

THE EFFECTS OF A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT SERIES ON THE ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS
OF TEACHERS OF DIVERSE STUDENTS IN A MISSOURI
SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

A DISSERTATION IN
Educational Leadership, Policy & Foundations
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by
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DEVELOPMENT SERIES ON THE ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF
TEACHERS OF DIVERSE STUDENTS IN A MISSOURI
SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Contrary to what supporters of the “No Child Left Behind” Act (P.L. 107-110, 2001) would have us believe about the effects of this legislation, the academic achievement gap between students of color and White students, and between economically disadvantaged students and students from higher socio-economic backgrounds is not closing. Given the demands and accountability standards required by NCLB legislation (P.L. 107-110, 2001), why aren’t we closing the achievement gap and making better progress? It is my supposition that a culturally responsive approach to

teaching diverse students is needed if we want our students to succeed. This heuristic, multiple case study examined the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of six teachers in a suburban Missouri school district. During eight, two-hour sessions, participants explored their beliefs about White Dominance, their own identity development, and teaching in a culturally responsive manner. Their cases were utilized to investigate the research questions: (a) How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series? (b) What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series? (c) What aspects of the culturally responsive professional development series (if any) influenced the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students as self-reported in journal prompts and interview questions?

Pre- and post-attitudes surveys (Color Blind Racial Attitudes Scale, Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000), teacher interviews, and responses to reflective journal prompts were utilized for data collection and analysis. The primary method of data analysis was the heuristic method of phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1990).

During the culturally responsive professional development series, teacher attitudes and beliefs towards teaching diverse students did change as evidenced by their pre- and post-attitudes surveys, teacher interviews, and reflective journal prompts. While each participant had their own unique personality and teaching style, the aspects of the course that were most powerful for one of the participants were also aspects that would be powerful for the other participants. Creating community by engaging in authentic,

honest conversations regarding White Dominance and race and having opportunities to reflect and put into practice what they were learning became the avenue of effective change with this group of participants. Participants reflected about their own mental models, biases, and beliefs regarding racial bias, institutional racism, and White Dominance and how this affected their interactions with students, particularly their diverse students. Awareness of their own identity development promoted a better understanding of their diverse students' needs.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies have examined a dissertation titled “The Effects of a Culturally Responsive Professional Development Series on the Attitudes and Beliefs of Teachers of Diverse Students in a Missouri Suburban School District,” presented by Amy C. Casey, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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A WHITE GIRL'S STORY

I am from the tobacco farm, hide in the barn, search for fascinating rocks until second grade. Then it was move to the city...no more tobacco barns, rocks or even crazy cows chasing me down.

I am from Patty and Buddy, really. Mom was who knows where. Great aunt and uncle did the raising with my three "brothers" and little sister, stray dogs and stray people.

I am from fried porkchops, mashed potatoes and bread and butter at every meal. Long John Silvers if it was a special occasion.

I am from Charlie's Angels, Mork & Mindy, and MTV – Martha Quinn and ohhhh I love Duran Duran and Cyndi Lauper!

I am from "Do I need to get the fly swatter?" And "if your friends jumped off a bridge would you follow them?!"

I am from let's go down to the creek or walk back in the woods. I will stay in this pool until I become a prune!

I am from Christmas Eve, Easter, Thanksgiving – always a reason to eat, celebrate and be thankful. Better do it with at least 50,000 relatives or you haven't done it right.

~ Amy Casey 2006

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2001, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB, P.L. 107-110), promised that all students in our public school system would perform at a proficient or advanced level on state standardized assessments in reading and math by 2014. Those schools not meeting this requirement would face sanctions. The intent of this legislation was to close the achievement gaps between students of color and White students, and between economically disadvantaged students and students from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

Despite the promises of the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001, educators are not closing the achievement gaps in the United States. In fact, according to data from the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), while modest gains are being realized in the areas of math and reading in the early grades by inner-city students, absolutely no gains have been made in the secondary grades in the past seven years. Further, while the early grades did realize a modest gain, students from economically affluent, suburban schools with majority White and Asian populations are outpacing them (Zuckerbrod, 2007).

The key to effective school improvement is effective teaching (Lambert, 2003; Schmoker, 2006), yet NCLB focuses on teacher certification rather than teacher quality. NCLB legislation necessitates that teachers be “highly qualified” and it is convenient to focus on teacher certification as it is easily apparent whether a teacher has attained this,

or not. If teachers hold a bachelor's degree, full state certification, and have demonstrated competence in core subject areas, they are considered "highly qualified." However, this requirement does not address their teaching quality. Hawley and Nieto (2010) posit that "efforts to improve teaching are often generic...and typically are based on the idea that what works for one student works for another. A concomitant belief is that struggling students just need more of the same" (p. 68). They further explain that despite numerous studies on the effectiveness of culturally relevant pedagogical practices (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Murphy & Alexander, 2006), "most measures of good teaching do not deal explicitly with culturally relevant pedagogy" (p. 68). Gay (2000) describes culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 29).

Further, Kennedy (2005) writes, "The traditional induction to teaching encourages teachers to rely on their own prior beliefs and values for guidance and to think of their practice as a highly personal and idiosyncratic endeavor" (p. 11). A powerful practice of culturally responsive pedagogy is to examine and reflect upon one's personal belief systems. Muhammad (2009) believes that "educators' personal belief systems may be the most powerful variables perpetuating learning gaps in our public school system" (p. 14). Without explicit opportunities to improve teaching quality through the experience of professional development focused on culturally responsive pedagogy in which educators examine their personal belief systems, we may perpetuate the achievement gap.

My own school district is no different than most trying to meet the demands of NCLB. As a Midwestern suburban district with over 19,000 students that is experiencing

rapidly changing demographics, we are challenged to close the achievement gap. In response to this, during the summer of 2006, a group of six people from my district were sent to Gary Howard's REACH (Respecting Ethical and Cultural Heritage) training in Seattle, Washington. Completing his degrees in Cultural Anthropology and Social Psychology from Yale University, Howard is the president and founder of the REACH Center for Multicultural Education (Howard, 1999). I was an elementary assistant principal at the time, and during the training I had many opportunities to assess my own growth and beliefs, particularly in the area of White identity development. Lawrence and Tatum (1996) explain, "In general, racial identity development theory refers to the belief systems that evolve in response to the racial group categorizations given meaning by the larger society" (p. 45). White identity development, therefore, is the process that involves "becoming aware of one's 'Whiteness,' accepting this aspect of one's identity as socially meaningful and personally salient, and ultimately internalizing a realistically positive view of whiteness which is not based on assumed superiority" (Lawrence & Tatum, 1996, p. 45).

This group of six people who were trained in the REACH model, designed diversity training modules for the leadership and others in our school district under the name of the Diversity Leadership Cadre. Participation in the training was voluntary and was well received; in fact, the 28 administrators who attended requested a "Part II." During the summer of 2007, another group was sent to Seattle for the REACH training and we meshed the two groups together. We presented the "Part I" again in January for administrators who were unable to attend the first training after making minor revisions based on the previous year's feedback and adding a section on LGBT (Lesbian, Gay,

Bisexual, Transgendered). We also developed a second day (Part II) for those administrators wanting to take their diversity work deeper. In addition to the development of these modules, we discussed how to expand the training beyond the leadership of our district into their buildings and how to infuse diversity practices into our curriculum.

Parallel, yet separate from the creation and development of our Diversity Leadership Cadre, the superintendent hired a new director of ELL (English Language Learners) services. In a very short time, she brought focus to the ELL practices of our district, emphasizing the importance of language acquisition for our ELL students. Shortly after that, in an effort to better prepare teachers and pre-service teachers to work with linguistically diverse students, she, along with personnel from the University of Missouri at Kansas City (UMKC), and our former Director of Staff Development, secured a federal grant named Project EXCELL (Exceptional Collaboration for English Language Learning). They recently completed the final year of the five-year grant meant to develop several master trainers and provide financial assistance for those wishing to obtain an ELL endorsement. An important piece of the grant was the work at the university level to better prepare pre-service teachers for a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom.

Over the past several years, we have had a change in leadership that oversees the district diversity initiatives, and went through a transition with a new superintendent. Our current superintendent has identified three initiatives as the focus of our district. These include: (a) a focus on mastery learning, (b) professional learning communities, and (c) culturally responsive teaching. While these changes have been an improvement, we still have several fractured diversity efforts in place across the district. We do not have

consistency or cohesiveness regarding our diversity initiatives, nor have we identified an effective and consistent method of professional development to change teacher attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching diverse students. Therefore, I asked myself, is it possible to create an effective and consistent professional development model to address this issue? This was the question that caused me to design this study.

This heuristic, multiple case study examines a culturally responsive professional development series experienced by teachers of diverse students in a suburban Missouri school district. Discussion in this chapter is organized in the following sections: (1) statement of the problem, (2) purpose of the study, (3) theoretical framework, (4) overview of methodology, and (5) significance of the study.

Statement of the Problem

In the United States there exists a disparity of educational outcomes among students of diverse backgrounds. We often refer to these disparities as the achievement gap.

This achievement Gap refers to the fact that Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, and particular segments of the Asian American population, as well as students who live in poverty and those who speak languages other than English as a native language, achieve substantially less than their White, English-speaking, and middle-class peers. (Nieto, Bode, Kang, & Raible, 2008, p. 184)

The National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP Data, 2009), “a congressionally authorized project of the National Center for Educational Statistics,” has been reporting United States educational progress in reading since 1971 and in math since 1973 through long-term trend assessments. While the overall trend in reading improved from 2004-2008 for 9-, 13- and 17-year-olds, there was no significant

improvement in the gap between White and Black students or White and Hispanic students from 2004-2008. Further, most gender gaps remained unchanged (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009).

While there was a slight improvement in math achievement for 9- and 13-year-olds from 2004-2008, the achievement of 17-year-olds has not significantly improved since 1973. Further, there was no significant change in the gap between White and Black students, or White and Hispanic students from 2004-2008. Once again, most gender gaps remain in mathematics as well (Rampey et al., 2009).

So despite the demands and promises of NCLB, we are not closing the achievement gap. Given these statistics, it appears that educators are not prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners and this lack of preparedness may contribute to the achievement gap. Howard (1999) posits:

The inner work of multicultural teaching has been missing the piece in the preparation of White teachers. . . . Too often we place White teachers in multicultural settings and expect them to behave in ways that are not consistent with their own life experiences, socialization patterns, worldviews, and levels of racial identity development. Too often we expect White teachers to be what we have not learned to be, namely, multiculturally competent people. (p. 4)

In response, nearly sixty years after the Landmark case *Brown vs. Board of Education*, in which Thurgood Marshall argued that separate schools of the South were damaging to African American children, many educators and parents have reconsidered the concept of the separate school or “immersion schools.” Some might argue that teachers of color are better prepared to teach in diverse classrooms. There is research that demonstrates higher graduation rates for students attending historically Black colleges and universities as compared to those attending predominantly White institutions

(Fleming, 1984). Yet, not all people of color believe that separate schools are better for their children. They often compare the facilities and other resources of White middle-class schools with those of declining urban schools, equating them with educational quality (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

In contrast, in an extensive review of the literature prepared for the Heinz Endowment, Mason and Noblit (2009) contend that there is an adequate amount of evidence to support the claim that culturally responsive teaching can promote achievement gains, regardless if the teacher is White or a teacher of color.

So how do we go about assisting teachers to become multiculturally competent or culturally responsive? It is not as easy as providing a hand-out on the latest educational strategy or a sample lesson plan. Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull (2008) identify three areas of consideration for teachers to become multiculturally competent, or, in other words, culturally responsive. Culturally responsive teachers know how to:

- 1) examine their own cultural values,
- 2) develop understanding of the values of others and regard them in a nonjudgmental way, and
- 3) apply what they learn about cultural differences to the improvement of classroom practices, particularly in a way that is meaningful, nonthreatening, and not overwhelming. (p. xiv)

Teacher attitudes and beliefs can interfere and even be in direct opposition to culturally responsive teaching practices. By seeing themselves as technicians and considering teaching a technical task, it can be difficult for teachers to create a community conducive for culturally responsive teaching. If teachers believe that failure is inevitable for some and that students should be homogenized into one “American” identity, progress in implementing culturally diverse practices will come to a halt. This

thinking is representative of a deficit belief. In contrast, according to Ladson-Billings (1994), teachers with culturally responsive teaching practices have high self-esteem and a high regard for others. They see themselves as part of a community and see teaching as giving back to that community. They encourage their students to do the same. They truly believe all students can succeed and they help their students make connections between their community, national, and global identities. By doing this, they are demonstrating an additive belief.

Another challenge of implementing culturally responsive practices comes when we have systems in place that inadvertently continue the cycle of inequity. An example of this is tracking students. “The asserted purpose [of tracking] is to tailor the rigor and pacing of curriculum to meet the specific learning needs of each student” (Welner & Oakes, 2008, p. 99). When we track students, we sort them by skills, knowledge and resources. Generally based on the judgments of teachers, students or parents, tracking should not be confused with flexible grouping and regrouping of children in which groups of students are continually shifted as they grasp new concepts and objectives. Tracking results in a system that duplicates the inequalities among races, classes and sexes that continue to hinder our society. If a child is placed in a low track, they never seem to get out (Menkart, 2002). Homework is rarely assigned. Rather than in-depth writing assignments, students are given worksheet drills with numerous multiple-choice questions. Further, high tracks tend to have a high number of boys in contrast to the number of girls as well as high numbers of Whites in contrast to the number of students of color.

Gloria Ladson-Billings' book, *The Dreamkeepers* (1994), examines the practices of highly effective teachers of African American students. Teachers were selected for the study by community nomination and then given a teacher interview. Observations of the classrooms were made over two years, each observational period lasting from 90 minutes to two hours. The teachers themselves assisted in the analysis of the data and were given an opportunity to self-critique as part of the study.

These teachers were highly effective as evidenced by “a willingness to include parents as active partners in the educative process without being patronizing and condescending; demand for academic excellence, including academic rigor and challenge; [and] ability to discipline the students without resorting to demeaning or abusive behavior” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 147-148). These same outcomes are aligned with culturally responsive practices. The students in these classes were successful compared to students who did not have the opportunity to have these teachers.

Another example of the transforming nature of culturally responsive teaching lies in the story of the *Freedom Writers* (Gruwell, 1999). In 1994, Erin Gruwell was placed in a classroom with students who were labeled as “unteachable, at-risk” teenagers. According to the story shared on the website, “Freedom Writers Foundation,” this teacher made a difference by practicing culturally responsive teaching with her students.

By fostering an educational philosophy that valued and promoted diversity, she transformed her students' lives. She encouraged them to rethink rigid beliefs about themselves and others, to reconsider daily decisions, and to rechart their futures. With Erin's steadfast support, her students shattered stereotypes to become critical thinkers, aspiring college students, and citizens for change. They even dubbed themselves the “Freedom Writers”—in homage to the Civil Rights activists the “Freedom Riders”—and published a book. (Freedom Writers Foundation, 2006)

In my own experience, I have seen the difference culturally responsive teaching makes. While teaching fifth grade, I allowed my students to set the norms for our class. I allowed them to discuss their concerns and successes during daily community meetings. I was careful to honor the different cultures represented in my classroom and made sure I included those perspectives as I taught, particularly in social studies. I was careful to draw on the experiences of my students and we practiced knowledge-building in cooperative groups. I set the expectations high and my students succeeded. Even today they are e-mailing me to share their successes with me. There is nothing more convincing than personal experience with the transforming power of culturally responsive teaching practices.

If educators were given the opportunity to explore their attitudes and beliefs concerning teaching diverse students, and the chance to implement culturally responsive practices, might we experience true progress toward closing the achievement gap?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this heuristic, multiple case study is to explore the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students in a Missouri suburban school district. Heuristics is a “form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” while focusing on “intense human experiences” (Patton, 2002). A case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are

not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). Case studies are often used to “describe an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred” (Yin, 2003, p. 15).

The following questions guided the research of this study: (a) How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series? (b) What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series? (c) What aspects of the culturally responsive professional development series (if any) influenced the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students as self-reported in journal prompts and interview questions?

Theoretical Framework

My training at the REACH center in Seattle and my experience in creating modules of effective diversity training for educators in my district have influenced and informed what I believe about changing attitudes and beliefs regarding diversity. In fact, it is through the knowledge I gained through graduate courses and the REACH training that my own attitudes and beliefs regarding diversity changed. Attitudes and beliefs are closely related and therefore it is essential to distinguish between the two. Milton Rokeach (1968) described attitudes as, “A relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner” (p. 112). Similarly, Gagne and Briggs (1974) described attitudes as “an internal state which affects an individual’s choice of action toward some object, person or event” (p. 62). Beliefs on the other hand, are formed early in our development and can persevere even when presented with contradictory information through time, academics or

experience (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968). White (1999)

conducted research on the nature and effects of beliefs and concluded:

1. beliefs help individuals to define and understand the world and themselves, and as such have an adaptive function, and
2. beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and play a critical role in defining behavior.

Rokeach (1968) explained that when beliefs and knowledge assemble around a phenomenon, they create attitudes. In other words, when presented with knowledge, we filter it through our beliefs in order to form our attitudes.

For example, while gaining knowledge through time, graduate courses and my training at the REACH Center, I came to believe that White people in the United States often struggle with the concept of culture as it relates to White identity and have difficulty defining what White culture is. Frankenburg (1993) explains:

...the cultural practices of White people in the United States in the late twentieth century must be viewed as contingent, historically produced, and transformable through collective and individual human endeavor. Nor can we view 'White culture' or 'White cultural practice' as a uniform terrain, such that one might expect all White people to identify in similar ways with the same set of core beliefs, practices, and symbols. (p. 232)

I also came to realize I didn't always understand the cultural differences of others, or my own White privilege. These ideas are consistent with empirical research conducted by Williams and Okintude (2000) with pre-service and undergraduate students. Their findings indicated that White students typically did not recognize the dynamics of White privilege intuitively. Most recently in the research, theories of whiteness and research regarding ways White people view themselves, their race and racial privilege have grown in a variety of fields including White identity development, critical race theory, cultural

studies, feminist theory and other social science disciplines (Wijeyesinghe & Bailey, 2012). This has become increasingly difficult as we become a more multi-racial society and scholars have challenged each other to define whiteness and White identity as well as have attempted to clarify what is meant by racism, oppression and White identity (Wijeyesinghe & Bailey, 2012). For purposes of this study, the following is true: “Varying by discipline, whiteness is seen as a position, an identity, a discourse, and more, but a common goal in most writing is the intention of understanding whiteness in order to dismantle White privilege and racial dominance” (p. 122).

Indeed, in the forward Howard’s book (2006) *We Can’t Teach What We don’t Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*, Sonia Nieto posits, “Part of the process of including Whites in multicultural education means defining Whites as “ethnics” who have their own histories and identities” (p. xv). She further states, “Without a recognition that Whites are ethnic – a designation usually reserved for anybody who is not White...it is too easy to characterize Whites as “normal” and others as “different” or “exotic.” When I understood this concept, I shifted my attitude to be open to the three critical developmental tasks in White identity development described by Howard (1999); they include, “Acknowledging the reality of White racism in its individual, institutional, and cultural manifestations; abandoning racism and engaging in active resistance to its many forms; and developing a positive, nonracist, and authentic connection to White racial and cultural identity” (p. 88).

When White people have not experienced these critical developmental tasks, they may have the attitude that everyone is the same or they might claim to be colorblind, “believing that one is not participating in racism if one learns to ignore color and feel

comfortable around children of color” (Sleeter, 1996, p. 38). This approach is detrimental to our students and families as it contributes to deficit thinking, “the idea that minority students labor under intellectual handicaps because of their family structure, linguistic background and culture” (Valencia, 2010, p. ix).

During a study in conducted in 2000, Lois Weiner (2006) found that “an impersonal, bureaucratic school culture undercuts many of the teaching attitudes and behaviors that draw on student strengths” (p. 42). Weiner (2006) further explains the deficit paradigm “casts student and family deficits as the cause of poor achievement” (p. 44). Quite the opposite, when educators demonstrate respect and affirm student identities through a culturally responsive culture, students are often able to overcome inequalities. This was evident in a 3-year study of academic achievement among Mexican American students in a Texas High School (Valenzuela, 1999). This study “located the problem of student underachievement not in students’ identities or in family culture or poverty, but rather in uncaring school-based relationships and ineffective organizational structures” (Hawley & Nieto, 2010, p. 69).

Gay (2000) posits that “Far too many educators attribute school failure to what students of color don’t have and can’t do” (p. 23). She further explains that, “Trying to teach from this ‘blaming the victim’ and deficit mindset sounds more like the basis for ‘correcting or curing’ than educating” (p. 24). This approach implies differences brought to the classroom are not valued.

My life experiences, trainings, readings, and research have brought me to my current understanding of diversity in which I embrace and celebrate our differences and consider them strengths in our society, rather than deficits. I believe that our cultural

differences bring fresh perspectives to our classrooms and our society. It is through this lens that I approach my design and make meaning of this heuristic, multiple case study. There is no “split” as my diversity work has become an integral part of my life and I wish for both to enrich one another.

As I was conducting a search of the literature to support this study, the terms I used during the search were: culturally responsive teaching, identity development, culture and human development, achievement gap, teacher beliefs, teacher attitudes, school reform, and teacher professional development. Searches of the ProQuest database which utilized 24 databases including ABI/Inform Complete, American Periodicals, British Periodicals, Dissertations/Thesis UMKC, and ERIC yielded 542 results: Throughout this search it was apparent that there was a gap in the literature surrounding the topic of culturally responsive professional development and teacher beliefs. Based on initial research and the research of many studies, it appears that Gay, Howard and Ladson-Billings and Nieto appear to be the leading experts on the topic of culturally responsive teaching. Their work provided many of the significant studies in the area of culturally responsive pedagogy.

As such, the five topics that make up the theoretical framework of my research are: (a) a history of the achievement gap, (b) culture and human development, (c) teacher beliefs and the academic success of students, (d) culturally responsive teaching, and (e) models for systemic reform including the important role of professional development.

This theoretical framework was like a blueprint or a detailed plan or program of action for me during this qualitative study. The framework includes concepts, expectations, beliefs, theories, and other research (Maxwell, 2005). Further, it informed

the rest of the research design, aided in assessing and refining goals, developing relevant research questions, selecting appropriate methods, identifying possible validity threats, and justified the research (Maxwell, 2005).

If we are to become more culturally responsive, examining our beliefs and facing our own prejudice and bias in our identity development as well as cultivating an understanding of culture and human development is essential. As we deepen our understanding of culture and its impact on human development, it will become apparent why culturally responsive teaching practices are needed in guiding the change of beliefs and attitudes of teachers of diverse students in hopes of narrowing the achievement gap.

History of the Achievement Gap

Race is one of several factors along with gender, class and culture that shape the experiences of the American people. Social scientists have studied these social constructs and their consequences for diverse groups in society (Anderson & Collins, 1998). Often the basis for significant social conflict, race is “not a fixed category, but a socially constructed category whose meaning shifts over time” (Anderson & Collin, 1998, p. 4). The United States has a history of White superiority in artistic, academic and cultural endeavors. In their revolution against England, our founders believed that they had created a society based on equality rather than class. However, the “inalienable rights” and “equality and justice for all” pertained only to White, male, property owners (Howard, 1999). “As the social sciences developed in the latter years of the 19th and 20th

centuries, ‘scientific’ traits defending white [sic] supremacy appeared with regularity”

(Berlack, 2001). Horsman (1981) explains this progression:

By 1850, a clear pattern was emerging. From their own successful past as Puritan colonists, Revolutionary patriots, conquerors of the wilderness, and creators of an immense material prosperity, the Americans had evidence plain before them that they were a chosen people; from the English they had learned that the Anglo-Saxons had always been peculiarly gifted in the arts of government; from the scientists and ethnologists they were learning that they were of a distinct Caucasian race, innately endowed with the abilities that placed them above other races; from the philologist, often through literary sources, they were learning that they were the descendants of those Aryans who followed the sun to carry civilization to the whole world. (p. 5)

Audrey Shuey’s work, *The Testing of Negro Intelligence* (1958, 1966) became the “definitive work on Black-White differences in measured intelligence” (Valencia, 2010, p. 35). In her 1966 edition, Shuey asserts, “[The test results] all taken together, inevitably point to the presence of native differences between Negroes and Whites as determined by intelligence tests” (p. 521). Her work was cited by others such as Garrett (1962), Newby (1967), and R. Travis Osborne and Frank C.J. McGurk (1982) to support the idea of genetic inferiority. Her work was however, challenged by Bond (1958) in regards to examples that concluded environmental factors were the major issues for observed lower IQ scores of Blacks, rather than genetics. Her findings were also challenged by Pettigrew (1964) who pointed out that there were only three psychologists of 21,000 members of the American Psychological Association who would accept the validity of Shuey’s claims. Further, Hicks and Pellegrini (1966) contended that Shuey inflated the numbers to create a statistical significance that did not exist in regards to conflicting interpretations of racial differences in IQ.

Arthur Jensen (1969) perpetuated the idea of White superiority with his statistical analysis of IQ testing. Jensen believed that differences in social class and variations of intelligence were not simply a result of environment, but were attributed to “genetic influence” (p. 2). Jensen’s analysis became the subject of much controversy and one of the most cited works in social science literature (Tucker, 1994). After his analysis was discredited by a number of other studies and publications (Crow, 1969; Phillips & Kelley, 1975; Smith & Bissell, 1970; Taylor, 1980), standardized test data were once again used to claim the inferiority of people of color with Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein’s publication of *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* in 1994. Relying heavily on the work of Jensen, this theory was discounted by a number of other researchers and geneticists; Fraser (1995), Gould (1996), and Kincheloe, Steinberg and Gresson (1996), and geneticist Nisbett (1998). With the scientific arguments supporting White superiority dismantled, it leaves one wondering how the academic achievement gap can be explained. Berlak (2001) concludes that there are three explanations for the achievement gap among races:

First, are students’ perceptions of the opportunities in the wider society and the realities of “making it.” Second, are the educational opportunities available in the educational system itself—within school districts, schools and each classroom. Third, are the cumulative psychic and emotional effects of living in a social world saturated with racist ideology, and where racist practices and structures are pervasive and often go unnamed. (p. 7)

While a pervasive achievement gap does exist, schools such as P.S. 124 in Queens, New York, Frankford Elementary in rural Delaware and Graham Road Elementary in Fairfax County, Virginia are high performing schools with a majority students of color population (Chenoweth, 2010). What sets them apart? These schools

practice the deeply held belief that it is their job to make sure that all students achieve (Corbett, Wilson, & Williams, 2005), a cornerstone belief of culturally responsive teaching.

Culture and Human Development

“Human psychological functions are cultural in their nature, and human psychological development is culturally guided and personally constructed” (Valsiner, 2000, p. 1). It is impossible to extract one’s culture from their learning as people learn through the filter of their culture. Valsiner continues by asserting that cultural psychologies “attempt to make sense of the ways in which culture assists the person in construction of his or her psychological world” (p. 1). However, people often give little thought to their own culture. Rogoff (2003) explains the importance of having contact with several cultural communities in order to see one’s self as actually having a culture and so as not to take the circumstances of their historical period for granted. In doing so, one can move from just seeing culture as what other people do (“Who me? I don’t have an accent”). It is common for people of Western European or American descent to see themselves as having no culture or of being “vanilla.”

Warmoth (2001) further explains that the mainstream, English-speaking culture of the United States has a limited sense of cultural self-awareness due to certain ideological characteristics of the culture itself that include “a tendency to see itself in a historical and universalizing terms, as well as a tendency to use racial categories to describe essentially cultural phenomena” (p. 8). Moreover, in studies of children and their development it is “usual to accept a prototypical middle-class European or North American child as the

norm for the human condition, and treat differences from that norm as either non-normal aberrations or as explainable by reference to ‘cultural differences’” (Valsiner, 2000, p. 3).

In fact, Cauce and Gonzales (1993) state that:

Children and adolescents of color have often been portrayed as “problems” which we dissect and analyze using the purportedly objective and dispassionate tools of our trade...With a White sample serving as the “control,” [the research] proceeds to conducting comparative analysis...Beginning with the assumption of a problem, we search for differences, which, when found, serve as proof that the problem exists. (p. 9)

As a result, this often leads people to make judgments on another’s culture based on the norms of the dominant culture. This practice is called *ethnocentrism*.

Ethnocentrism is “making judgments that another cultural community ways are immoral, unwise or inappropriate based on one’s own cultural background without taking into account the meaning and circumstances of events in that community” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 15). When we seek to understand the practices of different cultures, we need not seek out which way is “right.” Rogoff (2003) claims that “understanding one’s own cultural heritage, as well as other cultural communities, requires taking the perspective of people of contrasting backgrounds” (p. 11). Further, “there is not likely to be one best way” (p. 12).

Learning from others does not mean that we give up the ways of our own culture. Learning from others, however, does “require suspending one’s own assumptions temporarily to consider others and carefully separating efforts to understand cultural phenomena from efforts to judge their value” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 12). For example, as a young educator in an English as a Second Language School (ESL), I would often be frustrated that my Hispanic students would not look me in the eyes when I was speaking

to them. Based on my cultural beliefs, these students were being disrespectful of me. However, upon further investigation, I learned that in the Hispanic community, children exhibited their respect for adults and teachers by looking down. By suspending my own beliefs to consider this phenomenon, I was able to better understand, however this did not mean that I began looking down when I spoke to those in authority over me.

Arthur Warmoth (2001) explains the importance of groups of people sharing a particular worldview. He explains that a shared worldview allows groups to work together and adapt to the “natural world” allowing them to create their “social reality.” In other words, “it is culture that is the fundamental enabler and expression of distinctly human life” (p. 4). This carries over into the classroom. George and Louise Spindler (1994) conducted ethnographic case studies regarding Cultural Therapy. They went into classrooms and focused on every interaction of the teacher, essentially “holding up a mirror” of teacher behavior. They concluded:

Teachers carry into the classroom their personal cultural background. They perceive students, all of whom are cultural agents, with inevitable prejudice and preconception. Students likewise come to school with personal cultural backgrounds that influence their perceptions of teachers, other students, and the school itself. Together students and teachers construct, mostly without being conscious of doing it, an environment of meanings enacted in individual and group behaviors, of conflict and accommodation, rejection and acceptance, alienation and withdrawal. (p. xii)

If this is the case and we approach our diversity efforts in our schools without taking into account culture and human development, a deficit approach or belief system will continue to be the norm as diverse cultures are judged through the dominant cultural lens.

Teacher Beliefs and the Academic Success of Students

The phrase, “I believe all students can learn,” has been repeated in education for years. Indeed, was that not the intent of NCLB, to make sure no children were left behind in our educational systems? Unfortunately, some educators only give lip service to this and the beliefs that they bring to classrooms play an integral role in how they operate. Pajares (1992) stated “beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions that individuals make throughout their lives. Understanding the belief structures of teachers and teacher candidates is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices” (p. 307).

Identifying someone’s beliefs can be a complicated endeavor. Beliefs are typically inferred from what individuals say and do (Rokeach, 1968; Pajares, 1992, Ennis, 1994). In education, beliefs influence a number of curricular decisions from the selection of content, teaching strategies employed and the assessment of students. In fact, Ennis (1994) posited, “When beliefs are strongly held or have been part of the teacher’s decision-making structure for a long period, they often act as knowledge to inform the decision making process” (p. 169).

