ABSTRACT

Race, Class, and Title I Schools: A Critical Analysis of Undergraduate Discursive

Practices

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Do race and class still matter in American society today? Unfortunately, it is likely that race- and class-based biases continue to permeate contemporary society. Colorblind language disguises biases while coded, politically correct language allows people to express their beliefs without targeting a certain group. In this thesis, readers will engage with the role that race- and class-based implicit biases may play in contributing to the qualified teacher shortage in Title I schools. In this qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher explained emergent themes from nine small group interviews. In analyzing exemplar quotes through the sociopolitical development of discursive practices with an autoethnographic component, readers can reflect on their own way of speaking. Although certainly not the only factor affecting the qualified teacher shortage, pre-service teachers, educators, and those not in the education field can use this thesis to understand the sociopolitical, historical development of discursive practices of race and class to understand the role it may play today.

Keywords: race, class, implicit biases, discursive practices, Title I, autoethnography,

qualitative, phenomenology

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RACE, CLASS, AND TITLE I SCHOOLS:

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF UNDERGRADUATE DISCURSIVE PRACTICES

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CHAPTER ONE

Overview of the Issue

Educational equity between white, affluent students and low-income students of color rarely occurs. Local property taxes result in funding disparities between wealthy neighborhood schools and schools serving low-income, mostly minority students. To close the opportunity gap between wealthy and non-wealthy students, the Federal government provides Title I funding as part of President Barak Obama's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Title I funding under the ESSA originated in President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which was revitalized in 2001 by President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). All three acts establish necessary civil rights funding to continue closing opportunity gaps between affluent versus low-income students, and white versus minority students.

Aside from funding, schools serving students with the characteristics of low-income, high-poverty, urban, rural, mostly-minority, and English Language Learning classrooms face greater challenges finding and retaining qualified teachers than white, affluent schools, further widening the opportunity gaps between students of varying race and socioeconomic statuses (Aragon, 2016). Until the 1960s and 1970s, the teaching force consisted of "talented and devoted women who were socially bounded and discriminated against" until they became more socially accepted through the feminist and humanist movements (Tamir, 2009). With an increase in opportunities for women, the 1980's lead to an exodus of teachers and triggered the qualified teacher crisis in 1990 (Tamir, 2009). Per the assessment of *The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce,* most teachers (84%) are white yet they serve approximately 51% white

students and 49% minority students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Of public school students in 2013-2014, 9.3% of students were English Language Learners (ELL) which was up from 8.8% in 2003-2004 ("The condition of education - Participation in education - Elementary/Secondary - English language learners in public schools," 2016). Also, between 2000-2001 and 2012-2013, students eligible to receive free and/or reduced lunch increased by 12% (38% to 50%) (Snyder & Musu-Gillette, 2015). As indicated by changing student demographics, the result of a homogenous teacher workforce may pose a serious problem in teachers' ability to understand cross-cultural experiences because of their vastly different racial experience, socioeconomic status, and educational background. According to Ng (2003), Sleeter (1993) "observed that White teachers often deny racial issues and differences all together," which shows a reliance on ethnicity theory or the view that society is a meritocracy (p. 383). The idealistic colorblind outlook associated with meritocracy, diminishes students of color lived experiences in educational systems which tend to favor white and affluent students. Teachers who perpetuate this rhetorical fallacy of the meritocracy and colorblind ideology renders students of color experiencing forms of discrimination as invalidated and powerless. Sleeter (1993) further asserted that a growing qualified teacher shortage in hard-to-staff schools indicates a need to better understand undergraduate students' perceptions of professional opportunities in Title I schools and their perceptions of the students and families being served. Understanding undergraduate students' perceptions will provide researchers the opportunity to understand race- and class-based biases which may serve as barriers to teacher recruitment.

Unfortunately, much of the recent literature on minorities' experiences in American society indicates a reality of their lived experiences with regard to race and class discrimination. According to Yosso and Solorzano (2001), "the social issues of welfare, crime, drugs, immigrants, and educational problems are given a racial face" through stereotypes within the media, which leads to deficit discourse about people of color (p. 4). When all minorities are depicted as Yosso and Solozano (2001) described, dominant group members believe the stereotypes portrayed in media are true, enforcing the view that minority disparities in income, wealth, home ownership, incarceration rates, and test scores, for example, are due to deficient intelligence, character, physical appearance, or cultural values (Feagin, 2003; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). In terms of education, disproportionate numbers of white teachers in K-12 education may result in minority students being essentialized or stereotyped as being culturally deficient due to White teachers' potential implicit biases as racially dominant group members. As educators attempt to address the qualified teacher shortage they must account for recruitment and retention barriers of undergraduate students' perceptions of low-income, high-poverty, urban, rural, mostly-minority, or ELL students.

Race- and class-based dominant group members whose paradigm is shaped by a lack of cross-cultural experience might justify their social hierarchy status through the theories of the meritocracy and ethnicity theory. Since 84% of the teacher workforce is white and primarily composed of racially dominant group members, it is essential to evaluate race- and class-based barriers to teacher recruitment and retention (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Due to the pervasive nature of essentializing through cultural and racial stereotypes, undergraduate students' perceptions of Title I schools and

Title I students might present implicit biases that serve as a barrier to decreasing the qualified teacher shortage.

Although the problem is that Title I schools struggle to recruit qualified teachers across all subjects thus leading to an overall qualified teacher shortage in Title I schools, factors other than race- and class-based biases contribute to the qualified teacher shortage. For example, Title I schools tend to have long, bureaucratic hiring processes that require leaving or retiring teachers to give little notice of their attrition, as well as Human Resource departments struggling to meet the workload demand, and administrators or school leaders with little time to conduct interviews of potential hires (Levin & Quinn, 2003). Other barriers to solving the qualified teacher shortage include changing public policy, perceived low salaries, perceived lack of opportunities for upward mobility, and governmental or administrative regulations. Understanding the qualified teacher shortage in Title I, hard-to-staff schools requires the researcher to have a nuanced understanding the wide-ranging factors at play in the qualified teacher shortage. Therefore, the researcher recognized that race- and class-based biases are not the only factors which contributes to a lacking number of qualified teachers in Title I, hard-to-staff schools.

According to Hatt-Echeverria and Urrieta (2003), "the oppression of class and race tend to intersect, creating a grey area of overlapping categorizations" thus subjecting low-income children of color to a variety of biases and stereotypes (Carbone, 2010, para. 1). Other scholars such as Baker and Velez (1996) call for a greater study of the intersection of race and class within educational opportunities (Horvat, 2003). Therefore, by studying how undergraduate students' discursive practices sometimes reflect race- and

class-based biases about Title I schools and students, educators and policy makers can understand another barrier to solving the qualified teacher shortage. While it is unrealistic that educational policies would be enacted to address race- and class-based biases among pre-service teachers, this research may compel pre-service teachers, current educators, and non-educators to be more mindful of their discursive practices. Consequently, these groups of people with a new-found mindfulness of their everyday language patterns, can take steps to becoming more culturally competent. Eventually a growth in the mindset of mindfulness could make society less biased which may result in growing numbers of educators to address the qualified teacher shortage in Title I schools.

Statement of the Problem

Low-income, high-poverty, urban, rural, mostly-minority, and ELL students in Title I schools have qualified teacher shortages in greater numbers than their white, affluent counterparts (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Eubanks, 1996; Levin & Quinn, 2003). Schools that serve students of color, low-income students, or both face greater challenges in finding qualified teachers to place in the classroom for the subject they are teaching. Although some research shows (Aragon, 2016; Cowan, Goldhaber, Hayes, & Theobald, 2015) there is not an impending nation-wide teacher shortage across all schools, research from the Education Commission of the States, an education think-tank, found consistent shortages in certain subjects and hard-to-staff schools. In a report titled *Teacher Shortages: What we Know*, seven states reported teacher shortages, four of which cited shortages across subject and school type (i.e. hard-to-staff) ("Press Release," n.d.). The report (2016) revealed that working conditions significantly influenced a teacher's choice of where to teach. Working conditions that lead to teacher attrition

included lower salaries with bigger classes and perceived neighborhood characteristics such as safety or nearby amenities (Aragon, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

As a student-recruiter for an educator preparation program which recruits undergraduate students of all majors, the researcher desired to understand the barriers which are present in Title I teacher recruitment among pre-service teachers and those with a limited desire to teach (i.e. non-education majors). Although seemingly general, participants were purposefully selected beyond the School of Education to create a wider sample of undergraduate students' race- and class-based biases from which to study the possible emergence of race and class based biases.

This demographic—pre-service undergraduates and non-education majors—presented the researcher with the opportunity to examine the potential recruitment barrier of race- and class-based biases. Additionally, the autoethnographic component of the study provided an opportunity for the researcher to examine the larger social phenomenon of the teacher shortage within the context of her own professional aspirations and critically examine her sense making processes and motives for pursuing employment in a Title I school. To fulfill the study's purpose, the researcher conducted small focus-group interviews to gather responses which reflected undergraduate students' perceptions of Title I education and professional opportunities in Title I schools. The researcher then coded the interviews with her thesis adviser to identitfy emergent themes between interviews to understand responses on a larger phenomenological scale.

As an aspiring educator, the researcher hoped to explore her peers' perceptions to better understand their biases and her own implicit biases of Title I education. Doing so

will aid the researcher in recognizing potential barriers to her own success in following her vocational calling of becoming an educator and student advocate. By engaging reflexively with interviewees' responses and her own experiences, the researcher sought to understand her barriers to success when working in a cross-cultural setting. In this endeavor, the researcher embraced and continues to try to embrace Allen's (2011) version of *mindfulness*, or engaging in "a heightened state of involvement" in the past and present to 1) notice when relying on stereotypes, 2) monitor personal thoughts of someone else based on gender, race, age, etc. and 3) be curious about how she and others form their cultural identity to recognize when dominant belief systems shape her own thoughts and perceptions (p. 9).

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine race- and class-based biases that may exist in the discursive practices among undergraduate students about pursuing professional opportunities in Title I schools. The guiding research question was "What are the perceptions that undergraduate students have of pursuing professional opportunities within Title I schools?". The researcher used a topically sequenced, moderately scheduled interview script to engage the participants in a conversation about professional aspirations, factors in Title I schools, and teachers in Title I schools (Stewart & Cash, 2010).

The following sub-questions guided the study:

- Have you ever considered teaching? Why or why not?

- How do you feel about the role teachers/educators play in society? Why do you feel that way?

- Why do you think people choose to pursue professional opportunities in Title I schools?

The sub-questions guided the study; however, the researcher asked participants' other scheduled questions and emergent questions which allowed participants to elaborate on reasons why they wished to pursue teaching or not pursue teaching. For a full interview schedule, see appendix A.

Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical framework was based on critical race theory (CRT), a sometimes contested theory that bears witness to the pervasive nature of race in society (Tate, 1997). By examining CRT in education, the researcher attempted to understand the role race plays in education through the cultural stereotypes and assumptions undergraduate students have of Title I education. Closely tied, the researcher also looked at the intersection of race and class per Crenshaw's (1989) definition of intersectionality. Crenshaw coined intersectionality to describe various ways one can be discriminated against based upon group memberships such as race, class, or gender (1989). For example, a White low-income male may experience bias differently than a Black affluent male. Although the intersection of group membership expands much further than only race and class, the scope of this paper limits the intersection to these two factors. Additionally, the researcher followed tenets of autoethnography to explore her own assumptions in a larger cultural context (Chang, 2008).

Definitions of Terms

The U.S. Department of Education defines *low-income* as "an individual whose family's taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount" ("Federal TRIO Programs Current-Year Low-Income Levels," 2016).

Title I is a designation by the U.S. Department of Education indicating a school's financial need based on student achievement and student economic status. According to the U.S. Department of Education "Title I, Part A," the program is also known as "Education for the Disadvantaged –Grants to Local Educational Agencies, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged" ("Title I, Part A program," 2015). Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides additional funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high percentages of children from low-income families in order "to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards" ("Title I, Part A program," 2015). Schools receive different tiers of funding depending on their percent of low-income students; however, school populations with 40% or more low-income students may use Title I funding school-wide, whereas schools with less than 40% of low-income students must use targeted funding for failing or at-risk of failing students ("Title I, part A program," 2015).

Allen (2011) defined *stereotypes* as "oversimplified preconceptions and generalizations about members of social groups 'that provide meaning and organize perceptions, inferences, and judgements about persons identified as belonging to a particular social category'" (p. 2). Feagin (2003) included that "stereotypes generalize negative characteristics [which become] viewed as representative of people in subordinate racial groups" and tend to include negative attitudes of the stereotyped group (p. 18).

The term *qualified* in terms of teaching ability most often refers to "certification, subject matter background, pedagogical training, selectivity of college attended, test scores, or experience" (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 4).

Intersectionality, originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, "promotes an understanding of human beings as shaped by the interaction of different social locations (e.g. 'race'/ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religion)" to understand how different forms of bias can cross group lines (Hankivsky, 2014).

Race is a social construct used throughout United States history to justify White supremacy and differentiate between racial groups to establish superiority (Allen, 2011; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

Audre Lorde defines the term *racism* as "the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Lorde's definition of race is important to understanding race's pervasive role in modern society while considering statements made by undergraduate students.

Wicked problems, originally coined by Rittell, have six characteristics (Conklin, 2001):

1) New solutions are constantly being exposed because stakeholders have different perspectives on how to fix certain problems.

2) They can never be wholly fixed.

3) "Solutions to wicked problems are not right or wrong" (p. 7).

4) "Every wicked problem is essentially unique and novel" (p. 7–8).

5) Problem solvers must test various solutions which will have unintended consequences and therefore create new problems.

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6) There is no guaranteed a solution to work nor appease all stakeholders because solutions are value-laden judgements.

According to Allen (2011), *dominant ideologies* "reflect perspectives and experiences of ruling groups, whose members construct and circulate beliefs that will most benefit them" (p. 32). According to the previously defined concept of intersectionality, most members of society will have parts of their identity that are both dominant and non-dominant. For example, a White heterosexual female would be dominant in her racial and sexuality group yet non-dominant in her gender depending on situational context. Various non-dominant group memberships make one more susceptible to bias.

According to the Center for State Courts, *Implicit bias* is defined as "the bias in judgement and/or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes (e.g. implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes) that operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control" (Casey, Warren, Cheesman II, & Elek, 2012 p. B-2). Alvermann, Commeyras, Young, Randall, Hinson (1997) define discursive practice as everyday conversations that "refer to the spoken and unspoken rules and conventions that govern how individuals learn to think, act, and speak in all the social positions they occupy in life" (p. 2).

Value orientation is defined as "habitual ways of thinking about positive and negative grounds for human thought and action" (German, 2012, p. 51). For example, the term "family values" has different meaning depending upon what value orientation one places upon it (i.e. liberal, middle-of-the-road, or conservative ideologies) (German, 2012).

Limitations

There was one main limitation beyond the control of the researcher in the study. The researcher conducted the study on a volunteer basis with the incentive of extra credit in coursework from participating professors. However, not all participants attended the interview they signed up for nor gave the researcher notice of their intent to not participate. Although participating students received reminders on several occasions and had the opportunity to attend a make-up interview (interview #9), seven students did not attend their chosen interview date. Thus, the predicted sample size of 40 decreased to 33 participants.

Delimitations

Delimitations included factors within the researcher's control which she recognized as barriers to the study and conclusions of gathered research. While the researcher hoped to fulfill the full sample size of 40, she also chose a relatively small sample for the sake of time and scope of the project. Additionally, the use of a small sample allowed the researcher to spend more time with participants during interviews and critically reflect upon the interviews. The researcher does not aim to make a prescriptive declaration about all undergraduate students but instead seeks to better understand her peers' perceptions by creating a possibility for further research.

Assumptions

First, the researcher assumed that participants answered honestly and in a candid nature. However, she recognized the intersection of race and class may have caused participants to self-monitor, frame responses as "politically correct," or respond in a colorblind way. Second, the researcher assumed there would be prominent themes

throughout participants' responses based on feedback she received from individuals about her vocational choice outside of the study. Third, the researcher believed preexisting research regarding the nature of the teacher shortage and trusted documented interpersonal experiences of racial and social hierarchy in the education system. Lastly, the researcher trusted the lived experiences of individuals with race- or class-based minority group membership who are proponents of critical race theory and the abundance of people who believe in ethnicity theory which revealed race's pervasive nature in society resulting in frequent biases and microaggressions. The researcher believed her ability to examine the nuances of race- and class-based biases would have been limited if she bought into the fallacy that America is a meritocratic society where all people have an equal opportunity to pull themselves up by their boot straps.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

To understand race- and class-based biases in contemporary society, the researcher explored the historical aspects of language patterns, social hierarchy and social mobility in the United States' history. Additionally, the researcher explored the sociopolitical and sociohistorical factors of the teacher shortage which indicated the role race and class could serve as barriers to recruitment and retention of qualified teachers in Title I education in the past and today. The perceptions undergraduate students have of professional opportunities in Title I schools and the students they serve demonstrate a need to recognize critical race theory's role in education which is explained throughout the review of literature.

