Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

Building Organizational Belonging at a Time of Separation

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Abstract

Howard Ross presented "Building Organizational Belonging at a Time of Separation" as a keynote address for the White Privilege Conference.

Keywords: unconscious bias, organizational belonging, culture, workplace connection, tribalism

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It is no secret to anyone that we are living in a time of almost unparalleled polarization. A look at the daily news or social media posts confirms that our need to connect with people like ourselves is increasingly placing us at odds with people we view as "the other." Now, more than ever, this tendency is causing us to form unhealthy attitudes against those with different political, religious, and cultural viewpoints than our own. This leaves us strongly connected within our social organizations, and yet deeply divided as a society.

It is inevitable that some of this toxic energy comes with us to work every day. For many of us, our work environments put us among the most diverse people of any place in our lives. For that very reason, our workplaces can pose a challenge, but may also have the greatest potential for uniting us across differences.

Don't be afraid to open Pandora's Box

Workplaces tend to represent a microcosm of society where people will naturally gravitate toward and connect with their "tribes." Companies can find it difficult to avoid the schisms that such segregation creates. In fact, *studies show* that workplace tension causes both general stress and an increased reticence to talk about controversial issues, even when the issues impact the work.

Many employers are hesitant to discuss these issues at work. As one executive said, "Won't we be opening Pandora's Box?" What we can easily forget, in our desire to be comfortable and avoid conflict, is that Pandora's Box is only a problem *because there is something in it.* That "something" will find a way to create challenges, whether we address it openly or not. However, when companies ignore how the tribalism that's infected our society can spill over to the workplace, it can undermine the work environment and jeopardize the company's goals and objectives.

That's why companies need to take up the important work of addressing issues of diversity, culture, and finding common ground to create a culture of *belonging.*

New research in social, neurological, and cognitive sciences has shown us that the need to belong is fundamental to humans. We are social animals by design, and how we fit in to the groups of which we are a part is one of our prime drivers in life. That means creating environments in which all people feel a sense of connection.

Nurturing belonging, together

African American educator and community leader Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole once described *diversity* as being "invited to the dance," and *inclusion* as "actually being allowed to dance." Furthering the metaphor, we might say the *belonging* occurs when "they are actually playing some of my music!" In other words, not only are we included in another's culture, our needs, concerns, and ways of being are also part of the design of the culture itself.

How do we make this happen? Alongside the skills training that they provide, it's important that organizations give their employees training in interpersonal communication, inclusion, and addressing unconscious bias, as well as opportunities to constructively address their issues.

Some companies have instituted training and programs to unite staff across differences. Target and General Mills,

among others, for example, sponsor "courageous conversations" that allow employees with different backgrounds to discuss topical issues, such as race, transgender rights, the travel ban on predominantly Muslims countries, etc.

Kaiser Permanente's former CEO, George Halvorson, established a successful model for organizational belonging by coaching executives and department heads to act more as team leaders than bosses. Every team was tasked with instituting improvements that promoted the organization's established values, and they shared best practices throughout the organization. Halvorson explained, "When our organization fosters a culture of 'us,' we look out for each other in a different way. It can override our individual and societal belief systems."

5 Ways to Create a Culture of Belonging

If your company is searching for approaches that can bridge differences and build and sustain a sense of connection, it will serve to explore these strategies:

1. **Communicate a clear vision and purpose.** Set your vision clearly, so that every employee understands and can articulate the company's purpose and goals. Frequently communicating and reinforcing a powerful and positive organizational narrative around belonging and the value of diversity helps employees to internalize it. Each staff member can then see him or herself or themselves as part of a team, which helps to cancel out polarities caused by differing viewpoints.
2. **Develop systems and structures that promote diversity, inclusion, equity, accessibility, and belonging.** Work to remove bias across administrative systems — from recruitment to hiring to onboarding to performance reviews and more. It is also important to recognize that diversity involves more than representation. It's about cultivating open-minded thinking and connection.
3. **Create opportunities for dialogue on challenging subjects.** Create a safe space for conversations that involve different points of view, but make sure they happen as dialogues rather than debates. Set ground rules and ask everyone to move beyond their individual biases. Ask them to resist the tendency to convince others or to win the argument. Learning to listen actively to points of view with which you may not agree can translate to better employee-to-employee relations as well as employee-to-customer relations.
4. **Invite employees to share their own stories.** Sharing personal stories helps in promoting a sense of belonging — of being heard and seen. Sharing stories is a way to learn not only about each other personally, but also about other worldviews. Carve out time for employees to share their stories in meetings, in employee resource groups, in diversity education, or anyplace it may fit into the employee experience.
5. **Acknowledge everyone's individual contribution.** Organizations function best as a unit when all associates have a stake in the organization's success. It's important that employees understand their individual roles in serving the greater

> good. Does the person at the front desk understand how welcoming people can affect the experience that follows? Are the people who do administrative work and never see the customer acknowledged for the way they contribute to the customer experience? The acknowledgment of everyone's contribution to the mission keeps people focused on the big picture and sense of being part of a team.

The workplace may be our greatest hope for reestablishing connection between our different "tribes." Bridging divides in our organizational lives creates greater harmony and cooperation. Not only does engaging with different groups promote new insights, encourage innovation, and enhance business success, it also validates the humanity of people on all sides of the issues and, in doing so, can contribute to greater civility in our society.

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Multicultural Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy in South Korea

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Abstract

South Korea has witnessed a major demographic shift as more children of immigrants are entering the schools. Over the course of four months, I visited six elementary schools, graduate schools of education, and conducted interviews with teachers, principals, and district administrators to gain an understanding how multicultural theory, policy and practice were being implemented. I used of four heuristic devices to analyze the implementation of multicultural policy and curriculum at the elementary school level: 1) Serving the needs of children of immigrants, 2) Celebrating cultural differences, 3) Creating multicultural schools, and 4) Striving for a socially just society. The findings indicate that the current policy and practice has led to a deficit thinking model towards children of immigrants and therefore teachers and administrators need critical multicultural theory and praxis based upon a social justice platform. I do not want to be too critical of multicultural education in South Korea as I keep in mind issues of policy transfer, borrowing and lending; however, I believe that the research can have a positive impact upon multicultural education in Korea as well as in other countries that are also witnessing a rapid rise in immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Keywords: children of immigrants, South Korea, race and ethnicity, social justice, immigration, multicultural education

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Palmer has been featured on Arirang Radio, WLSU Public Radio, and Harvard EdCast as well as a keynote speaker at the 2018 Annual White Privilege Conference. He has presented at the WPC since the beginning in 1999. He has also been invited to several venues throughout the United States and audiences in Asia (South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, and Mongolia) to speak on the issues of multicultural education, social justice pedagogy, policy, and practices, and globalization and internationalization of East Asian higher education.

Beyond Colgate University, he is on the board of two nonprofits that serve recently resettled refugees in the Syracuse, New York area -- **The Boaz Foundation** (educational services) and **Building the Bridge Foundation** (housing assistance) and serves as a deacon at the Korean Church of Syracuse where he is active with local missionary endeavors.

I was deeply struck by the setting of my first visit to a nationally recognized multicultural[1] school in South Korea and was quickly reminded of my years growing up in the state of Iowa (U.S.A.), a predominantly White environment, where my elementary school was surrounded by cornfields. In this instance, I arrived at a school surrounded by rice fields, and, other than a small church located approximately 500 meters away, and the only infrastructure insight was the highway I just arrived on.

During the two-hour drive to the school located just outside of Seoul's rapidly blurring city borders, I discussed with my two graduate research assistants the aspects of critical multicultural theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tomlinson, 2018; Watkins, Lean, & Noble, 2016) and how it would pertain to our visit to the school. For the most part, we talked about cultural discontinuity (Delpit, 2006) and deficit thinking (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997) theories, as well as the way most K–12 schools in South Korea implement a multicultural curriculum by teaching only the surface-level aspects of culture (e.g., celebrations of food, holidays, and traditions). In other words, we spoke mainly of theoryand less about the implementation of multicultural policy and pedagogy in the schools. However, once we arrived at our designation, our focus quickly moved to include all of these aspects.

The first thing that drew our attention was the display of flags representing the nations present in the school (16 flags in total, including South Korea). A large welcoming display of all the students' pictures also greeted us at the entryway, and, as we looked at the pictures, one of the graduate assistants inquired, "Who are the multicultural students?" All of the students were of East Asian ethnic descent, and most had phenotypes that were similar to ethnic Koreans, making it difficult to determine who was Korean, biracial/multiracial Korean and non-Korean immigrant. Therefore, the first question that came to my mind was: How were students identified as multicultural students by their teachers, administrators, and peers if physical appearance was not a determining factor?

Upon my return to Seoul, I delved into the literature on children of immigrants' education and critical multicultural education development in Korea. Through conversations with my graduate assistants, we concluded that the landscape of South Korean multicultural education theory, policy, and pedagogy provides a unique setting. First, until recently the majority of ethnic minorities residing in South Korea were either English language teachers (mostly White and holding a university degree), involved in the major banking and financial security companies (again, mostly White and university educated), or members of the U.S. military (racially diverse, yet mostly isolated to specific military camps). However, in its push to meet the demands of globalization, the South Korean government internationalized nearly all aspects of its society and culture with a particular focus on economics and education. Palmer and Cho (2012) contend that these efforts have resulted in an increasing number of non-Korean immigrants (see, Bhowmik, Kennedy, and Hue, 2018, for a similar immigrant phenomenon in Hong Kong).

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the rapid demographic changes can be seen as a population perfect storm. The fertility rate has reached critical levels in South Korea. Kim (2009) reports that the fertility rate registered record fell from 1.47 in 2000 to 1.17 in 2002 to an all-time low of 1.08 in 2005. The rate has slightly increased

in the ensuing years as the Korean government interceded by providing incentives for families to have more children (Kim, 2018). However, Kim (2018) reported that the fertility rate dropped again in 2017 to 1.05.

Added to these demographic shifts is the sudden rise of immigrant manual laborers, foreign brides, and the biracial/multiracial children of these families. Manual laborers are coming in to fill the "3-D" (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) jobs left unfilled by a declining workforce and increasing highly educated middle class. As a result, Kim (2009) concludes that there will be a 1.23 million shortage of workers by 2020, while the Bank of Korea estimates a 4.8 million shortage.

In addition, foreign brides are filling the gender gap caused by male preference since the late 1980s. Most of these foreign brides, who are from Southeast Asia and China, are marrying working-class men (Kang, 2010). These women are also bringing their children from previous relationships and having biracial/multiracial children with their Korean husbands. From 2005 to 2008, the children of immigrants and biracial/multiracial children enrolled in school increased from approximately 6,000 to 19,000 (Hong, 2010; Kang, 2010). These children of immigrants are identified much differently than the expatriates from the financial and educational sectors of Korean society.

The purpose of this paper is exploratory in nature, while at the same time offering critical insight into multicultural education theory, policy, and pedagogy. The research analyses the implementation of multicultural education in public and private elementary schools located throughout South Korea. I fully realize that listening to the voices of the multicultural students and their families is valuable; however, for this study, I concluded that I first needed to understand the implementation process and that a subsequent study will look at the impact on the students, families, teachers, and community from their perspective. Future studies will focus on the lives of immigrant and biracial families.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework stems from the extensive scholarship on multicultural education, namely Banks (2010), Sleeter and Grant (2009), and Bennett (2011). From these frameworks, I developed four heuristic devices to analyze multicultural education as it relates to pedagogy, policy, and theory:

1. Serving the needs of children of immigrants,
2. Celebrating cultural differences,
3. Creating multicultural schools, and
4. Striving for a socially just (anti-oppressive) society.

These devices guide the multicultural program evaluation of the South Korean schools I visited with my graduate students. Ladson-Billings (2003) advises that by describing approaches as "heuristic devices," they are "not meant to serve as essentialized and fixed categories but rather as useful categories to describe an array of thought and practice evident in schools and society today" (p. 53). Moreover, I do not want readers to view these categories as stages in a multicultural education development process, as I feel that by concentrating on just one level at a time, the essence and ultimate purpose of multicultural education will be lost (Banks, 2010). In other words, all four of these categories should be considered when developing and implementing multicultural

education theory, policy, and pedagogy.

Serving the needs of children of immigrants

These types of multicultural policies stem from an assimilation theory. The schools view children of immigrants as needing to fit into the mainstream and, therefore, that they need to be "helped" to overcome their cultural deficiencies. Typically, assimilation into the cultural mainstream consists of separating these students from mainstream students in an attempt to meet their individual needs. These specialized programs consisted of English as a Second Language and other forms of language education. Once the students prove proficiency within these areas, they are then allowed to enter into the regular classroom. However, without full inclusion into the everyday curriculum, content integration remains stuck at a foundational level, as most view multicultural education as an additive to the real curriculum.

While the intentions of the school may be geared towards helping children of immigrants navigate through mainstream society, it is my contention that if multicultural education policies and pedagogies remain at this level, then children of immigrants will continuously live on the periphery of society and rarely be able to enact social change. Delpit (2006) states that "if minority people are to effect the change which will allow them to truly progress, we must insist on 'skills' within the context of critical and creative thinking" (p. 19). The skills that Delpit refers to go beyond just literacy skills in that children of immigrants need to empower their identities, which entails understanding how the forces of power, privilege, and discrimination (i.e., racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia) influence and direct their identities (Freire, 1989).

Celebrating cultural differences

Banks' (2010) content integration should be seen as the most basic form of multicultural education as it "integrates content" related to immigrants and people of Color into the curriculum. For example, U.S. schools may continue to teach their regular curriculum except during Black History Month. At this time, they may study the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and listen to his most recognized speech, "I Have a Dream." The content typically remains at the celebratory level, providing students with basic artifacts related to the immigrant group being studied, such as food, clothing, and music, and is typically based around a major holiday in that culture.

Leaving multicultural education policies at this level may lead the majority to espouse a colorblind philosophy without delving into greater issues of social and cultural inequalities. Indeed, the majority of students are led to believe that if schools are able to assimilate the culturally different into the cultural mainstream, then immigrants and people of Color can be accepted as part of the majority (Tomlinson, 2018). Thereby, a colorblind philosophy destroys opportunities to fully engage in discussions about racial and cultural differences as well as other forms of discrimination by leaving it up to the oppressed to create and enforce change (Freire, 1989). Lewis (2001) claims that colorblind philosophy allows the racial/cultural majority "to continue to see themselves as racially neutral, outside the racial hierarchy, deserving of their own success and not responsible for the exclusion of others" (p. 803). In other words, if people are all the same and provided with the same opportunities to succeed, then raising issues

related to racial/cultural inequality only promotes victimization,segregation, and discrimination.

Creating multicultural schools

Within this category, educational theory, policy, and pedagogy aim to transform the entire school by challenging students' "implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline" (Banks, 2010, p. 20). Students begin to question aspects of the status quo by developing multiple perspectives through what Banks (2010) refers to as "the knowledge construction process." For example, when U.S. students study the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus, students are asked to question: Who deemed it the New World? And what does this New World imply for the Indigenous people who inhabited the area at this time? (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Creating multicultural schools challenges institutional inequalities through both the curriculum and pedagogy. The culture of power is becoming more relevant to both the mainstream and the marginalized through a culturally relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billing, 1995). Notions of meeting the needs of children of immigrants are no longer seen through an assimilation process, but rather the schools need to transform to accept, understand, and, most importantly, reflect the cultural diversity that exists throughout society (Banks, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1987).

Striving for a socially just (anti-oppressive) education

I use the term "striving," as I realize that attaining social justice education is an ongoing battle. Moreover, educators should continue to "strive" to deeper levels of social justice education in their desires to meet the needs of all their students. And last, I accept the "ongoing challenges multiculturalism and multicultural education face with increasing demands by diverse groups, the growing complexities of the human condition, andexpanding methodologies" (Ladson-Billings, 2003, p. 62–63).

The main aspect of striving for a socially just society focuses on "social action and reform to create societal conditions of freedom, equality, and justice for all" (Bennett, 2001). The foundation of this device rests upon critical race theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2003). CRT allows me to analyze theory, policy, and pedagogy that seek to challenge all forms of oppression at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels.

Methods

Over the course of four months, I led a team of graduate assistants through six elementary schools and conducted semistructured interviews with teachers, principals, and district administrators. I also spoke informally with several teachers who were enrolled in graduate school courses aimed at addressing multicultural education issues. These were in-service teachers who were enrolled in evening and weekend graduate school programs. All of the teachers I spoke with stated that they had at least one multicultural student in their classroom. Moreover, at the university level, I formally interviewed department chairs of the multicultural graduate programs. All conversations in the field were conducted in Korean, and then the interviews were transcribed in Korean and then translated into English. The translated transcripts were then verified by another native Korean speaker. Thus, the graduate student research

assistants were integral members of the research project.

For teachers and pre-service, I was interested in why they chose to teach/study in multicultural education programs, what training they had received in multicultural education, what their philosophies/theories about multicultural education were, what they hoped students would gain from multicultural education, and how they believed multicultural education had impacted the overall educational system and Korean society.

I also had the opportunity to meet briefly with the district director and the assistant director about districtwide policy related to multicultural education. For educational leaders (e.g., school principals, district directors, and university department chairs) and educational researchers (e.g., university professors and government-controlled research institutes), I was interested in the development of multicultural education policies and how these leaders and researchers foresaw educational institutions carrying out these policies. More importantly, after speaking with several teachers in the field, I hoped to gain insight into how these administrators were attempting to resolve some of the early impediments to rolling out a multicultural education program.

It is important to note that with some of the conversations, I was asked to turn off the audio recorder. Some of the teachers were eager to talk about their experiences but were wary of "who" would be reading the article. As will be seen in the findings section, some of the teachers were "appointed" by their principals to lead the multicultural programs in the school and often felt isolated from other teachers, as multicultural education was not fully supported by all the teachers in the school.

Throughout the data collection process of interviewing teachers and principals and field observations of government-identified multicultural schools, I met dedicated and sincere faculty and staff in all of the schools. These were the people who opened up their classrooms, shared their resources, and, most importantly, provided me with personal insights into how they were implementing multicultural policies and developing their own theories related to teaching children of immigrants. I was honored to have them share with me their highlights and their struggles.

Findings

Through the observations and conversations with teachers and principals, it appears that schools were not prepared for a sudden rise in numbers of children of immigrants—ethnic minority, Korean language-learning students. Their pre-service teacher training and years of experience in the field prepared them to teach Korean students who spoke the same language and—equally important—shared similar life experiences, expectations, and understanding of the concept of school.

In the visited schools, the teachers I spoke with had little to no training (experience) and theoretical background in multicultural education prior to the arrival of children of immigrants. Even the teachers who were appointed to be in charge of multicultural education for the schools received very little government-sponsored training in multicultural education and theory. One teacher stated, "It's true that teachers aren't very cognizant of multiculturalism, but also we don't have the budget to send teachers to receive additional work training for only one or two kids."

At the district administrative level, I inquired about the training of the teachers for multicultural students. In these conversations, the administration was meticulous in its actions. There was strong support for more research prior to developing and implementing policies related to teacher training. An elementary school vice principal confirmed:

> There are not a lot of people who are researching multicultural education in theory, and it's hard to find scholarly research regarding the basics of multicultural education. There is little research on the policies that are in effect. In Korea, I hope to see how multicultural education will develop according to the current situation and environment ... There need to be consistent programs based on research. Thereneed to be inquiries and investigations on the multicultural population in the country. That should be the basis of the policies.

When I pressed for more specifics of the multicultural theories that drive the research and policies, the responses mainly consisted of learning from the research and comparing it to policies implemented in other nations; the United States, Australia, and France were mentioned.

In schools with larger numbers of multicultural students, the government attempted to provide more robust training for the teachers. The headteacher of multicultural education in one of the visited schools stated:

> At our school, all the teachers received training, work training for at least 30 hours [and] 4 times a year we invite professionals [art therapy, speech therapy, and head of multicultural education support center] to lecture. When we hold these lectures, it's not just the teachers of our school, but we send out a public announcement so multicultural education teachers or teachers who are assigned multicultural students in their classes can attend.

When I asked if she found the 30 hours of training helpful in meeting the needs of the multicultural students, she responded:

> It's like they don't need any separate multicultural awareness education. But, the "regular" parents have such harsh prejudices about the multicultural students, and that's the hardest. If we do a program, a field trip, they think isn't this too much and exclusively for the multicultural children. When their children take part in it [multicultural education programming], they're happy that all of the children reap all the benefits of our school. However, when we say multiculturalism, there's still some that think it's a marginalized culture, so even as they take part in the activities with their bodies and enjoy it, their heads are still not happy.

The teacher is attempting to explain the underlying issues related to teaching "other people's children" (Delpit, 2006) and addressing the issues that come with being oppressed (Ladson-Billings, 2009). While the majority of the teachers witnessed some benefits to having a racially and ethnically diverse school, the downsides far outweighed these minor victories, and therefore it was best to remove these students from the school (Tomlinson, 2018).

Serving the Needs of Children of Immigrants: A Zero-Sum Game

The first issue is grounded in a zero-sum game equation as the implementation of fresh and innovative programs that serve the needs of children of immigrants is seen as taking resources away from the ethnic majority (Korean) students. Indeed, some parents and teachers classified multicultural education as a reverse discrimination policy since ethnic majority students neither participated nor benefitted from the multicultural education programs. This led some of the teachers to conclude that there was a dire need to segregate children of immigrants out of the "normal" school or classroom so that they would not be a distraction to the ethnic majority students; students who are entitled to an education. A teacher at a multicultural elementary school stated:

> If the children are mixed together in this classroom, the Korean students are at a disadvantage, and the multicultural children can't keep up. I constantly have to take care, encourage, feed the [multicultural] children, etc., and it's not good for the Korean students. Korean students think I only like multicultural students. ....If multicultural children are not in the class, I'm sorry to say this, but my class wouldn't be like this. My class would've been so much better.

Here again, it would be easy to judge this teacher and draw conclusions that she is not concerned with her students; however, the way I perceived the conversation was that the challenges forced her to question her curriculum, pedagogy, and overall training. It appeared that all of the teachers were overwhelmed with rising issues related to their new students, which eventually led many of them to believe that segregated schools or segregated spaces were necessary to meet these demands placed upon them. Another elementary school teacher contemplated this point:

> The way I see it, the thing I want to say, is we need to take out the multicultural children separately. There needs to be a separate multicultural classroom … because Korean [language] is so difficult they can't keep up. Those children need to be segregated and according to their levels.

These teachers were not looking to rid themselves of these students; rather, due to factors related to cultural discontinuity and lack of teacher training to meet these nuanced cultural aspects in ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse classrooms, throughout the school visits, there were signs of disgruntlement and division due in part to how a small number of multicultural students were perceived as devouring all of the teachers' time and energy. An elementary school principal stated, "The homeroom teachers aren't too happy with getting multicultural students [in their classrooms]. They're not too excited about it because these children fall behind and they think this is a problem."

As more and more multicultural students began flowing into these designated schools, some of the teachers assigned to lead the multicultural curriculum expressed how other teachers in the school viewed the multicultural efforts as "reverse discrimination" due to the belief that these efforts drew resources away from the entitled Korean students. One elementary school teacher stated:

> In our school, there is a lot of support for multicultural students. The other teachers say that it's unfortunate for the Korean students because the Korean students don't have access to these programs ... Since I'm working with multicultural students, they say things like, "they give you too much to the multicultural students."

The battle lines were clearly being drawn as an "us versus them" dichotomy that was being firmly established in the schools and led to further animosity towards and isolation of children of immigrants. Moreover, the other teachers in the school began to distance themselves not only from the students but also from the teachers assigned to lead the multicultural curriculum.

In many cases, the teachers assigned to lead multicultural programs in the school were seasoned veterans: As one teacher stated, "I have experience and have flexibility, and I can naturally feel what certain students need by my senses. It's been 30 years that I've been an educator." However, most of them felt that they were fighting a losing battle, especially with little training and upper-level administrative support. Some even concluded that multicultural policy was a short-term program that aimed to address the current rise in awareness of the rising non-Korean ethnic immigrant population in Korea. Certainly, this could be compared to the United States multicultural policy, as some predominantly White and affluent public-school districts either viewed the policy as aimed towards students of Color and therefore none of their concern or concluded that multicultural was an "add-on" to the regular curriculum and as a result, multicultural education was taught using surfaced artifacts through typical food festivals that included ethnic garb and dance performances. In these cases, multiculturalism was seen as exotic and foreign through the "celebrating of cultural difference" and, therefore, definitely not a part of the fabric of the majority/dominant culture.

Without government support and empirically-based critical research, teachers and in-school administrators were attempting to solely "serve the needs of children of immigrants" and therefore concluded that these students needed more than what they could offer. This feeling of helplessness connects directly to the second main issue of "blaming and othering children of immigrants."

Blaming and Othering Children of Immigrants

When I asked a group of teachers enrolled in a graduate school multicultural education program why they wanted to work with children of immigrants, the far majority clearly stated that they wanted to "help" because they viewed these students as living in difficult home situations due to their foreign-born mothers and working-class fathers. Most of the teachers wanted what was best for children of immigrants and viewed the teacher's role as essential in their development. However, from this foundational deficit thinking perspective (e.g., that children of immigrants needed their "help"), the teachers disempowered the children of immigrants' identity, which eventually led the teachers to "blame the victim" for their struggles (Fine & Weis, 2003; Valencia & Black, 2002) and an "othering" of multicultural students (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012; Valencia &Solórzano, 1997).

The main issue for most of the teachers I

spoke with was the fact that many of the children of immigrants were learning Korean as a second language. Certainly, there is a great deal of research on second language acquisition (Jang & DaSilva Iddings, 2010; Jang & Jiménez, 2011) and, therefore, this is not the focus of the paper. Rather I highlight how the teachers believed that if the students were segregated into classrooms that focused on learning the Korean language and that once the students "mastered" Korean, they could enter the "normal" classroom. Therefore, blaming language skills was considered a verifiable reason to remove students from the classroom.

Moreover, the lack of Korean language acquisition by children of immigrants was directly tied to their home life situations. In many cases, the children were coming from homes where the mother was a recent, non-Korean ethnic minority immigrant, and the father was a Korean ethnic, working-class citizen. The parents were viewed as a major deficit for their children. Mothers were automatically considered to possess limited proficiency in Korean language and lack of cultural capital that resembled Korean culture, especially in correspondence with educational achievement. Several teachers and administrators held the belief that these non-Korean immigrant mothers were uneducated and were working full time to keep their families out of poverty, and therefore held little regard for their children's education. One principal was quite clear that the family background was the main issue that needed to be addressed:

> One of the reasons they [children of immigrants] have trouble with language is that the parents have a limited vocabulary. The mother is a foreigner. Because they have a limited vocabulary, they don't have the skills to teach their kids Korean. And another thing is, most of them need to work and earn money. In the countryside, they need to work so they don't have time to spend with their children. They don't spend time together, and because of that they don't talk, they don't read to them, they don't engage in cultural activities like going to a concert.

An elementary school teacher held similar deficit thinking about foreign mothers:

> The problem is, no matter how hard we teach these children, they cannot be bilingual. They can't speak Korean. Reading and writing are failing. .... The fact that the mother is a foreigner makes a huge difference. If they're foreigners, they don't appreciate it even though we give them things. They don't know about school materials. And every day the children try to get something from me. They believe everything's free. The multicultural children have the mentality that all things are free for them. They just want to take.

In a conversation with an elementary school administrator, we heard another version of how children of immigrants' cultural/language deficiencies were exposed:

> In our first-grade classrooms, there are many [multicultural] students. These first graders lack Korean language skills. For the upper elementary students, they learn the language fast. But for the first graders, many of them are in a public education program for the first time, so it's hard for them. And Korean parents have a zeal for education.