When teachers claim that all students can learn but their actions represent the belief that failure is inevitable for some students, a dissonance arises. This dissonance can be a result of underlying unexamined racism, prejudice or deficit thinking that are ingrained in a teacher’s belief system. Ladson-Billings (1994) described these teachers as “assimilationist teachers” (p.34). Assimilationist teachers seem to be satisfied with the “status quo” and “homogenize students into one ‘American’ identity” (p. 34). This belief system can be particularly worrisome if these beliefs are so deeply ingrained that they act

as knowledge. A way to counteract such a belief systems and address the achievement gap is to train teachers regarding culturally responsive teaching.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching “uses student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17). Ladson-Billings further explains, “The negative effects are brought about, for example, by not seeing one’s history, culture or background represented in the textbook or curriculum or by seeing that history, culture of background distorted” (p. 17). President George W. Bush stated “‘The No Child Left Behind Act’ expresses my deep belief in our public schools and their mission to build the mind and character of every child, from every background, in every part of America” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 1).

For several years now, schools have been implementing the requirements of NCLB in an effort to close the achievement gap among socioeconomically disadvantaged and culturally and linguistically diverse students, as well as students with disabilities. In a report by the Education Trust (2001), the seriousness of this task and the extent of the achievement gaps among groups were revealed:

- Of every 100 Asian kindergartners, 94 will graduate from high school, 80 will complete some college, and 49 will obtain at least a bachelor's degree.
- Of every 100 Black kindergartners, 87 will graduate from high school, 54 will complete at least some college, and 16 will obtain at least a bachelor's degree.
- Of every 100 Latino kindergartners, 62 will graduate from high school, 29 will complete some college, and 6 will obtain at least a bachelor's degree.

- Of every 100 White kindergartners, 91 will graduate from high school, 62 will complete at least some college, and 30 will obtain at least a bachelor's degree. (pp. 3-4)

These statistics are indicative of the symptoms of achievement problems and not the causes. Why do we even need to concern ourselves with culturally responsive teaching practices? Gay (2000) states:

Unless teachers understand what is interfering with students' performance, they cannot intervene appropriately to remove the obstacles to high achievement. Simply blaming students, their socioeconomic background, a lack of interest in and lack of motivation for learning, and poor parental participation in the educational process is not very helpful. (p. 16)

My experience with districts with changing demographics has been that most teachers have a difficult time adjusting to the cultures that become a part of their classrooms no matter the teachers' good intentions. They often have low expectations and negative beliefs about different cultures. In fact, Gay (2000) posits:

Many educators have good intentions about not being academically unjust and discriminatory toward ethnically and racially different students. Others understand and even endorse the importance of being *aware* of cultural differences in classroom interactions. However important they are, good intentions and awareness are not enough to bring about the changes needed in educational programs and procedures to prevent academic inequities among diverse students. (p. 13)

In contrast, many educators participate in what Ladson-Billings (1994) refers to as *assimilationist teaching*: “a teaching style that operates without regard to the students' particular cultural characteristics” (p. 22). In this style of teaching, it is the teacher's role to make sure the students fit into the dominant culture of society. Combined with low teacher expectations, this relegates these students to the lower rungs of society. These beliefs and attitudes simply add fuel to the fire of the vicious achievement gap. We are

creating the gap ourselves with our approaches to teaching diverse students, and this is evident by how the gap widens the longer students are in school. According to the NAEP report on 2008 Trends in Academic Progress (Rampey et al., 2009, p.12), there was no significant change for 17-year-olds at any performance level in Reading or Math. Engaging in culturally responsive teaching practices has the potential to help alleviate the achievement gap.

Culturally responsive teaching is built on the idea that culture is fundamental to student learning. According to Ladson-Billings (1994):

It is an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes. These cultural referents are not merely vehicles for bridging or explaining the dominant culture; they are aspects of the curriculum in their own right. (p. 18)

Echoing Ladson-Billings, Sonia Nieto (2008) explains the importance culture plays in education: “No longer is it possible to separate learning from the cultural context in which it takes place, or from an understanding of how culture and society influence and are influenced by learning.” Culturally responsive practices ensure that students see themselves in the history, culture or background represented in the textbook or curriculum. For example, when teaching Westward expansion to a group of fifth-graders, it is important to present this historical topic from multiple perspectives. For instance, how did westward expansion look from the African American, Native American, or Hispanic points of view? According to Jerome Bruner (1966), this view of cognition “takes its inspiration from the evolutionary fact that mind could not exist save for culture” (p. 3). Systemic educational reform is necessary to enact the principles of culturally responsive teaching.

Systemic Reform

Historically, educators have participated in school reform in reaction to criticism by various commissions and legislators. For example, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) “defined the problems of American schools in terms of international competition” (Franklin & Johnson, 2008, p. 460) in its report a *Nation at Risk*. The commission focused on economic challenges facing the United States and they claimed that the nation’s schools were inadequate to create a workforce with the skills and knowledge to outperform other industrialized countries. While a few were critical of the report, generally the public supported it and many state education officials were already working on school reforms before the release of *Nation at Risk*. “It’s publication, however, provided the impetus for an array of new initiatives that brought educational leaders, state politicians, the national government, the press, the business community, institutions of higher education, and ordinary citizens into the campaign for educational reform” (Franklin & Johnson, 2008, p. 470).

In response to *Nation at Risk* came the creation of national standards of academic achievement through various grants and educational organizations such as the National Science Foundation and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (Ravitch, 2000). No Child Left Behind legislation promised to hold schools accountable for low academic performance based on mandatory student testing and penalties for low performance.

Despite the fact that most reform is enacted as a result of criticism of our educational system, systemic reform is necessary in leading the change of an organization in adopting culturally responsive teaching practices. This is also referred to as *change*

leadership and a group at Harvard called the Change Leadership Group has made it their mission to:

Create and gather knowledge to support sustained systemic changes in K-12 public education that results in improved learning for all students, help school and district leaders create Leadership Practice Communities to strengthen local capacity for change and share key findings with a diverse group of educational leaders. (Wagner & Kegan, 2006, p. 74)

This approach has been implemented in several school districts to enact “whole system change.” One such school district is West Clermont in Ohio. This District began the process of Change Leadership in 1999. At that time only 46 percent of the non-special education students were reading on grade level. Five years later, 81 percent of ALL students, including special education students, were reading on grade level (Wagner & Kegan, 2006, p. 164).

The first key idea of leadership for change is “Leadership Practice Communities” which are leadership teams at both the school and district levels “collaboratively supporting a single, system-wide process of instructional improvement” (Wagner & Kegan, 2006, p. 77). These leadership practice teams work together as they tend to the change process while also developing an increasingly effective community of leaders and learners.

Other concepts of change leadership include a system of focused and deliberate efforts to improve teaching; recognizing what Wagner labels “immunities” to change; a framework for diagnosing systemic problems; and recognizing that “transformative change requires time” (Wagner & Kegan, 2006, p. 110).

Even if the framework is in place for systemic change, this work is best done from the “inside out.” In other words, it requires reflective practice and begins with a look at internal beliefs and attitudes before looking at outward results. This part of the process is best done through carefully constructed professional development opportunities. Allison Zmuda, Robert Kujlis, and Everett Kline (2004) point out that:

A competent system requires several significant shifts – from unconnected thinking to systems thinking, from environment of isolation to one of collegiality, from perceived reality to information-driven reality, and from individual autonomy to collective autonomy and collective accountability. (p. 1)

Once these shifts have happened, in order to sustain the change, conversations surrounding new challenges and the process itself must be allowed to flourish, and this best happens through a variety of professional development opportunities.

People make...fundamental transitions by having many opportunities to be exposed to ideas, to argue them to their own normative belief systems, to practice the behaviors that go with those values, to observe others practicing those behaviors, and, most importantly, to be successful at practicing in the presence of others (that is, to be seen to be successful). (Elmore, 2000, pp. 130-131)

Failure to continually assess the effectiveness of diversity initiatives was cited several times (Arredondo, 1996; Anand & Winters; 2008; Kandola & Fullerton, 1998) as one of the main reasons initiatives fail. This is a critical step in the systemic change process.

When one understands that we best learn through the filters of our cultural development and we apply culturally relevant teaching practices to education, we may see a decline in the academic achievement gap. We can turn to the best models and practices of school reform to sustain this change.

Overview of Methodology

The purpose of this heuristic, multiple case study is to explore the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students in a suburban Missouri school district.

When researchers are more interested in the quality of a particular subject or activity than how often it occurs or how it might otherwise be evaluated, they often turn to qualitative rather than quantitative research designs. Patton (2002) posits that, “Qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry” (p. 14). He further explains, “Quantitative methods, on the other hand, require the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned” (p. 14).

In qualitative designs, what one brings to the study from his/her own experiences—known as bias—is treated not as something that should be thrown out as in quantitative research, but rather something that should be valued. In other words, the researcher is the instrument. In order to defend this position, several qualitative scholars (Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002) cite the classic essay of C. Wright Mills (1959) in which he points out that, “the most admirable scholars within the scholarly community. . .do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such disassociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other” (p. 2).

In this study, each participant was a case to be examined. Case study research “involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Creswell goes on to explain:

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case)...over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 73)

This case study was limited to the volunteer teachers from a single school district and the time during which they participated in a culturally responsive professional development series.

Heuristics “emphasizes connectedness and relationships” (Patton, 2002, p. 108). Patton posits that the “reports of heuristics researchers are filled with the discoveries, personal insights, and reflections of the researchers” (p. 107). As a member of the Diversity Leadership Cadre, a Diversity Council member, a member of the Project EXCELL Advisory Board, and a former member of the Staff Development Committee, I am deeply entrenched and intensely involved in the efforts and culture of our district. By approaching the research this way, I was able to explore my own experiences, as well as the experiences of the participants to bring validity and depth to this study.

This study was critical in nature in that its “perspectives are concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender” (Creswell, 2007, p. 27). My goal was to understand teacher attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching diverse students in order to help move our school district into

becoming a more culturally responsive entity that truly celebrates our diversity, thus narrowing the achievement gap.

In a study, the unit of analysis is the focus of data collection. Here, the focus will be on “what is happening to individuals in a setting and how individuals are affected by the setting” (Patton, 2002, p. 228). For purposes of this study, the unit of analysis was the experiences of the participants as a result of the culturally responsive professional development series. This study allowed me the opportunity to explore the experiences (what was happening, the experience of) of a culturally responsive professional development series (the setting) on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students (how they are affected by the setting). These approaches will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3, the Methodology.

There are criticisms of case study research to be avoided. Case study research is often judged as lacking rigor. According to Yin (2003), “Too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, has not followed systematic procedures, or has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions” (p. 10).

As I analyzed the results of my case study, a thick, rich description provided the foundation for the qualitative analysis. Norman Denzin (1989) writes:

A thick description does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (p. 83)

A thick, rich description of teacher experiences of the course were obtained through interviews and reflective journal prompts in order to help avoid clumsy analysis and superficial conclusions in the case study.

Another criticism of case studies is that they take too long and produce massive, “lengthy narratives” (Yin, 2003, p. 11). I believe that by bounding my study, I was able to avoid this area of critique. I limited the study to one school district, and teachers from that school district for the length of time that the cultural responsive professional development series was being offered.

The site of the study was a suburban Missouri school district that earned the state’s “Distinction in Performance” rating on their 2010 Annual Performance Report (APR). The honor is based on a series of rigorous exemplars reflecting the state’s academic accreditation standards from scores of state-mandated MAP tests, high school end-of-course exams, graduation rates, ACT scores, and other measures. The school district serves over 19,000 students; 68% of which are White and 32% of which are students of color. Further, 48.7% of the students enrolled in the district qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Participants in the professional growth class were teachers and one administrative assistant who volunteered to participate in the study. By participating, the teachers had an opportunity to receive professional growth credit to advance on the pay scale. The administrative assistant participated in the course as an audit. Case studies were chosen through criterion sampling. All six teachers met the criteria for the study. The administrative assistant did not based on the nature of her job.

Data sources for this study included interviews of the participants of the professional development series from a criterion sample, journal entries written in response to prompts during the professional development series and pre- and post-attitudes CoBRAS surveys. The interview questions and journaling for this study focused on participants' cultural identity development, their previous concepts of diversity prior to the culturally responsive professional development series, and their beliefs and attitudes regarding student learning.

Significance of the Study

The achievement gap cannot be ignored. One indicator of success in closing the achievement gap in our public schools is the attitude and beliefs of teachers that it is their job that all students achieve (Corbett et al., 2005; Chenoweth, 2010). This is a cornerstone belief of culturally responsive teaching. By implementing a professional development training series that allows teachers to explore bias and their own cultures and identity development, the door might open to further culturally responsive teaching practices, thus facilitating bridging the gap.

Other schools and districts can utilize this research to develop culturally responsive professional development training series particular to their situations, meeting the needs of their students, teachers and families. A more complete discussion of the empirical studies that serve as the foundation of this study will be provided in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 2, I will present a review of the literature related to this study. I will elaborate further on the design of this study as well as address the limitations of this study in regards to validity and reliability in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I will present the findings

of the study, case by case, as well as through a cross-case analysis. Finally, in Chapter 5, I will share conclusions and implications for culturally responsive professional development, personal and social implications of this study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of our biggest challenges as educators today is to truly understand, fairly and objectively, the social, racial and socio-economic injustices that occur in our systems, particularly regarding legislation and high stakes testing. For years now, we have been trying to close the achievement gap among diverse students. The very legislation that was to ensure equity, leaving “No Child Left Behind,” fails to address the crux of the issue. Teachers need to be afforded opportunities to examine their beliefs and attitudes towards diverse students as well as be equipped with the tools to do so.

This study uses research from the areas of the historical development of the achievement gap, the role of culture and human development in education, teacher beliefs and attitudes, culturally responsive teaching/pedagogy and models for reculturing schools in order to understand these injustices and inequities. It is only then that we may bring about authentic change and close the achievement gap.

Diverse Students and the Achievement Gap

Given the demands and accountability standards required by NCLB legislation, why aren't we closing the achievement gap and making better progress? While many can argue the achievement gap is a construct based on the dominant society's values (Lee, Menkart & Okazawa-Rey, 2002; Sleeter, 1996; Gay, 2000; Vavrus, 2008), for purposes of this study I prefer to focus on why there is such a difference in achievement among White students and students of color as well as socio-economically challenged students

and I believe the difference exists for several reasons. It is because our schools continue to focus on what so-called “sub-groups” can’t do as opposed to what they can; we are not meeting the needs of our diverse students and ignore the important role culture plays in our classrooms; and we have not prepared teachers to be culturally responsive in their teaching by examining their own beliefs and attitudes regarding teaching diverse students.

The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), one of several educational reforms, came about as a result of the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993. The State Board of Education directed the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to “identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies that Missouri students should acquire by the end of certain grade levels and to evaluate student progress toward those academic standards” (DESE, 1010, p. 3). As a part of the assessment, students are identified as Advanced, Proficient, Basic or Below Basic in attaining the knowledge, skills, and competencies identified.

With NCLB, the goal is for all students to reach the Proficient level (as defined by each state) by 2014. In order to do so, every public school and district must make “satisfactory improvement each year toward that goal (NCLB, P.L. 107-110, 2001). This satisfactory progress has been named adequate yearly progress or AYP. Each Missouri school and district is evaluated to see if it has met its AYP for each student in Math, Communication Arts and Science. In addition, students are identified as a part of a sub-group (30 or more students in a category) and must make AYP as a sub-group. The current Missouri sub-groups are: Asian & Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, American

Indian, White, Free/Reduced lunch, IEP (special education) and LEP (limited English proficiency).

NCLB and the MAP use test scores for the purpose of defining achievement for each child. This standardized, high stakes method of defining achievement is narrow, relying solely on test scores to determine a child's proficiency level in math and communication arts. While achievement on a standardized, high stakes test is not necessarily representative of what any child truly knows, it is even more problematic when we compare "sub-group performances," where these differences are considered weaknesses. Many educators lack the pedagogical knowledge or skill to address this deficit approach. Geneva Gay (2000) posits:

Conventional paradigms and proposals for improving the achievement of students of color are doomed to failure. This is due largely to their being deeply enmeshed in a deficit orientation—that is, concentrating on what ethnically, racially and linguistically students don't have and can't do—and their claims of cultural neutrality. These positions are evident in current thinking about "at-risk" students and instructional programs that emphasize only the technical and academic dimensions of learning. (p. 12)

As a result, many educators rely on good intentions to ensure that no child will be left behind. Gay (2000) explains that educators' good intentions are not enough:

Many educators have good intentions about not being academically unjust and discriminatory toward ethnically and racially different students. Others understand and even endorse the importance of being aware of cultural differences in classroom interactions. However important they are, good intentions and awareness are not enough to bring about the changes needed in educational programs and procedures to prevent academic inequities among diverse students. Goodwill must be accompanied by pedagogical knowledge and skills as well as the courage to dismantle the status quo. (p. 13)

The combination of deficit orientation and lack of pedagogical knowledge and skills has produced the opposite of NCLB's intent. Contrary to what the "No Child Left Behind" policy's most fervent supporters would have us believe about the effects of this legislation, the achievement gap is not closing. In fact, according to a report produced from the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University led by Jaekyung Lee in June of 2006, "neither a significant rise in achievement, nor closure of the racial achievement gap is being achieved. Small early gains in math have reverted to the preexisting pattern." Further, "On the issue of closing the gap for minority and poor children, a central goal of NCLB, there are also no significant changes since NCLB was enacted" (Lee, 2006, p. 6).

Casserly (2007) disagrees, arguing that test scores in reading and in mathematics increased "at least in some places" (p. 43). He goes on to explain that "Reading scores in large central cities show significant increases on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), but scores nationally remain flat" (p.43). Casserly's conclusions are misleading in that he bases his conclusions on adequate yearly progress and transfer rates, rather than actually looking at individual achievement. This makes it appear the gap is diminishing. While he disaggregates the results by cities, he simply lumps all students together.

More recently, while NAEP data would suggest that Black and Hispanic students are improving in reading and mathematics, a study by the National Center for Education Statistics in 2009 and 2011 shows there is still a gap separating them from their White peers. Black and Hispanic students trailed White students by an average of more than 20 test-score points on the NAEP math and reading assessments. This represents a difference of almost two grade levels (USDE, 2011).

According to the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (2005), 82% of elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States are female and 85% are White. The district for my case study presents a different scenario in 2011. In fact, in my district, 79% of the teachers are female and 96% of the teachers are White. When we consider the student population, of the nearly 49 million elementary and secondary students enrolled in United States schools in 2004, approximately 42 percent were students of color (see Table 1).

Table 1

Total Public Elementary and Secondary School Students by Race/Ethnicity, 2004

Race/Ethnicity	%
White	57.9
Black/African American	17.3
Hispanic	19.2
Asian/Pacific American	4.5
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.2
Total	100.0

Note. Adapted from U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2004).

In the district of my study, 69.5% of our students are White and 30.5% are students of color. Thus, both across the United States and in the district for this study, White teachers, who may not examined their Whiteness, White privilege, or White power will

make up the majority of educators with students of color. Many of these teachers will be ill-prepared to meet the educational needs of these students (see Figure 1).

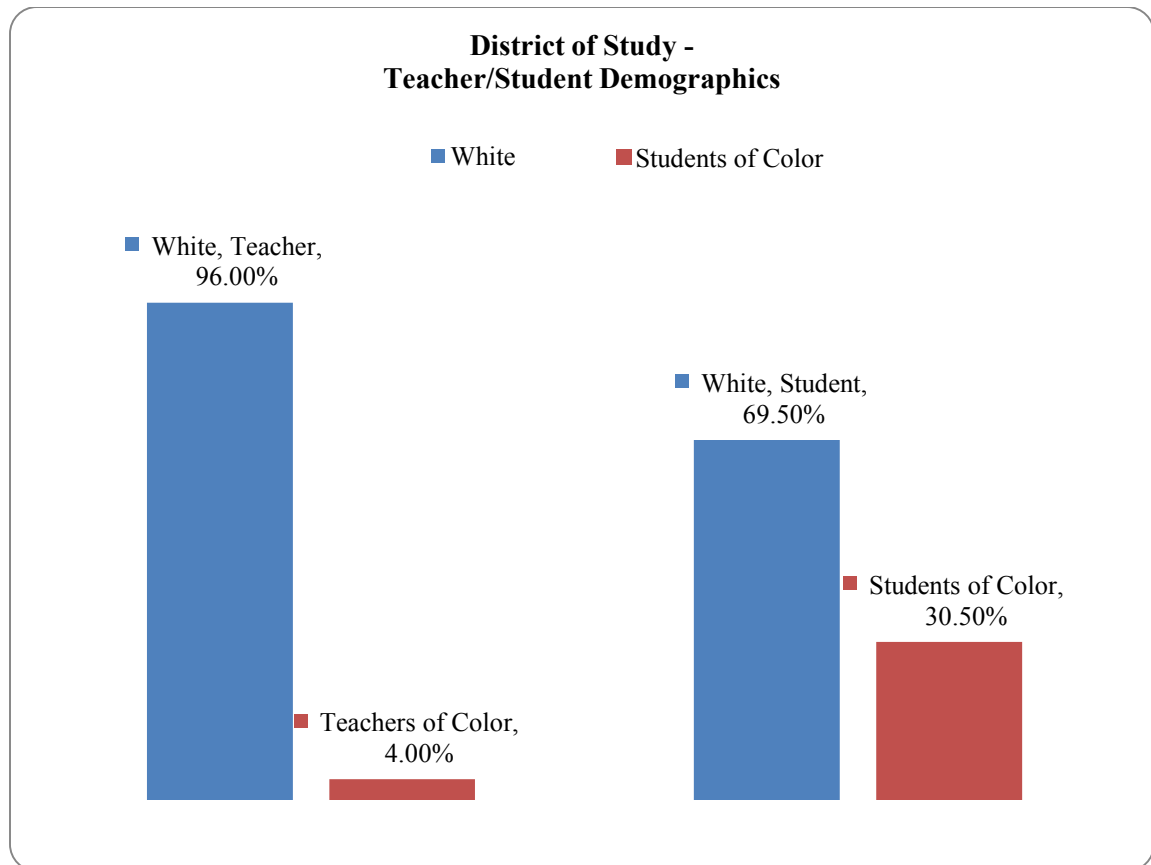


Figure 1. District of Study Teacher/Student Demographics, 2010

A Brief History of the Achievement Gap

Historically, claims of White superiority in artistic, academic and cultural endeavors were overtly racist. “As the social sciences developed in the latter years of the 19th and 20th centuries, ‘scientific’ traits defending white [sic] supremacy appeared with regularity” (Berlack, 2001). The eugenics movement gained support in the 1920’s and

30's with several leaders being instrumental in the passing of laws banning interracial marriage and the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924. With the passage of this act, eugenicists became expert advisors in the Congressional debate on the threat of "inferior stock" from eastern and southern Europe (Watson & Barry, 2003, pp. 29-31). The Immigration Act of 1924 reduced the number of immigrants to control the number of people from these regions entering the country. The eugenics movement was regarded as a serious and respectable academic discipline until about 1945.

In 1969 Arthur Jensen perpetuated the idea of White superiority with his statistical analysis of IQ testing. Even after his analysis was discredited by a number of other studies and publications (Kamin, 1974; Kohl, 1976; Gould, 1982), standardized test data was once again used to claim the inferiority of students of color with Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's publication *The Bell Curve* in 1994. This theory was also discounted by biologists and geneticists in the book *The Bell Curve Debate* (Jacoby & Glauber, 1995).

With the scientific arguments supporting White superiority dismantled, researchers turned to other explanations for the achievement gap. In 1966, the Coleman Report concluded "family background was said to have a greater impact on the academic success or failure of a student than the quality of school facilities" (National Archives, p. 10). In other words, social scientists of this time believed that students who came from a background of poverty or from parents who were "uneducated" would have difficulty learning regardless of the method of instruction. This led to Title I funded programs which "taught low-income children to learn in ways that conformed to most schools' preferred ways of teaching" (Lezotte & McKee, 2002, p. 13). In order to receive Title I

funding, schools are required to follow strict guidelines and while Title I does not dictate a certain method of instruction, it does require that strategies used with our “neediest” children are scientifically research-based. Given that the programs created at this time were to compensate for student’s disadvantaged backgrounds, this mentality fits the “cultural deficit” model described by Manning and Baruth (2004) and Olssen (2004). According to Manning and Baruth (2004), the cultural deficit model is enacted when “students who are culturally different are thought of as ‘deprived,’ ‘disadvantaged,’ and ‘socially deprived’” (p. 47).

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was published, insisting that a crisis was occurring in American Education. Franklin and Johnson (2008) summarize the report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education by stating that “the nation’s system of education, which they deemed to be inadequate, undercut the United States’ ability to create the skilled and knowledgeable workforce necessary to maintain its industrial and technological superiority” (p. 470). Further, our school systems weakened the “intellectual, moral, and spiritual strengths of our society” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 7). This report continued the idea of “cultural deficit” as it “reinforced the unequal status of segments of the population, particularly ethnic and racial minorities” (Franklin & Johnson, 2008, p. 470).

Some might argue that many things have changed since 1983. NCLB, signed into law by President Bush in 2002, promised many things for education. In fact, the U.S. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, proclaimed that “under this new law, we will strive to provide every boy and girl in America with a high-quality education—regardless of his or her income, ability or background” (O’Donnell, Pruyne, & Chavez, 2004, p. 175). The law

focuses mostly upon testing and accountability, and strengthening the federal role in controlling core aspects of education. Hess and Finn (2007) state that NCLB:

Radically overhauled Washington's role in education, rewrote the rules, and reassigned power—including more to Uncle Sam than ever before—while striving to boost overall pupil achievement, narrow a host of learning gaps, and assure every student a highly qualified teacher. (p. 2)

Apple (2008) warns that while the legislation incorporates a number of “progressive sounding issues...often couched in seemingly progressive language,” it “continues an established tradition of the conservative production of discourse that incorporates progressive language while simultaneously advancing key elements of the neoliberal and neoconservative agendas” (p. 29).

Apple (2008) criticizes high-stakes testing, a cornerstone for NCLB, for failing students of color in particular. Referring to the unsuccessful accountability system of Texas, which provided most of the justification for NCLB, he addresses three major problems:

The negative results in promotion, retention, and graduation are worrisome and fully raced. Much of this comes from using a standardized test as the only legitimate measure of student abilities....In addition, the accountability system interrupts the ways of knowing that are powerful in the cultures and languages of a diverse student population, making it even more difficult to connect the curriculum to students' lived realities. (p. 30)

While explaining that the Bush administration referred to education as “an issue of ‘national security’ and an instrument of ‘economic prosperity,’” McLaren and Jaramillo (2004, p. 282), question whose interests are being served:

Whereas NCLB purports to focus on the poor and on students of color, it is likely that the legislation will run congruent to the reproduction of capitalist social relation and the global division of labor in general and thus benefit the wealthy and regulate the poor. (p. 282)

Kozol (2005) compares the NCLB legislation with a game of musical chairs, criticizing President Bush: “Playing games of musical chairs with children’s lives, when half the chairs are broken and the best chairs are reserved primarily for people of his class and race, is cynical behavior in a president” (p. 204).

In evaluating NCLB remedies, Hess and Finn (2007, p. 317) question the effectiveness of these remedies on the larger goal of student achievement. NCLB legislation calls for “scientifically-based” research and evaluation. Hess and Finn point out that “experience with these sorts of remedies outside the NCLB context provides little cause to believe that they reliably yield heightened student achievement or school improvement” (p. 317).

Schmoker (2006) concludes that “our typical attempts to reform our schools not only fail but will have a corrupting effect as we engage in the pretense of instructional improvement” (p. 30). This is clear when we take a close look at the history of school reform. “Successful and sustainable school reform cannot be done piecemeal” (Lezotte & McKee, 2006, p. xi). Yet this is often what happens with reform, particularly in the area of Diversity.

While a pervasive achievement gap does exist, a few schools are not experiencing the gap between students of color, low-income students, and White students. What sets them apart? These schools practice the deeply held belief that it is their job to make sure that all students achieve (Corbett et al., 2005), a cornerstone of culturally responsive teaching. To fully comprehend culturally responsive teaching, one first needs to understand the role culture plays in our development.

Culture and Human Development

There are many definitions of culture in the literature; and, though they are worded differently, most express the similar meanings. Hatch (1985) defines culture as:

Culture is the way of life of a people. It consists of conventional patterns of thought and behavior, including values, beliefs, rules of conduct, political organization, economic activity and the like, which are passed on from one generation to the next by learning—and not by biological inheritance. (p. 178)

DeVito's (2000) definition varies little from Hatch's, yet includes the aspect of religion:

Culture is the relatively specialized lifestyle of a group of people—consisting of their values, beliefs, artifacts, ways of behaving, and ways of communicating—that is passed on from one generation to the next. Included in culture would be everything that members of a social group have produced and developed—their language, modes of thinking, art, laws and religion. (p. 90)

Jackson and Garner (1998) add the component of geography to the definition:

Culture is a term to describe a set of patterns, beliefs, behaviors, institutions, symbols, and social practices shared and perpetuated by a consolidated group of individuals connected by an ancestral heritage and a concomitant geographical reference location. (p. 44)

For the purposes of this study the definition by Manning and Baruth (2004) will be used. This definition is a synthesis of the literature. “We define culture as people’s values, language, religion, ideals, artistic expressions, patterns of social and interpersonal relationships, and ways of perceiving, behaving and thinking” (p. 40). Rogoff (2003) refers to these as cultural tools which contribute to the sociocultural process of human development, and it is through the use of these tools that human beings learn from one another. In other words, we learn from one another when we share language and artistic expression. As we share our ways of perceiving, we understand one another better.

Rogoff (2003) asserts that, “People develop as participants in cultural communities. Their development can be understood only in light of the cultural practices and circumstances of their communities—which also change” (pp. 3-4). Similarly, Valsiner (2000) posits “Human psychological functions are cultural in their nature and human psychological development is culturally guided and personally constructed” (p. 1). Valsiner continues by stating that cultural psychologies “attempt to make sense of the ways in which culture assists the person in construction of his or her psychological world” (p. 1).

Culturally Guided Identity Development

If our psychological development is contingent upon our culture and the cultural processes to which we’re exposed, what happens when we live, grow and develop in an increasingly multicultural society? While race should not be confused with culture, our race does contribute to our culture. Lee et al. (2002) explain:

Race is not a biological construct with clearly definable features and characteristic, as most of us were taught to think. Yet, as it has been constructed in our society, race plays a critical role in many social interactions in general. Racism is pervasive and has an impact on all aspects of society. (p. viii)

With this in mind, the United States was traditionally thought of as a “melting pot,” a metaphor referring to immigrants to the United States assimilating into a common culture with their differences melting away. In the 1970’s, this metaphor began to give way to the new metaphor, the “salad bowl,” as proponents of multiculturalism held that “people do not lose their differences when they immigrate to the United States.