The Qualified Teacher Shortage

The nation-wide teacher shortage varies cyclically based on factors such as war time, social changes and economic prosperity (Aragon, 2016; Cowan et al., 2015; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Eubanks, 1996). According to "Beyond the Commission Reports: The Coming Crisis in Teaching" aside from teacher demand in the 1960's, teacher supply raised above teacher demand from 1970-1980, although these teachers were not necessarily qualified (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Graybeal, 1971). Despite the natural occurrence of teacher surpluses in the United States's workforce, schools that served low-income and minority students consistently faced significant staffing challenges. Although Plessy v. Ferguson's (1896) catch-phrase of "separate but equal"

was rhetorically pleasing, America's school systems during Jim Crow did little to promote equality. African Americans were usually only offered classes in trade skills and were taught by teachers who typically only received 10 years of education themselves (Iron, 2002). When Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) determined the inherent discrimination of "separate but equal" and overturned Plessy v. Ferguson, the teacher shortage shifted. Although White and Black students were legally supposed to attend the same schools, many people openly resisted the anti-discrimination ruling. Schools serving students of color faced a greater challenge of finding qualified teachers to teach than their White, and sometimes more affluent counterparts. In today's teacher shortage Darling-Hammond (2017), president and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute, said "We are experiencing what appears to be the first major shortage since the 1990s" due to a fatal combination of teacher retirement and teacher attrition, or those leaving the classroom (Camera, 2016).

Although nation-wide teacher shortages have fluctuated cyclically throughout the United States's history, schools serving minority and low-income students consistently faced the issue of finding qualified teachers (Aragon, 2016; Cowan et al., 2015; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Eubanks, 1996). According to a report from the Urban Teacher Collaborative (UTC) among 40 urban school districts known as the Great City Schools (GCS), "there is [was] an immediate and/or anticipated demand for new teachers in urban schools for just about every teaching area" (Eubanks, 1996). Although Eubank's report is nearly 21 years old, the report is a seminal work cited frequently across academic publications discussing the teacher shortage to establish the need for increased teacher recruitment in the 1990 and 2000s. In 1990, 38% of urban students also qualified for free

or reduced price lunch, the marker used to evaluate poverty in schools (Lippman, Burns, & McArthur, 1996). Just six years later in 1996, the 47 school districts of the Great City Schools made up 40% of the nation's low-income students, contained 74.7% of the nation's minority students, and 42.4% of limited English proficient students; yet these districts represented only 13.1% of the nation's students (5.5 million), thus indicating a geographic trend between some minority and low-income students (Eubanks, 1996). The 40 school districts who responded to the UTC survey faced teacher shortages in nearly all subjects at the time of the survey but expected shortages in all subjects within the next five years. Interestingly more than 40 years after Brown v. Board (1954), schools serving high populations of low-income and minority students continued to face issues finding qualified teachers to fill teacher vacancies.

According to Adamson and Darling-Hammond (2011), results from studies in New York and North Carolina revealed several factors affecting student performance. Qualified teachers who were certified in the field they were teaching in created better performing students, as did teachers who received full preparation prior to entering the classroom, who received high marks on the licensure exam, who graduated from a competitive university, who had two or more years of prior teaching experience, and who obtained certification by the National Teaching Board. However, schools with low-income, children of color have significantly less human capital and physical resources than their White and more affluent peers thus creating a difficult environment for students to thrive in (Blanchett, 2010). According to research (Ayers & Ford, 1996; Blanchett, 2009; Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005; Kozol, 1992), "schools attended primarily by African American and/or Latino students are often schools that are

deemed high-poverty schools, have high turnover of the teaching and instructional staff, high number of uncertified or provisionally licensed teachers, limited access to technology, few educational specialists (e.g., math and reading specialists) and resources (e.g., accelerated curriculum for all students), limited extracurricular opportunities, and dilapidated physical environments" therefore rendering them unable to provide an equal education (Blanchett, 2010, p. 17).

The discussion of students and families in Title I schools facing teacher shortages frequently reveal the stereotypes related to implicit biases of race and class. According to the concept of intersectionality, group membership among demographic categories make individuals vulnerable to stereotypes and discrimination through perceived cultural generalizations and deficiencies based on his or her group membership (Crenshaw, 1989, n.d.). To best understand discursive practices regarding race in the public sphere, the scope of this literature review examines the (1) historical context of minorities in the education system and sociopolitical phenomena contributing to a lack of qualified teachers in Title I schools, (2) development of critical race theory, and (3) the role critical race theory plays in educational contexts.

Historical and Sociopolitical Factors of the Qualified Teacher Shortage

Although scholars explain race as an artificial construct used by northern Europeans and other settling groups to create power structures throughout colonialism, its pervasiveness in American society serves the foundation for social hierarchies (Allen, 2011). One scholarly perspective of race is that "race was borne out of a systemic and institutional effort to discriminate against non-Whites" which renders persons of color efforts to dismantle the construct of race in society difficult while facing oppression

(Brunson, Lampl, & Jordan-Jackson, 2010, p. 287). With the colonization of the United States, African Americans' and other minorities' supposed inferiority to Whites provided Congress and state legislators with excuses to offer minimal citizenship to minorities. Legal proceedings such as the Three-Fifths Compromise, Plessy v. Fergusson (1896), and Jim Crow laws gave African Americans and other minorities significant disadvantages within American society (Tate, 1997, p. 8). Slave states offered little to no education for African Americans prior to the Reconstruction period and in states that did, "Black children attended schools with inferior textbooks, lower paid teachers, crumbling, buildings, and so forth" (Allen, 2011). With the advent of Jim Crow (1877) following Reconstruction, people of color enjoyed few perks of being citizens. In terms of education, the new system ". . . left most Black children in segregated schools with minimal resources," few qualified teachers, and a technical curriculum, thereby building on the already present opportunity gap between White and Black individuals (Iron, 2002; Valant & Newark, 2016, p. 2). Despite the reversal of Plessy v. Fergusson (1896) with the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), progress towards desegregating and improving schools was slow due to 1) direct resistance of desegregation; and 2) school assignment based on geographic location "in the context of severe residential segregation" (Valant & Newark, 2016, p. 2).

Historically, students of color in low-income schools receive the least number of qualified teachers because "well-qualified teachers have been inequitably distributed to students in the United States" (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 2). Most African American and Hispanic students attend schools with homogenous peer populations (i.e. African American or Hispanic) and face the greatest opportunity gap due to teachers of

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varying quality and less resources. The term "qualified" in terms of teaching ability most often refers to "certification, subject matter background, pedagogical training, selectivity of college attended, test scores, or experience" (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 4). Many of the students affected by the qualified teacher shortage attend schools within the Great City Schools. Today, the Council of the Great City Schools represents 70 large urban school districts and 7.3 million students. The Great City School (GCS) districts contain 78% minority students (up 4% from 1996) and 70% of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch (up by 40% from 1990) ("Fact sheet," n.d.).

At its core, the teacher shortage in schools that are urban, low-income, high-poverty, mostly-minority, rural, or serving high populations of ELL students is a civil rights issue. Modern day segregation in schools must be acknowledged to develop policies that address the achievement gap which most commonly affects schools with these characteristics. Like Allen (2011) explained, race matters "because significant gaps persist between Whites and persons of color in terms of socioeconomic status and related aspects of life" including the qualified teacher shortage (Allen, 2011). In 2008, the poverty rate for non-Hispanic Whites was 8.6 percent; for Asians 11.8 percent; for Hispanics, 23.2 percent; and for blacks, 24.7 percent ("Poverty: 2008 and 2009,", 2010). Despite being genetically equal, minorities (many of whom are African American and Hispanic) face significantly higher poverty rates which may indicate a correlation between the opportunity gap and poverty levels.

President Lyndon B. Johnson's Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the 2001 bill by President George W. Bush named No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and President Obama's revitalized Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)

all classify schools based on their student's economic statuses to determine financial need. To receive Title I funding from the U.S. Department of Education, a school must have at least 40% of low-income students or have students with a high risk of failing, or already failing. As indicated by the GCS survey, many of the schools that qualify tend to face the largest discrepancies in teacher shortages across all subjects. These schools tend to serve populations of students that are low-income, high-poverty, urban, rural, mostly-minority, or ELLs. From urban cities to rural towns, students living in low socio-economic backgrounds lose the opportunity to learn and achieve in the same manner as their more affluent counterparts due to a severe lack of qualified teachers. Just as the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act was a civil rights bill as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, NCLB and ESSA followed suit. Though built from NCLB, the ESSA was designed to be a bi-partisan bill that addressed nuances in school achievement that NCLB failed to recognize (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). For example, ESSA protects Title I funding to close the opportunity gap and believes in meaningful standardized testing to create explanative measurements of school quality (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

At the 2015-2016 annual conference for the Council of the Great City Schools, U.S. Secretary of Education John King stressed that the ESSA would further the "civil rights legacy" left by the ESEA by taking advantage of "opportunities to advance equity and excellence in all of our students" (T. Harris, Duvall, & Gates Davis, 2016, p. 15). Additionally, Rep. Robert Bobby Scott (D-Va.), the ranking Democrat of the U.S. House Education and the Workforce Committee who also spoke at the annual conference, described the "persistent achievement gap between minority students and their White

counterparts [as one of the most] pressing civil rights issues facing the nation [United States]"(T. Harris, Chandler, Taylor, & Duvall, 2015, p. 15). By stressing the need to address the achievement gap as a civil rights issue, King and Scott recognized that the intersection of race and class in education disproportionately affects low-income students of color.

One program attempting to counteract the teacher shortage in hard-to-staff schools is Teach For America (TFA), an education non-profit founded by Wendy Kopp in 1989. Though initially only a theoretical undergraduate thesis, TFA places recent college graduates in an urban or rural schools to teach for two years after which alumni can continue teaching or pursue another opportunity. With an alumni network larger than 50,000 people, there are more 20,000 TFA alumni in the classroom, 1,000+ school leaders, nearly 300 school system leaders, 95 elected officials, 325 policy/advocacy/organizing leaders, and 125 union leaders ("2015 annual report," 2015). Of the 50,000 alumni, 85% "work in roles impacting education or low-income communities" and 82% "work in roles impacting education" ("2015 annual report," 2015). With a 15% acceptance rate of applicants, Kopp believed that if all under-served students experienced teachers who were at the top of their college class and also held high educational standards, they would have a greater chance at success (Kopp, 2001). Other programs such as Urban Teachers, The New Teacher Project, TEACH, and individual university-district coalitions (e.g. University of Chicago Urban Teacher Education Program) strive to place more teachers in underserved districts ("Teachers make a difference," n.d., "The University of Chicago Urban Teacher Education Program," n.d.; The New Teacher Project, n.d.).

Harling-Dammond recommended that schools in the United States prepare for more teacher shortages due to a fewer number of college students pursuing teacher preparation programs (Rich, 2015). According to Federal data, the number of teachers entering teacher preparation programs from 2010-2014 dropped by 30% which has led to a shortage of teachers in the subjects of math, science, special education, and bilingual education (Rich, 2015). However, others suggested the teaching work force in the United States follows a cyclical pattern in which program enrollment and available teachers depends on the state of the economy, which may fluctuate but will ultimately level out (Aragon, 2016; Cowan et al., 2015). Another study published by The New Teacher Project (2003) found the qualified teacher shortage today is no longer due to lackadaisical marketing campaigns pervasive in the 1990s. Instead, today the seemingly bureaucratic methodology of hiring—including union rules, vacancy notification requirements, and late budget timetables—forced the most qualified teachers with a variety of options to take another offer despite their desire to teach in a high-need school (Levin & Quinn, 2003).

According to Aragon (2016), the United States does not face an impending teacher shortage crisis. However, the report did find three main trends among teacher shortages: 1) shortages within certain states are impacted by individual state's educational policies; 2) shortages are often only in certain subjects such as math, science, and special education; and 3) shortages are often limited to schools with specific characteristics such as "urban, rural, high-poverty, mostly-minority, and low-achieving schools" (Aragon, 2016, p. 6). True to the Urban Teacher Collaborative report of 1996, schools today serving students with the characteristics of urban, low-income, high-

poverty, mostly-minority, rural, and high populations of ELL students face greater

qualified teacher shortages than their White, affluent, English speaking counterparts

therefore contributing to the persistent opportunity gap and most far-reaching civil rights

issue to date. Although the qualified teacher shortage has nuanced components—

including excessively long hiring processes and specific high-need subjects—the fact

remains that schools serving the nation's highest need students hire the least qualified

teachers.

<div align="center">

Critical Race Theory

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In modern discourse, some individuals in the public sphere claim that modern

society in America is post-racial; it is a belief that race no longer plays a role in society.

Unfortunately, racial minorities' lived experiences often reflect another story—a story

comprised of stereotypes, prejudice, and microaggressions. Allen (2011) noted "scholars

from many disciplines conceptualize race as an artificial construct that varies according

to social, cultural, political, legal, economic, and historical factors within a society" (p.

66). Although merely a social construct, race continues to play a powerful role in society

through its historical function of being a power determinant. With the colonization of

North America and the colonial conquest of its indigenous peoples, "power sources [in

North America and the United States] have steadfastly reinforced and perpetuated a

hierarchy of race that reflects an ideology of White supremacy" thereby justifying

grievous acts of intolerance like colonists' land seizure, the slave trade, and Jim Crow

(Allen, 2011). Although an artificial construct used to create power structures during

times of conquest geographic segregation, poverty statistics and opportunity gaps

between minorities and Whites shows race's continued existence in American social

hierarchies (Allen, 2011).

Other power hierarchies in American society exist and are identifiable by group

membership. As people are complex figures with multiple identities, the ability to belong

to multiple groups and be discriminated against in various ways is defined as

intersectionality. Crenshaw (N.d.) further explains the concept of intersectionality:

> A concept that enables us to recognize the fact that a
> perceived group membership can make people vulnerable to
> various forms of bias, yet because we are simultaneously
> members of many groups, our complex identities can shape
> the specific way we each experience that bias. (p. 3)

Areas of intersectionality can include race/ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality,

geography, age, disability/ability, migration status, religion, and other social categories

(Hankivsky, 2014).

In terms of education, the intersectionality of race and class plays an important

role as the opportunity gap is closely related to one's economic status and skin color.

Although some see American culture as post-racial, racially laden assumptions and

classist generalizations which enforce stereotypes shape a different paradigm. To

continue the rhetorical narrative of life in post-racial America, many people speak using

colorblind rhetoric, or the tendency of to use discursive practices that insinuate race plays

no role in contemporary society. Although some have named minorities' disadvantaged

status a result of their inferior nature (also known as the inferiority paradigm), colorblind

rhetoric insinuates lack of motivation and cultural deficiencies of minorities compared to

Whites without explicitly referencing color (Feagin, 2003). According to Feagin (2003),

the cultural-deficiency perspective sees "White Americans as having better values (e.g.

good work ethic), families, and communities than Black Americans" therefore more deserving of economic success and societal approval (p. 97). The cultural-deficiency perspective becomes apparent in contemporary discourse when Whites rely on apparently nonracial language that is laden in stereotypes to communicate negative racial or economic assumptions about people who have group characteristics other than their own. Allen (2011) said, "members of social identity groups constantly compare their group with others, and they try to show that their group is positively distinct" (p. 14). Additionally, when individuals perceive others to be a member of an out-group, stereotypes and prejudices occur more frequently (Allen, 2011). Although in-group and out-group membership extends beyond only race and class, the scope of this thesis focuses on these two aspects of identity. An example of the cultural-deficiency perspective examining the intersection of race and class is that the in-group members (White and/or affluent society) tend to classify out-group (minority and/or low-income society) members as inferior or less meritorious to reinforce their belief that society is meritocratic resulting in the belief that the in-group should be superior in the social hierarchy.

History of Critical Race Theory

With three major civil rights acts passed under Lyndon B. Johnson's administration, many politicians and legal scholars insisted that public opinion on race would change over time. In response to slowed acquisition of civil rights, critical race theory was created as a narrative based academic movement by a group of academics of color, three of whom include Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Kimberlé Crenshaw, to show how minorities' lived experience regarding racism in the United States

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demonstrated a continued need to recognize racism as an endemic factor in society (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The group questioned traditional legal scholarship's lack of consideration regarding the relational dynamic of social and cultural contexts (Tate, 1997). Scholars understand CRT as an extension of critical legal studies (hereby referred to as CLS) that is a reactionary movement to slowed civil rights progress in the late 1960s. Although CLS "challenged the traditional legal scholarship that focused on doctrinal and policy analysis . . . [and] spoke to the specificity of individuals and groups in social and cultural contexts," it failed to include racism in its critiques (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 10). Additionally, CLS "failed to recognize the impact of social forces on legal change and discourse" and how these contexts affected individuals in reality rather than only theoretical legal scholarship (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 10). Thus, CRT became a logical step to examining how racism shaped policies and social factors to demanded relevant policy actions. In examining today's education system, policy makers must account for how minority and low-income students are disproportionately affected by qualified teacher shortages and the opportunity gap to understand race's pervasiveness in society.