> Many of the Korean students go to preschool before they enter elementary school, but these children usually don't. They usually speak their native language with their mother or grandmother at home. And when they come to school, they can't speak Korean. For the first graders, even though they may have lived in Korea for a long time, they lack the language abilities.

The administrator provides reasoning for the cultural divide and the lack of Korean language proficiency of first-grade children of immigrants. She illustrates how the children are raised "differently" that leads to a cultural difference, which is quickly turned into a deficiency when children enter school.

The teachers and administrators also considered the fathers as being stereotypically uninvolved in their children's lives and, due to their working-class status, as not earning a university degree and possibly disconnected from the educational system in Korea. A teacher in an elementary school stated:

> [We] can't ignore the issue of the father. In Korea, the men who are in international marriages, perhaps because they have to live hand to mouth, but their educational mind [is lacking]. The father needs to engage in a child's education, but there are more families where the fathers don't get involved. Korean fathers today, they are very involved in their children's education. But for multicultural families, they [the fathers] abandon them [the children].

Due to these perceived home situations, many of the teachers began to view these students as possessing major deficits that would inhibit their success in the classroom. The interviews we conducted with teachers and administrators working firsthand with multicultural students illustrate the development of deficit thinking that eventually leads to marginalization and animosity (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Most of the teachers and administrators are deeply invested in these students' success in school and society; however, the pressures to assimilate quickly placed a significant burden on children of immigrants. This is not a new phenomenon when it comes to post-colonial immigration, as Rosaldo (1993) states:

> Race relations in North America involve a blend of assimilationist efforts, raw prejudice, and cultural containment that revolves around a concerted effort to keep each culture pure and in its place. Members of racial minority groups receive a peculiar message: either join the mainstream or stay in your ghettos, barrios, and reservations, but don't try to be both mobile and cultural. (p. 212)

If they are unable to quickly assimilate to their new environment, they will be seen as a burden to society and soon marginalized in their schools and communities. And at the same time, if these children were able to assimilate by quickly learning the language and the cultural norms, they continued to hold the label as a foreigner, non-Korean ethnic, and therefore remained in segregated and marginalized spaces. Thus, by understanding the foundation of these deficiencies, the schools can attempt to address the language and cultural divides.

As we entered the school, we met a Black girl standing at the main entrance. I instinctively said "hello" to her, thinking her

native language was English. However, she quickly responded in Korean, *annyeonghasaeyo* (hello), and in disgust informed me that she *only* speaks Korean. Instantly, I thought of my own experiences of living up in the United States and having strangers come up to me and say *nihao* and in so doing, automatically designating me as a foreigner and mistaken as Chinese (one of the stereotypes for Asian Americans is that we are all of the Chinese descent). Therefore, this young girl's response hit close to home, and I sincerely apologized to her for making this mistake. We ended up talking for a brief moment about her time in the school and discovered that her mother is from a country in central Africa and that she was born and raised in Seoul.

After conducting our formal interviews with the administration and headteacher, we were given a brief tour of the school and were introduced to two veteran teachers in the school. As we began talking about our project, one of the teachers began talking quite negatively about *all* the children of immigrants in the school, especially about classroom management issues—behavioral issues. This same teacher started talking about one particular student that had caused her so much trouble in the classroom, and we came to discover that she was talking specifically about the young girl we met upon entering the school. The point that I am attempting to make here is that even though this particular student speaks Korean as a first language, her phenotypes automatically designate her as a foreigner, non-Korean, which then leads to stereotypes and possible discriminatory actions.

Again, I am not writing this article to weigh judgment on the teachers and administrators, especially since I consider myself an outsider researcher to the Korean educational environment, and I did not investigate the Korean language ability reading and writing levels of the multicultural students. I am attempting to illustrate how teachers "easily" develop deficit thinking about their multicultural students and how this deficit thinking then leads to marginalization and isolation of these students, their families, and communities (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997).

It was at this point in the research project that my graduate students and I made the decision to visit an area just outside of Seoul that was home for many immigrant families (see Kim, 2011). Prior to our visit, I asked the graduate students what they "thought" and "heard" about this particular area. One of the students shared that her mother did not want her to go visit the area, especially at night, as it is considered a high crime rate area. I then asked the class how many have even visited the area? The answer was none; none of the 26 students in my graduate-level class had visited the area, and the answer is, why should they? There really is no reason for them to visit, thus furthering the realization of the isolation of the recent immigrant population.

The few students who opted to join this field trip during the daytime were excited to see the area, especially the established Migrant Community Service Center. As we walked around the area, we noticed the various restaurants offering a variety of non-Korean foods and the number of shops selling cellular phones. I asked the students what they did not see that is typical of most Korean residential areas. The answers ranged from franchised coffee shops and fast-food chains to *noraebang* (karaoke singing room) and Korean snack food shops serving *dukbokki* (spicy rice cake snack). However, when I pressed them to look even closer to what was "missing" in a residential area, one student said, "a *hakgwon*"

(learning institute). This started our quest to find at least one hakgwon in the area, and, alas, we were unsuccessful. While the Migrant Community Center offered free classes and job training programs, we could not locate a hakgwon that offered courses for elementary through high school students to receive additional classes in a wide variety of subjects.

The visit provided a fresh insight into the development of deficit thinking through a model of "Serving the needs of children of immigrants" and "Celebrating cultural differences." In that, "serving the needs of children of immigrants" was not about advancing or thriving in the schools but rather about surviving by learning the basic skills of the Korean language and assimilating to a working-class identity. Throughout our visits to the schools, rarely did we hear any of the teachers speak about the students learning beyond mastering the Korean language. Moreover, when incorporating cultural aspects of children of immigrants, the lessons were typically in the form of surface-level artifacts of food, clothing, and celebrations. This then led to the furthering of stereotypes by exoticizing the other through simple cultural displays. It was difficult for the teachers to view these students as dynamic and flourishing, especially as they were portrayed as completely reliant upon the Korean system for their basic survival needs.

Discussion

There is still significant fieldwork that needs to be done around multicultural education in South Korea, as multicultural theory, pedagogy, and policy are just at the emerging stage. Moreover, I do not want to appear to be too critical of the development and implementation of multicultural education in South Korea. Yet, the research findings and educational policy suggestions can have a lasting impact on not only multicultural students and their families but also on Korean society and educational systems throughout the world working to incorporate the rising number of immigrants. More importantly, Korean stakeholders need to investigate their Korean identities, privileges, and entitlements, and as a result, hopefully, they will be able to see how they can begin to directly challenge the racism/oppression that exists in Korean society (Cho & Palmer, 2013).

Even though my theoretical platform is heavily based upon multicultural education theory developed out of the United States, I am aware of the difference in context, culture, and history. Most important are two glaring differences: (a) Korea's educational system remains highly centralized within MEST, and (b) current ethnic diversity shifts are mainly immigrants from developing countries and their children. Therefore, I must keep in mind issues of policy transfer, as it relates to policy borrowing and lending, in developing my suggestions and implications (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). Certainly, Korean stakeholders can learn a great deal from the development of multicultural education policy and implementation in the United States, but this does not mean that these stakeholders need to follow the same process or design and implement the exact same policies. Rather, I hope to make Korean stakeholders aware of such issues in designing and implementing multicultural education policies.

For example, Lee (2010) described how foreign wives are being encouraged by their families and the school to speak only Korean to their children. In this sense, the children and their mothers are learning very quickly that their culture is seen as both inferior to Korean culture and a hindrance to

assimilation. And as the children attempt to shed themselves of their mother's culture, they are, in a way rejecting part of who they are. What I fear will happen is that children of immigrants will grow up believing that Korea will be tolerant of the racial and cultural differences as long as they assimilate, only to learn that they will continue to be viewed as a non-Korean or at best a second-class Korean as long as the Korean attitude towards immigrants remains the same (Tomlinson, 2018).

The current curriculum appears to uphold the notion of disempowering the children of immigrants' identities believing in assimilation practices and tolerant notions. I understand that South Korea should not borrow the United States' multicultural education policy as the two nations have distinctive racial histories; however, it is my hope that South Korea can learn from the United States' mistakes in implementing an effective multicultural curriculum and pedagogy (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010).

Taking from culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995), I can see how schools throughout the nation will need to begin engaging students on these racial issues. Students throughout the nation are arriving at school with the established notion of who is and who is not a Korean. Children of immigrants are not viewed as Korean by Koreans, and I believe this is one of the first issues that need to be engaged. It is not my place to say that Korea needs to accept biracial and children of immigrants as Korean, but at the same time, a conversation needs to move beyond the surface of acceptance andtolerance.

Moreover, Koreans need to begin to view the working-class wives and immigrant workers as a direct result of the country's push for internationalization/globalization and, therefore, need to view these people as contributors to the Korean society, rather than a hindrance. In this view, engaging the issues will involve learning directly the histories of immigration and the contributions immigrants are making in society. This, I believe, will have a direct impact upon the children; because, as it stands now, it looks as though the children could view their mother's culture as inferior and, therefore, a form of disempowering their racial identities.

Engaging Koreans, immigrants, and children of immigrants around the issues of race and racism in the Korean context, I believe, will impact the identities of all those involved. More importantly, these engagements need to move beyond the surface level of cultural differences. It is my hope that through engagement, immigrants and their children will feel empowered in their lives in Korea and that Koreans will find a way to address and overcome racial prejudices. Indeed, social justice activists need to come from both the racial minority and majority in order for true engagement, empowerment, and enactment to take place.

Significance

The issues related to multicultural policy and practice in South Korea need a thorough ethnographic study in order to unveil the multiple and nuanced issues attached to educating children of recent immigrants. This paper illustrates that "serving the needs of children of immigrants" and "celebrating cultural differences" are typical policy responses to a sudden and rapid rise in ethnically and culturally diverse (multicultural) students. Moreover, the paper concludes that these policy responses generally lead to deficit thinking (Valencia

& Solórzano, 1997) and segregation and marginalization of the ethnic and culturally diverse students.

In addition, the paper establishes that the teachers are at the frontlines of implementing these multicultural policy initiatives and, with little training in theory and praxis as well as minimal administrative support, teachers are often isolated in their endeavors, which leads to frustrations with classroom management issues. It appeared as though the teachers were just surviving the day rather than developing robust curriculums and innovative pedagogies to meet the new and dynamic demands in the classroom.

I am suggesting that our Teacher Preparation Programs (TPP) need to prepare teachers who are "committed to working toward an understanding of how white supremacy, cis-heteropatriarchy, coloniality, ableism, environmental racism, and capitalism intersect to legitimate violence, knowledge, and power" (Palmer & Gardner, n.d.)**.** Indeed, TPPs that focus on social justice theory and praxis will develop critical, creative, and inquisitive educators who are prepared to create inclusive educational spaces, teach with love and compassion, and construct their own theories and pedagogies through an action research agenda (Davis, Clayton, & Broome 2018). It is my belief that when teachers are prepared in this manner, then the schools will be able to implement multicultural education policy that resembles "creating multicultural schools" and "striving for socially just (anti-oppressive) society" (Ladson-Billings, 1999).

In conclusion, I strongly believe that our teachers throughout the world are dedicated to the mission of educating all of our children. And in this time of mass migration, countries like South Korea and the United States will continue to witness a rise in the number of immigrants and refugees seeking work and asylum; many of them will be bringing their children with them or will give birth to children in the host country (see, www.migrationpolicy.org). Our schools will be one of the first public institutions to interact with these children of immigrants and their families, and therefore it is imperative that our teachers are well prepared to educate our new neighbors.

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[1]Multicultural (*damunhwa*) is a term used in South Korea to identify people who are not members of the dominant-majority ethnic group. These include immigrants and biracial/multiracial people. Moreover, Korean ethnics immigrating to Korea, mainly from China, are considered multicultural people. Throughout the paper, I use "children of immigrants" rather than "multicultural children" unless it is from a direct quote (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002).

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Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

You Think You Know, But You Have No Idea: An Autoethnography of the Actualization of Privilege

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Abstract

This autoethnography was written as a self-reflection on my actualization of White privilege as a White, middle-income educator with the hopes that my story can illuminate the need for a new approach to close the cultural gap between students and teachers. My methodology was guided by standards set by experts in the field of autoethnography including Ellis, Bochner, Douglass, and Moustakas. I analyzed my journal entries, memos, and working and formal papers, including my dissertation. Then I borrowed from the heuristic tradition to identify patterns. Ultimately, the patterns are reflected in four realizations that I detail in the paper. Our classrooms are increasingly diverse, but our teacher population remains homogenous. Eighty-four percent of teachers identify as White (Feistritzer, 2011). I realized that for me to be an effective teacher, I must stand with my traditionally marginalized students as an ally. This evocative autoethnography does not solve any problems or make any claims, but it is written with the intention to create dialogue focused on creating a more inclusive education system.

Keywords: white privilege, autoethnography, cultural gap, educators

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You think you know, but you have no idea….

You have no idea how many people they have seen get shot.

You have no idea how much hurt they have bottled up inside.

You have no idea how much abuse they have witnessed.

You have no idea how much abuse they have experienced firsthand.

You have no idea of the loss they have experienced.

You have no idea about the drugs they have felt the need to experiment with.

You have no idea about when they have felt scared.

You have no idea when the stuff that was scary just became normal.

You think you know, but you have no idea.

Journal entry, Summer 2013

* * *

As an experienced and rigorously trained educator, it is easy for me to assume that we have all the answers and know-how to help every student be successful. However, there is a cultural gap that is inhibiting our ability as educators to close the achievement gap. The student population in public education is becoming increasingly more diverse (Banks, 2009), while 84% of teachers identify as White (Feistritzer, 2011). The Center for Public Education (2014) stated that "trends in birth rates and immigration indicate that soon there will be no majority racial or ethnic group in the United States – no one group will represent more than 50% of the population." Therefore, the challenge is to prepare new teachers identifying as White and middle income to reach a diverse population and work to close the achievement gap between traditionally marginalized students and those students from mainstream White, middle-income culture (Banks, 2009). As teachers, we are taught about different cultures and exposed to strategies that represent culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994), perhaps what is missing is an understanding of how traditional social power structures created the gap in the first place. Therefore, the goal is to position White, middle-class teachers—not as those prepared to swoop in and save young people from the clutches of whatever keeps them from the American dream—but as allies with traditionally marginalized groups to challenge privilege and break the cycle of oppression. The first step in solving a problem is to thoroughly identify the problem.

Consequently, this personal essay is a product of an autoethnographic study, which documents my realizations about my privilege as a White, middle-income female while studying the challenges for under-resourced youth in education as a doctoral student. This project sought to make the invisible visible, and the tacit conscious (Boyd, 2008), while providing a therapeutic opportunity for me to reflect on my transformation over the three years I spent as a graduate student (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Atkinson (2006) cautioned the research community to guard ourselves against the implicit assumption that self-transformation is the main outcome of autoethnography.

Yet this project documents my self-transformation with the belief that my story may resonate with other educators and challenge them to consider their own social position in order to move towards education reform (Ellis, 2000). When White, middle-income educators acknowledge their participation in a damaged education system created by traditional hegemonic policies and values, then perhaps all education stakeholders can move forward together to brainstorm solutions that are respectful, humanizing, and truly provide an equal opportunity for every student to reach their potential.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a method used by anthropologists, sociologists, and educators to describe their own cultures (Chang, 2008). Prior to my experiences as a doctoral student, I did not recognize my own cultural identity but simply saw myself as neutral (Lucal, 1996). This autoethnography is a journey to share my lived experiences as a means to gain a better understanding of my own cultural identity (Ellis, 2006; Jones, 2013). Through introspection and retrospection, I began to link my identity to other social worlds (Boyle & Perry, 2007). I connected everyday experiences with larger phenomena and social practices (Boyle & Perry, 2007). I challenged myself through this autoethnographic study to look back on experiences through new lenses and extract meaning (Bochner, 2000) in order to open up a conversation about the position of privilege in education reform.

Recently, autoethnography has been divided into two camps: analytical autoethnography and evocative autoethnography. Analytical autoethnography is committed to analyzing data and developing theoretical models (Anderson, 2006; Atkinson, 2006). *Evocative autoethnography* is focused on a narrative that seeks to provoke an emotional response from the reader (Ellis, 2000). I chose to write an *evocative autoethnography* because I am not in a place to develop a theory or make a claim about privilege because my journey has not ended. I share what I learned through a narrative that is emotionally engaging because my journey has been emotional (Ellis, 2000). I gained agency through writing my testimony that has helped me understand my position as a White, middle-income educator, and the opportunity I have to promote education reform through social justice. I hope the narrative promotes dialogue and future reflection and action by other educators (Bochner, 2000; Ellis, 2000), but I did not come to a final conclusion about the privilege that fits neatly into a theoretical model (Anderson, 2006).

I worked to maintain rigorous standards through methodological practices that are consistent with previous studies (Duncan, 2004; Holt, 2003). I began with my personal life and paid attention to my physical feelings, thoughts, and emotions through systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Then I borrowed a three-step process from heuristic inquiry (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). I immersed myself in self-searching, indwelling, and exploring the question of my own privilege (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Then I engaged in data collection and reflection through intuition, self-dialogue, and self-disclosure (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). My data consisted of my journal entries recorded over the three years I was a doctoral student, reflective memoing in my course work notebooks, two working papers that were completed during course work but not published, and four formal papers (including my dissertation) that were

presented at local or national conferences at different intervals on my journey as a doctoral student. I identified broad patterns and sought exemplar data from the literature that told a story (Hays & Singh, 2012). Finally, I synthesized the realizations that emerged. The process was not guided by strict methodological rules but was not a causal process. The power of the process was in disclosing the truth (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). The process was a private, introspective look into my own experiences, thoughts, and writings to seek understanding about my own privilege and how it impacts my actions as an educator. "This checking and judging and accepting that together constitute understanding are done by me and can be done for me by no one else" (Bridgman, 1955, p. 50). The result of the process is a private narrative made public, organized into four realizations in the hope that other educators may consider how their own positions impact their students.

Who Am I?

I am a 35-year-old White woman who grew up mostly in suburban America. I spent my early years in "Smalltown U.S.A." in a rural community with one corner store, two churches, a post office, an ice cream parlor, and no stoplights. My grandparents and great-grandparents were farmers. My mom and dad were high school sweethearts and have been married for 36 years. Just before I started first grade, my mom and dad moved my younger sister and me to a suburban community outside of a large metropolitan area, and I have been here ever since.

I spent most of my young adult life working to serve the poor and marginalized without understanding how my own privilege played a part in the cause of the problems. I volunteered and worked with nonprofit groups helping to bring resources and create safe places for under-resourced youth. I became a full-time history teacher right out of college and continued to serve and volunteer. I taught a high school elective course on serving the community. I volunteered in soup kitchens and gave money to those who were homeless. I gave up a teaching job working in one of the most affluent and highly respected schools in the mid-Atlantic region for a job teaching at a high-needs school known for violence and low test scores. I co-founded a community outreach program with a pastor from my local church designed to help under-resourced youth finish high school. I represented the standard for a "nice White lady" serving the community.

In the high-needs high school that I transferred to, I was introduced to a world of social challenges that I did not know existed and was grossly unequipped to handle as an educator. I began to catch a glimpse of the fact that the educational system that I loved and devoted my career to was broken and creating problems for many students, especially those from disadvantaged groups. I left my social studies classroom after 10 years of teaching because I was frustrated with the inequities in public education. I decided to pursue a doctoral degree in education at a nearby university to learn more about how I could help students in poverty perform better in school and reach higher academic success. I entered the program thinking that I would read about new education models for under-resourced students, dialogue with experts in the field about the possibilities of education reform, and research effective teaching practices so that I could return to my classroom more prepared to make a difference for students living in poverty. I assumed it would be a clean and straightforward process, albeit

academically challenging.

Context of My Story

Leaving my classroom as a teacher to become a student again created a schedule that allowed me to become more involved in the community outreach program that I helped to start while I was still teaching. The community outreach program was hosted by a local church and was based on the Christian faith. Since I was not in my classroom all day, I spent a great deal of time in an economically depressed neighborhood plagued with drugs, poverty, and violence, visiting families, and working with students between the ages of 14 and 22. Most of the families that I worked with were African American. I tutored students in libraries sitting at tables next to people who were homeless. One day I was working with a student who came back from the bathroom quickly. When I asked what happened, the student said she would "have to wait because someone was getting high in the bathroom." On another day, I visited a family and was invited into their home. I sat on the floor because they had sold all their furniture in order to make rent. As I sat on the floor with the mom, I realized that there were mug shots of her two older children hanging on the wall. They were the only pictures she had of her boys. She spoke about how much she missed them, loved them, and hoped they would be able to leave prison safely one day. I had entered a whole new world that was just 15 minutes from my home.

In the evenings, I spent my time in graduate class and working on course assignments. I was introduced to the work of Delpit, Gay, Ladson-Billings, and other researchers dedicated to working with traditionally marginalized groups and advocating for educational reform to close the achievement gap. I took classes about social justice and attended conference sessions focused on working with students in poverty. My own research for my dissertation took me deeper into learning about the culture of poverty and marginalization. The combination of being immersed in the culture of poverty physically and intellectually led me to struggle with my own identity issues in terms of my own race, class, and faith. The realizations that follow focus on my own actualization of privilege in terms of class and race.

Realizations

Before I started my journey as a doctoral student, I looked at the world in a way that made sense to me based on my own experience, socialization, and prior education. Drug dealers are the bad ones. Church people are the good ones. The police keep the drug dealers from hurting the church people, and the church people take care of those left in the wake. As an educator, I believed it was my job to make sure that everyone was educated so they could go to college and become good church people, stay away from drugs, and make good financial decisions. I saw the world as a Disney movie: There are good characters and bad characters. People run into conflict and make choices, and in the end, everyone lives happily ever after. It was not until I began working on my PhD that I was challenged to question this worldview.

The change in my worldview is captured in this autoethnography by describing four realizations that occurred over a three-year period. There were moments when I wanted to be "Superman" and save students from their own lack of knowledge and experiences. There were moments when I recognized the disjuncture between the lived

experiences of traditionally marginalized students and my own experiences. Then there were glimpses where I recognized a power structure that places me near the top of a social hierarchy as someone who is part of the current dominant social group. Still, there are other instances that acknowledged an opportunity to be an ally to those in poverty and traditionally marginalized groups. The realizations are recorded insider reflections that speak to my own self-awareness of privilege over time, but not in a linear pattern (Ellis, 2006).

Superman Mentality

> *However, there is a group of people lingering in the shadows almost invisible; almost silent that has a clear view of the purpose of education. They are on the front lines. They have firsthand knowledge of what content is relevant. They are experts in what defines and identifies an effective teacher. They are imaginative, compassionate, courageous, and full of hope. Hope that the schools they attend and the teachers they encounter will save them from a world that is plagued with corruption and prepare them to be positive agents of change in a world that is changing exponentially.*
>
> *Working Paper: Lessons Learned from "Waiting For Superman," Fall 2011*
>
> * * *
>
> *Therefore, students that do not have the background knowledge necessary to keep up with their peers get left behind because they are constantly playing catch up trying to learn double the amount of new material without the "mental Velcro" to build on.*
>
> *Working Paper: Education Reform Beyond the Classroom, Fall 2011*
>
> * * *

The first academic paper I wrote as a doctoral student was a review of the documentary entitled "Waiting for Superman." I name this realization Superman because I believe that the notion of Superman is relevant to how I perceived my role in society. I believed that educators needed to be like Superman and come to save the day for marginalized students that were challenged by social ills and often ignored. My Superman mentality was reflected in my desire to help students "catch up," "fill in the blanks," and "save students from a corrupt world." I was full of empathy and a desire to help others but without a full understanding of the complex factors impacting under-resourced populations, including the impact of invisible oppressive acts by the dominant culture, which I represent. My Superman philosophy was based on the need for self-gratification and to help those "less fortunate."

My Superman mentality is reflected in White privilege research known as the "missionary face of whiteness" (Warren & Hytten, 2004) or "white savior" (Aronson, 2017). Those that identify as White who "see themselves as information providers ready to spread their vision of how the world should be" fit into this category (Warren & Hytten, 2004, p. 327). Boyd (2008), who identified as a White, middle-class, male, Christian pastor, noted his recognition of his missionary face while he was enrolled in a course called "Building Community Between Justice-Seeking Christians: Bridging Race and Class Gaps" sponsored by the Alternative Seminary in Philadelphia. He wanted to help create a more connected,

peaceful community, so he was shocked when one of the African American female members of his class said, "When he speaks, he sounds like Hitler like he knows it all." He was troubled and hurt to hear how other people perceived his desire to help and motivation to act quickly. I can identify with Boyd's desire to help others and self-asserted swift action based on blind assumptions. Boyd's story challenged me to acknowledge my own missionary stance. However, my actualization came from reflection instead of a hurtful encounter like the one described by Boyd (2008). I realized that I wanted to be like Superman, a hero that would save the day for my students by providing the education and resources they needed to have a "better" life.

I became more aware of my missionary or White savior perception over time as I engaged in academic dialogue, researched for my professional work, and became more connected to the youth and their families that I was tutoring and serving in outreach programs. There was not one single flash of brilliance that unveiled this notion of acting as a missionary. It was a gradual process of becoming more aware of my own social position and motivations.

Recognition of Disjuncture

> *I am thinking that this whole idea of semiotics makes a lot of sense in the real world. The idea that something is right or wrong doesn't really make sense. God created a gigantic universe full of millions of combinations, so to assume that life can be categorized into just simply binary ideas only is a testimony to our own limits and not a reflection of reality. The families that I meet and work with challenge me and show me this in so many ways, and I am continually humbled by the blessings that I have experienced in my life and reminded of my own inadequacy to save a world that is really so much more than me. Not to mention the fact that my ideas of saving don't really make sense in other cultures. Why do people that eat with their hands have to be taught to eat with a knife and fork? What makes one more dignified than another? Why must everyone get a college education? What makes a person with or without a college education more dignified or successful than another? What makes kids on the corner selling drugs less dignified than a pharmaceutical rep pushing an experimental drug? What makes thugs in the hood smoking dope more criminal than hippy, granola type people smoking marijuana at a coffee house? What is the difference between a donation and a gift? What is the difference between elitism and bigotry?*
>
> *The world is messy. How do we sort it out?*
>
> *Journal entry, Fall 2012*

* * *

> *The goal of a social constructivist is to be able to identify and explain "truth" from a variety of different perspectives. Upper- and middle-class students are equipped with one set of experiences and knowledge, but students in poverty are equipped with a different set of experiences and knowledge; therefore, the goal is to explore how these perspectives could be different and identify strategies that are effective with this specific population of students.*
>
> *Paper entitled "Active Citizenship in Urban High School Social Studies Classrooms" presented at the College and University*

Faculty Association for Social Studies Educators, Graduate Student Forum Round-Table, Fall 2012

* * *

Although I worked with traditionally marginalized students before graduate school, I did not realize that everyone's normal didn't look like mine before becoming a doctoral student. Before graduate school, I was on the outside of the situation looking in. I knew that young people faced challenges that I wanted to "fix." It did not occur to me that people have different perspectives that are grounded in a different view of truth than my own. As a student, I became aware of the differences between my own experiences and how they impacted my view and others' experiences and how their views were impacted. There is a difference between the way I view the world and the way the under-resourced students with whom I work see the world. Rubin (2007) discussed the disjuncture between urban students' experiences and American ideals in her research on civic typology. As an example, she explained that often social studies teachers teach constitutional rights as if everyone has the same equal liberties, but some students might have experienced an infringement on their rights, such as being searched without a warrant. These experiences cause a disjuncture between American ideals and student perceptions.

