Rollins1	18	White	Italian	Female
Rollins2	19	White	Mixed (Heinz 57)	Female
Rollins3	18	Hispanic	Hispanic	Female
Rollins4	19	Caucasian	White	Female
Rollins5	42	White	White	Female
Rollins6	20	Caucasian	Mixed (Jewish, Russian, Cuban, Italian)	Male
Rollins7	22	White	Unknown	Female
Rollins8	18	Mixed Caucasian/ Hispanic/ Asian	Mixed Caucasian/Hispanic /Asian	Female
Rollins9	19	White	German	Female
Utlely1	19	Caucasian	Native American, Northern European	Female
Utlely2	18	Caucasian	Caucasian	Female
Utlely3	20	White	White	Male

Table 14 (Continued)

<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Hamels1	19	White Caucasian	American Born, Bahamian Raised	Female
Hamels2	20	White	Us	Male
Hamels3	20	White	Irish, Scottish	Female
Hamels4	20	White	Irish, Italian, Scottish, German	Male
Hamels5	19	White	White, Jewish	Female
Howard1	18	Caucasian/ White	American	Female
Howard2	18	African American	African American Gangster 24/7	Female (Gender is crossed out and sex is written in its place)
Howard3	18	Multicultural (White and Hispanic)	Puerto Rican and Italian And American	"Professor Howard says it's sex!", Gender crossed out, sex written in place, female
Howard4	18	White	American?	Male
Howard5	18	Hispanic	Mexican-American	Male
Howard6	22	Asian	Pakistani-American	Woman
Howard7	18	Black	Bahamian- American	Female
Howard8	19	Brown :-)	West Indian	Female

Table 15: Sources Used for Teaching Race (“Other” Category)

1	Self	Resp. said they were the most important resource; this may include research they did outside of anthropology training	16
2	Anthropology /academic training	Resp. said their training as an anthropologist, including their own research or grad school experience	14
3	Videos	Resp. listed videos (can be specific ones too)	20
4	Articles	Resp. listed articles, either scientific or popular	19
5	Textbook	Resp. listed textbooks	6
6	AAA materials	Anything from AAA, including <i>RACE</i> project	6
7	Can't narrow it down	Resp. were unable to list what they had used because it was too extensive	10
8	Non-text books	Resp. mentioned a specific book(s), including ethnographies, or said "non-textbook" readings	10
9	Life experience	Resp. used their own experience or experience of family/friends or of students or "personal narratives"	12
10	Web content	Blog, podcast, websites, other source	8
11	Other	I don't know what you are asking, "research", conferences, lectures, non-AAA sources (outside of NA, AAPA, other professional organizations), "a whole set of readings, discussions, etc", answers including colleagues, resources on population genetics, Obama, "all of the above" (meaning my choices listed above), "casts of crania from different geographic areas", "multiple reports and anecdotes"	22

Table 16: Categories for the Most Important Concept for Introductory Students to Learn about Race

1	Cultural construction	Race is culturally constructed and professor discusses that, whether in US alone or in comparison to other countries. Can imply element of critically examining own belief structures. Race isn't real but impacts are. Deconstruction. Getting rid of the idea. It doesn't exist.
2	Not biologically useful	Grouping humans into race-based categories is not useful in understanding human diversity. These categories have no predictive relationship to ability level. Arbitrary categories. Not "real" or biological basis for these categories
3	Identity & ethnicity	Professor focuses on identity component of the concept of race.
4	Common origins	All humans are descended from African ancestors
5	Race & power	Idea of race is related to attempts to gain power on part of Euro-Americans and their descendants. Examination of power relations in racial lens. Capitalism/economy, hierarchy of people/deservingness
6	Historical development of race	Historical accounts of how the idea of races were developed and encoded in culture.
7	Equal rights	All humans deserved to be treated equally, aren't because of race.
8	Human variation/Phenotype	Discussion of observable differences between humans. Observable characteristics do not mean race works. Differences in appearance do not have "larger" meaning. Evolutionary/adaptive nature of variation
9	Racism/anti-racism	Discussion of racism, impact of racialized thinking, ways to combat racism, whiteness, colorblindness
10	Miscellaneous	Catch-all category if nothing above works

Table 13: Current Anthropological Understanding of Race Categories

1	Cultural construction	Race is culturally/socially constructed and professor discusses that, whether in US alone or in comparison to other countries. Can imply element of critically examining own belief structures. Race isn't real but impacts are. Deconstruction. Getting rid of the idea. It doesn't exist.
2	Not biologically useful	Grouping humans into race-based categories is not useful in understanding human diversity. These categories have no predictive relationship to ability level. Arbitrary categories. Not "real" or biological basis for these categories
3	Identity & ethnicity	Professor focuses on identity component of the concept of race. Distinction of race/ethnicity.
4	Common origins	All humans are descended from African ancestors
5	Race & power	Idea of race is related to attempts to gain power on part of Euro-Americans and their descendants. Examination of power relations in racial lens. Capitalism/economy, hierarchy of people/deservingness
6	Historical development of race	Historical accounts of how the idea of races were developed and encoded in culture.
7	Equal rights	All humans deserved to be treated equally, aren't because of race.
8	Human variation/Phenotype	Discussion of observable differences between humans. Observable characteristics do not mean race works. Differences in appearance do not have "larger" meaning. Evolutionary/adaptive nature of variation
9	Racism/anti-racism	Discussion of racism, impact of racialized thinking, ways to combat racism, whiteness, colorblindness
10	Miscellaneous	Catch-all category if nothing above works (note: some people make distinction between social construct and social construct with harmful implications)