Inside Our World: African American and Latino High School Students'
Perceptions of Effective Teachers

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the School of Education.

Chapel Hill
2011

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ABSTRACT
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Inside Our World: African American and Latino High School Students'
Perceptions of Effective Teachers
(Under the direction of Dr. Fenwick English)

This mixed methods case study examines the perceptions that 24 African American and Latino students at one North Carolina high school have of effective classroom instruction in their favorite teacher's class. Six teachers were also interviewed and asked to reflect on student feedback and 1400 anonymous students were surveyed (secondary data source). Critical Race Theory (CRT) was utilized to examine the racial context of this high school, students' counter stories, the existence of deficit thinking, and the presence of bias (Marshall, C. 2010; and Yosso, T. 2006). The students' description of biased treatment by some teachers led to an experience termed *forced race consciousness,* an experience that propels people of color to think about their membership as part of a racial or ethnic group and make negative associations related to intellectual inferiority. It was posited that this awareness negatively impacts the students' school experience and detracts from their ability to become academically successful. In addition to being forced to think about race, students also described being forced to think about culture. *Forced culture consciousness* is another term that emanated from this research and is introduced and defined by this researcher. Though effective teachers were the focus of this study, White students at this high school became central to the study as Latino students described being subjected to crude jokes, stereotypical remarks, and ridicule based on language or perceived immigration status. Paradoxically, very little classroom time is spent learning about positive contributions or realities of African American or Latino

people, examining historical or contemporary issues of race to counter these negative experiences. The data from this study indicate that effective teachers of African American and Latino students create a *cultural symphony* in their classrooms as they lead discussions about race, racism and/or positive contributions of African American and Latino people, are dedicated to the success of students, *break it down to the ground* by simplifying instruction, call on everyone, are passionate about their subject matter and maintain highly structured classroom environments.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Paul, my loving husband, and my best friend. It simply would not have been possible to complete this odyssey without you. There were so many evenings during the dissertation years when you were the caregiver, the master chef, the bulwark. I am truly grateful for the encouragement, for the times I was able to write uninterrupted, and for calling this task complete months ago when you dubbed me, Dr. Darling. To my God who is always more than enough, for the inspiration and perseverance to see that the end was near. I will use this degree to fulfill my purpose as a school leader.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

shaped my doctoral experience include Dr. Linda C. Tillman, Dr. Kathleen Brown, Dr. Frank Brown, and Dr. Catherine Marshall. A Special thank you to Jacqueline B. Ellis, for providing me with professional advice and for your confidence in me and being supportive of me. I have grown tremendously as a result of your counsel.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my Pastor, Gilbert A. Thompson Jr. and First Lady LaShawn Thompson of World Overcomers Christian Church in Durham. You are the reason we moved to North Carolina. During the many late nights of writing, your words of encouragement and inspiration helped to guide me.

To my deceased parents, Veronica and S. Lloyd. You would have been proud.

I would also like to recognize my sons, Michael James McLaughlin and Paul Thomas McLaughlin who have been patient during their elementary years while their mother embarked on this journey. To Paul who was always inquisitive about what I was writing about and wanted to be the first one to read my dissertation (it was the thought that counted). To Michael, my youngest for your patience and love during those hurried good night kisses as mommy rushed back downstairs to write for a few more hours.

To my sister, Sharon, who encouraged me to finish one year earlier than I thought was even possible. Thank you for the positive words. Now I can spend more time on the phone talking to you and visiting you, Kenny, Christina, Christopher and Ronnie in Atlanta. Thank you also to my in-laws, Joan McLaughlin, Jeanne McLaughlin and Barbara McLaughlin for your support and love. Thanks to Kebbler Williams, colleague and UNC classmate and friend, for the numerous emails and conversations spent encouraging me as I reached the finish line. You are next.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Although for over a century our nation has advanced the ideal that a high-quality

and excellent public education is the birthright of all children, our schools cannot

fulfill this ambitious and noble purpose unless all of us—parents, policymakers,

and the general public—commit ourselves to sustaining education as a public

trust and a promise to future generations.   (Nieto, 2005, p.1)

Through the lens of critical race theory, the purpose of this study was to uncover the

perceptions and classroom experiences of African American and Latino students in one

North Carolina high school to determine which practices teachers utilize that contribute

to successful environments for them and how those practices could be used to further

inform instruction. This study used Critical Race Theory as a framework and a filter for

examining students' narratives about their experiences and for interrogating the

effectiveness of classroom instruction by then summarizing and sharing that narrative

information with teachers and administrators.

Background of Conditions That Led to the Current Study

Perry, Steele, and Hilliard (2003) asserted that from slavery to the Civil Rights

era, African Americans had a rich tradition of pursuing education as an act of freedom

and resistance. In pre-Civil Rights segregated schools across America, academic

achievement was an aspiration. Many Post-Civil Rights integrated schools have stymied

these aspirations by adopting the views of mainstream American society that promoted messages of Black cultural and intellectual inferiority.

Critical Race Theory faults ineffective civil rights legislation for impacting the resegregation of schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). Blacks left schools that were led by Black principals and Black teachers to be integrated into schools, where their culture was not understood, and their potential was underutilized. For many Black and Latino students, schools have become places where they are marginalized and disengaged.

Ten years ago, Latinos surpassed Blacks as the country's largest minority (NCES, 2007). Schools need to retain the promise and hope that many first generation immigrants bring who come to America searching for a better life. Room needs to be made at the table for retention of a bilingual culture and identity as well as an allegiance and pride in American culture and identity. Critical Race theorists espouse that the dominant dialogue cannot solve problems like Black and Latino underachievement. Understanding root causes will help introduce lasting solutions. This narrative becomes not one of deficit thinking blaming Black or Latino children for their lack of success or espousing colorblind thinking, but acknowledges the larger role of racism in society that caused resegregation of schools, maintains faulty images and beliefs about the intellectual capacities of racial minority students, and holds the larger society responsible for changing the racism it has been ignoring and perpetuating. Ways of thinking and behaving in our schools have maintained and supported Black and Latino underachievement. Without reshaping thinking and the institutions, Black and Latino students who achieve success will achieve in spite of the institutions, not because of

them. Part of the necessary change is embracing the knowledge, behavior, and dispositions of teachers and administrators who must understand how to create successful environments in schools for African American and Latino students. Racial and cultural competency is required. That competency includes recognizing and developing student potential, examining personal epistemologies and theories about African American and Latino achievement, learning about the contemporary and historical realities of race and racism in American society, embracing new learning about Black and Latino cultures, and adopting culturally responsive teaching.

The researcher's interest in this topic springs from her background as a British – born immigrant with Jamaican parents. She immigrated to the United States almost four decades ago. Her understanding of Latino culture stems from her work within the Latino community, travel abroad, and fluency in Spanish. Having completed the majority of her schooling in the United States successfully, she also understands what it is like as a woman of color of African descent to navigate public schools and to lead change as a former high school administrator.

Statement of the Problem

Part of the purpose of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is to ensure access to public schools taught by highly qualified teachers and to work toward educating all students at a level of proficiency on state mandated tests. Through mandates from the federal government, public schools are being required to ensure that all students experience the birthright of a high quality public school education. Given the increasing number of Latinos, the presence of African American students in our nation's public high schools, and the lack of success schools have had in educating students of color, this research

examined a process for creating more successful learning environments. On several indicators, including Advanced Placement scores, SAT scores, college participation rates, and NAEP Math and Reading scores, Black and Latino students are not as successful as White students. Data on achievement gaps show that Black and Latino students have not experienced the same level of achievement as White students in U.S. public schools.

Martin (2007) contended that truly effective teachers are not colorblind educators who promote teaching students without really "seeing" them. Teachers need to change the lenses through which instruction is viewed. Teachers need to really "see" their classroom environments, the topics they cover, the ways in which they interact through the eyes of African American and Latino students. Administrators need to understand the experience of being distinctly "other," how African American and Latino students form identity, what will cause school to matter for disinterested students, the amount of pressure to apply, and the amount of caring to demonstrate.

Research Questions

The overall research question explored by this study was: Can the perceptions and experiences of African American and Latino High School students inform classroom instruction by pointing towards practices and beliefs which in their eyes account for their success in them? From this question, the study more specifically investigated:

A) What are the characteristics and/ or practices of teachers that African American and Latino students identify as more successful than others?

B) If found to be applicable, how do the emerging data correspond to concepts in Critical Race Theory?

Assumptions of the Study

This study assumed that the types of classroom experiences Black and Latino students had were not substantially different from White students, but because of cultural differences their perceptions of what is helpful or is not helpful may differ. It was also assumed that once identified as important, such differences should be taken into account by teachers because they may enable instruction to become more effective.

For example, student perceptions about whether teachers demanded they work hard, teachers called on them even when they did not raise their hands, whether they were treated fairly and respectfully by teachers, whether they were treated differently based on their race, how much they cared about pleasing teachers and what they perceived about whether teachers cared about them were assumed to be important indicators of whether African American and Latino students were then successful or not in such classrooms. It was assumed that these students' perceptions were connected to their cultural experiences that are significantly different in how they see the world. It was also assumed that generalizations could be made from these two groups of African American and Latino students and that these two groups could be treated distinctly as compared to other students. This meant that there were no significant differences within the groups that would jeopardize the findings of this study.

Definitions

There were several terms that were utilized throughout this study. Defining the terms was vital to understanding the purpose of this research. The terms are Blacks,

African Americans, Whites, Latinos, Hispanics, Students of Color, Indigenous, Successful, Effective, MSAN, Critical Race Theory and NCWise, *Forced race consciousness, forced culture consciousness* and *cultural symphony.* In this chapter, the terms successful and effective have been used interchangeably.

- **Blacks** are defined as people of African descent, born in the United States or native born from the continent of Africa or any other continent across the globe. Blacks are not exclusively citizens of the United States.

- **African Americans** are defined as people of African descent, born in the United States, native born from the continent of Africa, Caribbean born or people of African descent born in other countries who have become American citizens.

- **Whites** are defined as people of European descent or natives of the Middle East.

- **Latinos** are defined as people who are White or Black or Indigenous, though many are of mixed race heritage. Latinos are from 20 different Spanish-speaking countries, with distinct backgrounds based on class, race, and skin color. Outside of the United States, they are not identified as Latino or Hispanic. They would be Puerto Rican, Salvadoran or Colombian, depending on their country of origin.

- **Hispanics** are defined as people who are White or Black or Indigenous, though many are of mixed race heritage. Latinos are from 20 different Spanish-speaking countries, with distinct backgrounds based on class, race, and skin color. Outside of the United States, they are not identified

as Latino or Hispanic. They would be Puerto Rican, Salvadoran or

Colombian, depending on their country of origin. The term Hispanic is

generally associated with people who have an ethnic connection to Spain.

- **Students of Color** are defined as African American or Latino students.

- **Indigenous** people are defined as the original inhabitants of the United

   States before Europeans or other immigrants arrived. Native Americans

   or Indians are considered to be indigenous people.

- **Successful and Effective** were used interchangeably in this study.

   Successful and Effective are defined as communication or behaviors that

   promote academic success. Academic success is defined for high school

   students as the sum total of interactions that occur in subject matter

   classrooms to help students succeed in class and learn the material

   presented or discussed in a given class.

- **Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN)** is a coalition of 24

   urban and suburban school districts located across the country. All of the

   districts boast high academic achievement, are affiliated with local

   universities and many serve an affluent majority white student population.

   MSAN districts also share a commitment to increasing the achievement of

   minority students within their communities through research, conferences,

   policies and collaboration with other MSAN districts (2010).

- **Critical Race Theory (CRT)** as defined by Ladson-Billings and Tate's

   (2006) tenets of Critical Race Theory include: racism as endemic and

   ingrained in American life; Understanding race as property; A

reinterpretation of ineffective Civil Rights law; Challenging claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy. Storytelling is one of the strategies of CRT that is used to counter the majority perspective.

- **The North Carolina Window on Student Education (NC WISE)** is a web-based student information system that was introduced to the North Carolina public schools in 2004. NC WISE allows schools to transfer student information and student records electronically between schools and from districts to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2010).

- *Forced race consciousness* is an experience that propels people of color to think about their membership as part of a racial or ethnic group. The associations made with the person's racial or ethnic group are negative, stereotypical, and assumptions are made about the person's intellectual inferiority. This awareness negatively impacts the students' school experience and detracts from their ability to be academically successful.

- *Forced culture consciousness* is described as an experience that propels people of color to think about their membership as part of a racial or ethnic group. The associations made with the person's racial or ethnic group are negative, stereotypical and assumptions are made about language, ethnicity or immigration status. This awareness negatively impacts the students' school experience and detracts from their ability to be academically successful.

- *Cultural Symphony:* Creating a *cultural symphony* in the classroom

   involves recognizing the uniqueness of each student in the classroom and

   intentionally utilizing their cultural heritage and strength. Expectations are

   set for presentation, attitude and the mood with every lesson. Each

   gathering is a unique event that is highly structured and pre-planned.

   Before the public performance, the teacher takes complex material and

   simplifies it - *breaks it down to the ground* so that the critical knowledge

   that each student needs to demonstrate mastery becomes evident. The

   teacher is dedicated to the success of each student because without each

   student's optimal performance, elements of the classroom experience

   would be deficient. The classroom teacher is passionate and creates an

   energy that shapes the mood, making even trivial material seem

   exhilarating.

Significance of the Research

Many research studies focus on the learning experiences of either Latinos or African Americans. Few studies focus on the learning experiences of both African Americans and Latinos. Of those few studies, few have used these experiences to inform instruction. Additionally this study used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a framework and a filter to explain how students of color experience school and how this information could be used to create environments that will be more effective with them in the future. CRT is an analysis frame that connects the significance of students' experiences by asking them to give voice to their perceptions while critically listening for issues of race and racism, promotion of deficit thinking, presence of bias and colorblind thinking.