Before, it was easy for me to dismiss under-resourced students' views as wrong or misguided until I began to look at the world from their perspective. I began to realize that it was as though we were looking at the world through different shades of sunglasses. They looked at the world and saw one color, and I looked at the world and saw a completely different color. Levinson (2012), a White, middle-class teacher, noted shock when her urban students immediately assumed that the attacks on September 11 were based on an American conspiracy. She explained that as the events of the day went on, her students were convinced that the American government was behind the attack. Levinson explained that, although she did not believe that her students were correct, she believed that her interpretation was grounded in her perception of the facts based on her experiences growing up and living as a White, middle-class, native-born American citizen with an Ivy League education. Contrarily, her students believed they were right because of their interpretation of the facts grounded in their perception based on their experiences growing up as non-White, poor, first- and second-generation immigrants in de facto segregated schools (Levinson, 2012). Levinson's example resonates with my own recognition of disjuncture. Experiences that are varied depending on your class, race, education, and other social variables can impact your interpretation of the world, which makes it hard to establish who is right and who is wrong.

Recognition of Power Structure

> *I think there is a fundamental mix-up about the situation of poverty. A young African American male father looks tirelessly for employment. Turns in application after application. Seeks consultation on his resume, but alas, he is unable to find work. His newborn baby is hungry, so he calls a church in an affluent, White neighborhood for help. The church says they cannot help because it might lead to a racket, and too many other people might call looking for a handout. So he finds a friend who cuts him in on a deal to sell drugs so he can make the money he needs to feed his*

baby. When the church and this young man reach heaven, what do you think God will say to the young man who sold drugs to feed his baby and the church who kept their money in the bank to avoid a racket?

Journal entry, Spring 2013

* * *

I used to be sad when a student messed up. Then as I walked a little further, I became confused when the "system" created to preserve justice and equality seemed a bit skewed. Today, I have moved to anger. I'm angry that we cry because kids made bad choices, but no one was willing to fight to make sure they had a choice to make, to begin with. To be beaten or get beaten is not a choice. Where were the crying do-gooders, when the kid needed a warm place to stay? Where were the crying do-gooders when the kid needed someone to count on, encourage them, love them, teach them? Where were the crying do-gooders when the kid needed a sense of security, purpose, autonomy, and place? Where were the do-gooders when a white-washed government decided to put all the poor people in stark, cinder block buildings isolated from technology, transportation, employment, business, or any other sort of chance for opportunity? Why is everyone's first response to be sad about someone else's mistake instead of recognizing that we might have had a part in creating the problem to begin with?

Journal entry, Spring 2014

* * *

It is easy to believe that equality, justice, and freedom have finally arrived decades after the Supreme Court ruled on Brown v. Board of Education *and during the presidency of the first African American in the United States. Yet, the climate within and surrounding our public schools tells a different story. When you lift the "veil of ignorance," there is evidence to show that inequitable standards and outcomes for traditionally marginalized students and institutional racism is still pervasive (Marshall & Olivia, 2006). There is still a need for conversations about social justice, and there is an opportunity for educators to promote transformational social justice through liberation, empowerment, and uplift (Beachum, 2008).*

Paper entitled "Climbing the Mountain: A Qualitative Study of Successful Urban Students" presented at the Journal of Language Literacy Education Social Justice Conference, Spring 2014

* * *

I did not write the word "White privilege" in my course notebooks until my last year as a doctoral student. Although I was aware of the social challenges of under-resourced students earlier and the disjuncture between my own experiences and my students' experiences, I did not recognize the power structure and social hierarchy that created many of the problems I was trying to address. "My schooling gave me no training to see myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 6).

We are taught about racism, which puts others at a disadvantage, but we are often not taught to see how privilege puts others at

an advantage (McIntosh, 1988). Lareau (2003) explained that middle-class children celebrate when they hit a home run, but they do not realize that they started on third base. As a White, middle-income woman, I was born with many advantages that were invisible (McIntosh, 1988). I grew up in a home without worry about electricity or food at the dinner table, which gave me the chance to focus on school and extracurricular activities. My parents, my grandparents, and my great-grandparents had the opportunity to attend quality schools, live in above-standard housing, and apply for employment in a variety of growing occupations, unlike some groups that were denied these luxuries because of the color of their skin or economic position. I did not do anything to be born into a middle-class family wearing the color of the majority group any more than the students I worked with did anything to be born into poverty wearing a color seen as inferior to many (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Yet, I do believe that the invisible knapsack of privilege (McIntosh, 1988) provided me an advantage to find success and my own piece of the American dream. It is easy to fall into a false sense of meritocracy without a clear understanding of the invisible layers and complexities that are embedded in the social power structure (Nenga, 2011; Hays & Chang, 2003). I believed that anyone that worked hard had the same opportunities and chances of success in realizing the American dream as anyone else.

Realizing that the people that I wanted to reach out and help were struggling because of some of my own participation in the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and discriminatory policies was a hard realization. I did not see myself as part of the political and social forces that shaped other marginalized identities (Gallagher, 2000). Then I began to become aware of de facto examples of segregation based on race and class, as well as social practices that perpetuate the cultural gap. Social practices, such as school policies, are not consonant with certain groups' schedules, beliefs, or values, and some everyday examples of discrimination towards traditionally marginalized groups are more obvious than others. The disillusionment was not something I went looking for in my research or my studies. The realization found me, and it caused me to rethink my position and purpose as an educator and as a researcher. How does the dominant social group use their power and their advantages? How do I use the unearned assets that were afforded to me (McIntosh, 1988)?

Critical Democrat

My prayer is that you will weep and be disrupted from comfort … restless to serve.

My prayer is that you would have the same compassion and connection to your brothers and sisters in Christ who may not live in your neighborhood, look like you, or speak like you, as you do for your own family.

My prayer is that you would weep when you hear how a young person has chosen to sell drugs to feed his family; instead of judging.

My prayer is that you would weep when you hear that a young person has joined a group devoted to violence to fill his excruciating need to feel secure and belong somewhere; instead of judging.

My prayer is that you would weep when you hear that your sister in Christ doesn't come to church because she doesn't have the "right" clothes; instead

of judging.

My prayer is that you would weep when you hear that a young person has turned to use drugs so the world will make a little more sense; instead of judging.

My prayer is that you would weep when you hear that a brother or sister in Christ is without food, water, shelter, or clothing: instead of judging.

Then, after you weep, I pray that you will be disturbed to the point of action. I pray that you will be convicted to no longer be comfortably miserable and will recognize your purpose in life is not to judge, but to love. Not the kind of love that is just a word, but the kind that leads to sacrifice.

Journal entry, Summer 2013

* * *

Paris (2011) stated, "Others will judge, but I can control how I represent the youth as I argue for change and understanding as a result of what I learned from them" (p. 145). I am proud of the work I have done that situates myself as a bridge between academia and those that academia exists to serve, the people within communities. I have made choices from the start of this project that some may view as inconsistent with rigorous research practices. Yet, each choice was made with purpose and intentionality to create a credible research project with findings that contribute to the community of practice while not steamrolling over the participants' words or disrespectfully minimizing their voice to simple codes to be analyzed. As researchers, when we chose methods that respect the voice of our participants, then we can only add to the credibility and authenticity of our work because our work becomes true reflections of those that we worked with instead of our own interpretations.

Finally, although my relationships with the participants are strong, I recognize that I am still an outsider to the community they are a part of. One of the participants explained one evening as we were talking that traveling to my neighborhood was like coming to an "imaginary world." I didn't tell him, but that is how I felt when I first went to his neighborhood. I felt like I was in the middle of a movie because it was hard to believe that some of the conditions that the participants lived in were real. I will always be a White woman with a middle-class background from the suburbs; however, now I live with a critical consciousness that the participants taught me. I am so grateful that they chose to open their lives up and share their community with me because I have learned so much about strength, hope, resiliency, and perseverance. I have learned that as researchers, we have a responsibility to make sure that our work does not perpetuate stereotypes that make the world more challenging for urban youth and harder for us to be a united community. And I have learned that as researchers, we have an opportunity to respond to a call for action by developing work that moves towards and delivers social justice. I cannot think of more valuable work as a researcher than to join as an ally with amazing young people that are working to make the world a better place.

Dissertation: An Appreciative Look:

Examining the Development of Urban Youths' Civic Identity In and Out of the Social Studies Classroom, Summer 2014

* * *

My final realization acknowledged my role as an ally to traditionally marginalized groups. I did not come to this understanding before experiencing guilt about my own privilege, but I realized quickly that guilt was not going to help anyone. The critical democrat finds a balance between the spaces of tension between reflection and action, speaking out and listening, guilt, and agency to adjust the ways they live, their own sense of fairness and justice, and to reconceptualize their roles (Warren & Hytten, 2004). Therefore, I found myself in a place balancing my sadness and the need to take action. I realized that I was a participant in a damaged world, which did bring about a sense of guilt, but I wanted to take action in a new way than before. I was not interested in remaining in my position of social power so I could swoop in and save the day. I began to recognize that I was not in the position to do the saving. However, I was in a position to walk alongside my students who had been disenfranchised and work with them and for them to help challenge and resist traditional dominant mainstream views that are perpetuating a cycle of oppression. At the beginning of my doctoral program, I saw my job as learning ways to solve the problems of under-resourced students in education through different teaching strategies. However, as I completed my degree, I began to see my role as a listener, ally, advocate, and to challenge traditional views and practices by the dominant culture that perpetuate the legacy of oppression for marginalized groups.

Challenging privilege was not an easy response. Nenga (2011) interviewed 40 affluent youth volunteers and identified four responses to privilege. Some responded with evading class and speaking about being colorblind. Others discussed the challenges of reverse discrimination or touted meritocracy. However, volunteers that participated in training specifically about structural causes of poverty and engaged in sustained long-term interactions of community groups in economically depressed areas challenged privilege. Individuals challenging privilege spoke up against racial injustice, became activists, and served as an ally to people of color (Nenga, 2011). I can hardly call myself an activist. I believe that title is left for people like Rosa Parks and Mother Theresa; however, I do see glimpses of an effort to be in allyship.

As an ally, I was determined to ensure that my dissertation treated the urban participants with respect and that they were given a chance to not only be heard but to inspire action and change. Therefore, I made intentional research choices in an effort to privilege their knowledge and experiences in the hopes of acknowledging their agency in academia. First, my dissertation explored how urban students develop civic identity from their point of view and what they believe social studies teachers should do to empower positive civic identity development. I wanted to focus on the point of view of those that had been previously silenced in research. Second, the participants were given a chance to not just review their transcripts, but to help create conceptual categories that were used to generate a grounded theory model. A grounded theory model is the product of a process of examining data with inductive logic and comparative inquiry (Charmaz, 2011). The model was a reflection of the participants' values, beliefs, and principles instead of a conglomerate of outsider perspectives.

Third, I tried to write my dissertation with a Freirian perspective of critical consciousness (Freire, 1973) that challenged me to consider how to minimize my own view from a dominant culture perspective and privilege the knowledge of the urban youth that participated in the project. Fourth, I chose to use the critical indigenous paradigm to encourage me to filter all my research decisions through a lens that was created to disrupt traditional power structures and encourage community and respect (Smith, 2012). Fifth, the participants created and produced a video with their own ideas and language that was shared with other educators directly. I was conscious of my position as an outsider but worked to do research that would make a difference *with* the participants instead of *to* them in allyship. I realized that perhaps the best way to help my students was to stop telling them how to fix their problems and start listening with an open heart to hear even the hard truths.

Conclusion

Whiteness is not a monolithic idea (Gallagher, 2000). It is full of complexities, as are other constructs of privilege, such as class. Therefore, this story is not meant to be a representation of all realizations that those that live with privilege should or have had. This story is a reflection of my own journey and self-transformation based on experiences that were mine, and mine alone. However, I do hope that my story will evoke conversation about how privilege impacts the ways teachers teach students that have been disenfranchised.

My journey and self-transformation made it impossible for me to return to work in public education. The realization that I was a part of a broken system that was, at the minimum, implicitly hurting a group of young people that I love dearly was just too much for me. Instead of returning to public education after graduation, I started my own laboratory school that serves about 50 low-middle income PreK–12th-grade students from a variety of different religious, economic, and racial backgrounds. About 70% of our students live below the poverty line. The school is designed based on research from my graduate studies to facilitate the development of global citizenship equipped with twenty-first-century skills ready to make the world a better place. It is far from perfect, but every day we make choices based on a social consciousness that I hope acknowledges the agency of our students and brings awareness about the challenges that those that have been a traditionally marginalized face. Our first priority at the school is to support, equip, and nurture our students, but the second priority is to teach others in the community about the importance of reimagining an educational system that truly respects and honors all types of students from all types of backgrounds.

G. Gay said that we inherited a dark and ugly world (personal communication, April 28, 2014), but we have an opportunity to heal wounds caused by centuries of injustice by looking inward, seeking the truth even when it is hard, listening to others, and refusing to accept the status quo. It is unacceptable to allow young people to go on thinking that they are disadvantaged because of something they did or did not do. It is unacceptable to allow young people to graduate or drop out without an understanding of possibilities of their potential based on their unique gifts and talents. It is unacceptable to allow young people to go on believing the misconception that they are less than anyone else because of where they live or the color of their skin. Therefore, as educators, we have a

responsibility to teach with a critical consciousness that challenges us to be aware of our own bias that stands in our way of joining with our students in solidarity for transformational social justice (Beachum, 2008). Social justice that empowers, uplifts, and brings liberation from the "isms" that plague our world, such as racism and classism (Morcom & Freeman, 2018).

Acknowledging our bias is a constant process of reflection and action. The realizations I shared demonstrate a progression of thought from believing I could be a hero and save the day to a humbling understanding of my role working in allyship. However, I did not share the realizations in a linear fashion to allude to the fact that my understanding of privilege does not constantly move forward in a straight line. Like other forms of identity development, my concept of privilege swings like a pendulum (G. Gay, personal communication, April 28, 2014) that has not found a resting place yet. My concept of privilege and its consequences continues to develop in a dynamic fashion.

Although my realizations demonstrate a strong focus specifically on white privilege, they also reflect the influence of class privilege. I chose not to delve into the issues of faith, gender, or other identity factors that impact my perspectives and contribute to other aspects of privilege. The intersectionality of different points of privilege are important and warrant further study, but my class and race were the identity constructs that were the most poignant for me to reflect on personally at this time. They are the identity constructs that I believe impacted my own context as an educator the most because I worked with predominately African American families in an economically depressed area.

As I started to look back at what I wrote academically and privately, I was worried about what I would find with a critically conscious eye. Would there be examples of unintended discrimination or language that perpetuates negative stereotypes of traditionally marginalized groups? The answer to both of those questions is yes. However, I am grateful for the opportunity to gather my thoughts in a way that will hopefully help other educators discover misconceptions, unacknowledged bias, and/or their own unearned assets that may keep them from authentically and honestly connecting with the students in their class.

As I wrote the autoethnography, I wondered how to write about my new awareness and experience with privilege without sounding self-righteous. I suppose to some, I failed miserably, and you are finishing this article with a sense of annoyance or perhaps mild anger. I hope that others have felt my groaning with the struggle of privilege and recognize my true sincerity. Either way, this project was intended to evoke emotion that would lead to discussion and open conversation, so as long as it does that, this project has served its purpose.

It is a daunting challenge to equip educators who closely identify with their white, female, middle-class, privileged lives to teach in diverse classrooms. Hence, I believe that the need for reconciliatory education has never been greater. We need an education workforce that is prepared to identify inequality and has the capacity to advocate for change (Morcom & Freeman, 2018). “Reconciliatory education is dedicated to teaching through love, respect, and an unyielding commitment to honoring, speaking truth, and building wisdom” (Morcom & Freeman, 2018, p. 809). Yet, I believe that the first step is for those of us in

privileged positions to recognize our privilege and our part as oppressors or at least as bystanders that have watched as archaic systems continue to perpetuate oppressive policies and procedures. Then we can all begin the process of reconciliation together.

Dear past students:

I'm sorry for not taking the time to listen to your ideas and perspectives.

I'm sorry for not valuing your experiences and knowledge.

I'm sorry for looking over you and through you—instead of at you.

I'm sorry for judging and assuming.

I'm sorry for pushing you towards my own ideas of success without acknowledging your own unique gifts and talents.

I'm sorry for the legacy of oppression that you have had to endure.

You inspire me with your resiliency, compassion, integrity, and loyalty to your family and your community.

I hope that we will meet again someday and walk together side by side towards a world of love, dignity, and peace.

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Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

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Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion: A Framework for Individual and Organizational Change

Diane J. Goodman

Abstract

This article presents a model of Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion (CCEI) defined as the ability to live and work effectively in culturally diverse environments and enact a commitment to equity and inclusion. Going beyond traditional approaches to cultural competence that tend to focus solely on self-awareness, the appreciation of cultural differences and interpersonal skills, this model integrates an intersectional perspective and social justice concepts—issues of power, privilege, oppression, and systemic change. The CCEI framework identifies a range of awareness, knowledge, and skills that allow people to develop the capacities to constructively engage with people from a variety of socio-cultural identities and create equitable and inclusive relationships and institutions. I describe each of the five interrelated core competencies along with some key components of each core competency. Examples of role and context specific competencies are also discussed. I suggest a variety of ways this framework can be utilized.

Keywords: cultural competence, social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, multicultural competence

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As the United States becomes increasingly diverse, organizations realize that developing cultural competency is a growing imperative. Many institutions have committees or initiatives focused on some aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). They acknowledge that in order to be effective and successful, individuals at all levels need to develop and deepen their capacities to work across differences and create environments that are welcoming, equitable, and inclusive. Whether it is working in teams, serving clients, engaging with community members, educating students, or leading organizations, people need to cultivate the cultural competencies—the awareness, knowledge, and skills related to DEI to do their jobs effectively. Moreover, schools and universities recognize their role in preparing students to develop the ability to live and work with people from a range of backgrounds and to be thoughtful global citizens (McNair, 2016; Whitehead, 2015).

Since the language of cultural competency is widely used in DEI work, the Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion (CCEI) model integrates equity, inclusion, and social justice content into the paradigm of cultural competence. It is an accessible and flexible framework that can guide efforts to help people develop the capacities to become more culturally competent for equity, inclusion, and social justice across a range of contexts. In this article, I clarify what I mean by cultural competence for equity and inclusion, briefly describe each component of the CCEI model, note some of the highlights of this framework, and identify ways it can be utilized. Some models of cultural competence focus on cross-cultural understanding in a global context. This model will focus on the United States but may have applicability to other settings.

Clarifying Language

When organizations engage in DEI work, often the focus is on the "D," diversity, sometimes on the "I," inclusion, and least often on the "E," equity. Often these terms are used interchangeably, but I believe there are important distinctions. *Diversity* efforts usually focus on increasing the representation of under-represented groups and understanding sociocultural differences. The emphasis is frequently on recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention. Diversity initiatives generally seek to ensure that the organization reflects the larger community of which it is part and that people understand and value differences.

Inclusion speaks to a sense of belonging and feeling valued, respected, and empowered. People may be at an institution but not really feel part of it or as if they are fully valued members. Often gaining a sense of belonging is a one-way street—individuals from marginalized groups are expected to assimilate into the already existing organizational culture and norms.

Equity refers to fairness, ending systemic discrimination, ensuring access, and creating equivalent outcomes. It attends to differences in power and privilege and seeks to address those inequities. All three of these components are necessary to create a truly fair, multicultural environment.

I sometimes use the term *social justice* to refer to the integration of these three aspects. Social justice refers to creating a society (or community, organization, or campus) with an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities where all people are safe (psychologically and physically), can meet their needs, and can fulfill their potential (Bell, 2016, p. 4).

The concept of cultural competence has been discussed for many years in a range of fields, especially in the helping professions (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). A variety of terms have been used to capture the importance of being able to understand, work with, and serve people from various backgrounds and social identities, such as *cultural competence* (Why Cultural Competence, n.d.), *cross-cultural competence* (Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto, & Ward, 2013), *multicultural competence* (Shallcross, 2013), *intercultural competence* (Bennett, 2004), *cultural proficiency* (Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, & Terrell, 2009), and *cultural humility* (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Most cultural competency efforts have focused on developing the necessary interpersonal skills to work across cultural differences and particularly on race, ethnicity, and language. Some professional fields and organizations have shown increasing interest in developing cultural competency to work with other marginalized groups and sociocultural differences, as well as to address issues of social inequality (National Association of Social Workers, 2015; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2019; Ratts, Singh, Butler, Nasar-McMillan, & McCullough, 2016; Sue, 2001). While many descriptions of cultural competence have identified some important qualities and capacities, most are related to a particular discipline (e.g., counseling, healthcare, student affairs, social work) and do not adequately attend to concepts related to equity—power, privilege, and oppression.

Undergirding the Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion framework is the notion of cultural humility, which originated in reference to medical relationships (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Tervalon and Murray-Garcia describe the three main dimensions of cultural humility as (a) committing to life-long self-education and self-critique, (b) addressing power imbalances between provider and client, and (c) creating mutually beneficial partnerships with clients and communities. When we approach developing cultural competency with cultural humility, we do not engage from a stance of arrogance or paternalism but from a place of curiosity and openness. We recognize that even if we have experienced some form of oppression, it does not mean we understand the oppression others face, nor does it eliminate the areas in which we have privilege. The willingness and ability to suspend our assumptions and judgments to respect how an individual expresses their own culture and identity is an ongoing process, not an endpoint. Similarly, developing cultural competence for equity, inclusion, and social justice is a life-long endeavor.

Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion Model

Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion (CCEI) is the ability to live and work effectively in culturally diverse environments and enact a commitment to equity and inclusion. CCEI requires developing critical consciousness, or the ability to perceive social, political, and economic inequities and to take action against the oppressive elements of society (Freire, 1970). Developing cultural competence for equity and inclusion helps move toward the vision of social justice. Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion requires a range of awareness, knowledge, and skills. The five core competencies in this model are: (a) self-awareness, (b) understanding and valuing others, (c) knowledge of societal inequities, (d) interpersonal skills to effectively engage across differences in different contexts, and (e) skills to foster transformation towards

equity and inclusion. These five core competencies are interconnected, and each has key components. Additionally, depending on the context and one's role and responsibilities, there will be specific awareness, knowledge, and skills that are necessary. See Figure 1.

The CCEI framework also incorporates an intersectional perspective. An intersectional approach recognizes that different social identities and forms of oppression simultaneously intersect and interact (Collins & Blige, 2016; Crenshaw, 1993). While individuals may focus on one aspect of their own or another's identity and the related marginalization or privilege, this dimension is always being affected by other aspects of identity and positions within other systems of oppression. To truly be culturally competent for equity and inclusion, we need to appreciate how lived realities are shaped by all aspects of identities and how different forms of social inequities are interlocking.

Self-Awareness

The first core competency of Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion, self-awareness, entails the ability to understand who we are and how it affects our worldviews, relationships, perspectives, experiences, and behaviors. Some of the key components of self-awareness are:

- Awareness of our social identities and their cultural influences and how they intersect.
- Awareness of our prejudices, stereotypes, and biases.
- Awareness of our internalized superiority and internalized inferiority.
- Awareness of how we may be perceived by others and the impact of our behavior.

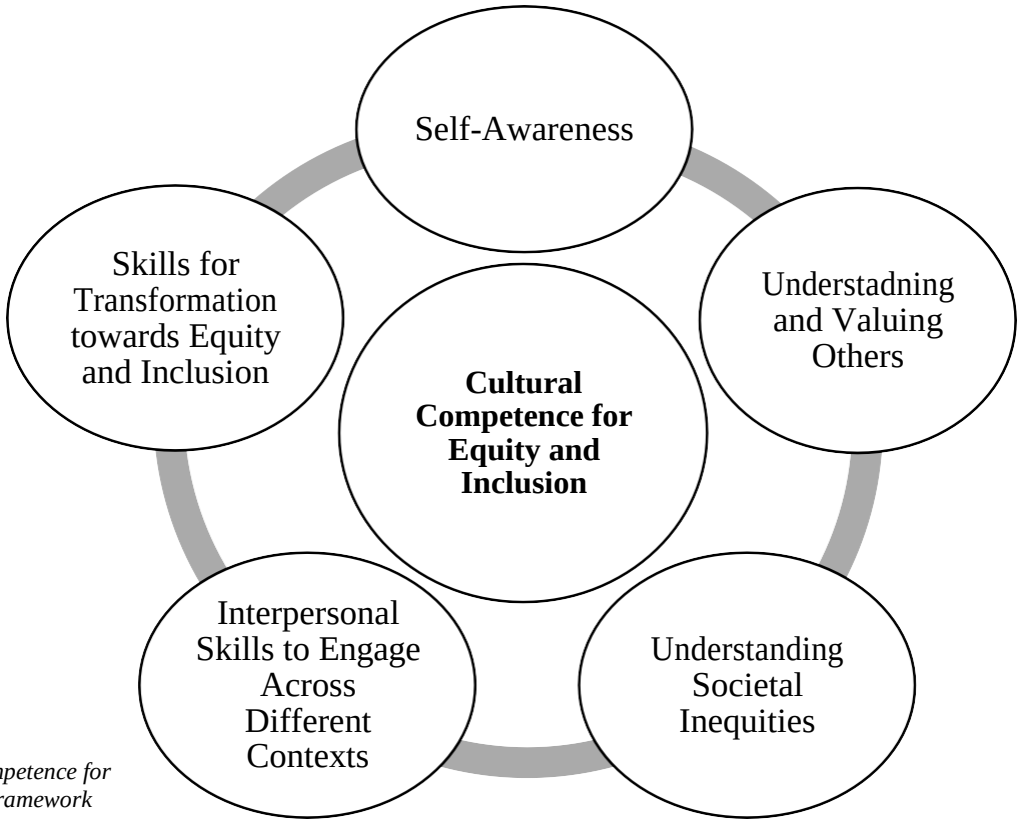

Figure 1: Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion Framework

Awareness of our own various social identities and their cultural influences and how they intersect

How do our race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, gender, ability, national origin, age, and other social identities affect our worldview, values, beliefs, and behavior? We are socialized and culturally conditioned into particular roles and ways of being. Consider the messages you received (overtly or implied) growing up about how to express your feelings; how to deal with conflict; expectations about school, work, career, and lifestyle; and appropriate gender roles. Were you encouraged to address conflict openly, or were you encouraged to avoid conflict? Were you expected to conform to rigid gender roles or supported to express yourself in gender-nonconforming ways? Were you raised to be highly individually competitive or to be more collaborative and community-oriented? These messages are tied to our social and cultural identities (as well as our particular individual personalities and histories). It is not sufficient to understand each dimension of our identity in isolation without appreciating how these various aspects intersect to shape our particular behaviors, perspectives, and realities. The messages we receive may align or contradict. As a middle-class girl in a New York area Jewish family, I was taught both to "act like a lady" (be polite and well-mannered) as well as to speak up for what I believed in, even if it meant challenging authority.

Awareness of our prejudices, stereotypes, and biases

We all are exposed to misinformation and a lack of information about various social identity groups. The growing research on implicit or unconscious bias demonstrates that everyone has biases that affect their behavior and decisions, whether we realize it or not (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013; Staats, Capatosto, Wright, & Jackson, 2016). These unconscious biases may not even be consistent with our conscious beliefs. Biases may affect whom we see as most trustworthy or as having the most potential, or with whom we feel most comfortable. The more we are aware of our stereotypes and assumptions and are vigilant about how our unconscious biases may be manifesting, the more we are able to act in equitable and inclusive ways.