Moreover, the diversity of their cultural backgrounds deeply enriches the nation”

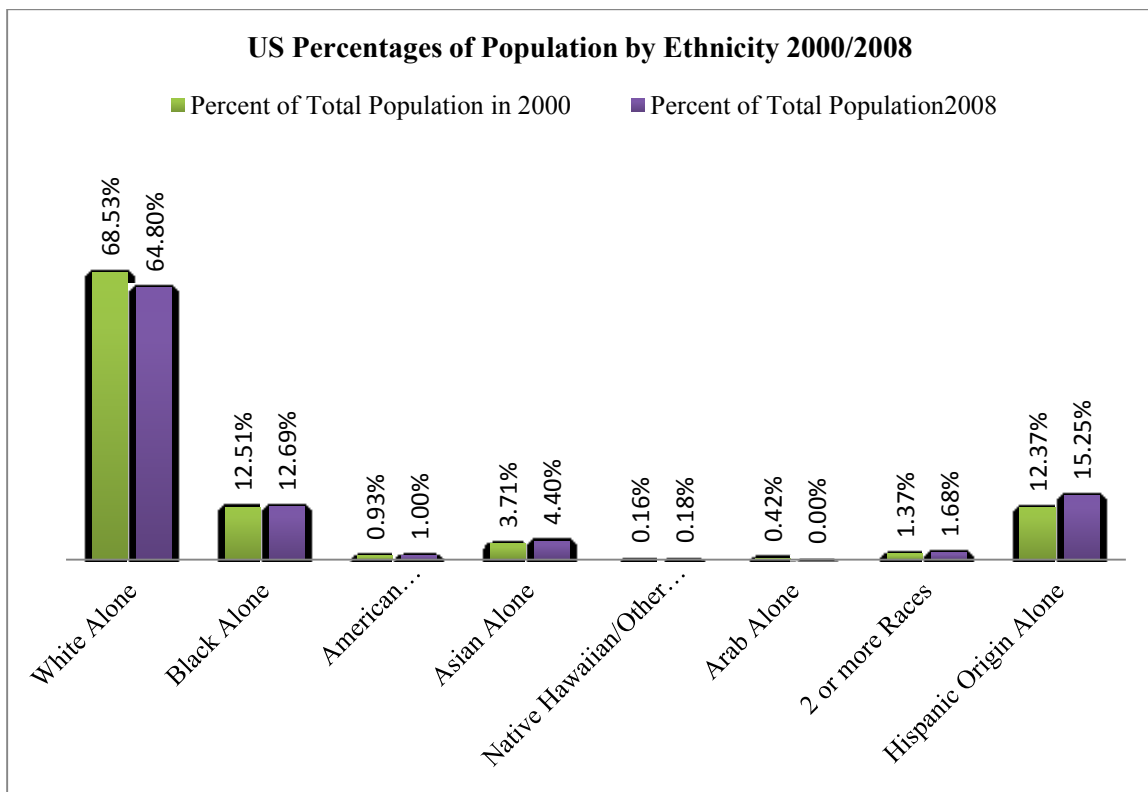
(Manning & Baruth, 2004, p.28). Table 2 and Figure 2 below, show the multicultural nature of the United States.

Table 2

US Population by Ethnicity

	2000	2008
Not Hispanic/White Alone	195,577,000	199,491,000
Black Alone	35,705,000	39,059,000
American Indian/Alaskan Native Alone	2,664,000	3,083,000
Asian Alone	10,589,000	13,549,000
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Alone	463,000	562,000
Arab Alone	1,189,731	Not available
Two or more races	3,898,000	5,167,000
Hispanic Origin Alone	35,306,000	46,944,000
Total	281,425,000	304,060,000

Note: Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2008). *Statistical abstracts of the United States*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0009.pdf>.



Note: The White population is decreasing whereas the other ethnicities are increasing. Further, the Hispanic population is exceeding the Black population as the highest percentage of students of color population. Please note that 2008 data was not available for the Arab population.

Figure 2. US Percentages of Population by Ethnicity

Immigration, interracial marriage and demographic shifts may cause people to experience contact with many differing cultures. This can present many challenges, especially when the ways of one cultural group clash with the ways of another. So while contact among different cultural groups can be enriching and a source of creativity, it can also be a source of conflict. Typically these conflicts stem from the dominant culture's belief that their own culture is the "One Best Way" (Rogoff, 2003). The belief in "One Best Way" leads to ethnocentrism.

Ethnocentrism is the belief that your own culture is the only correct one, and that the way your culture approaches issues is the correct and civilized way (Hernandez, 1989; Berger & Luckman, 1966; Jahoda & Krewer, 1997; Rogoff, 2003; Manning & Baruth, 2004). Rogoff (2003) explains, “Ethnocentrism involves making judgments that another cultural community’s ways are immoral, unwise, or inappropriate based on one’s own cultural background without taking into account the meaning and circumstances of events in that community” (p. 15). As a result, we often judge other cultures by our own cultural standards, believing our own standards are correct and viable while the others are incorrect and nonviable.

In the United States, the dominant culture consists primarily of Whites, making it easy for Whites to fall into ethnocentrism. Sleeter (1996) states:

Whites draw on their own experiences to understand inequality, and their interpretation of that experience usually upholds their belief that the rules of society apply roughly the same to everyone. Haves and have-nots rise or fall by their own merit or effort, for the most part. (p. 37)

Howard (1999) echoes that thought. “Because of our social positionality as Whites in Western settings, the arrangements of dominance may appear ‘normal’ to us, part of the assumed and natural fabric of reality” (p. 34).

Moving away from this ethnocentric view does not require us to avoid informed value judgments, nor does it require us to give up our ways to become more like others. However, it does require that we consider there can be more than “One Best Way,” and causes us to seek to understand and respect those other ways.

White Privilege and Dominance

Howard (1999) states, “If we do not face dominance, we may be predisposed to perpetuate it” (p. 26). Dominance is an uncomfortable topic but one that needs to be explored if we are to bring about equality and justice in our education system. “The dominant culture promotes the myth that the basic structures and institutions of the society—educational, economic, social—are fair and democratic” (Lee et al., 2002, p. xi). Yet we know this is not true. The achievement gap continues, drop-out rates among students of color is disproportionately high (Lee, 1996), poverty is highest among children of color (Males, 1996), and prison rates among Black males are disproportionately high (Lee, 1996). In fact, according to the New York Times in 2003, an estimated 12% of Black men ages 20 to 34 were in jail or prison while only 1.6% of White men in the same age group were incarcerated.

As our schools become increasingly racially and culturally diverse, it is necessary for Whites to confront the truth of their dominance and privilege in order to become truly culturally responsive. Whites experience many privileges based on nothing more than the color of our skin. In the classic essay “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” (the first essay on White privilege published by a White person) Peggy McIntosh (1988) pens a long list of advantages she enjoys in her daily life including going shopping without being harassed or followed; turning on the TV and picking up the newspaper to find people of her race widely represented; and, when she asks to talk to the “person in charge,” she can be fairly certain it will be a person of her race. Throughout her essay she shares her experience of being taught to ignore her privilege. “I was taught

to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring racial dominance on my group from birth” (p. 81).

In response to McIntosh’s work, Leonardo (2009) asserts:

Although they clearly benefit from racism in different ways, whites [sic] as a racial group secure supremacy in almost all facets of social life. The concept of race does not just divide the working class along racial lines and compromise proletarian unity. Racism divides the White bourgeoisie from the Black bourgeoisie, and white women from women of color. In other words, race is an organizing principle that divides across class, gender, and other imaginable social identities. (p. 78)

While our schools can be a place in which the truth of this statement can be confirmed daily, they can also serve as a place to bring healing and change.

It is common for White educators to attempt to treat everyone the same way and ignore differences. This is the color-blind approach and is often accompanied by comments such as, “I don’t see color. I treat everyone the same.” Howard (1999) posits, “The declaration of colorblindness assumes that we can erase our racial categories, ignore differences, and thereby achieve an illusory state of sameness or equality” (p. 53). He continues, “Colorblindness grows from a dominance-oriented perspective. Difference threatens dominance because it upsets the belief in one’s own rightness” (pp. 53-54). Once again, we see the belief in “One Best Way” at work.

In a study with White educators, Sleeter (1996) found that many of the teachers upheld the colorblind approach and believed they were not participating in racism if they ignored color. She explains, “Convinced that individual attitudes and stereotypes form the basis of racism, Whites try very hard not to see color and therefore not to hear race-related information; Whites also experience guilt when confronted with information

about racism.” Her claim that Whites experience guilt when confronted with racism is consistent with the literature on White identity development (Helms, 1990, 1992, 1994; Howard, 1999; Lawrence & Tatum, 1996; Tatum 1997).

Personally Constructed Identity Development

Knowing that we are faced with tremendous cultural, ethnic, religious and socioeconomic diversity in our schools today, we are challenged to educate in ways that reflect understanding and respect these differences. However, it is difficult for us to explore the cultural, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic diversity of others if we have not first explored our own culture and identity development.

Identity is developed by our individual characteristics, family influence, historical, social, and political factors. We have come to understand through the work of Erickson (1968) the important role of self-reflection and observation in identity development:

We deal with a process “located” in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture. In psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. This process is, luckily, and necessarily, for the most part unconscious except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or elated, “identity-consciousness.” (p. 22)

Typically in the United States, this identity-consciousness is experienced during the period of adolescence.

Lawrence and Tatum (1996) describe the process of racial identity development as more circular than linear as people may spiral back and forth through the stages, beginning in adolescence and continuing into adulthood:

In general, racial identity development theory refers to the belief systems that evolve in response to the racial group categorizations given meaning by the larger society. In societies like the U.S., where racial-group membership is an important determinant of social status, it is assumed that the development of a racial identity will occur, to some degree, in everyone. (p. 45)

Based on the identity development work of Janet Helms, author of over 60 empirical and theoretical articles and four books on racial identity and the cultural influences on assessment and counseling practices, Tatum (1997) explains that “The task for people of color is to resist negative societal messages and develop an empowered sense of self in the face of a racist society.” She continues:

The task for Whites is to develop a positive White identity based in reality, not on assumed superiority. In order to do that each person must become aware of his or her Whiteness, accept it as personally and socially significant and learn to feel good about it, not in the sense of a Klan member’s “White Pride,” but in context of a commitment to a just society. (p. 94)

The stages of identity development characterize a “White individual’s pattern of responding to racial situations in his or her environment” (Lawrence & Tatum, 2002, p. 45). There are two phases in the process of developing a positive White identity (Helms, 1990). The first is the abandonment of a racist identity. This phase has three stages: (a) *contact*, (b) *disintegration*, and (c) *reintegration*. The second phase is the establishment of a nonracist White identity. This phase also has three stages: (d) *pseudoindependence*, (e) *immersion/emersion*, and (f) *autonomy*.

In order to make sense of these stages, I will share my own White identity development.

Abandonment of a racist identity. During the contact stage, Whites may be oblivious to their Whiteness and see themselves as “normal.” They are typically ignorant of White privilege and “unaware of the benefits that come to us because of institutional and cultural racism” (Howard, 1999, p. 89). I was in the contact stage until my third grade year in elementary school. Up until this point, I had not noticed that I was White or that there were other colors of skin. I just saw other kids like me who were learning and wanted to play. I met an African American student and we became the best of friends. I was fascinated by Janice Thorton. I loved her beautiful braids. She was so fun to play with and we both loved to sing! She was a great dancer and the best friend a girl could have! I told my aunt all about her and all the nice things she did for me.

My contact stage came to an abrupt end when my heart was broken. I asked my aunt if Janice could spend the night with me. I was told “no.” When I asked why, it was made clear that we didn’t mix with Black people and that I needed to find a new best friend who was White. I remember crying myself to sleep that night. I thought so highly of Janice and we shared many common interests.

These events brought me to the disintegration stage. As is typical in this stage, I mourned how unfair it was that I could not befriend her simply due to her skin color. I suddenly saw color everywhere and felt guilty and sad. I did not understand why it was a problem to be friends. I even remember thinking that my aunt was asking me to treat Janice like we treated animals: don’t bring them around, but don’t be unkind. It was so difficult to comprehend as a child. I was very angry with my family when my aunt

informed me that we “did not mix with that kind,” that it “wasn’t right [for me] to be friends with a Black girl.” I could be “nice to her—we didn’t want to treat anyone unkindly—but we were not the same.” I was forbidden to be her friend.

In the reintegration stage “feelings of guilt and denial may be transformed into fear and anger toward people of color” (Lawrence & Tatum, 1996, p. 46). I skipped over the reintegration stage and entered the next phase.

Establishment of a nonracist identity. The pseudoindependence stage begins “when we acknowledge White responsibility for racism and confront the fact that White people have intentionally or unintentionally benefited from it” (Howard, 1999, p. 92). It is typical of this stage to “help” people from other racial groups. This stage began for me around the age of fourteen. I was very actively involved in my church youth group, and we had an outreach ministry for inner city children and their families. I was on a personal mission to help these children of color. Unfortunately, I still was unconsciously exercising “White moral superiority” because I thought I had the real answer to their problems. As a matter of fact, this continued as I pursued my dreams of becoming a teacher. I thought to myself, “As a teacher, I could really help these children and their families.”

In 1993, I was a “green” teacher cutting my teeth at an English as a Second Language (ESL) site in Des Moines, Iowa. Twenty-seven percent of our population was Hispanic, and we also had a good percentage of African-American students sprinkled among our White students. It was here that my worldview really changed. I fell in love with my students and the beautiful diversity they brought to my classroom. I was

growing, yet I was still stuck thinking that special diversity months and ethnic dinners were the answer to this diversity dilemma.

I believe the adoption of my Hispanic daughter marked a period of overlap between the pseudoindependence stage and the immersion/emersion stage. At the age of twenty-six, I had four years of teaching under my belt. I had truly begun to appreciate the Hispanic culture of my students. I was actively involved on the ESL committee and had even created a tutoring program for our Hispanic students with high school Spanish students called *Estudiantes y Amigos*. I was finally looking for something beyond a day or month to celebrate the Hispanic culture. Yet, I still did not recognize myself as culturally White, nor did I question the privileges I had experienced as a White person.

According to the Helms' White racial identity development model, those who are in the pseudoindependence stage "actively seek relationships with people of color as a way of reducing the social isolation experienced earlier" (Lawrence & Tatum, p. 46). Adopting a child of color was just that for me. I was out to prove how wrong racial discrimination was and color didn't matter when it came to love. The adoption of my daughter prompted the beginning of a transformation for my whole family in regards to beliefs regarding diversity. The love felt for her suddenly caused a change regarding racial bias and prejudice among our family.

My education would help me to evolve further. I fully entered the immersion/emersion stage about seven years after the adoption of my daughter while taking a block course with Dr. Larry Gregg at UMKC while pursuing my Education Specialist degree. One of our required books was Gary Howard's *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know* (1999). When describing this book to friends and colleagues, I explained

that it was “easy to read, difficult to digest.” I related to the stages Gary Howard experienced through his White identity development. I cried when confronted by my “White Dominance” and the “luxury of my ignorance.” I finally realized that I was not just “vanilla” and I indeed did have a culture. I sought out people in our class who accepted this too, who did not become angry and lash out in reintegration. I sought out conversations with my friends of color to ask them questions about how they felt about my Whiteness and what that meant to them. Dr. Gregg became a role model for me, and I looked to him to help guide me in my new ways of thinking about my White identity. My internal work was consistent with the model. According to Helms (1990), there are two important questions during this stage: “Who am I racially?” and “Who do I want to be” (p. 62)?

Finally, during the summer of 2006, I joined four of my colleagues on a journey to Seattle, Washington. We were going to the REACH center (founded by Gary Howard) to become REACH diversity trainers for our district. These were an intense four days in which we looked very deeply at the issues of diversity. It was here that I approached the autonomy stage.

What I experienced during that week is difficult to describe. The five of us were able to share our stories with one another. We were able to share our journey through our individual identity development. We came to know one another in deep ways that I have not known other colleagues. We cried with one another as the feelings flooded us. And finally, by the time we made it to the end of our four days together, we made a commitment to ourselves and one another to continue our self-examination and become anti-racism activists. As is characteristic of the autonomy stage, race was no longer a

threat to us. We were no longer afraid to talk about it with people of any color. It was also during this time that I realized the depths of the other forms of inequality and social injustice such as ageism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism.

If we can face the painful truth of White Dominance, and not fall victim to the enervating cycles of blame and guilt, there is some hope that we might then be able to engage our hearts and our hands in the healing work of social transformation. (Howard, 1999, p. 48)

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1994), Gay (2000), and Howard (2006) are some of the thought leaders of culturally responsive pedagogy. According to Gay, “Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them” (p. 29). Academic achievement is not the only goal of culturally responsive teaching. Gay (2000) posits that culturally responsive teaching helps students of color “maintain identity and connection with their ethnic groups and communities; develop a sense of community, camaraderie, and shared responsibility; and acquire an ethic of success” (p. 30). When students are involved in a culturally responsive classroom they engage in multiple perspectives and learn different ways of knowing, understanding and presenting information. Baker and Digiovanni (2005) further explain:

Because diverse views are allowed, students are introduced to new and diverse interpretations and perspectives. The different views challenge and broaden the students’ boundaries. In the classrooms students are allowed to use their strengths which in turn facilitate the development of new skills. Moreover, associations are made between the school culture and home culture. (para. 7)

It is important to realize that:

To do this kind of teaching well requires tapping into a wide range of cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives. Emotions, beliefs, values, ethos, opinions, and feelings are scrutinized along with factual information to make curriculum and instruction more reflective of and responsive to ethnic diversity. . . . Cultural responsive pedagogy focuses on those elements of cultural socialization that most directly affect learning. (Gay, 2000, pp. 31-32)

The Role of Teacher Beliefs and the Success of Diverse Students

In his book *Savage Inequalities* (1991), Kozol shares a typical encounter where he enters a school with out-of-date materials, drab classrooms, and students and teachers who are not engaged in the learning process. As an example of this, Kozol summarizes a conversation with a science teacher:

[This teacher] spoke of kids with little initiative whose ‘study habits,’ he said, ‘are poor.’ Much of what they learn, he said, ‘is gotten from the streets.’ Asked if more supplies, a cheerier classroom or a better lab would make a difference, he replied that he was ‘not sure money is the answer.’ (p. 231)

In a study titled, *Effort and Excellence in Urban Classrooms: Expecting—And Getting—Success with All Students* (2002), Corbett, Wilson and Williams also reported of similarly unengaged and pessimistic teachers who felt there were “insurmountable obstacles,” such as lack of student motivation and failure of the home and parents to emphasize the importance of learning. These teachers accused more optimistic colleagues of being “unrealistic” (p. 9).

Teachers who believe in “insurmountable obstacles,” and believe that their students of color or socio-economically disadvantaged students will never catch up are demonstrating a deficit belief in their students (Cummins, 1996; Freeman, 2004; Nieto, 2002). On the other side of the coin, teachers who believe that their diverse students bring

prior knowledge, cultural knowledge and unique perspective to their classrooms are demonstrating an additive belief in their students (Cummins, 1996; Freeman, 2004; Nieto, 2002). Additive or deficit perspectives are tightly aligned with teachers' mental models and beliefs. Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross and Smith (1994) define mental models as "the images, assumptions, and stories which we carry in our minds of ourselves, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world." For purposes of this study I will use White's (1999) definition of beliefs. White (1999) conducted research on the nature and effects of beliefs and concluded:

1. beliefs help individuals to define and understand the world and themselves, and as such have an adaptive function, and
2. beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and play a critical role in defining behavior.

Teachers' beliefs are usually developed utilizing their own experiences as learners in classrooms, prior teaching experiences, classroom observations they were exposed to, and their previous training courses (Richards, 1998). Similarly, Ennis (1994) states, "Teachers' beliefs are formed over their professional careers through chance observations, intense experiences (either positive or negative), or a series of events that gradually convince them of the 'truth' of some rationale or relationship" (p. 169). Teachers bring all of this to their classrooms and therefore, their belief systems, including their attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning, are considered a primary foundation of their classroom practices.

Corbett et al. (2002) identified a common thread among successful teachers of urban students. "Great urban teachers share a common belief: It's their job to make sure

that all students achieve” (p. 8). An example of this optimistic attitude is expressed by sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Franklin:

We don't have any kids who cannot do it. They have been allowed to get away with it. I believe they will perform well if they know I am concerned about what they do. I do think we have a group that someone has given up on. It is real easy to not expect much. That bothers me. We've given them an excuse to not do well. One of my major things is, [even if a student is] learning disabled or severely handicapped, in here, “we” is all of us. You will do 25 problems [the full assignment], but you may need more help to do it. Kids aren't the problem; adults are the ones finding the excuses. (p. 9)

In the same study, another teacher explained the importance of active learning groups and connecting what they were doing in the classroom to the students' actual lives. She also expressed annoyance and disappointment in the expectations of some of her colleagues:

We must raise standards and stop worrying about how this looks on paper. I'm really appalled by the level of standards of teachers. Teachers use kids as an excuse instead of [seeing] the need to work harder. (Corbett et al., 2002, p. 11)

This teacher was expressing her concern of deficit beliefs held by some of her colleagues. It was evident that the teachers she was referring to in the study did not hold the belief that all students can learn, thus blaming the lack of achievement on the students instead of taking responsibility as the educator.

Marzano (2007) states, “Among the elements such as a well-articulated curriculum and a safe and orderly environment, the one factor that surfaced as the single most influential component of an effective school is the individual teachers within that school” (p. 1). Knowing that teachers have such an enormous impact on the success of

their students makes it imperative for them to explore and utilize culturally responsive practices in their classrooms so that all of their students can achieve.

Culturally Relevant Attitudes and Practice

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) found similar attitudes and beliefs in successful teachers of urban students. According to Ladson-Billings, “Culturally relevant teaching uses student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture.” She goes further to explain, “The negative effects are brought about, for example, by not seeing ones’ history, culture, or background represented in the textbook or curriculum or by seeing that history, culture or background distorted” (p. 17).

Ladson-Billings (1994) asserts that educators with culturally responsive practices exhibit certain qualities and operate from a particular belief system. These beliefs are necessary to be successful teachers of urban students. Teacher with culturally relevant practices:

- Have high self-esteem and a high regard for others. (p. 33)
- See themselves as part of the community, see their teaching as giving back to the community, and encourage their students to do the same. (p. 38)
- See teaching as an art and themselves as artists. (p. 42)
- Believe that all students can succeed. (p. 44)
- Help students make connections between their community, national and global identities. (p. 49)
- See teaching as “digging knowledge out” of students. (p. 52)
- Ensure the teacher-student relationship is fluid and “humanely equitable.” (p. 61)
- Cultivate the relationships beyond the boundaries of the classroom. (p. 62)

- Are careful to demonstrate a connectedness with each of their students. (p. 66)
- Encourage a community of learners. (p. 69)
- Encourage students to learn collaboratively and expects them to teach each other and take responsibility for each other. (p. 70)

Teachers will be hard-pressed to follow through with these practices if they do not understand the role of culture in their own lives. George and Louise Spindler (1994) explain the importance of teachers understanding their own cultures and that of their students:

Teachers carry into the classroom their personal cultural background. They perceive students, all of whom are cultural agents, with inevitable prejudice and preconception. Students likewise come to school with personal and cultural backgrounds that influence their perceptions of teachers, other students, and the school itself. Together students and teachers construct, mostly without being conscious of doing it, an environment of meanings enacted in individual and group behaviors, of conflict and accommodation, rejection and acceptance, alienation and withdrawal. (p. xii)

Teachers with culturally responsive practices must have “high self-esteem and a high regard for others.” In other words, they need to consider themselves professionals and “strongly identify with teaching.” Next, they “see themselves as part of the community, see teaching as giving back to the community, and encourage their students to do the same” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 33-53). This idea is best illuminated by a quote from one of the teachers Ladson-Billings highlights in her book. The teacher, Lewis, explained this concept regarding community:

They have to care about each other and to depend on one another before we can really get anything meaningful accomplished. We have to have a sense of family, of ‘teamness.’ When we see ourselves as a team that works together, we can do

anything. Having a kind of team spirit helps them to understand that one person's success is success for them all and that one person's failure is failure for everybody. (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 40-41)

“Educators with culturally relevant practices see teaching as an art and themselves as artists” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 42). Ladson-Billings goes on to explain that this does not mean that educators who are culturally responsive ignore the “scientific principles of pedagogy.” On the contrary, teaching is highly technical and requires much training. One cannot simply follow a recipe or formula to predict student outcomes. Teaching is highly creative.

Another aspect of culturally relevant practices is a strong belief that “all students can succeed” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 44). As much as this catchphrase is tossed around in educational circles, many educators seem to be satisfied with the status quo and the notion that failure is inevitable for some students. If an educator truly believes that all students can succeed, one would find evidence of differentiated instruction, various projects in order for students to show what they know, and constructivist principles of learning operating in classrooms.

Yet another aspect of culturally relevant practices is “helping students make connections between their community, national and global identities” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 49). Rather than pretend not to see a child's color, it is imperative that “students' diverse cultural backgrounds are central” to educators. Where this is valued, teachers know who their students really are and how they are connected to their communities.

Finally, educators engaging in culturally relevant practices see teaching as “digging knowledge out of students” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 52). Rather than seeing

teaching as putting knowledge into students, an overriding belief that “students come to school with knowledge and that that knowledge must be explored and utilized in order for students to become achievers” is central to becoming culturally relevant.

Lee et al. (2002) concur, stating, “Good teaching is made better when we create opportunities for our students to show us what they have accomplished outside of the school and when we incorporate their teaching into our teaching. . . . We know that linking student’s lives to the school and the formal curriculum in a serious way enhances our opportunities for reaching and teaching them” (p. 30).

In an extensive literature review in which 2,808 sources were viewed, Hanley and Noblit (2009) posit that there is “convincing evidence that there are strong connections between culturally responsive pedagogy and achievement” (p. 4). They explored connections between culturally responsive approaches, racial identity, resilience and achievement and concluded that racially diverse students “performed best in settings that built on their culture and promoted their racial identities” (p. 8). One example, Project KEEP – Kamehameha Elementary Education Project has been well-researched and indicates a clear connection between culturally responsive pedagogy and achievement gains (Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987; Jordan, 1985; Hu-Pei Au, 1980).

Another study (Love, 2003) examined the teaching practices, knowledge and social relations of 244 teachers from six urban schools in which the majority of the students were African American. This study specifically examined teacher’s beliefs about effectively teaching African American students. The results of the study indicate that reading achievement of African American elementary students was directly tied to teacher beliefs and ability to be culturally responsive. Therefore, it is clear that culturally

responsive beliefs and attitudes are directly tied to the success of diverse students, but what if teachers are not culturally responsive? Is it possible to train teachers to adopt culturally responsive beliefs?

Teacher Beliefs and the Academic Success of Students

Beliefs are formed early in life and are indicative of one's personal, social or professional truths that have been created by reason, time, education, or experience (Ennis, 1994; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968). The earlier these beliefs are formed, the harder it is to change them (Nespor, 1987; Nisbett, & Ross, 1980; Rokeach, 1968). Our culture plays a significant role in the development of our belief system and our belief system functions to help us understand the world and ourselves (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968). Further, experiencing a belief shift as an adult is a fairly rare occurrence, as individuals tend to hold tightly to their beliefs even when presented with scientific explanations contrary to their beliefs (Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Rokeach, 1968; Ennis, 1994). Teachers bring their own belief systems into their classrooms and these systems play an important role in the decisions they make in those classrooms every day. Those decisions, in turn, affect the success of their students.

Ennis posits, "Curricular expertise depends on a synthesis of knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning" (1994). There is a fine line between these constructs. Knowledge ranges from factual information that serves as a foundation of a disciplinary knowledge base, to the kind of knowledge that one needs to perform a task. Knowledge that answers "when," "why," and "under what circumstances" is yet another type of

knowledge (Aiken, 2002; Ennis, 1994). Aiken (2002) explains, “Beliefs are less certain than knowledge but more certain than attitudes or opinions” (p. 6). Indeed, knowledge and beliefs are closely intertwined and as new phenomena are encountered, beliefs serve as a filter through which these phenomena are interpreted (Goodman, 1988; Nespor 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1994).

Additionally, Nespor (1987) argued that belief systems do not require a group consensus to validate and appropriate them as knowledge systems do. Because of this, belief systems are disputable, inflexible and more static. While reason, logic and evidence advance knowledge acquisition and scholarly consensus, beliefs tend to remain unchanged. For example, Ennis (1994) shared that some physical educators might “have knowledge of the musculoskeletal structure in the development of strength and power and a belief that boys are better basketball players than girls” (p. 168). Nespor (1987) would argue that in order to change this belief a “conversion or gestalt shift” (p. 321) would have to occur rather than this shift occurring as a result of argument or reason. While Pajares (1992) declared that “beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions that individuals make throughout their lives” (p. 307), Roehler, Duffy, Herrmann, Conley and Johnson (1988) would contend that although beliefs influence teacher thinking, it is knowledge that causes us to make sense of our experiences, therefore it would be knowledge, and not beliefs, that truly influence teacher thoughts and decisions.

With such conflicting information about beliefs, a couple of things are common to most definitions. “Belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact” (Pajares, p. 313). Pajares continues to clarify how important it is to consider that while teachers have beliefs about school, learning, and students, these are

not the only beliefs they hold. They have beliefs about things beyond their profession and to some extent, these beliefs also influence their teaching practices. Beliefs clustered around a particular situation or topic form attitudes. “A teacher’s attitude about a particular educational issue may include beliefs connected to attitudes about the nature of society, the community, race and even family” (Pajares, p. 319). In fact, teacher’s beliefs and attitudes formed through the years through their observations, experiences, and education may “gradually convince them of the ‘truth’ of some rationale or relationship” and eventually these “beliefs held and reinforced over a long time period increasingly act as a form of knowledge” (Ennis, pp. 169-170).

In education, we are often presented with information that causes us to think differently, or we are presented with scenarios that challenge some of our deeply held beliefs. At times, we could be receiving conflicting information in regards to our own beliefs. When we attempt to maintain our beliefs in spite of the conflicting information this can result in what Pajares (1992) explains as “very agile, mental somersaults” p. 317). Further, Ennis (1994) posits “When knowledge presented is inconsistent or incompatible with the individual’s belief system, it will not be positioned in the knowledge structure and will not affect future practice” (p. 172).

On the other hand, Kise (2006) states, “Changing beliefs touches on the very essence of how teachers see themselves. The information teachers receive must help them reevaluate their core beliefs while validating who they are. Only then can deep change take place” (p. 38). This begs an important question. When presented with knowledge or information that conflicts with deeply held beliefs, how does one experience that

“conversion or gestalt shift” referred to by Nespor (1987)? While there are many studies

on the role beliefs play in teacher practices (Ennis, 1994; Nespor, 1987; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968), there is a gap in the literature on how to create that “conversion or gestalt shift (Nespor, 1987). Indeed, Pajares (1992) claims, “research is necessary on the nature and process of belief change itself” (p. 329). And while quantitative methodologies have traditionally been used to measure such changes, Pajares (1992) further states that qualitative methods such as case studies, such as were employed for this study, show promise in examining those belief changes (p. 327).

Systemic Reform

Failure to view diversity as organizational change was cited by Christopher Metzler (2003) as one of the top ten reasons diversity initiatives fail. He posits that organizations tend to make small changes but that they fail to address the power dynamics and organizational structure needed for the change. He further states that failure to address systemic issues is yet another reason for the failure of diversity initiatives. These issues include the organization’s practices, policies and procedures. This position is echoed by Lee (2002) as she explains a process for closing the racial gap in academic performance:

Work with teachers is based on a social, political and historical understanding of the issues of racism. In practice, it is directed to the policies and structures in institutions; the professional and personal growth of teachers; and their practice in classrooms, in hallways, in parent meetings and all areas of school life. (p. 26)

This systemic change must be performed from the “inside out.” Zmuda, Kujlis and Kline (2004) point out that:

A competent system requires several significant shifts—from unconnected thinking to systems thinking, from environment of isolation to one of collegiality,

from perceived reality to information-driven reality, and from individual autonomy to collective autonomy and collective accountability. (p. 1)

Lezotte and McKee (2002, p. 5) list what they conclude to be the “essential attributes of sustainable school reform.” In order for reform to be sustainable, it is best to focus on results. In the years before *A Nation at Risk* was published, most standards focused on the number of certified teachers in a district, how many books were housed in school libraries, and how large science labs were. The focus was rarely about student achievement. After *A Nation at Risk*, there was much political unrest regarding student outcomes, thus later accountability models focused on measuring student achievement.