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Limitations of the Study

This was an exploratory study and was undertaken to determine the perceptions that African American and Latino students had of successful classroom teachers as they reported them to the researcher. As such, the results have limited generalizability to other high schools. This study was conducted in a district in North Carolina that the researcher had been employed. The participants interviewed therefore may have known the researcher and that may have resulted in a greater willingness to respond to questions in a forthright manner, or conversely may have created some reluctance to completely share such experiences.

In this study, successful teachers were identified based on success in the eyes of students and not by official means of teacher evaluation sanctioned by the district. Such a comparison would have been difficult since in this district, tenured teachers have not been evaluated regularly. A potential limitation of stratified purposeful sample exists if the sample is not truly random. For this study, this researcher worked with an intermediary to generate a list of students that meet the selection criteria with a range of academic abilities. Participants were selected randomly. This study did not take into account students' socioeconomic status (SES). While SES is highly correlated to achievement, the method of determining SES for high school students is at present unreliable. Although districts utilize free and reduced lunch figures to determine SES, free and reduced numbers in high schools are inaccurate in that many students in poverty do not enroll in free and reduced lunch.

Research Methods

This study was a mixed methods case study. Data gathering included qualitative student and teacher interviews. The quantitative part of this study involved the analysis of secondary student survey data that was collected at the school for the school's purposes. Students' perceptions about teacher effectiveness, classroom conditions, and the school environment were assessed using the Student Perceptions Survey. The survey was developed collaboratively by Achievement First and the Tripod Project which is led by Ron Ferguson, Faculty Chair and Director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University. Information from the technical manual which includes information about validity and reliability (Examples of Scales and Alphas that Distinguish Among Classrooms) is in Appendix L. (Ferguson, 2008; Tripod Project, 2010). The types of experiences African American and Latino students have that contribute to or detract from their success or failure in high school were assessed by the interview instrument. All 1400 students in one high school, grades 9-12 participated in the survey which was independent of this research study, though for the purposes of this research study, only the anonymous surveys of up to 328 African American and Latino students were analyzed. Twenty-four African American and Latino students and six classroom teachers were interviewed. An intermediary worked collaboratively with this researcher to randomly select 24 students for interviews to represent the school's grade levels (9-12), student achievement levels (high, medium, low), and gender. The data collection part of this study which included qualitative student and teacher interviews and the quantitative

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analysis of student surveys gathered for the school's purposes were conducted over a three month period in one school year. Conducting data analysis took several months. The interview questions and the survey are shown in the appendices.

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study were (1) The perceptions that African American and Latino students have about their high school experiences contribute to or detract from their academic success or failure in the schools they attend; (2) Classroom experiences reported by African American and Latino students can help inform teachers and administrators in a meaningful way about how they may be more successful with them and; (3) In some cases, African American and Latino students bring different experiences to the same treatment, but since it is assumed that racism is endemic in our society, some teachers exhibit behaviors that CRT predicts namely deficit thinking, bias and or colorblind thinking. However, in their favorite teachers' classes, students would indicate that their favorite teacher did not view them as having a cultural disadvantage because they are minorities, students would state that their favorite teacher treats them like every one else, and that their favorite teacher plans lessons that include the topic of race or racism. In other words, some teachers would surmount those racialized beliefs or attitudes and not view their students as having a cultural disadvantage because they are minorities, and those teachers would engage in classroom discussions about race or racism.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter included the following three sections: A) Educational Context of African Americans and Latinos B) Background on the Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory and C) Knowledge, Behaviors and Dispositions of Teachers who Create Successful Classroom Learning Environments for African American and Latino High School Students.

A) EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS AND LATINOS

Growing Racial Minority Population

Racial minority populations in the United States are growing and attention to educational issues should be addressed. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2007) indicated that in 2005, racial minorities represented 33% of the population. In 2010, they are projected to reach 34.9% and in 2020, racial minorities are projected to reach 39%. Latinos represent a large part of this population growth. In 2000, Latinos were 12.5% of the population of the United States, having surpassed African Americans as the largest racial minority. Latinos currently represent 14% of the population; African Americans represent 12%.

According to Census Bureau News (2005), four states are majority-minority states: Texas (50.2% minority), Hawaii (77%), New Mexico (57%), California (56%), and the District of Columbia (70%). Five states have 40% minority populations: Maryland, Mississippi, Georgia, New York, and Arizona. Although New York had the

largest African American population in July 2004 (3.5 million), the state with the largest numerical increase is Florida. Broward County, FL experienced an increase of 17,900 African Americans between 2003 and 2004.   For Latinos, the state with the largest Latino population is California (12.4 million in July 2004, and Los Angeles County, California posted the largest numerical increase (76,400) since July 2003.

Wainer (2004) reported that 9 of the 10 fastest growing counties for Latinos are in the South. Although these counties may not represent counties with the largest numbers of Latinos nationally, they are the fastest growing counties in the country. They are Benton, AR; Forsyth, NC; Washington, AR; Durham, NC; Whitfield, GA; Gwinnett, GA; Mecklenburg, NC; Wake, NC; Hall, GA; and the only non-Southern county, Elkhart, IN.

The fastest growing county for Latinos is Benton, AR with an increase of 12, 110 people in just 10 years, a 891% change. The fourth fastest growing county is Durham, NC, with an increase of 17,039 in 10 years, a 730% change. Table 2.0 illustrates these changes. North Carolina is one of the states in the country with the fastest growing Latino populations. Four of the fastest growing counties are located in North Carolina, the most of any state. Additionally between 1990-2000, North Carolina was the state with the fastest growing foreign born population in the country; During this period, the foreign born population grew by 274%.

Table 2.0 GROWING LATINO COUNTIES IN THE U.S. 1990-2000

COUNTY/STATE	1990 LATINO POP.	2000 LATINO POP.	NUM. CHANGE	% CHANGE	% LATINO 1990	% LATINO 2000
Benton AR	1,359	13,469	12,110	891 %	1 %	9 %
Forsyth NC	2,102	19,577	17,475	831 %	1 %	6 %
Washington AR	1,526	12,932	11,406	747 %	1 %	8 %
Durham NC	2,054	17,039	14,985	730 %	1 %	8 %
Whitfield GA	2,321	18,419	16,098	694 %	3 %	22 %
Gwinnett GA	8,470	64,137	55,667	657 %	2 %	11 %
Mecklenburg NC	6,693	44,871	38,178	570 %	1 %	7 %
Wake NC	5,396	33,985	28,589	530 %	1 %	5 %
Hall GA	4,558	27,242	22,684	498 %	5 %	20 %
Elkhart IN	2,932	16,300	13,368	456 %	2 %	9%

Source: Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) Analysis of Census Data - 2004

NCES (2007) reported that the number of racial minorities in public schools increased by 7% (34% to 41%) from 1993-2003. Latino students grew by 6%, the largest of any racial minority group. The percentage of African American students remained the same in schools. City schools had the largest percentage of racial minorities at 65% and also experienced the largest minority increases. Racial minority enrollment in city schools increased by 9% (1993 to 2003) primarily due to an 8% increase in Latino student enrollment in city schools.

In some states with large minority populations, the minority public school percentage of the population exceeded the minority percentage of the resident population. In two examples, African American students represented 84% of the public school population in Washington D.C. in 2005 (56% of the district population). In New Mexico, Latinos made up 53% of the public school population, yet 43% of the resident population. In the three Southern states (Arkansas, Georgia, and North Carolina) with the largest growing Latino counties, public school populations experienced substantial growth in 2004. In Arkansas, Whites represented 69.2% of the public school population, the total minority population was 30.2%. Blacks represented 23% and Latinos represented 6%. In Georgia, Whites represented 50.5% of the public school population, the total minority population was 49.5%, Blacks represented 38.9% of the population and Latinos represented 7.9%. In North Carolina, Whites represented 57.4% of the public school population, the total minority population was 42.6%, Blacks represented 31.6% and Latinos represented 7.5%. These data are also listed in Table 2.0 below (NCES, 2007).

Table 2.1 Southern States with counties with the Largest Latino growth

Public School Elementary and Secondary enrollment by Race

State	Whites	Total racial Minorities	Blacks	Latinos
Arkansas	69.2%	30.2%	23%	6%
Georgia	50.5%	49.5%	38.9%	7.9%
North Carolina	57.4%	42.6%	31.6%	7.5%

.   **Overrepresentation of Racial Minorities in Statistics on**

Poverty, Retentions, Suspensions, and Drop Out Rates

Although African American and Latino students are a visible presence in public schools and Latinos are rapidly growing, African American and Latino students have been largely unsuccessful in public school across the United States. African Americans and Latinos are overrepresented in statistics on poverty, retentions, suspensions, expulsions, and drop out rates. Poverty is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau based on income, family size, and family composition. Poverty impacts a child's ability to access quality educational opportunities. In the United States (NCES, 2007), 16% of families with children under 18, lived in poverty in 2005. By race, 30% of those families in poverty were Black, 25.6% of those families were Latinos, and 10% were White.

NCES (2007) cites the work of Baker et al. (2001) who reported that students who are retained and students who are suspended from school are at risk of dropping out of school. "In 2003, 10% of K-12 public school students had been retained (i.e., repeated a grade since starting school), while 11 percent had been suspended (i.e., temporarily removed from regular school activities, either in or out of school), and 2 percent had been expelled (i.e., permanently removed from school with no services)" (p. 86).

In 2003, 17% of Black students had been retained, 11% of Latinos had been retained compared to only 8% of White students. As is also the case, a larger percentage of Latino (10%) and Black students (20%) were suspended than White students (9%).

Expulsion rates also mirror the results above. For Black students, the number was 5%, for Latinos 1% and for White students 1%. With regard to gender, male students

were retained at 12%, while the female retention rate was 8%. For suspensions and expulsions, males (regardless of race) were suspended at twice the rate as females.

Students who fail to complete high school have fewer employment opportunities and lower earnings during their lifetime than those who complete a high school diploma or equivalency. The drop out rate measures the number of 16-24 year olds who are no longer enrolled in school and have not obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent. In 2005, Latinos led the numbers in that they had the highest drop out rates at a staggering 22%. Blacks dropped out at a rate of 10% and the drop out rates for Whites was 6%.

Underrepresentation of Racial Minorities in Advanced Placement

Courses in College Enrollment, Low Performance on SATs

African Americans and Latinos have been underrepresented in Advanced Placement courses, in high performance on the SAT and as students on college campuses (as graduates from colleges and universities). The Advanced Placement (AP) program coordinated by the College Board originated in 1955. Currently more that 700,000 students in more than 13,000 schools take AP exams. Students receiving a three or above are eligible to earn college credit (Diverse, 2009). Advanced Placement courses allow students to take a college level course and become eligible to earn college credit while in high school.

In the AP Report to the Nation (2009) as shown in table 3.0, Black students were listed as representing 14.4% of the graduating class of 2008 of public high school students but only 7.8% of the students who took AP examinations. Latino students were listed as representing 15.4% of the graduating class of 2008 of public high school

students and 14.8% of the students who took AP examinations. White students were listed as representing 62.8 % of the graduating class of 2008 of public high school students and 61 % if the students who took AP examinations. Even more alarming are the rates at which Blacks and Latinos are passing the AP exam. Only 3.5% of Blacks earned a passing score on an AP exam. Only 13.8% of Latinos earned a passing score. The percentage of passing scores for White students are not listed by the College Board in the AP Report to the Nation.

Table 2.2   AP Test Takers By Race – Graduating Class of 2008

Race	% of the graduating class	AP Test Takers	% of students who scored 3+ on AP exams
Blacks	14.4%	7.8%	3.5%
Latinos	15.4%	14.8%	13.8%
Whites	62.8%	61%	Not listed by College Board

The SAT (2009) is administered through the College Board and used most commonly by college admissions officers to predict college success. The SAT tests knowledge and skills in Math, Reading, and Writing. Scores on the SAT range from 200-800. Students generally take the SAT in their junior or senior year of high school. Among college bound high school graduates in 2009, 1,530,128 students took the SAT

through March 2009. Of those students, only 187,136 (12%) of those test takers were

Black. Only a total of 206,584 (13.5%) were Latinos and 851,014 (56%) were White.

In addition to being underrepresented as test takers, Black and Latino students

scored far below White students on the SAT. Black students earned an average of 429 in

Reading, 426 in Math, and 421 in Writing. Latinos (disaggregated by nationality –

Mexican, Puerto Rican and other Latinos) scored between 453-455 on Reading, 450-463

in Math, and 443-448 in Writing. White students scored about 100 points higher than

Black students on all three tests. Whites scored 526 in Reading, 520 in Math, and 524 in

Writing. White students scored on average 57-80 points higher than Latinos on each of

the three tests.

Table 2.3   Average SAT Scores High School Graduates – March 2009

Race	Reading	Math	Writing
Black	429	426	421
Latinos: Mexican, Puerto Rican, other Latinos	453-455	450-463	443-448
White	526	520	524

NCES (2007) listed the percentage of 18-24 year olds enrolled in colleges and

universities by race/ethnicity in 2004. Only 32% of Black 18-24 year olds were enrolled

in colleges/universities, only 25% of Latino 18-24 year olds, compared with 42% of

White 18-24 year olds enrolled in colleges/universities.

Thus on several measures of performance, Advanced Placement participation rates and scores, SAT test scores, and college participation rates, Blacks and Latinos are performing far below their white counterparts. National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) is administered by NCES, an agency within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. NAEP is commonly referred to as the Nation's Report Card and is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know. Students are tested in Reading, Math, Science, Writing, U.S. History, Civics, Geography, and the Arts. In 2009, only 18% of Black 4th graders and 27% of Latino 4th graders scored at or above the Proficient level in Math, as compared to 59% of Whites. In 2009 8th grade NAEP results were similar. Forty nine percent of Whites scored at or above Proficient, versus 12% of Blacks and 24% of Latinos. The average reading score of 9 year old Latinos decreased by 8 points between 2004 and 2008. There were no significant changes for 13 and 17 year olds. In terms of the gap between Black and White students in Reading, there were no significant changes since 2004. The gap is 24-27 points between White and Black 9 year olds, 21-25 points between 13 year olds and 27-29 points between 17 year olds (NCES, 2009).