Awareness of the impact of our positionality and internalized superiority and inferiority

Not only are we all cultural beings, but we are also positioned differently within systems of inequality. We may be part of dominant (or privileged) groups—male, heterosexual, cisgender (people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth), middle/upper class, Christian, able-bodied/without disabilities, born in the United States, as well as part of marginalized groups—female; lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer (LBGTQ); low-income; born outside the United States; have a disability; be an elder; or from a religious minority. Most of us are part of both privileged and marginalized groups.

When we are part of privileged groups, that identity is aligned with norms of the dominant culture. Therefore, we are often less aware of that identity or of the realities of others from marginalized groups. As a result, we may not be as sensitive to or empathic about the inequities others may face. This can affect how we respond to concerns, form opinions on issues, make decisions, and set policy. People without

disabilities may not be attuned to the range of challenges people with disabilities face and thus may not sufficiently attend to how to make the organization more equitable and accessible. Or individuals who come from predominantly dominant groups may not understand why other people feel so strongly about the need to address microaggressions (subtle insults and slights, often unconscious, towards marginalized groups).

Moreover, in mainstream society, dominant groups are seen as superior to other groups and set the norms and standards against which others are judged. When we are part of dominant groups, we may internalize this sense of superiority and the normality of our group—internalized superiority. We may see ourselves and people like us as "just normal" (with the implication that others are not) and as smarter, more capable, more valuable, and more deserving of positions of power than people from the corresponding nondominant group. We may not be aware of our internalized superiority; we may not consciously believe that we are better than others. Yet, these attitudes and beliefs may manifest when we negatively judge others who are from marginalized groups who are "different," feel that we know what is best for those individuals and communities, want to make others "more like us," or feel entitled to take up more space, attention, and resources**.** Despite good intentions, behavior that is seen as patronizing or condescending such as the "White savior complex" (when White people assume they can "fix" the problems of people of Color) or "mansplaining" (when a man explains things to a woman in a way that is arrogant and condescending, assuming that he automatically knows more than she does) are examples of internalized superiority. When we are part of privileged groups, we may also find it difficult to hear challenges to the current social, political, and economic systems, learn about our group's role in perpetuating oppression, or get feedback on our behavior (DiAngelo, 2011; Goodman, 2011; Watt, 2015). Self-awareness, in this regard, requires being able to notice and address our reactions, feelings, and defensiveness so we can continue to learn and grow.

The flip side of internalized superiority is internalized inferiority (or internalized oppression). In mainstream culture, nondominant groups are seen as inferior, deficient, and "less than." When we are part of marginalized groups and internalize these negative messages we may believe, sometimes unconsciously, that we or others like us are not as smart, competent, attractive, or deserving of power and resources as people from dominant groups. The research on stereotype threat (Inzlicht & Schmader, 2012; Steele & Aronson, 1995) illustrates how these negative beliefs can adversely impact test performance. Due to internalized oppression, we may try to overcompensate, limit ourselves, or engage in self-destructive behavior. We may also distance ourselves from others from our social identity group or view them negatively (Bivens, 2005; David, 2014). Expressions of internalized oppression maybe when an administrative assistant assumes she has nothing valuable to contribute to a department meeting that involves higher-level staff and administrators, or when a gay person is uncomfortable being around other gay people whom he sees as "too gay." Internalized oppression contributes to our collusion with oppression, which supports its continuation.

Unless we are aware of how we have absorbed and enacted internalized superiority and inferiority, we are likely to

continue to enact inequitable dynamics. Becoming aware of internalized superiority/inferiority is essential though challenging work because these beliefs are often unconscious. Personal awareness of internalized superiority and inferiority is linked to understanding societal inequities and will be explored further in the third component of the model.

Awareness of how we may be perceived by others and the impact of our behavior

Another component of self-awareness is understanding how we may be seen or "read" by other people and how our behaviors are interpreted and experienced. These perceptions are influenced by our social identities and dominant and subordinated statuses. An African American with a more passionate style of communication may be incorrectly interpreted as being angry. As a woman, my self-deprecation may be read as a lack of confidence or competence, whereas that is less likely to be the case for a man. A man who interrupts women or talks at length may be seen as enacting his male privilege. Our various intersecting social identities affect how we are experienced. While White female instructors are likely to be challenged more than White male ones, women of Color faculty are even more likely to have their authority and credentials questioned (Gutierrez y Muhs, Niemann, Gonzalez, & Harris, 2012; Pittman, 2010). Add in other marginalized identities, such as being younger or being an immigrant, and this undermining of authority will likely increase. Being aware of how we may be seen by people with different identities and backgrounds allows us to not internalize inaccurate projections, adjust as necessary, or decide how we want to express our authentic selves within the mainstream norms.

Understanding and Valuing Others

The corollary to self-awareness is knowledge of and appreciation for others' social identities, cultures, and perspectives, and understanding their biases and internalized inferiority and superiority. Some key components of this core competency include:

- Knowledge of the social identities of other people, their cultural influences, and how they intersect.
- Ability to value and appreciate ways of being, doing, and thinking other than our own.
- Ability to recognize how other people express internalized superiority and internalized inferiority.

Knowledge of the social identities of other people, their cultural influences, and how they intersect

Like self-awareness, knowledge of others' cultures and social identity groups and how they intersect is also essential. We need to explore how others' socialization, life experiences, and cultural backgrounds shape who they are, their worldviews, beliefs and values, and ways of being. Unless we understand other individuals, we are likely to misinterpret their behavior, unintentionally offend, or be ineffective at meeting their needs. Much diversity work is focused on understanding cultural differences and people's experiences as part of different social identity groups.

Furthermore, we cannot assume that just because we share a particular social identity with another, our perspectives and experiences are alike or that two people will be similar just because they come from the same social identity group. For example,

although women in an organization may share some similarities related to being female and dealing with sexism, a Chinese American, middle-class manager, and a White, working-class custodian are likely to have different experiences as women. Additionally, simply because two people are Latinx immigrants, we cannot assume similarities and would need to understand not only personal differences but countries of origin, conditions of immigration, status, and experiences in their home country, years in the United States, as well as the significance of their other social identities. The more we can appreciate the many dimensions of an individual and how they interact, the greater the understanding and ability we will have to work with them. There is less likelihood we will misinterpret their behavior or rely on stereotypes.

Ability to value and appreciate ways of being, doing, and thinking other than our own

It is not enough to just seek to know and understand different social and cultural identities. We need the capacity to value and appreciate other ways of being, doing, and thinking. CCEI entails a shift from believing that our way is the right or only way. Different worldviews, cultural backgrounds, socialization, and experiences influence how people approach situations, tasks, and relationships. Dominant U.S. society tends to value individualism, competition, expediency, and objectivity (Okun, n.d.). Yet, people may have other cultural styles and orientations. Some people may be oriented towards more collaborative approaches to working together, less linear thinking, artistic ways of conceptualizing and expressing ideas, recognizing the wisdom of the body, the use of ritual, less rigid time norms, and prioritizing relationship and process over task. People with different abilities/disabilities, religious practices, or other needs outside the mainstream norms may require structures and processes that allow for their full participation and inclusion. Cultural competence for equity and inclusion requires not only understanding different social identities and cultural styles but developing the flexibility to interact and work in ways that value and accommodate these differences.

Ability to recognize the impact of others' positionality and how they express internalized superiority and internalized inferiority

Social location and experiences of privilege and oppression affect others' sense of identity, perspectives, behavior, and experiences. This lens of positionality provides ways to understand how individuals may be interpreting, understanding, and dealing with situations. This, in turn, can enable us to make sense of their behavior, develop ways to challenge their biases, support their growth, and have greater compassion.

We can consider positionality and internalized superiority and inferiority when we work with and mentor different individuals. For example, in a university context, how might internalized dominance be at play when a straight, cisgender resident assistant at a college is being accused by queer students in a residence hall of being insensitive to their needs and planning programs that are not inclusive of people with a variety of genders and sexualities? How could the resistant assistant be helped to see how this behavior may reflect his lack of awareness or sense of normalcy as a heterosexual, cisgender person and is impeding his ability to be successful in his position? Or, when a female student

studying engineering is quick to assume she can't succeed in this field when she receives some negative feedback. How could we challenge her internalized inferiority and support her to explore the roots of her self-doubt and achieve her academic and professional goals? Dominant and subordinated statuses may also affect how people respond to diversity and social justice issues. While any individual can experience a range of emotions at different times, as noted previously, people from privileged groups may express defensiveness as well as guilt and shame. People from marginalized groups may feel anger and hopelessness. By understanding these common reactions, we can better support people in working through their responses, finding appropriate outlets, and developing greater openness to learning and change.

Knowledge of Societal Inequities

We cannot understand ourselves or other people or create greater equity without considering the larger sociopolitical and historical context of which we are part. We need to have a grasp of different forms of privilege and oppression and how these affect people's experiences and access to social power, resources, and opportunities. Additionally, we need an awareness of the strategies for resistance and resilience different individuals and communities have utilized. It is also critical to appreciate the interlocking nature of different types of inequality. Some key components include:

- Knowledge of the history and ideology of different forms of oppression and how they impact current manifestations of systemic inequities.
- Understanding how different forms of oppression operate on individual, interpersonal, cultural, institutional, and structural levels.
- Understanding the impact of systemic inequities on individuals' opportunities and lived realities and strategies for surviving, resisting, and thriving.

Knowledge of history and ideology of oppressions and their current impact

Our current inequities did not occur overnight, nor are they disconnected from what has previously occurred. Oppression is a system of accumulated advantages and disadvantages. Without a historical perspective, we cannot appreciate how the past is shaping the present. For example, in order to understand the challenges for Indigenous people in gaining access to education and well-paying jobs, it is necessary to recognize the long history of oppression Native people have endured, including the stealing of their lands, displacement and isolation, boarding schools that forcibly removed children from their homes and brutally tried to erase their cultural knowledge and language, the breaking of treaties, negative and distorted history and media images, and the banning of their cultural and religious practices. Every marginalized group has a particular history of exclusion, discrimination, violence, and distortion. This history provides a context and lens for interpreting the behaviors and inequities we currently see. Knowledge of how different groups have survived and thrived despite or because of these barriers and mistreatment is also important to challenge notions of victimhood and provide models of resilience and change.

Coupled with a historical perspective is the need to understand the dominant ideology that justifies and normalizes oppression. What are the commonly

accepted narratives and stereotypes about different marginalized groups? How do these biases and beliefs perpetuate systemic inequality? Returning to the example of Native Americans, the dominant ideology in the United States portrays Indigenous people as poor, lazy alcoholics, who mistreat their children, while also being exoticized as spiritual and in tune with nature. More generally, the dominant narrative in the United States is that we are a meritocracy where anyone can pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. This allows people who are poor to be viewed as deserving of their situation rather than seeing the systemic forces that create and maintain poverty. The commonly accepted beliefs about different marginalized groups allow the oppression to continue as if it is natural or deserved. Similarly, the dominant ideology also allows the elevated positions of people from privileged groups to seem natural and go unchallenged. For example, many people have accepted the disproportion of men in positions of power since their dominance historically has led to assumptions that this is normal and that they are stronger, more decisive leaders than women.

Oppression on different levels

All forms of oppression occur on multiple levels: individual, interpersonal, institutional, cultural, and structural. Oppression needs to be understood and addressed on all dimensions if we want to dismantle inequities and foster social justice. The individual and interpersonal levels entail the ways individuals internalize the messages from the dominant culture that maintain oppression, such as the internalized superiority and inferiority discussed earlier. Offensive jokes, individual acts of meanness or bias (e.g., writing a hateful word on someone's door), and microaggressions are examples of interpersonal oppression. Members of organizations often relate numerous ways they experience interpersonal bias on a daily basis, eroding their sense of belonging and ability to thrive. Institutional policies, practices, and norms also create barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Examples include a criminal justice system that has unfairly targeted and incarcerated Black and Brown people, a lack of legal protection against job or housing discrimination for LGBTQ people, an under-representation of women in high-level positions in government, business, and corporate boards, and the reluctance to hirer older employees. Institutional manifestations may include biases in hiring, mentoring, and promotion; the lack of adequate accommodations for people with disabilities; a curriculum that ignores the history, contributions, and realities of various marginalized groups; pay inequities; or financial barriers for low-income students. Cultural manifestations include norms around communication, dress, and language; the holidays that are recognized and observed; the food that is served; gender role expectations; and physical esthetics (decorations, pictures, etc.). Often people from marginalized groups feel that they cannot express their authentic selves since they would not fit in or feel that the environment does not reflect their cultural identities or needs. Structural oppression refers to how ideology, along with these different levels of oppression, and interlocking institutions, create a broader, interconnected system that disadvantages people from marginalized groups.

Impact on opportunities and lived realities

History, ideology, and manifestations of oppression on multiple levels all affect people's experiences and access to resources. Being culturally competent for

equity and inclusion requires that we understand and support people in navigating and overcoming these barriers. Someone in a queer family may face different obstacles and have different concerns finding housing in a welcoming and safe community with accepting schools for their children than someone who is heterosexual. Socio-economic status affects people's ability to pursue educational or professional development opportunities—conferences, internships, study abroad, or simply to being able to afford to stay in school. Immigration status may affect someone's opportunities to get jobs or internships and their risks in complaining about unfair treatment for fear of losing their position, which could jeopardize their visa status. Ability/disability may impact how easily and quickly someone can move around campus or a city or what jobs are available. When we are part of privileged groups, relative to the marginalized group, we are generally seen as smarter and more capable, given the benefit of the doubt in situations, and thus are more likely to be given mentoring and opportunities to try something new. The particular mix of dominant and marginalized identities will affect the ways and the degrees to which people experience both advantages and disadvantages.

Interpersonal Skills to Engage Across Differences in Different Contexts

In addition to understanding self, others, and society, we need the ability to adapt to and work collaboratively with a diversity of people in a range of situations. People's social identities affect their interpersonal, communication, and work styles, as well as their views of conflict, notions of leadership, and sense of time (among many other things). Our positionality affects power dynamics in interpersonal relationships and groups. Some key components of this core competency include the ability to:

- Embrace, integrate, and adapt to different cultural styles.
- Engage in dialogue about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.
- Deal with conflict due to cultural differences and the dynamics of inequality.

Embrace and adapt to different cultural styles

Given these myriad differences, we need to develop the skills to work together across our various social identities and cultural orientations and recognize and value alternative styles of engagement. When people act in ways different from our own or different from organizational norms, it can be easy to label their behavior as wrong or inferior. Cultural competence for equity and inclusion asks us to reconsider our assumptions and find ways to embrace a wider range of interpersonal and work styles. People who favor personal connection might prefer face-to-face meetings rather than email exchanges. Others may want the expression of emotions to be an acceptable part of interactions and not seen as irrational, unstable, or dangerous. Degrees of formality vary, and those who seem too informal may be viewed as disrespectful or unserious. We need the skills to recognize and then adjust to and integrate these different cultural orientations, so people do not feel excluded, silenced, or misinterpreted. We need the flexibility to engage in ways that stretch our own and our institution's cultural norms in order to truly be more inclusive.

Engage in dialogue about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues

If we are to live and work together

effectively, we need to be able to acknowledge and discuss the impact of social identities, power dynamics, and systemic inequities. Often these topics are taboo, or people are too uncomfortable to talk about them. Some individuals believe that merely talking about differences creates division and that if we ignore injustices, they will simply go away. Yet, we know that cultural differences and inequities exist and affect us whether we name them or not. It is often easier to adopt a colorblind (or power evasive) stance or avoid issues that may be controversial. Cultural competence for equity and inclusion requires that we talk about how social identities shape perspectives and experiences and validate the realities of different groups of people. For example, instead of dismissing the concerns of people of color as being overly sensitive, we can explore how institutional racism and unconscious racial bias may be affecting decisions and climate. There are a variety of skills that help us do so. Active listening is critical since these skills help us pay attention and really listen to what someone is saying and reflect that understanding. We also must be able to give and receive feedback. Individuals need the ability to discuss how we are experiencing different situations and the impact of others' behavior. We need to let people know what we expect from them in order to have constructive and authentic personal and working relationships. The ability to hear and utilize feedback requires managing our defensiveness and other reactions. Knowing the appropriate language or terminology to discuss issues helps conversations be more productive.

Deal with conflict

Inevitably, conflicts arise in our relationships with others. Differences in social identities, positionality, and cultural styles can increase the potential for conflict and the complexity in resolving it. CCEI requires that we not only have the awareness and knowledge to recognize how conflicts may be fueled by our differences in identities, cultures, and positionalities, but also have the skills to work through these challenges. Often people have different ways to approach conflict and its management. Some people may prefer a direct approach that clearly lays out the concerns and actively seeks to explore the issues; others may prefer a more indirect approach that addresses disagreements in a more subtle way. Avoiding conflicts that arise as we work together reduces our ability to enact change and often results in people disengaging. We need to be able to work effectively through differences and disagreements in culturally sensitive and respectful ways. Successfully resolving interpersonal issues allows for the development of trust and deeper and more authentic relationships.

Skills for Transformation Towards Equity and Inclusion

Cultural competence for equity and inclusion entails more than just interpersonal skills and an understanding of the impact of structural inequities. It requires being able to identify and address inequities and choose appropriate interventions to create environments, policies, and practices that foster diversity and social justice. We need to be able to transform the barriers to equity and inclusion. Key components for creating change are needed at various levels, such as skills for:

- Continual self-development and allyship.
- Addressing interpersonal and group issues.
- Transforming institutions.

- Creating societal change.

Continue self-development and allyship

Skills for self-development include ongoing self-reflection, self-education, and personal growth. Since developing cultural competence for equity and inclusion is a life-long process, we need to know how to continually learn and grow. These skills include being able to self-monitor our thoughts and behavior, hear and respond appropriately to feedback, access resources for on-going learning around different social identities and forms of oppression, work on overcoming our biases and prejudice, and examine and transform our internalized superiority/inferiority.

We also need to be developing our skills for allyship (Brown, 2015; Goodman, 2011). While allyship can occur within and across different marginalized groups, I am particularly referring to when people from privileged groups work against a form of oppression from which they benefit. Certainly, personal awareness and knowledge of the issues are key components. Additionally, being able to work in solidarity with people from marginalized groups for equity and inclusion involves numerous skills such as learning when to listen and when to speak up, how to contribute one's expertise without taking over, and not looking for and expecting the marginalized group to provide emotional support and praise.

Skills to address interpersonal and group issues may involve a host of capacities depending on one's role, including the ability to respond to biased comments and microaggressions, to identify and remedy oppressive group dynamics, and to create equitable and culturally inclusive workplaces and classroom/learning environments. This may mean being able to speak up at a meeting when one notices that a person of Color's idea is being ignored or attributed to a White person, ensuring that students with disabilities are appropriately included in-class activities and group assignments, or constructively leading a discussion on controversial social issues. Supervisors/managers, in particular, may need skills at helping to resolve interpersonal conflicts related to culture and social identities and providing unbiased performance evaluations.

Skills for institutional transformation involve being able to create and critically analyze organizational policies and practices for differential impact and outcomes (Diversity Collegium, 2016; Sturm, Eatman, Saltmarsh, & Bush, 2011). This competency requires that one can advocate on behalf of self or others to address policies, practices, or organizational cultural norms that are inequitable or culturally exclusive or insensitive. Institutional policies and practices that affect admissions, graduation, hiring, promotion, retention, discipline, curriculum, services, and programming are some areas that need to be considered. People need to be able to use a social justice lens to develop new policies and practices that are equitable and inclusive and be able to remedy and enact changes to existing ones once inequities or disparities are identified.

Skills for societal change include the ability to work collaboratively with others to create changes in society that may include efforts to change laws, governmental policies, or cultural norms. These efforts might be collective action to support rights for the LGBTQ community, to increase educational access for low-income and immigrant students, or to enhance worker rights. To be effective, we need the capacity

to utilize various social change strategies as appropriate, such as community organizing, media campaigns, petitions, rallies, and teach-ins and the ability to choose appropriate action for a given situation.

Competencies

Context and Role Specific Competencies

Thus far, I have focused on the five core competencies and key components that are likely to be relevant for anyone seeking to become more culturally competent for equity and inclusion: self-awareness, understanding and valuing others, knowledge of societal inequities, interpersonal skills engaging across differences, and skills for transformation towards equity and inclusion. Depending on one's particular context, role, and responsibilities, the specific awareness, knowledge, and skills within these core competencies will need to be tailored to the situation. For example, in terms of considering the context, the make-up of the members of the organization and the surrounding community will affect what people need to know to be culturally competent for equity and inclusion. If an institution has numbers of individuals from particular ethnic groups, obviously greater knowledge of those cultures and lived realities is necessary. Similarly, if an organization serves people from specific populations, such as individuals who were formerly incarcerated or immigrants, people need a deeper understanding of the experiences and related government policies for those groups.

People within the same organization with different roles will need different specific competencies. For example, in a university, faculty have many varied responsibilities. They need the self-awareness to understand how their social identities and positionality will affect how and what they teach, an awareness of how their biases might affect how they treat students in the classroom, as well as how they advise, mentor, or grade them. Faculty also need knowledge of how the social identities and positionality of their students may affect their participation and experience in the class (e.g., feeling isolated, invisible, confident), and their life circumstances (e.g., being able to afford books, food, housing; working other jobs). They need skills to manage classroom dynamics (e.g., address microaggressions, handle conflict constructively) and create an inclusive curriculum and classroom environment where everyone feels valued and is able to learn. In addition, faculty need skills to create and advocate for equitable departmental and university policies.

Others in the college community may need other specific awareness, knowledge, and skills. Health service providers need to be particularly aware of gender and sexuality issues in order to provide appropriate and sensitive medical and mental health care to people who identify as gender non-conforming or queer. Important for career counselors is an awareness of their biases as they advise students on career options and an understanding of how internalized inferiority, cultural background, and societal oppression may influence career choices, whether in limiting one's aspirations, dealing with the pressure from family to pursue a particular vocation, or concerns about the bias and discrimination a student is likely to encounter in a particular field (e.g., women in technology). Administrators and those with management responsibilities may need particular work regarding biases that arise in hiring, promotion, evaluation, and supervision skills to effectively manage diverse staff, and the

ability to create and review policies and procedures for equity and inclusion.

Developing Competencies

The development of a particular competency rarely occurs in isolation from other competencies. The core competencies are interrelated, and thus their development is often interconnected. For example, when we learn about others' cultures and experiences, it often sheds light on our own. As we learn more about systemic inequities, it can help us develop ways to create more equity in our environments and to raise our awareness of the privileges we receive. The point is not to try to isolate the different core or key competencies, but to ensure that all of them are being addressed in appropriate ways. Additionally, individuals likely have uneven awareness, knowledge, and skills depending on the social identity, form of oppression, or issue. Someone might have high levels of competency around LGBTQ issues but not about class issues, or be skilled at institutional advocacy but limited in self-awareness.

There are numerous ways to develop competencies and increase capacity for equity and inclusion. One way is through various educational experiences such as classes, workshops, webinars, and lectures that provide information, discussions, and activities to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills. Another avenue is through relationships and experiences with different individuals, groups, and communities. This may include meeting with people from local organizations, doing internships, volunteering, joining groups, or developing more meaningful relationships with individuals with a diversity of social identities and backgrounds. As we have actual contact and connections with different people, we have the potential to gain invaluable firsthand knowledge, empathy, and insight. Additionally, we can engage in our own self-education by accessing information through reading, media, and cultural events. There is no shortage of opportunities to be developing cultural competence for equity and inclusion if one is intentional about doing so.

Assessing Competencies

There are also many ways to assess the development of competencies. While at the moment there is no validated instrument for the CCEI model, there are a variety of other methods that can be helpful. Individuals and departments can receive feedback from relevant others: colleagues, supervisors, students, clients, community members. This can be done through surveys, questionnaires, feedback forms, and/or focus groups. Campus climate surveys can help identify areas for attention. People can be asked to discuss or write self-assessments, self-reflections, or case analyses and take tests that assess knowledge. Individuals can demonstrate skills though facilitating a group, planning and conducting a class or workshop, or being observed working with a client. There are also instruments that measure attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to diversity and inclusion (e.g., https://idiinventory.com/Intercultural development inventory; Pope & Mueller, 2005).

Implementation and Application

The Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion model can be used for a variety of diagnostic and planning purposes. It can help people reflect on the questions:

- What do we want people to be able to do?
- What areas are we are already

addressing and which need more attention and depth?
- How can we measure where we are towards this goal?

This model can offer a roadmap for implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and for identifying the capacities that need to be deepened. Instead of just randomly offering particular workshops or implementing new programs, the CCEI can help individuals and groups charged with advancing DEI at their institutions create a more systematic and intentional way to plan their interventions. The following are a few examples of how the model could be used.

Organizational mission and strategic planning

At its broadest level, this model can be used for setting institutional goals. These core competencies can provide the overall framework for what the institution wants to cultivate in all its members. It can then consider how these capacities can be developed.

Professional development

The CCEI framework can be used to identify and develop the competencies needed by members of the organization, generally, as well as the specific needs of different departments/groups within an institution. The model can be a reference to ascertain which competencies are being developed and which need further attention. For example, I worked with one organization to offer a two-day general CCEI training open to all members of the organization to create some shared foundational knowledge and skills. This was followed by some sessions, particularly for people in different roles.

Educational programming

To go beyond just general diversity events, planners can be intentional about offering a range of programming that would help people develop the awareness, knowledge, and skills for CCEI. They can consider the particular speakers who are invited, include sessions that allow people to have meaningful dialogue across differences, and provide workshops on specific topics.

Student leadership development

Student leadership development programs can be designed to prepare students to be culturally competent for equity, inclusion, and social justice. At one university, I developed and trained trainers to lead a one-day basic workshop for student leaders on CCEI. The staff is subsequently developing additional training for students who remain student leaders over several years to build on and increase their competencies.

Curriculum development and creating student learning outcomes

Instructors can develop courses that intentionally develop these various competencies or create programs or sequences of courses to do so. These competencies can be the basis for student learning outcomes. Some instructors have intentionally integrated these competencies into their syllabi. One university has adopted the CCEI framework as the core competencies for all their students. Each school and department is working to identify the specific competencies needed for their students and how students through courses and other experiences (across the university) would develop these competencies and how they will be assessed. I provided initial

training on the CCEI model to a steering committee so they could help oversee this process.

An overall flow to consider for implementing the CCEI is identifying:

> Core competencies → Key components→ Specific competencies for that role/context → Ways to develop the competencies → Ways to assess the competencies.

As more people have become familiar with the model, they are finding different ways of utilizing it.

Highlights of This Model

There are several characteristics of this framework that make it different from most cultural competency models, and that may make it a useful tool for a range of organizations.

Encompasses all social identities and forms of oppression. This framework addresses various sociocultural groups, not just those related to race and ethnicity. People can use this model to explore and develop cultural competency around sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic class, ability/disability, age, and national origin, among others, along with the corresponding systemic inequities.

Incorporates an intersectional perspective. Not only does this model address a variety of sociocultural groups, it considers how these various social identities and forms of oppression interact and intersect within particular contexts and how this affects people's senses of self and experiences.

Integrates equity, inclusion, and social justice issues. Examinations of power, privilege, and oppression, as well as cultural differences, are infused throughout all components of the model.

Includes skills for action and advocacy. In addition to interpersonal skills, this framework addresses the skills needed to ensure equity and inclusion on organizational, institutional, and societal levels. It recognizes the importance of both personal and institutional/social change.