Tenets of CRT scholarship reach widely from interest convergence theory, or the idea that minorities are racialized depending on needs of the labor market, and intersectionality of identity, or the capability of ascribing to multiple groups, e.g. White feminist Jewish working class single mother. However, Delgado and Stefancic's tenets of CRT for the purpose of examining discursive practices in society claim that 1) race is a normal part of society even if we no longer see it in overt forms of lynching and Jim Crow; 2) colorblind ideology insists that we subconsciously do not see color and give fair

treatment to all people regardless of color; 3) racism is difficult to address and therefore difficult to understand because it is not acknowledged (Harris, 2012). In addition to the tenets of CRT, the role of intersectionality in race- and class-based bias must be considered to understand the cultural deficiency perspective, a form of implicit bias and discrimination, as articulated by Feagin (2003).

<div align="center">Contemporary Forms of Racism</div>

Colorblindness

Derrick Bell—once an NAACP civil rights lawyer under Thurgood Marshall turned Harvard law professor, academician, and activist—attempted to advocate for civil rights his entire career. Although some criticized him for making money on speaking tours that took place during a protest-extended leave during his time as a professor at Harvard, as one of CRT's most prominent scholars Bell utilized his practitioner experience as a lawyer and an academic to develop key aspects of CRT (Tate, 1997). Bell's work regarding the theory of colorblindness effectively provides a way to "reveal the ways in which discourses that appear neutral or void of race actually function to implicitly reinforce existing racial/ethnic dynamics" (Brunson et al., 2010, p. 289). Put simply, colorblindness is the idea that one can choose to not take race into account when immediately meeting someone. Seemingly enlaced in equality, colorblindness is an easy supposition to identify with. However, according to Lawrence (1987, people are unable to see "the ways in which our cultural experience . . . influenced our beliefs about race or the occasions on which those beliefs affect our actions" render people ignorant to the role race plays in society (Tate, 1997, p. 219). An additional scholar in the field of sociology, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, explored the "theory of color-blind racism to interrogate color-

blind rhetoric" (Holmes, 2007, p. 25) For example, Bonilla-Silva's (2006) work in

Racism with Racists explains that:

> color-blind racism has rearticulated elements of traditional
> liberalism (work, ethic, rewards by merit, equal opportunity,
> individualism, etc.) . . . also that . . . Whites today rely more
> on cultural rather than biological tropes to explain blacks'
> position in this country. (7)

Rather than the prior arguments that claimed minorities are unable to improve their social

conditions due to biological inferiority, colorblind rhetoric frequently points lack of

motivation and cultural deficiencies for their societal position.

Additional portions of Bell's scholarship aim to contribute to "intellectual

discussions concerning race in American society" and to "promote political activism to

achieve racial justice" while implementing allegory or narrative to give the historically

disenfranchised a voice (Tate, 1997, p. 210). Although sometimes criticized in the

academic sphere, allegory, storytelling, and autoethnography offer a unique opportunity

for minority voices to explain how their lived experiences inform their experiences with

overt and implicit racism (Chang, 2008).

By challenging traditional language patterns of colorblindness and supposed equal

opportunity that has traditionally supported civil rights language, CRT attempts to

empower minorities in the plight of social empowerment and upward mobility in the

public sphere. Allen (2011) described race, just like sex or gender, as "one of the first

things we notice about a person, whether consciously or not" (p. 65). Therefore Bell,

Bonilla-Silva, and Barnes (1990; 2006; 1997) believe a color-conscious approach in

talking about equality must be adopted to see how cultural-deficiency perspectives

inform society and allow implicit bias to continue. Feagin (2007) argued that

colorblindness

> It also makes them blind to the need for much greater
> antidiscrimination efforts by private and public
> organizations in a still-racist society. (231)

Without pointed reflection of the evolution of colorblind rhetoric, it is difficult to

understand why colorblind language patterns became such a popular form of discourse in

the civil rights movement and today: they offered a viable way for many Whites to

disengage with their implicit biases and insist on a meritocratic society that people get out

of what they put into it.

Symbolic and Laissez-faire Racism

Similar to colorblind racism, symbolic racism and laissez-faire racism provides

Whites a reason to justify inequality and resist changing the status quo. In this form of

racism, Whites tend to consider African Americans and other people of color as lacking

the American values of "individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and

discipline" which is rooted in liberalism (Kinder & Sears, 1981, p. 416). Per Kinder and

Sears (1981)

> Whites may feel that people should be rewarded on their merits,
> which in turn should be based on hard work and diligent service.
> Hence symbolic racism should find its most vociferous expression
> on political issues that involve "unfair" government assistance to
> blacks: welfare ("welfare cheats could find work if they tried");
> "reverse discrimination" and racial quotas ("blacks should not be
> given a status they have not earned"); "forced" busing ("Whites have
> worked hard for their neighborhoods, and for their neighborhood
> schools"); or "free" abortions for the poor ("if blacks behaved
> morally, they would not need abortions") (p. 416).

Originally coined by Lawrence Bobo and James Kluegel (1997), laissez-faire

racism "encompasses an ideology that blames blacks themselves for their

poorer relative economic standing, seeing it as the function of perceived

cultural inferiority" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 17) Like symbolic racism, laissez-

faire racism contends that Blacks and other people of color are blamed for

lacking certain cultural values rather than being biologically deficient.

Although no longer dependent on the explanation of eugenics to defend

inferiority, modern racism now depends on insinuating that people of color are

culturally deficient similar to the theory of the culture of poverty.

In a study that revealed the effect of White students' "colorblind" ideologies on

minority students Lewis, Chesler, and Forman (2012) found two main forms of racial

stereotyping: academic—"Oh my God, this Black person said something that was

intelligent!", and behavioral—"Show me the M.C. Hammer" (p. 77-78). Academic

stereotyping depicts minority students as less competent because of their race or as

beneficiaries of affirmative action policies while behavioral stereotyping creates

behavioral standards which Whites believe dictate how a minority should act (Lewis,

Chesler, & Forman, 2000). Similarly, the ideology of the culture of poverty blames poor

people for their economic status due to "personal frailties and failures" rather than

individuals struggling from economic hardship indicating a connection to symbolic and

laissez-faire forms of racism that rely on cultural and behavioral deficiencies (Pascale,

2013, p. 105).

CRT and Narrative

As discursive practices surrounding race have evolved, so have the problems

minorities face today. Modern social justice proponents examine systemic racism in

terms of forms of institutionalized racism affecting minorities more than others. Though

the qualified teacher shortage, police violence, and high incarceration rates for people of color have always existed, efforts to address inequity have become more accessible to everyday people. Brunson, Lampl, and Jordan-Jackson (2010) argued that scholarship alone will not facilitate change in society until more people shift their understanding of race from neutral to subjective. Race's subjective nature accounts for the varied experiences of Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians/Pacific Islanders in society. Tate explained that for CRT theorists, "social reality is constructed by the creation and exchange of stories about individual situations" which indicates a need to consider how individual stories explain the way society functions (Tate, 1997, p. 210). Since minorities face different daily experiences than Whites, narrative and self-exposure is a powerful and convincing mode that can justify voice in legal analysis and scholarship to explain the experiences of people of color. Four reasons narrative should have a place in legal argumentation/scholarship are (1) reality is socially constructed, (2) stories are a powerful means for destroying and changing mind-sets, (3) stories have a community-building function, and (4) stories provide members of out-groups mental self-preservation (Tate, 1997, p. 219).

<center>Implications of CRT on Education and the Teacher Shortage</center>

CRT scholars Delgado and Stefancic see race as a factor in society (A. Harris, 2012). Though most people are figuratively supportive of the abstract principle called racial equality, few people actually support policies designed to address racial equality, including those policies in the field of education (Valant & Newark, 2016). Though education is rhetorically proposed as the great equalizer, schools serving low-income, high-poverty, urban, rural, minority or ELL students rarely achieve the same level of

academic preparedness as their White and affluent counterparts. Historically, intelligence and educational stereotypes were used to justify low educational and occupational standards for students of color, separating entire schools or classrooms within a school between students of color and White students (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). The evolution of this justification produced categories to continue the stereotypes of students of color: intelligence and educational stereotypes, personality or character stereotypes and physical appearance stereotypes (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). These assumptions in conjunction with less qualified teachers lead to a "dumbed down" curriculum for students of color since society expects students of color to attain a lower social status based on their occupation and education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

Role of Socioeconomic Status in Education

As stated throughout this chapter, a student's socioeconomic status plays a significant role in the type of education he or she receives. Schools serving students from mostly low-income families living in low-income areas have fewer resources due to lower local property values (and therefore less revenue in property taxes) and fewer local funds distributed to schools. When low-income schools repeatedly face resource challenges, the opportunity gap for low socioeconomic status students widens. Class is, reportedly, "the strongest predictor of achievement in schools" in part due to available school resources (Allen, 2011, p. 98). Even in schools with diverse populations of students from low and high income families, students from low income backgrounds often face greater challenges when attempting to take higher level courses such as honors or Advanced Placement due to a perceived lack of ability. Just as schools today are racially segregated, they are also segregated by class.

Interestingly, a study conducted on perceived barriers of the achievement gap found that ". . . Americans are more concerned about—and more supportive of proposals to close—wealth-based achievement gaps than Black-White or Hispanic-White gaps" (Valant & Newark, 2016 p. 1). When given choices of proposed policies to address the achievement gap (in cases of gaps due to socioeconomic status or race), few participants expressed interest in implementing programs in their own school districts. Valant and Newark (2016) described the trend this way:

> Among advantaged groups, greater support for these proposals when enacted elsewhere could suggest a form of the "not-in-my-backyard" (NIMBY) syndrome: People desire a good—like more equitable educational opportunities— but want other communities, rather than their own, to incur the costs of acquiring it. (p. 5)

Despite American society's ideal value of equality, many dominant members of society are not willing to bear the financial burden of implementing related policies. While more people understand the intersection of class and opportunity gap at 63.7% of respondents (Valant & Newark, 2016) fewer people have the will to create policies around closing the gap. However, since people are willing to address the opportunity gap more often for low-income students than for minority students, policy makers may have a greater chance of passing affirmative action policies phrased in terms of class instead of race. However, this presents certain ethical implications (Valant & Newark, 2016).

Political Correctness and Changing Discursive Practices

The Meritocracy

Changing discursive practices represent changing political landscapes. Affirmative action, or the practice of favoring individuals who tend to be discriminated

against, has been a widely contested and politically driven issue in the higher education admission processes. Fisher v. University of Texas (2013) among others (Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978), Grutter v. Bollinger (1997) and Gratz v. Bollinger (2003)) have claimed affirmative action policies are unfair—usually citing preferential treatment for those who are less competent. Anti-affirmative action lawsuits typically question whether affirmative action is the best solution to promoting diversity but rarely acknowledge that direct university recruitment—not specific quotas—are most commonly used to increase university diversity (Espinosa, Gaertner, & Orfield, 2015). Additionally, anti-affirmative action lawsuits depict American society and the college admission process as meritocratic and just where all people achieve what they desire based on their ability and dedication. However, the concept of the meritocracy fails to acknowledge the role that race- and class-based biases play in society. Discourse surrounding achievement in America tends to rely on the fallacy of the meritocracy.

Academic Deficiencies: The New Eugenics

Despite the end of legal segregation with Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), legal segregation continues to occur through special education/learning disability segregation, geographic segregation, and honors versus general versus remedial track classes. Sleeter, "a young, White, former special education teacher", spent significant time determining race and class's role in learning disability segregation. Sleeter utilized her experience as a former special education teacher and her educational training in multicultural studies to explore the role that race and class play in determining which students are labeled with a learning disability and which students are placed into alternative classrooms (Blanchett, 2010). Over the past 40 years, children of color have

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been overrepresented in learning disability segregated classes. For example, today children of color are more likely than White children to be labeled with a learning disability and 3.63 times more likely to be placed in a segregated classroom (Blanchett, 2010).

Much like eugenics justified African Americans' second-class citizenship throughout the late 1800's into the 1930's, unproportionable numbers of students of color have been labeled with a learning disability thus segregating them from their White counter-parts. Eugenics, a movement highly popularized by Morton and Nott during the late 1800s and early 1900s used botched science to justify slavery. The pre-civil rights era discourse of the eugenics movement justified segregation and second class citizenship much like classrooms today are divided: labeling students of color in underserved communities as "lesser" in academic ability. According to Blanchett (2010), "the American educational system and our society has not missed any opportunity to use it to continue a sorting system for children on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, and social class and to re-segregate students of color" (para. 6).

The Theory of the Culture of Poverty

According to Allen (2011), the culture of poverty "does not acknowledge that economic, cultural, and social capital can tilt the playing field in favor of those who have accumulated wealth, knowledge, and/or connections" (p. 103). Allen also noted that with the ideology of the culture of poverty, discursive practices by people not living in poverty contain "victim blaming narratives. . ." that "attribute persistent intergenerational poverty to immorality and family dysfunctions" giving people in poverty a supposedly distinct and degenerate culture (2011, p. 103).

In an interview with The Society Pages of the University of Minnesota, Gould (2014) succinctly explained why the rhetoric of the theory of the culture of poverty has become so accepted:

> If most Americans believe that African Americans should be treated as if they are the same as Whites, given equal opportunities, and if most Americans believe that poor African Americans have equal opportunities, the disproportionate failure of African Americans to "succeed" can only be attributed to traits internal to them and their communities. Logically, it does not matter on what traits we focus, but often it is a "culture of poverty" that is seen as inhibiting success, as inhibiting the inability of poor blacks to take advantage of the opportunities open to them. (I limit myself here to a discussion of African Americans.) (Gould, Gustafson, & Small, 2014)

Framing Gould's (2014) response another way, the culture of poverty justifies lacking achievement among racial minorities because America's meritocracy should allow all people a fair and equitable chance at economic prosperity. Consequently, colorblindness or political correctness dictates that dominant group members must not openly say that racial minorities are at fault for being low-income due to certain intrinsic cultural traits. However, it is politically and socially correct to blame an individual for being lazy or lacking drive while still being implicitly racist though the chosen vocabulary may not reflect racist words. Therefore, throughout participants' responses in the coming exemplar quotes it is essential to recognize how colorblind rhetoric is anything but impartial.

The participants' discursive practices—put simply, the way they talk and words they chose to use—reflect their social positions in life and aspects of their identity that are dominant (Alvermann, Commeyras, Young, Randall, & Hinson, 1997). Participants' responses were likely affected by their group membership within dominant and non-

dominant groups in society and on-campus (Allen, 2011). Throughout the interviews, participants used language that essentialized students within Title I schools as deficient because of their race, class, or both. Discursive practices, or everyday talk, demonstrate how dominant group members communicate power through stereotyping and cultural generalizations. Although not always documented, the intersection of race and class is becoming more acknowledged in the discussion of educational equity and access to a high-quality education (Horvat, 2003). Baker and Velez (1996) called for expanded areas of study, specifically researching the intersection of race and class within educational opportunities (Horvat, 2003). Therefore, in the analysis section I discuss six emergent themes from my qualitative focus group interviews to explore how race- and class-based biases emerge among undergraduate students when discussing Title I schools and students.

Discursive Practices: Meaning and Implications

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines politically correct as "conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated" ("Definition of politically correct," n.d.). Discursive practices, i.e. everyday talk, are rooted in political correctness which is often interpreted as the need to avoid talking about certain potentially sensitive topics such as race, class, sexuality, and ability. According to Goffman's (1959) impression management theory, or the tendency for people to self-monitor their word choice and behave in conversations based on the audience in front of them, an individual is more likely to try to appear neutral and fair to avoid embarrassment or uncomfortability when communicating with strangers (Tseelon, 1992). However, society's hyper-emphasis on political correctness

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has cultivated a cultural narrative that American society is both color-blind and meritocratic. Daily conversations reveal discursive practices that do not directly reference race or class but imply a deeper meaning—a meaning that shows deep-rooted biases. Some researchers (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Carr, n.d.; Kinder & Sears, 1981) have described this phenomenon as "modern racism" or "color-blind racism" (Feagin, 2003 p. 12). Albert Memmi, author of *Racism* (2000) said, "There is a strange kind of enigma associated with the problem of racism. No one, or almost no one, wishes to see themselves as racist; still racism persists, real and tenacious" (p. 3). Often political in nature, the discussion of race and what constitutes as racism is naturally discomforting and frequently polarizing as Memmi (2000) recognized. Unfortunately, racial biases are just as pervasive in contemporary society as they once were. Although Jim Crow is no longer, low-income, students of color in Title I schools continue to face issues of educational inequity.