In urban areas where racial minorities are the majority, it makes sense to focus on their achievement. One of the challenges particularly for high performing suburban schools is that their college acceptance and enrollment rates far exceed the aforementioned national averages, some in excess of 90%. Many of these schools consider themselves to be college preparatory high schools. In the case of one

southeastern school district (anonymous) with a White population of 61%, only 15% of

the students are African American, 11% percent are Asian, 8% percent are Latino and

3 ½% are "other". The numbers of racial minority students are fairly small compared to

the majority White population. With so few racial minorities part of the population and

therefore representing a small percentage of racial minority students who may or may not

attend college, it becomes a social justice issue to examine why the academic

performance of these students should be a priority.

<div align="center">**No Child Left Behind**</div>

With the advent of federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and

the North Carolina ABC accountability measures, school leaders are required to

document the performance of all students and pay particular attention to achievement

gaps. School leaders have a moral obligation to examine and implement socially just

organizational structures and instructional practices and dismantle structures that

perpetuate inequalities. NCLB caused school districts like the one listed above to

carefully examine its racial minority population, even in cases where that population only

represented a small percentage. Schools in North Carolina must meet the standards of No

Child Left Behind, a federal program and the ABCs of Public Education, a state program.

> North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2009) reported that The No
>
> Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is the most recent reauthorization of the
>
> Elementary and Secondary Authorization Act of 1965. The reauthorized law
>
> added strict new accountability changes and mandated that every child be taught
>
> by a Highly Qualified teacher. The law emphasizes new standards for teachers
>
> and new consequences for Title I schools that do not meet student achievement

standards for two or more consecutive years. The law's major goal is for every

school to be proficient in reading/language arts and mathematics by 2013-14 as

measured by state tests.

AYP measures the ten student groups as defined by NCLB. North Carolina

Department of Public Instruction (2009) described the State's Adequate Yearly Progress

(AYP) as measuring yearly progress of different groups of students at the school, district,

and state levels against yearly targets in reading/language arts and mathematics. Title I

schools and districts are especially affected if they do not make AYP. About half the

schools in North Carolina receive Title I funding as do all 115 of the state's school

districts. AYP results must be publicly reported. The ABCs of Public Education is North

Carolina's major school reform effort. Begun in 1996 as a result of state law,

the ABCs focuses on local school accountability, an emphasis on student mastery

of basic skills, and as much local board and local educator control as possible.

Focusing on the academic achievement of all students is now a national public

school priority. Finding a plausible solution involves closely examining potential causes.

How the Underachievement of African Americans and Latinos is Described

A number of factors impact achievement.   Ferguson (2003) presented

counterarguments that pointed to inadequate preparation of entering kindergartners,

poverty, single parent households, family income, and/or parental education. Gándara's

research (2004) suggested that residential mobility, lack of peer support for academic

achievement, racial and ethnic stereotyping, low teacher expectations, inequality in K-12

schools or limited English ability are to blame. Perry (2003) stated candidly that the

discussion about the underperformance of Black students often leads to a discussion that faults Black families, the Black community and Black students themselves for their predicament. Literature on the underachievement of Latinos also faults factors outside of schools (Gándara, 2004).

While the above-mentioned issues are certainly factors in underachievement, they do not represent the whole story. Noguera (2000) remarked that most research from achievement tests shows that wealthier children receive higher scores than poorer children as a whole, but the issue of race surfaces when even the children of wealthy African American and Latino families demonstrate performance below their white counterparts. When the children of affluent Black and Latino families attend affluent neighborhood schools, but do not demonstrate the same level of performance as their White peers, income does not provide a sufficient explanation.

Central to the understanding the chronic underachievement of African American and Latino students is the historical and contemporary role of race in society and schools in the United States. One of the ways that the issue of race manifests itself is through deficit thinking (Marshall, C. 2010; Yosso, T. 2006). Deficit thinking results in the belief that students of color are incapable of achieving at the levels of white students and that family background and the race of the student inhibit performance. Other ways that race is evident will be discussed at latter points in this paper.

In addition to understanding the overrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos in some statistics, the underrepresentation in others, the role of NCLB in addressing the issues and the theories about causes of the underachievement, an important part of understanding the educational context of African Americans and

Latinos is the development of cultural competency. While the information below presents

limited data, it does offer a glimpse into experiences of Blacks and Latinos in America.

Black Experience in the United States

It should be made clear that there is no monolithic Black culture or Black

experience. Blacks are people of African descent, born in the United States, native born

from the continent of Africa, Caribbean born and from every country on every continent.

It is true, however, that given the unique history of racism and enslavement in this

country, that Blacks in America regardless of their education or socioeconomic status

share some commonalities with regard to race. There are many contemporary stories that

help to illuminate the issues of race and identity: *Two Nations* (Andrew Hacker), *Race

Matters* (Cornel West), *Color Blind* (Ellis Cose), *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting

Together in the Cafeteria?* (Beverly Daniel Tatum) to name a few. While there is not

room here to expand on the themes of all of those narratives, there, is one critical chapter

from *Two Nations* that will be discussed. Although relayed through the voice of a White

Queens College Political Scientist, Andrew Hacker's 1995 New York Times Best Seller,

Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal is a must read for anyone who

wants to learn about the Black experience in the United States. Although the published

date is 15 years ago, many of the same stories about race could be told today. In Chapter

three, "Being Black in America," Hacker covers topics as broad as Black parents talking

to children about race, residential apartheid, the media portrayal of Blacks, and

experiences with the police. In refuting accusations of maintaining a double standard with

regard to race and affirming the Black experience, Hacker (1995) stated, Well it happens,

you do believe,

- That discrimination against Blacks remains real and calls for radical remedies; yet you cannot take seriously the argument that these compensatory actions will cause Whites to suffer from "reverse" discrimination.

- That Blacks have every right to attend dominantly White schools; yet once they are there, they should not be taken to task for spending too much of their time with classmates of their own race.

- That it is important to preserve historically Black colleges; yet you would feel entitled to object if some other schools were to designate themselves as "historically White."

- That racism is often the key reason why White voters rally behind White candidates; yet when Blacks support a candidate of their own race, you do not see this as expressing racism.

- That while you reject censorship, you would prefer that a book like *Huckleberry Finn* not be assigned in high school classes since its ubiquitous use of "nigger" sustains a view of Blacks that can only hurt your people. Nor are you convinced that the typical teacher can make clear Mark Twain's intentions, or put them in perspective, for White teenagers. (p.48-49).

Whether reading this or another treatise on the Black experience, it is critical for educators who work with Black students to have some understanding about the Black experience. For those who work with Latino students, reading a book like, *Latinos* by

Marcelo Suárez and Mariela Páez offers some basic understanding about the varied countries and cultures represented by the unifying label, "Latinos".

Latino Cultural Sensitivity

Latinos can be White, Black or Indigenous though many are of mixed race heritage. Latinos are a heterogeneous group of people that faces many contradictions and tensions. Many Latinos are American citizens (Puerto Ricans and other U.S. born Latinos). Others do not have legal residency. Latino students are faced with becoming bilingual or resolving to be monolingual. Latino students are bicultural, straddling two worlds – home and school - depending on the amount of Spanish that is spoken at home (if any).   Suárez-Orozco and Páez (2002) wrote that part of understanding Latino culture is learning that Latinos represent over 12 different countries, with distinct backgrounds based on class, race, and skin color. White upper middle class 3rd generation Cuban Americans vary considerably from newly arrived Mexican American immigrants in North Carolina. Latinos are not a race. Outside of the United States, they are not identified as Latino or Hispanic. They would be Puerto Rican, Salvadoran or Colombian, depending on their country of origin. Noguera (2008) found that many first generation Latinos have a desire to work hard and see value in making sacrifices to obtain their goals. Second and third generation Latinos tend to be socialized to be less optimistic and less willing to buy into the hope of the American Dream – having to contend with poverty and racial oppression. It is important for educators to learn more about how first generation Latino students become acclimated to life in the United States and how they make sense of immigration issues that target illegal immigrants. Second generation Latinos face different issues, some may not identify at all with their parents' country of

origin. It is vital not to make assumptions, but to get to know that Latino students who are part of each school's unique Latino population. The students' language ability, literacy level or parental background should not inhibit the expectations concerning their potential.

B) THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – CRITICAL RACE THEORY

The first area of literature used to ground this study was Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory traces its roots to Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory in Legal Studies. Tierney (1993) stated that critical theory stemmed from the development of the human emancipation project at the Frankfurt School in Germany in the 1920's. DeCuir and Dixson (2004) stated that law professors, Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman and Richard Delgado created CRT in the 1970's in response to the shortcomings of civil rights legislation and Critical Legal Studies (CLS). Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006) developed the concept of Critical Race Theory in Education in 1995. One of the strategies of CRT is storytelling. Storytelling is used to draw attention to ways in which policies, social norms and lived experiences are affected by inequity. CRT offers counterstories to the dominant account of historical or contemporary matters of race in the U.S. CRT also focuses on moving from theory to practice. Ladson-Billings and Tate's tenets of Critical Race Theory include:

- Racism as Endemic and Ingrained in American life
- Understanding Race and Property
- A Reinterpretation of Ineffective Civil Rights Law
- Challenging Claims of Neutrality, Objectivity, Colorblindness and Meritocracy

Racism as Endemic and Ingrained in American Life

Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006) use Wellman's definition of racism. Wellman (1977) defined racism as "culturally acceptable beliefs that defend social advantages that are based on race. Racism is not simply bigotry or prejudice; and it should not be confused with ethnic hostilities. Regardless of its historically specific manifestations, racism today remains essentially what it has always been: a defense of racial privilege" (p.4).

Wellman (1977) further asserted that "When people speak of racism they usually mean attitudes rather than institutionally generated inequality. Given this perspective, the crucial feature of race relations in America becomes the ideas that Whites have about others; not their own superior position, the benefits following from their position, or the institutions that maintain this relationship."

Wellman pointed to the institutional aspects of racism and its currency in society. Racism is believed not just to be a historical issue, but a present reality. Race can be used as a lens to analyze educational inequities.

Understanding Race and Property

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006), U.S. society is based on property rights. One of the roles of government is the protection of those rights. U.S. history books are replete with examples of battles fought with Native Americans, Mexicans, and Japanese Americans over land (property). The Civil War was fought over rights to own enslaved Africans as property. U.S. Property rights are rooted in racial domination.

Education is connected to property through property taxes. More affluent communities pay more property taxes and tend to have better schools. Harris (1993)

developed the theory that whiteness is property, meaning property (whiteness) is viewed

as a right not just a thing. Property is described as a defining social relationship whereby

historically owning White identity was protected because so much depended on it. The

rule of hypodescent protected whiteness by stating that a person with one drop of Black

blood was considered to be Black. A person with White and Black parents was

considered to be Black. The law has accorded 'holders' of whiteness the same privileges

and benefits accorded holders of other types of property" (p.1731).

Harris indicated that there are several benefits of whiteness as property: (1) rights

of disposition (2) rights to use and enjoyment (3) reputation and status property, and (4)

the absolute right to exclude. The rights of disposition are explained as "When students

are rewarded only for conformity to perceived 'White norms' or sanctioned for cultural

practices (e.g. dress, speech patterns, unauthorized conceptions of knowledge), White

property is being rendered alienable (transferable). The rights to use and enjoyment in

the school setting refers to the right to access and enjoy what the school has to offer. An

example of this is the difference between what a White affluent suburban New York City

School has for students to enjoy as compared to a poor minority school (Kozol, 1991).

Reputation and status property refers to diminishing status (personal property), by

denigrating a person's reputation. Urban (synonymous with minority) schools do not

have the status of suburban, majority White schools. Majority minority schools are not

viewed as favorably as majority White schools. Calling a White person 'Black' is also

viewed as defaming character Harris, 1993, p.1735). As cited by Harris, Oakes (1985)

states, "Within schools, absolute right to exclude is demonstrated by White flight from

urban schools, and resegregation via tracking."

Understanding race as property is a fairly complex and controversial theory. Other Critical Race theorists have chosen not to include Understanding Race as Property in their descriptions of CRT (Soloranzo, 2001; and Villalpando, 2004).

A Reinterpretation of Ineffective Civil Rights Law

Forty years after the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, urban schools across the nation are even more segregated now. In addition to the resegregation, many African American teachers and principals also lost their jobs. School desegregation has increased white flight and not necessarily resulted in better academic performance for African American students (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2006). In addition, Black schools were closed and the limited accessibility Blacks have to high quality curricula in schools nationwide have led some to question the benefits accrued from the *Brown* decision (DeCuir and Dixson, 2004).

While valid points have been made about the loss of positions and subsequent resegregation of schools, one of the weaknesses of this aspect of CRT is that an alternative is undertheorized. It is clear that desegregation came at an enormous cost to the African American community. But if not desegregation, then what? If students continued to attend separate schools, live in separate neighborhoods and not work in integrated settings, would the U.S. have become a more integrated society? If there were no Black children attending predominantly White schools, would Black teachers and administrators ever have been hired?

Challenging Claims of Neutrality, Objectivity, Colorblindness and

Meritocracy

Storytelling or "naming ones' own reality" is a vehicle that people of color can use to describe their experiences and realities and challenge claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness or meritocracy. Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006) asserted that the voices of people of color are critical to opening the understanding of oppression. These stories serve as counters to the dominant society's stories about reality. Stories also serve as part of a healing process for marginalized people who can become liberated by telling their stories. Part of the storytelling involves a process of critical reflection.

Other Aspects of CRT

Interest Convergence or Does White Self-interest Match Black Benefit?