Provides a flexible, broad framework. This model can be applied across a variety of contexts and purposes. These basic components can be tailored to meet the needs of particular fields or organizations.

The Cultural Competence for Equity and Inclusion model offers one way to integrate social justice content with cultural competency to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. Making competences explicit increases the likelihood they will be addressed. The ability to live and interact effectively with a diversity of people in diverse contexts and foster equity, inclusion, and social justice is needed throughout all of our institutions. This framework can be a tool towards this end.

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Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

Collectors, Nightlights, and Allies, Oh My! White Mentors in the Academy

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Abstract

As more students of Color enter into Historically White Institutions (HWIs), the dearth of mentors of Color continues to be an issue leaving students to rely on White mentors within academia. Much of the literature regarding mentoring discusses its definitions and best practices. It does not, however, capture the experiences of students of Color and their perceptions of their White mentors. It also fails to challenge White mentors who other, tokenize, or fail to understand their mentees. Through autoethnography rooted in Critical Race Theory counternarratives, I identify, define, and discuss three roles White mentors play for students of Color.

Keywords: critical race theory, counternarrative, autoethnography, cross-racial mentoring

Marisela Martinez-Cola joined the faculty at Utah State University in the Fall of 2018 after receiving her PhD from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. The first in her family to attend college, she is also an alumnus of the University of Michigan, where she majored in African American Studies. She then earned a law degree at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. She credits her varied educational experiences for contributing to her interdisciplinary approach to research and teaching. Her research largely focuses on the critical comparative study of race, class, and gender as it relates to culture, social movements, and comparative/historical sociology. Her current book project is entitled *The Bricks Before Brown* and is a comparative historical case study of the construction of race, class, and gender in Mexican American, Chinese American, and Native American school desegregation cases that came before the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education.*

During my graduate school career, I was often asked to speak with or mentor young undergraduates. As a first-generation Chicana pursuing a PhD, I received these requests often. In reality, I have always been asked to participate in these kinds of events ever since high school, into college, throughout law school, graduate school, and now as an assistant professor. These requests are both an opportunity and a challenge. I truly appreciate sharing my experiences with students with whom I have so much in common. It is a form of giving back to the various scholars of Color who were generous to me. It can be challenging, however, when attempting to manufacture more time to write, research, teach, and be a mother.

On this particular occasion, I was asked to network with a group of incredibly talented Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows (MMUF). The MMUF is a fellowship named after noted scholar and educator Benjamin Elijah Mays that is designed to support and encourage underrepresented minority groups to pursue a PhD. The group was small enough to provide an opportunity to have protected, "real" conversations. One student asked, "What should we look for in a mentor?" Most of the time, I would give a fairly general answer about how having a good mentor requires that you are a good mentee—and so forth. However, on this particular occasion, I was experiencing an intense moment of clarity and candor. I realized that I had spent most of my academic career, K–12, college, law school, and graduate school (approximately 25 years total) in predominantly White spaces. I explained to them that, though there are few in HWI, they will interact with and find mentors of Color who may be able to share their experiences. However, most of their mentors will likely be White. I shared, "White mentors are very interesting. You have to get to know them and how to interact with them. You will likely encounter Collectors or Nightlights." I had never used these descriptors before in a public setting, but in a room full of people of Color, I felt comfortable enough to name my experiences.

This article is a result of that very frank and honest conversation. Ever since that meeting, I have played those conversations in my mind, shared these classifications with colleagues, and added the third category of Allies.[i] In sharing this conversation with fellow people of Color, I have found that naming these experiences with White mentors provided much-needed validation in an academic setting where my presence is problematic. In sharing these ideas with White faculty, I have encountered surprise, reflection, and some push back. As some of my colleagues have shared, generally speaking, "White folks don't like being told about themselves."

The under-representation of faculty of Color in the academy ensures the chances that students of Color will likely look to White faculty as mentors. Research from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows that Black male, Black female, and Latino professors account for 3% each, with Latinas accounting for 2%, Native Americans less than 1%, and Asian American male and female faculty representing 6% and 4%, respectively (see Figure 1). In the meantime, the NCES also reports that in postsecondary institutions students of Color comprise approximately 42% of college enrollment distributed in the following manner: Black (14.1%), Latinx students (17.3%), Asian American (6.8%), Native American (0.8%), and Multiracial (3.5%). With the ever-changing diversification of higher education, the onus

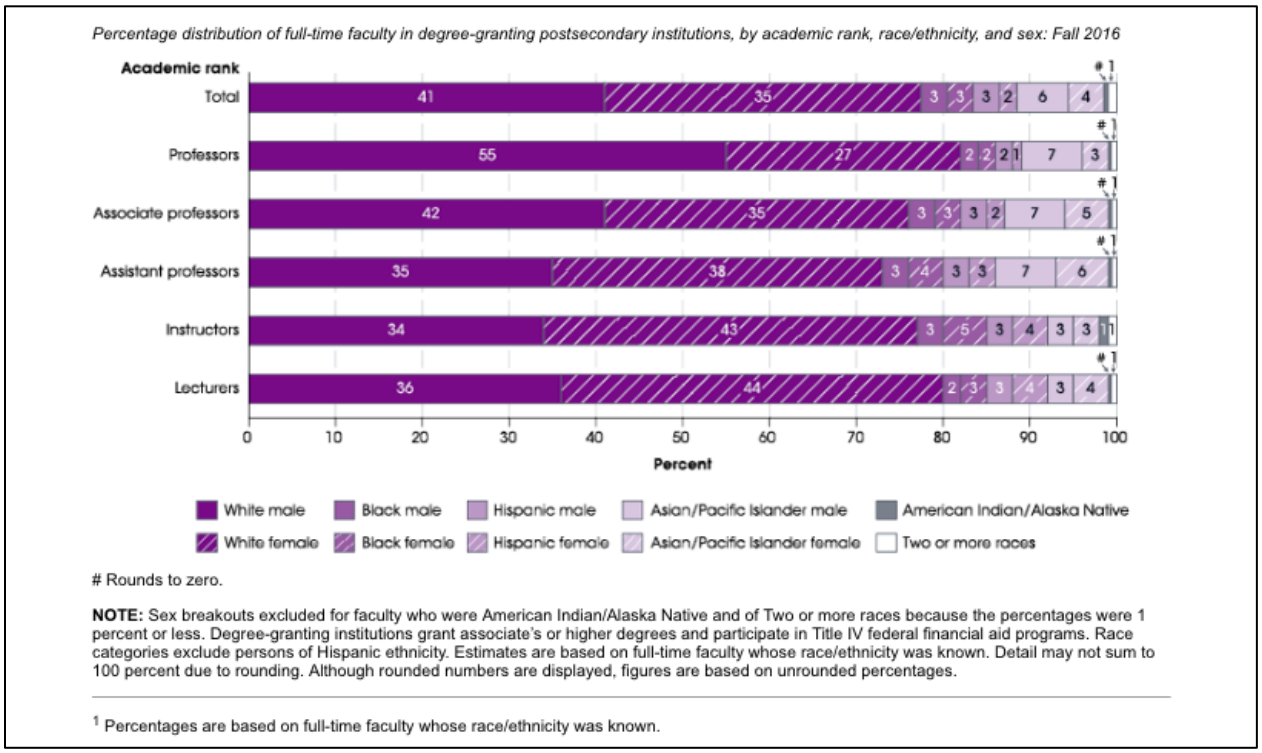

Figure 1: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2018). The Condition of Education (NCES, 2018, p. 144).

for mentoring falls mostly on White faculty, a role they may or may not be prepared to undertake.

In the next section, I will review the literature regarding cross-racial mentoring and argue that, despite the mountain of information available, the critical lens has yet to be turned towards White mentors from their student of Color mentees. Next, I define and provide examples of Collectors, Nightlights, and Allies whom I have experienced during my academic journey. In doing so, I describe the specific ways White mentoring behavior presents itself in the academy. Through autoethnography and storytelling rooted in Critical Race Theory, I ultimately hope to generate meaningful dialogue and self-reflection between and among White mentors as well as shared stories or debates among scholars of Color.

Literature Review

Because mentoring is such a challenging relationship to define, this article will not focus on defining mentoring. Kerry Ann Rockquemore (2016) correctly assesses that

> [I]f you ask 10 different faculty members what mentoring is, how it works, what it looks like, and how to tell if it's effective, you will get 10 different responses ranging from a once-a-year coffee date to a quasi-parental, lifelong relationship. (p. 1).

Instead, this article focuses on the participants and subjects of the literature on mentoring. Much of the literature regarding mentoring discusses its definitions and best practices. However, it does not completely capture how students of Color experience

their White mentors. The closest example of ascertaining a protégé of Color's experience is Reddick and Ortego Pritchett's (2015) analysis of six interviews with White faculty who were mentoring Black students. However, the reporting was the White faculty's experience of mentoring rather than the Black students' experience of them. This one-sided reporting is problematic, considering that such mentoring programs are often designed to remedy the inequality in academia by addressing the needs of underrepresented or marginalized communities. One may consider the numerous "how to be an ally" or "learning antiracism" articles and publications that advise White faculty (Bishop, 2015; Derman-Sparks, Brunson Phillips, & Hilliard III, 1997). However, those articles fail to challenge White mentors who, *despite their best intentions*, continue to other, tokenize, and fail to understand their mentees and the challenges they confront in White spaces.

Much of the literature discusses what it means to be a good mentor or mentee generally (Allen, 2007; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). While some of the literature is helpful, much of it is very much rooted in a deficit model. Similar to the "fix the woman" perspective studied within gender studies, such literature often describes these students as lacking some kinds of skills or knowledge, rather than emphasizing their strengths or focusing on structural inequalities (Hewlett, 2013; Hewlett, Peraino, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2010; Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010). For example, in his research of how students of Color interact with professors, Jack (2016) labels students at elite universities who are low-income and attended boarding, day, or prep school versus those who are poor and remaining in their communities as the "Privileged Poor" and "Doubly Disadvantaged," respectively.

Mentoring studies also imply that mentoring students of Color requires a great deal of investment in time, emotion, and resources. In a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Brad Johnson (2017), a professor of psychology at the U.S. Naval Academy, shares that mentoring "minority students and/or faculty" requires practicing cultural humility; being willing to take action to tackle racism, discrimination, and other inequities; publicly advocating or singing the praises of their scholarly work; and being familiar with the resources available on campus. By this description, mentoring students of Color sounds like a mammoth undertaking. However, such an undertaking pales in comparison to the emotional labor experienced by faculty of Color who mentor students of Color while needing mentoring themselves (Calafell, 2007; Hochschild, 1983; Katzew, 2009; Padilla, 1994).

Much of the literature on mentoring can be grouped into the following themes or purposes:

- Addresses the needs of graduate students of color generally, Black graduate students specifically (Barker, 2011, 2016; DeWalt, 2004; Patton, 2009; Smith & Davidson, 1992; Twale, Weidman, & Bethea, 2016)
- The dearth of faculty of Color contributing to lack of mentors for students of Color (DeFour & Hirsch, 1990; Ellis 2001; Felder, Stevenson, & Gasman, 2014; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009; Margolis & Romero, 1998; Patton, 2009; Patton & Harper, 2003)
- White peers/colleagues having greater access to departmental resources (Acker & Hague, 2015;

Cohen & Steele, 2002; García, 2005; McGuire & Reger, 2003)
- Students of Color lacking trust or experiencing isolation, microaggressions, tokenism, and/or stereotyping (Daniel, 2007; Johnson-Bailey, Valentine, Cervero, & Bowles, 2009; Monforti & Michelson, 2008; Ramirez, 2014; Schlemper & Monk, 2011; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000)
- Understanding, describing, or explaining how to mentor students of Color (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Griffin, Muñiz, & Smith, 2016; Johnson-Baily & Cervero, 2004)

What is demonstratively missing is the point of view of the students themselves and their experiences (good, bad, or indifferent) of White faculty mentors outside of the classroom. The closest examination of a mentoring program that reports a mentee's experience is Phelps-Ward and DeAngelo's (2016) research on a doctoral education pipeline created for Black students. They found, "When aspects of frequent contact, closeness, reciprocity, friendship, and trust are present in a relationship between a student and faculty member, the student is more likely to benefit from the psychosocial and instrumental functions of mentoring" (p. 120). While their findings are in line with the needs of students of Color, it is based on interviews of four Black mentees and their White mentors who are reporting on the reciprocal nature of the mentor/mentee relationship.

This article is intended to fill the gap that much of the mentoring scholarship is missing. How do students of Color perceive their White faculty mentors? This article centers the point of analysis from those in power to the individual most impacted by unequal power dynamics. If the goal is to recruit, retain, and advance students of Color, then it is critical to learn how they navigate White mentoring relationships within historically White spaces. This article is intended to begin a conversation that begins with the student of Color.

Methodology and Theory

To begin this conversation, I utilize an autoethnographic approach rooted in the counternarrative tradition of Critical Race Theory. Autoethnographies are "highly personalized accounts that draw upon the experience of the author for the purposes of extending sociological understanding" (Sparks, 2000, p. 21). This is an approach used to describe the experiences of gender or racial bias in the tenure process (Bailey & Helvie-Mason, 2011; Edwards, 2017; Hellsten, Martin, McIntyre, & Kinzel, 2011) and the experiences of faculty of Color at HWIs (Griffin, 2012; Miller, 2008). This methodology is based on the claim that "narratives form a structure within which to think about our daily lives and about the magic and mess of human possibilities" (Dillow, 2009, p. 1344).

Counternarratives add a dimension to autoethnography that invites the experiences of the marginalized other to speak their truth to power. Raúl Alberto Mora (2014) writes that "A counternarrative goes beyond the notion that those in relative positions of power can just tell the stories of those in the margins. Instead, these must come from the margins, from the perspectives and voices of those individuals" (p. 1). As demonstrated, the experience of students of Color of the different types of mentors in their lives has not really been captured in the literature. This is largely because the literature is written by those in relative positions of power who may not have considered asking their mentees to contribute to an article. As a

result, many people of Color have to rely on others to "tell their story." Counternarratives offer a solution for that oversight, in this case, by inviting the mentees of Color to reveal their experiences of White mentors.

Ultimately, the goal of an autoethnographic approach is to make sense of everyday experiences by connecting it to sociological principles—connecting the micro to the macro, the personal to the structural. This is what separates it from everyday storytelling or personal accounts. For the purposes of this article, my narrative inquiry is, generally, limited to my pre-graduate school experience as well as my time in Multicultural Affairs. I use this approach to minimize the risk of easily identifying my mentors and colleagues at a certain university. In the next section, I pick up on my conversation with the MMUF to define Collectors, Nightlights, and Allies and provide examples from my own experiences with various mentors in education.

Collectors

Back with the MMUF students, I began to describe/define the role of White mentors whom I called Collectors:

> There are White mentors who will "collect you." They are mentors who will want to add you to the cadre of students of Color that they have decided to help. These are the ones that will "trot" you out to events, ask you to represent the University at some panel during the admissions process, or ask you to serve on some type of diversity committee to help them figure out a solution to a problem they created for themselves.

Around the room, I saw heads beginning to nod in understanding. I continued, "Collectors are the ones that will ask you to be in photographs or public relations materials on behalf of the university. They also often limit their interactions with students of Color to 'diversity' events." Again, a room full of heads nodded in acquiescence. The other graduate students and faculty of Color added their experiences with Collectors as well. One undergraduate lamented in frustration, "Ugh! I hate it when people are like that." I urged them not to dismiss or overlook Collectors because they, I believe, are often *unintentional* in their condescension. Their value often lies in knowing the resources available within and outside of the institution. Collectors are not bad people. I shared that they are genuine in their desire to help. This desire, however, may be misguided and motivated by what has been identified as a "White savior complex" to "rescue" those who need their help (Hughey, 2014). I have also heard these progressive Whites referred to colloquially as "well-meaning White folk." It just feels like your purpose, as a student of Color, is either to assuage their White liberal guilt or publicly demonstrate their commitment to diversity, or both.

The most frequent kind of mentor I have had is Collectors. From kindergarten to law school, it was usually the teacher or administrator who thought of me for every opportunity designed to benefit a student of Color. If an organization was looking for a Latinx student, my name was usually the first, maybe only, to be put forth. Perhaps one of the strongest examples of a Collector I encountered was Karen, a White woman who administered a program that benefited Latinx students.[ii] Because of her genuine

enthusiasm and ability to speak Spanish, she was beloved by the students. Her sincerity was never in question. However, she was also the person who, in an effort to connect with students of Color, wore outfits or carried purses from the Latin American country where she had some kind of transformative experience. This particular Collector spoke of one country so frequently that the students could predict when she would say, "During my time in….". It became a running joke among the students to count how many times she uttered the phrase.

This particular Collector was notorious for inviting students to events under the guise of networking but then did not introduce them to anyone who could help them advance or establish professional relationships. What made things worse was that when she spoke about the students in the program during administrative meetings, she would refer to them as "my little Latino students," or "my name of the Latino organization" students. It was never simply "my students" or a recognition of their value by saying, "What I have learned from my students is…." While faculty often use the phrase "my students," her particular use of it seemed like a claim of ownership instead of a connection.

Collector behavior also reveals itself in the types of invitations one receives. For example, Madeline, a Collector from my time in Multicultural Affairs, would frequently invite me to cultural or diversity events but offer my White colleagues tickets to football games or even invite them over to her home for a meal and drinks. My White colleagues would unintentionally share stories of being at Madeline's house or having drinks with her at particular restaurants. Me? I got to meet whatever performer or speaker of Color happened to be invited to the campus. I became what Pat Mora (1985) calls "a handy token sliding back and forth." I was respected as a colleague, but our interactions were confined to the walls of the university.

While these examples may put Collectors in a bad light, they were usually always the ones who maintained access to valuable resources in the form of economic and social capital. In gender studies in corporations, they are called "sponsors." "Sponsors," according to Ibarra, Carter, and Silva (2010), "go beyond giving feedback and advice and use his or her influence with senior executives to advocate for their mentee" (p. 82). Similarly, Collectors were usually the ones who, when a student or I needed financial assistance or an introduction to a person of influence, would almost always come through. I have had Collectors find students internships, provide scholarships for summer study abroad, and even replace lost or stolen technology. I never knew how they accomplished these tasks, just that they did. For me, if this Collector would help me achieve an important goal, I had no problem having dinner with a Latinx candidate for this or that job on campus or a donor who was considering giving money to funds that would benefit students of Color.

The biggest challenge is when I encounter a Collector who believes, in all sincerity, that they are an Ally. It is not difficult to identify the difference between the two, but it is challenging to explain the difference without frustrating a Collector. The best way I have ever heard this type of misguided, but well-intentioned, belief described is as "benevolent racism" (Esposito & Romano, 2014; Miller, 2008). While Miller's use of this phrase was describing a genuinely racist interaction, he describes it as part of the "numerous

experiences of patronizing kindness" he has experienced as a Black man in the academy (Miller, 2008, p. 353). What makes this type of racism so insidious is the fact that it is couched in kindness or "acknowledges and often directly condemns a system of White privilege. However, it does so in a way that further legitimizes and reinforces racist attitudes, policies, and practices in the name of benevolent aims" (Esposito & Romano, 2014, p. 70).

I had a Collector who, after learning that I attended the University of Michigan, wanted to engage me in a conversation about what it was like to be the product of Affirmative Action. I had to decide at that moment whether or not to explain why her question was problematic. Could I explain that her question implied I was accepted based solely on my race and not my skills and intelligence? Did I feel safe enough to explain to her that those kinds of questions trigger the imposter syndrome in me that I have struggled with my entire academic career? Could I be that vulnerable, knowing I could become a story she would share with her colleagues whenever the issue of Affirmative Action was discussed? Could I engage in a scholarly critique/discussion about Sandra Day O'Connor's majority opinion versus Antonin Scalia's dissent in *Grutter v. Bollinger*? Was it worth offending her and losing the relationship to ask her, "I don't know. You tell me. Research shows that Affirmative Action programs benefitted White women more often than people of Color" (Crenshaw 2007; Wise, 1998). How do *you* feel as a product of Affirmative Action?" Instead, I answered, "It can be a challenge sometimes, but I remind myself that I am just as, if not more, qualified than White candidates." She responded exactly as I expected her to with a vigorous, "Of course you are!" She may have thought she was encouraging, but, to me, it felt like a patronizing pat on the head.

Nightlights

The term, Nightlight, came from a very clever student I worked with at a small, private women's college in Georgia. I shared that my father was interested in buying a car, and we were going to a dealership to browse. The student said, "Don't forget your Nightlight!" The room immediately erupted in laughter. I was not in on the joke and stood there confused. My Nightlight? The student was referring to my partner, Greg, who is a 6'1" White man. This led to a discussion that Greg, as a White man, would likely receive better treatment than my short, heavily accented Mexican American father—which, unfortunately, turned out to be true. At that moment, I thought about all of the times I asked Greg to make particular phone calls when I was either (a) concerned the recipient of the call would not respond to someone with a complicated, obviously ethnic name, or (b) I didn't feel like using my "White voice" and use the name, Marcy or Marcella. I have had colleagues scold me and tell me to *make* people say my name. Most of the time, however, I just want a refund, or a service ordered with little to no complications because, on those particular occasions, I just do not have a fight left in me. If I am never going to interact with those individuals again, why exert my energy?

Nightlights, then, are White mentors who understand the challenges inherent at HWIs and can help students of Color navigate the unknown and unforeseeable curves and twists of the academy. They, figuratively, provide light in the dark, unfamiliar places within academia. Nightlights may not relate to or understand

the experiences of students of Color, but they do recognize and acknowledge the existence of systemic racism within the academy. Nightlights help you to see around corners and briefly step in when you need assistance navigating a complicated academic journey. They use their privilege, social capital, and cultural capital to reveal the often unspoken rules that you will likely encounter during your academic life or translate the statements or situations that are laden with double meaning. They make the invisible visible and explain the unspoken. In essence, they reveal the hidden curriculum that so often eludes students of Color. One would not necessarily maintain a deep relationship with a Nightlight. Instead, their purpose is almost situational, practical—similar to an actual nightlight that illuminates dark spaces.

I can go as far back as elementary school to identify one of the first Nightlights in my life. I was one of two Latinx kids in my elementary school. My mother would make tacos wrapped in aluminum foil for my father to take to work. One day I opened my Muppets lunchbox, and, to my delight, there sat my very own aluminum-foil-wrapped deliciousness. As I peeled back the foil, my classmates began asking, "What's that smell?" "What are you eating?" These were the days before the rise in popularity of Taco Bell and the little "Yo Quiero Taco Bell" Chihuahua. To this day, I can remember feeling embarrassed, alone, and, most of all, weird. From behind I hear this delighted gasp. I turn around and it is Mr. Walsh, one of the most popular teachers in the school. He asked, "Are those tacos?" I sheepishly answered, yes. He asked, "Can I have some?" I happily answered, yes. He reached down and tore one in half, took a bite, and loudly proclaimed, "Mmmm, mmmm! I love tacos! These are sooo good!" He thanked me for sharing, winked, and walked away. Almost immediately, my classmates began asking, "Can I have some? I want some."

Looking back, I truly admire his low-key approach. He could have intervened on my behalf and tried to rescue me. He could have excoriated my classmates or turned it into a "teachable moment" about valuing difference and whatnot. He could have talked to me afterward to make sure I was okay, making me feel even more different from my classmates. Instead, he quietly approached the situation, made a connection with me, and, most importantly, used his popularity to transform my weird to cool. Maybe Mr. Walsh genuinely did like tacos and used this opportunity to steal lunch from a child. But, looking back, he carried on in such an animated fashion that I have to believe it was deliberate.

The key to this interaction was how he used his social capital as a favored teacher to help me out of an awkward situation and give me more status in my classmate's eyes. In an academic setting, this may come in many forms. I will offer four scenarios:

1. Intervening during a meeting when a person of Color becomes "the representative" for all people of Color

There have been times when I have sat in a meeting, and all eyes are on me for the "diversity" perspective, such as how to recruit more students of Color into a school or program; how to identify the needs of people of Color in the department; or to suggest what ways a department can improve the processes related to hiring, mentoring, or retention. A Nightlight could intervene and say, "We are all intelligent people here. I recommend we all conduct research on this topic and then come back and revisit the discussion. We can all stand

to learn more and not just rely on a colleague or student to do the work for us."

Sadly, I have never had anyone intervene in this way on my behalf. Could I speak up for myself? Yes, there is nothing technically stopping me. But when you consider the power dynamics of being a student, you have to weigh and balance which "hill you're willing to die on." This particular scenario happens so often you almost become immune. Once people have demonstrated to me that they are not willing to put in the work to understand the issues relevant to people of Color and leave that to those who do "race work," the effort to teach is too overwhelming. The risk is not worth the reward. There are some cups you can never fill.

2. Nominating a person of Color for a committee or task that is *not* related to race/difference

Over my educational journey, I have been asked to sit on numerous advisory boards, serve on various committees, and review books/articles where my Latinidad offers a "unique and valuable perspective." That is usually how it is framed for me, particularly when the group is dominated by White people. I never doubt the sincerity of the request, but I do often question the effort. This is not to say that I do not want to do this work. Most times, I find myself saying yes. Perhaps this is something that will change over time as I cultivate the ability to say no. I am not suggesting to never ask, I would just like to be considered for other things as well.

Once again, I cannot think of a time when I was asked by a White mentor to serve on a committee or advisory board that did not have to do with diversity work. However, I can think of many instances when women of Color have asked me to serve in ways that did not involve diversity work. I was asked to serve on a local arrangements committee for a conference in Atlanta. I relished the experience and got to meet a new colleague whose path I may have never crossed otherwise. I was also asked to serve on another committee where my legal experience/knowledge was helpful to the process. In this particular case, I was not asked because I was Latina. I do not even know if I was asked because of my legal education. In all honesty, I do not know why I was asked. It is not to say my race, gender, or class does not shape and inform my thoughts, ideas, and recommendations. However, simply being asked to do something so important outside of "diversity work" was refreshing.

3. Take a moment to read a colleague's or student's work and talk about it with them, drop a note of appreciation, or mention it in a professional setting

This is probably an area where Nightlights can really shine. As a woman of Color, I have read Weber, Marx, Goffman (not Alice), Butler, McKinnon, Bourdieu, Hochschild, and the like. I am almost certain many of my White colleagues have not read Aldon, DuBois, Cooper, Anzaldua, Collins, Crenshaw, Takaki, or Lopez. Many of my colleagues involved in race become experts twice over. For example, in social movement literature, I not only have to know McAdam, Tilly, Tarrow, Bedford, and Snow, I am also reading Aldon, Bell, Craig, Torres, and Omatsu in order to carve out a place for my research. I truly believe this is why so many sections in the American Sociological Association struggle with recruiting people of Color. You may not know our work, but we know yours. An environmental sociologist, for example, can

spend an entire career never engaging questions of race. An environmental sociologist who uses a raced lens, on the other hand, has learned both kinds of literature.

I have had moments when I am simply talking about my research, and someone will take a genuine interest and pepper me with questions, recommend articles, etc. I have also had people tell me that they were at a conference and mentioned my research. One individual told me, "You made me look really smart the other day! We were discussing school desegregation, and I got to give them new information about cases in your research. Here was a room full of experts, and they learned something new." He was essentially bragging about me. He shared it with me, not because he was trying to show his support. He was sharing it because he enjoyed introducing something new. The best is when a colleague emails me or comes and talks to me about an article I authored. Felder, Stevenson, and Gasman (2014) who studied doctoral graduates found that "most students found support from faculty members of *all racial and ethnic backgrounds* helpful when they were supportive of their racial identity, research interests, and progress towards degree completion" (p. 38, *emphasis mine*).