Lezotte and McKee (2002, p. 6) suggest that overall achievement is just part of accountability. It must be paired with equity; that is, achievement measured across various categories of students such as boy/girls, students of color and White students, and across socio-economic status. Lambert (2003) expresses concern about closing the achievement gap and explains that the “heart of this problem are the differential skills and knowledge with which students enter and leave school” (p. 7).

A further essential attribute is establishing a system for specific and frequent monitoring of data. Moreover, as the data is disaggregated, it is critical that the teaching practices identified to support the education of students are research-based, in other words, the learning activities and systems of data analysis are based on “research and documented practice” (Lezotte & McKee, 2002, p. 6).

The final two essential attributes of sustainable reform identified by Lezotte and McKee (2002, p. 7) are imbedded in the climate and culture of the organization: The school improvement efforts must be collaborative in nature, and, the process must be on-

going and self-renewing to be effective. This position is consistent with Lambert (2003, p. 7) as she states, “Collaboration and the expansion of roles lead to a sense of collective responsibility for all students in the school, the broader school community, and the education profession as a whole.” Collaboration and collective responsibility can be developed through professional learning communities.

Professional Learning Community

The literature often points to professional learning communities as an effective means of systemic change or reform. According to Schmoker (2006, p. 108), we have “relied far too much, with miserable results, on a failed model for improving instructional practice: training, in the form of workshops or staff development.” A professional learning community, on the other hand, does not focus on workshops. Instead, there are four main priorities that are the focus of professional learning communities, according to DuFour, DuFour and Eaker (2002, p. 34). Professional learning communities focus on learning, collaborative culture, results and providing timely, relevant information. It is important to note that a professional learning community focuses on learning rather than on teaching. There is a difference. While educators often focus on teaching strategies in workshops and what they will do in the teaching/learning process, teachers in professional learning communities focus on what the student is doing.

According to DuFour (2004, p. 8) there are three crucial questions that drive the work in a professional learning community: “What do we want each student to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?” DuFour posits that the answer to the third

question is what separates professional learning communities and traditional schools. Typically, these decisions are left up to individual teachers who vary in how they respond to the student who is experiencing difficulty in learning. However, in a professional learning community, the team implements a systematic and school wide approach and respond in a timely manner with interventions rather than summer school, retention or remedial courses. Further, instead of inviting students to seek additional help, the plan requires students to participate in the interventions until mastery of concepts is achieved. This assures that all students will attain identified outcomes.

Another important concept regarding professional learning communities is that of creating a “culture of collaboration” (DuFour, 2004, p.9). A culture of collaboration is more than just being collegial or building group camaraderie. DuFour (2004) defines it as:

The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement. (p. 9)

Danielson’s research supports the notion of professional learning communities (2002, p. 9). She posits that, “Most educators want to work in a place that meets their professional needs; like their students, they seek opportunities for learning that will be relevant in both the short and long term.” Danielson goes on to explain how important it is to have this approach embedded in the norms and values of the school. She also takes that stance that professional development must “consist of more than one-shot workshops, or checking boxes on a license renewal application.” According to Danielson

(2002), the purpose for professional learning communities is to “enable teachers to engage in meaningful work with their colleagues to strengthen their knowledge and skills for the complex challenges of teaching” (p. 9).

Sergiovanni and Starrat (2002) offer the following definition for teacher leadership:

Teacher leadership involves the experimentation and examination of more powerful learning activities with and for students, in the service of enhanced student productions and performances of knowledge and understanding. Based on this leadership with and of students, teacher leaders invite other teachers to similar engagements with students in the learning process. (p. 150)

Developing and investing in teacher leaders is invaluable as we focus on student learning. Teachers in professional learning communities demonstrate best practices in their classrooms and “provide individual attention and motivation while leading the class to high quality learning.” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002, p. 154) As they work closely and collaborate with their colleagues, they begin to bring these same best practices and high quality learning experiences alive in other classrooms.

A third key component of professional learning communities is that of focusing on results. “Effective organizations overcome resistance with results generated by people within their own company” (Schmoker, 2006, p.119). When referring to a principal that had implemented the concepts of a professional learning community, Eaker, DuFour and DuFour state, “the third priority that drove the work of our principal was an insistence that school effectiveness should be assessed on the basis of results rather than intentions” (2002, p. 42). This is further clarified in the article by Dufour (2004) in which he states “professional learning communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results.

Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine work of everyone in the school.”

The final component of professional learning communities is providing timely, relevant information. While educators tend to be rich in data, they tend to be information poor. What is meant by that is we have plenty of data, but is it timely, relevant and useful in determining the extent in which our students are learning? Eaker, DuFour and DuFour (2002) state,

There is an increasing demand for data-driven schools in this country. I have never felt that schools suffered from a lack of data. Schools and school districts are typically rich with data. The problem has been that the people in the schools are not provided with relevant information that can give them insights into what is and what is not working. (p. 46)

It is very difficult to engage in the components of a professional learning community without effective leadership.

Effective Leadership

A strong, passionate, competent leader is essential to systemic reform. This “inside out” work begins with the school principal. Leadership as a factor in systemic reform and school improvement shows up in the literature multiple times as an indicator of the success of such reform (Marzano, 2003; Lezotte & McKee, 2002; Lambert, 2003; Schmoker, 2006). In fact, Marzano (2003) states, “Leadership could be considered the single most important aspect of effective school reform” (p. 172). Further, there are three principles of leadership for change. The first principle he states as, “Leadership for change is most effective when carried out by a small group of educators with the principal functioning as a strong cohesive force” (p. 174). He debunks the myth that

leadership should reside with a single individual, although he concedes that strong leadership from the principal can be “a powerful force toward school reform” (p. 174). He explains that effective change must be supported by both principals and teachers to be successful and sustainable, in other words a strong leadership team is needed.

The second principle of leadership for change is that “the leadership team must operate in such a way as to provide strong guidance while demonstrating respect for those not on the team” (Marzano, 2003, p. 175). The team must work to ensure that they are operating with the concerns and views of all members of the school staff.

The final principle outlined by Marzano (2003) is that “effective leadership for change is characterized by specific behaviors that enhance interpersonal relationships” (p. 176). Specifically, the behaviors that promote effective reform are optimism, honesty and consideration. If these behaviors are exercised by the leadership team, a natural outgrowth of these behaviors would indicate a more attentive team that considered the needs and concerns of non-team members and that non-team members would be involved in the decision making and problem-solving for the schools.

This research is consistent with Schmoker (2006), “It’s this simple: schools won’t improve until the average building leader begins to work cooperatively with teachers to truly, meaningfully oversee and improve instructional quality” (p. 29). Lezotte and McKee (2006) echo this when they state “research has consistently shown that the most effective school change strategies have been created and sustained when the leaders risk trusting those closest to the teaching-learning process” (p. 48). However, when leaders settle for the status quo—when they are unable to pursue quality instruction and trust those closest to the process—school improvement efforts suffer. As Schmoker (2006)

further states, “When administrators ‘go along’ instead of leading, they perpetuate mediocrity” (p. 30). Effective change cannot happen if we are perpetuating mediocrity. Lambert (2003) emphasizes the importance of the reciprocal relationship with teachers. She observes leadership as “reciprocal, purposeful learning in a community” (p. 2). This purposeful learning is in direct opposition to what Lezotte and McKee (2006) refer to as “going along” which is an impediment to systemic change (p. 33).

Lezotte and McKee (2006) describe the difference between simply managing and strong leadership. Every organization needs to be managed well. But good management alone will not take a school or district in need of significant, sustained, and continuous improvement where it needs to go. Only strong and effective leadership can provide the catalyst needed for change.

That “strong and effective leadership” includes these steps: building a strong foundation by clarifying a definition of the problem facing the group, creating a sense of urgency for the change, and creating “increased clarity about the desired outcomes” (Wagner & Kegan, 2006, p. 153).

There are some who dispute the impact of leadership on student achievement. Donmoyer (1985) posits, “Recent studies of schools invariably identify the principal’s leadership as a significant factor in a school’s success. Unfortunately these studies provide only limited insight into how principals contribute to their school’s achievements” (p. 35). Further, in a study conducted by Witziers, Bosker and Kruger (2003) they concluded that “statistically there is almost no relationship between school leadership and student achievement.” However, Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005), using meta-analysis procedures for 69 studies involving 2,082 schools and approximately

1.4 million students, determined that there was indeed a correlation between principal leadership behavior and the academic achievement of the students (p. 7). In fact, the correlation was .25. These results were more in line with yet another study conducted by Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson, and Kyla Wahlstrom (2004). This particular study used a narrative approach and estimated that the correlation between school leadership and student achievement was between .17 and .22. A major finding of their study was that “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn in school” (p.3). Therefore, if an organization has created professional learning communities that focus on student learning led by effective leaders, what role does professional development play in improving classroom instruction?

Professional Development

The most common form of professional development is the workshop, a structured approach to professional development that takes place outside of the teacher’s classroom. Workshops are usually presented by experts in particular areas often after school, on weekends or over the summer (Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998). Institutes and conferences share many of the same features of a workshop and are considered more “traditional” (Loucks-Horley et al., 1998). Even though the traditional forms of professional development are most common, they are also the most criticized in the literature (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman and Yoon, 2001).

Traditional forms of professional development are typically criticized as “being ineffective in providing teachers with sufficient time, activities, and content necessary for

increasing teacher's knowledge and fostering meaningful changes in their classroom practice" (Garet et al., 2001, p. 920). As such, other forms of professional development have emerged including study groups, mentoring and coaching. These forms are different from traditional professional development models in that they often take place during the day, sometimes even during classroom instruction.

With most of the recent literature calling for professional development to be sustained over time, Garet et al. (1998) posit that the duration of professional development is important to how teachers experience professional development for two important reasons:

First, longer activities are more likely to provide and opportunity for in-depth discussion of content, student conceptions and misconceptions and pedagogical strategies. Second, activities that extend over time are more likely to allow teachers to try out new practices in the classroom and obtain feedback on their teaching. (p. 922)

Effective professional development also provides opportunities for teachers to become actively engaged in "meaningful discussion, planning and practice (Garet et al., 2001; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998), as well as opportunities to engage in professional communication with other teachers involved in the same improvement efforts (Garet et al., 2001; Liberman & McLaughlin, 1992). Similarly, Kise (2006) posits that staff development should be liberating for teachers.

The art of staff development is helping teachers understand where their strengths and beliefs lock them into practices that limit their freedom to help students succeed. It isn't freedom for teachers to do what they please, but freedom for them to entertain possibilities and stay open to new avenues for professional growth. (p. 15)

In their empirical study of 1027 nationally representative teachers attending Eisenhower funded professional development activities in 1997, Garet et al. (2001) provided confirmation of the literature regarding “best practice in professional development (p. 935). Indeed, their results indicated “sustained and intensive professional development is more likely to have an impact, as reported by teachers, than is shorter professional development” (p.935). Their results also indicated that professional development opportunities that allowed for focus on content and active participation was more likely to “produce enhanced knowledge and skills” (p. 935). “Our results give renewed emphasis to the profound importance of subject-matter focus in designing high-quality professional development” (p. 936).

Lasting Improvement

In order to sustain large-scale district reform, Fullan, Bertani and Quinn (2004) share the ten components for making lasting school improvement possible. Their work involved several districts including the Edmonton Catholic Schools in Alberta, the York Region School Board and the Toronto District School Board in Ontario in Canada. It also included the Chicago Public Schools and Guilford County Schools in Greensboro, North Carolina as well as the Bristol Local Education Authority in England. All of these districts experienced large gains in student achievement. The success of these districts was a result of realizing all ten components identified in this research.

The ten components identified by Fullan et al. (2004) include: a compelling conceptualization, collective moral purpose, the right bus, capacity building, lateral

capacity building, on-going learning, productive conflict, a demanding culture, external partners, and focused financial investments.

A “compelling conceptualization” goes beyond the obvious terms of reform such as the importance of professional learning communities, capacity building and the use of common formative assessments in driving instructional decisions. “Large-scale reform requires pluralized leadership, with teams of people creating and driving a clear coherent strategy” (Fullan et al., 2004, p. 3). They further explain that, “Having a driving conceptualization means high engagement with others in the district and plenty of two-way communication that deepens shared ownership and commitment.”

“Collective Moral Purpose” refers to more than just a few “heroes” in a school district experiencing academic success. “Collective moral purpose makes explicit the goal of raising the bar and closing the gap for all individuals and schools” (Fullan et al., 2004, p. 3). This component applies to not only students, but the adults in the organization, as well. There is no room for competition among schools within a district or even across districts. In fact, “District leaders must foster a culture in which school principals are concerned about the success of every school in the district, not just their own (p. 3).

When Fullan et al. (2004) speak of “the right bus,” they are referring to the analogy by Collins (2001) regarding getting the right people in the right seats on the bus in an organization. They argue that it is just as important to have the right bus in the first place, or in other words, “the right structure for getting the job done” (p. 3). These structures reflect “a common direction and collective purpose, a laserlike focus on

teaching and learning for both adults and students, and an alignment of structure and roles” (p. 4).

“Capacity building” refers to leaders being able to raise up new leaders that can go even further than they have as well as leaders who continuously improve in their own learning and professional development. Effective leaders engage in practices such as study groups, focused institutes and walkthrough site visits (p. 4). Taking it a step further, “lateral capacity building” refers to actually connecting schools within a district to “develop new ideas, skills, and practices that increase the ability of individuals and organizations to bring about improvements” (Fullan et al., 2004, p. 6).

Successful districts in this study were committed to “on-going learning,” continually refining effective strategies and using them systematically. Further, they invited “productive conflict” realizing that, “all changes worth their salt reveal differences” (p.6) and as district leaders improved at implementing their reforms, they were able to sort out productive conflict from dysfunctional conflict. They are able to do this partly because of a “demanding culture” in which “respect, personal regard, integrity and competence” are combined with a high level of trust. In these cultures, “schools are motivated and supported to engage in demanding work, able to withstand frustrations along the way, and persist in their efforts to make reform doable and worthwhile” (Fullan et al., 2004, p. 7).

Finally, improving school districts have “external partners” that contribute to their professional capacity by sharing valuable resources and expertise as well as accountability. They also have very “focused financial investments” in which “they ruthlessly redeploy existing resources in the service of teaching and learning” (p. 8).

While this is not an exhaustive list of what districts need to do to sustain school reform, it is clear that these practices have a lasting impact. Further, Fullan et al. posit that “As more districts reach out to learn from one another, we can expect greater progress in raising the bar and closing the achievement gap” (2004, p. 9).

Conclusion

After several years of educating diverse children and studying the literature regarding culturally responsive teaching, I am convinced that culturally responsive practices are required for an equitable education. We can no longer look at our differences as a disadvantage. Further, the literature makes it clear that a lack of cultural responsiveness contributes to the achievement gap. It is important to appreciate the richness that differences bring to our classrooms and to seek to understand the different ways of knowing. This is the only way we will be able to overcome the achievement gap.

In order to help the teachers in my district grapple with these issues, I created a professional growth course in which they could explore their beliefs and attitudes surrounding issues such as culture, racism, White privilege and their identity development.

It is important to realize that everyone in our learning organizations (students, staff, parents and community stakeholders) think and construct knowledge differently from one another. It is vital to understand these differences and value the multiple intelligences present in our school communities as well as concentrate on differentiated instructional practices. Being culturally responsive means valuing diversity and believing it enriches our educational experiences. “Diversity provides complexity, depth, multiple

perspectives, and equity to relationships, thereby extending human and societal possibilities” (Lambert et al., 2002, p. xvii).

As we offer students the experience of “needing to know,” they are more likely to be motivated learners. As they are given the opportunities to explore their world and study things that are meaningful to them, they can build on their prior knowledge and find the answers to the questions they ask. This is the heart of democratic schools. “This process is...directed toward intelligent and reflective consideration of problems, events and issues that arise in the course of our collective lives. A democratic curriculum involves continuous opportunities to explore such issues, to imagine responses to problems and to act upon those responses” (Apple & Beane, 1995, p. 16).

It is vital that our learning communities be safe places where people are valued and cared for. Teamwork, collaboration, mutual respect, and hard work are highly regarded from all, thus installing a contagious pride in the school, community, and most importantly themselves. Further, when children from all backgrounds, regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and religion can attain the real goals of education, we will experience adequate and equitable education. Those real goals go beyond high stakes test scores and were suggested by Littky and Grabelle in their book, *The Big Picture, Education is Everyone’s Business* (2004). Littky and Grabelle posit that they would like students to:

- be lifelong learners
- be passionate
- be ready to take risks
- be able to problem-solve and think critically

- be able to look at things differently
- be able to work independently and with others
- be creative
- care, and want to give back to their community
- persevere
- have integrity, self respect
- have moral courage
- be able to use the world around them well
- speak well, write well, read well, work well with numbers
- truly enjoy their life and their work. (p. 1)

If the achievement gap is to disappear, an examination of the important role culture plays in our identity development is in order. Further, an exploration of White privilege and dominance is not to be feared. This can lead to the implementation of culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy in the classroom which is an important path to sustainable, systemic reform in our schools.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this heuristic, multiple case study was to examine the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students in a Missouri suburban school district. For the purpose of this study, culturally responsive professional development series refers to a 16-hour professional growth course in which teachers met twice a week for two hours with the researcher. During this course teachers read assigned chapters from the book, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* (Howard, 2006) and *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (Gay, 2000). Participants engaged in discussions and activities surrounding culture, racism, identity development, social dominance, White privilege, being “color-blind,” the achievement gap, and the power of honesty, empathy and caring in culturally responsive classrooms, led by the researcher. Further, participants engaged in self-reflection through journal prompts once a week during the course. The unit of analysis for the study was the experiences of the participants as a result of this professional growth course.

The problem that was examined throughout this study was that an achievement gap exists between White students and students of diverse backgrounds throughout the United States. There is sufficient evidence in the literature to argue “culturally responsive programming and positive racial identity can promote academic achievement and resilience” (Hanley & Noblit, 2009) and yet the gap persists. Hanley and Noblit (2009) contend that despite the amount of evidence we have to support the idea of culturally

responsive teaching as a means to narrow the gap, educators and policymakers cannot agree to curricula and instructional methods “that embrace the cultures of students and their families” (p. 31). They further posit that this is due in part to “the history of cultural and racial dominance and supremacy at the root of United States history and experience” (p. 31). As such, the professional growth course was designed to explore these issues and the study was designed to examine teacher attitudes and beliefs as a result of their participation in the course.

All aspects of the research methodology used in this study are reported in this chapter. This information is organized into the following sections: (1) research questions, (2) research design (qualitative), (3) means of data collection, (4) means of data analysis, and (5) reliability and validity.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the research of this study: (a) How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series? (b) What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series? (c) What aspects of the culturally responsive professional development series (if any) influenced the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students as self-reported in journal prompts and interview questions?

Rationale for Qualitative Design

Qualitative Research Methods

When a researcher wishes to obtain a more holistic impression of their study, when they wish to know more than “to what extent” or “how well” something is done, they often turn to qualitative research rather than quantitative (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Researchers that are more “interested in the *quality* of a particular activity than in how often it occurs or how it would otherwise be evaluated” (p. 430) generally turn to qualitative research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). This study sought to understand “how well” a culturally responsive professional development training series that explored the topics of culture, racism, identity development, social dominance, White privilege, being “color-blind,” the achievement gap, and the power of honesty, empathy and caring in culturally responsive classrooms worked in helping teachers explore their attitudes and beliefs regarding such.

One of the most prominent differences between quantitative and qualitative research lies in the way results are analyzed. According to Patton (2002), “Thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting” (p. 437).

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) posit that:

There is a greater emphasis on holistic description – that is, on describing in detail all of what goes on in a particular activity or situation rather than on comparing the effects of a particular treatment (as in experimental research), say, or on describing the attitudes or behaviors of people (as in survey research). (p. 430)

I was able to collect data throughout the course and at the conclusion of the course that helped me to create a “thick, rich description” of the participants’ experiences.

Further, while there are many different qualitative methodologies, there are certain features that are characteristic of most qualitative studies. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), there are five such features. “The natural setting is the direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This simply means that qualitative researchers go to the field or site that they are studying or observing, rather than in a lab setting. I was able to hold the professional development course in a school setting, just as most of the professional growth courses in the district of study are offered. Additionally, rather than sending out instruments for individuals to complete, researchers actually become the instrument as they interview and observe situations and people. Creswell (2007) points out that “this up-close information gathered by actually talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context is a major characteristic of qualitative research.” (p. 37)

Next, Bodan and Biklen (1998) state that “Qualitative data are collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.” There are several types of data that can be collected in qualitative research including interview transcripts, field notes, audio recordings, photographs, diaries, personal comments, textbook passages, videotapes, memos, and documents. Anything that can communicate the words or actions of people can be analyzed for qualitative studies. Patton (2002, p. 21) points out that “what people say is a major source of qualitative data, whether what they say is obtained verbally through an interview or in written form through document analysis or survey responses.” During my study I used interview transcripts and participant reflections from the journal prompts as sources of data in addition to their pre and post CoBRAS surveys.

Additionally, “qualitative researchers are concerned with process as well as product” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). They are especially interested in *how* things occur.”

Patton (2002) echoes this position by stating:

The purpose of observational analysis is to take the reader into the setting that was observed. This means that observational data must have depth and detail. The data must be descriptive – sufficiently descriptive that the reader can understand what occurred and how it occurred. (p. 23)

While my observations of the participants’ experiences of the course were weaved in to recreate their case record, I relied most heavily upon the interviews, journal responses and CoBRAS results of the participants.

“Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 6). It is not typical for qualitative researchers to formulate a hypothesis to test. They spend ample amounts of time collecting and analyzing data, “constructing a picture that takes shape as they collect and examine the parts” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. XX). Patton (2002) further states that, “inductive analysis begins with specific observations and builds toward general patterns” (pp. 55-56). The coding process was used in an effort to reach conclusions based on participant interviews and journal reflections regarding their experience of the professional growth course. The coding process allowed me to establish patterns or themes that contributed to the thick description of the participants’ case records. I shared the case records with each participant to ensure it accurately represented their experience of the class. I received positive feedback from participants including statements such as, “I was impressed with how much you used from our interviews, reflections, and conversations” and “Wow –

there's a lot in that – It's interesting to read it as an 'outsider' so to speak" and "I really love the Michael Jackson tie."

The fifth characteristic that Bogdan and Biklan list is, "How people make sense out of their lives is a major concern to qualitative researchers" (1998, p. XX). Creswell (2007) agrees as he states that, "In the entire qualitative research process, the researchers keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue" (p. 39). As I sought to construct meaning and understanding of the beliefs and attitudes of the participants, these five characteristics guided my study and the analysis of my qualitative data.

Case Study

Case study research "involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" (Creswell, 2007, p. XX). Creswell goes on to explain:

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case)...over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 73)

During this study, I examined the experiences of six participants in depth. Each individual represented their own case or experience with the culturally responsive professional development series. As Stake (2006) explains, "The single case is of interest because it belongs to a particular collection of cases" (p. 4). The individual cases (or experiences of six participants from the study) share the common condition of their participation in the culturally responsive professional development series. As a result, the cases in this collection are bound together by the experience although each participant

will likely experience the phenomena differently. It is the condition of their combined experiences that represents the quintain in this study. A quintain, according to Stake (2006, p. 6) is “an object or phenomenon or condition to be studied – a target, but not a bull’s eye.” This study was further bounded in that I limited the study to one school district, and the volunteer participants in the professional development training series.

As I explored the “why” and “how” in regards to the beliefs and attitudes of teachers of diverse students, case study became a good vehicle in which to explore. “In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p.1).

As I analyzed interview transcripts and reflective journal responses of the participants, I constructed their individual cases and accomplished what Patton (2002) claims a case study should do. “A case study should take the reader into the case situation and experience – a person’s life, a group’s life, or a program’s life” (p. 450). After understanding the picture of “how” and “why” in regards to teachers’ attitudes and beliefs, these answers have provided impetus to build a better foundation for culturally responsive teaching in the district.

Thus, this case-study can be considered an instrumental case study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), “In an instrumental case study, the researcher is interested in studying the case as a means to some larger goal” (p. 439). “The researcher’s goal in such studies is more global and less focused on the particular individual, event, program

or school being studied.” It is my hope that this professional development series can be duplicated in order to set the foundation for truly culturally responsive teaching.

The case study as a research strategy comprises an all-encompassing method – covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis. In this sense, the case study is not either a data collection tactic or merely a design feature alone but a comprehensive research strategy. (Yin, 2003, p. 14)

Heuristics

This study was heuristic in nature due to my heavy involvement in the diversity efforts of this district. As a member of the District Diversity Council, the Project EXCELL Advisory Board and a former member of both the Staff Development Committee and the Diversity Leadership Cadre, I am deeply entrenched and intensely involved in our efforts and culture. Heuristics, a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings the personal experience and insight of the researcher, “emphasizes connectedness and relationships,” as well as leads to “depictions of essential meanings and portrayal of the intrigue and personal significance that imbue the search to know” (Patton, 2002, p. 108). As such, heuristic inquiry was the overall framework for all of my data analysis.

This study had great personal investment for me as I sought to explore ways to help educators examine their beliefs and attitudes regarding teaching and working with diverse students. This desire to help educators grapple with questions regarding diversity, White privilege, and institutional racism grew out of my own struggles to understand these issues. It is through Heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) that one can engage in scientific research through processes and methods that utilize self-inquiry and

conversations with others to find “the underlying meanings of important human experiences” (p. 15).

Patton (2002, p. 107) describes reports of heuristics researchers as “filled with the discoveries, personal insights, and reflections of the researchers.” These discoveries, personal insights and reflections bring the researcher to what Moustakas (1990) refers to as “illumination” (p. 15). By approaching the research this way, I was able to explore my own experiences, as well as the experiences of others to bring validity and depth to this study. Patton goes on to posit the most important thing about heuristic research is that:

it epitomizes the phenomenological emphasis on meanings and knowing through personal experience; it exemplifies and places at the fore the way in which the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative inquiry; and it challenges in the extreme traditional scientific concerns about researcher objectivity and detachment...In essence, it personalizes inquiry and puts the experience (and voice) of the inquirer front and center throughout. (Patton, 2002, p. 109)

Design of the Study

Setting, Participants and Sampling Techniques

The site of the study was a suburban Missouri school district that earned the state’s “Distinction in Performance” rating on their 2010 Annual Performance Report (APR). The honor is based on a series of rigorous exemplars reflecting the state’s academic accreditation standards from scores of state-mandated MAP tests, high school end-of-course exams, graduation rates, ACT scores, and other measures. The school district serves approximately 19,000 students; 68% of which are White and 32% of which are students of color. Further, 44% of the students enrolled in the district qualify for free or reduced lunch.

After receiving approval of my proposal by the UMKC Social Sciences IRB board, I submitted a letter to our superintendent explaining the purpose of my research as well as asked permission to conduct my research in the District (see Appendix A, p. 179). After receiving permission to proceed, I offered a course through the District Professional Growth Credit (PGC) model. Courses offered this way are advertised in an on-line catalog for district teachers. Additionally, an e-mail was sent to building principals asking them to share the information regarding the course with their staffs. The course was offered for one credit of professional growth. Classes following this model must meet for a minimum of 16 hours. Following the guidelines of the PGC model, seven participants enrolled. I had originally hoped for 20 -25 participants, but a number of new district initiatives and required professional development in other departments impacted the number of enrollments.

The participants for this study consisted of six teachers from five of the 30 schools in the district where the study was conducted. Each of these teachers serve as a case in this heuristic case study. One course participant was an administrative assistant and therefore did not meet the criteria for the study. For purposes of this study, participants must have met the criteria of being a teacher. So though the administrative assistant was able to participate in the course, data were not collected or analyzed regarding her experience of the course. Criterion sampling is “to review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” (Patton, 2002, p. 238), and for purposes of this study it was important that participants be teachers as they are the ones that directly affect student learning.

During the course, participants discussed issues, joys and challenges that confronted them, particularly with their diverse students. They were taken through a journey of the dynamics of dominance – from social dominance to social justice. The goal of the course was to provide educators with culturally responsive philosophical underpinnings and strategies for effective instruction of diverse students. The primary focus was for learners to explore their own attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching diverse students and to gain knowledge of culturally responsive strategies to maximize instruction and relationships with all students.

The Objectives of the course stated that participants would:

- Develop a multicultural perspective, explore diversity statistics regarding business, educational, national and global issues
- Define and engage in Culturally Responsive Teaching practices
- Explore their own culture and identify personal and organizational characteristics of culture
- Define and explore the impact of “isms” in the educational setting;
- Personally identify ways in which to move from “social dominance” to “social justice.”

Data Collection and Sources

After receiving permission from the Superintendent to proceed with my research I began the data collection process. The data collection process occurred continuously throughout the study.

There is no “treatment” in qualitative study, nor is there any “manipulation” of subjects. Data are not collected at the “end” of the study. Rather, the collection of data in a qualitative research study is on-going. The researcher is continually observing people, events, and occurrences, often supplementing his or her

observations with in-depth interviews of selected participants and the examination of various documents and records relevant to the phenomenon of interest. (Fraenkal & Wallen, 2003, p. 435)

During the first meeting with the seven course participants I conducted the CoBRAS attitudes survey as a pre-attitudes assessment.

CoBRAS pre- and post-attitudes survey measure. The Color-blind Racial Attitude Scale (CoBRAS) is a 20-item survey developed by Neville et al. (2000) to measure cognitive dimensions of teacher's color-blind racial attitudes. Items on the CoBRAS are rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree). Scores can range from 20-120, with those most frequently occurring indicating a stronger level of "blindness," denial or unawareness to racial privilege, institutional discrimination and blatant racial issues. In order to reduce potential bias in responses, seven of the items are worded in the opposite direction, and this is taken into account while scoring.

The CoBRAS was found to have strong psychometric properties (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$, 2-week test-retest reliability estimate = .68); criterion validity (significantly positively correlated with McConahay's (1986) Modern Racism Scale and other racial attitudes measures; robustness under a variety of settings (Neville, et al., 2000). CoBRAS has been used as a measurement in at least six published studies with over 1,100 observations. In addition it has been used as a pre- and post-attitudes survey measure to examine the effects of a diversity training course with college students (Atwater, 2007, p. 6).

There were three factors that accounted for 45% of the variance in the exploratory factor analysis of CoBRAS (Neville et al., 2000). These factors make up sub-domains of

color-blindness for the instrument. The first factor, “Racial Privilege” consists of seven items of unawareness of White privilege. The second factor, “Institutional Discrimination” also consists of seven items regarding unawareness of institutional forms of discrimination and exclusion of people of color. The final factor, “Blatant Racial Issues” consists of six items regarding the unawareness of general forms of racial discrimination.

Interviews. Along with administering the CoBRAS as a pre- and post-attitudes survey, (see Appendix B, p. 182), I conducted interviews utilizing the general interview guide approach (Patton, 2002, p. 343) with the six participants who made up my purposeful, criterion sample. Using an interview guide (see Appendix C, p. 185), the interviews became a conversation surrounding their experiences of the course. In this approach, “An interview guide is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed” but also allows for the interviewer to “remain free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined.” (Patton, 2002, p. 343). The interview questions were aligned to ensure that the research questions of the study were addressed. The interviews varied in length from 40 – 60 minutes. The following interview protocol was used and all participants were asked the following questions, in addition to other conversational questions that arose based on their answers:

1. What are some of the most memorable experiences you have had during this PGC course?
2. What stage of identity development do you believe you are in currently? Has this view changed during the course of this PGC course and if so, how?