Bell "added interest convergence" to other CRT tenets. Bell (1980) stated that basic civil rights for Blacks would only occur if attention were paid to ensure that the self-interests or privileges of Whites were not interrupted. The self-interests of Whites needed to converge with the rights of Blacks in order for the advancement to be supported.

CRT includes research from other disciplines such as ethnic studies, women's studies, history and law. An example of using an interdisciplinary perspective is portraiture. In a study using CRT, Chapman (2007) advocated for interrogating teacher-student interactions in classrooms using portraiture and a CRT framework. She described portraiture as a methodology "used when a researcher wishes to produce a full picture of an event or person that tells as much about the subject as it does about the researcher, or portraitist. Portraiture includes "various at forms (music, literature, visual art) with the

rigor of science…" Portraiture was created by Sara Lawrence Lightfoot to document the

components of effective schools (Chapman, 2007, p.157). Chapman relayed the story of a

teacher who gave a "family tree" assignment to her students using Margaret Walker's

poem, "lineage". The teacher was completely surprised when the African American

students became visibly frustrated and refused the complete the assignment. The teacher

was unaware of the impact that an assignment on completing a family tree would have on

students from an African American background who were not able to retrace their

ancestry past one or two generations. Had this teacher considered the absence of fathers

in some families or the erasure of lineage through the Middle Passage, this assignment

would not have been attempted in quite this way. Simply using Black poetry does not

constitute effective, culturally responsive instruction. The researcher using portraiture

and CRT considers the multiple ways that participants experienced a racialized world

including the contexts of politics, history, and society. In this setting, a White teacher in

a recently desegregated school was attempting to utilize multicultural poetry with a

diverse class of students. Part of the purpose of portraiture and CRT is to cause the

reader or participants to rethink their point of view and to examine apparent racial

conflicts (in the story).

This study focused specifically on three areas of CRT analysis:

- Interrogating racism and dominant racial ideology that promotes deficit thinking, and bias (Challenging Claims of Neutrality, Objectivity, Colorblindness and Meritocracy)

- Centering the experiences of African American and Latino high school students in order to learn about their experiences with race and using their counterstories to challenge the stories of the dominant group

- Centering the knowledge, behaviors and dispositions necessary to create successful learning environments for African American and Latino students

C) KNOWLEDGE, BEHAVIORS, AND DISPOSITIONS OF TEACHERS WHO CREATE SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINO STUDENTS

Effectively Teaching All Students

This first section focuses on the dispositions of teachers who are successful or effective with students of all racial backgrounds. Rather than simply include the technical knowledge required such as the ability to write effective lessons, exhibit strong classroom management skills or evaluate students through assessments, Nieto (2005) developed a synthesis of literature on effective, highly qualified teachers. The common characteristics and practices of effective teachers she found included strong content knowledge and communication skills; the ability to build connections with students; create high expectations; centralize students' identities as part of the learning process; care about, love and respect their students; utilize active learning strategies; exhibit a willingness to challenge school and district bureaucracies; develop safe learning environments and partnerships with parents; and present themselves as lifelong learners who do not shy away from challenges and who are willing to try new things. Further, Nieto described these educators as enthusiastic, lifelong learners who prioritized

excellent education for all of their students and prioritized excellence in themselves. Darling-Hammond (2007) also reported some similar practices of effective teachers. She noted that teachers who were described as effective communicated clear expectations for quality assignments; maintained mutually respectful classroom environments; facilitated parent involvement; promoted active learning and adjusted the curriculum to match the diverse needs of their students. Other practices Darling-Hammond noted that were not part of Nieto's research included utilizing a variety of instructional assessment tools to determine prior knowledge and inform instruction and developing well-organized lessons. In his study of 150 10th graders in 10 Boston high schools, Noguera (2007) reported that effective teachers were organized and well-prepared; patient and inquired if students understood the material; passionate about the subjects taught; showed respect for students and were firm. In all three studies, effective teachers were described as passionate; skilled in maintaining respectful learning environments; and capable of creating a rigorous environment of high expectations (Nieto, 2005) with organized (Noguera, 2007) carefully planned lessons (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

While these characteristics of effective teachers were not identified explicitly in the two other studies, students in Noguera's study included the importance of patience and checking for understanding; the ability of teachers to be firm and not permit students to detract others from learning. The latter two characteristics were described by Nieto (2005) as technical knowledge commonly understood as part of effective teaching.

As this researcher reviewed the literature on effective instruction for African American and Latino students, the following themes emerged as strategies, behaviors,

and dispositions that teachers could employ to experience success with African American and Latino students.

Student Potential and Treatment of African American and Latino Students as High Achievers

This section focuses on teacher perceptions and expectations about bias, intellectual inferiority, and ensuing beliefs about student potential. Ferguson (2003) observed that "teachers' perceptions, expectations, and behaviors interact with students' behaviors, and work habits in ways that help to perpetuate the Black-White test score gap" (p.461). He also shared research that showed teachers' expectations for student performance differed by race and favored Whites. Ferguson defined bias as deviation from neutrality. Ferguson suggested that bias can be expressed in actions as simple as teachers choosing to call on White students more frequently. Black students may believe that teachers do not call on them as frequently because they do not believe they are as smart as White students. Teachers' perceptions and expectations about the potential for high academic performance from Black students is perceived to be lower than their expectations about potential for White students. "Teachers underestimate the potential of students whose current performance is poor, including disproportionate numbers of Blacks" (Ferguson, 2003, p.494). Both Ferguson (2003) and Perry (2003) referred to the challenge of prevailing beliefs about the intellectual inferiority of Black students. While aware of past performance, effective teachers of African American and Latino students do not allow past performance to dictate students' future potential. In addition, effective teachers treat their African American and Latino students like high achievers and avoid the behaviors listed below:

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Ferguson (2008) shared ways in which teachers treat students differently based on whether they are perceived to be high achievers or low achievers.

For low achievers, these include waiting less time for them to answer; giving them the answers or calling on someone else, rather than trying to improve their responses by offering clues or repeating or rephrasing questions; accepting inappropriate behavior or incorrect answers; criticizing them more often for failure; praising them less often for success; failing to give feedback to their public responses; paying less attention; calling on them less often with questions; seating them further from the teacher; demanding less from low achievers (teaching them less, providing unsolicited help); interacting with them more in private than public, and monitoring and structuring their activities more closely; in grading tests and assignments, not giving them the benefit of the doubt in borderline cases, (p.95)

Personal Epistemologies, Theories of African American and Latino

UnderAchievement and the Impact on Students

Teachers' epistemologies do matter. Martin (2007) stated that teachers' beliefs about natural ability, merit and other epistemologies impact their effectiveness with African American students.

Consciously or unconsciously formed epistemologies directly affect how teachers and administrators treat students. Perry (2003) asserted that educators should study theories of achievement/underachievement and articulate their belief system. Perry stated that what teachers believe about achievement will impact how they teach students of color. While there are certainly other theories, two theories documented by Perry

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explained racial minority underachievement: cultural difference theory and social

mobility theory. The Cultural Difference Theory maintained that the academic failure of

racial minorities was predicated on the mismatch between home and school cultures

(Gándara, 2004; Perry, 2003). For Latinos, limited English ability was viewed as the

primary reason for school failure, hence the introduction of bilingual education.

Social Mobility Theory was introduced by John Ogbu. Noguera (2008) found that

there is a connection between identity and "school – related behaviors". Noguera's

research differed from the research done by Ogbu and Fordham on "acting white". Ogbu

and Fordham's research found that some Black students did not excel in school because

they perceived achieving in school to be in opposition to their Black identity. They

perceived academic success as "acting White" – acting like a member of the majority

culture. This research was presented about nonvoluntary minorities versus voluntary

minorities. Nonvoluntary refers to minorities who became part of North American

society through conquest or enslavement. Nonvoluntary minorities are Native Americans

and African Americans. Voluntary minorities are those minorities who immigrated to the

United States by choice. Noguera shared his own experience as a successful male student

who did not develop an oppositional identity, but rather the adoption of multiple

identities allowed him to successfully navigate between home, peers and school.

Noguera stated that Ogbu's research did not apply well to Latinos because of how distinct

each of the cultures is and also because of the voluntary/involuntary nature of Puerto

Ricans, Mexicans versus other Latinos.

Counternarratives, Antiracist Education and the Historical and the Contemporary

Reality of Race in Our Society

Effective teachers introduce counternarratives that are in opposition to the dominant society's notions about the intellectual inferiority of African Americans and Latinos. Perry, Steele and Hilliard (2003) defined counternarratives as messages passed consistently and intentionally on in a group setting. Anti-racist education is also an important part of effectively educating African American and Latino students (Martin, 2007).

The task of achievement for African American students is unique. There are extra social, emotional, cognitive and political competencies required of African American youth. There are also dilemmas that African American students wrestle with as they pursue achievement. A counterhegemonic school-community is called for that "will pass on behaviors that are essential to academic achievement: persistence, thoroughness, a desire to do one's very best, and commitment to hard work" (Perry, Steele, Hilliard, 2003, p.94).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

African American and Latino students would be more successful if classroom instruction reflected their prior knowledge, cultural backgrounds and connections were made between content and students' present (social) realities/interests (Martin, 2007;Gay, 1999).

Scheurich and Skrla (2003) described the importance of culturally responsive teaching. They contend that many well-meaning White teachers unconsciously have negative or deficit beliefs about racial minority students. Many do not see the assets that

students of color bring to the classroom. Gay (1999) asserted that the primary functions that teachers should consider in developing effective learning environments for African American and Latino students are managing classroom discourse, providing culturally relevant conceptual examples, delivering curricula and creating classroom climate.

Classroom Discourse

Teachers control the discourse in their classrooms. The degree to which culturally diverse learners participate in the classroom discourse will depend upon "turn-taking rules, attending and attention-getting behaviors, wait time for responses, length of speech exchanges, questioning strategies, and feedback mechanisms. Teachers need to intentionally extend wait time, integrate active learning strategies and incorporate questions that require higher-order thinking skills. Students also need opportunities to "talk through learning tasks together – posing questions, finding solutions, and demonstrating mastery." These types of activities promote learning of African American students.

Culturally Relevant Conceptual Examples

In seeking to convey the meaning of abstract concepts, pertinent skills, facts and principles, teachers often rely on examples, illustrations and anecdotes. When culturally relevant examples are not used, the opportunities for African American and Latino to learn are limited. African American and Latino students are more likely to learn when classroom experiences are connected to their cultural experiences. The challenge is educating teachers about the history, cultural traditions and the background of Latino and African American students so that teachers are equipped to introduce ethnically diverse anti-racist content and pedagogy.

Multicultural Content

  Although teachers work within state guidelines to determine what students need to know and be able to do, culturally divergent perspectives, experiences, contributions and realities can be infused into instruction and influence how students access curriculum.

Classroom Climate

  Research (Moos, 1979) demonstrated that improved satisfaction, performance and student growth existed in highly organized classes where students had positive relationships with teachers and were rewarded for improved academic performance. Personal experiences are essential aspects to facilitating student learning. Teachers should attach significance to the personal experiences their students share and make overt connections between those experiences and the curriculum. Teachers who are effective in teaching all students engage in transformative education that incorporates personal and culturally responsive teaching.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

There are five sections included in this chapter: A) Purpose of the Study

B) Research Design and Context   C) Research Participants and Sampling Frame

D) Instrumentation and Data Collection E) Data Analysis.

.   **A) PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study was a preliminary, exploratory investigation of the perceptions and

experiences that African American and Latino students have of their high school

experience. The objective of the study was to summarize the students' experiences in an

effort to determine if they could inform other classroom teachers and school

administrators to become more successful in their work as instructional leaders with

African American and Latino students. As part of the study, teachers were asked to

reflect on their teaching practice, identify specific aspects of their teaching that positively

or negatively impact African American and Latino students and consider any changes

they might implement based on student feedback and their own reflection. As this was a

very large research purpose and a relatively limited and selective sample, this study

addressed whether there was enough evidence to warrant a larger scale investigation. To

more fully understand these questions, a single mixed methods case study of one high

school was conducted.

B) RESEARCH DESIGN

The case study method was selected because the research questions chosen

require in-depth descriptions of complex phenomena within their context. The

perspective of the participants was critical as were the words participants used and the

stories they communicated. The phenomena that was studied was the experiences of African American, and Latino high school students in one North Carolina high school, Coventry Midlands High School (a pseudonym for the real school). Yin (2009) stated that one of the strengths of the case study method is its ability to utilize a variety of sources of data collection. Triangulation enhanced the validity of this study through the use of multiple sources of data which for this study included interviews and a student survey (secondary data source). Case studies also allow for flexibility in design. Prescribed models of research design do not exist for case studies, rather the case study researcher can determine the design that best matches the case. As is true for other forms of qualitative research, the design of a case study is determined by the researcher and the phenomena. The complexity of case study research allows the researcher to engage in close communication with the participants rather than rely on distant, non-personal measures. This researcher was also interested particularly in the emic perspectives of the participants, that is telling the stories of participants through their perspectives (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007).

The case study method creates the opportunity to include details about context as well as the phenomena. According to Yin (2003), case studies are utilized when research questions are structured to address questions of "why" and "how"; when limited ability exists to change certain current events; and present day phenomena exists that will be researched in its context (setting). Another important aspect of case study analysis that was utilized as part of this study was the chain of evidence and pattern matching. The chain evidence refers to a clear connection between the research question, data and

results of the study. Pattern matching refers to determining whether research hypotheses match patterns in the data collected.

Several limitations exist in the use of case study methods: generalizability, ethical issues, labor intensive, and lack of rigor (Yin, 2003; Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007). Limited generalizability has already been stated as a limitation. Ethical issues are a purported concern if the identity of the case study individuals becomes difficult to obscure.   The labor-intensive, time-consuming nature of case studies is described and the lack of statistical rigor are additional limitations. Case study researchers have been accused of not following procedures and providing biased evidence. The aforementioned limitations can be addressed by preserving confidentiality of the case, adhering to data collection timelines and procedures.