The imposter syndrome is so terribly strong, particularly for a first-generation individual where every interaction feels like a new one. These brief moments of affirmation are helpful, particularly when they come from seasoned scholars or people within your own department. This is not about being affirmed by someone who is White. It is about being recognized as an equal, valuable member of the organization, group, or department. This is why I call these Nightlight moments. It's a temporary, helpful illumination in an otherwise obscure place.

4. Take a moment to learn about a situation before making conclusions

To provide an example for this recommendation, I share another "Nightlight" moment in elementary school when I was recommended for speech therapy. Apparently, my "Y's" were sounding more like "J's" and my "Ch" sounded like "Sh." So Instead of yellow, I would say, "Jellow." Instead of cheese, I would say, "Sheese." During my first session, the speech therapist asked me to say "yellow," emphasizing the Y. "Yellow. Y— Y— Y—Yellow." I replied, "Yellow." She took me through a few other Y-words, and, sure enough, I could easily pronounce them. She did the same with the "Ch" and "Sh" sound. Once again, I could say "ships" and "chips" clearly and knew one was a boat and the other a snack. In an amazing act of simplicity, she asked what no other teacher or administrator thought to ask me, "Why do you say 'sheese' and 'jellow'?" I said, "That's how my mom pronounces it." I was simply imitating the sounds I heard at home living with parents who possessed heavy accents. We did meet a few more times as she taught me the difference between school and home language without saying one was right and the other wrong. She would simply say, "Your teachers don't know your family." I remember going home and trying to teach my mother the same thing. To this day, she still says, "jellow."

That particular interaction demonstrates how Nightlights do not take things as they seem. They "shed light" by simply asking questions, gathering more information, and recognizing that perhaps I am not the problem. In this particular case, I was not the "problematic" student with a speech

impediment. I was a very bright student with a Spanish-speaking mother who was trying to learn English. In the academy, it translates to learning more about a student's circumstances, training, background, responsibilities, etc. As sociologists, we should know that there have to be other explanations besides individual ones.

I struggled with passive voice for years and felt foolish for not being able to identify it in my writing. A Nightlight who recognized my insecurity assured me that many people struggle with passive voice. She observed that I write as though I am speaking or giving a speech and asked me why. At that moment, I realized that it was because my parents could not read and revise my papers in school. Their primary language was Spanish, and they possessed a second- and eighth-grade education, respectively. I had no clue they could not read my papers. Instead, they would ask me to read it to them. These opportunities gave me tremendous confidence because they would applaud at the end of my "presentation." Each writing became rooted in drama and colorful language to get a visible reaction from my parents. I have no doubt that that experience is why I am a confident public speaker. I was not a bad writer. I just needed to learn a few simple rules about writing that I was never taught. Ever since then, I share the same lesson on passive voice with my undergraduates just in case they were not taught as well.

Allies

There is, of course, the third category, and those are Allies. Allies are by far the most aware of the experiences of students of Color, usually, because they can make meaningful connections to their own experiences without asserting equality (e.g., first-generation status, working or blue-collar class background, childhood in communities where they were the minority, or having other marginalized identities such as gender, LGBTQI+, or living with a disability). Allies are most likely to, for example, invite their mentees to conferences and take the time to introduce them to important individuals in the field beyond simple introductions. They are also most likely to co-author with their graduate students to help them gain greater standing in the already competitive world of academia. When you examine the syllabus of an ally, it is filled with scholars that affirm the varied experiences of students of Color and demonstrates an effort to "decolonize" their syllabus (DeChavez, 2018) or engage in the recent movement of #CiteBlackWomen started by Dr. Christen Smith, an anthropologist at University of Texas at Austin. In a phrase, Allies have "done the work" it takes to develop an appreciation and admiration for the experiences of students of Color, and this work informs their mentoring relationships.

Allies, for me, were the easiest to identify during my academic career. I culled three examples from my life, each different in their approach but similar in their impact. The first was Penelope Sanchez. Penelope was a White woman who worked in a bilingual education program in my high school and was actively involved in the Latinx community of Battle Creek. I would regularly see her at baptisms, Quinciñeras, weddings, and funerals. Like Karen, the Collector, she spoke Spanish, but her use of it was so different. Karen seems to show off her bilingual skills and would sometimes even correct Latino students, whereas Penelope used it because sometimes English just cannot capture the sentiment. It was more than a language she acquired; it became the language of her soul. Members of the Latinx community would often

describe her as "not Mexicana in blood but Mexicana by heart."

I would go to Penelope's office when I was struggling with microaggressions, and she would just sit and listen and understand. She did not make a big show of her own outrage but focused on understanding me and preparing me for the microaggressions yet to come. She never coddled me, and I always felt respected because she would remind me of my strong character and that I come from a long line of strong women. As a Latina in high school, I needed affirmations and validation, not indignation and representation. She never tried to "rescue" me. She helped me rescue myself because she knew I could do it.

I was not a decoration in her life like a piece of furniture, a set of earrings, or a handbag that affirmed her connection to Latinidad. I was an integral part of her life. Her advocacy and love for justice were like breathing. She made it look easy—even though I knew it wasn't. I did not have to "perform Whiteness" for Penelope. I never felt exhausted after meeting with her because she found me so "fascinating." I never felt as though I was her own personal cultural teacher translating my beautifully complex world and experience into manageable, easy-to-swallow bites for her.

Penelope also fed my hungry educational soul that longed for any kind of reminder of me, my culture, and my history. She gave me a well-worn copy of Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez's epic poem called, "Yo Soy Joaquin/I am Joaquin." I devoured all 122 pages of that book—even the photographic credits. I memorized it. I even used it in public speaking competitions. It contained photographs of people who looked like my family members. It was written by someone who looked like my *tios and tias* (uncles and aunts). Every page fed the fire of Chicana pride coursing through my soul. When she gave it to me, she simply said, "This made me think of you." I didn't know it at the time, but the book was no longer in print. That was her one treasured copy, and she gave it to me. To this day, I purchase whatever copies I can afford and share them with my own students.

I believe her ability to connect with me came from her own blue-collar background. She knew what it was like to feel strange in "wealthy" places. She battled the ignorance of people who looked down on her interracial/bicultural marriage. Because she had daughters whose skin signaled that they were biracial, she understood the challenge of raising someone with pride when the world tells you that you should be ashamed. Even though she had all this "inside" knowledge, she never treated it as an open invitation into my Chicana world. She always waited for an invitation, never assumed she would be welcomed, and was humbled when she was invited into our world.

I met another ally and dear friend in Stephen when I served as director of multicultural affairs at a southern institution. He was the director of the LGBT Center and, understandably, wary of the new member of the community. The office I inherited was not necessarily connected with the LGBT Center despite it being just down the hall. I liked him immediately because he would speak so beautifully about his students, and the Center was always buzzing with voices and laughter. He knew what it was like to have to create a space where people who are choked by ignorance could come and just breathe.

He became my ally after an argument/misunderstanding having to do

with the copy machine. His office used my "code" to make copies, and I asked if we could be reimbursed after a particularly large job. His office did not have a code because the university worked very hard to assure state representatives that public money was not being used to fund the LGBT Center. He complained to my boss and her boss about my "bill." Fortunately, my boss told me and asked me to settle the affair before it grew into a bigger problem. I learned very quickly about the politics of paper that arise among those with limited resources.

I asked him to come meet me in my office, where we had an intense but real conversation. I had explained to him that we were both on the same side but that he put me in a challenging position because instead of being able to subsume the Center's activities undermine, he now put a spotlight on it. I explained that I only asked to be reimbursed because it took a big chunk of my budget. He thought I would be billing him monthly, taking resources that he had otherwise planned for his students. He thought I was using the opportunity to establish a clear separation between my office and his, sending a message that my issues with racism took precedence over his battle with homophobia. I understood his position, and he understood mine. We were able to come up with a compromise that was mutually beneficial. After that, we were friends. He never doubted my motives, and I never questioned his.

After that misunderstanding, he became my biggest advocate whenever we were in all White spaces. He understood the privileges that came with being a White male and that those privileges weren't erased because of his identity as a gay, married man. It was nice to sit in meetings with him because I was not the one who always had to point out racially and culturally offensive suggestions. When he did so, he did not don a cape and come to my rescue. He was doing it because it was the right thing to do. The best thing about his advocacy is he never advertised it. No one except the people in those meetings knew what he had done on my behalf and on behalf of the students of Color I represented.

My interaction with Stephen represents two more aspects of an ally: (a) the ability to have and recover from disagreements and (b) understanding when and how to use their privilege in spaces where another's voice was not or would not be heard. Disagreements are part of every relationship. Collectors are devastated when confronted with their bias, implicit or otherwise. I almost hesitate to point out a Collector's problematic words or behaviors because I know they will respond as if their whole world has just collapsed. DiAngelo (2018) describes this response as "White fragility." What is worse is that they will expect me to help them feel better about themselves and affirm their imagined place in my world. An Ally, on the other hand, apologizes, uses the experience for self-reflection, and then puts in the work to self-educate. The onus for growth is on them, not me. An Ally also knows when to push back and when to support, when to question and when to validate. The most important aspect of a relationship with a mentor who is an Ally is trust. They have earned a student of Color's trust with their consistency and humility.

An Ally is different. I'm thinking of the Collector who wanted to know "what it was like to be a product of Affirmative Action." First, an Ally would have already taken the time to learn as much as possible about Affirmative Action in higher education and not relied on me to give them a fascinating story to share with other White colleagues.

Second, if they wanted to talk about Affirmative Action, they would want to engage in a scholarly discussion that drew upon my expertise. As an example, I was recently on the job market and fortunate to interview with several phenomenal institutions and in a position where I turned down three more campus invitations. I was overwhelmed and humbled by the attention. As my colleagues heard of my good news, I was told by one of them, "I heard about your luck! Good for you. Of course, you can't be surprised that you were going to get lots of invitations. I mean, you're Hispanic, right?" Though I loathe to admit it, his response did trigger the imposter syndrome in me that questioned if I was a statistic in interviewers' minds representing proof that they had "tried" to hire a faculty member of Color.

Knowing that I could not go into another interview with those doubts, I shared the experience with an Ally, and she said with all the sarcasm I had grown to love, "Oh yeah sure! It has nothing to do with the fact that you have a f**king JD and PhD, are published more than he is, have a fascinating research project that you worked you're a** off to complete, and were awarded a Mellon Fellowship to teach at one of the most prestigious colleges in the country (referring to Morehouse College). Yeah, sure, it's because you're Hispanic." Her default was not to affirm my qualifications with the patronizing kindness of, "Oh, you know that's not true, right? You're fantastic!" Instead, knowing me so well, she was able to criticize his shallow, limited ignorance while reminding me of my intelligence and accomplishments.

This interaction is affirmed in the literature. In a 2008 study of faculty-student links and college persistence, Cress (2008) "found that students who feel that faculty treat them with respect, give them honest feedback about their ability, challenge them intellectually and give them emotional support are less likely to perceive negative campus climate or prejudice" (p. 104). Collette Taylor (2013) shares that in her experience as a Black woman in academia,

> I have found my support by looking outside of my institution with former mentors, writing colleagues, friends, and family. With them, I do not have to be *faculty while black*. In this space, there is a natural understanding and acceptance of the complexity of my identity and the expectation to be the best. The nonjudgmental and unconditional support that these individuals offer is not about what type of faculty member I am expected to be. It is framed around the faculty members that I already am, and they push me to be better than my best. (Jones, Taylor, & Coward, p. 8).

This is an example of moving away from "deficit model thinking." Taylor is describing an experience where her credentials, intelligence, and contributions are already assumed to exist. She does not have to be taught to be amazing. She just needs to learn where, when, and how to direct that energy.

If I am making it seem difficult to become an Ally, I am. It should be difficult because it involves doing "the work." It requires a White person to excavate parts of themselves that have received the wrong messages and replace them with new experiences and learning. It requires pursuing education from multiple sources

and not just waiting for a person of Color to be an easily accessible teacher. It requires acknowledging that people of Color possess a different kind of cultural capital rooted in resilience, hard work, innovation, determination, and the ability to negotiate multiple realities simultaneously. Becoming my Ally requires an individual to work as hard as I have to interpret, understand, and maneuver within an overwhelmingly and exhausting White world. As Tressie McMillan Cottom (2016) once wrote, "I know my whites." The question becomes how well you, White mentors, know us.

Conclusion

It is critical to understand that these are not static categories with clear lines and definitions. I am still refining my own understanding of these groups. The fact of the matter is, as with any category defined in the social sciences, the lines between these groups can be blurry. Furthermore, one person's Nightlight could be another's Ally and vice versa. All Allies are also Nightlights, but not all Nightlights are necessarily Allies. The easiest to identify, however, is the Collectors since they are, by far, the most common type of White mentor a student of Color will encounter throughout their academic and professional career. Also, if you are a well-meaning White mentor, please do not use this article to ask your students/colleagues of Color, whether you are a Collector, Nightlight, or Ally. As I have discussed these concepts with my fellow scholars of Color, most agree that if one has to ask which category of mentor applies to them, they are most likely a Collector.

These reflections are not meant to deride the genuine efforts of White mentors. There are some White mentors who believe that they have a professional, moral, and ethical obligation to provide mentoring. However, until mentoring becomes part of faculty role statements and employment contracts, White faculty in the academy are under no obligation to mentor marginalized or under-represented students—particularly if they cannot do it well. I hope this will spark conversation, debate, and even self-reflection. I also understand that being labeled, categorized, studied, and discussed amongst students of Color may cause offense or feel disturbing. To that, I can only share, "Welcome to my world." As evidenced in the literature review, many people of Color know what it feels like to be a problem to identify or a puzzle to solve. If colleges and universities are ostensibly interested in recruiting a diverse and representative student population, yet fail to provide meaningful mentoring, they will only replicate and reinforce an already well-established racialized hierarchy.

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[ii] I thank my colleague Dr. Selina Gallo-Cruz for suggesting this third category.

Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

Being Global Means More Than Traveling Around the Globe … So, What Does It Mean?

Corinne Brion
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Abstract

Being global means more than traveling around the globe. Being global means having a culturally proficient mindset. Having a culturally proficient mindset involves celebrating and advocating for diversity and being willing to face our own conscious and unconscious biases while also accepting the fact that some of us are born privileged. I know I was born in and with privileges. I accept that I have biases because of cultural and familial values and beliefs.

This reflection is a product of teaching a course for future school leaders on diversity in schools, my own educational and leadership journey, and my passion and desire to help create socially just educational systems and societies.

Keywords: cultural proficiency, diversity, equity, bias, privilege, education

Corinne Brion is an assistant professor at the University of Dayton. She earned her PhD in educational leadership at the University of San Diego. The overall framework for her research is equity. Her research interests include investigating the process of learning transfer among adult learners so as to understand what enhances and hinders the transfer of knowledge in different contexts. She is also interested in women's and girls' empowerment in African countries. She has presented her research at the Comparative and International Education Society Conference (CIES), the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Her work has also appeared in the *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Educational Research for Policy and Practice,* and *Frontiers in Education*.

Globalization is defined as the way countries and people of the world interact and integrate. In education, we often hear or see mission statements that would say something to this effect "The mission of [institution] is to educate global citizens who…" But are we truly educating global citizens?

To me, being global means more than traveling the globe and/or superficially interacting with others from varied cultures. I believe that being global is to know and accept ourselves first and to genuinely accept and advocate for everyone else regardless of their place of residence, race, gender, age, abilities, socioeconomic status, religion, and other social identities. To get better acquainted with ourselves, we must spend time identifying our biases and work on managing them in order to create authentic relationships with people of diverse cultures (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009; Samuels, 2018; Singleton, 2015). It is essential to recognize our biases because biases trigger emotions, and our emotions initiate our actions. Authors such as Samuels (2018) and Singleton (2015) offer a variety of ways in which one can work on their biases. Please do not stop here and say, "I do not have biases!" If you are alive, you have biases whether you are conscious of them or not and whether you are willing to admit you have them or not.

When teaching the class Leadership in Diverse Communities, I have engaged students in talking about racism, microaggressions, as well as the concepts of whiteness and white privilege. These principles allowed for rich conversations and the realization that we are not born equal, and that from the start, the system has not been set up equally. Not being aware of these realities is perpetuating inequalities. These are challenging conversations to have with anybody, let alone people whom you do not know well. But these conversations are crucial. As educators, we must model them and "walk the talk" if we are to serve all students, staff, and faculty/teachers.

As I reflected upon my biases after I took the Harvard Implicit Bias Test (https://implicit.harvard.edu/), I realized some of the biases I had prior to my first trip to Ghana years ago. I remember wondering why local people moved slowly about their day. I remember being impatient, confused, and frustrated with them. But, I soon realized that the locals were merely saving their energy, because they did not know what and when they might eat next. Moving slowly was a way to last longer while selling in the streets under the unbearable heat. Moving slowly helped the locals walk miles daily to fetch water or to go to school. Since then, I have been fortunate to work in five countries in anglophone and francophone Africa, namely Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. The countries and people that I once considered "poor" based on my exposure to media and the fact that I had never been in the field with locals, I now consider them rich. They are rich in love, faith, amazingly resilient, giving, and community-oriented. Spending a large amount of time in these five countries has been the best part of my life, and the African continent has become my adopted home.

I also had the privilege of taking graduate students to Sri Lanka. We lived in a village with local families and helped them build a community center. We did not speak the language, yet we ate, interacted, and understood the locals. I witnessed students being judgmental at first, criticizing the locals body language to being deeply touched by their kindness, hospitality, and community spirit. I witnessed students being

transformed just as I had been transformed the day I first set foot in Ghana.

Being from France, I am generally well accepted in the world, because when people hear me speak, they associate me with great food, wines, and beautiful scenery. I had encountered, however, a few unpleasant experiences—particularly when the socioeconomic climate between the United States and France was tense when France opposed going to war against Iraq, for example. At that time, the House of Representatives cafeterias stopped serving French fries. They served "freedom fries" instead. It is also at that time that a few people made fun of me and my native country, calling me "freedom fries."

I also lived through some hostile moments when I was the principal of a school and had to make controversial decisions to serve the interests of the children. Angry parents ridiculed my accent and told me to go back home to France because I was not from the area. Although I will never claim that these experiences are comparable to what other people go through, they hurt me. Being the victim of biases *always* hurts. A few years ago, when I met my husband in Ghana and announced to relatives that we would get married that summer, very few people were supportive of my decision. Rather, friends and family, without knowing him, would warn me that the only thing my future husband wanted was a visa in order to get out of his country (my husband loves his country and his family). I was hurt and amused by these biases: hurt that people would not trust my judgment and amused by the fact that love is not black or white—it just is. Love and understanding can overturn educational, language, economic, race, and cultural differences. Unchallenged biases cause pain to others.

From my local and global lived experiences, I would like to share a few reflections for your consideration: How you view people is based on the prejudices you hold due to education, media exposure, beliefs, and norms that you have adopted consciously or not. So, change your lens! Be curious and adventurous, be courageous, be open to learning, and vulnerable to challenge your biases.

For those of us in education: Get to know and confront your biases so that you can better work with your students, parents, teachers, and staff. Be an advocate for differences. Plan field trips to serve in a neighborhood, short trips to understand another North American culture, and I urge you to consider global trips so that students can start their journey towards becoming true global citizens. One Kenyan colleague shared with me that *safari* means "journey" in Swahili, the lingua franca of eastern Africa. Being culturally proficient and becoming a global citizen is a safari. Like a safari, it requires patience. Understanding ourselves takes time. Unpacking our biases is a journey, but it is an essential one to embark on to create socially just societies, peace, and justice.

Ubuntu means "I am because we are."

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Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

Privilege

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Abstract

This essay is a discussion of the author's identity crisis which rose primarily from the recognizing of their economic privilege. It grapples with the idea that one's personality could be entirely different depending on whether we recognize our privilege. Lastly, it asserts that once we are able to recognize our privilege, we must do better with it.

Keywords: economic privilege, minimalist lifestyle, recognizing entitlement, identity crisis

Nimmi Mathews has lived in Chicago, Mumbai, and Bangalore, before moving to Florida to pursue a dual degree in Behavioral Neuroscience and Biology at Nova Southeastern University. She has a keen interest in the medical sciences, but also in philosophy, political science and law. As a daughter of immigrants, she always invests in recognizing her parents' struggles as well as her privilege. She views herself as a minimalist, but a recent examination of the origins of her lifestyle resulted in a conversation about whether her economic modesty is entirely innate.

One of the foremost debates in psychology is whether human behavior is a product of genes or the environment. Can behavior be attributed solely to our genetic disposition? Or does one's environment or situational factors also dictate behavior? These questions surrounded the recent identity crisis I experienced in my first week at the university. It severely affected my view of my lifestyle and habits, as well as my own personality. I was born a millennium baby in the year 2000, in Chicago, Illinois. In July 2005, my family moved back to India, and that is where I spent the next 13 years of my life. Irrespective of the country I was living in, I was raised in quite an economically modest fashion. I wasn't starved of anything I wanted, but I also learned about compromise and saving, which knowledge has stuck with me throughout my life. Eventually, I came to reject excessive resource consumption and was content with a simple, minimalist lifestyle. Through years of self-reflection, I concluded that, although mostly the result of my upbringing, this contentment was, in some part, innate.

About a week ago, I was spending some "downtime" with my suitemates after a long day of classes. The four of us were sitting on Annabelle's maroon futon with pepperoni pizza crusts and garlic bread laid out in front of us. We were discussing the possibility of spending the weekend at the Blue Spring State Park in Fort Lauderdale to swim with the manatees that visit the park during the winter. I was suddenly struck with the idea that we should visit my house on Fort Myers Beach after the midterms, and my suggestion was received very well. As we frantically searched for our midterm schedules to pick a suitable date, Annabelle said in passing, "It's so cool that you have a 'summer' house!"

Deja vu suddenly overcame me. I was transported back to the year 2016, to my high school in Bangalore, India. I was sitting in my math teacher's small, cramped office where we had our usual lectures since we were only six students taking that class. My friend Priyansha was laughing, her dimpled cheeks bobbing up and down, as she told Sir Deepak, our teacher, about how I had a house in Florida. He was already aware of the fact that my dad lived in a house in Chicago, but this was new information to him. He raised an eyebrow and said, "So you have a summer house? Like the Hamptons?" Although he was obviously pulling my leg, I felt my face flush. I thought to myself, "I'm not a celebrity. They're the ones that own houses in the Hamptons!"

Back to the night, I was spending with my suitemates: After I retired to my room at nearly midnight, I lay in bed with Annabelle's words ringing in my ears. I decided to count the number of houses my family-owned. After several seconds of silence, I realized the answer was seven—seven houses for a family of three children: four in Chicago, two in Florida, and one back home in India. I was suddenly plunged into a set of extremely confusing questions. Was this what the average American possessed? Or was I just never made aware of the actual volume of wealth my parents had as two practicing physicians in the United States? Was being completely oblivious to this somehow a contributor to my personality?

This confusion got progressively worse as I was made more aware of how wrong I was. Certain aspects of everyday conversations were so unfamiliar to me. A friend mentioned how she had put aside time to research the possibility of student loans for college. Knowing I had an educational

fund, I did not ever need to worry. Essentially, the program allows parents to put away some amount of money that can only be used for their children's education, or if unused, rolled over to their grandchildren. Since my parents invested in stocks, the value of the funds appreciated rapidly over time. My suitemate mentioned that had she not received a full-ride scholarship, she would not have been able to afford Nova. This thought had never even crossed my mind. Although during my senior year I searched and applied for merit-based scholarships, it was never a necessity, but rather my attempt to alleviate the burden on my parents, even if that burden is minimal compared to many other families. While Nova's undergraduate tuition is about $30 thousand per year, give or take, a university like Columbia's is a whopping $53 thousand per year. Even when I had considered applying to Columbia University, my parents merely said that it was a "tad bit expensive." When I didn't get into a school in Mumbai that offered the International Baccalaureate curriculum, my parents moved all the way to Bangalore so I could attend the second school on my list. Someone else mentioned how they shared their car with their parents. Four out of five members of my family have a car no older than a 2014 Acura model. Another friend remarked that I was "boujee" because I preferred to go grocery shopping at Whole Foods rather than Walmart.

I began to remember certain instances from my past that reinforced this disparity. While my mum, my siblings, and I lived in India, my dad stayed behind in Chicago to work. Every other month or so, he would fly in to see us. He could afford to take a "vacation" every other month. While this certainly involves covering the cost of plane tickets, it also means that my father was obviously not working paycheck to paycheck the way many individuals in the United States do to support their families, or he did not have to compromise in other areas to be able to visit us halfway across the world. In contrast, I recently read in a book called *Always Eat Left Handed* (2013) that the author, Rohit Bhargava, had to forgo the option of buying a new car to take a vacation with his family.

Fortunately, this privilege was never abused. For as long as I could remember, my siblings and I had actively tried to pay for the things we wanted. This summer, I watched my sister juggle spending mornings attending a physics class and nights writing essays for merit-based scholarships because she wanted to pay to go to Thailand and Laos with an organization known as Growth International Volunteer Excursions (GIVE) for community service. The cost of attendance itself was $3,000, flight tickets not included. I never wanted my parents to pay my entire undergraduate tuition since I was aware that they'd pay for a major chunk of medical school tuition, which on average, amounts to about $50 thousand a year. Having received scholarships from Nova, I now focus my energy on maintaining my GPA for the next four years. I spend days debating whether I should join the Army to pay for medical school. I wonder if I had been fully aware of my parents' wealth, would it be any different? Would I be placing the financial burden of college and graduate school entirely on my parents, knowing full well that they could pay for it?

My identity crisis took root in this confusion and bloomed. Was this aspect of my personality—being economically resourceful and minimalist—because I was completely out of touch with my family's financial standing? Had I been raised differently, would I be an entirely different person? Someone I disliked? Would she

have the same personal values, goals, and ambitions as I? Here's where the psychology debate can be addressed. There's something about being a psychology student: We can't stop diagnosing ourselves! I was forced to ask myself if what I had assumed was innate was a result of my environment, and if that had varied, would I have? It made me wonder if my assumption about being innately economically modest was entirely wrong.

These questions are still very much unresolved and have made me start to ponder over a variety of everyday actions. I think about whether the students who have perfect grades and are from a lower-income background are far more deserving of the merit-based scholarships that I received. I also question if the $150 I spent to watch The Weeknd, an R&B artist, in concert would have been of better use in buying toys to donate to a children's hospital. In fact, my identity crisis has somehow already spread into my future as well. I now wonder if I should ask my suitemates to pay me back for the cab that we share when we go out, or if I should pay for the majority of the common items in our bathroom.

If there's one thing I've learned from this identity crisis it's that I don't always recognize the privilege I have. Although there is currently no solution to my confusion, I'm choosing to consciously make the decision to accept that this is the personality I have, and will continue to have, and there's nothing I could possibly do to change it. This is what I would like readers to take away from this as well: Once you recognize your privilege, do better with it. I refuse to allow my economic advantage to control how hard I work to get into graduate school, to get a job, to get a promotion, or to be successful. Instead, this is driven by my innate desire to make something of myself, and I will never be ashamed of that.

Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

Teacher Activism in the Age of Trump: A Year in a Suburban High School

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Abstract

What follows is the story of a year working for social justice in a suburban high school, the year Trump was elected. It was a tumultuous year, but the challenges of teacher activism in any given year are similar. This piece reflects on the different demands and manifestations of teacher activism and explores the nature of what it means to daily identify as a teacher-activist. Names have been changed, including that of the author. The school depicted is in an upper-class, predominantly White community in New England. A small minority of students of Color attend, mostly through School Choice programs. At the time of this writing, there were no teachers of Color. This piece is part of a larger work in progress, *Teaching to Kill a Mockingbird*: *A Social Justice Lens for the 21st Century*.