According to Feagin (2003), this contemporary prejudice puts emphasis on "White-superiority, but now in cultural terms" (p. 12). Similarly, a usual colorblind quip is "I see all people based on their character-not their skin color" or "I got to where I am because I worked hard". Although these statements are not explicitly racist or classist, they belittle and discredit racial minorities and low-income individuals' lived experiences that explain their mistreatment in society. When one is accused of being racist, classist, or showing micro-aggressions, a person is quick to defend him or herself. The usual response is embarrassment, denial, blaming of identity politics or the excuse that he or she was simply "telling it like it is". While an individual might have truly had innocent

intentions, his or her discourse is representative of deeper societal problems: biases our

society refuses to acknowledge or discuss. According to Fisk etc. al. (2014) bias usually

> comes from our strong, innate tendencies to (a) categorize objects
> and people into groups (Allport, 1954; Bruner, 1957), (b) prefer
> things (and people) merely because they are familiar (Zajonc, 1980)
> or because they belong to our group (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963), (c)
> simplify a complex world (e.g., with stereotypes; Fiske & Taylor,
> 1991), and (d) rationalize inequities (Eagly & Steffen, 1984).
> Although most people shun racial bias, racial discrimination remains
> prevalent because prejudice can influence our judgments and
> behaviors in subtle, unexamined ways. Most biases can operate
> outside of conscious awareness and control, nevertheless distorting
> our judgments and making discriminating all the more difficult to
> avoid (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). (p. 88)

Due to the continuation of biases in society, their appearance in society is

unlikely to disappear. Like Fisk et. Al. said, racial biases are apparent in

unexpected ways—one of which is discursive practices. Understanding the

historical develop of race- and class-based biases can help people who usually

"shun racial bias", understand it in a more examined way (Fiske et al., 2014, p.

88).

Discursive practices that refer to low-income individuals and racial minorities has

distinctly developed over time. As the political climate changes so do the terms necessary

to be politically correct in varying contexts. According to Alvermann, Commeyras,

Young, Randall, Hinson (1997) discursive practices "refer to the spoken and unspoken

rules and conventions that govern how individuals learn to think, act, and speak in all the

social positions they occupy in life" (p. 2). In other words, discursive practices informally

and formally tell people what to say in what contexts while (intentionally or not)

reflecting their social status. Discursive practices also reflect and transmit power.

Dominant group members' discursive practices frequently utilize language which

perpetuates power dynamics benefitting dominant group members—although they may

not realize the power and implicit biases of their words (Alvermann et al., 1997).

<center>*Phenomenological Study and Autoethnography*</center>

Clark Moustakas (1999) defines phenomenology as "the science of describing

what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience" (p.

26). Phenomenology became apparent as the most realistic qualitative research

methodology when the researcher began to perceive stereotypes her peers ascribed to

low-income minority students as racist and classist. Coupling her knowledge of the

teacher shortage and lived experience of how people talk about Title I students, the

researcher felt a need to document her peers' perceptions of professional opportunities in

Title I schools and the students they serve. The greater phenomena of the teacher

shortage made the researcher question if a part of the teacher shortage was caused by

implicit biases potential teachers had of low-income and minority students. Although this

phenomenological study does not aim to generalize all undergraduate students, the

researcher hoped to make sense of her own lived experiences of how people refer to low-

income and minority students. Additionally, the researcher noted that her

phenomenological study has characteristics of a heuristic study, a sub-category of

phenomenological research. Moustakas (1999) defined heuristic study as "a way of

engaging in scientific search through methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of

self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of

important human experiences" (p. 18). In short, heuristic study is a method used to

illuminate the researcher's question in an autobiographic method that can have universal

or social meaning. The researcher simultaneously evaluates her own race- and class-

<center>40</center>

based biases while engaging with herself to gain a more thorough understanding of larger social phenomenon of race- and class-based biases among undergraduate students.

To understand her role as an aspiring educator and her own implicit biases, the researcher included an autoethnographic component. Closely tied to heuristic study is autoethnography, a technique used to explore one's experiences with a certain phenomenon through evocative storytelling. A leading scholar on autoethnography, Chang (2008) asserted that to be an effective autoethnography the researcher must engage in more than self-exposure and evocative storytelling. Instead, the researcher must provide personal and societal cultural analysis, thereby attempting to understand the larger cultural phenomena of his or her own experiences. One tenet Chang (2008) emphasized is the necessity to link the self and the social by connecting an individual person to the overarching culture to understand why the researcher's experiences matter in the larger social context.

Autoethnography and phenomenological studies closely relate because each involve engaging with personal experience and other's experiences through the larger goal of understanding the social phenomenon in which these experiences occur. A significant component of the following study is a reflexive analysis of the researcher's experiences in which she reflects on how her perceptions have developed through realizing her vocational calling. In the study, the question the researcher hopes to understand is two-fold and therefore both heuristic and autoethnographic. The researcher will explore why the study falls into both methodology categories in Chapter Three.

Summary

Tate (1997) accurately stated, "The framers and interpreters (i.e. policymakers) of our legal system have used race as a factor in the construction and implementation of laws influencing education," to preserve Whites status in society (p. 9). Denying race- and class-based biases continued existence in society by calling America post-racial and meritocratic is disingenuous to the cause of civil rights. Although the opportunity gap will likely never be eradicated in full, it must be closed if society is to lower the qualified teacher shortage, become equitable, and allow all people to become economically independent. While it is essential to create targeted policies that address inequity among lines of race and class, the struggle that American schools face is ultimately a wicked problem, or a problem with no technical solution which is rooted in underlying values (Carcasson, 2013). Too many White, affluent, and overly represented people are more concerned with what others may get instead of them thus perpetuating race- and class-based biases. Although policy can directly affect low income, minority students' educational outcomes by lessening the opportunity gap, those individuals with the most influence on policy (i.e. White, affluent citizens) must genuinely advocate for more robust resources and opportunities in these schools.

Though it may seem logical to close the opportunity gap to have an educated and prepared citizenship, not all Americans believe this is a significant need (Valant & Newark, 2016). To understand the magnitude of the role that race- and class-based biases play in the qualified teacher shortage, critical race theory and heuristic studies with an autoethnographic component comprised the theoretical framework from which to understand discursive practices of undergraduate students. Additionally, the

autoethnographic component provided the researcher the opportunity to reflect on the

perceptions of her peers in the context of her development as a young adult and aspiring

educational leader. Following in Chapter Three, an overview of the proposed research

method, design, and synthesis is presented to understand the data collection process

aimed at capturing discursive practices among undergraduate students when talking about

Title I education.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine race- and class-based biases that may exist in the discursive practices among undergraduate students about pursuing professional opportunities in Title I schools. Additionally, the researcher sought to explore barriers to solving the qualified teacher shortage in such schools. Utilizing an autoethnographic component to reflexively understand her own biases of Title I schools and professional opportunities within them, the researcher explored her questions through their intersectionality, or the understanding of how biases of a group or institution can be affected by varying demographics (Crenshaw, 1989). The concept of intersectionality of race and class played a major role in interpreting qualitative responses of participants and the researcher's perceptions.

Research Method and Design

The researcher developed five phases of research per John Creswell's (2013) design. In phase one, the researcher explored the "researcher as a multicultural subject," the "history and research tradition," "conceptions of self and the other," and "the ethics and politics of research" (p. 17). Phase two involved the selection of critical race theory as the most appropriate theoretical perspective because it provided a relevant framework to explore racial and class-based bias in education. In phase three, the researcher established the research strategy of phenomenology—defined as a study that "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a

phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). The phenomenon referred to throughout this study is race- and class-based biases in discursive practices regarding Title I education. In phase four Creswell (2013) stated the researcher should determine data collection methods and analysis. The researcher chose interviews with peers of similar status (students pursuing an undergraduate degree in a predominantly White and affluent university) because she believed they provided her the most access to peers with potentially similar life experiences and potentially similar biases. The researcher utilized responses of her peers to reflect on why her racial and class biases might differ from her classmates in the context of Title I professional opportunities. In phase five, the researcher determined the practice by which she should analyze the research, which was analyzing participant responses based on documented critical and interpretive theories such as critical race theory and the theory of the culture of poverty.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology's purpose is to address a certain phenomenon that occurs in one's life on a universal scale (Creswell, 2013). After the researcher determines a phenomenon worth studying, he or she "collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon" consisting of what the participant experienced and how the participant experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). A researcher can study whatever phenomenon he or she wishes, but it must have universal significance that applies beyond the researcher's own life.

The race- and class-based biases in discursive practices emerged within conversations with her friends, family and acquaintances. As a Teach For America intern recruiter and a young woman seeking employment in a Title I school, the researcher

noticed that her peers and her elders often referred to students within Title I schools differently than how she viewed them. For example, her peers and elders frequently questioned her desire to work with students that many of them characterized as hopeless, troubled, lacking motivation or dangerous. However, the researcher's lived experience of working with low-income minority students presented a different paradigm—a picture of students who had immense parental support (despite some of their long work hours), consistent drive for success (despite society's expectations), and behavioral issues typical of all students (regardless of race or economic class). As a racial majority group member and a class-based majority group member, the researcher heard other White students stereotype students in ways that contradicted her lived experiences with students. Because of the researcher's knowledge of the qualified teacher shortage in Title I schools, she wondered if the larger implication of race and class bias contributed to the qualified teacher shortage in Title I schools. Consequently, the researcher saw a need to study the phenomena of race and class biases in discursive practices to evaluate potential barriers to teacher recruitment in Title I, hard-to-staff schools. For the researcher, the phenomena of race and class bias in education emerged during discursive practices describing professional opportunities in Title I schools, schools and Title I students and families.

Wicked Problem: Race and Class Biases

Race and class biases are not simple problems solvable by policy initiatives or quick-fixes. Wicked problems, a phrase coined by Rittel, are ". . .an evolving set of interlocking issues and constraints" with no simple, single solution (Conklin, 2001 p. 7). Policy makers frequently mis-characterize wicked problems as issues which can be solved with direct policy implementation. However, according to the Australian Public

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Service Commission, wicked problems "require innovative, comprehensive solutions that can be modified in the light of experience and on-the-ground feedback" (Briggs, 2007 p. 1). In other words, wicked problems are dynamic, non-linear problems which require a thorough understanding of the history of the problem, nuances of the problem, and a recognition of the need to address the problem in a variety of ways.

Heuristic Characteristics

Moustakas, a formative scholar of phenomenology, (1999) adopted heuristic study to document the process of investigation into the human experience that occurs on a personal level but evolves to a universal level. Heuristic study is defined as

> A process that begins with a question or problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer. The question is one that has been a personal challenge and puzzlement in the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives. The heuristic process is autobiographic, yet with virtually every question that matters there is also a social – and perhaps universal – significance. (Moustakas, 1999, p. 17)

The researcher experienced her fellow dominant race group members' practice of stereotyping low-income, minority students in ways that caused her to question her racially dominant group membership and her own implicit biases. She felt compelled to understand why her fellow dominant group members viewed Title I schools and their students in negative ways without tangible experience with them. The researcher also questioned her own motivation for pursuing professional opportunities in Title I schools—despite those in her life who told her Title I students lacked a chance to succeed because of their (and their families') cultural values. Although many Americans claim to live in a post-racial society, the researcher's lived experience within her racially dominant group show a society rooted in race- and class-based stereotypes. Through the

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heuristic process, the researcher explored the phenomena of racialized and class based

biases through the lens of CRT to understand the meaning of her lived experience.

Autoethnographic Component

Although the researcher engaged reflexively throughout the study, much of her

self-examination occurred when thematically sorting the interviews for the data analysis.

According to Chang (2008), autoethnography "combines cultural analysis and

interpretation with narrative details" with a distinct focus on the larger sociocultural

context (p. 46). Without significant cultural analysis, autoethnography is simply

evocative storytelling of a phenomenon within one's life. However, cultural analysis

shifts the discussion to understand the significance of one's lived experiences on a

universal or societal level (Chang, 2008).

The autoethnographic reflection within this study contains participants' responses

from the focus group interviews for the researcher to reflect upon and delve into her

stereotypes and implicit biases. The interviewer used the focus group interviews to

understand her unexamined implicit biases and evaluate how the biases shape her

identity. By practicing Allen's (2011) conception of mindfulness, the researcher

recognized how her biases formed her stereotypes. Mindfulness of actively processing

statements by being "sensitive to [the] context" in which they were said, allowed the

researcher to develop a deeper cognizance of discursive practices of herself and her peers.

Participant Demographics

The sample consisted of 33 undergraduate students pursuing a degree at Baylor

University in Waco, Texas. Of the 33 participants, 28 participants identified as White,

three identified as Asian, one identified as Black/African American, and one identified as

Latino. While the study sample was not representative of the entire Baylor University undergraduate population nor large enough to make generalizations of all undergraduate students, the researcher did not seek to. According to Creswell (2013), "the intent in qualitative research is not to generalize the information," but to make clear certain aspects of what is being studied. For this study, the researcher sought to understand how race- and class-based biases affect undergraduate students' perceptions of Title I schools and students and therefore become barriers to teacher recruitment in Title I schools. It is important to note that the researcher's analysis of undergraduate perceptions relied on understanding how the intersectionality of race and class may predispose participants to implicit biases against Title I schools and students.

To give the reader a general idea of each participant's identity, the researcher named each one's classification, gender, race, and major. Aside from these characteristics, the participants' identities are confidential. Participants also had the option of receiving a completed copy of my thesis—although not every participant chose to do so. Participants were selected on a voluntary basis with the singular requirement of pursuing an undergraduate degree at Baylor University; specifically, selection occurred as a reward convenience sample. The researcher's thesis advisor emailed professors in the Communication Department, Journalism Department, Film and Digital Media Studies Department and a select number of College of Education professors on behalf of the researcher. The researcher wrote an explanatory letter about the study and sought out professors willing to offer extra-credit to participating students. A total of seven professors out of 50 offered extra credit to students who participated in the focus group interviews.

Organizational Profile

According to its own website, Baylor University is a Baptist institution in Waco, Texas within the region of Central Texas. Baylor's student population is 14,348 undergraduate students of whom 8% are African American, 65% White, 14% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 5% other/unknown ("Baylor University || About Baylor || Overview," n.d., "BaylorProud: Baylor named among nation's best colleges for African Americans," n.d.). However, the study's racial demographic differed from Baylor's total student racial demographic. In this study, 84% of participants were White (compared to 65% total), 3% of participants were African American (compared to 8% total), 9% of participants were Asian (compared to 8% total) and 3% of participants were Hispanic (compared to 14% total). Additionally, 9 participants (27%) of participants were men while 33 participants (73%) of participants were women. Within all undergraduate students, 42% are men while 58% are women ("How does Baylor University rank among America's best colleges?," n.d.). The researcher solicited participants from students taking communication, journalism, film and digital media studies, and education classes. The sample included students with majors from across the university because other departments, such as those in the business school, require certain classes across disciplines. Although this study does not seek to generalize across the university or among certain racial groups or degree plan, it is important to note that the breakdown of the study does not depict the overall population demographic of the university.

Schedule of Interview

Following a script which was consistent across all the interviews, the interviewer conducted a moderately scheduled interview which she recorded with an audiotape and

later transcribed. The interview focused on an overarching research question about undergraduate students' perceptions of Title I schools and sub-questions that provided space for participants to talk about their professional aspirations, their perceptions of educators in society, and their perceptions of educators as professionals. Throughout the interview, the researcher frequently used restatement and reflexive probes to verify statements made by the participants and asked participants to further explain their answers (Stewart & Cash, 2010). At the researcher's discretion, some interviews required more time on certain questions than others, depending upon the length of participant responses.

Interviews began with signing of consent forms that explained the purpose of the study. Then, the interviewer inquired about the participants' professional aspirations and whether they had any interest in teaching. Next, the interviewer introduced the problem of the teacher shortage and inquired whether knowing about the problem changed any participants' minds. By thoroughly introducing the problem, the researcher ensured that all participants had basic knowledge of how low-income, high-poverty, urban, rural, mostly-minority, and ELL students were most frequently affected by a lack of qualified teachers, and therefore an opportunity gap, in comparison to White, affluent, English-speaking students with access to qualified teachers. Next, the researcher shifted the focus of the interview to perceptions of educators in society. The final portion of the interview contained information about incentives provided by various government programs and school districts. (See Appendix A for a full schedule of interview questions.)

Pilot Study Adjustments and Validation

To "refine the interview questions and the procedures further," (Creswell, 2013, p. 165) the researcher conducted two pilot tests. Both pilot tests contained a convenience sample of participants. Each pilot test occurred with people from two separate extra-curricular organizations in which the researcher was involved. In conducting a pilot study with participants she already knew, the researcher recognized some of the challenges that emerged. Within the pilot interviews, some of the challenges included awkward pauses, stifled and self-monitored responses, and nervous giggling. Despite these challenges, the pilot study showed the researcher what questions needed adjustment and the best method of data collection. In the first pilot test, the researcher attempted to record the interview on her phone but quickly realized the phone's audio recorder did not record at a high-quality level nor have enough memory. The interviewer then purchased an audio recorder with significant data storage as recommended by Creswell (2013) and conducted the second pilot test with five additional people. The audio recorded clearly and concisely in the second pilot study.

The second pilot study allowed the interviewer to validate the interview schedule she created, test the recorder, and get feedback about the interview. The second pilot study happened without any problems or necessary changes and became the final interview schedule (Appendix B) for the interviews that comprised the study.

Procedures for Data Collection

Prior to each interview, the researcher set up five different manila folders labeled 1-5. Each folder contained an informed consent form with the number that matched the number on the folder. Although each participant received a copy of the informed consent

form via email to review prior to the interview date (Appendix A), participants did not

sign the form until they reviewed it in the presence of the researcher signing it at the day

and time of the interview. The interviewer placed the recorder in the center of the table in

the pilot tests and during the actual interviews.