This mixed methods data collection blended existing secondary student survey data with the gathering of qualitative student interviews, and teacher interviews. For the qualitative part of this study, the researcher sent an email/letter to the school district's Executive Director of Testing and Program Evaluation to request permission to conduct the study (see appended letter to Executive Director). Once permission was obtained, a second email/letter was sent to the Principal (see appended letter to Principal) which also described the purpose of the study and requested permission to conduct the study.

After permission was granted, this researcher conferred with the Principal about appropriate start dates for the student and then teacher interviews. The interviews took take place between November 2010 and January 2011. Each participant was invited to take part in one individual interview for 50 minutes, during one class period. Teachers and students selected whether they wanted to be interviewed before school, after school,

or at lunch, or during a free period. The principal investigator conducted all interviews in a private location. Interviews were completed with 24 African American and Latino student volunteers selected to represent the school's grade levels (9-12), student achievement levels (high, medium, low) and gender.   Students who were interviewed were asked to respond to questions about their favorite teacher. Students were asked to select a "favorite" teacher rather than their "best" teacher or "most effective" teacher. It was posited that the word "favorite" implied a level of intimacy that would resonate with high school students and be more conducive to this study.

The purpose of the teacher interview protocol was to examine the perceptions that African American and Latino high school students at Coventry Midlands High School had of effective classroom instruction and to create opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practice. The feedback from 24 Coventry Midlands African American and Latino students who were interviewed was shared with teachers.

The quantitative part of the study involved the analysis of secondary student survey data that was collected at the school for the school's purposes.

The duration of the data collection phase lasted three months in one school year. Transcription and analysis, and writing the dissertation, took many more months. Participants (students and teachers) were asked to meet for one 50 minute interview

which is the length of a class period. Some student interviews were shorter (25-50

minutes). Follow up for clarification took the form of a brief phone call or email.

Table 3.0 Research Crosswalk – Mixed Methods Research Design

Research Hypotheses	Student Surveys	Student Interviews	Teacher Interviews
The perceptions that African American and Latino students have about their high school experiences contribute to or detract from their academic success or failure.	x	x	
Experiences reported by African American and Latino students can inform teachers and administrators in a meaningful way.	x	x	
African American and Latino students bring different experiences to the same treatment, but since racism is endemic in society, some teachers exhibit behaviors that CRT predicts namely deficit thinking, bias and or colorblind thinking.			x

THE CASE – RESEARCH CONTEXT

Neighborhood

This study was conducted at Coventry Midlands High School in North Carolina in the southeastern United States. Coventry Midlands High School is surrounded by economically diverse neighborhoods and subdivisions (within a two mile radius) including an apartment complex, transitional homes on ½ - 1/3 acre lots for $200,000-225,000, single family contemporary and transitional homes on ¼ -1/3 acre lots for $275,000-300,000 and upscale traditional homes on ½ acre lots for $400,000-550,000. A new home community has housing from $500,000-700,000 only a mile from a modest community with prices starting at $150,000. Also within three miles of the school is a $6.5 million dollar aquatic center which was built in 2009, walking trails, a skateboard park, batting cage and a dog park. Coventry Midlands is part of a three school neighboring campus, a middle school and elementary school are all within walking distance.

Background – District

Coventry Midlands Public Schools District, a suburban school district founded in 1909 is home to a major research university. Coventry Midlands spends $9779 per pupil and there are 227 district teachers who earned National Board Certification (NBPTS) since the program began in 1996. In the 2009-2010 school year, 26 district teachers achieved National Board Certification. National Board Certification is a voluntary national teaching certificate that demonstrates mastery and accomplished teaching and is achieved in addition to state certification. Coventry Midlands Public Schools has a drop out rate of 1.12 percent, and a cohort graduation rate of 88.3%. There are over 11,000

students in this district of 18 schools. Coventry Midlands Public Schools has three

traditional high schools, an alternative high school, four middle schools, ten elementary

schools and is considered to be one of the top performing school districts in the United

States as determined by standardized test scores. Average class size ranges from 18-21 in

grades K-8, the teacher: student ratio is 12:1. Coventry Public Schools is also part of the

Minority Student Achievement Network and was the first district in the state to have an

AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) chapter.

Background – Coventry Midlands High School

Coventry Midlands High School was constructed in 1966 and spans nearly 85

acres with 4 buildings and 14 mobile units. Coventry Midlands has seven athletic fields

and offers 25 varsity sports for men and women, over 50 clubs and 21 co-curricular

associations. Student publications include a yearbook, literary magazine, and student

newspaper. There are just under 1400 students at Coventry Midlands, 66% are White,

14.8% are Black, 8.1% are Latinos, 7.8% are Asian and 3.3% are multi-racial. Nineteen

percent receive free or reduced lunch. The average SAT score was 1176 (1744 if reading

is included) with a 90% participation rate. Coventry Midlands offers 20 Advanced

Placement courses and 34 honors courses.   Recognized as a School of Excellence by the

State of North Carolina, at Coventry Midlands High School, 92% of the graduating

seniors attend 2 or 4 year colleges. There are 83 teachers at Coventry Midlands High

School. Fifty nine percent have 10 or more years experience teaching, 43% have

advanced degrees (Master's degree or higher), and 19 have National Board Certification.

School and Community

Coventry Midlands High School has a sprawling campus. In between periods, 1400 students crowd the hallways, pausing briefly at lockers to collect books or personal belongings in the hallway to catch up with friends or move outside as they pass between one of the four distinct buildings. With five minutes passing time, the pace must be brisk, the warning bell gives students notice that they have one minute until the start time of their next class. On a Friday, instead of a bell, contemporary music is played, the collection of songs determined by Student Government or a classroom teacher. Depending on the building and the hallway, a few teachers will be assembled in the halls between classes, greeting students or chatting with one another. No longer do teachers chastise students for wearing headphones in the hallways or for talking on cell phones. A new electronics policy changed all that. Now students are allowed to talk on cell phones before school, after school and during lunch. Students wear hats or doo rags and there are few limitations on the dress code. Once the bell rings, most students are in class with relatively few stragglers. The school's only School Resource Officer, two security guards and most periods, the three assistant principals linger briefly to assure that stragglers make their way to class.

After the start of the period, in the main building, it is not uncommon to see student groups huddled in the hallways working on a teacher designated group assignment. It is common in English or Social Studies classes to see students discussing a novel or listening to a lecture, students in Math classes explaining their answers to problem sets or in Science classes see a teacher model the procedures to be followed for a lab. In a Foreign Language classroom, it is common to hear students and teachers

speaking in the native language whether it be Japanese, German, French, or Spanish and in Latin class students pouring over the correct translation of poetry or prose. Students in Physical Education classes, head to one of two gymnasiums, a weight room, tennis courts, a soccer, softball, baseball or football field or an outdoor track. Students in Career and Technical classes work in a state of the art facilities.

At lunch, all students are released for a common 50 minute lunch, an unusual occurence for a high school of 1400 students. The fact that all 1400 students are released to have lunch at the same time is indicative of the level of safety and security in this school. In some communities, releasing the entire high school for lunch at the same time would result in a loss of campus control.

During lunch, about 600 students head to the cafeteria while seniors with off-campus privileges head to their cars for a meal downtown or at a neighboring restaurant. The rest of the underclassmen eat outside in the quad or throughout the school in the halls outside of classrooms. New cars line the student parking lot of a community filled with the children of lawyers, university professors and business professionals as well as the children of recent immigrants and blue collar workers. In the afternoons, students return for the final three 50 minute periods of a seven period day. In such an affluent community, only one private Friends K-12 school exists in town, since most opt to attend the public high schools.

C) RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

There were 1400 students at Coventry Midlands High School, of which 328 were African American and Latino students. The high school student participants in this study were a stratified sample selected from the pool of 207 African American and 122 Latino students. The actual total sample size (n) used for the surveys was 1,003 legible surveys that clearly identified a favorite teacher. The sample size (n) for African Americans was 99 students (9.97%), and for Latinos, the sample size (n) was 47 (4.69%). Students who decided not to report their race accounted for 236 students (23.53%) and 104 students (10.37%) identified themselves as multi-racial. These numbers varied significantly from the actual demographics of Coventry Midlands High School. African Americans actually account for 14.8% of the population, Latinos for 8.1% and multi-racial students for 3.3%.

The students were in grades 9-12 and their ages ranged from 14-18. Even those who had already turned 18 in 12th grade were treated as "minors" in order to follow school policy, that is, that they were given parental permission forms to complete. Pools of African American and Latino students were identified (see Table 3.1) for the sampling plan; randomly selected students were invited to participate, and those who responded first in each of the sampling groups were interviewed.

In addition to balancing the sample by race/ethnicity (African American and Latinos), it was also balanced by grade level and past achievement level. The goal was to include a total of 24 students. The interview sample included six students in each grade level, half African American and half Latino, and included two students at each past achievement level in each grade, half African Americans and half Latinos.

Table 3.1   Sampling Frame

	Latinos					**African Americans**			
Ach.Levels	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Total**		**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Total**
9th	1	1	1	3		1	1	1	3
10th	1	1	1	3		1	1	1	3
11th	1	1	1	3		1	1	1	3
12th	1	1	1	3		1	1	1	3
Total Latinos	4	4	4	12	**Total Af.Am.**	4	4	4	12

Total of 24 students were interviewed stratified by grade, achievement and race

This sample was drawn from the African American and Latino students. The sampling frame utilized for the interviews ensured that African American and Latino students from each grade level in grades 9-12 were interviewed.   This researcher obtained written permission first from the Executive Director of Testing and Program Evaluation of the school district, and then from the Principal of the high school, before recruiting participants. (Please see the appended letters to these two individuals).

The 24 African American and Latino students who were interviewed included equal numbers of "average" students, students who were taking honors and AP courses, and students who were struggling and failing one or more classes. To determine which of the 328 African American and Latino students fit into these three categories, this researcher worked with an intermediary, the Executive Director of Testing and Program Evaluation's designee: the Manager of Student Information Systems or another

designee(s). The designee provided this researcher with an Excel spreadsheet that

contained the NC Wise Student ID number, gender, race/ethnicity and the GPA of all

African American and Latino students in grades 10-12. The designee also provided this

researcher with an Excel spreadsheet that included 9th graders' NC Wise Student ID

numbers, 8th grade EOG scores, race, and gender of all African American and Latino

students in grade 9.   The 8th grade EOG scores were utilized since 9th graders do have

high school GPAs until the end of the school year. Student names were NOT included.

Together, the designee and this researcher sorted the data first by race/ethnicity,

then by grade, and then by GPA/EOG within grade. We were then be able to create

achievement categories using the following "cut-points" for those categories.

**Table 3.2 Recruitment Designation of High, Medium and Low level
Achievement for African American and Latino High School Students**

	High	Average	Low
Grades 10-12	3.4 +GPA (weighted)	2.3-3.3 GPA Weighted	Below 2.3 (weighted)
Grade 9	Level IV. EOG Reading and/or Math	Level III. EOG Reading and/or Math	Level I or II EOG Reading and/or Math

The designee and this researcher were then able to indicate where those

GPA/EOG cut-points were in the Excel spreadsheet, save that file, then delete the column

with the actual GPA/EOG scores, and save the file again without the GPA/EOG scores.

That sorted list was then given to the researcher. This researcher used the sorted list to

randomly select students to create a shorter list for recruitment purposes that included the

NCWise ID numbers of students in the three broad achievement-level groups for African

American and Latino students, and for each grade level, without knowing actual

GPA/EOG scores. To create this shorter list for recruitment, the researcher more or less

randomly selected three to five African American students and three to five Latino

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students at each grade level who are high, average or low achievers, that is three to five students for every individual cell. This researcher used gender information to help balance the design. Up to ten African American and Latino low achievers were initially selected since it was anticipated that it might have taken low achievers longer to return parent permission and assent forms or it was believed that they may have been less likely to want to participate in the study. In reality, the majority of students invited to participate elected to participate regardless of their achievement level.

Once the pool of students who were asked to participate in the interviews were selected by the researcher, the researcher shared this list of students who were identified by their NC Wise numbers. The intermediary provided this researcher with the names of the students that corresponded to the NC Wise numbers. This researcher obtained the schedules of these students from the high school's administration and invited them in small groups to participate in the study; this researcher was an employee of the high school, so her presence there, and her asking to speak with a student, was not a surprise.

Based on past experience, it was thought that personal, face to face invitations would be more effective in communicating with African American and Latino high school students rather than just sending them forms via their home room teachers. The face-to-face invitations also provided students with an opportunity to ask questions about the study when they first heard about it. At this high school, using written invitations for meetings, sent via homeroom teachers, has been much less effective. Teachers often forget to give students the notes or students forget about the appointments or to take materials home. When this researcher met with students initially, students were told about the interview and the overall study, and were given assent and consent forms to

have signed and returned at a later date if they were interested in participating in the study.

During this initial meeting, the researcher described the random process of selection (not everyone was being invited) and communicated that not every student who expressed an interest (returned the parent permission and assent forms) would be interviewed, because the researcher only had a limited amount of time. To reinforce these statements, and the perception of voluntariness, it was communicated that it was understood that high school students are busy, and that the researcher expected some of them not to have time, or that they would simply decide not to participate in the study for other reasons. Students were told that more than the number of students the researcher was hoping to interview were invited to participate. Once this researcher received assent and parental permission forms from each student, interviews began.

As noted above, the researcher worked at the site where the interviews took place. Student interviews were scheduled during study halls, free periods (periods with no classes scheduled), and AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination). AVID is a program that helps prepare minority and other students for college. No students were interested in meeting before school, at lunch or after school. Student interviews took place in a private office. Phone conversations took place in a school administrator's office. Students were given $20 as a token of appreciation for their participation in the study. Students were compensated after student assent and parent permission slips were returned.