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The author is using a pseudonym because she fears repercussions from the school district for writing publicly about social justice.

When Obama was elected, Donald, one of our students of Color, came into school the following morning, skipping through the hallways, shouting, "Obama won! He won!" Our first Black president's face smiled out from his T-shirt. Instantly, his joy was countered by racism. "That's because he cheated," another student said. "He should go back to Africa where he belongs." Donald shouted back in response; there was some shoving, a scuffle before the two were separated. I remember the desperate look on his face when he later told me what happened, the two of us alone in my classroom.

"What would Obama have done in that situation?" I asked, unsure of what to say to help Donald manage his feelings, but knowing we now had the ultimate role model to look up to. An administrator was waiting outside my door, ready to take Donald down to the office for a consequence after we finished talking. Racism clearly still loomed in our building, but it felt like things were finally going to change.

This year, when Trump won, I felt like crying. We had an assembly for Veteran's Day just after the election, and I had to leave the auditorium when students started chanting "Trump, Trump," as though at a baseball game. The speaker on stage, in military uniform, had been chastising people who took a knee during the national anthem to protest racial violence. Overnight, the political landscape had changed, and so had our school. On the eve of Obama's election, several White men in town set a Black church on fire just down the street. Barely anyone talked about it, only the Black kids. Others said, "Is that really what happened? I'm not so sure." But months later there it was, in the back pages of the local newspaper: "FBI confirms church burning was an act of racism." Only the Black kids knew what was happening; no one else wanted to admit it. The specter of racism that had been swept under the rug so many years ago seemed now to have emerged full force.

Write-ups for derogatory language surged after the Trump election. So much so that administrators called a meeting with students from the Gay-Straight Alliance and the students of Color club. "We wanted to check-in," they said, "and let you know we won't tolerate this behavior." But the rest of the school—the perpetrators—didn't get the same message or any message. It got so bad that our principal asked for a committee to step up and plan a schoolwide advisory lesson on empathy, to address the "uptick" in discriminatory behavior. That was how the year started—on the bittersweet note that, although people were getting more blatant with their biases, at least we would finally address what had been happening all along. I thought it was my big chance to step up and help out. It was, and I did, but it backfired. The adults in the community just weren't ready. Thankfully, some of the students were.

Since I started teaching the required text, *To Kill a Mockingbird,* to my freshmen 15 years ago, Harper Lee's call to action was something I took seriously. After I was called a "nigger-lover" in January of my first year (presumably because I have a biracial daughter), I formed a club for students of Color, and that was where I delved into issues of race. I supported the students that joined, helped foster a community among them, and found outlets for their voices to be heard. We wrote editorials to the school paper, celebrated Black History Month by highlighting the accomplishments of African Americans, took field trips to museums and performances that featured Black artists, and

once hosted a hip-hop night with local talent—that was the best. But after running the Black Culture Club for 12 years, I was ready to make a larger impact on my school community.

I knew what some of the problems were (implicit bias, microaggressions, lack of diversity among staff, and school policies and practices that discriminated against and marginalized students of Color) and wanted to address them with colleagues. I'd been very involved in my daughter's school community at home and saw how activism worked to change school culture. In the college town where we live, numerous groups keep watch on the district's record in terms of diversity—from the hiring and retention of teachers of Color to unequal rates of discipline, to whether the curriculum is inclusive, social justice-oriented, and multicultural. I'd joined a group called the Equity Task Force and helped start a Restorative Justice program at the high school. I was an activist now at home, so how could I stand by while my school repeated cycles of exclusion and abuse towards students of Color?

The kids in the Black Culture Club shared numerous stories with me over the years. For instance, a hall monitor followed them around while White kids passed by unnoticed. One time, teachers harassed them outside the gym after school, told them to disperse while ignoring the mob of White athletes in team uniforms, making just as much noise. A racist bus driver disparaged them each morning and one of the adults told them they were "ridiculous" when they suggested the Black church was burned down on election night because of racism. They shared the microaggressions they encountered each day: "Sorry I bumped into you—are you going to beat me up now?" "Can you fill out this map of Africa for me?" "Why are all Black people good at basketball?"

During one lesson in class, while discussing stereotypes in the context of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a White boy asked, "If they [Black people] are so concerned with stereotypes, why do they always act like one?" The one Black girl in class, who'd barely spoken all semester, gasped and shook her head. I knew I had to address his comment but wasn't sure where to begin. Fumbling through a series of questions designed to help him see his blind spot, I think we got somewhere—I'm never sure. But my own emotion acted as an obstacle; my stomach tightened every time a comment like that was made, and I knew I needed to get a handle on my reactions if I was going to be effective at educating my students.

But the problem was bigger than I. We needed help as a school. If this kind of tension existed in my room, it likely existed everywhere. And if I, the one person I knew who was actively engaged in antiracism, was having such a hard time with it, what on earth was happening in other classes? As in most schools, students of Color were under-represented in our advanced classes and over-represented in our discipline system. Just around the time, I was hoping to spread my wings and try to implement some action that would help address our school climate, and then Trump was elected. This was both good and bad. Good because my administrators were forced to take measures to counter emboldened students who now freely expressed intolerance. Bad because some community members began scrutinizing the school for its "liberal" stance and pushed back hard when we took steps to address our problems.

The first step my principal, Sean, took was to hire an outside trainer to address

implicit bias. I met with him on several occasions to point out problems. Once to share an essay by a student of Color about the negative assumptions his teachers and peers made about him, and another time with a low-income student who was disturbed by disparaging comments and teacher attitudes towards working-class kids. In some incidents, we reviewed policies that I felt targeted low-income students and students of Color, such as the tardy policy that hit School Choice kids the hardest and the lunch policy that denied food to kids whose parents couldn't pay. (Coming from less privileged districts, Choice kids often have more structural barriers to getting to school on time: They are not provided a bus; their parents often work multiple jobs, sometimes at night; and many have to look after siblings.) These discussions never went well. Sean usually dismissed or argued against most of my points, citing a "lack of data," and seeming offended that I would suggest our "perfect" school had problems. But of all the things I said, he latched onto one phrase, "implicit bias." He'd likely heard it before, in a workshop or article—which goes to show that repetition matters. He said he'd be willing to do some professional development for staff on implicit bias. I suggested a trainer I knew, and he contacted her.

Several months later, I sat amidst our faculty in the auditorium for the training. One moment stands out: I am physically unable to sit still. My heart is pounding, and I'm taking deep breaths to calm myself, constantly shifting in my seat. I get up and go to the back of the auditorium, where I stand and spread my arms across the railing behind me. It feels good to stand. I catch my breath and the eye of the presenter, Saffire, an ally from a group we both belonged to several years ago, The Alliance of White Anti-racists. Saffire has her doctorate in social justice education now and is used to giving presentations like this one, but maybe not to the severity of the pushback she's getting. I know she understands my pain and frustration with what my colleagues are saying.

Since the start of her workshop, several people have criticized her presentation, questioning the bias in the advertisements she's put up on slides; one person even called her analysis "ridiculous." Then a few male teachers began laughing at Saffire's co-presenter, a young, gender non-conforming Latinx. If this is how our adults act, I thought, is there any hope for our students? Before my real discomfort set in, Safire showed a study by Harvard that tracked the eye movement of elementary school teachers and found that they anticipated more behavior problems from students of Color. People scoffed at this and began trying to disprove the data.

But the comment that finally propelled me out of my seat was made by a special educator and football coach, a large, lumbering man with salt-and-pepper hair, usually kind. He said,

> My son is Black. My wife and I adopted him. If he were here, he would say this is ridiculous. He would say this is the type of stuff that drives us farther apart, causes more problems than fixes them.

Now, standing at the back of the room, I've caught my breath and had a chance to think about what he said. Perhaps he does not know the damage a comment like that can cause. Perhaps he believes that ignoring the subject, denying implicit bias, is the best way to preserve our community and help us all get along. Saffire said that bias is often subconscious, so maybe he just doesn't know that, even when we adopt Black

children, we've all been brought up with assumptions about race. It is these assumptions that result in different expectations and outcomes for students. I need to help him understand this, or at least push back against his effort to silence the conversation before he succeeds.

I'm ready to speak. Saffire sees and calls on me when I raise my hand. As I make my way back to my chair where I remain standing, I address my colleagues saying,

> I have a Black child, too, and it makes me more aware of my racism. I can relate to the Harvard study. When I first began teaching, I was intimidated by students of Color. I had to work on my own bias. Instead of criticizing what the presenters are saying, can we at least consider the possibility that what they're saying is true? What if there is implicit bias in these images? What if there is implicit bias in our school? What if we have implicit bias, and it impacts our relationships with students? If that's true, then what does that mean? What do we have to do about it?

I sit down, and Saffire proceeds. Minutes later, I'm still shaking, and it takes several deep breaths before I can calm down. Sometimes, this is what teacher activism feels like.

Part of my little speech was inspired by *The Color of Fear*, a film used for teaching about racism in which a group of men has a conversation about race. Throughout the discussion, a couple of Black men keep trying to explain to a White man how they experience racism on a day-to-day basis, and he keeps on doubting the reality of their experience. Finally, one of the Black men gets so frustrated he nearly jumps out of his chair, and the facilitator asks the White man, "What if what they are saying is true? What would that mean?" and he finally breaks down, accepts the possibility of their truth, and can have some conversation without spending his energy trying to disprove what they're saying. I hadn't planned to use words from that movie; they just came out—which shows that the more you read and absorb discussions around this work, the more tools you have to come to your aid when you need them.

Part two of the implicit bias workshop, a few weeks later, was more toned down. Instead of targeting race, the presenters began with gender. They showed a slide of two different bathroom signs found in the same school. One said, "Men's Faculty Restroom," and the other said, "Women's Teacher Bathroom." There was not so much pushback this time. They reviewed implicit bias, then broke us into three groups, each with a different trainer. In separate rooms, we read a series of one-page articles about how to create a positive, culturally responsive classroom. We traveled from table to table in small groups to read and discuss the different articles, considering how to apply the strategies offered to our classes.

I ended up in a group with another English teacher, a school psychologist, a science teacher, and a gym teacher. I recognized the gym teacher as someone who'd given the presenters a hard time in the last training, shaking his head and texting and making comments under his breath. We barely met eyes, but I tried to see this as an opportunity to understand his viewpoint, and for him to hear mine. As we discussed the readings, he and the science teacher kept attempting to discard the questions we were asked, rush through the readings, and talk about unrelated topics. But the psychologist, the other English

teacher, and I took our time reading and talking seriously about the practices described. The others eventually just stayed silent. Sometimes teacher activism is simply engaging when there is pressure to disengage.

When we got to the last table, the superintendent was sitting there—a small, cheerful man in a bowtie. He'd planted himself at that table, discussing with the teachers who rotated there and listening in on their conversations. New to the district, he was from a blue-collar city an hour away, a more diverse but also potentially more conservative community. I wondered what he thought of the training if he was behind it or not.

The moment from the training that stands out best is this next one: After the last reading, which is about transgender students, the gym teacher, Karl, presents a question to the superintendent. "Why do some kids have to be uncomfortable, and others don't?"

Karl is standing, having refused to sit for the last three rotations, and looks agitated. As he speaks, his face reddens, and he crosses his arms tightly, as if holding something in. He relates a scenario that happened recently, where a transgender male student wanted to change in the locker room of his preferred gender, and a cisgender student complained that it made him uncomfortable. The school supported the transgender student (Go Sean!), and Karl seems very upset by this.

I nod my head as I listen, not to validate his point, but to understand his feelings. I can see that he's angry, even sense that he's hurt somewhere as if this situation has opened an old wound. I've learned that it's important to acknowledge people's feelings, even when you disagree with them. In a way, I'm glad Karl's getting a chance to have a voice. He's been mostly quiet for the last hour or so. But it's equally important then to share my thoughts and feelings on the issue, challenge him to see outside himself, which I'm calculating how to do when the superintendent jumps in: "Let me ask you guys a question. Parents keep calling, I've gotten about a dozen phone calls this year, saying that our schools only serve the White athletes. Is that true?"

Simultaneously, Karl answers "no," and I answer "yes."

The statement is extreme, but I'm thrilled to be asked the question and have a chance to discuss race and privilege, especially with the superintendent. But the science teacher, a young woman, who is now scowling, speaks up, "That's just the outside perception."

"But these are parents," I say, "with kids *inside* the school."

Just then, the presenter calls for the room's attention and announces that our time is up. The superintendent leaves, the conversation ends, and our training is over.

Sean did take another step to address school climate by following through on his call for a schoolwide advisory lesson on empathy. He'd made this announcement early in the year, right after part two of the implicit bias training. It was the same professional development day; actually, our group that had formed in the fall was ready to present our lesson to the faculty—probably not the best timing.

At our first meeting, the advisor to the Gay-Straight Alliance club, also a guidance counselor, had shown up, along with a

different school psychologist, a new assistant principal from the Bronx, and one student, a White girl on the student council. No other teachers came, and no people of Color. We shared ideas and decided to use the Anti-Defamation League website to search for lessons on empathy, as well as gather materials from other resources to address microaggressions and derogatory language. We also talked about doing a privilege walk, made popular on YouTube. I decided to search for more diversity and more students. I knew we had to be intentional if we wanted real representation.

Before the next meeting, I invited Yvonne, a new Spanish teacher who was Latina, and two Black kids I'd had in class, both of whom had been vocal about issues of equity and social justice. I found an ADL lesson on discriminatory language, contacted my daughter's school and borrowed their advisory lesson on microaggressions, and got a copy of the prompts read during a privilege walk. With input from all three students, we were able to narrow down the advisory lesson to just the privilege walk and activity on microaggressions. We went through the list of microaggressions offered for discussion, and the students added more relevant examples: "You talk like a White girl" "You don't look like you're actually a boy" (to a transgender girl). Yvonne was also able to add some about being Latina: "Do you eat tacos for dinner?"

The lesson asked kids to take some of these comments and consider the intent behind them, which was often good, the possible negative way they could be interpreted, and then think of another way to say what the person meant without being hurtful. It also went over the cumulative psychological effects of microaggressions, which are daunting.

We decided to test out the lesson on my Creative Writing class, a heterogeneous mix of grades and levels. The kids were great, even though they snickered a little at some of the microaggressions, and one student, a White boy, commented that "people were being too sensitive." I'd anticipated this and replied, "Not if you hear these things multiple times a day." I referred to the list of psychological effects, which included depression and even suicide. The message seemed to take hold when a senior boy of Color shared that a store clerk once asked him if he were sure he could afford all the groceries he'd brought to check out. I'd experienced something similar shopping with my daughter, when a store clerk looked at her, then asked if I was paying with food stamps. I shared this, and we discussed the assumptions behind these remarks, how they may not have been intended to do harm but still did. There's really no way to argue with stories and people's honest feelings about them, so creating space for that type of sharing to happen is a good goal.

When we lined up to do the privilege walk, the room became silent. I read the prompts ("If you live in a household with two parents, take a step forward." "If your ancestors were brought here by force, take a step back.") and as they separated, students looked around to see where they were in relation to others. In the end, I made sure to read the statement Yvonne had prepared:

> If you are near the front, you don't need to feel guilty about it but realize that you have a responsibility to use your privilege to help others. If you are near the back, know that you may have more obstacles to overcome, but it will build your resiliency and strength.

Students said the activity fostered empathy and made them realize the

situations other people were in, as well as where they had privileges. "It was uncomfortable being at the back," said a female African American student, "but it was a valuable exercise." The lesson felt like a success—so when we did it with the whole school, what went wrong?

At the faculty meeting just after the second implicit bias training, our committee stood in front of the auditorium and shared our steps for teaching the advisory. (Sean was conspicuously absent, as he had been during the implicit bias training—administrators send clear messages by their very presence or absence.) We warned teachers of potential potholes—like the comment, "Everyone's being too sensitive"—and gave them choices for how to modify the lesson if it wasn't working. We'd decided to break the lesson in two because we'd run out of time in the trial run. Finally, we did a privilege walk with the whole faculty in the gym. But somehow, the lesson, once executed, caused a maelstrom in the community.

The day after we did the first advisory, the privilege walk, as a school, Sean, the superintendent, and even the guidance counselors started receiving phone calls. Parents were furious. "They were upset that their kids were singled out at the back of the line, at the front of the line being told they had privilege, and everything in between," Sean told me later. Some were upset because their teachers had *not* done the activity, and some because they had done it poorly, and not taken it seriously, but most simply objected to its content. The second part of the advisory, the lesson on microaggressions, was canceled. Instead, one of our assistant principals wrote up a lesson on the power of words, and students contributed to a schoolwide word wall of kind things to say. This skimmed the surface and did not delve into the discriminatory nature of the comments that students were using towards each other, the ones that Sean had wanted to address. It sidestepped the real issues, which was disappointing and even dangerous, as it taught kids to do the same.

The school committee got involved, publicly denouncing the lesson, and community members attacked the Anti-Defamation League, which Sean had cited when asked where the lesson had come from (even though we hadn't used ADL resources). I sent him a quick email to ask which parents were upset, "those whose kids were in the back, or those in front who had to confront their privilege?" After answering, he snapped, "If forcing kids to confront their privilege was the point of the lesson, it should never have been done."

I did not respond to Sean's email, as I understood he was under fire from several directions, but I realized something from our exchange. If I was going to impact school climate, I was going to have to bump up against Sean and push his comfort zone. My success hinged, in part, on my ability to engage him. This role was outside my comfort zone; I generally avoid authority and do my own thing. Now I knew I was going to have to get used to interpersonal conflict. To leverage my privilege, I have to use my position to serve as a voice for marginalized students, who don't have access to Sean's ear like I do. I have to get uncomfortable for their sake.

Meanwhile, other things were happening in the building that provided opportunities to effect change. For one thing, the superintendent announced that he was considering cutting School Choice, the program that brought most of the diversity to our district, to accommodate a merger

with the middle school. With so many kids, the building would be at capacity, and we needed to reduce the numbers. Everything was just conjecture, he said, but I've learned over the years that "possibilities" are usually realities, announced as "possibilities" to soften the blow. I knew we had to do something. I approached colleagues whom I knew would be concerned and decided to write a letter. I penned it, and a few others made adjustments before we showed it to Sean (who signed it) and sent it to the superintendent. We argued for the inclusion of multiple perspectives in our classes, the need for diversity in our school, and the great loss it would be to let go of the Choice program.

This action felt good; my colleagues and I had taken a stand. Many of the teachers in the building signed the letter, which felt like a win. However, the football coach with the adopted son, with whom I'd experienced tension all year, sent a response to two of the male colleagues I'd worked with, saying, "Good job, guys!"

They fired back: "Although Aaron can sometimes be a boy's name, we're pretty sure Aaron Byrum identifies as female." I was glad they stuck up for me, but it burned that the coach had tried to discredit me. I'd written most of the letter, come up with the idea, and he'd intentionally left me out of the congratulations. Was it an attempt to cut me down to size? Backlash for taking a stand against racism is real. I've had to live with not being liked or considered "one of the gang." I avoided the coach and continued to reach out to colleagues I trusted.

Finding allies is essential if you are going to be in this work for the long term. Yvonne turned into a friend, one I could go to when I was upset. We commiserated when our second advisory lesson was cut and many times after that, helping each other keep resolve. The assistant principal from the Bronx, Reggie, also turned out to be an important ally. Although he left at the end of that year (he was "not a good fit"), we got to know each other well. He gave me insight into how the school operated on an administrative level, confirming what I already knew: "Keeping order is the top priority, not trying new things."

Reggie left, and so did Yvonne, who got bumped by another teacher. I was sad but determined to keep moving and make new allies. One way I did that was by attending social justice events outside of my school. It helps to have a community of like-minded people to support you, remind you of your goals, and reinforce your commitment. One such person was Safire, who'd done our implicit bias training. She organized a local conference called Transforming Education for Social Justice and reached out to me to lead an affinity group for "White Folks for Racial Justice." Before we broke into groups, the keynote speaker, Jamila Lyiscott, blew me away. A professor at Columbia who specializes in racial justice and hip-hop, she performed a spoken word piece about speaking three different dialects of English, and her process of finding validation for all of them. Then she spoke about social justice education and asked us to visualize a positive outcome for the work we were doing. "Don't focus on injustice only," she said. "Imagine what a just world looks like." She asked us to write down our vision. Here's what I wrote that day:

> *People of Color in my school, parents, and kids, band together and have a voice. Teachers know how to support SOC in class, are educated and doing their own personal work to address implicit*

bias. Students are used to multiple perspectives in the classroom, have regular conversations about diversity, the history of supremacy, and social justice. Examples of activism are given, and students engage in service projects. Sean commits to educating the larger population about bias, microaggressions, and diversity. We hire more staff of Color, address the roots of derogatory language, and have more faculty training, which he attends and enforces. We hire more consultants, have more advisories, and our school begins to change its culture. The culture becomes one where all voices matter, all students feel welcome, and everyone is committed to equity and feels confident to address difficult issues when they come up.

This is a dream I won't give up on.

The school year ended as it had started, with small victories amid catastrophe. We had a guest speaker in the English department, from an organization I'd suggested the year before. I've learned that every little conversation counts when it comes to working for social justice. Asked to think up guest artists at an English department meeting one day, I'd intentionally suggested an organization with a diverse staff and multicultural focus. In a school with almost no racial or ethnic diversity among its teachers, we have to be creative in finding ways to reach all students. The company I'd suggested sent us Gary, a gay, African American actor from Baltimore. No one could have been more different from our students culturally, or more a breath of fresh air. Gary bellowed during class, cracking jokes and laughing out loud at them, and danced around the room, getting kids out of their seats and their comfort zones. He made them laugh, connected with them and helped them connect with each other.

Gary's role was to facilitate a final project for our American literature classes, a creative version of their "American story," told in podcasts, performance, or some other artistic medium. He worked with three English teachers, including me, and visited classes for several weeks. The kids were warming up to him when disaster struck, again in the form of community blowback. He showed Childish Gambino's video *This Is America*, to offer another version of an "American story." Before showing it, he said,

> I am a Black man. My story is going to sound different from yours, but that's ok. All stories are important and valid. This particular story is the one I can relate to, but that doesn't mean you have to.

The video features a Black man (Donald Glover) dancing and singing while violent and distracting things are going on around him. Rife with commentary on the state of America, the video hones in on gun violence against Black people in particular, and twice Glover shoots people—once a fellow musician, and once a church choir in the middle of a song (some say this is a reference to the church massacre by Dylann Roof). Other images include cops on horses chasing down Black people and cars burning as if referring to mass protests against police brutality. Tame compared to what kids see every day on television and social media, the violence in the video was cited as the reason for the outrage that followed. But my colleagues and I sensed something else at

play.

Here was a Black man, the only Black man in our school, in the classroom, teaching content created by another Black man, which offered a critical lens on the system of white supremacy. My colleagues and I show a lot of violent videos, such as modern versions of Shakespeare, Holocaust films, not to mention videos about slavery. None are met with the kind of pushback that Gary and his video received. Parents called the superintendent, the principal, the school board, even the theater company to complain. We were forced to issue an apology letter, and each of us had to attend a meeting with Sean. "Certainly a different resource could have been used to make the same point," he said.

I noticed a change in Gary after that. He was disheartened, engaged less, and was more reserved in class. "I had a version of my own American story I was going to show," he told me. "But not anymore. I don't feel safe here." He sent an email to all of us involved in the project: "I feel I've had to swallow my voice to make others more comfortable."

"If that's how a grown Black man feels here," I said to my colleagues, "imagine how it feels for a student."

This kind of climate, these kinds of battles, reflect what is going on in the country as a whole. There's an attempt to curtail movements towards social justice, to silence marginalized voices, particularly when they encroach on the sovereignty of white supremacy. This climate is playing out in the White House, in racially motivated mass shootings, in courts of law, on our streets, and in our schools. It's no wonder that curriculum that challenges the status quo, especially in predominantly White communities, is under fire. We are in a period of regression, where forward momentum and change are meeting roadblocks that weren't there before.

The good news is that an increasingly oppressive climate brings people forward to take a stand who may not have otherwise, and produces an equal amount of resolve on the part of those it attempts to oppress. For every attack that tries to squelch a voice for progress, that voice gets stronger. I want to finish with a few examples of students who stood up in the face of a hostile climate this year and inspired me to do the same.

The first is Isaiah, a School Choice student. Isaiah was repeating junior-level English. He'd been struggling academically and socially since coming to our school; he was even expelled sophomore year. By the time he got to me, he was becoming vocal about the discrimination he'd faced over the past few years and wrote several pieces about it. One time he told me that as a student of Color from a low-income community, he felt like a "burden" on our school. Soft-spoken and sweet, I found it hard to believe the stories other teachers told about him, how he'd "told them off" and stormed out of class. Since I never saw this side of him, I can only imagine that his teachers must have done something to really upset him. Sometimes, repeatedly failing a student who wants to do well is all it takes.

The first thing Isaiah did to fight back against the negative perception others had of him was to write an open letter. I'd assigned a personal essay on identity, and he used the opportunity to confront the issues he'd been faced with while at our school. He candidly addressed the community and certain individuals about how he'd been treated with discrimination. Unfortunately, before he even finished drafting it, one of his other

teachers found a copy and shared it with some of the people he'd addressed. They were angry, and they took the letter to Sean, who asked Isaiah to sit down for a meeting. He declined. His graduation was a few weeks away, and he didn't want to try to "work it out" anymore, he said. But his message got across. The teachers' defensive response, unfortunately, made him give up on working on the essay.

For his final American story, Isaiah created a project to share in front of his peers about being "Blackorican." He wrote an essay explaining what this term meant to him and described the pride he felt in his heritage but also the discrimination he'd faced because of it. For the visual portion, he put together a slideshow of family photos, showing him as an infant up until high school, with traditional Puerto Rican music playing in the background. "I want kids to see I was just a baby," he said, "just a kid, like them, and how can you be racist to a baby, someone who comes from the same place as you?"

Isaiah's will to educate people in the face of discrimination shows his courage and his generosity. Through his letter and his project, he gave us the gift of holding up a mirror. Because of Isaiah, I was able to reflect on my involvement in school disciplinary issues. As teachers, we are often given the message to mind our own business when it comes to disciplinary action taken by others, especially administrators. But when we sense there may be an injustice happening, teachers need to break that code. One day I saw Isaiah in the hallway, looking upset. He was heading, he said, to meet the assistant principal.

"What happened?" I asked.

"They're accusing me of putting pot in my brownies." He explained that he'd brought brownies in for the class, and another student had joked that Isaiah put marijuana in them. Isaiah just laughed, but the teacher took this to mean it was true, so she called the principal.

Knowing Isaiah's history with the school, how he'd been suspended, I didn't want to leave him on his own. I could tell he needed an ally, someone who believed him. So I stood in the hallway when the assistant principal came to meet him. The two of them stepped inside an empty classroom to talk, and I waited outside the door. I felt pressure to walk away, leave the situation to the administrator, but I also felt a responsibility to make sure Isaiah was ok. I stayed, and when the two of them came out, I checked in with him, "Is everything ok?"

The administrator gave me a skeptical look, but I finished my conversation with Isaiah before moving on. That time, Isaiah was believed, and the incident blew over, but I'd made up my mind not to give in to the pressure to turn a blind eye. If I felt a student wasn't being treated fairly by a colleague, no matter who it was, I was going to see it through. It can be a tricky line to walk, but if you have the students' best interest in mind, you're only doing your job.