Prior to starting the recording, the researcher provided a verbal notification that

the interview was beginning to participants. Within the opening script, the interviewer

explained each participant's right to leave the interview at any time but warned their

extra-credit would be forfeited if they chose to do so. By explaining the participants'

rights and guaranteeing confidentiality, the researcher immediately established rapport to

encourage candid responses (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher chose focus group interviews because they are "less intrusive" for

phenomenology and put less pressure on participants to answer immediately (Creswell,

2013, p. 176). Although not every participant had experienced the teacher shortage in

Title I schools, every participant had a perception of what a professional opportunity in a

Title I school might entail. By studying the perceptions of the 33 undergraduate students,

the researcher delved into how those perceptions might interfere with the undergraduates'

willingness to pursue a professional opportunity in a Title I school. Additionally, the

interviews aided the researcher in writing the autoethnographic component to explore

how her perceptions of Title I schools differed from those of her peers. The researcher

explored her implicit biases in the analysis to reflect on how her racial and economic

dominant group membership may influence how she sees Title I professional

opportunities, Title I schools, and Title I students and families.

Despite the overarching purpose of self-reflexivity, the storage and organization of the interviews were particularly important to maintain the quality of research. The researcher stored each interview by date and interview number to ensure organization and clarity: for example, Focus Group Interview #3 11-7. Additionally, the researcher stored the informed consent forms in a separate manila folder labeled "Interview Consent Forms" in which each interviewee's consent form were stapled together and labeled by date.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred in three parts. First, the researcher coded the interviews via teleconference and in-person meetings with her thesis adviser. The researcher and the thesis adviser read each interview and verbally discussed every response to reveal reoccurring themes. Co-coding the interviews ensured inter-coder reliability in the effort to decrease researcher bias.

The second step in the research analysis was categorizing emergent themes. The researcher identified themes by grouping all significant quoted words and phrases from the interviews together. Then, the researcher gave each quoted word or phrase grouping a theme. Finally, the researcher identified thematic components that fit the tenets of CRT and the theory of the culture of poverty.

Finally, in the third step of analysis the researcher to examined how her racial and class-based dominant group membership influenced her perceptions of Title I education and professional opportunities. The autoethnographic component takes shape in Chapter Five when the researcher alternates between the emergent theme, exemplar quotes, the demonstrated theory, and the autoethnographic component to make sense of her lived

experiences in a larger cultural context. Chapter Five is the culmination of thematic analysis and reflexive description of the researcher's conscious thoughts and experiences that reflect her own implicit biases of race and class.

Summary

Creswell's *Qualitative inquiry and Research Design* (Creswell, 2013) and Moustakas's *Phenomenological Research Methods* (Moustakas, 1999) are essential texts in creating a phenomenological study. By utilizing Creswell's (2013) framework for designing a qualitative study and following Moustakas's research on the purpose of heuristic study, the researcher designed a qualitative study to examine the phenomenon of race and class bias of Title I schools and the students they serve. This chapter was an overview of research design and rationale, the participant sample and organization profile, procedures, and rationale for data collection and analysis. In chapter four, the researcher presents her interview findings through thematic representation of exemplar quotes from study participants that capture the essence of the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of Research

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine race- and class-based biases that may exist in the discursive practices among undergraduate students about pursuing professional opportunities in Title I schools. Specifically, I hoped to gain a better understanding of how these may biases affect undergraduate students' desire and willingness to pursue a professional opportunity within a Title I school. Participants' responses to sub-questions throughout the interviews revealed six themes that reflected race- and class-based biases about Title I schools and the students they serve. Typically, the biases were rooted in the stereotypes that participants associated with Title I schools or students. Few participants directly said the students or families were inherently deficient because of their race or class, yet their "politically correct" verbiage that represented the concepts of colorblind racism, symbolic racism, and the doublespeak. Thus, the participants' value orientation to people of color and low-income people materialized in their discursive practices. To analyze the data, I read the transcripts several times and reviewed the codes I created with my co-coder to determine significant themes throughout the interviews. As I identified each theme, I explained how the discourse represents some form of race- or class-based bias.

Purpose of the Analysis

Due to the large number of undergraduate students at universities across the United States, this study was not designed to be representative of all undergraduate

students nor all Baylor University undergraduate students. The themes I discussed throughout this chapter were representative of the themes which emerged in the interviews as well as my lived experience as a dominant group member who actively talks to others about her career path. This study's aim was to showcase my experiences as an undergraduate student while pursuing a position as an educator of Title I, urban students who are predominantly low-income, minority students while also being an on-campus student recruiter for a Title I teacher preparation program.

As I prepare to transition to the analysis of exemplar quotes, I think it is important to present a disclaimer on my analysis. I recognize that the discussion of racial biases can be extremely polarizing in contemporary America, often resulting in the denial of racism or of personal shut down in the opportunity to discuss it. Talking about and recognizing one's own biases, racial or otherwise is deeply personal, so I believe it is unlikely that any individual would care to admit to being racist, having been an aggressor of a racial microaggression, or falling into the trap of stereotypes. As I discuss the exemplar quotes and present my own self-reflection through autoethnography, my goal was not to indict the participants or create a pedestal upon which to put my own opinions and behaviors. Rather, I hope that those who read my study become more mindful of their daily discursive practices when referring to Title I students and Title I schools. Although critical of racism itself, Ian Haney-López (2014) recognized that "most racists are good people" in day-to-day interactions (p. xvi). Similarly, I do not think any of the participants are bad people because of their responses. I recognize that without significant self-reflexivity and an understanding of the sociopolitical, historical, and economic factors informing racism today, it may be difficult for one to grapple with whatever

biases he or she might have. However, to answer the lofty call of "All Men are Created Equal," as a future educator and advocate I hope that our society becomes more dedicated to self-reflexivity to better understand how we might perpetuate racial and classist hierarchies in everyday talk. Therefore, to make contemporary America a nation of fair opportunity, citizens within it should consider how to advance civil rights issues. One way to do this is by taking steps to recognize racial bias in everyday talk to practice dismantling identity-based power dynamics between dominant and non-dominant groups.

Equally as important to others being self-reflexive, I practiced Allen's (2011) conception of mindfulness to become more cognizant of my own discursive practices as I prepare to become a teacher for a racially and economically diverse population of students. Public communication and daily discursive practices represent cultural practices rooted in social life—in other words, the language one uses reflects his or her values in the world (German, 2012). If an individual values equality and the meritocracy, he or she should consider carefully examining what his or her discursive practices may reveal. Then, when one becomes aware of the biases his or her language patterns reveal, he or she can take steps to speaking and avoiding essentialism to promote a more fair, equitable, and bias-free society. Although idealistic in tone, such mindfulness can reduce the fallacy that we live in a meritocratic, color-blind society by bringing personal awareness to one's biases which can develop into awareness of systemic biases and discrimination.

Pervasive yet Polarizing: Dealing with CRT in the Discursive Interpretation

The discussion of race and racism—directly or indirectly—can lead to respondents' self-monitoring their expressions per Goffman's (1959) impression

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management theory. In order to make participants responses as emergent as possible, I conducted focus group interviews with questions relating to Title I schools and students—which are frequently comprised of low-income and minority students. By conducting interviews which only referred to Title I students in a manner that was not leading, the apparent biases in everyday talk were self-emergent. Although my goal was to receive candid answers, I acknowledged that many people might answer questions per what they believed to be the "'right' answers (i.e., those that fit public norms)" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 21). Some responses used the rhetorical concept "doublespeak" to attempt to disguise potentially embarrassing or racially biased thoughts. German (2012) describes doublespeak as the choice of words or phrases that disguise facts or true feelings. For example, one doublespeak term that refers to people living under the poverty line is "fiscal underachievers." If one refers to people living under the poverty line as "fiscal underachievers," it is likely that he or she values the idea of the meritocracy by insinuating that those living in poverty are unable or unwilling to do the work necessary to be a "fiscal achiever" rather than underachiever.

Critical race theory depends on the assumption that racism continues to pervade contemporary society despite the end of the Civil Rights Movement. Unlike the explicit racialized intent of Jim Crow, colorblind racism allows Whites to rationalize the social, economic, and political status of racial minorities by "explains[ing] contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006 p. 14). It is for this reason that critical race theory is the most appropriate theoretical framework by which to analyze how colorblind racism, symbolic racism, and laissez-faire racism may have pervaded the focus group interviews. Although not every White, racially dominant group

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member may subscribe to racist, colorblind ideology, Bonilla-Silva said most will: "although some White[s] fight White supremacy and do not endorse White common sense, most subscribe to substantial portions of it in casual, uncritical fashion that helps sustain the prevailing racial order" (p. 21). It is by non-resistance and acceptance of the status-quo that unexamined White privilege continues to permeate society. The theoretical framework of CRT recognizes that racism in contemporary society has changed—Jim Crow is no longer; yet, the supposed colorblindness of the meritocracy perpetuates the idea that contemporary racial and economic inequity is the fault of those who are affected. According to Bonilla-Silva (2006), colorblind rhetoric has become popular today because "the normative climate in the post-civil rights era has made illegitimate the public expression of racially based feelings and viewpoints," thus making the continuation of White supremacy, intentional or not, in discursive practices intentional (p. 21).

In addition to the analysis of colorblindness in discursive practices based on the theoretical framework of CRT, I integrate explanation of how the theory of the culture of poverty pervaded the interviews. Tied to cultural deficiency stereotypes of Title I students, as well as others with non-dominant group characteristics, face multiple types of biases per the concept of intersectionality. Participants tended to assume Title I students or families were inherently deficient. Although CLS contends that blaming race for class-based oppression is misplaced, in CRT "class analysis alone cannot account for racial oppression" therefore I provide both race- and class-based analysis throughout this chapter (Barnes, 1990, p. 1868). The examination of racial biases does not negate the role class-based biases may have played in participants' responses. Therefore, taking class-

based biases into consideration clarified the discursive practices reflected in the participants' language in light of colorblind racism, symbolic racism, and laissez-faire racism.

The Role of Self-Reflexivity

Haberman and Post (1998) believe that while cultural competency training is important for teachers, excellent teachers are predisposed to certain inherent characteristics:

> (a) self-knowledge, a deep understanding of one's own cultural group and group affiliations; (b) self-acceptance, a strong self-esteem emerging from knowing one's identity; (c) relationship skills, respectful and caring ways of working effectively with diverse people; (d) community knowledge, a sense of the children's families and communities; (e) empathy, a sincere appreciation and sensitivity to the way children and their families perceive, understand, and explain their world; (f) cultural human development, an understanding of how the local community influences children's development; (g) cultural conflicts, an ability to recognize the discrepancies between local groups and traditional American values emphasized in schools; (h) relevant curriculum, an ability to connect general values to the specific ones in the community; (i) generating sustained effort, the strength to engage and motivate students in their schoolwork; (j) coping with violence, skills to prevent and de-escalate violent situations; (k) self-analysis, the capacity for reflection and growth; and (l) functioning in chaos, the skills necessary to function in a disorganized environment. (Ng, 2003, p. 388)

Haberman and Post's (1998) list of necessary skills to be a "star-teacher" are skills they believed would be inherent to "star teachers" (Ng, 2003). However, certain characteristics such as self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and empathy are characteristics that may mature as one explores the development of his or her majority or minority group identity (Martin & Nakayama, 2013; Salett, 1994). At some point in time, people may have explicit or implicit biases of those different than them, such as students in Title I schools. Even the

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best teacher is likely to have experienced a defining moment that shaped his or her thinking, which contributed to the development of the skills necessary to be a star teacher. The skills articulated by Haberman and Post are necessary but also developable. With classrooms growing in diversity and an increasing global economy, classrooms with culturally competent teachers are necessary. Therefore, those in the teaching workforce should consider actively self-reflecting to become more culturally competent by improving upon Haberman and Post's list of skills. To do this, the educator work force can develop self-reflexivity or the practice of introspection, self-analysis, and self-evaluation to understand who and what an individual is (Chang, 2008). An individual can also use systematic self-observation to make sense of one's personal cognitive processes, emotions, and motives that are usually "taken-for-granted, habituated, and/or unconscious matter[s]. . ." (Rodriguez and Ryave, 2002, p. 4). By developing self-reflexivity, teachers can practice becoming more culturally competent to develop the skills Haberman and Post (1998) deem necessary.

Much as students are expected to grow in their academic abilities, teachers—especially those who struggle with or fail to understand the relationship between identity and power dynamics in society—should consider holding themselves to a higher standard of becoming more culturally competent and aware. Therefore, as I explain each emergent theme I also reflexively acknowledge how my awareness of my implicit biases has developed overtime and how I utilize Allen's (2011) conceptualization of mindfulness to become a more culturally competent individual for my future students.

Thematic Presentation

Although most respondents referred only to Title I students' class identity rather than students' racial identity, the concepts of colorblind racism, symbolic racism, and laissez-faire racism defended the theoretical framework of CRT by supporting its central tenet that racism continued to function pervasively in society. Doublespeak, a rhetorical term describing a part of the language encoding process, described words with implied meaning in an effort to be politically correct. Through the identified forms of contemporary racism and the discursive practice of double speak, I analyzed participants' interview responses to understand the role race- and class-based biases may play in their perceptions of professional opportunities in Title I schools.

Throughout the interviews nearly all participants consistently expressed the beliefs that 1) teachers and teaching as a profession are less respected than it should be; 2) students in classrooms with caring and inspiring teachers perform the best; 3) most teachers in Title I schools choose to teach there to make an impact on students (although some participants voiced concern that teachers might not have a choice other than teaching in a Title I school); 4) Title I schools lack resources which contributes to a lack of student achievement and teacher satisfaction. Participants also consistently expressed gratitude for the teachers in their lives. Every interview had at least one or more participants who described a situation where a teacher had a significant impact on their professional or educational trajectory.

Despite the reverence participants had for their own teachers, various themes emerged in the interviews that either implicitly or explicitly revealed forms of race- and class-based stereotypes. Throughout this chapter, I explain each theme in context of how

it discursively reflected bias, stereotypes, and cultural generalizations about Title I

schools or the students they serve. I categorically present each theme as a cultural

stereotype or cultural avoidance with support from exemplar quotes and academic

literature accompanied by autoethnographic reflection.

Cultural Stereotype: Low-income students and neighborhoods tend to be dangerous.

Participants expressed the belief that Title I students are inherently dangerous and

posed a threat to those who chose to teach there. This stereotype is rooted in the notion of

cultural deficiency related to supposedly lesser cultural values associated with symbolic

racism and laissez-faire racism. Historically, African Americans and other people of

color have been represented in the media and in the public sphere as inherently dangerous

and violent and as being responsible for their social problems (Feagin, 2003). Although

most of the participants did not directly say something such as "Black students in Title I

schools tend to be dangerous," they did not have to, because colorblind racism functions

as a mechanism to blame seemingly non-racial characteristics for the flaws a participant

perceived with Title I schools and students.

A sophomore female Caucasian pre-business major said, "Because with Title I

schools, like a lot of the times it can be dangerous like there will be knife fights, there

will be gunshots, like there will be things happening that puts you in danger." She went

on to commend teachers who choose to teach in Title I schools by hailing them as people

with tremendous character who desire to make a difference. This participant spoke of

teachers in Title I schools as if they should be saviors for students when she said that

"[teachers] can then show that that they [the students] can make it farther and can be like

you [the teacher]". Such a mindset reflects the idea of the Great White Hope, a term that

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originally referred to a White boxer who could beat the first African-American heavyweight champion but today refers to the notion that only a white person can fix the problem ("A true champion vs. the 'Great White Hope,'" 2010). Although the participants' response was seemingly non-racial, the stereotype and truth is that most teachers tend to be middle-class, White women (Ng, 2003). When the participant said a student could make it farther to "be like you [the teacher]," she implied that the students, who were most likely students of color, needed to look up to the, most likely, White teacher because they did not have another role model to turn to. Without explicitly referencing the students' or parents' races, the participant assumed they were culturally deficient in a "colorblind" manner.

Most participants specifically addressed the supposed danger in terms of income level rather than race. However, one senior female Caucasian Communication major said she believed danger could arise for her as a young, White female: "Um in addition like the cons of working for a Title I school would be that as a Caucasian like young woman I feel like there's a safety concern. . .". This exemplar quote revealed explicit rather than implicit bias—the participant believed her students could want to hurt her because she was a "young Caucasian woman." The same participant also expressed the belief that interracial issues could cause tension and lead to fights between students of different races and could put White teachers in danger: "Probably in the classroom um they would probably struggle with biracial [interracial] issues um probably fights and depending like on the grade I know I've heard that a lot of Title I schools have issues with like violence and kids bringing items to school that they shouldn't be. And it's a different um experience than like teaching in a um higher school district." Based on the participants'

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responses, her biases continued to be rooted in symbolic and laissez-faire racism due to the assumption that students of color may wish to hurt her or other students out of resentment. Her continued response also has under tones of the concept of the Great White Hope. Since students might be fighting from interracial conflicts, the question is what students does the participant believe are fighting: White vs. a student of color, or students of color vs. students of color? Although many of the participants referred to students' income level, Title I schools often have students who are both low-income and of a racial minority status. The concept of intersectionality reveals that people are simultaneously to subject different kinds of bias based on various aspects of their identity which continues to support the concepts three forms of contemporary racism discussed in this paper. For students attending Title I schools, their lower socioeconomic status subjected them to additional bias for being deemed a part of the culture of poverty.