There are 83 classroom teachers in this high school. Six of these teachers were interviewed; a larger pool of 10-12 teachers was identified and invited to participate;

those who agreed first were selected for the actual interviews. Since this researcher formerly worked as an Assistant Principal at this school, it is possible that some teachers may have been more forthcoming or more reserved in their responses. Teachers were told that many teachers were contacted, given that teachers may be busy, the opportunity for the interviews may come at an inconvenient time in the semester, or they may choose not to participate in the study for other reasons. This researcher emailed teachers inviting them to participate in the study. (Scripts for the email are attached).

The teachers in the pool were a subset of the teachers that were previously chosen as a "favorite teacher" in a school-administered survey that took place in the Spring of 2010. Those teachers who were chosen were also named by at least one and in most cases by at least two of the 24 minority students in the study sample (see table 3.1) as a "favorite teacher" during the student interviews conducted for this study. Gender, ethnicity, age and the subjects taught by teachers were not directly relevant, but where feasible those demographic and background factors were considered when making the selection of which teachers to invite to be part of the study.

Interviews took place during teachers' planning period, at lunch or after school based on the teacher's preference. Teacher interviews took place in the teacher's classroom. Teacher participants were not be given any monetary compensation, just verbally expressed appreciation.

D) INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

Interviews

Twenty-four students were asked a total of 20 questions to determine their experiences. The interview protocol is appended. Each participant was interviewed for

25-50 minutes during the duration of a class period. The Odum Institute provided

consultation in the development of questions for the student interviews. The Odum

Institute is an institute for research in Social Science located at the University of North

Carolina, Chapel Hill. A meeting was held with Paul Mihas, the Coordinator of

Education and Qualitative Research Consultant at the Odum Institute and several email

consultations also took place. The first five questions of the interview protocol are

rapport building questions. Glesne (2006) asserted that rapport is a critical aspect of

effective field relationships in qualitative research.

Content validity was established through expert consultation. Experts from the

field were consulted to ensure that the questions were designed to address Critical Race

Theory. The researcher developed and distributed email questions to a group of experts

who were knowledgeable about CRT that included three University professors and two

practitioners. The experts consulted were three professors: Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings –

University of Wisconsin – Madison; Dr. Latish Reed – University of Wisconsin-

Milwaukee; Dr. George Noblit – University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill; along with

Graig Meyer – Blue Ribbon Mentor Program Coordinator and Equity Coach and Dr. Sam

Oertwig, Investigator, University of North Carolina Frank Porter Graham Child

Development Institute. The experts revised questions in the interview protocol and/or

gave general feedback about the instrument. All of the changes recommended by experts

were made. Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings informed this researcher that there are no CRT

questions. CRT needs to be used in the analysis of data. Dr. Latish Reed indicated that

clarity was needed about which CRT tenets the study was focusing on particularly for the

data analysis portion of the study. Dr. George Noblit also stated that the determination of

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which tenets of CRT the instrument focused on was critical. Dr. Sam Oertwig commented that the questions were a comprehensive examination of minority student experiences.

The seven questions that were revised were #'s 1, 2, 12, 13, 14,16, and 17. From questions number one and two, Graig Meyer removed references to examples of specific classes. In question 12, Graig added reference to the student's favorite class. Question 13 was revised from, *can you tell me the last time you had a voice* to *what does the teacher do to show they value your voice?* Graig added question 14 as a new question. Dr. Noblit and Dr. Oertwig revised question 14 in order to specify which teacher the question was referring to. Dr. Oertwig questioned whether students would be able to answer a question about how their race impacted their experience in class. That question (formerly question 15) was eliminated since several other questions more specifically asked about the students' experiences with race in the classroom. Dr. Oertwig also revised questions 15, 16 and 17. Dr. Oertwig revised question 15 to specify, *Did your favorite teacher's class or any of your classes include materials or discussion about different cultures, races, and/or ethnicities?* rather than state *Do classroom resources include materials or discussion about different cultures, races and ethnicities?* Question 16 was changed from *Do class resources include materials or discussion about racism?* to *Please list any classes that include materials or discussion about racism.* At the end of question 17, Dr. Oertwig revised the tag question from, *if yes, can you think of an example?* to *if yes, can you give an example*?

The initial plan was to conduct 24 student interviews and 24 teacher interviews. Dr. Reed and Paul Mihas from the Odum Institute both stated that 48 interviews was

excessive therefore the number of interviews has been reduced to six teacher interviews and 24 student interviews.

Six teachers were asked a total of 14 questions to assess their reactions to student feedback from the student interviews and surveys. Each teacher was interviewed for 50 minutes during a class period, at lunch or after school. The interview protocol is appended. The development of the teacher interview protocol was based on the student interview protocol. In order to establish content validity, Graig Meyer and Paul Mihas were consulted in the development of the teacher protocol. Graig Meyer changed question number ten from *Where in your curriculum do you intentionally interject different ethnicities, races or positive contributions of African Americans or Latinos?* to *How do you choose when and where to include different ethnicities, races or positive contributions of African Americans or Latinos?* Graig Meyer changed question 12 from *This is what students shared about an experience when they felt they were treated differently from their white peers in your classroom or another classroom (provide examples).* The question became, *Do you remember an experience when African American or Latino students communicated that they were treated differently from their white peers based on one or more of the following reasons: Based on race, Based on whether they spoke Spanish or were non-native speakers of English, Based on immigration status If yes, can you share about that experience?*
Question 12 was changed to *This is what students shared about an experience when they felt they were treated differently from their White peers in your classroom or another classroom based on race, based on whether they spoke Spanish or were non-native speakers of English or based on immigration status (provide examples) Has a student*

ever disclosed this type of experience to you and if so what was it like for you to hear this

from the student?   Paul Mihas recommended adding several questions to capture

teachers' understanding of their own methods independently before sharing student

feedback. The first question was written to determine the strategies teachers used to get to

know their students and establish relationships with them. The questions that were added

were: *1) What strategies do you use to connect with students? 2) How do you motivate*

students to work hard? 3) What are your strategies to get students to talk in class or is

there anything in particular that you do to show that you value the voice of all students?

– This question was initially written as two questions, but to save time, this question was

combined as one. *4) How do you choose when to include materials on different*

ethnicities in the class? 5) Have you had discussions about racism in the classroom? Can

you share an example? 6) Has a student ever disclosed that he or she was being treated

differently based on whether they spoke Spanish or were non-native speakers of English?

Potential threats to research validity and reliability for the student interview

instrument were examined. The interviewees were limited in number and only selected if

multiple volunteers fit all the sampling strata. A potential threat was selection

maturation. It was anticipated that some of the students' experiences could have been

related to their age. Certainly 9th graders could have had vastly different experiences than

12th graders. To address this threat, an equal number of students from each grade level

were selected. An assertion of this study was that student experiences describing favorite

teachers would differ by race regardless of the grade level. Potential threats to research

validity and reliability for the teacher interview instrument were also reviewed.

Survey

The Coventry Midlands High School Equity Team which consisted of nine members led an initiative to administer an anonymous student survey to all students in response to teacher requests for student feedback. This survey was separate and apart from the proposed study, but the topic was relevant. Although the impetus for the survey was minority student feedback, the survey was targeted towards all students in order to inform teachers about student opinions of the entire student body. As part of Equity professional development for the 2009-2010 school year, teachers who had been nominated by minority students because of their effectiveness were invited to make equity presentations to their peers. In spite of being nominated by students, several teachers expressed uncertainty about what they were doing specifically to help minority students. The survey was conducted in response to teacher requests for data from minority students so they could understand better what they were doing that was helpful. The Tripod Project has the raw student data, but has provided teacher level reports to teachers who could give, or not give written permission for school administrators to view individual, identifiable teacher data. For the original data collection of this school-initiated, school-administered survey, high school students were given the option of not participating in the survey the day of the survey or of leaving any questions blank they were not comfortable completing. This is standard policy for school-based surveys like this. In addition, again in accordance with school policy, parents were given the opportunity to refuse their child's survey completion, and parents signed a form if they did not want their son/daughter to complete the survey.

The survey that was distributed to students was the Student Perceptions Survey. The Student Perceptions Survey, originally named the Ed-Excel Assessment of Secondary School Student Culture was developed for Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) districts to examine the differences between majority and minority student engagement in classes and to determine what teachers were doing to engage minority students. In the 2000-2001 school year, the survey was administered to 40,000 students in 95 schools in all of the 15 original MSAN districts. Since then, the survey has been given to a total of more than 50,000 students. Some of the districts that have administered the survey are Ithaca High School in Ithaca New York; four schools in Lafayette Parish, Lafayette, Louisiana; Eugene Public Schools in Eugene, Oregon; South Orange and Maplewood public schools, New Jersey; Memphis City Schools and 17 schools in New Jersey, Connecticut, Ohio, New Mexico, Massachusetts and California.

For the quantitative part of this study, analyses were made of the Student Perceptions Survey data, collected by the Tripod Project. The survey was developed by Achievement First and the Tripod Project which is led by Ron Ferguson, Faculty Chair and Director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University. Because this is a secondary data source, written permission to use these data is included from the Tripod Project (Data Use/Permission letter is in Appendix J.) The Tripod Project has the raw student data, but has provided teacher level reports to teachers who could give, or not give written permission for school administrators to view individual, identifiable teacher data. A school level report was also given to this school.

Of the 83 Coventry Midlands High School teachers, just under half, 40 teachers indicated that they gave written permission to receive their compiled classroom responses

and gave permission for the administration to view their teacher level reports. Teachers selected for interviews had indicated that they received their teacher level reports, thereby signaling that at least five students nominated them as their favorite teacher. Teachers only received teacher level reports if they were nominated by at least five students as a favorite teacher. The teachers were also named by at least one and in most cases at least two of the 24 students interviewed as their favorite teacher. A list of ten to twelve potential teachers to be interviewed was compiled. The first six teachers to respond affirmatively were interviewed.

The Tripod Project granted permission to this researcher to use the survey instrument, to analyze the data and publish the findings, including a limited number of specific survey items as appropriate (Data Use/Permission letter is in Appendix J.) Information from the technical manual which includes information about validity and reliability was reviewed. (Ferguson, 2008; Tripod Project, 2010).

Student respondents in the Student Perceptions Survey were anonymous at the time of the original data collection. There was no identifying student information on the surveys. Even though there was a blank space on the survey to identify student # and school #, all of those sections were left blank. Students were not asked to provide any identifying information on the survey nor were school numbers provided. Students were, however, asked to review a list of 83 teacher names with accompanying numbers and write the teacher number that corresponded with their favorite teacher. This information was listed as "class # on the survey.

This instrument was considered appropriate to the research purpose because of its focus on minority students' perception of the school environment. The instrument was developed for use with middle school and high school students which is consistent with the students of interest. This survey gave feedback on students' perceptions of engagement, environment and effort students put forth in the classroom. Students were asked to think about a particular teacher's class and tailor their responses to that class. Students were also asked about trust and belonging in their favorite teacher's class and peer relationships that pertained to resilience and efficacy based on effort.

Surveys were administered to all students at Coventry Midlands High School during a Friday monthly meeting period. The typical seven-period day schedule is collapsed 8-9 times a year during Delayed Opening days. On Delayed Opening Thursdays, students arrive two hours later while teachers participate in professional learning communities and attend three classes, periods 2, 4 and 6. On the Friday following the delayed opening, students attend periods 1, 3, 5 and 7 and a required monthly meeting period. During one Friday monthly meeting period, all students completed a 20 minute classroom conditions survey developed by the Tripod Project. While all students from one high school were surveyed, the particular focus on this study was the African American and Latino students whose survey results were extracted from the entire group that was surveyed.

<div align="center">**Confidentiality of the Data**</div>

Quantitative Data

Data collected from Tripod's Student Perceptions Survey were kept on a computer in a locked office at the residence of the researcher which is only accessible

with a secure password. Only this researcher had access to the password. The original

data were collected anonymously; quantitative data for the analysis was summary data

and did not focus on individual students.

Procedures were in place to protect the privacy of the participants during the

individual interviews and the confidentiality of the information they provide.   The

secondary data used for the quantitative analysis were collected anonymously, so there was

minimal risk of a breach of confidentiality involved in those analyses.

Qualitative Data

Initially this researcher had planned to audio-tape student and teacher interviews,

but later decided to just take notes in order to eliminate the need to transcribe interviews.

No names were used when student comments were shared with the teachers; in addition,

only summary (non-identifiable) student statements about perceptions were shared with

teachers. Student GPAs, EOG scores and written analysis of this study's information

were kept in a locked office. At the conclusion of the study, the identifying information

was destroyed. Signed teacher consents, parent permission forms, and student assent

forms will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's residence for three years, and then

destroyed. The data used for the secondary analysis were collected anonymously; the

data will be retained until no longer useful, and then shredded.

If it was necessary to clarify a statement, a follow up phone call or to email was

made. The possibility of this is addressed in the teacher consent and the parent

permission and student assent forms. When this happened, teacher contact was made by

email or a meeting during a planning period. Student contact took place during a study

hall, free period or lunch.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 2006) utilized storytelling to expose how racism impacts minority experiences. Critical Race Theory was utilized as a framework to analyze the students' responses by examining what CRT would say about answers to questions in the teacher and student interviews. The two primary areas that were examined were deficit thinking, and bias. This researcher hypothesized that in favorite teachers' classes, students would indicate that their favorite teacher did not view them as having a cultural disadvantage because they are minorities, students would state that their favorite teacher treated them like every one else, and that their favorite teacher was comfortable talking about race and racism. These two areas were the primary focus of how the theoretical frame was utilized in data analysis, but this researcher also allowed other themes to emerge.

E) DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed utilizing the lenses of Critical Race Theory, and the knowledge, behaviors and dispositions that help African American and Latino students to be successful, namely culturally responsive teaching. This study focused more specifically on three areas of CRT analysis:

- Interrogating racism and dominant racial ideology that promotes deficit thinking, and bias (Challenging Claims of Neutrality, Objectivity, Colorblindness and Meritocracy).