The identity essay assignment that Isaiah used to tell his story turned out to be a catalyst for reflection for some White students as well. Two White girls chose to write about their race—something White students are not often asked to do. We read Zora Neale Hurston's *How It Feels to Be Colored Me,* and I shared a piece of my own about discovering the meaning of my whiteness. For some students, this opened their minds to an exploration of their own White identity and privilege.

One girl was Nicki, a popular athlete whose family lived in town and owned property in the city next door, a more diverse and less privileged community. In her essay, she examined incidents in which she'd felt aware of her whiteness, such as one time when she went with her father to collect rent and played outside with some Black girls. A black girl made the comment, "Do you go to Starbucks every day?" This revealed her assumption about White people, and she considered the causes of these assumptions. As I had with Isaiah, I acted as coach and cheerleader, applauding her for taking on the subject, and challenging her to go deeper: How do their assumptions about you compare to your assumptions about them?

One of my favorite moments from that class was when Nicki and Isaiah sat at a table together and had a long conversation about each other's essays, both listening intently to the other.

Another student who stepped up this year was Bella, a biracial junior in the School Choice program. She'd been vocal all semester about issues of race, identity, and diversity, especially in our school. For her argument essay, she chose to write a letter to our superintendent, asking him to keep the School Choice program. She researched the positive impact a diverse student body has on *all* students, and shared anecdotes about being treated with fear and suspicion by her peers, and held to lower academic standards by her teachers, because of her skin color. With more, not less, diversity, she argued, people can understand and appreciate differences, unlearn stereotypes, and adjust to an increasingly multicultural society.

Bella helped me realize that kids want to and can fight their own battles. If we can give them the tools, such as a relevant writing assignment, a strong foundation in skills, and a chance to reach an authentic audience, they will make change happen. I don't know the impact of Bella's letter, and still don't know if we are keeping School Choice or not, but her devotion to the assignment showed me that teacher activism also means empowering students to take matters into their own hands. Any time our curriculum gives students tools to advocate for themselves, we are promoting equity.

Finally, one student gave me hope for the future by deciding to do an independent study with me next year. Karla and I had lots of conversations in class about the issues troubling our school; she was one of the girls who had worked on the advisory lesson with us and saw it all blow up. Typically, shy, Karla had taken to staying after class or coming in early to talk with me about all that was going on. Instead of internalizing negative images about herself as she had in the past, she said, she was finally accepting herself for who she was, and was ready to tackle racism (and other *-isms*) head-on. For her final American story, she made a digital magazine with articles and ads countering negative stereotypes of Black women, telling the truth about Black hair, and sharing her story of learning to love herself. I think we were both sad about the prospect of not being together for her senior year.

One day, after getting excited about all the books I wanted her to read over the summer, I said, "You know, you should do an independent study. Then we can keep talking about this stuff!" She completed the paperwork, and next year she will research microaggressions, how they affect marginalized kids, and what schools are doing to address them and improve school climate. Her final product will be a presentation to the faculty.

I can already imagine that day, Karla standing and talking in front of an auditorium of teachers, me sitting somewhere nearby, filled with joy, pride, and the peace that comes with moving towards justice. Sometimes, this is what teacher activism feels like.

Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

Ferguson Teacher of the Year 2016: Colonizing the Classroom

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Abstract

In the aftermath of Michael Brown's murder in Ferguson, Missouri, the author deconstructs the Ferguson-Florissant School District's response to the community in crisis and the policies enacted through a colonizer-colonized lens, coupled with ramifications resulting in a cultural mismatch in education and law enforcement. This article reviews the teacher-student dynamics resulting from the 2018–19 Ferguson Teacher of the Year award for Lindsay Williams, a fourth-grade teacher who decided that her students should make care packages for the police in Ferguson four short years after the uprising from which the community is still healing.

Keywords: culturally responsive pedagogy, socially just education, colonization, trauma informed practice, Michael Brown Ferguson

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Nearly four years after police officer Darren Wilson fatally shot Michael Brown in the center of Canfield Drive in Ferguson, Missouri, the Ferguson-Florissant School District awarded Lindsay Williams, a fourth-grade teacher at Lee Hamilton Elementary School, Teacher of the Year. Williams was highlighted that year for her collaborative work project with Thrivent Financial, a ministry of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. Williams used volunteers from Crossings Church to create a "Lee Hamilton Cares for Law Enforcement" project. Accessing the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) buddies, Williams connected her fourth graders to second graders in making care packages for police officers. Each student personalized their bag with a picture or message, filled it with goodies, and placed a thank you note in the bag. An April 15, 2018, Ferguson-Florissant District Facebook post noted, "Williams is hoping to have some officers come to the school to receive their bags and meet the students (otherwise bags will be taken to the officers)."

Invisible, forgotten, or otherwise disregarded by Ms. Williams, are the facts of Brown's death. Under suspicion of robbery, Brown was approached by Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson. A physical struggle ensued between Brown and Wilson, Wilson fatally shot Brown six times, and two of the shots landed in his head. Brown's friend, Dorian Johnson, who accompanied him that day, testified that Brown's hands were in the air to prove he was unarmed–hence, the protest rally cry of "hands up, don't shoot." Brown was left in the street outside Canfield Apartments for four hours as the community began to gather. Residents of Ferguson, adult and child, watched as Brown bled out while police stood around his body marking evidence, supporting Officer Wilson, and taking notes. Michael Brown was 18 years old. This event ignited protests and civil unrest in the town of Ferguson, Missouri (Buchanan et al., 2015). Missouri's governor, Jay Nixon, enacted a curfew for residents and called in law enforcement from St. Louis County, surrounding municipalities, and the state troopers. Eventually, he brought in the National Guard. Nixon received heavy criticism for his insensitive and militarized response to the civil unrest in Ferguson.

Personal Connection

As an administrator for the Ferguson-Florissant School District, I observed the faculty and staff leaving work early when the National Guard deployment was announced and refusing to return to work until the "rioting" had ceased. Predominately White female teachers called, texted, and emailed me, expressing fear to come to work or even to leave the school at the end of the day. I even received requests for police to escort them to their cars, implying that the citizens of Ferguson would attack any White person seen in their community. Being a Latina school administrator, who passes for White (if my name is unknown), I had no fear for my safety. I observed residents and families in pain at yet another death of a friend at the hands of police. I did not feel or observe any hostilities towards non–law enforcement White people within the school community or in the town of Ferguson.

Ferguson-Florissant School District leadership demonstrated this perceived lack of innocence in children and lack of compassion in the choices they made in handling the aftermath of Brown's murder. The Sunday after Brown was killed, the interim superintendent, Larry Larrew, called in all administrators for a special meeting.

Mr. Larrew is a White male administrator who was promoted to interim superintendent from a principal position while the school board was completing the search for a new district leader. Mr. Larrew gave specific instructions that no faculty or principals were to discuss the incident at school, whether with parents or students. If we were approached by the press, we were instructed to ignore them or say "no comment." We were assured that any violation of these instructions would result in our immediate dismissal. The overwhelming feeling in the room was, "Michael Brown deserved what he got and the 'Blacks' are mad, so don't make it worse." The idea that the volatile situation was somehow the fault of the community and that ignoring it would make it all just go away was archaic and indicative of an administration that did not know the cultural history of the community in which they served, nor did they care to. Essentially, educators were now being policed under zero-tolerance policies, and by proxy, so were students. The implementation of zero tolerance policies takes incidents of child development to a criminal level. These offenses create a hierarchy of power and control from administrators to educators to students, similar to what exists at the community level from law enforcement to civilians. Administrators and law enforcement took on the role of policing and controlling children under a punitive model instead of a child development model.

> Under neo-liberal education reform, policy makers and the general public have privileged Black educational attainment and zero tolerance surveillance over and above Black children's happiness and creative exploration of themselves and their social worlds. In short, Black boys and girls are imagined not as real children but as suspect Black bodies for whom the broader public need have little compassion or connection. (Dumas & Nelson, 2016, p. 34)

Putting a zero-tolerance muzzle on the community in an attempt to de-escalate the situation quickly backfired. As the town residents continued to protest and the governor announced the arrival of the National Guard, we received an email in the middle of the day announcing that school would close for the week.

During the week that school was cancelled, administrators, community leaders, volunteers, and church members held school in churches. As administrators, we were expected to work within the community. I handed out lunches to families and held structured activities like kickball, basketball, and social spaces. When the National Guard left and school resumed, the students organized a walk out. As school leaders, we worked with police to ensure that the students were safe during their walk out and march from one high school to the next. Surprisingly, the school provided buses for students to bring them back to their home schools after the march. It appeared that the Board of Education and law enforcement agreed that stopping the march might upset the community further, leading to more protests.

On November 24, 2014, St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCulloch announced that the grand jury had decided against indicting Officer Wilson for Brown's murder. On March 4, 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice concluded its own investigation, stating that Officer Wilson had not violated any civil rights during the shooting. The Department of Justice (DOJ) found that the witnesses that corroborated Officer Wilson's account were credible, while the witness for Michael

Brown was discredited. The DOJ believed that the forensic evidence supported Officer Wilson's account of the incident, and they determined that Officer Wilson acted in his own self-defense. Civil unrest began again in Ferguson, prolonging a sense of vulnerability and chaos in the community (Buchanan et al., 2015).

The experience of these events wreaked havoc on a community already marginalized and impoverished from gentrification, police harassment and brutality, a failing school system, and chronic crime. Trying to hold school in an oppressed community infiltrated by the National Guard was an experience like no other, an experience misunderstood by the masses, and an experience entrenched in anti-blackness.

Blue Lives, White Lives, Not Black Lives

In terms of "Blue lives" and "White lives," Williams's project is laudable; in terms of Black lives, Williams's project is damaging. The community still holds great mistrust for law enforcement and is still trying to recover from the emotional, economic, and legislative injustices surrounding Brown's death, which is memorialized annually on the day of his death with protests and vigils alike. A step toward that recovery came in August 2018, when Robert (Bob) McCullough, the St. Louis County prosecutor who held office for more than two decades, was removed in the county's primary and replaced by a young Black male named Wesley Bell. The entire St. Louis County came out to vote McCullough out of his office primarily because of his defense of law enforcement in Brown's murder and other countless acts of police brutality in these communities.

Needless to say, the entire community, including school-age children, is still healing, and delicacy and sensitivity ought to be employed at every level. Yet projects like Ms. Williams's, which lack awareness of the community in which she serves, are being highlighted and awarded. Not only is her project problematic in demonstrating egregious ignorance, it also is emblematic of the lack of cultural knowledge of her teaching community and classroom and her lack of empathy and understanding of the social injustices that face her students, their families, and the community. The recognition and applause of the school district leadership demonstrates a complacency and conformity to the oppressive systems that trivializes the death of a young Black man at the hands of a White officer. This is an extension of the "do not discuss this incident with students or the press or you are fired" rhetoric we heard four years ago. It is a continuation of the mindset that these children are less innocent or more deserving of this injustice, that a lack of empathy for them is appropriate, and that gratitude towards officers is the true path to healing the community. Although the district school board did choose a new superintendent, the thought process prevailed over racism and systemic injustice. The new superintendent, Joseph Davis, is a Black male, educated at Harvard and from the South, and he awarded this young White teacher for her insensitivity, lack of empathy, and ignorance of the community in which she teaches. In this, he demonstrated the side of the oppressor and colonizer. He, too, lacks the vision of these students as innocent children in need of empathy and compassion. A study done at Yale Child Study Center on implicit bias demonstrates that Black males are seen as less innocent and at least four years older than their White male counterparts (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti, & Shic, 2016). This study demonstrates that in the perspective of White people, their implicit bias towards

Black children holds them as more culpable, less innocent, and older than they truly are. This incident is a perfect demonstration of this study's findings.

There is no doubt that Ms. Williams is a White female who does not live in the Ferguson community but drives in to work each day. Her husband, partner, significant other, or family members may be in law enforcement in St. Louis County or the neighboring municipalities. Her behavior is directly linked to colonizer mentality and oppression of students who are marginalized, and it is very much part of the footing in how schools maintain anti-blackness. It plays into

> the long history of Black struggle for educational opportunity, which is to say a struggle against what has always been (and continues to be) a struggle against specific anti-black ideologies, discourses, representations, (mal)distribution of material resources, and physical and psychic assaults on Black bodies in school. (Dumas, 2015, p. 6)

Not only did Williams not understand the context of her community, she lacked the understanding of the history of Black struggle for education, the history of whiteness, and its colonization of Black spaces. By requiring her young students to cater to, console, and show gratitude to an institution that has harmed their people and community historically, her actions went beyond her own lack of understanding and became a direct hit on her students. She represented the anti-Black ideologies of law enforcement in a classroom space meant to be safe for learning. Her project was hailed as an opportunity for healing. That healing was for law enforcement. Where is the healing for the children, their families, and their community? The belief that White female teachers' role is as benign protectors of children in need is ingrained in our history. White women have been teachers in an evolving system that is dependent on its colonial past and continuing colonizing mindset. Marginalized students taught by White women reflect a relationship dependent on and constructed by ideologies of racial superiority. This relationship reflects a historical relationship that is represented even more today as students of Color increase and White female teachers increase in our public schools (Leonardo & Boas, 2013).

Cultural Mismatch in Public Schools

In 2014, Ferguson-Florissant School demographics demonstrated that of the 11,599 students enrolled, 79.9% of students were Black and 13.0% of students were White. No other racial or ethnic classifications held statistical significance. Staff demographics at the time showed 86% of the teaching staff as White and 80% of the administration staff as White (DESE, 2014). The dominance of whiteness is evident in the knowledge, values, experiences, and ways of being polarized in society and in educational settings, including (but not limited to) schools and teacher education programs. In the specific case of the United States, the sociocultural factor of race has played a primary role in categorically supporting inequitable social power dynamics (Brown, 2014). The issue of race plays itself in precarious ways during times of social unrest caused by incidents of oppression. When examining the demographics of K–12 teachers in public schools, data show they are typically female, middle class, White, and monolingual (Howard, 2010). In 1988, 87% of teachers in Grades 1 through 12 were White, and in 2012, this figure dropped to 81%. Principals

are also overwhelmingly of the White race, at 80% in 2012 (US Department of Education, 2016). Although the racial diversity among teachers and principals is increasing, this is happening at an insufficient pace to match the increasing diversity of K–12 students; while our students are becoming more diverse at a rate of 8%, our teachers are only becoming more diverse at a rate of 4%, and principals at a rate of 3% (US Department of Education, 2016).

The socioeconomic status of the Ferguson-Florissant community is working poor. The Ferguson-Florissant School District offers free breakfast and lunch for all students without the need to meet an economic standard of poverty. Most families in this community are working multiple jobs while unable to meet the basic needs of housing and nourishment. Employment is typically in blue-collar trade jobs, part-time service jobs, and full-time service industry positions, such as home health aides, nurses' assistants, and housecleaning services. Very few families own homes in this community, and most properties are government-subsidized rentals. There is a clear distinction from middle-class, homeowner subdivisions that are mostly White, single parents, or elderly residents. The majority of Black families are single parent (with one parent incarcerated, sometimes not within the same geographic location), grandparents raising grandchildren, foster homes, and shelters. Students have complicated family structures impacted by mass incarceration, gentrification, poverty, and environmental racism.

An unfortunate and harmful outcome of cultural mismatch in schools is the promulgation of cultural insensitivity undergirded by a history of myths, lies, stock stories, and other rhetorical anecdotes told by White people to maintain their privilege and the unequal existence of people of Color in the United States. Continuing a tradition of "racial folklore" (Brown and Brown, 2015; Fredrickson, 1988, p. 4), White people currently use a construct of racially coded terms and symbolic situations to maintain their historical advantage over people of Color by opposing policies intended to foster social equity (Lopez, 2014). This is apparent in Ferguson, often referred to as "the ghetto." Most of the teachers, and *all* of the White teachers, live in the wealthier suburbs of St. Louis and drive into "the ghetto" to teach. Terms like "urban school," "ghetto school," and "those kids" are racially coded language for "Black" and "poor."

Ferguson: From Redlined Zoning to White-Washed Education

Although the death of Michael Brown at the hands of Officer Darren Wilson was a turning point in the grassroots activism around the policing of Black communities with the explosion of the Black Lives Matter movement, these brutalities are not new to the residents of Ferguson. Ferguson was founded in gentrification and the redlining real estate practices of the 1950s. White flight hit North St. Louis County deliberately and strategically (Wright, 2005). The mass exodus of White families to the West County and South County suburbs left the communities in North County devastated by a reduction of employment opportunities, abandoned properties, and removal of industry. As a result, these communities were quickly marginalized and became the high crime and poor areas of suburban St. Louis. Law enforcement increased in the 1970s under President Nixon's "law and order" policies, resulting with each village, town, and municipality having its own law enforcement, in addition

to St. Louis County police. Around this same time, school desegregation policies were enacted in an attempt to equal the playing field for the students in North County with the educational opportunities of students in West and South County. However, the messaging of school desegregation is an example of anti-blackness in education policy.

> [T]he essence of anti-blackness in education policy: The [sic] Black is constructed as always already the Problem, as non-human, inherently, uneducable, or at the very least, unworthy of education. (Dumas, 2015, p. 6)

The results of school desegregation and industry moving was the complete elimination of once-thriving Black communities along with anti-Black deficit messaging and the White-privileged assumption that "these communities" are ripe for the saving. Akin to this is the idea that the public education system is understood as a form of "collecting by taking" from the community. That is to say, White entrepreneurs have taken, marketed, and profited off of the vital piece of the Black community that is saturated in poverty. This collecting-by-taking approach comes in a variety of forms. An example on a macro level is the city of New Orleans, which essentially sold off its public educational system to charters. Once deconstructed, the education system rapidly morphed into a "lottery-based" system in which families are placed into competitive stances in order to get their children into the best available schools, ultimately limiting access of those in struggling Black communities (Selner, 2012). An example on a more micro level is Ms. Williams's project that led to her being honored as teacher of the year. In both examples, public education in Black communities is saturated in anti-Black thinking, White-savior mentality, and ultimately, collecting by taking.

When the majority of educators do not share the same cultural identifiers as their charges and commute in to serve a marginalized population, incidents of oppression and colonization escalate. Similarly, law enforcement officers are brought in from other communities to police Black bodies. Both educators and officers drive in to "save" these children/people because they are inherently uneducable or uncontrollable. The racist ideologies and colonist mindset is supported and encouraged by these geographical separations.

Since 83% of the national teaching force are middle-class Whites (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2012) who have limited experiences with people of Color, one must question what experiential knowledge they draw from—as the Black imagination does—to understand the dynamics of race, racism, and whiteness. If White educators normalize whiteness to invisibility, then how can they recognize the existence of a White imagination used to resist learning about race (Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tandon, & Galindo, 2014)? White women have fulfilled a specific role that differs from White men within the execution of racism. From enslavement to colonialism, White women have done the work to uphold White supremacy specific to their roles within the patriarchy, resulting in their own social harm and oppression in the process. As part of a marginalized identity, White women have been subjugated to reproductive roles—social and biological—in society. Despite this, the history of teaching did not always follow this script, and men were once the dominant gender in education. The fact that Black teachers of

Black and other marginalized children offer their own influence on education under the current social dynamics makes White women ideal subjects for maintaining the race relations within education today (Leonardo & Boas, 2013).

In Bruce Anthony Jones's article, *Forces for Failure and Genocide: The Plantation Model of Urban Educational Policy Making in St. Louis*, he clearly outlines seven necessary factors that need to be present for colonialism in public education. According to Jones:

1. The central concerns of the historically disenfranchised community are handled by a process that is heavily male and Eurocentric. This was evident in the Ferguson-Florissant School District when the school board chose a White male principal about to enter retirement to step in as superintendent during the search process.
2. The policy process is top-down and hierarchical compared to a shared, collaborative leadership. Likewise, the male-dominated and majority White school board gave top-down instructions to school administrators in how to respond to the students and the community in the aftermath Michael Brown's murder.
3. In rejection of diverse viewpoints for this community, the policy process is usually paternal, with the central idea being that the older, White male is politically connected and thus a better resource to the community than the community members and leaders. The educational leadership community is heavily saturated with transformational leadership propaganda and ideologies. In the face of a perceived crisis by the school board, their decision-making process quickly reverted to a top-down formality. Calling school administrators in on a Sunday afternoon for a mandatory meeting and essentially threatening each of us with termination should we choose to not follow their mandates regarding the community in crisis is an excellent example of top-down authority.
4. Policies are often unpredictable and there is no set process in place for accessing resources for school in predominantly disenfranchised communities. During my tenure at the Ferguson-Florissant School District, there was no policy in place for community crises. Granted, it would be difficult to construct a policy for a National Guard presence, however, Ferguson-Florissant is a community that is not free from violence and the loss of life. Policies are in place for students in the event of a death of a classmate, family member, or national leader in order to support students. Those policies were not enacted and extended. Instead, new punitive policies with little-to-no precedent available to support or justify the decisions of the school board were used.
5. Policies are often punitive in nature where the fear of job loss or movement is saturated in shame of the conditions and mostly inconsistent. The prevailing attitude in the district at that time was that the community was out of control, that the community members somehow brought the National Guard upon themselves, and that their behavior was unjustified and criminal. Therefore, the victim

blaming stated at the leadership meeting that prevailed among teachers and eventually was expressed towards the students was palpable.

6. Community members lack a sense of stability when policy changes are punitive and unpredictable. The school district set itself up to close school and to provide limited resources to the community as a policy during the week the National Guard was present. At the same time, the free lunch program continued as school administrators delivered sack lunches to homes and provided educational materials to churches and community centers for the week. These policies lacked consistency and predictability. Clearly, closing the schools made a statement and providing lunch and educational resources made a contrasting statement.
7. As the authority in public education moves towards the absolute, racial diversity actually decreases (Jones, 2005). After the year-long search, the school board chose the current superintendent, Dr. Joe Davis, a Black male with Harvard degrees. Aesthetics such as these ought not be underestimated in the aftermath of tragedy such as Michael Brown's murder.

Ferguson-Florissant School District is part of the St. Louis County public schools and a good example of the plantation model presented in Jones's article. In the interim during the superintendent search, the board chose a White male just before his retirement. Mr. Larrew was a politically connected educator in the county who would make policy and decisions during the community crisis after the murder of Michael Brown. These policies, as described, were absolute, top-down, Eurocentric, and male dominated. White female teachers often perpetuate the plantation model of policy making in their own classrooms as an extension of what they experience in educational leadership. Ms. Williams's project, for which she received teacher of the year, is a mere extension of these punitive policies found in colonialism. White female and male teachers who choose to serve the marginalized and impoverished communities must be informed and conscious of their own privilege before entering the classroom. Educator preparation programs without such a lens and explicit teaching on implicit bias perpetuate the colonizer mindset in our educator community.

Ms. Williams clearly sees her students' role in the healing process as situated in the forgiveness and honoring of their oppressors, thus teaching those children that they deserve to have police in their communities, murdering their residents, abusing their power, and that they should be grateful to law enforcement for their services. She also validated and reaffirmed that they have some accountability as to why these blemishes occur in their community and not the suburban communities. The idea that they should be mature enough at nine and ten years of age to offer a healing process to the officers is absurd and unheard of in White communities. According to a Yale study, Black children are often perceived to be older than they really are and are therefore expected to understand and process complex adult themes that White children would be sheltered from (Gilliam et al., 2016).

Conclusion

Teacher preparation programs must do better to dismantle this continuous cycle of young, White teachers entering marginalized communities with the mindset of a

colonizer. Ms. Williams's "good intentions" with her project are an excellent example of the cultural mismatch between *the culture we are* versus *the culture we serve* as educators. Her lack of understanding resulted in harming children. Explicit teaching of implicit bias, privilege, oppression, and marginalization in a teacher educator preparation program would have supported Ms. Williams in being conscious of her own bias and how it may impact her classroom. If she knew the history of the community in which she serves, the Black American culture, and her own race and class privilege, she may have made more empathetic and trauma-informed choices for a class project. It is a lack of awareness of her own race and class privilege that allowed her to think this classroom project would bring healing to her students and the community. Ms. Williams's project forced the students to validate and demonstrate accountability in their own oppression and systemic injustice. Having students make care packages for the officers that harmed their community is to invalidate their own suffering. As children, adults should be caring for their mental health and emotional well-being. Ms. Williams employed the opposite. It was a symbol of contrition and subordination for students of Color to be giving care packages to their White oppressors using state-sanctioned violence to force submission. The award Ms. Williams received for this work has perpetuated the colonizer mindset and set the standards of excellence in teaching at a level that accepts harm to students because of a lack of awareness of the community and families in which she serves. Ms. Williams was praised and awarded for her innovative project in collaboration with community members and church leaders. However, when viewing this project from a colonizer-colonized lens, Ms. Williams added to the trauma of this community by forcing compliance to an oppressive structure that harms this community and its residents daily.

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The Magnifiers

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I spent all my days looking proudly at myself in the mirror.
I stood there – arrogant, entitled, uncontested.
Conquest, domination, and superiority pumped through my veins.
As I looked in the mirror,
I saw no flaw in these colonized eyes.
My distorted view of reality ruled and reigned in my heart and mind.
I stood there – frozen, detached, exhausted.

Who taught me to see the world this way?
Who taught me that I am blessed, right, and deserve to be first?
Who taught me my way is the 'true' way?

The answers are vast and deep and incomplete.
Textbooks, teachers, religion, and school
are just the beginning of this tangled web of the colonized mind.
Would I always be standing at this mirror?

Then one day, a majestic sage swoops down
and drops me a key.
She whispers that the time has come
to walk away from the mirror and free myself.
I look down at my hands, and for the first time,
I notice the heavy brass shackles I've always worn.
I use the key to remove the cuffs.
I stand there – perplexed, afraid, timid.

The sages smiles.
Before she takes flight, she urges me
to walk away from the mirror
and into the vastness of the unknown.
The pursuit of beauty and new truth awaits.

I spot a magnifying glass buried in the sand.
I place it in my trembling hand and start walking.
Many have used a magnifying glass before
and become free like my sage.
It's time for me to join them.

I walk to the shoreline and meet an army of magnifiers
who use their glass tool to seek and question and liberate
rather than to simply stare back at themselves.
I stand there – overwhelmed, humbled, hopeful.

The magnifiers welcome me – their arms are open
despite my mirror gazing history.
They tell me it's time to begin again.

They promise that my days at the mirror
will inform my work as a magnifier.
Slowly, day by day, they show me how use my magnifying glass
as a tool to unlearn and learn
in order to transform myself and the world around me.
I stand there – nervous, grateful, surprised.

As I start to see the world through the magnifying glass,
I am awoken to see a different reality than the one from the mirror.
In this story, I am not the hero –
I am the villain.
I stand there – shocked, horrified, and yet determined.

Can I, the unaware oppressor, become new
now that I have walked away from the mirror
and found my magnifying glass?
Can I retrain my heart to cut down jungles of lies
and deserts of faulty thinking and oceans of deception?

Can I join this army of magnifiers?
They tell me *yes*, I can.
It will take time and continual praxis,
but I can join in their collective work.
They continue to show me how to use my tool
to make the world more just and fair and equal.
They teach me to think about a better tomorrow
by engaging in liberatory justice work today.
I stand there – overwhelmed, humbled, hopeful.
There is great work to do.

I remember back to the mirror and
how I stood there – serving myself, believing lies, wearing shackles.
My mirror has a new purpose. Now,
I stand there – critical, examining, researching.
I stand there – relearning, restoring, restorying,
magnifying glass in hand
standing amongst a sea of radiant, hopeful magnifiers.