A junior female Asian management information systems and supply chain management major believed that Title I schools and students were dangerous said:

> Um see if I had the option between teaching there and a more um elite school, again like ----- [name redacted] said, it's a huge safety issue being in those neighborhoods. You don't know how the children are going to act, or what's going to happen in those schools. So the standards at other schools, um, how I guess the teachers conduct themselves, [and] the students conduct themselves. I think I would have, um, I think I would be more comfortable staying at those [elite] kind of schools.

In this exemplar quote, elite is bracketed because she previously said she would be prefer to teach at an elite school. In her response, the participant framed Title I students and schools as unpredictable. She believes non-Title I schools would be a more prestigious teaching position with better behaved teachers and students. This participant also recognized that she would be more

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comfortable teaching in a school that did not have Title I status. Historically, the face of blackness has been presented as dangerous and unpredictable similar to the respondent's way of stereotyping students. Although the participant does not directly reference the color of students' skin, she knew they were likely to be of a minority status due the usual demographic of Title I students. Therefore, her belief that students in these schools lacked the value and predictability necessary for safety showed how she bought into the symbolic and laissez racism of deficient cultural values.

Reflection. Unlike the participant who could not imagine herself teaching in a Title I school, I am the opposite—I cannot see myself teaching anywhere other than a Title I school and serving students who are neglected by the United States education system. Although I have never envisioned teaching in a Title I school as life threatening like the film *One Eight Seven* depicts or some respondents described, people in life (my parents, extended family, friends, and acquaintances) express their concern for my safety.

My parents regularly encourage me to take self-defense classes despite my reminder to them that "kids are kids" no matter their socioeconomic status or skin color. Similarly, my aunt has expressed that she is proud of me yet is worried that I could get hurt because I will be working in a "high crime area." When I have casual conversations with acquaintances (i.e. people I meet through work, mutual friends, etc.), the typical response I receive is that I am "very brave to teach in a school like that." I have struggled with many of these responses. I am convinced that they are prime examples of the racist discursive

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practices I examine in this essay, based on their symbolic and laissez-faire

racial assumptions with a colorblind code. However, I find it difficult to talk to

these individuals in my life about the implicit biases and stereotypes they are

perpetuating. Naturally, talking about racism is difficult—especially in a time

that often claims to be post-racial. While I am convinced that neither my

parents nor my aunt are il-intentioned, their lack of cross-cultural competency

training and experience with the meritocracy may have led them to feel this

way about low-income individuals. As an advocate and someone who hopes to

increase equity in our country, I need to improve on talking to those around me

when their racial biases are presenting themselves. Although it can be easier

and more concrete to speak only about the role class-based biases may play in

the way we talk, is it moral to ignore the racial bias in conversation for the sake

of changing someone's way of speaking? Although potentially a faster way of

convincing people of their biases by referring only to class, I would be doing a

disservice to the cause of promoting racial equity among people I know.

Cultural Stereotype: Low-income parents cannot or choose not to be involved with their

kids' lives and education.

Both racial stereotyping and the ideology of the culture of poverty reveal that

minority individuals and low-income individuals have inherent characteristics that dictate

their position in life based on how they are supposed to behave. One of these stereotypes

is that low-income parents cannot or choose not to be involved with their kids' lives and

education. Frequently, the myth of the meritocracy purports that low-income people

suffer from poverty because they do not have the skills nor work hard enough to improve

their social status (McNamee & Miller, 2009). When attempting to be politically correct and colorblind, people often refer to low-income individuals only in terms of class. In this study, participants consistently expressed their belief that students in Title I schools suffered from uncaring parents. For example, a junior female Caucasian communication major said, "Um I think some [of] these challenges are [that] there's not really parental support helping the kids want to succeed to." This participant discounted parents as not caring, and not involved, which indicates her belief that Title I parents lack certain values of care and support for their children.

Although some responses were phrased only in terms of class, analyzing the theory of the culture of poverty makes it appear to be closely linked to both symbolic racism and laissez-faire racism. For example a sophomore female Caucasian communication major said:

> Because if they don't have support at home, like either because their parents are abusive or neglect their kids or even just like they love their kids so much they want to be able work so they can provide food for their kids, so they're not home. After school programs and special organizations that like help bring in tutors to the classroom or student teachers to help those teachers at those schools, again, just show people that they care because the kids remember.

In this particular quote, the participant perpetuated various cultural and behavioral stereotypes associated with racial minorities and low-income individuals: they are violent, neglectful, and rarely home. In order for these students to feel love, they needed afterschool programs and caring teachers. Although not every low-income person is a racial minority, many people who identify as racial minorities are low-income. People of color are also stereotyped as being poor more often than their White counterparts.

In many ways, the theory of the culture of poverty is an extension of symbolic racism through colorblind language. A junior Caucasian male film and digital media major spoke of how a lack of parental involvement would affect students developmentally:

> I think one of the biggest issues still would be the attention span. Just cus you know students that are, I feel like students that are higher income usually um pay more attention in school because they've been taught to and they've been more I guess, they've been taught to pay more attention because they're somewhat forced to where I feel like lower income you know their parents aren't paying as much attention to them so they're allowed to do more activities or just not, are not pushed to their limit so they don't develop as fast which means they don't have enough attention span so it'd just be as hard.

Like this participant, simply because the theory of the culture of poverty does not reference people of color does not mean it lacks that implication. The tenets of the culture of poverty align with the language historically used to describe peoples of color inferiority, much as his language reflected. This participant assumes low-income, minority students will have less attention span which is a behavioral stereotype rooted in symbolic, yet colorblind racism. The language used to refer to low-income individuals shows class-based bias; however, this language has greater implications when recognizing who its cultural deficiencies have historically been assigned to—i.e. ethnic minorities.

An example of a common misconception that demonstrates race- and class-based bias is: "More black people are poor than White people because they spend all their money on drugs and alcohol." This stereotype depicts black people's position in life as their own fault caused by chemical dependence—in other words, a blame the victim mentality. They are being depicted as deserving of being poor because of their perceived poor choices. Similarly, discursive practices among high-profile officials and

newspapers have shifted the conversation of the cause of poverty from economic downturn to personal failure, mental illness, drug abuse and laziness (Pascale, 2013).

Reflection. The stereotype that low-income students' parents cannot or choose not to be involved in their students' lives is a stereotype I continue to struggle with. As an affluent class member in society, my parents were always involved throughout my educational experience. Growing up in a relatively small and affluent school district for elementary and middle school, they had close relationships with my teachers. Although it is the case that while I was in high school they were not as involved with my teachers, at least one of my parents always attended parent/teacher conferences and frequently asked how my classes were going or the usual "what did you learn at school today?" question. Growing up, I did not realize that my parents' educational experiences were atypical for our socioeconomic status: my mom attended college for one year only and my dad was a first-generation college graduate who finished his undergraduate degree at 36-years of age. For most of my teenage years, money or lack-there-of was rarely an issue. I grew up privileged to compete in equestrian sports, a sport known for its extreme expense. Although my family could not afford and would not allow me to have the nicest (most expensive) horse nor compete in the highest level of competitions, they spent tens of thousands of dollars providing me the opportunity to pursue a sport I had passion for; however, this lifestyle changed after the housing market crashed while I was in high school. My experience with my parents led me to believe there was no excuse for anyone's parents not to be involved in their kids academic and extracurricular lives. Although I did not realize it at the time, I allowed this perspective to permeate my perception of some of my friends' parents. In high school, most of my friends were either

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White or Latino. Although close with each group of friends, I did not build any relationships with my Latino friends' parents. Unlike many of my White friends, I did not think I saw them at school events or feel as though I could approach them at there. I essentialized my friends' parents as lacking community and parental involvement and thus associated that characteristic with the majority population of Latino families in my high school. Looking back now, I understand that I failed to realize that my parents' small business owner lifestyle allowed their work schedules to be flexible while providing plenty of income for me to continue my expensive sport. Up until this past summer, I maintained the perspective that low-income parents of color are less generally less involved than they would be if they "cared" about their students' education.

Two years ago during the summer between my sophomore and junior year, I applied and was accepted as a summer teaching fellow with Breakthrough Collaborative – Austin, a non-profit program whose mission is to create first-generation college graduates. I went into that first summer with hopes to inspire my students, see academic gains, advocate for their needs, and be a mentor. I expected my students to have parents who cared little about their children's' education. Although I failed to realize it at the time, my perception of these parents was rooted in symbolic, colorblind racism and the concept of the Great White Hope. Through symbolic racism, I assumed they lacked certain cultural values that I thought successful students had to have.

In some ways, that expectation was fulfilled. One of my students experienced patches of homelessness and was frequently shuffled between his mother and grandmother. Another one of my students had an abusive older sister who had been in and out of juvenile detention for hitting, biting and breaking bones of her siblings when

she became angry. To an outsider with little context, both situations seemed to re-enforce the stereotype that low-income parents care little about their students' education. In reality, my student who sometimes experienced homelessness had a mother and grandmother who spoke with me via text and email about my student's progress as frequently as they were able to, given their circumstances.

When my other student first revealed he experienced abuse at home from his sister, my initial thought was "Where are your parents?!" I soon learned it was his mother who sent her own daughter to juvenile detention and often tried to block him from his sister's rage. I immediately assumed the worst of these students' parents but did not learn my lesson until the following summer. I now realize I fell trap to cultural deficiencies and stereotypes about my students' parents as part of the symbolic and laissez-faire racism associated with a colorblind perspective.

As a returning teacher, I helped lead a nine-person team for an interdisciplinary project which was a leaving based pilot program. I vividly remember the last day of our two-week training prior to teaching: In a small round circle with my team members as our final conversation of training, I urged each of my teammates to remember that this summer "we will be the biggest advocates for our students and sometimes the only advocates they have." Essentially, my statement was the essence of the Great White Hope—I believed that only we (summer teaching fellows) could pay close enough attention to our students to advocate for their needs. I assumed, while non-cognizantly following symbolically racist ideology, that my students' parents did not have the same caring that my parents did for me; therefore, I was their only hope. As an aspiring educator, I still believe we must be advocates for our students. However, because of my

preconceived notions of low-income and minority parents' care for their students, I

falsely assumed that I (or my team members) would be the only ones able to make sure

our students received the attention they needed and had someone to look out for them.

Throughout the summer, I read literature about race- and class-based biases, held parent-

teacher-student conferences and became immensely impressed by my students' parents'

tenacity to come to conferences, text with me as needed, and communicate with my

broken Spanish. By the end of the summer I came to realize how classist and inherently

racist my assumptions were about my students' parents and that I ultimately did a

disservice to my students and their parents by assuming they lacked the cultural values to

advocate for their children. Although this theme directly references class, my

assumptions implied racially driven undertones. I knew that nearly all of my students

were racial minorities, and I also knew that the majority of students in urban, Title I

educational settings are racial minorities. I became complicit in my own implicit biases of

assuming that the norm for low-income, minority parents was to be disengaged with their

students' education rather than understanding they cared just as much for their kids as my

parents cared about me.

Cultural Stereotype: The salary isn't worth the hassle for everything that I would have to

put up with.

A senior male Caucasian accounting and entrepreneurship major said, "I just don't

think it's worth it." Participants continually expressed the sentiment that teaching in a

Title I school would not be worth the salary nor other taxing factors such as teaching kids

who may have complicated home lives or working in a potentially higher crime area. A

junior female Asian business major believed that choosing to teach in a Title I school

would be professionally unsustainable because the school and the students would be inherently difficult because of their Title I status (i.e. low-income). She said: ". . . I would never choose to go into a school that I knew was going to be more difficult. . . Personally on a professional day to day that would really wear me down, so I wouldn't choose it." This particular response calls into question: why will a Title I school be more difficult in her perspective? Perhaps the respondent was referring to lack of resources, but based on her prior responses it is likely she was referring to the students within the school. The participants word choice of "be more difficult" and "wear me down" implied that the students in Title I schools had some type of deficiency that would make teaching them more difficult which implied both symbolic and laissez-faire racism. Both statements implied that these students would be more difficult to teach because of their behavior thus indicating her belief that they were culturally deficient compared to students who were not low-income or people of color.

Other participants expressed the belief that low-income students do not care about their studies and that they have disrespectful attitudes which would make teaching in a Title I school more frustrating than rewarding. For example, a senior female Caucasian communication sciences disorder major insinuated that a teacher would feel inadequate at their job because of his or her students are inherently more difficult to teach because of the students' Title I status. This participant said:

> I feel like you'll always feel like you can [not] do enough especially
> when you have those low-income children that are disrespectful or
> um they're just hard to, what's the word, um it's just hard for you to
> continue like helping children who don't want to learn or like whose
> families don't really support or care about them enough.

This participants' response is almost explicit bias except she did not directly

refer to the students' skin color but conveyed her belief through colorblind

language. In assuming that "low-income children are disrespectful" and "don't

want to learn," she stereotyped them behaviorally and culturally. Symbolic

racism and laissez-faire racism in a colorblind tone permeated her response just

like many other responses. Ultimately, her response is rooted in an

individualistic perspective of the meritocracy: students have the ability to take

control of their education to "pull themselves up by their boot straps" yet do

not because they do not want to learn.

Another participant who was a junior female Caucasian media business

major expressed the belief that teaching in a Title I school would offer her little

personal gain. In the following exchange between the interviewer and the

participant, the participant attempted to be politically correct through

colorblindness by vaguely referring to "the environment" and "challenges" in a

Title I school. However, her choice of words communicated a hegemonic

function by essentializing all Title schools and students. The following

exchange occurred:

> Participant: I definitely don't think it would be for me either. I think
> that the cons outweigh the pros in that and I think for me the only
> benefit would be to see the impact that I could possibly make but it's
> not always guaranteed, and so I just don't think that, in that
> environment, I would be a benefit for it.
>
> Interviewer: Great. Thank you for your response. Could you explain
> the, what you see as the pros and cons in that situation?
>
> Participant: Yeah in the pros being like the balance in salary, the
> incentives that um different districts may give. But I think because
> the cons are like the challenges that you face. So like the
> environment you're putting yourself in, the likelihood of not really

getting much of a response from students um and just overall the challenges. . .

The participant's response expressed the concepts of the Great White Hope, and symbolic/laissez-faire racism through cultural deficiencies. She assumed she would not necessarily see student improvement (cultural deficiency— students lacked the ability to improve in classes, lost-cause mentality by the participant). The participant also engaged in the discursive practice of doublespeak. She once referred to "*that* environment" and later "*the* environment" (italics indicated emphasized word) which implied double meaning. Although unlike other forms of doublespeak, the word "environment" does not have implicit meaning in all situations, but she used the word to convey a negative connotation of Title I schools, which include low-income students of color, thus functioning as doublespeak.

The biggest variation between participants' responses within this theme was whether participants' responses were framed in terms of not benefitting themselves or not benefitting their students. Some participants believed teaching in a Title I school would not benefit them personally while others believed they would be unable to help the students in Title I schools. However, the defining characteristic of this theme was that the participants consistently referenced characteristics they believed were intrinsic to Title I students, which made them a hassle to teach or unteachable and therefore not worth their time. *Reflection.* Although the thought "it would not be worth teaching in a Title I school" had never crossed my mind before, I believe that if I had been asked a similar question a year ago my response would have been the same as some

participants. Throughout the last two years, I have questioned whether I would be a "good enough" teacher to make a tangible impact on my students. I worried I would not provide them with the academic rigor or opportunity they needed to "pull themselves out of" the cycle of poverty. Up until the last two years, I saw the world, our economic system and schools as meritocratic. I lacked understanding of the role that social factors, cyclical poverty, racism and microaggressions played in the daily lives of people of color and hoped my teaching could make the difference to help them to a new status. Although I had good intentions, like my peers I identified myself as part of the Great White Hope. Essentially, I thought I had certain skills my students needed to learn (that their parents could not teach them) in order to break cyclical poverty but I did not recognize the various forms of systemic racism pitted against them.

As I have become increasingly aware of educational equity issues and felt further compelled to serve in a Title I school, I have had the opportunity to discuss my career choice with friends and family, professional adults, professors, peer undergraduates, and others throughout Texas and Illinois. Although I have received much positive feedback about my career choice, I have also encountered criticisms from different individuals who were questioning why I would choose to enter a profession that is underpaid and is known to have obstacles to attaining personal and student success. I noticed trends of language choice that appeared to contain racial and classist undertones in conversations of both support and discouragement. Often, these assumptions bothered me, yet other times I caught myself shaking my head up and down, affirming these generalizations

despite my lived experience in the classroom. I continue to be mindful of doing such and actively calling attention to my own behavior through self-reflexivity. I challenge myself to break stereotypes when individuals, peers or my elders, stereotype students and degrade the work they are capable of. I challenge myself to talk about race- and class-based biases of Title I students, families, and schools. By being mindful and recognizing that I still have steps to take to identify my biases, I continue to become more culturally competent to work with my students. gre, but I have taken steps to become more inclusive in my discursive practices and more culturally competent for my students which I plan to continue doing.