- Centering the experiences of African American and Latino high school students in order to learn about their experiences with race and using their counterstories to challenge the stories of the dominant group

- Centering the knowledge, behaviors and dispositions necessary to create

  successful learning environments for African American and Latino students

Interviewee's responses and surveys results were analyzed for deficit thinking, and bias.   Since racism is endemic in society, this researcher examined when and under what circumstances students stated that they had experienced racism at Coventry Midlands High School. The first set of questions about the students' perceptions of their ability and academic success (see appended student interview) were examined for responses based on its focus on rapport building. The second set of questions, about their favorite teacher, were examined for evidence of culturally responsive teaching practices, some of which are classroom discourse, infusing multicultural content, utilizing culturally relevant and managing classroom climate. The third set, about classroom environments, and the fourth section, about experiences with race or racism, were examined for evidence of the existence of racism, bias and deficit thinking. Analysis of the teachers' responses to their interview questions followed similar lines.

This researcher had hypothesized that 1) in favorite teachers' classes, students would indicate that their favorite teacher did not view them as having a cultural disadvantage because they are minorities, 2) students would state that their favorite teacher treats them like every one else, and 3) students would indicate that their favorite teacher was comfortable talking about race and racism.

 As a CRT strategy, students' counterstories were included and knowledge, behavior and dispositions that lead to academic success for African American and Latino students were centered.

In reviewing questions 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, and 18, this researcher examined whether the students' favorite teachers included discussions about race and racism in their classroom, demonstrated evidence that they were not color blind, did not show bias, and did not ascribe to deficit thinking.

In reviewing questions 9 (classroom climate), 12 and 13 (classroom discourse), 14, 15 and 17 (multicultural content, culturally relevant examples), this researcher examined the extent to which teachers engaged in culturally responsive instruction. Culturally responsive instruction is a strategy that contributes to the successful learning environment for African American and Latino students. In examining questions 19 and 20, this researcher determined whether issues of immigration status and language acquisition would surface in terms of how Latino students were treated by teachers and administrators.

In examining responses to the teacher interview protocol, this researcher examined the responses to question one, two, seven and eight (classroom climate), question three and nine (classroom discourse), question four, five, six, 10, 11 and 12, (culturally relevant examples and multicultural content), this researcher determined the level of teacher utilization of culturally responsive pedagogy. Evidence of culturally responsive instruction indicated whether teachers are utilizing knowledge, behaviors and dispositions that create successful learning environments for African American and Latino students.

In reviewing questions four, five, 11 and 12, this researcher assessed the teachers' inclusion of curriculum and classroom instruction focused on race or racism, their beliefs about bias, colorblind and deficit thinking. In reviewing questions six and 12, this

researcher determined the teachers' consciousness about issues of immigration status and language in the teachers' classroom which particularly pertained to students who were bilingual or are immigrants. In question 14, this researcher assessed the connections between the students' feedback about their perceived experiences and any impact on the teachers' decisions to change their practice.

Interview data analysis process initially started with single word codes and line by line coding then gradually incorporated codes with multiple words. A deeper understanding of the definition of the codes was developed by creating codes with multiple words. After developing codes, the codes that only appeared once were not used as themes. Codes were combined if similarities were discovered. Some triangulation was conducted through use of student surveys, student interviews and teacher interviews to verify the importance of a code and to confirm the accuracy of the data about each other's assessment and the prevalence of a stated perception. This researcher also investigated through the Odum Institute the use of NVivo or ATLAS.ti as qualitative research tools, but ultimately decided to take written notes and analyze the data without the aid of computer software. The decision not to use computer software was simply made for convenience so that this researcher did not need to spend time learning how to use the software. Student surveys utilized were secondary data sources and included analysis conducted by the Tripod Project.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

While working as an Assistant Principal at Coventry Midlands High School, I received an email from a Science teacher, Mr. Gold (pseudonym) who was concerned about one of his students who was regularly late or missed his first period class. In the email, Mr. Gold requested that the student, Dulce (pseudonym), a Latina student be dropped from his first period class and moved to his third period class. Mr. Gold also requested that Dulce be placed in Physical Education first period instead. I had not received any previous emails or disciplinary referrals about this issue, so this was Mr. Gold's first communication with me about Dulce's tardy problem. Mr. Gold also sent the email to the student's counselor and the family specialist (bilingual licensed social worker). Mr. Gold expressed a concern that since Dulce was Limited English Proficient (LEP), perhaps she did not understand the concerns he had raised with her. I met with Mr. Gold and shared that the first step was to write a disciplinary referral. I also shared that dropping his class first period and adding Physical Education (PE) would send a message that PE was not as important as his class. It would also not solve the problem of Dulce's tardies. After Mr. Gold wrote the referral, I scheduled a meeting with Mr. Gold, Dulce and the family specialist. During our meeting, I asked Dulce why she was late to Mr. Gold's class. She explained that her older brother, a senior, drove her to school in the mornings. Since her brother did not have a first period class, they were often late. Every Coventry Midlands High School student who is not within walking distance has access to free bus transportation and so I told Dulce that she needed to take

the school bus. Both the family specialist and I are bilingual so we were able to

determine from talking to Dulce that her English skills were fine and she had no difficulty

understanding Mr. Gold. I also assigned Dulce one day of In School Suspension (ISS)

for being late and missing so many first period classes without a legitimate excuse. It did

not take long for Dulce to start arriving to class on time.

So often in Education we move to a solution before truly understanding the nature

of the problem. Dulce's problem was not limited English skills nor did she have a

transportation crisis. Dulce was choosing to take the most convenient mode of

transportation and if she had been allowed to take PE first period instead, she would have

received the message that her first period class was not important. There was an

assumption (not based on data) that Dulce could not get to school on time. Rather than

hold her accountable and require her to come to first period on time, the proposed

solution was to allow her to take a less rigorous first period class. This was clearly not an

effective way of working with this Latina student. These types of teacher interactions

prompted me to examine effective and ineffective practices for educating African

American and Latino students.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions and classroom

experiences of African American and Latino students in one North Carolina high school

in order to determine the knowledge, behaviors and dispositions that teachers utilize that

contribute to successful environments for these students of color and how such practices

might be used to further inform instruction. In particular, this mixed methods case study

examined characteristics and/or effective practices of teachers identified by African

American and Latino students through the theoretical lens of Critical Race Theory.

The research question was: Can the perceptions and experiences of African American and Latino High School students inform classroom instruction by pointing towards practices and beliefs they believe account for their success in school? From this question, the study more specifically investigated:

C) What are the characteristics and/or practices of teachers that African American and Latino students identify as more successful than others?

D) If found to be applicable, how do the emerging data correspond to concepts in Critical Race Theory?

As previously indicated, these data gathered for this study came from secondary student surveys, student interviews and teacher interviews. In this chapter, this researcher will briefly describe the findings from the surveys to provide the context for the interviews. Within this section, this researcher will discuss five targets, each will be briefly described.

Secondary Student Surveys and Context

Data analysis consisted of data collected from 1003 student surveys, 24 student interviews and six teacher interviews. In this section, this researcher will discuss the findings from the student surveys in order to contextualize the interviews. The following table describes the high school students who took the survey as part of a school-initiated, school-administered survey. During one Friday monthly meeting period, all students completed a 20 minute classroom conditions survey developed by the Tripod Project which students were given the option of not participating in the survey the day of the survey or of leaving any questions blank they were not comfortable completing. Students

were asked to review a list of 83 teacher names with accompanying numbers and write

the teacher number that corresponded with their favorite teacher.

Table 4.0 Survey Demographics

White	37.99%	381
Unreported	23.53%	236
Multiracial	10.37%	104
Black	**9.97%**	**100**
Asian	6.58%	66
Latino	**4.69%**	**47**
Other	2.39%	24
Arabic	1.60%	16
East Indian	1.10%	11
Native American	.90%	9
Pacific Islander	.60%	6
West Indian	.30%	3
Total Sample Size		1003 student surveys with valid Teacher # that corresponded with their favorite teacher

The Student Perceptions' Survey developed by the Tripod Project focused on classroom learning conditions and student engagement targets. The following target areas were the focus areas of the student survey:

Target 1: Trust

Target 2: Cooperation

Target 3: Goal Orientation

Target 4: Diligence

Target 5: Satisfaction

The first target, Trust, referred to students feeling trusting, welcome and safe at

school. The second target, Cooperation, described behaving appropriately in school. The

third target, Goal Orientation, focused on students learning as much as possible and peer

beliefs. The fourth target, Diligence, centered on working diligently and resilience. The

fifth target, Satisfaction, described satisfaction and efficacy based on effort. The survey

results were primarily used to set the context for the learning experiences of Coventry

Midlands High School students. The survey was also used to select teachers for teacher

interviews. Teachers who were nominated as favorite teachers by at least one student and

in most cases at least two students through the survey process were interviewed.

Coventry Midlands High School
Tripod Student Perceptions Survey Results Table 4.1
Target 1: Trust
Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: I feel out of place in this class, like I don't really fit in.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
1: Trust – part 1	Totally untrue/ Mostly untrue	50.6	62.79

Target 1: Trust (part 2)
Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: My teacher in this class makes me Feel that he/she truly cares about me.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
1: Trust Part 2	Totally true/ Mostly true	59.52	48.89

Target 1: Trust

For the first target, trust, 50.6% (about half) of African American students at

Coventry Midlands High School stated that they disagreed with the statement that they

felt out of place in their favorite teacher's class. For Latino students, 62.79% disagreed.

For the second part of target 1 that asked if the teacher made them feel that he/she truly

cares about them, 59.52% of African Americans stated that was totally true/mostly true.

For Latino students, 48.89% stated that was totally true/mostly true.

It is striking that for the first target, these numbers were not significantly higher given that the students were responding with their favorite teacher's class in mind. Students were being asked about how they felt about the environment in their favorite teacher's class, whether they felt out of place and if they felt that their favorite teacher really cares about them. There was not even a solid majority of African American students at this high school that disagreed that they felt out of place or agreed that their teacher cares about them. There was, however, a majority of Latino students that stated that they felt out of place in their favorite teacher's class and only about half of the Latino students believed that their favorite teacher cares about them.

This level of trust and sense of belonging was surprisingly low. These low levels of trust and a sense of belonging could be explained by experiences outside of the favorite teachers' class. This target resonated with the themes that emerged from student interviews and it will be discussed later when the student interviews are discussed.

Target 2: Cooperation
Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: I don't really care whether I arrive On time to this class.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
2: Cooperation	Totally untrue/ Mostly untrue	53.09	60.87

Target 2: Cooperation (part 2)
Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: My behavior is a problem for the teacher in this class.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
2. Cooperation Part 2	Totally untrue/ Mostly untrue	60.76	73.33

Target 2: Cooperation

While this target was part of the survey, it did not emerge as an important theme from the interview data so the subsequent data are presented simply to provide context for the larger study. For this second target, cooperation, 53.09% of African American students indicated that they didn't really care whether they arrived on time to this class as totally untrue or mostly untrue. For Latinos, 60.87% stated this was totally untrue or mostly untrue. More Latino students cared (7% more) about whether they arrived on time to their favorite class than African American students. Just over half of African American students indicated that arriving on time mattered. For the second part of target 2 which was related to what students believed about whether their behavior was a problem for their favorite teacher, 60.76% of African American students said that was totally or mostly untrue. For Latino students, 73.33% stated that was totally or mostly untrue. African American students were saying that the majority did not believe that their behavior was a problem in their favorite teacher's class. A significant majority of Latinos felt the same.

Target 3: Goal Orientation

Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: One of my goals in this class is to keep others from thinking I'm not smart.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
3: Goal Orientation	Totally true/ Mostly true	33.73	17.78

Target 3: Goal Orientation (part 2)
Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: In this class, I worry that I might not do as well as other students.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
3: Goal Orientation Part 2	Totally untrue/ Mostly untrue	40.91	28.26

Target 3: Goal Orientation (part 3)
Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: In this class, it is important to me to thoroughly understand my class work.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
3: Goal Orientation Part 3	Totally true/ Mostly true	75.56	84.78

Target 3: Goal Orientation

Target 3 centered on Goal orientation and whether one of the goals the students had in this class was to keep others from thinking they were not smart. For African American students, about a third, 33.73% said that was totally true or mostly true. For Latino students, the number was significantly lower at 17.78%. For African American students, keeping other students from thinking they are not smart was a preoccupation for at least one third of the students. Having to expend mental energy to focus on what other students are thinking distracts students from being able to focus on classroom instruction and learning new material. One possible effect is that this preoccupation has a negative impact on student academic performance.

For the second part of target 3 which referred to whether students worried that they might not do as well as other students, only 40.91% of African American students stated that was totally untrue or mostly untrue. More Latino students seemed to worry about doing as well as other students. Only 28.26% stated that this was totally or mostly

untrue. Rather than being able to focus in their favorite teacher's class on the content that was being covered, almost 60% of African American students were worried about not doing as well as other students. That number is staggering. The majority of African American students even while sitting in their favorite teacher's class were concerned with whether they will be as successful as other students. Even more Latinos were worried about not doing as well, almost 72%.

It was not surprising then for the third part of target 3 that 75.56% of African Americans stated that it was important to thoroughly understand class work. For Latino students, the number was even higher, 84.78% agreed that it was totally true or mostly true that it was important to thoroughly understand class work. Part of what those numbers illustrate is that students care about understanding class work. It is also indicative of the importance of being able to complete the class work so that students can successfully complete homework. Later when the student interview results are discussed, reference will be made to students thoroughly understanding class work.

Target 4: Diligence
Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: I sometimes hold back from doing my best in this class because of what others might say or think.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
4: Diligence	Totally untrue/ Mostly untrue	50	60.87

Target 4: Diligence (part 2)
Percentage of students by Race/Ethnicity who responded: I don't mind asking questions in this class if I need to.