3. What was your experience with diversity previous to this course?
4. When did you first realize that diversity existed? What led you to take a course that addressed culturally responsive teaching?
5. How can teachers move from Social Dominance to Social Justice in our educational setting?
6. What have you learned during this course that will help you narrow the achievement gap in your classroom?
7. Can you identify a pivotal moment or aspect(s) of this PGC course that made a difference for you? If so, what were they and what was your experience?

The relationships I established with the interviewees were essential to the success of my study and were one of the more difficult aspects of navigating my study. Because I already knew some of the interviewees from our working relationships, it was important that I defined my relationship with them in regards to my study as one that would allow me to “ethically gain the information that can answer my research questions” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 83). Maxwell further posits that, “In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationships are the means by which the research gets done” (Maxwell, 2005, p.83). Realizing that “the research relationships you establish can facilitate or hinder other components of the research design” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 83), I was able to move beyond our established relationships to ones that supported the honest exploration and examination of their deeply held beliefs and attitudes.

Yin, (2003, p. 89) posits that “one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview.” It is through my interviews that I was able to determine what effect the culturally responsive professional development training series had upon

the participants. According to Yin, (2003), a researcher has two jobs during the interview process. “Follow your own line of inquiry, as reflected by your case study and ask your actual (conversational) questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs of your line of inquiry.”

The interviews were conducted where the professional growth course was held regularly as I wanted the interview process to be convenient and comfortable for the interviewees. During the interviews, I scribed somewhat, however, it was difficult to write everything down verbatim so I asked each participant for permission to record our interview.

As a result of recording the interviews, I was able to engage in a much more conversational interview. After conducting the interviews, I transcribed them from the recordings and then proceeded to manually code them. No computer program was used for the coding and recordings and transcriptions were saved on my computer and external drive.

Documents. According to Yin (2003), “For case studies, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (p. 87). This aligns with Patton’s (2002) position regarding documents.

Organizations of all kinds produce mountains of records, both public and private. Indeed, an oft-intriguing form of analysis involves comparing official statements found in public documents (brochures, board minutes, annual reports) with private memos and what the evaluation observer actually hears or sees occurring (in) the program. (p. 293)

During the culturally responsive professional development training series, participants were asked to keep a journal with one entry per week. The journal entries are

considered personal documents. Personal documents refer to “any first-person narrative that is self-revealing of a person’s view of experiences” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp. 133-134). I asked that each journal entry be approximately one to two pages long.

Journal prompts included:

1. What does it mean to you to be culturally responsive? What part does your own culture play in culturally responsive teaching?
2. Where are you in your own identity development? Respond to the idea of social dominance and White privilege.
3. What is your experience with “color blindness” and the “assumption of rightness?”
4. How has this course affected your ideas of culturally responsive teaching? What will you do differently in your teaching as a result of this course?

I conducted a document analysis of journals from the six participants in my purposeful, criterion sample. The journals were helpful as I reviewed the information gained from interviews and attitudes survey for cross-examining the results and comparing them to the journals themselves.

Finally, the journals provided further insight to me regarding participants’ attitudes and beliefs that I might not have been able to extract from surveys and interviews such as things that may have taken place before I began the study.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics – pre- and post-attitudes survey. When researchers want to report their findings in a study, they use descriptive statistics. “In general, the function of descriptive statistics is to describe quantitatively how a particular characteristic is distributed among a group of people” (Cowl, 1993, p. 239). During the first meeting of

the professional growth development series, the CoBRAS was administered to class participants and collected in order to obtain a color-blind racial attitude score. Permission to use this survey was granted by Helen Neville, creator of the instrument. Results were analyzed to determine three factors: the participant's levels of "blindness", denial or unawareness of 1) racial privilege, 2) institutional discrimination and 3) blatant racial issues. The most frequently occurring scores show greater levels of "blindness", denial, or unawareness.

At the conclusion of the professional growth development series, the participants were given the CoBRAS again. Originally I had planned to use t-tests to compare results from the pre-attitudes survey to the results of the post-attitudes survey to determine if the professional growth development series significantly affected participant's levels of "blindness", denial or unawareness of racial privilege, institutional discrimination and blatant racial issues. With only six participants in the study, I could not run t-tests so instead used descriptive statistics with the quantitative data set.

Qualitative analysis. Once I collected data from the pre- and post-attitudes surveys, journals, and interviews, I began my analysis. Given that I was looking at six case studies, this was a nested case study. In this approach, according to Patton (2002), "the analysis would begin with the individual case studies; then the cross-case pattern analysis of the individual cases might be part of the data for the program case study" (p. 447). The process of constructing a case study includes three steps (Patton, 2002). The first step is to assemble the raw data. After I collected my case data, I created a case record. The case record "pulls together and organizes the voluminous case data into a

comprehensive, primary resource package” (Patton, 2002, p. 449). The case record contains my condensed raw data that has been organized, classified and broken down into a manageable file. Finally after creating my case record, I wrote a final case study narrative which Patton (2002) describes as a:

...readable, descriptive picture or story about a person, program, organization, and so forth, making accessible to the reader all the information necessary to understand the case in all its uniqueness. The case study offers a holistic portrayal, presented with any context necessary for understanding the case. (p. 450)

While organizing the data in this manner, I was also following the steps of heuristic inquiry.

There are six stages of heuristic inquiry as outlined by Moustakas (1990). The first phase is Initial Engagement. The first phase represents the researchers struggle with a topic, theme, problem or question in which they have realized an “intense interest” or a “passionate concern” that has arisen from within the researcher. During initial engagement, one goes inward to discover tacit awareness and knowledge and allows their intuition to run freely to clarify a lingering question (p. 27). I shared in Chapter 1 about my diversity journey. The adoption of my daughter caused me to deeply consider just what diversity meant and how to make sense of that in my world. As an educator, I committed to understanding diversity and what that commitment would look like in my classroom with my students. Confronting my own White Dominance and biases propelled me to dig deeper and consider how I could share this new understanding with others in hopes of addressing the achievement gap between students of color and White students.

Once this question is discovered, defined and clarified, the researcher becomes immersed in the question. Anything connected to the question becomes material for sustained focus and concentration. The researcher engages fully into life wherever others are expressing the theme or question whether experienced in social situations or professional experiences (Moustakas, 1990). This stage naturally occurred as I was facilitating the PGC class. I became deeply immersed into the experiences of the participants as I helped them navigate through their own biases and identity development.

The third stage of incubation represents a time where the researcher retreats from their concentrated focus on the question. The period of incubation “allows the inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition to continue to clarify and extend understanding on levels outside of immediate awareness” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 29). It was during this stage that I just let myself “be” with the data. I would read it, reflect upon it, and even journal about it and then read it again.

Insights or modifications of an old understanding can occur in the Illumination stage. It is during this stage that the researcher may awaken to new possibilities surrounding their question as they are receptive to new dimensions of knowledge. While reflection is important during this stage, a “receptive state of mind without conscious striving or concentration” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 29) allows insights or modifications to occur. It was as I was coding the data that I experienced this stage. It was tedious at first. After reading the transcripts over and over, themes, repeated words, experiences and expressions became evident. I first wrote these down in a notebook and generated themes that were common amongst the research, assigning each theme a color. I then went back and circled descriptive codes that appeared to align with each theme. These descriptive

codes naturally grouped together to form interpretive codes. I began to experience mental clarity as the data began to make sense to me.

During the explication stage the researcher enters a process in which they examine the insights and modifications of old understandings gained during the illumination stage. They look for layers of meanings and may recognize new themes emerging. The process surrounding explication requires the researcher to attend to their own thoughts, ideas, understandings, attitudes and beliefs as a prerequisite for understanding the same from others (Moustakas, 1990). As I experienced this stage, it became a bit frustrating. As I looked for layers and meanings, new codes emerged. Some codes overlapped and I had to make sense of how to regroup to make sense of the data sets. New interpretive codes emerged at this stage, and several got renamed.

The process I used to code the data was a cross between Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to coding and analysis and the Husserlian method of phenomenological analysis (Grbich, 2007). In Stage 1 of the Husserlian method, you gather closely connected ideas, words or concepts. I did this by reading and rereading the transcripts. "Codes are category labels" and they were utilized throughout the analysis to categorize data for easier retrieval for data reporting (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 66). Coding was used to develop themes that represented the major concepts that were found throughout the interview transcripts and reflective journal prompt responses from participants and these were color-coded. The themes were made up of interpretive codes that defined the themes. Descriptive codes provided detailed definitions for each of the areas within the interpretive codes. (Grbich, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This process allowed me

to make sense of large amounts of data and group them so that the patterns and themes could be ascertained (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

For example, the theme of Community was color-coded in purple. Anything within the interview transcripts or reflective journal responses regarding community was circled in purple. There were nine total descriptive codes in the community theme. Three of these descriptive codes regarded: (1) silence around issues of race, (2) conversations regarding race, and (3) the sharing of individual stories as a powerful vehicle of change. These three descriptive codes lead to the interpretive code of communication. There were two other interpretive codes that led to the community theme for a total of three in all. The three codes that led to the community theme were: (1) communication, (2) community values, and (3) inter-relations.

After color-coding the themes and assigning letter names for the descriptive and interpretive codes, I counted up the number of times these codes appeared in each participants' interview and journal entries to determine the number of times the codes appeared in their case. These codes then became representative of the participants' experiences of the culturally responsive professional development series. Finally, I then counted these codes across the cases to determine which codes showed up the most frequently across the cases.

The final stage of heuristic inquiry is creative synthesis. During this phase, Moustakas (1990) posits that "the researcher in entering this process is thoroughly familiar with all the data in its major constituents, qualities, and themes and in the explication of the meanings and details of the experience as a whole." Typically creative synthesis takes the form of a narrative depiction of the process including concrete

examples and experiences, however, the creative synthesis can also be expressed as poem, drawing, song, story or other creative outlet. I experienced this stage of heuristic inquiry as I began to recreate each participant's story from the analysis of their case record. I was able to see how each participant experienced a theme and what importance that theme played in their growth during the course based in the frequency of the interpretive codes in their case record. I was able to compare the experiences of each participant to the others as a "cross-case analysis" (Creswell, 2007). Finally, this analysis allowed me to reflect on my own understanding of my personal diversity journey and compare it to the participants of the study.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The most significant limitation to this study was the size and sample. I was able to conduct this study in only one district. The fact that the initial participants were volunteers was also a limitation. I addressed this limitation through the use of criterion and purposeful sampling. Participants represented gender diversity and a variety of roles within the district of study, which added to the validity of the study.

I certainly brought my own researcher bias and experiences with the topic of diversity to the study and this could be considered a limitation, but the heuristic nature of the study addresses this issue. By being considered an instrument of the qualitative research, my researcher bias contributes to the study as a lens through which this research was viewed. This perspective can add meaning to the study that wouldn't otherwise be there (Maxwell, 2005). Further, Creswell (2007, p. 208) affirms that, "Clarifying researcher bias from the outset of the study is important so that the reader understands the

researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that impact the inquiry," and lists this as a validation strategy.

A bias that I hold strongly is that it is difficult to address culturally responsive teaching strategies without first examining one's beliefs about diversity. You can train teachers in effective research-based strategies but if they don't truly believe with all their hearts that all children can learn and be successful, those strategies become less effective.

It was difficult to keep my personal beliefs and opinions regarding diversity out of the professional development course due to the nature of the course. Therefore I focused on the work of leading experts in the field, while sharing my own personal experiences allowing for each participant to come to their own conclusions about the content of the course. While considering the experiences of the participants and constructing their case records, I focused on the data and the literature rather than relying on my own beliefs and biases.

Another limitation to this study was that I am a principal in the district of study. In fact, two participants were teachers in my own building. One participant has taken a course with me in the past, another participant had worked on various committees with me and yet another had worked in the same department with me. Further, his daughter had been a former student in a school that I had been assistant principal in for two years. Only one participant had never had any previous experience with me. I opened the course by acknowledging this and assuring them that our work was confidential (we set norms for the group) and would not be repeated to their supervisors. In regards to the teachers in my building, I shared that in no way would this information be used in an evaluative manner. On the other hand, the fact that I had worked with some of these teachers before

contributed to the ease in which we were able to gel as a group and follow our group norms.

Validity and Reliability

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003, p. 463) state that “validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the inferences researchers make based on the data they collect, while reliability refers to the consistency of these inferences over time, location and circumstances.” One of the most important ways to ensure validity and reliability of qualitative research is triangulation of data. Patton (2002) states:

The logic of triangulation is based on the premise that no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival explanations. Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the research mill. (pp. 555-556)

Patton goes on to say, “It is in data analysis that the strategy of triangulation really pays off, not only in providing diverse ways of looking at the same phenomenon but in adding to credibility by strengthening confidence in whatever conclusions are drawn” (p. 556).

I utilized multiple sources for data, including participant interviews, reflective journal entries and pre- and post-attitudes surveys. By triangulating the data I strengthened the validity of the study. Further, I interviewed a purposeful, criterion sample, as well. By interviewing six participants, I gained a broader understanding of the phenomenon. I was not looking for these different perspectives to yield essentially the same results, rather I hoped to test for consistency. When differences did emerge, I took the opportunity to “find deeper insight into the relationship between inquiry approach and

the phenomenon under study” as suggested by Patton (2002, p. 556). Further, by utilizing heuristic inquiry, I returned to the data again and again to search for a genuine depiction of the experiences and questions being researched.

Another way in which I gained validity and reliability was by asking my participants to review my findings. Patton (2002, p. 560) posits that, “researchers and evaluators can learn a great deal about the accuracy, completeness, fairness, and perceived validity of their data analysis by having the people described in that analysis react to what is described and concluded.” In fact, this technique is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314).

Finally, the Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) instrument was investigated in five different studies with over 1,100 observations providing initial reliability and validity data (Neville et al., 2000). Further, this instrument has been cited in several studies (Atwater, 2007; Spanierman, Poteat, Beer & Armstrong, 2006; Constantine & Sue, 2007).

Ethical Issues

One of the first things I did to ensure the ethics of my study was to obtain informed consent from my participants. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), I should ask myself, “Do the people I am studying have full information about what the study will involve? Is their ‘consent’ to participate freely given – fully voluntary and uncoerced?” (p. 291). Frankel and Wallen (2003) state that a “measure of intimacy can be developed between interviewers and participants that can lead participants to describe events in their lives that, if misused, could leave them very vulnerable” (p. 462). This

aspect was particularly important for me as the participants in my study are my co-workers. I did not want them to feel coerced in any way and I wanted them to feel that their participation in the study was worthwhile personally and for the betterment of our District (see Appendix D, SSIRB “Consent to Participate” Form, p. 187).

Another area of ethical concern is that of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. This was a rather difficult area since I was utilizing a small sample and participants could potentially be easily identified. As a result, I used the “Ethical Issues Checklist” from Patton (2002, pp. 408-409) (see Appendix E, p. 194) to guide me in these areas.

In general I was committed to the core principles identified by Sieber (1992, p. 18) to guide my ethical choices as I reflected on my study. They were:

Beneficence – maximizing good outcomes for science, humanity, and the individual research participants while avoiding or minimizing unnecessary harm, risk, or wrong.

Respect – protecting the autonomy of (autonomous) persons, with courtesy and respect for individuals as persons, including those who are not autonomous (e.g., infants, the mentally retarded, senile persons).

Justice – ensuring reasonable, nonexploitative, and carefully considered procedures and their fair administration; fair distribution of costs and benefits among persons and groups (those who bear the risks of research should be those who benefit from it).

As I followed these principles, my greatest hope was indeed that those who bore the risks of my research will end up benefiting the most and that our District can grow in an understanding of culturally responsive teaching and the importance of exploring and examining beliefs and attitudes regarding diverse students.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This heuristic, multiple case research study was designed to examine the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students in a Missouri suburban school district. The study allowed me to use my own understandings and interactions with participants as a lens to view their experiences of the professional growth series. The unit of analysis of the study was the experiences of the participants as a result of this professional growth course. Did their attitudes and beliefs change as a result of the course? Six participants served as a single case study in this heuristic, multiple case study.

In this chapter, and again in Chapter 5, I will first share my own reflection of this experience as the heuristic lens. Then I will present a discussion of how I analyzed the data. In this section I will explain the setting, data sources and analysis procedures. Finally I will share my findings of the CoBRAS results, the with-in case analysis, and the cross case analysis.

Self-Reflection

This process has been one of the most difficult and most rewarding experiences on my life journey. As educators, we don't often have time to consider our ways of thinking or to challenge our deeply held beliefs. We spend ample amount of time in professional development often to find that there is a new name for an old technique we used to employ. We often learn strategies to increase student achievement. We rarely, if

ever, have time to reflect or think about these things. It always seems to be a process of go, go, go...do, do, do. York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore and Montie (2001) described this very phenomenon. “Most educators experience a continuously hectic pace in their daily professional lives. Such a pace is not conducive to reflection and learning. The dominant culture in many schools is one of doing, with little or no time for reflection and learning” (p. 2). Our professional growth course gave us time to slow down for reflection and learning and indeed, reflection came up as a significant code. I have argued for some time now that until educators have an opportunity to explore their beliefs and attitudes, and ways of thinking, it is very difficult to effect change. It is also difficult to explore your beliefs and attitudes, and ways of thinking on your own.

I watched the power of a professional learning community unfold before my very eyes. This particular group seemed hungry for this work based on their conversations in class. They appeared to be open and honest with one another as well as displaying a genuine desire to reflect on their beliefs. Our time together became the “rest area along the roadside” of our diversity journey (York-Barr et al., 2001, p. 2).

Reflective practice cannot be done in the fast lane. Although much of educational practice occurs in the fast lane, educators must find or create a rest area along the roadside to reflect on past practices and to determine appropriate adjustments for future practice.

While all participants experienced anger when first confronted with the ideas of White Dominance, racial privilege and the luxury of ignorance, they went deep inside themselves to explore why they felt that way and how to maneuver past that feeling. Each participant moved through one stage of White identity development during the course. I realize that I lead them through this process and I do not discount my ability as a skilled

presenter and facilitator, but they were truly an amazing group of educators. I want these people teaching my children!

Not only did the participants change during the course, but I changed during this process as well. At one point while analyzing and coding the data for this research study, I became overwhelmed with emotion. I realized that I had something important to share. I also actually felt a shift in my attitude as I considered myself. While I will always be a life-long learner, I realized I have something important to say, and I know what I am talking about. I shifted from the mind-set of student to master. On January 12, 2013, I wrote in my personal journal:

As I have coded the data, it is very exciting to see just how much the participants have grown and changed during my PGC course. I have been effective in getting people to consider their thinking and perhaps even helped nudge them to think differently and claim a different point of view. It is very exciting and I see that I have something to offer in the literature. It is powerful, transformational stuff!

Setting and Participants

Originally, I had hoped to have 25 participants for the professional growth series that was open to all certified teachers in the district of study. I had planned to give them the CoBRAS as a pre-attitudes survey. Additionally, I was going to use their CoBRAS results as a method to choose my criterion sample in order to identify five participants for more in-depth case study. Instead, seven people signed up for the course and six met the criteria to become in-depth case studies.

These six participants taught in five different schools throughout the district. Five were elementary teachers and one was a secondary teacher. Two of the participants were teachers in my own school. I have known them both for six years and work closely with

them on a regular basis. I have an excellent relationship with both of them and I was excited that they were able to participate in the course. Two participants had taken a couple of classes with me in the past and I had limited contact with them at various District events. Another participant knew me through a department we had both worked in at one time. Additionally, I was assistant principal to his daughter seven years ago. The final participant was someone that I did not know previous to her taking the course. Finally, an administrative assistant participated in the course as well on an audit basis. Her data is not presented in the findings because she did not meet the criteria for the study due to the fact that she was not a teacher within the District.

As planned, the six participants were given the CoBRAS at the beginning of the study to gain a quantitative number regarding their unawareness of racial privilege, unawareness of institutional discrimination and unawareness of blatant racial issues before participating in the culturally responsive professional development series. Every participant attended eight, 2-hour sessions of the culturally responsive professional development series designed and led by me.

During the first session, I presented four norms to the group, asking them if they could agree to them, and solicited feedback regarding anything that needed to be changed or added to the norms. As a group, we agreed upon the following norms:

1. We will participate in a relaxed atmosphere, beginning our classes on time, sticking to the agenda, and ending on time.
2. We will be committed and active participants in the group, allowing for sharing without interruption and offering feedback as needed.

3. We will interact with our group in a positive manner showing mutual respect, acceptance, sensitivity and encouragement.
4. We will use active listening and be flexible and open-minded to other's thoughts and be trustworthy with thoughts and opinions shared between group members.

The majority of our work centered around assigned chapters from the book, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know ~ White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* by Gary Howard. Participants were given a course syllabus with assigned readings the first night of the class. Each class usually consisted of a time of reflection from the previous class, a connection that the participants could make to the material, a text-based seminar, a group-building activity and plenty of time to dialog about their discoveries and thoughts along the way. Attention was given to teaching in a way that modeled best practices so that the participants could use the information in preparing instruction for their own classrooms if they wished to. Additionally, participants were asked to respond to a journal prompt once a week. At the end of the eight sessions, participants were given the CoBRAS again as a post-attitudes survey upon completion of the course. All six participants also consented to participating in an in-depth interview after the course was completed. Interviews lasted from 40 to 60 minutes and took place at the school in which the professional growth course was held.

In order for teachers to become culturally responsive, and ultimately close the achievement gap, they must first look at their own attitudes and beliefs regarding diversity (Hanley & Noblit, 2009). Through all of my experiences and diversity training, I have wondered if there was an effective avenue for educators to examine their own beliefs and attitudes and was it possible for a person to change their attitudes and beliefs

regarding diversity? This question, that continues to follow me on my life journey, was impetus for me to create the culturally responsive professional growth series.

As a result of creating and leading this professional development series with these participants, I was able to be there as they opened up and honestly talked about their struggles and triumphs with diversity, racism, and White privilege. I opened up the first class by sharing my own story and my “I Am From” poem. It was by doing this that I hoped to display an environment of honesty and trust. I was poignant about my own diversity journey in hopes that this would set the stage for them to share their own journeys with me and one another.

Over the course of five weeks, things definitely shifted. Trust among the group members grew rapidly and participants abandoned the usual niceties surrounding diversity discussions. This chapter presents the findings and stories of Michael, Grace, Maryam, Concordia, Theresa and Anastasia. Their names are fictitious to ensure their anonymity.

Data Sources and Analysis Procedures

I spent three months from October to December of 2012 conducting fieldwork. During this time, data for this study included the results of the CoBRAS pre- and post-attitudes survey, four journal entries each that the participants completed for the class and in-depth interviews (ranging from 40-60 minutes) with each of the participants at the conclusion of the course. In this qualitative, multiple case study, I examined the results from participant scores on the CoBRAS and compared those results with the themes identified from their journals and interviews. I used the heuristic process (Moustakas,

1990) as well as multiple case study analysis (Grbich, 2007; Yin, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994; & Stake, 2006) to analyze the data. During this process, several codes emerged and five common themes among the six participants became evident. What is to follow is a thick, rich description (Denzin, 1989; Patton, 2002; Cresswell, 2007) of their experiences in regards to the research questions through a heuristic lens. “The focus in a heuristic quest is on a recreation of the lived experience; full and complete depictions of the experience from the frame of reference of the experiencing person (Moustakas, 1990, p. 416).

The following questions guided the research of this study: (a) How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series? (b) What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series? (c) What aspects of the culturally responsive professional development series (if any) influenced the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students as self-reported in journal prompts and interview questions?

CoBRAS Results

All participants were given the CoBRAS the first night of the class (see Appendix B for the CoBRAS questions). At the conclusion of the course, the participants were given the CoBRAS again to measure any change in their attitudes and beliefs regarding specifically their unawareness of racial privilege, unawareness of institutional discrimination and unawareness of blatant racial issues before participating in the culturally responsive professional development series. The CoBRAS was useful in

answering the research question “What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series?” Further, it aided in determining several codes during the analysis process as well as three of the themes of the study; Attitudes, Change and Social Dominance.

A higher score represents more unawareness of the three issues. A lower score represents more awareness of the issues. Participants’ total color-blind pre-attitudes scores ranged from 45 to 76 (scale = 20-120), with a mean score of 67, a moderate to moderately high range. Participants’ total color-blind post-attitudes scores ranged from 39 to 58 (scale = 20-120), with a mean post score of 49, a low to moderate range (Atwater, 2007; Neville et al., 2000).

As evidenced in Table 3 below, all participants had lowered scores in the area of racial privilege on their post-attitudes survey.

Table 3

CoBRAS Means and Range by Participants

Participants	Total Color Blind Score <i>Score Range: 20-120</i>		Racial Privilege <i>F1: Range 7-42</i>		Inst. Discrimination <i>F2: Range 7-42</i>		Blatant Racial issues <i>F3: Range 6-36</i>	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Michael	75	58	30	21	34	23	11	14
Grace	66	52	25	17	29	26	12	9
Maryam	74	48	35	29	28	13	11	6
Concordia	45	50	21	16	16	20	8	14
Theresa	76	39	24	11	34	17	18	11
Anastasia	66	48	39	25	11	10	16	13
Mean	67	49	29	19.8	25.33	18.17	12.6	11.17

This represents a meaningful change in attitudes on this instrument. Five of six participants had lowered scores in the area of institutional racism and four of the six participants had lowered scores in the area of blatant racial issues on their post-attitudes survey, also indicative of meaningful change. Concordia's scores were actually higher for the latter two issues. Her journals and interview indicated a greater awareness of all three areas, contrary to her scores on the CoBRAS. This validates the importance of multiple sources of data and the power of triangulation.

With-in Case Analysis

All six participants who served as in-depth case studies will be described in detail through-out this analysis. As I examined the journals and interviews of each participant, several codes emerged and upon further examination, five themes became evident in regards to the culturally responsive professional growth series and how the participants experienced it.

These five themes are: Attitudes/Beliefs – a mental position with regard to diversity issues; Change – evident change in beliefs and attitudes regarding diversity issues; Community – “a group of individuals who have learned to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to ‘rejoice together, mourn together’ and to delight in each other, and to make others’ conditions our own” (Peck, 1987); Environment – group dynamics and training structure; and Social Dominance – Human beings tend to form group-based hierarchies and draw distinctions between in-groups and out-groups that typically favor their own group. Power added to this mix creates hegemonic groups “able to construct reality in ways that both perpetuate and justify their social position” (Howard, 2006). Each participant experienced these themes in a different manner. Depending on the participant, one of these areas may have played a more vital role in their journey than the others.

In this analysis, the participants will first be introduced with their individual “I Am From” poems opening their case. The experience of writing these poems and sharing them with one another in class assisted us in to getting to know one another better; helped us in understanding more clearly the culture each of us grew up in; and helped us to

consider the perspectives each of us brought to this learning community. Several of the participants voiced that this activity was very powerful in helping them consider their own identity and culture while simultaneously becoming more aware of others’.

The participants will then be described with an introduction, followed by an explanation of the themes that were present in their case as evidenced in their responses to the journal prompts and their in-depth interviews. These themes represented participant experiences and phenomena that were captured in the analysis of the data. While all themes were present in the case record of each participant, certain codes and how they experienced that theme were more relevant than others. This is due to the fact that every person experiences phenomena differently based on their individual culture, experiences, perspectives and differences (Rogoff, 2003).

Case 1 - Michael

I AM FROM

I am from North Tullis Street, Gracemor Pool, the concert halls and venues of Kansas City in the great Show-Me-State. I am from the school formerly know as SMSU.

I am from Richmond Street, where I have been charged with being a husband and father two 3 beautiful women.

I am of the McDonald Clan from Scotland. I am from the Henrys of Greenville Mississippi

I am from beef and fried sliced potatoes as only my daddy could make them. I am from oatmeal every morning before school when I was young, to recreating the Food Network in our teensy kitchen with my wife.

I am from Mozart, Mendelsohn, and Megadeth! I am from the classical concert halls with great symphonies and choirs and crowd surfing with metalcore and death metal at the clubs. I am from performing to honor my God at church.

I am from my parents saying “Because I said so” and “it doesn’t suit me” to me saying “Because I said so” and “It doesn’t suit me”

I am from a house where tripping over guitars, amps, violins, violas, cellos, and pianos is not weird, but expected. I am from puppy slurpees and bunny kisses.

I am from family game night, movie night, and always finding room for more music. I am from a house where the cacophonic sounds of violins, pianos, cellos, and bagpipes are filling the air– at all the same time – sweet chaos!

I am from a God given spectacular life.

~2012

Michael has been teaching for 18 years, is the only male participant, and the only teacher from a secondary (7th-12th grade) setting. He hails from a school in the District that often gets a rap for being one of the toughest. He has a great sense of humor and his love and passion for teaching students is evident in every conversation he has about them. Michael is very upbeat and the other participants quickly warmed to him. Michael decided to take this course after a very unpleasant experience regarding race the previous school year.

You know, after the experiences I had last year, I was really questioning myself. I have always professed to be non-racist. I have always professed that I was that guy that is for equality and there is not a racist bone in my body. But after that incident, you know, I started questioning myself. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

Michael described this incident with the other participants in our course and went into more detail with me in our interview. He had tried to redirect a Black student in the halls and the student refused to be redirected. Things escalated and Michael called for assistance from the resource officer. The student became very verbally aggressive. About that time, one of the assistant principals who was also Black, came down the hall. As soon as the young man saw the assistant principal, he started yelling at Michael and calling him a racist.

Michael went on to explain that when this happened, something flipped inside of him and he lost his temper. He explains that he stepped toward the student and asked, “You think I am a racist?! Tell me what I did that makes you think I am a racist.” At that point the assistant principal asked him to back off, but he didn’t and the assistant principal redirected Michael to his office. The next day the young man claimed that

Michael had said, “I am tired of all these Black kids being in the hall” and his parent came in and filed a complaint. Michael did not say this to the student and didn’t feel he was given the opportunity to fully share his side of the story. Everything surrounding this incident was very painful for Michael, as he always felt like a champion for equality.

As a result of this incident, Michael began wondering, “Was I thinking it? I might not have said it, but he [the student] knew what I was thinking.” Michael continued by saying “So if I was thinking that, what do I do about it because that is not the person I want to be.”

Attitudes/Beliefs. Throughout the course and evidenced in Michael’s journal entries and interviews was the transformational attitude of being willing to reflect upon one’s own biases and ways of thinking (an interpretative code). Michael demonstrates this in a journal entry regarding his experience of what Gary Howard refers to as “the assumption of rightness.”

As far as “the assumption of rightness” goes, I knew what this was, but not what it was called. I have become very sensitive not to assume that a student will or will not be able to accomplish something when I see their race or gender. Sometimes it takes a lot of willpower. I have become very good at recognizing when these notions begin to sneak in my head. I have a little ritual I go through where I first acknowledge the feelings, understand the problem with those feelings, and pray about it. I can do this in about 10 seconds.

I really believe I have gotten pretty good at this problem, but I’m not perfect and I understand I might miss. I think that if everyone could identify and understand these weaknesses within themselves, we would come a long way as a society to a culture of social justice.

This was a difficult journal entry because I have learned that the definition of words and phrases when speaking about racism are many times different from what I was led to believe growing up. I am learning a whole new vocabulary when speaking about the issues and it can be difficult at times to understand the paradigms within myself. I have a long way to go, but I am feeling that because of

these new ways of thinking...I am allowing myself to really become much more ready to change my ways of thinking about culturally diverse teaching. (Journal Entry 3)

Michael stated in another journal entry that he had always been proud of the fact that he did not see himself as racist. He had several friendships with people who were Hispanic and Black. When he experienced the racial issue at his school and took time to reflect upon it, he concluded, "When I realized these tendencies in myself it really turned my world upside down and made me question everything I believed about racial inequalities. That is why I was so interested in taking this class." And that led to the next theme that was very present in Michael's case.