Cultural Stereotype: Low-income students' lives outside of school would prevent their success and I'm ill equipped to handle that.

Most participants in the interviews believed that few students in Title I schools would be teachable or have future success in life due to their socioeconomic status and supposed lack of drive to achieve. Many of the participants also associated students' economic status with familial problems such as abuse, starvation, cleanliness, and lack of parental support/involvement, which is indicative of symbolic and laissez-faire racism through colorblind language. A junior female Caucasian corporate communication major said, "They don't have as much drive a lot of the times and a lot of them just have very difficult family lives and so that may translate into their school life". This participant perceived Title I families (and was therefore most likely referring to low-income families of color due to the demographic breakdown) through perceived cultural deficiencies associated with symbolic and laissez-faire racism. She saw them as not motivated—"they don't have as much drive" and lacking family values—"difficult family lives" which are both 'values' historically associated with Whiteness, individualism, and the meritocracy.

A junior female Caucasian media business major said:

> I think going off that too just like being one of the biggest
> challenges you face in that environment is being able to inspire kids
> to want to do well. Because going all the way back to like the
> expectation portion like you may, with like your background your
> qualifications, you may be qualified to teach your course but if
> they're [students] not inspired to learn it then that doesn't benefit
> them in any way.

This participant stereotyped the students in the same symbolic way many of
her peers did: students do not want to learn despite the educator in front of
them. In this described scenario, the participant believed that the teacher who
symbolized the Great White Hope would not be appreciated because of her
students' lack of drive and inspiration. She also engaged in the discursive
practice of doublespeak by referring to "that environment." Although not
explicitly stated, the word carried a negative connotation that low-income,
minority students in Title I schools make their own success and inspiration
very difficult or nearly impossible.

Another participant who was a senior female Caucasian integrated studies major
said the students would need to be very determined. However, she then went on to
engage in the victim blaming rhetoric that became prevalent during the 1980's: "I guess, I
don't know the first thing is like determination like they have to be determined to get out
of like the place that they're in like they have to be determined to not be I guess like their
parents. . .". In the interaction, the participant solely placed blame on the parents by
assuming they had done something wrong to be put in that situation. In reality, poverty is
cyclical and generational (Noguera, 2011).

Another participant who was a junior female Asian management information systems and supply chain management major recalled stories a friend had told her about working in local Waco schools. She said: "I've heard so many problems like they don't have lunch to eat at school, their parents are in jail, um they don't care about their studies. Maybe it's because you know there's so much going on at home, they don't, they can't invest in anything else - school or extracurriculars." This participant also thought that because of these challenges, a teacher's job would go beyond the classroom: "And so I think a teacher who works with them has to be there um through thick and thin. It's not just a teaching job anymore," meaning that a teacher would have to do everything in their power to help them succeed. The participant's response portrayed the necessity of a teacher in a Title I school behaving as a surrogate mother or father. By being there for students through thick and thin, a teacher would become more like a parent than teacher. Her response reinforced the concept of the Great White Hope teacher complex in which a teacher needed to behave more as a parent than student.

In Title I schools, where 40% or more of students are low-income, there certainly may be additional challenges students face because of their income level. The participants were not necessarily wrong in assuming some students might come to school hungry or abused or having not had a shower in a few days. However, essentializing all students of being a certain way or lacking certain support at home indicates a colorblind, symbolic and laissez-faire racism conception of Title I students.

Reflection. As an incoming educator and member of society I believe educators and everyday people alike must not essentialize or stereotype all students in Title I schools in the way revealed in the interviews. However, I have found myself stereotyping in such a

way as well. Not all children in Title I schools have families who cannot afford food or families who abuse their children. Not all children have parents who do not care about their students' success—in my experience, it is the opposite! Parents care, advocate, and do their best to aid their students in whatever way they can. There will always be students, rich or poor, who suffer from complicated home lives. To change the conversation about Title I students I believe that we all need to be cautious to avoid the ideology of the culture of poverty because it perpetuates symbolic and laissez-faire racism by enforcing the social hierarchy of power dynamics.

As I stated previously, I am guilty of assuming my students would all have difficult home lives with little parental support. I have come to realize that although it is likely my students may face more challenges than their affluent peers, I cannot assume that these challenges occur because something is inherently deficient with their life style or familial upbringing. Poverty certainly causes emotional and physical duress in certain situations; however, people living in poverty do not have characteristics that make them inherently deficient. Four years ago, as a senior in high school, my responses would have been very similar to the participants in my study. I thought little about my identity as a majority group member—at the time, I had no understanding of what it meant to be a dominant or in-group member—and therefore, my identity was far from examined. Per Hardiman's (2003) majority identity development theory (Salett & Koslow, 1994), I fluctuated between unexamined identity and passive acceptance of the way my majority membership privileged me. Although I did not understand how my identity aided me in life, I realized I had significant economic privilege compared to many of my peers. However, through a colorblind perspective I saw myself deserving of all that I had or my

parents gave me: being able to afford equestrian sports because my parents worked hard and being in Honors/Advanced Placement courses because I was smart enough and deserving. I did not understand how my race privileged and eased my access to Honors/Advanced Placement courses or how the Eurocentric curriculum enforced my own peoples' success and dominance.

I failed to realize many of my accomplishments were aided by the forms of social, cultural, and economic capital that I inherited with my birth into an upper middle class White family. Some examples of this capital include my parents knowledge of the need to call counselors to put me in honors track classes, counselors' assumptions of my ability to perform in these classes, and my parents' financial status that provided my brother and me with cars to be involved in extracurricular activities, stay early/go home late for tutoring, and be involved with our community.

Cultural Avoidance: I am ill-prepared to handle these kids and these schools.

A variety of participants expressed the belief that teaching in a Title I school would be culture shock because of their lack of experience relating to people living with dire economic needs. A sophomore female Caucasian pre-business major unknowingly referenced (perhaps unintentionally) the ideology of the culture of poverty: "I mean I know for me like I did not grow up, grow up in a like low-socioeconomical like culture. . ." she went on to recognize that it would be difficult for her to assimilate to an environment where her students might not have everything they need. Her response indicated a colorblind reference that was embedded in symbolic racism through the reference to the culture of poverty. She implicitly assumed that those attending Title I schools were culturally different, and thus it would be difficult to adapt to. This

participant expressed the belief that individuals with low socio-economic statuses have a

distinct culture that makes them inherently different from her. Her description echoed

other participants' beliefs that working in a Title I school would be a "culture shock." For

example, this participant said "it would be really, really hard for me to comprehend and

get used to that [low socio-economic status culture] really quickly" in a Title I school.

The participant's response showed that she believed Title I schools had a distinct culture

due to their income.

Another sophomore female Caucasian corporate communication major thought it

would be intimidating and particularly difficult for Baylor students to work in Title I

schools:

> So I think it would be very much for me initial culture shock in a
> way just because it's something I think most students especially at
> Baylor are not familiar with. And so I think that would be really,
> like I said earlier, really intimidating but I think um I would have the
> perspective of being among the mission field.

This participant also implied that low-income individuals have different cultural values

which continued to develop the argument of symbolic racism's pervasive nature in

discursive practices through its colorblind focus. Although this theme does not directly

reference race or class, it inherently implies both race- and class-based biases. First,

participants insinuated those living in poverty have a distinct culture that would be

difficult and intimidating to adjust to. Although the culture of poverty seems to be

referring to only class, the majority of Title I students in urban areas are also racial

minorities.

Another participant who was a senior female Caucasian human resource

management major was concerned with the sustainability of working in a Title I school.

She worried that it would be too emotionally draining "to see kids who don't have food or they don't have proper clothing." This participant essentialized all students in Title I schools as suffering from a lack of resources much as I assumed my students' parents cared little about their education. Such assumptions support cultural deficiency stereotypes in symbolic and laissez-faire racism. The participant also saw being use to an affluent life-style as being a barrier to connecting with students in Title I schools: "I think it would be rough. I mean like she was saying we're so used to like an affluent life style and like you can have compassion for someone but being able to relate to someone is very, very different." Here, the participant showed an us versus them mentality that showed a potential lack of cross-cultural competency.

Few participants verbally recognized that there might be racial tension between themselves and the students. However, one participant who was a senior female Caucasian accounting major insinuated her success would depend on how resentful her students would be to her as an "established Caucasian person" and that younger students would be less concerned about the color of her skin. The participant said

> I'm Caucasian and so I think going into a lower [socioeconomic status school], it depends what age that, I would think like older kids who have grown up with that like divide might be a little bit resentful to like a older established Caucasian person coming in, but then I think the younger ones they just are like looking for stability.

As the interviewer, this participant's recognition of potential racial tension was both encouraging and concerning. First, her response was encouraging because she avoided the colorblind rhetoric of many of her peers and recognized the role that race plays in society. However, the use of the word "resentful" implies that low-income students who are minorities resent White teachers

because they are supposedly more successful than the students or their parents which shows another example of the Great White Hope perception. Her response indicates that she believes she would not be able to handle teaching in a Title I school because of the racial tension felt between White teachers and low-income minority students.

Reflection. In my experience thus far, I do not believe I have felt resentment from my students for being Caucasian and pursuing a college degree. However, that does not mean I have not had situations where I felt awkward talking about race or the privileges I was afforded growing up. Throughout my two summers with Breakthrough Collaborative-Austin, I was often asked about my experience with riding horses and attending Baylor. I understand the sport of equestrian is a symbol of status due to the expense of riding. I also realize that Baylor is an expensive, private institution with certain stereotypes of the student body including rich, White, affluent, conservative and privileged. However, unlike some of my peers in the interviews I found myself more at ease with students—many of whom were of a low-income socioeconomic status and were of Hispanic descent. My high school was significantly diverse in its racial and economic breakdown (58% of students were racial minorities and 29% low-income) (*Illinois at-a-glance report card: Community High School*, 2012). Coming to Baylor where most of my peers were White and affluent felt more shocking than working with students who were low-income and racial minorities. Therefore, I never felt as though I would be unable to

connect with my students because of their race or economic status in a way

that would hinder my ability to teach.

Cultural Avoidance: I want to "keep my hands clean."

Metaphorically laden, to keep one's "hands clean" means to not be doing the

work associated with Title I schools or ending the qualified teacher shortage. Although

many found value in solving the problem of the qualified teacher shortage, they preferred

not to be involved. This theme emerged during the portion of the interview in which I

explained the phenomenon of the qualified teacher shortage in Title I schools and then

asked participants if knowing about the shortage made them more inclined to pursue a

professional opportunity within a Title I school. Some participants expressed interest in

donating to the cause while others believed general national awareness would attract

people other than themselves to the cause. A senior female Caucasian corporate

communication major simply said: "Um it doesn't really change my opinion either. I

think it's a good thing to be aware of," indicating an affinity to solving the problem but

lacking the interest to taking personal steps to solve the problem. Another participant who

was a junior male Caucasian film and digital media major expressed interest in donating

money to solve the issue but did not explain how he thought donating money would help.

He said: "I would not pursue a professional opportunity so I could donate money

instead." This mentality demonstrated that although the participant thought the qualified

teacher shortage deserved attention, specifically monetarily, he had little desire to be

directly involved.

A junior female Caucasian media business major had concerns that she would not be willing to put in the time and effort necessary to be a good teacher, although she believed she was capable of doing the job:

> Yeah I think for me I still wouldn't consider it either. I think it's important to encourage people to get involved if they can, and if that's something that they're interested in doing but being in that setting I don't think I would be right for it. I don't think that students would benefit from me being there; in a sense that, not that I wouldn't be capable of like teaching, but I just don't think that I would be able to take the time and effort necessary to contribute to their overall education.

Despite this participant's confidence in her own teaching abilities, she doubted her commitment to the cause. This is a convenient way to keep one's hands clean.

Another senior female Caucasian marketing major thought additional compensation for teachers in Title I schools was valuable for teachers already in that position. However, she did not want to be involved because of the salary:

> I think for me since the profession I'm getting into would be, you know, at [the] level [of] or higher than a teacher's salary at least, business profession, and that's where my interests is to begin with and so I don't think it would interest me more than I currently am based on compensation. But that being said I do think it [incentives] is a valuable resource for teachers to have to go to those sorts of places.

For this participant, there was an acknowledgement that money was a driving factor in her interest. She recognized that incentives could be valuable to people who would consider teaching. A sophomore female Caucasian pre-business major said: "I probably still wouldn't because that's not my passion and where I think I would be best at. But definitely like be an advocate for that and like supportive within my friends and like making sure the public knows that for other people." This participant wanted to avoid actually teaching; however, she cited lack of passion as being the primary factor for

her disinterest. The theme of wanting to keep one's "hands clean" symbolizes that participants do not want to do the "dirty" and difficult work that comes along with teaching in a Title I school.

Reflection. Throughout high school and into college, I had little interest in being in the classroom as a teacher. Like many of my peers in the interviews expressed, I loved my teachers in high school and appreciated all they did for me. However, I did not like the title of teacher for myself and it had a lot to do with how much respect teachers get in society (i.e. little) and their yearly salary. I recognized that a teacher's yearly salary cost as much as some of my friends were spending to buy a single horse. During my time at Baylor, specifically within the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core, my lack of interest in teaching continued but I began to realize I could not be successful in educational policy or leadership without experience in the classroom. I learned of Teach For America and met with a recruiter who introduced me to Breakthrough. My thought was, "Cool, this will give me the experience I need to avoid teaching." I could have never been so wrong. I taught at Breakthrough and fell in love with the profession and with my students. Leaving at the end of the summer was gut wrenching but I knew it would not be my last time with these students. I returned for a second summer and worked on refining my style, yet tried to recognize all I had to learn. My first summer, I kept trying to tell myself that teaching was just "okay". I tried to convince myself not to love it—I was determined to have a job making over $80,000 with a title that sounded more important than: "teacher". I look back and cringe at my naiveté. Although I will never know how much I love being in the classroom until I am there full-time, I already dread leaving the classroom to go to graduate school. I dream that I can find a job where I manage to spend

some time in the classroom but also work to create macro systemic change. I have sincere interests in policy and am concerned with what the current political climate might mean for our nation's most deserted students. I enjoy research and advocacy work, but I also love working with students. For a long time, I wanted to "keep my hands clean" from the dirty work intertwined with teaching. Today, I am the opposite—I desire to do the dirty work but feel called that I am meant to work beyond the classroom as well. Where that vocational calling will take me is to be determined, but for now I try not to plan my future too far ahead and let my path emerge.

Summary

Five major themes emerged from exemplar statements which reflected race- and class-based biases in undergraduate students' discursive practices in focus group interviews. Although seemingly discouraging because of the implicit biases revealed, the thematic analysis offered a strategy to recognizing and addressing stereotypes. Specifically, participants who requested a copy of the thesis may recognize their own quotes in the exemplar examples and reflect on how their discursive practices represented biases, thus providing an opportunity for the development of mindfulness.

Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, recommendations, and implications for future research. A discussion of the relationship between the emergent themes and the existing literature—or lack thereof—is an essential component in concluding the study. Also, a concluding summary highlights key insights from participants' responses and summarizes my own proposed recommendations for solving race- and class-based biases.

CHAPTER FIVE

Recommendations and Implications

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine race- and class-based biases that may exist in the discursive practices among undergraduate students about pursuing professional opportunities in Title I schools. This chapter contains three sections: an overview of the study, recommendations for addressing race- and class-based biases, and implications for future research. The researcher also addressed how the recommendations could lessen the role that race- and class-based biases served as a barrier to ending the qualified teacher shortage.

Summary of the Study

Toni Morrison (1992) said: "It [race] seems that it has a utility far beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another, and has assumed a metaphorical life so completely embedded in daily discourse that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than ever before" (Young & Braziel, 2007). Morrison among other scholars (McKnight, 2008; Omi, n.d.), recognized that race—whether implicitly or explicitly—continues to function in everyday discourse. Class-based biases are also apparent in everyday discursive practices—the theory of the culture of poverty permeates the language many individuals speak about low-income people or those living in poverty.

Race- and class-based biases function as structures that perpetuate power dynamics in everyday talk by reinforcing the sociopolitical power that majority group

members have. Data collected in this qualitative phenomenological study revealed language practices which reflected participants' dominant group membership. The tenets of critical race theory reflect the explicit or implicit ways power dynamics are apparent along lines of race. Although not always intentional, implicit biases tend to be revealed in discursive practices despite being seemingly politically correct.

Some readers of this thesis may question the validity of the study since few participants desired to teach—after all, it is reasonable for all people to have interests and passions other than teaching. Although race- and class-based biases are certainly not the only reason individuals do not want to teach, their pervasive nature in society could be a factor in why some participants did not teach in a Title I school. Other readers may wonder why it mattered that participants stereotyped Title I students and schools— stereotypes are rooted in facets of truth, are they not? Although stereotypes about Title I schools and students were not wholly unreasonable, the extent to which they guided the interviews demonstrated that most participants had essentialized all students and families to be a certain way—much like the theory of the culture of poverty or intellectual/physical assumptions about people of color. Therefore, the stereotypes indicated an imperative need for the researcher to understand the cause of such statements. Doing so aided the researcher in understanding barriers to recruitment in under-served schools. By recognizing the role that race- and class-based biases may serve in Title I teacher recruitment, future teacher recruitment strategies and educator prep programs can take this additional barrier into account to promote equity and inclusivity.