Change. Michael's most frequent interpretive code was that of Change Results. Michael specifically demonstrated not only a "greater awareness" of racial bias, institutional racism and White Dominance but a "shift in attitude" regarding the same. I gave Michael his pseudo name because of an expression he used regularly in our classes and again in his interview. He frequently talked about his change in awareness of racial bias and White Dominance as a result of his interactions with his classmates. He described them as "holding a mirror up to his face." Every time he said that, the lyrics to Michael Jackson's song "Man In the Mirror" went floating through my head. "If you want to make the world a better place, take a look in the mirror and make a change."

In his interview, he demonstrated a greater awareness and described two pivotal moments in class. One was when a well-respected colleague shared a racial experience similar to his. The other moment was when another colleague said something that

shocked the rest of the class with her blatant honesty. He describes these moments in class:

One moment was when one of the students in our class...I love this person very much as a colleague and friend and I don't get to work with her very often...but she has a story similar to mine. And it kind of put a mirror up to my face. And then there was another student talking and she said she couldn't believe what she was saying, and I think some of us were shocked. But I was thinking...wait bro, what's up? Why are you so shocked dude, because you feel the same way! That mirror again. And so those were two really critical moments in the class. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

Michael goes on to explain his shift in attitude regarding racial bias, institutional racism and White Dominance in the following journal entry:

As the course went on, something wonderful happened. I was able to view my students on a much different level, and became much more sensitive to not only culturally diverse students, but students of different socio-economic means and behaviors. It became very clear to me that the key to overcoming some of these boundaries within myself was to build relationships with all students. I began this process on a daily basis, and now have come to a point in a very short time where I can do these things naturally and without much thought. Rather than just "assume" a student is a certain way based on their race or socio-economic status, I have allowed myself to understand, and embrace, that it is ok for them to be that way. Are they different than me? Yes. Do they have a different set of values and life processes? Yes. Is that ok now? Absolutely. This transformation was a direct result of taking this class and being taught a different way of thinking. I am building these relationships daily, and the result is that the respect level by all parties involved has become very high. (Journal Entry 4)

His journal responses and interview responses aligned with his results on the CoBRAS. He scored nine points lower in the category of unawareness of racial privilege and 11 points lower in the category of unawareness of institutional racism.

Community. The theme of community played heavily in Michael's experience of this course. Interpretive codes of relationships and interactions showed up the greatest number of times over any of the other codes. These both were under the interpretive code

of interrelations in the community theme. Michael spent a lot of time talking about the importance of relationships during class, his journal entries and his interview. It was through his interactions with others, both in our class and back at his school, that he appeared to grow the most. Although he shared that he had spent a lot of time dialoging with his wife and pastor in regards to racial issues, it was in our learning community that he felt he really began his shift.

In reflecting on the incident at his school and the importance of relationship, Michael shared the following insight regarding the young man and their encounter during our interview:

If I know me, but I don't know him, how can I know what to do with him? So my method was wrong that day. I was fighting a losing battle from the start because the kid didn't know who I was. There was no relationship. That's the bottom line. So I shouldn't have even tried. I should have, at the first sign he was not going to comply, called for assistance and walked away. That is what I should have done. Those relationships are critical. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

In contrast, Michael shared an example of how he handled a similar situation after several of our class sessions and as a result of what he had learned. He explained that he was trying to reach out to two or three different students a day that he didn't previously know.

There is one instance in particular with a young man who I was trying to get to do what he was supposed to be doing. He didn't want to do it. So I kind of left him alone and then I saw him later in the day and he walked up to me and I walked up to him and I shook his hand. I said, 'you know there is not a teacher in this building that does not care about you. And we just want to make sure you have everything you need.' He said, 'yeah, I was having a bad morning. I am sorry.' And I thought, yeah, you know, so what is your name and he told me his name and now when I see him in the hall, we're on a "Hey Mr. Jackson, Hey Christian, how ya doing?" And that could have been one of those potential blow-ups. I thought immediately...I need to protect the relationship. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

Michael continued to share the importance of relationship as he described how teachers could move from social dominance to social justice in our educational settings.

I think we gotta know the kids. I don't mean to sound cliché or like I am on the same tangent but I think that we just have to know the kids and love them for them. And not where they came from or who their parents are or any of this other stuff. We can't feel superior. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

Social dominance. This is a difficult theme to define. To give a brief definition for purposes of this study would be inappropriate. Instead I will share the framework suggested by Howard (2006):

The literature on social dominance suggests that human beings are predisposed for the formation of group-based hierarchies. We tend to draw distinctions between in-groups and out-groups and quite naturally come to discriminate in favor of our own group. When power is added to the formula, hegemonic groups are able to construct reality in ways that both perpetuate and justify their social position. (pp. 50-51)

When I questioned Michael about how he related to the idea of social dominance, Michael admitted “Social dominance is a hard concept for me. I saw it. I can tell. I know people who fit into that category, I just don't... I am not sure where I fit into it, still. That is a hard one for me to grapple with.” This is indicative of the descriptive code that came up for him frequently; wrestling with a racist/non-racist attitude.

Michael mentions several times how much he took pride in the fact that he was not a racist. His world was turned upside down when he was confronted with the idea that he might exhibit some racist tendencies. Reflecting once again on the incident at his school, Michael stated in his journal, “While I never said the things the student claimed, it caused me to ask some very hard questions of myself – specifically, could it be true

(myself being racist) even though I didn't say it? My determination was that in some ways, it was true."

During his interview, Michael shed some more light on this line of thinking. "There were times when other people's actions led me to have racist thoughts." When I asked him what he meant by other people's actions, he shared a very honest and open answer with me.

When I would see a Black person that acted a certain way, I had racist thoughts. So I call it "conveniently non-racist" when I am with my buddies at church or you know I have a really good friend who is the custodian at my school. I don't have a racist bone in my body towards them. But when I see actions of other Black people, I can flip that little racist switch on. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

At this point I pushed him. I knew that Michael was morphing on his diversity journey, so I probed further because I wanted to know why. I asked him, "So what do you think helped move you? Would you even say you moved?"

Absolutely! I think that just acknowledging that I had those thoughts and I couldn't even identify them before made me realize that I wasn't giving everyone I came in contact with a fair chance. I really exercised during this PGC class that when I saw students in the hall that I had never seen before, I wanted to know their story. I wanted to know where they were coming from. I didn't want them to be just that Black kid in the hall, you know what I mean? Because that is what they were to me before. If I had time I would stop and talk to them and it might just be a 'Hi, how are you doing' and I would shake their hands. Just having that contact really helped me change the way that I thought. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

I truly appreciated Michael's sincerity and his honesty. Because of his example, others were not afraid to open up and share their experiences. He hit the nail on the head when he spoke of the hope he felt in a journal response,

Through the dialogue with other classmates I realized quickly that I was not alone in these ideas and thoughts. It was very liberating to understand that while I did not like these tendencies within myself, I was not alone, and there was hope to learn and change. Our classroom during the course was a safe place to be honest and to share exactly how we felt. It was also a place to brainstorm ideas on how to be more sensitive to diverse cultures. (Journal Entry 4)

Case 2 – Grace

I AM FROM

I am from..

*Texas, Indonesia, volcanoes, beaches, and the city of fountains
From moving 13 times in 12 years until I settled
and then I really settled--
Same house and phone number for over 30 years*

I am from...

*Avery, Shirley and 5 siblings and our boxer, Jeep
Cherokee blood, evangelists, Bible belt, and Londo Londo*

I am from...

*Chocolate, tropical fruit, sate, and “meat and potatoes”
But not bananas, milk, or melons*

I am from..

*Soccer, marbles, Gatrik, Washers, and card games of all kinds
Bonanza, Mission Impossible, and the Lone Ranger
Cassette tapes of John Denver, Jim Croce, Chicago, and Bread
I still remember Randy’s 45 records and 8 track tapes
(although I never owned them)*

I am from...

*Cutting our own Christmas tree
Thanksgiving in the mountains
Europe on \$5 a day
Whole family reunions every 5 years with more people than I could name*

I am from...

*“you get what you pay for”
“a little hard work never hurt anybody”*

I am from...

*Trust God
Experience life
Stand up for yourself
Time is better used enjoying life than worrying about it*

~2012

Grace snuck into our class. I did not know she was coming ahead of time. She just showed up and graced us with her presence. I mean that in every sense of the word. Grace wanted to know what this class was all about before she could commit to it, an indication of her integrity. She committed and was the ultimate expression of grace.

Grace understood exactly what it felt like to not exactly fit into a culture. Growing up as a missionary kid in Indonesia, she considered herself a TCK – Third Culture Kid – raised in two cultures and not fully belonging to either. A deeply committed Christian, she and her husband have pastored for the past 12 years in a lower middle class/blue collar congregation. They have done a number of things to reach out to their community and sought to grasp a better understanding of the cultural dynamics and mindsets of those they serve. Grace came in and immediately was curious to see if the class would, “open her eyes to prejudices I am blind to now.”

Grace is in her 16th year of teaching, and is currently an elementary reading teacher. She readily shares that she truly gets a lot of satisfaction from working with her ELL students. Grace expressed, “I love to have them share their language, practices, food, and sometimes, I am more familiar with their religious beliefs than they are. I do believe I value their culture and I am saddened when children (newcomer generation) do not attempt to maintain it and would rather assimilate as much as possible into the American culture.”

Attitudes/Beliefs. In this theme, the most frequently occurring code for Grace was that of emotions. Participants experienced a broad range of emotions regarding diversity issues during this course. Grace recalls her reaction to a chart that we considered from Howard’s book on White identity orientations. In this chart, modalities

of growth concerning thinking, feeling and acting are examined. Behaviors and attitudes regarding each of these modalities are categorized as fundamentalist, integrationist or transformationist. She laughed and said, “This is the one that I didn’t react well to” implying that it made her angry. After explaining how the chart sounded negative and no one would really be honest about where they were on the chart, she shared about how she had made a copy of the chart and highlighted where she thought she was. The fact that she did not like the chart did not keep her from using it to examine her beliefs about herself.

Between her journal entries and our interview, Grace explained how we could also experience the emotions of being both afraid and embarrassed to talk about race.

I would love the opportunity to continue the self-awareness and dialogue we have begun in this class as a group of White, mostly female educators who care and extend it to an honest conversation with members of a multi-racial group. Honestly, it probably helped to explore the White identity question with other White people so we were less afraid of our comments being offensive and therefore were able to be more honest with our own racism. (Journal Entry 4)

When discussing with her the silence that often surrounds issues of race, she agreed that participants in the class began to open up, “when people admitted things they were embarrassed to admit.”

Another experience that elicited an emotional response from Grace was a section from Howard’s book on “the assumption of rightness.” In a journal entry, Grace described this section as “prickling” to her. She articulated clearly the points she agreed and disagreed with.

I disagreed with Howard’s statement (pg. 58) that “the notion of the chosen people, which is a central tenet of the Judeo-Christian worldview, narrowed the focus *regarding who should have dominion over the creation.*” I believe the

command to “be fruitful and subdue the earth” was given to all mankind, not one race or people. I have never viewed the church or its leaders as infallible. I know great damage was done in the name of the Church through history (ex: Crusades, etc) and I have certainly seen, heard, and experienced the pain caused by members of the church in my personal history. I know a number of people who are “church-damaged” enough to never return and it breaks my heart to see how the name and glory of God are disgraced through our human behavior. (Journal Entry 3)

In contrast, she was willing to acknowledge the “other accusation” against the church presented by Howard as its patriarchal position. Grace explained that she was “raised to believe that I was free to operate in any ways God called me or gifted me, and I was not limited by my gender – except in the office of pastor.” For 13 years she co-pastored a church with her husband and was given freedom to “lead, administrate and teach.” Most recently she and her husband have been attending a church that holds the positions of church eldership to men only. While Grace is willing to submit to the leadership of this church because of their deep commitment to “Jesus and exercising humility and service,” she expresses her sadness that her teaching gift is limited in this congregation.

Change. Grace was exceedingly reflective and demonstrated in class, in her journal entries and during our interview that she was developing the interpretive code of greater awareness of racial bias, institutional racism and White Dominance, as well as the interpretive code of experiencing a shift in her attitudes and beliefs regarding these issues.

She was able to articulate in her first journal entry that she was “aware that my greatest racial prejudice is toward Middle Easterners, particularly strict Muslim” and concluded in that same journal entry that “It will be interesting to me to see if this class

opens my eyes to prejudices I am blind to now.” When recalling one of the most pivotal moments in the class for her, Grace referred to a discussion we had as a group regarding religion. People seemed to be much more willing to open up and talk about their religious differences and she easily saw how to connect this with her experience with racial issues. She explained, “That probably clarified for me that whole piece about all the different ways we just assume, because of our own perspective, what we know about everybody else. Or at least we think we are right and they are a little out there.” She clarified, “Just the assumptions of what I am comfortable with and when I walk into your world I am suddenly not right and I have no idea why you do what you do.”

A powerful display of just how much Grace shifted in her attitudes and beliefs was apparent in the following story she shared regarding a “personal racism check” in a journal entry:

This past Friday night, as they were entering the church for a prayer meeting, a 70-year-old Chinese couple were carjacked at gunpoint. We began immediately to pray for the 5 young men. On the way home, I had a “personal racism check” and asked my husband, “Did she actually say it was 5 Black men or did I jump to that conclusion?” On Sunday, the couple spoke to the church to not let fear cause anyone to move out or cede any ground but to view this as God opening doors into the neighborhood. The wife advocated that our position should be that we will give up all we have if it means the people see Jesus in us. To me, true social justice means laying your own “stuff” down to bring truth and compassion to others. (Journal Entry 3)

In her final journal entry for the class, Grace gave some solid examples of what she wanted to put into practice to continue her transformation as a culturally responsive educator. This included the results of a mini-experiment that she conducted to see if an achievement gap existed at her school based on students of color status. White children make up 66% of their total school population compared to students of color who make up

34% of their population. Grace found that the numbers representing her caseload in reading were congruent with 67% of her students White and 33% students of color.

She goes further to give three solid examples of other things she would like to try in order to continue her diversity journey. This included observing teachers of other cultures, participating in a form of “cultural therapy” designed at the University of Michigan and video taping her own teaching to observe both the quantity and quality of her interactions with “students of differing gender, ethnicity and behavior.”

Grace stated it beautifully as she shared:

I suppose my next steps in teaching are to seek opportunities and not to slide back into personal ignorance and laziness in regards to the issues this class has raised. I want to move on toward immersion and not fall back to reintegration simply by not taking the time to grow. I currently see myself as having the characteristics of both an integrationist and a transformationist (slightly more the later) so I know I am in flux and I hope to find ways to continue the growth. Another class? (Journal Entry 4)

Community. Under the interpretive code of communication, the descriptive codes of conversations and stories presented as important aspects of Grace’s experience. Although she didn’t always agree with what Howard had to say in his book, she expressed the power of his story in helping her look at things differently,

Yes I did love Gary Howard’s story. He established great credibility with me by telling that story first. And the fact that he was 60 and he was a real hippie. He lived through all those things of the 1960’s and just the fact that he was 60 established credibility for me. He wasn’t a young upstart in this thing, he had really lived a long ways and so that helped. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

The power of story did not stop with Howard’s book. Grace loved hearing the stories and new experiences of the other participants in the class because she felt like this was when “people were actually making a direct change.” One teacher in the class, Maryam,

regularly shared stories of how she was applying what she was learning in our course to what she was doing in her own classroom with her students. “I enjoyed Maryam sharing about her interactions with her kids and becoming aware of that” Grace shared in her interview.

Further into our interview we were discussing the importance of story in other cultures. Grace responded, “We do the whole training orality...they have been using it overseas for a long time because it is a very normal part of culture there...the whole oral tradition.” She went on to explain that in her experience, “North America is becoming less and less literate and more oral. Whether it is music or movies, iPods...people are not reading.” She concluded, “Everyone loves a story so we are doing much more biblical training with story telling because it is relevant in North America now” (Personal communication, November 1, 2012).

Even more relevant than the power of story for Grace was the effectiveness of conversation as a vehicle of community. In her final journal entry she shared:

The very fact that I have caught myself on repeated occasions over these past few weeks saying, “I am taking this class and we were talking about...” as a preface to what I want to say demonstrates the impact this class has had on me. I have found the need to continue conversation topics we have begun in class with my family and others around me. I am a social learner and honest, reflective conversation is very stimulating and the best and quickest way for me to change my ways of thinking. I have thoroughly enjoyed the transparency and dialogue, both as a participant in the discussion and as an observer of others in their journey. (Journal Entry 4)

She visited this topic again in our interview.

We were developing relationships as we were being honest with each other and our ideas were bigger when you heard other people say things. And then to actually be allowed to verbalize things, whether positive or negative, and be accepted. So then that allows you to work through stuff. Just reading the book

would have been not nearly such a fun class (laughs). It really was the conversation that made it interesting. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

Grace took the idea of conversation even one step further by examining what this looked like among her own students in her classroom. She described the differences regarding conversation between her Black, Asian and White students.

I do think that black students are by nature, louder and more need to converse. Those are the kids who tend to interrupt. Not out of rudeness, they are just adding to the conversation and they are not raising their hand and waiting for their turn. They are in on the conversation which is one of the things that our White middle class thing shuts down all the time. And those kids get in trouble for doing what is natural. It doesn't matter if conversations are on top of each other because it is still a joint conversation. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

She continued,

So I worked since taking our class at separating (this). I told my kids, "we don't want to interrupt one another" but I sort of let it happen when it was not actual disrespect. And I actually talked about it one day. It is actual disrespect when you are saying what you have to say is more important than what this person has to say. That is disrespectful and I don't want us to interrupt like that. If you are responding to me and you jump in without raising your hand, (because I used to use talking chips), I am probably not going to take your talking chip because I will know you were just there. That shows me that you are learning and you are connecting. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

Social dominance. It is not surprising that the interpretive codes that were emphasized most in Grace's case analysis were that of understanding different perspectives and awareness of White privilege. Grace scored eight points lower in the area of racial privilege on her CoBRAS post-attitudes survey. For the most part, Grace finds it easy to see things from a different perspective. Grace discussed that her experience as a third culture kid has given her many opportunities to practice this skill. She wrote in a journal entry about how American schooling was based on the culture of

the White, middle class and how this makes it very difficult for some students who do not come from that background to relate to what the teacher is saying. She noted that “Many of the ways of behaving that are valued in some cultures are seen as disruptive, even disrespectful, and are put down in the traditional classroom.” She continued, “I know that I often teach in ways that make perfect sense to me because of my background, not realizing that my students do not have the same schema I have.”

As a result of this understanding, she made a concerted effort to “assume nothing” and made what she described as a “deliberate shift to begin her lessons with establishing what was known and what wasn’t.” This included spending additional time to clarify vocabulary, build background knowledge, and teaching her students to stop her when they needed something clarified. Additionally, she experienced “the level of verbal processing” as different from one culture to another.

While it was not difficult for her to comprehend these different perspectives when it came to working with her students, Grace shared during her interview that there were some instances where she struggled with perspectives when it came in direct conflict with her religious beliefs. She felt more comfortable with race and socio-economic diversity than that of sexual orientation. Even so, she still demonstrated the ability to see from this perspective though she did not agree with it.

I have people I relate to that are lesbian and homosexual but ultimately it comes back to the rightness thing and I look at scripture and it says it’s not okay. That is not how God created us. And so that’s where I come back to I don’t know if I could really live with that being okay. I can understand that that might be a natural tendency just like alcoholism can be a natural tendency for somebody...but that doesn’t mean you have to act it out. I understand my that to a...if there was a homosexual; they would not be okay with my position. I mean

that would be very hurtful for them to hear me say you shouldn't act it out. So that one I am not where I am with the race thing. (Personal communication, November 1, 2012)

This too, is indicative of Grace's self-awareness which opened the door for her awareness of White privilege. Grace shared that she would "love the opportunity to continue the self-awareness and dialogue we have begun in this class." She also stated, "The biggest thing I learned was the White Dominance, the legacy of privilege and the luxury of ignorance. That has been the most growth for me personally." It was in this area that her beliefs and attitudes changed the most as evidenced both in her statements during her interview and in her CoBRAS results.

One of her most astute statements was in response to a section in Howard's book on the "Methodologies of Dominance." In this section of the book Howard recounts the numerous ways, such as through land theft, missionary fervor and disease that the Europeans conquered Native Americans. In response she stated, "This is a perfect example of social dominance rooted in the belief of personal superiority and the result is still abominable. The danger comes when we teach this history through the same position of social dominance so that we make ourselves the heroes of the story and continue to justify the behavior."

Case 3 – Maryam

I AM FROM

I am from a two story white house with a porch swing on the front porch and a beautifully cared for yard, that will always be home.

I am from amazing parents Roy and Betty, two sisters and a brother.

I am from chalk the arrow, hide and seek, softball, playing outside until mom called us, and hours of badminton and family time in the back yard.

I am from iced down Budweiser and pop in the coolers, cold watermelon and deviled eggs for the 4th of July, and waking up to the aroma of the turkey in the oven on Thanksgiving.

I am from delicious open-faced hamburgers, homemade chicken and noodles, homemade fudge, and sitting at the table at mealtime as a family.

I am from mom popping popcorn and putting it into big brown grocery bags, playing on the swings until dark at the drive-in movies, and falling asleep in the back of the station wagon.

I am from driving to Big Lake, singing all the way, swimming in the lake, and catching toads. (I held the flashlight.)

I am from great memories that I wish my daughters could experience!

~2012

Maryam has been teaching for 25 years in an elementary setting and loves teaching. Her love of teaching was evident as she was able to weave all of her conversations during our course to what she was learning and applying in her classroom with her own students. No matter what the topic was, she could always turn the conversation around so that she was speaking about what to do next in her classroom. Her excitement would bubble up and she could hardly contain herself as she would share another moment regarding how her students really “got it.” Maryam grew up with modest means in a Catholic family. She attended a parochial school where the most notable differences she observed were whether one was Catholic or Protestant. She grew up with a lot of “Mexicans” in her parish and never gave it another thought until she was an adult. As a child she was taught to never to think of herself as above anyone else so she was shocked to hear slang comments about the Hispanic culture as she got older, though she didn’t give it much thought afterwards.

Attitudes/Beliefs. Emotions showed up as the most frequently occurring code in the attitudes/beliefs theme for Maryam. During the first class sessions, it was evident that Maryam was agitated with the assigned reading. She was actively involved in the class but you could tell she was experiencing a lot of disagreement with Howard. During our interview she explained. “It was never mentioned in our home that we were above anyone else. That is why it burned me alive in the beginning when we talked about White supremacy. I was like, well that isn’t happening around here! We have never thought that we were above anybody. That just didn’t happen in our family.”

Maryam shared that the first part of the book really “irritated her to death.” So much so that she even went to another participant in the class to see what they thought of the book. She expressed to the other participant “That really made me mad.” During our interview she told me what she was thinking as she wrote her first reflection. “Are you kidding me? It’s not my fault. I don’t think it is this way for everyone.” She expressed in a later journal reflection how she had always associated White privilege with the wealthy and did not consider herself as experiencing either. “I think that is why the beginning of the class made me very uncomfortable and angry.”

Maryam was also good about communicating the emotion of fear in regards to race. She was one of the first participants in the class to express what was really going through her mind and because of her honesty and willingness to open up, others felt safe enough to share, as well. During class she described the experience of going to a particular restaurant. Some Black men came in and they looked like they were going to start trouble and they did. She immediately felt afraid when she saw them. During class she expressed that if they had been White, she wasn’t so sure she would have felt the same fear. As the class continued, she carried on little experiments with herself to see if she could recognize when there was truly a safety issue or if she was being unwittingly afraid. She shared these examples with the class and shared that she found she was overcoming the fear. She realized she was experiencing fear when there was no need to do so. She challenged the belief that she should be afraid when a group of Black men enters a public places. Maryam brought this class discussion to my attention during our interview as she discussed “the fear thing versus the safety thing.”

Change. The most frequently occurring code for Maryam in the theme of change was awareness. Maryam experienced a greater awareness in all three areas on her CoBRAS post-attitude survey. She moved six points in the area racial privilege, fifteen points in the area of institutional racism and five points in the area of blatant racial issues. The most obvious changes reported by Maryam regarded the way she designed her lessons in the classroom. During our interview she used the word awareness over and over again. She shared a very pivotal thought process she went through in regards to our American government.

Do you know how stupid I felt? I'm 50 years old and I have taught elementary students for a very long time. Do you know how many times I've taught government? Do you KNOW how many times? And when we were talking about who set it up...oh my gosh... I felt like an idiot. It was the wealthy White men who set everything up. 'You know these are our rights. This is going to save us. This is going to be for our entire United States. It is for all people.' No it was not. And I never even thought about that. That's sad. (Personal communication, November 5, 2012)

She then described what a difference this awareness has made in her teaching. She was reading the book, *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco as a read-aloud during Reader's Workshop. This is a story about two boys and their friendship during the Civil War. When Say (a White child) was wounded, Pink took him to his home in Georgia to recover with his family who were slaves. Ultimately, the boys were taken as prisoners by the Confederate Army. Pink was hanged while Say survived to share this story with his daughter Rosa, Patricia Polacco's great grandmother.

Maryam explained that in the past, she would have read the book and they would all have enjoyed it. She would have talked about it with the students, "but not in the depth that I have this time. The impact is so different. Even the kids are getting that from me,

and that's what I feel good about. I think they are getting a much deeper understanding and more of an impact from the story.” Rather than glossing over the racial issues the story presented, she led the students through an in-depth conversation about slavery and allowed students to actually discuss how the issues in history affected them today.

Maryam described the major belief shift she felt regarding the concept of being color-blind. In a journal entry she compared the two. “Before the experience of this class, I would have said I was color-blind when it came to race and I would have been proud of that. I would have assumed that meant that I was ‘blind’ to the differences in skin color, as it did not matter to me what color a person was. She then described her new understanding of being color-blind. “Now I understand this term in a different context. Being color-blind is a disservice to another human being. It is in looking at that person through our eyes, life, and experiences instead of seeing life through *their* eyes, taking in cultural differences and life experiences.”

I originally gave Maryam the pseudo name of Mary because of her devoted Catholic upbringing and the first thing that came to my mind was Mary, mother of Jesus. Maryam has done so much internal work to be more aware of others and their perspectives that I chose instead to give her the Islamic name for Mary, representing yet another perspective. Many people might not realize that the account of the birth of Jesus in the Quran is almost identical to that of the book of Luke in the Bible and that Islam honors Maryam as the mother of the Jesus, the Messiah, and most important prophet of the Isrealites.

Community. While Maryam touched on the importance of honesty and the power of stories to usher change in the participants, the singularly most important aspect

for her, as revealed by the most frequently occurring code, was that of the capacity of conversation. When referring back to her new understanding of White privilege she said, “after all of the conversations, discussions and reading, I understand where I fit into all of this.”

Even in the beginning of the class when Maryam was feeling angry, she sought out others in the course to converse through the issues. At one point, after hearing another participant talk about what it was like to be a White woman married to a Black man, she felt confident enough to engage a friend outside of our course in a conversation regarding her ethnicity. She just came right out and asked her friend if she understood the term, “person of color.” They had a rich conversation as a result. Maryam explained that she never would have been bold enough to engage in a conversation like this before taking the course, as it would have scared her before. When I probed her further about how it felt to engage in that kind of conversation she described it as, “Well I felt empowered, because I thought, you know, I like having this conversation. I don’t feel like I am tiptoeing around it. I knew I wasn’t offending her. It was just an honest conversation. So yeah, that felt good.”

For Maryam, the conversations did not stop at the door of our classroom. She found herself engaged in conversations with her family. During our interview she laughed and shared that she would be out to eat or doing other things with her family and would frequently talk about the things she observed in light of what we were discussing in class. In fact, at one point her sister jokingly said, “I don’t want to hear another thing about your class.” Ignoring her sister, she forged ahead and said, “I am going to tell you right now why I think that is happening. There are no female waiters and I think it is a

cultural thing.” During our interview Maryam reflected at this point and said, “It just causes me to think and watch and I think I relate better. I am more tuned in rather than just there. I observed before, but I feel like I’m more focused, I am more tuned in to what is happening and why. I would not have questioned before.”

Maryam shared that the greatest example of the capacity of conversation took place in her classroom. One such example took place as the class was reading the book *Minnow and Rose* to get ready for the author visit of Judy Young. The students were discussing a part of the book where pioneers encountered Indians and everybody ran away in fear. The students inquired as to why that happened? Rather than give the politically correct answer that they have always heard, Maryam asked them, “Why do you think?” and proceeded to lead them through a more candid discussion regarding westward expansion through a Native American point of view.

Social dominance. For Maryam, it was through listening to others and their perspectives that she was able to become more aware of her White privilege. Both understanding different perspectives and awareness of White privilege were frequently occurring interpretive codes in the Social Dominance theme. A clear indication of this was in one of her journal responses. “The more we talked, and people would talk about what was in the book and what they were thinking and how it affected them in their own lives, I guess that was the realization that I have this all wrong and there is so much more to this than I thought,” another indication of her change in beliefs and attitudes.

She described in a journal response how enlightening it was for her to consider things through the eyes of others and their perspectives.

This class has very much brought cultural differences into a bright new light. I have always been aware, but not in tune, with cultural differences that are so important to each individual. I question why something or someone may have done what they did...or why something is so misunderstood (in my opinion) that seems clearly understandable. I have only been considering how I see things...perspective is everything! (Journal Entry 4)

Therefore, understanding other perspectives became a gateway to her own awareness.

When I asked her what stage of identity development she was in, she replied that she would hope she was in the immersion stage. She felt like the “awareness word” popped up in everything she wrote and said. She explained that sometimes she felt she could flip back and forth, but because she was “living it, thinking about it, and being more aware of it” that she indeed had grown in her understanding of her White privilege. She went on to share her wish, “I wish that every teacher in our district would have the opportunity to participate in a small book study as we have. It has been so awakening, inspiring and refreshing! Perspectives from others are so beneficial and spark thought and conversation.”

Case 4 – Concordia

I AM FROM

I am from Walnut Creek, Weatherby Lake and Lake Waukomis full of friends and time spent at the lake.

I am from the families of New York and Iowa. I am from Tim and Judie and 2 brothers- Nick and Lucas. I am from loving animals including Mel, Ginger, Sneaky Pants, lots of fish and other cats. I am from 2 Step Brothers, Timmy and Jeff and 1 Step Sister, Anna. I am from a Step Dad, Tim. I am from big family with lots of gatherings, lots of games and food.

I am from homemade, home cooked meals where we sat down and ate as a family. I am from hamburger casserole, fried chicken, meat and mashed potatoes. I am from big smokers and hours smoking food. I am from yummy homemade treats such as chocolate chip cookies.

I am from Sega Genesis and Sonic, Mario Kart and DDR. I am from Saved by the Bell, Full House, dance and cheerleading. I am from riding bikes and playing outside. I am from playing school, and playing with Barbies (when my brothers were not ripping off their heads).

I am from "I love you forever," "I'll like you for always," "As long as I'm living my baby you'll be." I am from the nicknames "missy" and "bugs." I am from "you are my sunshine."

I am from a hardworking work ethic, including my love and for children. I am from always taking the opportunity to further develop myself personally and professionally. I am from going to church on Sundays. I am from big 4th of July celebrations, Thanksgiving and Christmas get-togethers. I am from lots of relatives and friends, boating and swimming, making snowmen in the winter, having sleepovers, listening to music and celebrating birthdays. I am from fishing, cleaning cars, reading books, playing with the latest gadgets and enjoying life to the fullest.