Addressing race- and class-based biases in contemporary society will be difficult due to their inherently political and divisive nature. The fallacy that America today is a colorblind, meritocracy is represented in political discourse on both the Right and the Left. However, such a view discounts the sociopolitical, historical, and economic factors that have re-enforced race- and class-based biases and oppression on non-dominant groups today. Despite the steps already taken to making the United States a more equitable and inclusive society, readers should consider taking steps to recognize their own privileges as well as their role in buying into race- and class-based stereotypes. However, doing so will likely be difficult for many dominant group members. Luis Urrieta summarized why privilege is difficult to grapple with by reflecting on his own male privilege: "It is difficult in these situations to recognize and counter ones privilege, and that helps me understand White privilege a bit. Why would I want to, or take the initiative to give up something that benefits me?" As long as race- and class-based biases continue to inform the way power is communicated through everyday talk, educators, policy makers, and non-educators alike should consider implementing the various recommendations that follow.

Educators

With an increasing global economy and classrooms which represent America's growing diversity, educators should consider these changes as indicators for a need to develop new, more culturally competent ways to teach. Based on this qualitative phenomenological study, two main groups should consider reflecting on how their discursive practices and teaching methods might reinforce power dynamics: pre-

service/current educators and educator preparation programs. In the context of the

emergent themes, addressing race- and class-based biases is essential because

"unfounded assumptions [about low-income, children of color] can be dangerous to the

outcome of a student affected by this type of marginalization" (Carbone, 2010, para. 27).

To combat the biases these children face, Carbone (2010) recommended:

> In the classroom, there are many strategies and approaches to
> counter the classist and/or racist marginalization of
> students. Spradlin and Parsons (2008) suggest that teachers take
> steps to explore their own beliefs about social class and determine
> the potential influence those beliefs could have on curriculum or
> teaching style. It is important that the teacher contribute to the
> marginalized student's academic achievement in the most positive
> way possible. In formulating lessons, teachers must recognize the
> impact of class status on their students and reflect a more relatable,
> realistic portrayal of the American lifestyle. (2010, para. 29)

In essence, teachers should consider taking steps to understand their own influences on

their ideology of social class and race. Teachers can do this by doing personal research

into the development of discursive practices about race and class. Pre-service/current

educators might also consider returning to Haberman and Post's (1998) list of skills

essential to being a star-teacher (Ng, 2003). Despite Haberman and Post's (1998) belief

that these characteristics are innate to some educators, as a majority group member's

sense of identity develops (Hardiman, 2003), he or she can develop the skills described

by the researchers. Self-awareness is the first step to moving beyond the unexamined

identity and identity acceptance phases of Hardiman's (2003) racial majority identity

development theory (Salett & Koslow, 1994). With self-awareness and mindfulness, an

individual may closely examine their identity leading to: redefinition of his or her

majority group membership by advocating for minorities, choosing to work to create a

more inclusive environment, and by actively advocating for civil rights in tangible ways

(Salett & Koslow, 1994). Examples of skills educators can hone include increasing culturally competency: self-knowledge or "a deep understanding of one's own cultural group and group affiliations," relationship skills to develop "respectful and caring ways of working effectively with diverse people," community knowledge by holding "a sense of the children's families and communities," empathy or "a sincere appreciation and sensitivity to the way children and their families perceive, understand, and explain their world," cultural human development to understand "how the local community influences children's development," and understanding cultural conflicts by "recognizing the discrepancies between local groups and traditional American values emphasized in schools" (Ng, 2003, p. 388). Ultimately, if pre-service educators and current educators choose to take time to reflect on how they talk about Title I students, essentialized them, or ascribe different values to their families, race- and class-based biases in education could be lessened through practicing mindfulness.

Institutions of higher education should also feel an obligation to develop courses and programs of study that inform non-education students and pre-service educators of the role that everyday talk places in reinforcing power dynamics. Although it is unlikely that class alone would change stereotypes education students and other students may have of Title I schools and students, analysis of the role that race- and class-based biases play can insight newfound self-reflexivity. In knowing and understanding the sociopolitical and sociohistorical factors still at play in contemporary America, students will have the opportunity to be advocates for non-dominant groups—even if only in the forum of friendly conversations with a grandparent, friend, or acquaintance. Institutional measures that cultivate the characteristics described by Haberman and Post (1998) and Allen's

(2011) conception of mindfulness can be used as springboard to develop best or better practices among students no matter their program of study. Ultimately, educators who design EPP's (educator prep programs) and pre-service educators within EPP's may feel a greater sense of accountability to monitor how they're talking about Title I schools and students, which can reduce stereotypes that ascribe negative characteristics to Title I education.

Policy Makers

Another potential solution lies at a macro-level approach in which new educational policies are designed to "transform preservice teachers' attitudes and perceptions such that they better satisfy the needs of urban, minority children or attempt to target individuals seemingly predisposed to teaching in urban classrooms. . ." (Ng, 2003, p. 390). However, policy development is inherently political. Unfortunately, race- and class-based biases are frequently denied in society with low-income individuals or people of color being deemed deviant and thus deserving of their socioeconomic status. This political nature of creating policy which addresses race- and class-based biases though valuable, would be likely to create tension among law makers and teachers who have not yet examined how identity influences power in society.

However, simply because developing policy may be difficult does not mean it is not necessary to continue addressing race- and class-based biases. Based on the data I have collected enacting policies which can create better paradigm: one that creates awareness of biases and stereotypes rather than denial. Policy makers should "learn to phrase ideas and engage the feelings of their listeners within the communication traditions of their audience's cultural traditions" to incite change (German, 2012, p. 48).

Creating a paradigm which acknowledges the implicit biases in our discursive practices can shed light on other systemic inequities. Additionally, the growing global economy makes it is essential that cultural competency is refined across all sectors—as a nation we can become more respected in our interpersonal behavior which will assist our ability in the world's marketplace. As Americans, many of us relish our educations and find pride in having degrees that confer achievement and imply intelligence. However, as a member of a population that highly values education, I believe one cannot claim to be "educated" without sincere self-reflexivity on the role implicit biases may play in our own lives and contemporary society. If universities of higher education choose to prepare students for the global economy and internal growing diversity, stereotypes, implicit biases, and non-culturally competent behaviors can be recognized, addressed, and reduced.

Implications

When examining biases in discursive practices, researchers need to take an intersectional approach to understand how racial stereotyping and the ideology of the culture of poverty are closely related in language practices. It is essential to evaluate discursive practices to understand implied meaning and recognize how the inferred meaning of language extends beyond what one may realize. In American society where racial biases permeate society and social stratification runs rampant, researchers and educational leaders alike must take an intersectional approach to understanding the role of race and class in today's schools.

Throughout my research, there was generally a dearth in literature surrounding how race- and class-based biases are apparent in discursive practices today. Some scholars (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Haney-López, 2014) addressed the way race biases

permeate discursive practices; however, additional research on coded/loaded language and everyday talk as a mechanism of oppression in power dynamics could prove useful in the discussion race- and class-based biases. Additionally, scholars should consider contributing to research that documents the intersectionality of biases. Some scholars (Crenshaw, 1989; Hatt-Echeverria & Urrieta, Jr., n.d.) have reflected how their lived experiences explain their group memberships and the treatment they were or were not subjected to; however, additional scholars could spend time documenting other examples.

Title I schools, which typically serve low-income students of color, continue to be the most underserved and the most difficult to staff. In order to understand the barriers to solving the problem of the qualified teacher shortage, researchers, policy makers and educators must closely examine the role that race- and class-based biases play in recruiting teachers to underserved schools. Although race- and class-based biases are not the only factors which contributes to the qualified teacher shortage, these biases contribute to the issue of ensuring every student has access to a qualified teacher.

Appendix A

Individual Information

Subject's Identification Number _____

Subject's Full Name _____

Subject's Email _____

Subject's Phone Number _____

Subject's Classification (i.e. senior) _____

Subject's Major _____

Subject's Race _____

Subject's Age _____

Subject's Home Town (City, State) _____

Class of professor offering extra credit _____

Would you like to receive a copy of the completed thesis?   YES   NO

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for participating in this study. Data collection for this study will take place from November 1ˢᵗ – November 18ᵗʰ via a series of one hour focus group interviews. This form details the purpose of the study, description of the involvement required to participate, anticipated benefits and risks of the research, methodology and data collection process, and your rights as a participant.

Purpose and Information: The interview for which you are being asked to participate is part of a research study that is focused on examining the perceptions undergraduate students have of pursuing professional opportunities in Title I schools. The purpose of this qualitative autoethnographical study is to understand the perceptions undergraduate students have of pursuing professional opportunities in the teaching profession and what considerations they might have of teaching in a Title I school.

Your Participation: Your participation in this study will consist of one focus group interview lasting approximately one hour. The interview will be audio taped to aid in accuracy of transcription for data analysis. My thesis advisor – Dr. Rosalind Kennerson-Baty, the hired transcriber, and I will be the only individuals to hear the tape. To maintain the ethical integrity with which this study will be conducted, the transcriber must sign a nondisclosure agreement prior to hearing the tape. Data transcription will occur at a secure location and files will be saved and secured in a manner that will keep your identity confidential. To ensure accuracy of your comments, you will be contacted via email to review the transcript. There may be additional follow-up/clarification through email, unless you request otherwise. You will be asked a series of questions about your professional aspirations, your thoughts on educators in society, and educators as professionals. Your participation is voluntary therefore, you have the right to stop the interview and/or withdraw from the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation. Be informed in the event you decide to discontinue or withdraw from the study you forfeit your extra credit.

Benefits and Risks: The benefit of your participation is to contribute to the empirical research that chronicles the perceptions undergraduate students have pursing professional opportunities in education especially in Title I schools. Additionally, this study may inspire other undergraduate students to pursue professional opportunities in education, especially high-need Title I schools. There are no risks associated with participating in this study.

The insights gathered from you and other participants will be used in writing a qualitative autoethnographical thesis in fulfillment of the requirements for an undergraduate honors program in which I am enrolled. Although direct quotes from you may be used in the thesis, your name, and other identifying information will be kept anonymous. The only reference to your identity will be related to your major, gender, and race (i.e. junior female Caucasian business major). At the conclusion of the study, the auditory recordings and transcribed recordings from your interview will be secured for five years on a flash drive and then destroyed by erasing the data.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via the information provided for you.

By signing below you acknowledge that you have read and understand the above information and that you agree to the terms of the agreement.

Subject's Full Name: _____

Subject's Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____

What are the Perceptions that Undergraduate Students have of Pursuing Professional Opportunities within Title I Schools?
Question Schedule and Script of a Moderately Scheduled Topically Sequenced Focus Group Interview

Opening

Hello, my name is Kelsey Wolf and I am senior communication major within the Baylor Interdisciplinary Core pursuing departmental honors in communication. Additionally, some of you may know me from presenting to your class about Teach For America or my involvement with the equestrian team. First of all, I would like to thank each of you for taking time to be here today and participate in a focus group interview as part of the completion of my honor's thesis. Our time here tonight will last approximately one hour and you are welcome to help yourself to the refreshments on the table as you please.

To begin, I am going to explain to you how tonight's process will work. As mentioned in the outreach email and follow-up email containing the informed consent form, this interview's audio will be recorded. I would like to stress that if any question confuses you, or you would like the question rephrased, you may request this at any time. Please be informed that although you may withdraw your participation at any time, your extra credit will also be forfeited. If you are not willing to be recorded, you may now take a moment to excuse yourself.

To protect the identity of every participant in this study, you each have a number on the folder at your place setting. When answering a question or adding a response to the discussion, please say your response to the question and then say your number. Throughout my writing in my thesis, you will be generally described according to your classification, sex, race, and major (e.g. junior female Caucasian business major). By saying your number at the end of your response, you will ensure that your identity is protected and that the procedure does not impede your ability to respond to questions.

At this time, please take a moment to read the informed consent form and then sign it if you are comfortable with this process. Additionally, please check that the number on the "Subject Identification Number" is the same as the number on your folder. Then, please fill out the following individual information.
(2 minute pause)

Thank you for your consent and participation. My goal is to facilitate an enriching conversation with you all as I introduce certain phenomena about Title I schools and the field of education in general. I encourage you to be candid with your responses as this room is a safe place for honesty and concerns.

At this time, I would like to offer you all a space to ask any questions you may have.
(30 second pause)

To begin, I am going to ask each of you questions about your professional aspirations and then we will transition to your perceptions of educators in society and the teaching profession as a whole. Your responses will be used in my evocative autoethnography to help me understand my own perceptions of professional

opportunities in Title I schools and as a sampling of language that my peers sometimes use to talk about Title I education. Again, the first question I am going to ask is about your professional aspirations. I would like every participant to answer each question. Please do not forget to state your number after your response.

Body:
Professional Aspirations
First of all.
- What are your professional aspirations?
- Have you ever considered teaching? Why or why not?
Introduce the Teacher Shortage and Title I Schools:

Thank you all for responding. Before continuing I am going to offer background information on what a Title I school is and how the teacher shortage affects the United States.

Under the U.S. Department of Education, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) declared that "all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education" in an effort to address severe achievement gaps between students in low-income schools and their more affluent counter parts (Title I - Improving The Academic Achievement Of The Disadvantaged, 2005). To qualify for Title I funding under the ESEA, "children from low-income families make up at least 40% of the enrollment"; additionally, if a school does not meet the 40% marker but has a significant number of students at risk of failing, or already failing, schools are able to implement a "targeted assistance program" to identify and aid the students who are most at risk. (Title I, Part A Program, 2015).

Logically, studies cited from the Center For American Progress reports that, "students of color in low-income schools are 3 to 10 times more likely to have unqualified teachers than students in predominantly white schools" no matter what state they are attending school in (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011, p. 1). While the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 attempted to address the problem of the qualified teacher shortage, there continues to be a significant opportunity gap between students attending high and low socioeconomic status schools in regard to the number of qualified teachers available. Although the number of students in the United States who have access to qualified teachers is comparable to the international average, our opportunity gap of between high SES and low SES schools of access to qualified teachers is one of the largest in the world.

With this information regarding the teacher shortage in the United States in mind, would you consider pursuing a professional opportunity within a Title I, high need school in our country? Why or why not? (Would you consider teaching with this need in mind?)

Follow Up Questions:

If you did pursue an opportunity in one of these schools,

- What do you think it would be like to teach in a Title I school? Why?
- What challenges do you think teachers in Title I schools face?

Thank you all for your candid responses.

Perceptions of Educators in Society
At this time, we are going to transition to how you feel about educators within our society as well as how much you believe a teacher can affect a student. My first question is:
- How do you feel about the role teachers/educators play in society? Why do you feel that way?
    - What factors do you think determine a student's ability to succeed in a Title I school?
    - How do you think a teacher in a Title I school can influence a student's trajectory?

Thank you all for your responses. At this time we are going to shift the discussion to perceptions of educators as professionals.

Perceptions of Educators as Professionals
To begin I would like to know:
- Why do you think people choose to pursue professional opportunities in Title I schools? Please explain your answer.
- What factors are at play?

Like everyone has mentioned here, there are certainly many factors in an individual's choice to pursue a professional opportunity in a Title I school. Interestingly, various programs have been created to incentivize these teaching opportunities.
- How attractive would it be for you to pursue a professional opportunity with the promise of an advanced degree or loan forgiveness or deferral?

Introduce Incentives for Entering Education in Title I schools.
Some of these incentives include but are not limited to: improving and equalizing teacher salaries among districts of varying incomes, bonuses or "combat pay" to fill vacancies in hard-to-staff schools, alternative routes to teaching and certification with degrees of selectivity, increased prior training to teaching, Teacher Loan Forgiveness of Federal Staffordshire Loans from the U.S. Department of Education for 5 or more years of teaching, scholarships from AmeriCorps for corps member alums who served in certain educational programs like Teach For America and Urban Teachers, as well as reduced tuition, waived application fees, and scholarships specifically for corps members alums from programs such as Teach For America and Urban Teachers, and finally district wide incentives for teachers to pursue additional education, become English Language Learner certified, and salary increases based on years served (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011, pp. 12–16; Teacher Loan Forgiveness, Federal Student Aid, n.d.).

With this information in mind, would you be more interested or inclined to pursue a career in education? Why or why not?
Follow Up Question:
- Specifically, would you be willing to serve in a high-need, low-income Title I school? Why or why not?

Thank you all for your responses and time here this evening.

Conclusion

At this time we are going to conclude our interview. Before I begin my concluding remarks, does anyone have any final comments to make or questions they would like to ask?
(2 minute pause)

Thank you all for your thoughtful responses. I will send each of you a transcript approximately one week from today via email for you to evaluate and make any changes to if you feel that you have been unfairly represented. If you do not respond with requested changes within one week I will assume you are content with your responses. Additionally, if you would like to receive a completed copy of my thesis, please indicate so at the final question of your "Individual Information" form. If you mark "Yes", you will receive a copy via your email during the month of May 2017.

Again, thank you for your attendance and participation here tonight. I hope you had a fulfilling experience during our group interview. Please feel free to take a refreshment to go on your way out. Have a good evening.

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