I am from a love for the Mizzou Tigers and the Kansas City Chiefs.

I am from an amazing husband who has given me the miracle of a daughter. I am from Cocoa, Kuro and Pretty Kitty. I am from a wonderful support system including a great Mother-In-Law. I am from camping, dutch oven cooking, riding the motorcycle and sitting on the back deck.

I am from lots of trips back and forth from Oklahoma, and several back to New York.

I am me because of where I am from.

~ 2012

Concordia was a particularly reflective and introspective participant. She has been an educator for seven years in the elementary setting and is currently an elementary counselor. She was thoroughly engaged in our classes but preferred to listen rather than talk. She reported that she would do most of her processing at home after our classes and through her reflective journaling. When she did share something in class, it was typically deep and profound. She had a caring and warm personality and is committed to making the world a better place. It is because of this that I gave her the pseudo name Concordia as Concordia was the Roman Goddess of harmony and peace.

During our interview, Concordia shared with me that as a child, her parents divorced and as a result she moved several times. This made it difficult to create long-term friendships or get to know people very well. She was very honest about the fact that when she was growing up her family exhibited racist attitudes and the “n” word was “flying all over the place.” While she was often confused by the racist attitudes displayed by her family, she never felt she could question it because the feelings were “so strong” and she felt like she was “just this little person.” With her sitting across from me during our interview, it occurs to me that she is not a little person anymore. She is a powerhouse for change. As a wife and new mother, she is working hard at finding balance between work as a school counselor and her family. In fact, during our course, she was detained at her school on a couple of occasions to work on issues that arose during the day (Personal communication, November 8, 2012).

Attitudes/Beliefs. The most frequently occurring code for Concordia in the attitudes/beliefs theme was emotions. When I asked her what stage of identity development she was in when she started the class she shared with me that she actually

thought she was in the disintegration stage when we began. She explained during our interview, “I was upset, I was angry that everyone was saying that we have privileges because we are White and I didn’t know what to do with that.” Concordia shared that after reading the introduction and first chapter of the book she felt very confused. In a journal entry she explained, “At the beginning of this class, I was very defensive and had a hard time understanding what the big deal was about White privilege. I did not think I was a part of this, and did not want to even talk about it because it just made me mad that I was automatically put into this category” (Personal communication, November 8, 2012).

This reaction is not surprising given Concordia’s struggle with the way her family felt regarding diversity. She shared with me that as a child there were only a couple of students she came in contact with that were Black and Asian. She recalled feeling confused and thinking about what her grandpa would have to say about these students. She explained, “He would be making comments about these people and I didn’t understand why. I remember thinking, ‘Why don’t you get to know these people before you make judgments about them and say all these racial slurs?’” She saw her grandpa as a truly caring person and could not reconcile the judgment he had towards people of color with how caring she saw him (Personal communication, November 8, 2012).

Therefore, since Concordia struggled with this judgment of people of color by her family, she did not see herself as participating in the culture of White privilege. This is what caused her disintegration at the beginning of our course. She did not stay in this stage for long as she continued to read Howard’s book and participate in the class discussions.

Change and social dominance. I combined these two themes for Concordia because they were so intricately tied together in her journey. In the theme of change, the most frequently occurring interpretive code was awareness of racial bias, institutional racism and White Dominance. In the social dominance theme, the most frequently occurring interpretive code was Awareness of White Privilege. In her first journal entry, Concordia explained that she felt really confused,

I thought I knew what culturally responsiveness was and now I think it is something completely different. I think that I am embarrassed to say that I was being culturally responsive and really was not. I thought because I considered what the culture was and how to best help that student that I was being culturally responsive. Now I know it's different from that. Now I know that it's my culture coming forth and I am starting to understand what White privilege is. (Journal Entry 1)

It was of interest to me to follow Concordia's progression of her understanding of White privilege. She spent a lot of time reading the book and taking time to reflect quietly on the readings. In response to the second journal prompt, you can see that Concordia is no longer resisting the idea of White privilege and is developing a better understanding of it. She is no longer in the disintegration stage of White identity development, an indication of her belief and attitude change regarding White privilege.

As I am reading this book, I realize more and more how much privilege we have as White people. I see there is social dominance and we are a part of it. I realize we are a part of it whether we are trying or not, it's the way it is. As White people, we have the privilege to not think about things like we are the majority everywhere we go, and that we are comfortable with the way things are done around us – this is our culture. Social dominance is White privilege, whether we want it to be or not. (Journal Entry 2)

By her third journal response, Concordia was not only aware and accepting of her White privilege, but she began to comprehend other aspects of diversity through that lens.

When responding to the prompt regarding her experience with “color-blindness” and the “assumption of rightness” she expressed, “This question is really hard for me to answer. I am sitting here thinking about what my experiences have been. I think that it is my White privilege that I cannot think of an exact example of this.”

In Concordia’s final journal response she stated, “This class has had a tremendous effect on how I see myself and how I teach. I now understand what my part is in White privilege and I am absolutely a part of it, and I have a responsibility in it.” I better understood what she meant by this as she explained her experience of a staff meeting after being a part of our course. During the staff meeting the teachers were looking at achievement data and Concordia was compelled to raise her hand and ask, “Why is it that free and reduced are so much lower?” and she then proceeded to share information with her staff about things she had learned in our class. She described that the teachers at first looked at her like she was making some off the wall comments, but then she noticed that people appeared to really think about what she said (Personal communication, November 8, 2012).

Later in our interview I asked her if she had learned anything in our course that would help educators narrow the achievement gap. She responded:

When I signed up for this class, I wanted to get some concrete ways to interact with our diverse population. I think it was in our last class that I understood you can’t get that until you have this background knowledge, and I didn’t understand that because I didn’t know. Like it said in the book, we don’t know. We don’t have to know. So going forward I have this in the back of my mind all the time, and I am always thinking about it. Like when my principal was sharing that data...that is what was going through my mind. I think that is really big that it is always there. I am always questioning what is happening. (Personal communication, November 8, 2012)

It is interesting to note here that Concordia felt very rushed during our last class. She had to leave a little early and told me later that she thought she got confused as she was taking her post-attitudes CoBRAS. In the area of Unawareness of Racial Privilege she lowered her score by five points. However, in the other two areas, her scores were actually higher, although it is evident in her journal entries and her interview that she did not increase her unawareness of Institutional Racism and Blatant Racism. This is testament to the strength of qualitative research designs and the importance of multiple data sources.

Community. The descriptive code with the highest frequency for Concordia in the community theme was Conversations. Concordia described herself as an “inward person.” She actually shared that she grew the most when she was able to be home in her own space to “relax and reflect.” However, though she was such an introspective person, she spoke a lot about the importance of our class conversations in her last two journal entries and during our interview.

When referring to moving from social dominance to social justice, Concordia spoke of the importance of “small conversations like we are having in class.” She felt that people must “continue to talk to each other” and “educate ourselves.” She spoke, too about how it takes “some hard conversations” to move forward with social justice. During our interview we were discussing the aspects of the professional growth course that she felt were worthwhile and needed to be replicated in future courses. She shared how meaningful conversation was in regards to her own personal growth. “I think we could continue to grow together and I think that our conversations are really beneficial. Someone would bring something up and that would spark something in me.” At the end

of our interview I asked her if she had any final thoughts regarding the course and she offered, “It was really good. It was probably the best PGC class I have taken. Because of the experience and the conversations we were able to have” (Personal communication, November 8, 2012).

Case 5 – Theresa

I AM FROM

*I am from Spring Hill, Kansas
The country, hayfields, dusty gravel roads
Small town U.S.A.*

*I am from Mom and Dad
Playing with my little sister, Sandy
2 grandmas, 2 grandpas, aunts, uncles, and cousins
A foundation of faith in God*

*I am from fried chicken, baked ham, mashed potatoes, home grown and canned
vegetables, fresh bread, and homemade pies*

*I am from playing house, playing school, Little House on the Prairie, the Waltons,
Dallas, and Trapper John M.D.
Playing Frisbee, playing catch, and fishing in our ponds*

*I am from hard working and not quitting, we are so proud of you, and God will not give
you more than you can handle*

I am from Santa Claus collections and Hoarders before hoarding was pop culture

*I am from Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, the Fourth of July, birthdays, and Sunday
dinners with extended family*

~2012

Theresa has been committed and dedicated to education for the past 12 years in an elementary setting. In fact, she is pursuing a doctorate in education. I know Theresa from working with her on various committees and projects throughout the district of study. I was surprised the first night of class when she shared that she had been involved in a couple of incidents in which families accused her of being racist. As a school counselor, I had always known Theresa to be a champion for equality and social justice. Her first journal response went into great depth regarding her experiences and why she chose to take the class. She described the pain and frustration that she experienced as a result of these incidents. Of all the participants in the class, Theresa lowered her scores the most on the post –attitudes CoBRAS for a total of 37 points. She lowered her score 13 points in unawareness of racial privilege, 17 points on unawareness of institutional discrimination and 7 points in the area of blatant racism. I chose her pseudo name because Theresa means “to harvest.” That is exactly what she did through this course. She harvested the fruits of her self-reflective labor.

Attitudes/Beliefs. Theresa scored most frequently in the codes of experienced and/or participated in racist issues in family and experienced a broad range of emotions regarding diversity. During our interview Theresa shared with me that she grew up in a very small town and there was only one Black person in her high school. She didn’t really experience much diversity until she went to college. She recalls her grandparents as being very “racist” and ones to use derogatory terminology on a regular basis. She explained that her father felt that you could not go anywhere in the city and still be safe because “there were Black people there.” Even as an adult she has lived in a predominantly White neighborhood leaving the majority of her diversity experiences

taking place at her school. These experiences are the very same that left her hurt, angry and bitter (Personal communication, November 2, 2012).

Theresa shared in detail how difficult the previous school year had been for her. A mother was concerned that the school was not meeting her child's academic needs, yet in the school's perspective the child was successful both academically and behaviorally. The parent made demands that clearly violated board policy and when the school personnel could not deliver on the demands, the mother went to the school board stating there was a lack of support due to racism. After Theresa encountered many sleepless nights trying to reconcile these events, there wasn't really any resolution and the parent withdrew the child from the school (Personal communication, November 2, 2012).

That spring another issue came up with a different family that was, however, related to the first family. The issue this time involved the student running from school property and disrupting the class by standing on a desk and insisting that he didn't have to "take this f...ing test." As Theresa was working with this student and his mother to problem solve these issues, the parent accused Theresa of stalking and harassing her in regards to her son and proceeded to call her a "racist bitch." Theresa shared honestly in her first journal response about how she felt.

Is it really worth it? If parents are going to turn on me like this? I deserve to be treated better than this. I'm not a racist. How do I make this woman understand I am not a racist? HOW do I make this woman understand I am not a racist? HOW DO I MAKE THIS WOMAN UNDERSTAND I AM NOT A RACIST?...I still don't know how. It hurts me to the core of my being that someone would call me a racist. Am I missing something? (Journal Entry 1)

This self-reflective question opened the door for healing and a shift in Theresa's beliefs and attitudes regarding her awareness of racial bias, institutional racism and White Dominance. These are the codes she scored most frequently in for the Change theme.

Change. By the time Theresa penned her second journal response, it was already evident that she was experiencing a shift in her thinking.

Teachers are expected to teach students and are given limited instruction or training on culturally responsive teaching. Until I took this class, I thought I was culturally responsive. It was a result of reading, discussion, instruction and painful self-reflection that I have realized being culturally responsive is a journey.
(Journal Entry 2)

She echoed these thoughts in our interview when I asked her what were some of her most memorable experiences during our course were. She replied,

The discussion we had among our group and the self-reflections that I was able to do. The self-reflection made me more aware of misconceptions I had, stereotypes that I had and I feel like I was able to grow. Understanding that there were other people that had experienced similar things, and while they had felt as attacked as I had felt and really becoming aware of those misconceptions that I held. (Personal communication, November 2, 2012)

As we progressed with our interview Theresa talked of how she came in and truly did not think she had any bias. She said, "I came in thinking it was THEIR problem. Help me figure out how to fix THEM" (Personal communication, November 2, 2012). This is typical of someone going through the Pseudo-Independence stage of White Identity development as "our attempts to abandon racism in this stage are usually characterized by a desire to 'help' people from other racial groups rather than to systematically change the dynamics of dominance" (Howard, 2006, p. 96). Indicative of her new way of thinking

she continued, “But what I really realized was it is MY reaction and it is MY problem and it is how I take that” (Personal communication, November 2, 2012).

Her awareness of institutional racism was exceedingly clear when I asked her how her understanding had grown regarding institutional and systems issues.

Well, for me personally...I was someone who would say, “I haven’t had any slaves.. it is not my problem.” And now I realize just because I am White and I am part of an institution where other people don’t have the same rights, they don’t get the same privileges, just because they are a different skin color. That plays a part in everyday interactions. And it doesn’t matter that I didn’t live in the 1800’s and it doesn’t matter that I didn’t live in the 1960’s. It’s still a problem today and a very prevalent problem. (Personal communication, November 2, 2012)

When I asked Theresa about pivotal moments for her in the classroom she talked about reading the chapter in Howard’s book regarding White Dominance and then coming back to talk about it as a group when most of the participants were feeling a little angry about it.

I was angry too. Again it was, “I didn’t own the slaves. I wasn’t there when people had to sit at the back of the bus. This is not my problem. I am Theresa. I treat everybody the same.” And then I realized that just being a White person has made me part of a history of social dominance. And I can’t change that, but I can change my interactions going forward and I can try to make other people more aware. I can certainly recommend this book. I can certainly have discussions with people. (Personal communication, November 2, 2012)

I probed her a little further because I wanted to know if it was just reading the book, *We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know – White Teachers Multiracial Schools*, that was causing people to be so reflective and aware. I asked, “Had you just picked that book up and read it on your own, what do you think your experience would have been?” Theresa replied, “I think I might have had a little bit more awareness. I would have stayed mad about the social dominance. I might have stopped reading, Amy. I might have stopped

reading at the social dominance part and tossed the book and said ‘Oh that’s stupid!’”

(Personal communication, November 2, 2012).

Again I decided to delve deeper. “So what got you through it, what in our class got you through it?” Her answer led me right to the next theme of Community where her most frequently occurring code was that of conversations followed closely by relationships and interactions with others. These comments from her journal prompts and interview, along with her CoBRAS scores indicate a definitive change in her attitudes and beliefs.

Community. Theresa responded,

The discussion with the other people and there were people in our class that were angry just like I was. And so it was pushing forward. And it was the knowledge that you brought as the facilitator of “but don’t you see?” and giving us these other perspectives. I mean if we would have sat there, just us...without you as the facilitator, we might have gotten even more angry, you know? But having that knowledge that you brought and having the passion you brought and your experiences that you have had helped facilitate that turning point for me.

(Personal communication, November 2, 2012)

Theresa talked frequently, both in her journal responses and in our interview about the importance of conversations in changing our views, subsequently, she expressed the importance of relationships in having these honest conversations. She said in her final journal response, “After taking this class, I have realized that I might try to educate myself from articles and books regarding different cultures, but the true learning comes from dialogue with individuals. I cannot make assumptions of anyone based on stereotypes. Each individual is just that, an individual.”

Social dominance. In the Social Dominance theme, the most frequently appearing interpretive code for Theresa was that of Awareness of White Privilege though

she referenced this in regards to the achievement gap (another descriptive code) quite frequently. When describing her understanding of the “assumption of rightness,” Theresa referred to the idea of our founding fathers, American democracy and “equality and justice for all.” Similar to one of the other participants, Theresa came to realize that our society had actually been based on “sexism, racism, and elitism.” She explained, “Only those who were wealthy, White and male had the full rights of citizenship. These rights were intended only for an elite class.” She stated it beautifully when she continued, “The assumption of rightness is often strengthened by the fact that dominant groups tend to know very little about those people whom they define as the ‘others.’”

Theresa demonstrated in her third journal response that she understood the concept of her White privilege by stating that until she took the course she “assumed that since I don’t make racist comments and work to make sure everything is equal for everyone, all must be good and I was doing nothing to contribute to any racist attitudes.” She understands now that her “background as a White, female American, is obscured by privilege and dominance.” These statements sounded far different from the statements of her first journal response. She couldn’t have made it any clearer than when she professed,

Now I know that because I am White I am able to simply exist without having to cater to another culture or have any visible markers to influence opinions about me. I am now able and willing to make connections between my experiences and those of oppressed people. As a result of this class and my self-reflection, I am conscious of the facts regarding the legacy of privilege, dominance, and racism among my culture as a White American. I can no longer go through life as a color-blind person pretending everything is okay and claiming ignorance to White Dominance. Instead, I have empathetic understanding and a desire to learn more. (Journal Entry 3)

This statement indicates a meaningful change in attitudes and beliefs for Theresa.

Case 6 – Anastasia

I AM FROM

I am from freezing winters and Buffalo Emblems.

*I am from "Those Crazy Hagens." Daddy's little girl, Katie the sister
that keeps me on my toes, "I am my mother's Daughter," aunt Sue, Kellen and
the best gift in the world, our son.*

*I am from Buffalo wings, salt and vinegar chips, beef on wic, Chavita's
chicken and deep fried Oreos.*

*I am from "Saved by The Bell," "Girl Talk," "Hungry, Hungry Hippos," shop till
you drop and sunday tailgating with Daddy.*

*I am from "25 cent words and if it was really special it would be worth a
dollar," And "Your dad isn't a young pup anymore."*

*I am from sneaking out of bed to watch the scary movies "As long as you
don't wake your sister."*

I am from celebrate everything! and Family ALWAYS comes first.

~2012

Rebirth. Revival of culture and learning. Spiritual enlightenment. Causing a person to lead a new life. Anastasia.

Anastasia is a young teacher who is in her 6th year of teaching. She is a White woman married to a Black man with a mixed baby boy. Relentless in her passion for teaching first graders, she cannot sleep until she figures out exactly what each child needs in order to be successful.

Anastasia frequently brought perspective to our class discussions. Since the participants of our course were all White, she would often go home and engage in conversations with her husband regarding our topics and then come back and report his perspective to us. Anastasia often shared during the course that one would think that because she was married to a Black man that she would be the most aware of racial privilege, institutional racism and blatant racism, but that was not the case when we started. However, by the end of the course, Anastasia had a different story.

Attitudes/Beliefs. In the theme of attitudes/beliefs, the most frequently appearing codes for Anastasia were in the areas of emotion and her willingness to reflect upon her own biases, ways of thinking and considering other perspectives. When I asked Anastasia what the most memorable experiences during the class were for her, she immediately shared how important it was to her to get to know people and consider their different outlooks. She enjoyed being able to reflect back on our previous classes while applying what she had learned and sharing that with the other participants.

She would frequently come into class with a perspective that others might not have considered. During the first week of our course, we wrote our “I Am From” poems. This was a powerful experience in getting to know one another, where we came from and

considering other perspectives. Anastasia took it one step further. She enlisted her husband to write his own “I Am From” poem and then received his permission to share it with our class. You could have heard a pin drop while she was sharing it with us. It did not remotely sound like the “I Am From” poems written by any of the White people sitting in the room.

While she stated that she received so much from other’s perspectives, the class, as a whole, appeared to have received a lot from her perspective. In her journal and in class discussions she shared “I understand how it feels to be looked at while out to eat at a restaurant or to be pulled over because your ‘Black’ husband is driving.” During our interview she became emotional as we discussed what ultimately led her to take the course. “I took the course because I knew as a White individual with a child that was mixed that I am still not where I need to be with that. So I wanted to take it and thought it would be neat to share my story with people. Because a lot of people, when they meet me, and then my husband...they don’t get it” (Personal communication, November 20, 2012).

In regards to the emotional aspects that surround race, Anastasia shared in her journal responses and again in her interview that there is a lot of fear that surrounds race. As a result, she believes that educators spend more time talking about socio-economic diversity rather than racial diversity because “race is a scary issue.” “I understand why people don’t talk about it, they are concerned to step on toes.” However, “when you share your experiences, it really opens up their eyes and vice versa.” She particularly enjoyed the aspect of our course where she could “go with an open mind that I might accidentally

hurt your feelings, but I am not meaning to” and could be honest with the other participants and say, “I don’t mean to hurt your feelings, but how come....if I did hurt your feelings?”

Change. The most frequently occurring interpretive codes for Anastasia in the Change theme were that of Awareness of racial bias, institutional racism and White Dominance and Awareness of Identity Development. By the time we met for our interview, Anastasia was very aware of where she was in her identity development and the stages she had gone through along the way. When we began the class she would have said she was in the autonomy stage because she was married to a Black man. After taking the course, she reflected that she probably came in at the pseudo - independence stage and wound up somewhere along the immersion stage, an indication of her change in beliefs and attitudes.

Like I have said many times, I don’t think I have made it to that final stage yet and it’s really weird because you would think I would have. Now when I am in situations, I reflect on that. For instance, would I, if I were in the autonomy stage, think the way I am thinking right now? A lot of people would think that because I have a bi-racial son and a black husband that I would be in that autonomy stage, but I am not. I still have my thoughts about things that I need to keep working through to grow as a person. (Personal communication, November 20, 2012)

When I asked her to describe which stage she was currently in she shared:

I think I'm in the immersion stage. Like I mentioned, I think I kind of float through a few. There are times when I have a new crash in my brain, and I think oh! I didn't think of the world that way or I didn't think of it this way. I still feel that sometimes I want to make life a little bit easier for my husband. I think that's why I'm not in that autonomy stage. (Personal communication, November 20, 2012)

While Anastasia was working on her master’s degree she experienced a couple of classes that touched upon diversity, albeit they were focused more on issues of socio-

economic diversity. These courses did not address the issues raised in this class as they touched more upon the work of Ruby Payne. In describing how these experiences differed, Anastasia offered,

I really liked this class because I feel like even I have places to grow or things to think about. I have those judgments in my head and I am like, Oh! I didn't realize that was what I was thinking about until I had this course. (Personal communication, November 20, 2012)

She has learned more about diversity from the school of life with her husband.

"The idea of social dominance and White privilege in my opinion is still very common today." As we spoke about this in class, I really had an opportunity to sit back and think about this term, 'White privilege.' Anastasia went on to explain how life was different for her as compared to her husband.

I am White and I never thought about or worried about fitting in or being treated differently. When I talk to my husband, he always tells me that he constantly notices how many 'Black people' are in the room or at the restaurant. This is crazy because I never count the number of White people. This is a great example of social dominance and White privilege. (Personal communication, November 20, 2012)

Community. Anastasia, like most of the other participants in the class experienced the interpretive code of conversations the most frequently in the community theme. While Anastasia learned a lot from her conversations with the other participants in the course, she also spoke of the conversations she had with her husband and the effect that had on her, deepening her understanding of the issues we discussed in class. In regards to the power of conversations she shared,

I really loved all of the authentic conversations we were able to have with the small group of people and being able to get to know people that had completely different outlooks than what I have. I really enjoyed the times we talked and were

able to reflect back on the previous class. I feel like after the class we went out into the world and we always came back with something to share about what we were talking about the week before or just our thoughts about things we discussed in class. (Personal communication, November 20, 2012)

In her last journal response Anastasia shared that one of her favorite things about the course was the way it opened up an avenue for her to have discussions regarding diversity with her husband. In a particularly compelling conversation, she told her husband that she did not want their child to have to learn about slavery and that she didn't really like teaching about it in school. She wanted to protect their son from that "horribly sad time." Her husband responded, "Our son needs to know about his ancestors and he needs to learn about it." Anastasia concluded, "I guess part of the way that I can protect him is by educating him."

Anastasia valued not only the conversations in our course and with her husband, but in her classroom as well. She explained that with her type A personality it was not always easy for her to see the other side. She shared about opening up and asking someone about what they were thinking, adding it to her own views and synthesizing the two. She continued, "I think it is important to teach the students that, too." For example, she might say to her students, "You were thinking about this real life situation. But after we have talked about it and you have heard your friends talk about it, how are you feeling about it now?"

Social dominance. The most frequently occurring interpretive code for Anastasia in this theme was that of Understanding Different Perspectives and Awareness of White Privilege. This flows right along with her scores on the CoBRAS. Anastasia lowered her score in the area of unawareness of racial privilege by 14 points. Perspective seemed to

be the bridge to her understanding of White privilege. She referenced a discussion we had during our course regarding religion. Each participant had a different experience and perspective with regards to religion. People shared openly and questioned each other about why they did things a certain way. Anastasia stated that this was another pivotal moment for her during the course. She explained that she was “not really religious.”

I’ve never really been to church and that kind of really made me think. I need to get into this and explore my options with it. Some things we talked about made me think, ‘I don’t know what it going on!’ But it was really good for me to hear. I think we have families in this school that do things because of their religious beliefs. And so that day was very eye opening for me. My husband is from a very religious background and so I feel like I need to step out of my comfort zone and maybe try some things out. (Personal communication, November 20, 2012)

It was during this discussion in our course that things really seemed to come to light for most of the participants. They could see how different their opinions were on different aspects of religion and how each of them experienced it. This seemed to be the door that opened their eyes to understanding different perspectives including their own White privilege, and was a catalyst for changing their attitudes and beliefs.

When speaking to this, Anastasia shared that “sometimes it is hard to put yourself in their shoes when you have never lived paycheck to paycheck or you have never been judged by your color.” She added, “People judge all the time.” In a journal response she shared,

I will NEVER know what it feels like to be pulled over and then accused of stealing my own car or how it feels to be called a horrible, nasty name or how it feels to get horrible looks from people. (Journal Entry 3)

Things that her husband knows far too well.

Conclusions: Cross-Case Analysis

The following questions guided the research of this study: (a) How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series? (b) What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series? (c) What aspects of the culturally responsive professional development series (if any) influenced the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students as self-reported in journal prompts and interview questions? Within the cross case analysis of this study, I compared the results of each case with the results of the whole in order to highlight the findings in regards to the research questions.

The findings of this study revealed four of five themes were consistent in all six cases in the qualitative data sets of journals and interviews. These four themes were Attitudes/Beliefs, Change, Community, and Social Dominance. One of the themes, Environment, was apparent in three of the six cases in the qualitative data sets.

Table 4

Cross Case Themes in Qualitative Data Sets

Cross Case Themes		<i>Themes</i>			
<i>Participants</i>	Attitudes/ Beliefs	Change	Community	Environment	Social Dom.
Michael	x	x	x		x
Grace	x	x	x	x	x
Maryam	x	x	x		x
Concordia	x	x	x		x
Theresa	x	x	x	x	x
Anastasia	x	x	x	x	x

Community Theme

For purposes of this study, I am using Peck's (1987) definition of community:

A group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to "rejoice together, mourn together" and to delight in each other, make other's conditions our own. (p. 59)

This is an appropriate definition of what happened with our group. There were 316 instances throughout the qualitative data sources (journals and interviews) by all six participants regarding community. In fact, this was the most formidable theme of the study. The analysis for this theme provided response to the research question, "How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series?"

This theme held the singularly most mentioned code, conversations.

Conversations became the vehicle that helped us get to the destination of community.

Conversations regarding race and diversity were necessary to build community and create change. Conversely, we discovered as a group that silence often surrounds issues of race and diversity. When visiting with participants, they often talked of “being afraid to step on toes” and not wanting to offend anyone.” It is important to break this silence barrier in order to move a group and have the hard conversations. Individual stories helped to break that silence barrier. As individuals opened up and shared their stories with honesty, trust developed among the participants and authentic relationships began to grow. These connections and interactions were the foundation of our learning community.

Every participant shared with me the importance of conversations in helping them look at things differently or consider a different perspective. They all shared that relationships and making connections with one another (community) helped them to grow and change some of their deeply held beliefs. Comfort, trust and honesty were important elements in creating a community where it was safe to share so openly.

Social Dominance Theme

For purposes of this study, I used Howard’s (2006) framework when defining Social Dominance. Human beings tend to form group-based hierarchies and draw distinctions between in-groups and out-groups that typically favor their own group. Power added to this mix creates hegemonic groups “able to construct reality in ways that both perpetuate and justify their social position.” References to social dominance appeared 295 times throughout the qualitative data of all six participants.

The single most common interpretive code was that of awareness of White privilege. This actually was a powerful revelation for most of the participants in the study. Many of them often shared how they just didn't know before (what Howard refers to as the luxury of ignorance) and the awareness changed everything. When first confronted by their White privilege, most of the participants became angry. They did not believe that they were privileged just because they were White. In fact, they experienced stages of Helm's Identity Development, shared in Gary Howard's book, *We Cant teach What We Don't Know, White Teachers, Multi-Racial Schools*. When made aware of their White privilege, they had to do something with it. They could have stayed angry and moved into the reintegration stage of White identity development, but all of them changed their belief regarding White privilege and moved forward into the stages of pseudo-independence or immersion.

Other codes in this theme included bridging the achievement gap, moving from social dominance to social justice, the problem of ignorance of diversity issues, understanding different perspectives and wrestling with a racist/non-racist attitude. The analysis of this theme provided response to the research question, "What aspects of the professional development series (if any) influenced the attitudes and beliefs of the participants," as self-reported in reflective journal prompts and responses to interview questions?

Change Theme

This theme was evident in all data sources including the quantitative data for all participants. It occurred 250 times across the qualitative data sets. The cross case analysis

for this theme provides further perspective on the research question, “what changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series?” Every participant changed their attitudes and beliefs regarding White privilege during the professional growth series as evidenced in their CoBRAS surveys and all but one changed their attitudes and beliefs regarding institutional racism and blatant racism as evidenced by their CoBRAS surveys. Codes in the change theme included, reflection about own mental models, biases, and beliefs aided in change of beliefs and attitudes, awareness of identity development promoted understanding of individual and aided in change of beliefs and attitudes, education is a vehicle of change, greater awareness of racial bias, institutional racism and White Dominance and a shift in attitude regarding racial bias, institutional racism and White Dominance evident.

When asking participants about pivotal moments in the course, there were three powerful points that the participants came back to again and again. These points were the powerful, honest conversations that we engaged in, time to reflect both in class and in their journals, and reading and dialoging about the book with a facilitator. Four of the six participants brought up a conversation we engaged in about religion that really helped open their eyes to understanding the power of considering others perspectives. For these particular participants, religion seemed to be a much safer topic to discuss over race. This conversation actually served as a bridge in understanding each other’s perspectives.

Attitudes/Beliefs Theme

Attitudes/Beliefs played an integral part in the change that occurred in participants. I defined the attitudes/beliefs theme as the mental outlook of the participants regarding diversity issues. However, this encompassed the lengthy description of attitudes and beliefs shared in the theoretical framework in Chapter 1. Rokeach (1968) described attitudes as, “A relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner” (p. 112). Similarly, Gagne and Briggs (1974) described attitudes as “an internal state which affects an individual’s choice of action toward some object, person or event” (p. 62). Beliefs on the other hand, are formed early in our development and can persevere even when presented with contradictory information through time, academics or experience (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968). White (1999) conducted research on the nature and effects of beliefs and concluded:

1. beliefs help individuals to define and understand the world and themselves, and as such have an adaptive function, and
2. beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and play a critical role in defining behavior.

Rokeach (1968) explained that when beliefs and knowledge assemble around a phenomenon, they create attitudes. In other words, when presented with knowledge, we filter it through our beliefs in order to form our attitudes.

The attitudes/beliefs theme included interpretive codes of attitudes prior to the course, during the course and transformational during the course. This theme occurred for all participants a total of 209 times in the qualitative data sets. The descriptive code that

occurred the most was broad range of emotions (75 times) and willing to reflect (46 times). Other codes included made assumptions about others, experienced and/or participated in racist/prejudiced thoughts in their families, experienced confusion while wrestling with own identity development, willing to reflect upon own biases, ways of thinking and consider other perspectives, and became more empathetic during course.

Participants not only experienced a broad range of emotions during the course, but they changed their attitudes and beliefs because they were willing to reflect on why they were feeling the way they were and then asked themselves what they wanted to do about it. It was important for the participants to actually allow themselves to feel the feelings without any judgment and then be able to relate to other participants that were feeling the same thing. The analysis of this theme provided response to the research questions, “What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series” and “How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series?”

Environment Theme

This theme occurred in only three of the six participants for a total of 152 occurrences. I did not include it in the individual case studies because it referred specifically to the group dynamics and training structure. Codes that appeared in the qualitative data sets included, intimate small group setting, participants were honest with one another, participants felt safe and comfortable with one another, participation in class was voluntary, training structures and experience of the training structure.

While it wasn't mentioned several times by each participant, every participant shared with me how important it was that this work took place with a small group. I originally had planned for 20-25 participants in this class. Instead, I ended up having seven participants in the class. Every participant stated the small group setting made them feel more comfortable opening up with one another. Most felt that if there had been more people, we would not have been able to create the safe and comfortable atmosphere that we experienced as a group.

Five of the six case studies stated that it was important for the course to be voluntary and that was a critical aspect of why people were able to open up. Many expressed that had it been mandatory, it would have been difficult to reach people who did not want to be there. It would have been difficult to open up in front of people who did not want to be there and might have been judgmental regarding what people had to say. Most of the other comments referred to aspects of the training such as the time frame in which it was held, materials used, and format of the classes.

In regards to these other aspects, participants reported during interviews that they truly liked the format of meeting twice a week for two hours. They felt this gave them time to experience the aspects we discussed in class and then be able to come back and revisit how we experienced back in the real world. When I asked participants whether they thought this would be as effective in a workshop model, every single participant said "no." They felt a workshop model would not give them time to get to know one another to open up to the extent that we did, nor would it give them time to experience the aspects

we discussed. The analysis of this theme provided response to the research question, “How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series?”

Summary

The purpose of this heuristic multiple case study was to examine the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students in a Missouri suburban school district and creating a thick, rich description of the participants experiences. Having been involved in a number of different diversity groups and trainings, I was convinced that there had to be an effective means of changing teacher attitudes and beliefs when it came to diversity. Upon analyzing the participants’ experiences of the culturally responsive professional development series, it appears a change in attitudes and beliefs of the participants occurred as a result of the course.

These participants were a group of educators who desired to make a difference for all of their students. While each participant had their own unique personalities and teaching styles, the aspects of the course that were most powerful for one of the participants were also aspects that would be powerful for the next. Creating community, engaging in authentic, honest conversations, having opportunities to reflect and put into practice what they were learning became the avenues of effective change with this group of participants.

I have been an administrator in the district of study for eight years. During this time we have grappled with the concept of culturally responsive teaching and how to effectively address it within our District. I am excited to share the results of this study

that demonstrate that professional development is an effective means to change teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching diverse students in a more culturally responsive manner.

CHAPTER 5

CAN YOU REALLY CHANGE ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS REGARDING DIVERSITY?

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this heuristic multiple case study was to examine the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students in a Missouri suburban school district. The unit of analysis of the study was the experience of the course by the participants. The experiences of the participants as shared both in their journals and during our interviews, as well as the results of their pre and post CoBRAS surveys were used to answer the research questions of this study. Those questions were: (a) How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series? (b) What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series? (c) What aspects of the culturally responsive professional development series (if any) influenced the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students as self-reported in journal prompts and interview questions?

This was an incredibly exciting journey. I did not know what to expect as I started with these participants. I knew what the literature had to say and I understood what worked for me as I traveled on my own diversity journey and what aspects had been most powerful and had caused me to change my attitudes, beliefs and mental models concerning diversity. However, my journey happened over a number of years, not a matter of weeks. I wasn't sure that I would be able to capture and recreate an atmosphere in which people could do this internal work in such a relatively short period of time. This

internal work is foundational to being truly culturally responsive. In fact, In a study of 244 teachers from six urban schools, Love, (2003) surveyed the teachers regarding their teaching practices, knowledge and social relations and the study suggested that achievement of African American elementary students was related to teacher beliefs. Therefore, it was imperative that this internal work be done prior to utilizing various “strategies” for culturally responsive teaching. So many times I have observed educators go through classes or workshops regarding culturally responsive teaching or working with ELL students, only to find that they went right back to their old habits. I believe this is because they did not do the internal work ahead of time as suggested by Love (2003). It was obvious through participant discussions during this course that these participants were immediately changing their interactions with students and I never explicitly taught them one “strategy.” We never created one “ELL lesson plan.” And yet they reported that they were changing their interactions and relating to their diverse students in a significantly different way.

Essentially, this course created an avenue to break the silence surrounding racial issues, which in turn paved the way for the participants to become more culturally responsive teachers. As the data from the participants suggested, conversations and individuals stories became powerful in changing their attitudes and beliefs about social dominance, White privilege, and racial bias. This would not have been possible if a sense of community had not been established. The norms agreed upon, that were listed in Chapter 4, helped to establish this sense of community and allowed for trust to be built amongst the participants. Further, as a facilitator, I was careful to model what respectful racial conversations and activities sounded like so that participants could go back and

successfully guide conversations in their own classrooms or environments, without tiptoeing around the subject or avoiding it all together. This would help participants to be conscious of what Atwater (2007) warned against when speaking about teachers who avoided children's racial questions or comments. "This avoidance of racial issues may emphasize that racial differences are negative and are not fit for discussion; for children of color, it may also dismiss or trivialize the discrimination that they encounter" (p. 2).

An example of the power of conversations changing attitudes and beliefs of the participants during the course was a story shared by Anastasia. Anastasia shared with the other participants that when her Black husband would walk into a room for social events, such as eating out or a party, he would immediately notice the racial make-up of the people in the room. Anastasia shared that as a White person, contemplating the racial make-up of the people in a room was something she had not considered before. The other participants found that their own experiences aligned with Anastasia's. This example and shared story clearly illuminated the idea of the "luxury of ignorance" that became a powerful understanding for all participants, as indicated in their case records.

Participants shared with me the different elements of the course that were most effective in changing their beliefs and attitudes. Most of them offered similar ideas regarding what they valued from the course. Codes that continued to come up again and again for the participants illuminated aspects of the course that should be replicated to create effective change. Time and again participants shared that one of the most powerful elements of the course was the dialogue surrounding race and White privilege. This aligns with Hanley and Noblit's findings regarding educating about racism. They posit "programs should provide accurate information about racial oppressions and racism as

they promote awareness of strategies to use racial identity in service of high achievement in the face of racial oppression” (2009, p.79). Another finding of Hanley and Noblit (2009) was that “culturally responsive work requires many educators to change their frames of reference” about children of color and socio-economically challenged families. “Prevailing racial beliefs are key impediments to developing such programs” and “educators and other service providers will need to be trained” (p. 79). This is exactly the type of work we did during the professional growth course.

During the in-depth interviews, all participants spoke about the importance of being ready to receive the messages that I shared as the facilitator. They pointed out the fact that they voluntarily signed up for the course and all participants indicated this was an important aspect of their own change. They were pre-disposed to it by the very fact they volunteered and held the attitudes and beliefs that the topic of culturally responsive teaching was of value. This is consistent with the research that “attitudes become action agendas” (Pajares, 1992, p. 319).

Implications for Culturally Responsive Professional Development

This course had seven participants in a district of nearly 19,000 students. One of the questions I posed to participants during a class session was “how do we effectively recreate this experience for the other teachers in our district?”

Findings from this study lead to the conception of a culturally responsive professional development model that includes the following components:

- (1) Create a sense of community (as defined in Chapter 4) that includes establishing trust amongst a small group of participants.
- (2) Allow for authentic conversations and reflections surrounding race, White privilege, and identity development with a facilitator that models respectful racial conversations and activities. A book study, such as Howard's (2006) *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* can aid in guiding the content for these conversations and reflections.
- (3) Extend professional development beyond a workshop model. Meeting twice a week for 2 hours for a period of four weeks (16 hours of total contact time) was helpful in aiding reflection and provided time for participants to implement what was being modeled. Further, it allowed participants to come back together as a community and share their experiences as a result of implementing culturally responsive practices in their own classrooms and environments.

Every participant voiced during their interview that the model of meeting twice a week for a couple of hours was very desirable for them. They shared this model gave them time to put things into practice and yet still allowed them to attend to their family responsibilities. They all voiced the opinion that a workshop format would not be as effective as the professional growth course format. This is consistent with the research regarding effective professional development models (Garet et al., 2001; Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1992; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998). Garet et al. (2001) state, "Professional

development is likely to be of higher quality if it is both sustained over time and involves a substantial number of hours” (p. 933). Participants shared unanimously, that this model allowed them to reflect on their practices and further allowed them the chance to put their new beliefs into practice. This is consistent with Kise’s (2006) supposition,

The art of staff development is helping teachers understand where their strengths and beliefs lock them into practices that limit their freedom to help students succeed. It isn’t freedom for teachers to do what they please, but freedom for them to entertain possibilities and stay open to new avenues for professional growth. (p. 15)

Further, the participants shared that it was not best to require teachers to take the course but instead, it would be important for past participants to talk about their experiences to create excitement among their colleagues. By doing this, it was their hope that their colleagues would have a desire to experience the course for themselves. Therefore, they would like to see me continue to offer this course, particularly to different school buildings. Anthony Muhammad’s work on *Transforming School Culture* (2009) could be helpful to future facilitators who would like to replicate this work.

Personal and Social Implications

By sharing my own journey with diversity in the introduction of Chapter 1 and further in Chapter 2 regarding my White identity development, I have hoped to make it clear that my whole life has brought me to this moment. Every experience has been instrumental in forming my own attitudes and beliefs regarding diversity, social justice and equity, and my deep desire to make a positive difference in the lives of my students, staff and other school community members. Helping educators to become more culturally responsive is a good start to bridging the achievement gap. However, it lies so much

deeper than that. If I desire to “be the change I wish to see in the world” as Gandhi directed, it begins with our children. All is for naught if this work doesn’t directly impact the experiences of our children so that they may lead the charge for a more just and equitable future. Since educators often replicate their own childhood experiences of learning, despite their pre-service training (Ennis, 1994; Garet et al., 2001; Pajares, 1992), it is imperative that we create and model culturally responsive experiences for our children. Some of them will become the teachers of tomorrow and will grow to reconstruct these experiences for their own students. Further, they are the citizens and policy makers of the future.

Suggestions for Future Research

Replication of Model

This study examined the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students. I had originally planned on conducting this professional growth course with 25 participants, but ended up with only seven. This small class size became one of the most powerful aspects of the professional growth course as indicated by the participants in their interviews, as well as my own observations of the class dynamics. Based on the findings of this research, I would recommend that a smaller class size of no more than ten students be implemented in order for participants to create community and be open to conversations regarding the difficult topics of race, White privilege and White identity.

Further, though the small class size allowed the professional development model to be highly effective, it was not terribly efficient. In order to gain efficiency, it might

still be possible to implement this professional development model with a larger class size if the class was broken into smaller cell groups. This would require multiple facilitators, although one facilitator per group would not be necessary. If presenting the culturally responsive professional development series in this manner or with the recommended smaller class size, case studies representing the transformative experiences of participants from the previous course may be helpful in aiding current participants in their own journeys.

Continuing Culturally Responsive Professional Development

All of the participants of this study voiced the desire to participate in a second installment of the course. If I were to develop a “Part II,” now that the participants have had the opportunity to explore their White identity development and feel more confident about talking to others about race, I would like to invite some of my friends of color in to share their perspectives. All of the participants in this study were White educators. While that probably made it easier to have very direct and honest conversations, the participants in this study expressed that they would like to have some of these same conversations with people of color, now that their understanding had grown. In fact one participant referenced the “Program on Intergroup Relations and Conflict” at the University of Michigan. The intent of this program was, “to help college students learn about different ethnic groups’ cultures and experiences, deconstruct racial myths and stereotypes, and combat racism” (Gay, 2000, p. 73).

In addition to this component, I would like to explore and model specific strategies and sample lesson plans for culturally responsive teaching. We were barely

able to touch on the assigned readings from Geneva Gay and in a second installment of the course, I would like to spend more time with her book *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (2000).

Future Studies

While it was obvious that participant attitudes and beliefs changed during this study, it was difficult to measure the impact of the culturally responsive professional development series on the students of the participants. Participants in this study self-reported changes in their classroom instructional practices as a direct result of their experiences of this course. Further, two participants invited me to come and observe their classrooms while engaging their students in culturally responsive experiences and learning activities. Therefore, in a future study, one could conduct observations of classroom practices and examine disaggregated student achievement data of teachers who participate in a culturally responsive professional development series. One could also compare observations of classroom practices and disaggregated achievement data of teachers who participate in the culturally responsive professional growth course to teachers who did not.

Hanley and Noblit (2009) concluded that more work is needed in the area of establishing “the link of culturally responsive pedagogy to either racial identity or resilience” (p. 52). While I was able to guide participants to an understanding of where they were currently in their own identity development, in the future, one could facilitate an understanding of the journey of racial identity development among teachers in order to analyze links to culturally responsive teaching.

This is essential in that while students can actually have access to the same formal curriculum, depending on whether their teacher engages in culturally responsive practices, they might experience it differently. Ladson-Billings and Brown (2008) posit, “Even when students have access to the same curriculum we know that they have it differentially and that the curriculum can serve to reinforce racial ideologies” (p. 155). Teacher attitudes and beliefs impact how students experience the “living curriculum” and therefore culturally responsive teaching practices are vital if we want students to have equal access to the formal curriculum. Ladson-Billings and Brown (2008) further posit,

If we recognize that social inequality is antithetical to what the society stands for, then we must find ways through the education system to address these inequalities. The curriculum is an important location for supporting democratic ideals. It represents a small but important aspect of social justice and social change. (p. 156)

Further, this study was limited to six case studies. Future research that is broader in terms of sample size, demographics and geographical locations is needed. This would allow one to examine if a difference existed between the way suburban, urban and rural teachers of diverse students experienced the course.

Additionally, one could analyze connections between the new Common Core Standards and culturally responsive teaching. Will these rigorous standards require us to be even more culturally responsive if we want to see the achievement gap disappear? More research is needed in this area as the new Common Core Standards are implemented across the country.

Finally, I would like to conduct follow-up studies with the participants of this study in the future in order to examine if participants revert back to previous attitudes and

beliefs or continue moving forward in their understanding of the issues addressed in this study. I would like to explore what is needed to sustain changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs and how to support the implementation of culturally responsive practices in the classroom.

Appendix A

SSIRB APPROVAL

From: barrethr@umkc.edu [barrethr@umkc.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2012 10:35 AM

To: Friend, Jennifer I.

Cc: Barreth, Rebekah; Casey, Amy C. (UMKC-Student)

Subject: Study SS12-125e: The Effects of a Culturally Responsive Professional Development Series on the Attitudes and Beliefs of Teachers of Diverse Students in a Missouri Suburban School District

October 3, 2012

Jennifer Friend, Ph.D.
UMKC - School of Education
328 Education
Kansas City, MO 64110

Approval Date: 10/02/2012
Expiration Date: 10/1/2013
Review Type: Expedited # 6 and 7

RE: SSIRB Protocol #: SS12-125e, entitled: "The Effects of a Culturally Responsive Professional Development Series on the Attitudes and Beliefs of Teachers of Diverse Students in a Missouri Suburban School District"

Dear Dr. Friend,

The above referenced study, and your participation as a principal investigator, was reviewed by a member of the Social Sciences Institutional Review Board on 09/21/2012, and was granted a conditional approval.

You have met the required conditions for approval and are granted permission to conduct your study as described in your application.

The approval includes the following:

- Consent Form Attitudes Version dated: 09/08/2012
- Consent Form Entry Version dated: 09/08/2012

All subjects must be consented on a copy of the stamped SSIRB approved consent form.

- Application submitted on 09/10/2012
- Recruitment Email

The ability to conduct this study will expire on or before 10/1/2013 unless a request for continuing review is received and approved. If you intend to continue conduct of this study, it is your responsibility to provide a Research Progress Report prior to the expiration of approval.

There are 5 stipulations of approval:

- 1) No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date. (PIs and sponsors are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings).
- 2) All unanticipated or serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB.
- 3) All protocol modifications must be IRB approved prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk. This includes any change of investigator.
- 4) All protocol deviations must be reported to the IRB.
- 5) All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.

Please contact the administrative office of the SSIRB (email: umkcassirb@umkc.edu; phone: 816-235-5927) if you have questions about what may or may not need review.

Thank you,

SSIRB Administrative Office

PLEASE NOTE:

If you are using a signed consent form, a SSIRB stamped approved version will follow via a separate email.

If a signed copy of this letter is needed, please contact a member of the IRB staff.

This e-mail is an official notification intended only for the use of the recipient(s). If you have received this communication in error, please return it to the sender immediately and delete any copy of it from your computer system.

Appendix B

COBRAS INSTRUMENT

COBRAS INSTRUMENT

COLOR-BLIND RACIAL ATTITUDES SCALE SCORING INFORMATION

Neville, H. A., Lilly, R. L., Duran, G., Lee, R. M., Browne, L. (2000). Construction and Initial Validation of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 47, 59-70.

Directions. Below is a set of questions that deal with social issues in the United States (U.S.). Using the 6-point scale, please give your honest rating about the degree to which you personally agree or disagree with each statement. Please be as open and honest as you can; there are no right or wrong answers. Record your response to the left of each item.

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| | Strongly
Disagree | | | | | Strongly
Agree |
| 1. ____ | Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich. | | | | | |
| 2. ____ | Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S. | | | | | |
| 3. ____ | It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American. | | | | | |
| 4. ____ | Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality. | | | | | |
| 5. ____ | Racism is a major problem in the U.S. | | | | | |
| 6. ____ | Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not. | | | | | |
| 7. ____ | Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today. | | | | | |
| 8. ____ | Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S. | | | | | |
| 9. ____ | White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color their skin. | | | | | |
| 10. ____ | Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension. | | | | | |

- 11. ____ **It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.**
- 12. ____ **White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.**
- 13. ____ Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.
- 14. ____ English should be the only official language in the U.S.
- 15. ____ **White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the U.S. than racial and ethnic minorities.**
- 16. ____ Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.
- 17. ____ **It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.**
- 18. ____ Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
- 19. ____ Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.
- 20. ____ **Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.**

Appendix C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Evaluation Interview Guide for Participants in the Culturally Responsive Professional Development Series

1. What are some of the most memorable experiences you have had during this PGC course?
2. What stage of identity development do you believe you are in currently? Has this view changed during the course of this PGC course and if so, how?
3. What was your experience with diversity previous to this course?
4. When did you first realize that diversity existed? What led you to take a course that addressed culturally responsive teaching?
5. How can teachers move from Social Dominance to Social Justice in our educational setting?
6. What have you learned during this course that will help you narrow the achievement gap in your classroom?
8. Can you identify a pivotal moment or aspect(s) of this PGC course that made a difference for you? If so, what were they and what was your experience?

Appendix D

SSIRB FORMS

Informed Consent for Journal Entry and Interview – Teachers

Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study to share your experiences of a culturally responsive professional development course (PGC class). The student investigator (SI) for this project is Amy Casey, Doctoral Candidate – University of Missouri – Kansas City.

The goal of this study is to identify what teachers experience during a culturally responsive professional development course that was created to provide educators with culturally responsive philosophical underpinnings and strategies for effective instruction of diverse students. The primary focus of the course is for learners to explore their own attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching diverse students and to gain knowledge of culturally responsive strategies to maximize instruction and relationships with all students.

Although all class participants will be completing journal entries for the course, five teachers out of the PGC class will be invited to participate in individual journal entries that will be submitted to the student investigator regarding their experience of the culturally responsive professional development series for the purpose of analysis. All journal entry writing will be conducted at a time that is convenient for the participants with the exception of the first journal prompt which will be written during the first session of the course. The student investigator will be the only person reading the journal entries and the journal entries will remain secure and confidential.

The same five teachers will be invited to participate in individual interview sessions with the student investigator regarding their experience of the culturally responsive professional development series. All interviews will be conducted at a time that is convenient for the participants within the first week of the PGC course conclusion. Interviews will be scheduled for forty-five (45) minutes. Interviews with participants will be recorded using a digital recording application on the student investigators iPad, and these records will remain secure and confidential. This informed consent document provides consent for the researcher to record the interviews with the participants.

The risks of participating in this study are minimal, no greater than those encountered in daily life however there is a risk of loss of confidentiality.

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Although no direct benefits can be guaranteed to you, we hope to understand more about the effects of the culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of the participants.

To reduce the risk of loss of confidentiality, all data collected will be stored in the locked office of the student investigator. Only the student investigator, primary investigator, Dr. Jennifer Friend and creator of the CoBRAS instrument, Dr. Helen Neville, will have access to these data, however, there will be no identifiers on this data. Data from this study will be destroyed within seven years of this study. The student investigator may seek publication for the written research findings in peer-reviewed research journals; however you will not be identified in this publication.

Participation in this study is voluntary at all times. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any time without any penalty.

Although it is not the University's policy to compensate or provide medical treatment for persons who participate in studies, if you think you have been harmed as a result of participating in this study, please call the IRB Administrator of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927.

While every effort will be made to keep confidential all of the information you complete and share, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study for quality improvement and regulatory functions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the student investigator via phone call or e-mail:

Amy Casey, Ed.S., I.Ph.D. Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership, Policy & Foundations and Curriculum & Instructional Leadership

ph: (816) 674-9140 / accx97@mail.umkc.edu

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB Administrator of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927.

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If you agree to participate in this study, please print and sign your name and date on the lines below:

Participant's Printed Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

Version dated: 09/08/2012

<p>UMKC Social Sciences IRB Approved from 10/03/2012 to 10/01/2013</p>
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Informed Consent for Participation in Professional Growth Course and CoBRAS Pre- and Post-Attitudes Survey – Teachers

Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study to share your experiences of a culturally responsive professional development course (PGC class). The student investigator (SI) for this project is Amy Casey, Doctoral Candidate – University of Missouri – Kansas City.

The purpose of this heuristic, mixed methods case study is to explore the effects of a culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students in a Missouri suburban school district.

The following questions will guide the research of this study: (a) How do teachers experience the implementation of a culturally responsive professional development series? (b) What changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs occur during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series? (c) What aspects of the culturally responsive professional development series (if any) influenced the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of diverse students as self-reported in journal prompts and interview questions? There will be one research hypothesis related to the quantitative data collection and analysis: There were significant changes in teacher attitudes and beliefs as measured by the CoBras during the implementation of the culturally responsive professional development series.

If you agree to participate in this research study portion of this Professional Growth Course, you will be asked to take the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) at the first session of the course and at the final session of the course. Additionally, in the first session, group norms will be set and participants will define culturally responsive teaching and diversity through discussions and assigned readings.

In session two, participants will examine their own culture, different “isms” such as racism and sexism, and Howard’s Identity Triangle through discussions and assigned readings.

In session three, participants will explore their own stories and perspectives surrounding diversity. They will also explore Helm’s Identity Development theory through discussions and assigned readings.

In session four, participants will examine Social Dominance research and theory, particularly the theories of Minimal Group Paradigm, Social Positionality, Social Dominance theory and privilege versus penalty through discussions and assigned readings.

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In session five, participants will examine the luxury of ignorance and the legacy of White privilege. Participants will explore concepts of the “melting pot” and “colorblindness through discussions and assigned readings.

In session six, participants will explore ways in which a healing response towards issues of culturally responsive teaching and diversity can be evoked through honesty, empathy, advocacy and action through discussions and assigned readings.

In session seven, participants will explore theories of racial identity development and methods of growth and transformation through discussions and assigned readings.

During the final session eight, participants will reflect on their experience of the course through discussion and take the CoBRAS.

Assigned readings will come from the book *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know ~ White Teachers, Multi-racial Schools* by Gary Howard and selected passages from the book *Culturally Responsive Teaching* by Geneva Gay. You may purchase your own copy of the books or copies will be provided for use during the course. As a part of the course, you will be asked to complete one journal entry per week regarding your reflections of the course material, discussions and personal insights (4 journal entries total). Five class participants will be asked to participate in a second part of the research in which journal entries will be analyzed. If you are asked to participate in this part of the research and agree to do so, you will sign a second informed consent. By agreeing to THIS informed consent you are only agreeing to take the pre and post CoBRAS survey.

All journal entry writing will be conducted at a time that is convenient for you with the exception of the first journal prompt which will be written during the first session of the course. The student investigator will be the only person reading the journal entries and the journal entries will remain secure and confidential.

The risks of participating in this study are minimal, no greater than those encountered in daily life, however there is a risk of loss of confidentiality.

Although no direct benefits can be guaranteed to you, we hope to understand more about the effects of the culturally responsive professional development series on the attitudes and beliefs of the participants.

To reduce the risk of loss of confidentiality, all data collected will be stored in the locked office of the student investigator. Only the student investigator, primary investigator, Dr. Jennifer Friend and creator of the CoBRAS instrument, Dr. Helen Neville, will have access to these data, however, there will be no identifiers on this data. Data from this study will be destroyed within

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seven years of this study. The student investigator may seek publication for the written research findings in peer-reviewed research journals; however you will not be identified in this publication.

Participation in this study is voluntary at all times. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any time without any penalty.

Although it is not the University's policy to compensate or provide medical treatment for persons who participate in studies, if you think you have been harmed as a result of participating in this study, please call the IRB Administrator of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927.

While every effort will be made to keep confidential all of the information you complete and share, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study for quality improvement and regulatory functions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the student investigator via phone call or e-mail:

Amy Casey, Ed.S., IPh.D. Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership, Policy & Foundations and Curriculum & Instructional Leadership

ph: (816) 674-9140 / accx97@mail.umkc.edu

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB Administrator of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927.

If you agree to participate in this study, please print and sign your name and date on the lines below:

Participant's Printed Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

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Appendix E

ETHICAL ISSUES CHECKLIST

Ethical Issues Checklist (Patton, 2002, p. 408-409).

1. Explaining Purpose. How will you explain the purpose of the inquiry and methods to be used in ways that are accurate and understandable?
2. Promises and reciprocity. What's in it for the interviewee?
3. Risk assessment. In what ways, if any, will conducting the interview put people at risk?
4. Confidentiality. What are reasonable promises of confidentiality that can be fully honored?
5. Informed consent. What kind of informed consent, if any, is necessary for mutual protection?
6. Data access and ownership. Who will have access to the data? For what purpose?
7. Interviewer mental health/ How will you and other interviewers likely be affected by conducting the interviews?
8. Advice. Who will be the researcher's confidant and counselor on matters of ethics during a study?
9. Data collection boundaries. How hard will you push for data?
10. Ethical versus legal. What ethical framework and philosophy informs your work and ensures respect and sensitivity for those you study, beyond whatever may be required by law?

Appendix F

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE SYLLABUS

Has course been taught before? NO

If so, when? _____

Are there any changes to the syllabus? _____

If so, changes need to be in red.

Is Blackboard required? No

WINTER SEMESTER 2012

Course Title: Culturally Responsive Teaching

Number of Credit Hours: 1

Meeting Dates and Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:30-6:30

September 27 October 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18, 29

Location of Class:

Instructor: Amy Casey, Principal

Course Materials: *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know, White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*, - Gary Howard Teacher's College Press 2006

Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, & Practice – Geneva Gay Teacher's Collage Press 2000

Course Description: Participants will discuss issues, joys and challenges that confront teachers of diverse students. They will be taken through a journey of the dynamics of dominance – from social dominance to social justice.

Course Goal and Learner: The goal of the course is to provide educators with culturally responsive philosophical underpinnings and strategies for effective instruction of diverse students. The primary focus is for learners to explore their own attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching diverse students and to gain knowledge of culturally responsive strategies to maximize instruction and relationships with all students.

Objectives: Participants will:

- Develop a multicultural perspective, explore diversity statistics regarding business, educational, national and global issues
- Define and engage in Culturally Responsive Teaching practices
- Explore their own culture and identify personal and organizational characteristics of culture
- Define and explore the impact of “isms” in the educational setting;
- Personally identify ways in which to move from “social dominance” to “social justice.”

Content Outline:

Thursday, September 27: Defining Culturally Responsive Teaching and Diversity Part 1

- Norm setting and connections
- What do we mean by diversity and what is Culturally Responsive Teaching?
- What are the business, educational, national and global cases for this work?
- Pages 1-44 Gay

Tuesday, October 2: Defining Culturally Responsive Teaching and Diversity Part 2

- Understanding my own culture and engaging in multiple perspectives
- Understanding collectives and defining and reducing “isms”
- Identity Triangle
- Pages xiii-24 – Howard

Thursday, October 4: Exploring our own stories and perspectives surrounding Diversity

- Identity Development
- Everyone has a story, a perspective ~ what is yours?
- Pages 25-48 – Howard

Tuesday, October 9: Social Dominance Research and Theory

- Minimal Group Paradigm
- Social Positionality
- Social Dominance Theory
- Privilege and Penalty
- Pages 25-49 - Howard

Thursday, October 11: Luxury of Ignorance and Legacy of Privilege

- Assumption of Rightness
- Colorblind? Melting Pot?
- Pages 49-64 - Howard

Tuesday, October 16: Healing Response

- Honesty, Empathy, Advocacy, Action
- The Power of Caring
- Pages 65-82 – Howard
- Pages 45-76 - Gay

Thursday, October 18: Exploring Identity Development

- Theories of Racial Identity Development
- Where am I?
- Growth and Transformation
- Pages 83-121 - Howard

Tuesday, October 29: Reflection & Evaluation

Instructional Methods: Participants will engage in group activities, the Socratic approach to readings, whole class discussions of activities and readings and reflective practice.

Course Requirements:

Participants will be asked to:

- Write journal entries/reflections for each class
- Participate in class discussions
- Write journal entries/reflections for each assigned chapter
- Read the book, “We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know” by Gary Howard and selected chapters from the book, “Culturally Responsive Teaching” by Geneva Gay

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VITA

Amy C. Casey was born on February 6, 1970, in St. Joseph, Missouri. She was educated in public schools in Missouri. She then attended Missouri Western State College in St. Joseph, Missouri and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Education with a music performance emphasis in 1992. Mrs. Casey received her Master's in Educational Technology from Lesley University in Boston, Massachusetts in 2000. Her Education Specialist in Urban Leadership and Policy Studies was completed at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2006. Amy earned her Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Leadership, Policy and Foundations with an emphasis on Curriculum and Instructional Leadership in May of 2013.

Mrs. Casey is a life-long learner with a vast array of educational experience. Amy taught music for 12 years with the majority of that time spent in public schools, although she taught for a year in a private setting as well as one year in a charter school setting. During that twelve year time span she taught everything from pre-school music through high school music, with the majority of her time teaching elementary music. Also receiving certification in elementary education 1-5, she taught 5th grade for one year.

At that time, she was recognized for her instructional and leadership skills and was chosen to participate in the North Kansas City School District Leadership Institute. Upon completion of the Leadership Institute she was chosen to serve as the Assistant Principal of Gracemore Elementary School in 2005, a diverse Title I school with 650 students. In 2007, Mrs. Casey was chosen to be the Principal of Oakwood Manor Elementary School in the North Kansas City School District. This Title I school has 360 students in grade K-5.

Amy has served on the Professional Development Committee, Project EXCELL advisory Board, Diversity Leadership Cadre, Diversity Council, Literacy Task Force, and Curriculum Council for her School District. She is a certified REACH trainer and trained with Gary Howard in Seattle Washington.