Target	Category	African Americans	Latinos
		Percentages	
4: Diligence Part 2	Totally true/ Mostly true	57.14	55.81

Target 4: Diligence

For target 4, Diligence, students responded about the extent to which they sometimes hold back from doing their best in class because of what others might say or think. For African American students, 50% said that this was totally untrue or mostly untrue. Half of all African American students at Coventry Midlands High School stated that they held back from doing their best because of what others might say or think. For Latino students, 60.87% said this was totally untrue or mostly untrue. Just under 40% of Latino students indicated that they held back from doing their best because of what others thought or said. The second part of target 4, referred to the extent to which students stated that they mind asking questions in their favorite teacher's class. For African American students, 57.14% said that was totally true or mostly true. For Latino students, 55.81% stated that was totally true or mostly true. About half of the African American and Latino students stated that they did not feel comfortable asking questions in their favorite teacher's class. Given the preoccupation with what others think or say and concern about whether they had the correct answer, it was not surprising that about half of Latino and African American students at this high school were not comfortable asking questions. The third part of target 4, and all of target 5 focused on working diligently, resilience and efficacy based on effort. These topics were not central to this study so therefore the results were not included. The focus of target four and target 5 and the rest of the targets was more on the students' own beliefs and behavior versus the students' perceptions of classroom instruction and teaching.

Reflections on the Survey Results

There is a confluence of interrelated factors that impact the student's classroom experience. This survey assessed classroom conditions, and the school environment. The survey focused on students' perceptions of feeling out of place in a class, feeling that the teacher cares, being concerned about whether other students think they are smart, worrying that they may not do as well as other students, thoroughly understanding class work, holding back from doing their best and being comfortable answering questions. African American students reported being significantly distracted by what others think (1/3 were preoccupied with what others think and about half held back from doing their best). African American students also reported being worried about not being as smart as others (60%) , about half were uncomfortable asking questions and about half mentioned not fitting into their favorite class. Only about half of Latino students reported believing that their favorite teacher cared about them, a majority of Latinos reported being worried about not doing as well as others (72%) and 84% said understanding class work was important and just over half were uncomfortable asking questions. All in the context of the class they enjoy the most and with their favorite teacher.

It is notable that for African American and Latino students, there is such a high degree of agitation and anxiety and a low level of trust and belonging even in their favorite teacher's class. In terms of understanding context, for Coventry Midlands High School students, they were asked to report on their experience in one class. Students at this high school take seven classes and the one that they report as their favorite class might not even be a current class that they are taking. It would be naïve to think that African American and Latino students take their favorite teacher's class outside of the

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context of the school and the larger society. Therefore it is important before looking at the students' favorite teachers' classes to reexamine the larger macro context of race in society, then the micro context of race at Coventry Midlands High School.

Student and Teacher Interviews

The data analysis framework utilized was Critical Race Theory (CRT) with a focus on integrating counter stories and highlighting major tenets of CRT. CRT links the importance of students' perceptions with their experiences while noting the existence of issues of race and racism, promotion of deficit thinking, and the presence of bias (Marshall, C. 2010; and Yosso, T. 2006). The primary data gathering method included qualitative student and teacher interviews. Both the survey and the student interviews focused on African American and Latino students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness through the lens of CRT. In addition, the interviews were understood within the context of the student surveys. This section will provide an overview of how the targets in the student survey connect with CRT themes and the themes that emerged from the student interviews.

During the student interviews, several students discussed the importance of having caring teachers. This was part of what made teachers effective in the eyes of students. In the student survey, this correlated with target one - trust. For the qualitative student interviews, students did not discuss their behavior or whether or not they arrived on time to their favorite teachers' class (Target 2)

In the student interviews, the only mention of concern about comparing themselves to other students (Target 3) was made in reference to what motivated students to work hard. Some students indicated that they were motivated to work hard in classes

where other students were competitive and prioritized being successful in school. A common theme during the student interviews among both African American and Latino students was the importance of understanding class work and being comfortable answering questions (Target 3: Goal Orientation).

In the Fall of 2009, this researcher accepted a position as a Principal in a neighboring district, but continued to conduct research at Coventry Midlands High School. This researcher returned to Coventry Midlands to first meet with students to tell them about the study and invite them to participate. Prior to arrival, a list was compiled of potential students to interview, following a process that was explained in Chapter three. Since this researcher no longer had an office, meetings with students took place in the vacant office of a former colleague. Students crowded into the office 6-10 at a time to hear the appeal and take written information about the project. Those who were interested were asked to return signed parent consent forms and assent forms. The 25-45 minute individual interviews were later conducted in the same private office.

For the interviews, inductive and deductive analysis was utilized to develop emerging themes. CRT codes were deficit thinking, and bias. In addition, there were six primary themes that emerged from the data. In order to discuss the interview findings in the section below, the CRT themes (Deficit thinking and Bias) will be shared in detail. Next the themes that emerged from the student interviews that related to the context of race will be examined. These data provide context and illustrate the impact of racism on the learning experiences of African American and Latino students at Coventry Midlands High School.

Racism in the Learning Experiences of African American and Latino Students

While African American and Latino students shared about positive experiences with favorite teachers, they also shared about being treated differently than their White peers, the absence of curriculum that addressed the positive contributions of African Americans and Latinos, the absence of classroom discussions about racism and the presence of a sometimes hostile learning environment.

In this study, it was not surprising that in most cases, students stated that their favorite teachers treated them like every one else (absence of bias) and that in most cases their favorite teachers believed they were as capable as White students (absence of deficit thinking) (Marshall, C. 2010; and Yosso, T. 2006). At Coventry Midlands High School, the majority of African American and Latino students shared that the racial context in which they experienced school included an absence of bias in their favorite teacher's class and the absence of evidence of deficit thinking. Critical Race Theory, however, points to the permanence of racism in society. This study focused particularly on the students' experiences with bias, and deficit thinking, two CRT themes highlighted in the data within the context of their academic experience at Coventry Midlands High School. Ferguson (2003) defined bias as deviation from neutrality. In the context of the classroom, bias can also be described as teachers having expectations for student performance that differ by race. As expected, this researcher found that the majority of students stated that their favorite teachers treated them like every one else (no bias) with some caveats. The GPAs of the students was included as way of identifying the academic strength of the students interviewed. The inclusion was deemed helpful even though GPA relative to others in their graduating class (class rank) was not available.

No Bias (Generally Speaking) From Favorite Teachers

"I was the only Black person in my class. He didn't make it a point to zone in on that I was the only Black student. He never called any specific race."

April, 12th grade African American female student, 3.59 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) shared this statement about being isolated in an Advanced Placement Science class, but not being treated differently. Other students concurred though they referenced being the only one or one of a few in an Advanced Placement or Honors class. Just over half of the twenty four students interviewed (fourteen students), simply said no, when asked if they remembered an experience in their favorite teacher's class when they were treated differently from their White peers. They stated that they were not treated differently. When White students asked questions, and they asked the same question, they were treated the same. The teachers answered them in a way that they would understand, not making assumptions that the students were incapable of understanding the material at the pace it was being presented. Three students said, no with a caveat. One added a twist, that her teachers had not treated her differently, but that once she thought a Black cafeteria worker had mistaken her for a White student and given her preferential treatment. Sandra, 12th grade Latina, 2.29 said, *"It was weird. There was a Black guy in front of me. They (cafeteria workers) did not let him go because he didn't have his ID, but I didn't have mine and they let me go."* Another student said that her favorite teachers had not treated her differently, but she had friends who stated that they had been treated differently than their White peers (by other teachers). A third, student, Kaleb, a 10th grade African American male, 4.0 GPA stated, *"Not in a way that offended me, but was noticeable. One of my teachers made a statement. They were talking about their favorite*

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kind of music. They (the teacher) liked Rap music . They assumed I like Rap. I was the only African American kid (in the class). I do like Rap." Kaleb shared that an assumption was made about the type of music he liked because he was Black. Though he does like Rap music, an assumption was made by his teacher. Without elaborating, Kaleb added that he plays both football and lacrosse and among students there are stereotypes and a lot of racial division among students.

As was expected, the majority of African American and Latino students (14 of 24) reported that their favorite teachers did not treat them differently than their White peers. Seven students reported being treated differently by other teachers (not their favorite teachers) and three who said no with a caveat. What is clear is that at least ten of the 24 students experienced being treated differently from their White peers by an adult, though not their favorite teacher at Coventry Midlands High School. Those experiences will be shared later in this chapter.

Deficit Thinking and Bias

In chapter two**,** Deficit thinking was defined as cultural disadvantage. Deficit thinking results in the belief that students of color are incapable of achieving at the levels of White students and that family background and the race of the student inhibit performance (Marshall, C. 2010; Yosso, T. 2006). As mentioned earlier, bias can be defined as deviation from neutrality. Based on a belief about deficit thinking. The belief – deficit thinking, led to the treatment – bias. Students who were targeted for unsolicited help were treated as if they were incapable of achieving at the levels of White students. Two themes that evolved from beliefs about Deficit Thinking were Targeted for Unsolicited Help and Ignored Because Most Teachers Think that Because You are

Latino, You Won't Do as Good as Other Students. At Coventry Midlands High School, this researcher found teachers who are utilizing effective strategies or exhibiting characteristics that were effective for African American and Latino students. In addition to these teachers who are working effectively with African American students, however, there exists a cadre of teachers who knowingly or unknowingly ascribe to beliefs about deficit thinking and as an outgrowth of this thinking, these educators treat minority students at Coventry Midlands High School in a way that is biased.

Targeted for unsolicited help.

For this paper, targeted for unsolicited help refers to extra help offered by teachers to students of color before assessments have been conducted to determine which students are actually in need of assistance. The help is termed unsolicited because students of color have not indicated that they need or desire additional assistance.

"Our first test, Mr. Gold pulled all of the Black students aside. There were four students. He asked us if we wanted separate testing. The girl I sit next to is White and she asked us, what was that about? She asked, was it because we were all Black? I was so shocked. I was like, what?"

A 12th grade African American female student**,** April, 3.59 GPA shared this experience about being asked if she needed separate testing. Separate testing refers to testing accommodations that student with learning disabilities receive. Some students who are eligible for Special Education (Exceptional Children) services receive testing in a separate setting with a small group or one on one. By asking if the students wanted separate setting, the teacher was implying that the students received Special Education services. Special Education teachers inform regular education teachers of the students

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needing EC (Exceptional Children's) services so there was no need for a teacher to ask a group of students if they needed separate testing. Before assessing the students' abilities, Mr. Gold behaved as if he believed that because the students were Black, they would need separate testing. At the onset of this chapter, this was the same teacher who suggested that Dulce drop his Science class and take Physical Education first period. Assumptions were made about Dulce's language ability and her ability to get to school on time. Mr. Gold's treatment of both Dulce and April was based on Deficit thinking. In the first case, asking April and the other students about separate setting showed that he did not believe that they were capable of achieving at the levels of White students. In the case of Dulce, his actions showed that Dulce's family background and race influenced how he viewed her performance which led him to suggest changing her class schedule.

Four students shared their experiences being targeted for unsolicited help, being eyed suspiciously or not being expected to do well. In one instance, India, 12th grade African American student, 2.86 GPA stated, *"When teachers see you are African American or Black, they already have ideas about how you will perform in the class or act. Kind of the way they treat you. First day of class. It's like they don't care. This kind of attitude, not very welcoming."* Elisa, 10th grade Latina, with a 2.66 GPA shared, *I think she (Ms. Brown) expected us not to get it. Even before she could tell I was having a difficult time, she would always put it out there if I needed help."* Elisa did not mention whether White students were also asked if they understood the material, instead, she pointed out that she and another Latina female were asked if they needed help. Teachers like Ms. Brown and Ms. Law may have truly been trying to be helpful. Offering additional help only to a small group of African American or Latino students before

evaluating grades sends the message that teachers believe that students of color need additional help because they are incapable of achieving at the levels of White students.

While Mr. Gold and Ms. Law were not selected by any of the twenty four students interviewed as favorite teachers (Ms. Brown was selected), they are teachers at Coventry Midlands High School and teachers who will have other African American and Latino students in their classrooms. It is important to acknowledge that although there are teachers who are helping African American and Latino students to be successful at Coventry Midlands High School there are other teachers who are demonstrating behaviors that are inhibiting student success. Teachers who behave in a way that exhibits deficit thinking are a real part of the learning experiences of students at Coventry Midlands High School.

Ignored because most teachers think that because you are latino, you won't do as good as other students.

In the context of this study, "ignored" refers to the treatment of African American and Latino students at Coventry Midlands High School by some of their teachers. Some students who legitimately needed academic help and requested that help did not receive teacher assistance during class or during extra help sessions. Students noted that White students or other students who were more academically advanced received assistance instead. "Ignored" also refers to not being presented with an academic opportunity that White students were offered. Both African American and Latino students shared that they were ignored by some teachers. The students who shared these stories were also from varying grade levels, low, middle and high as was previously defined in this study. The students were all upperclassmen, meaning 10th-12th graders.

While in some cases thinking that African American or Latinos were not as capable as Whites meant teachers gave unsolicited help, in other instances, students were ignored. "*Most teachers think that because you are Latino, you won't do as good as other students. They don't pay much attention to you when you need help. They ignore you.*" Adriana**,** 10th grade Latina, 1.58 GPA was describing an experience in which she needed help but students who were more capable, received assistance. Several students shared experiences of being ignored or being expected to do poorly. Dale, 12th grade African American male, 1.86 GPA added, *"We're expected to do bad. When we don't, it's a shocker. I'm going to succeed in life. There are multiple intelligent Black people at Coventry Midlands High School. Some friends don't make the right decisions. You don't have to have tattoos to be cool. Getting an education is cool. Some people don't have people to tell them to take school seriously. When it comes down to it, there are only three things: Education, God and your family. African Americans here think if you're Black and smart, you have to be a nerd. It's an insult, being smart."* Dale shared that contrary to the beliefs of some teachers, he planned to be successful in life. He believed that there were many intelligent African Americans at Coventry Midlands High School and that thought that getting an education was cool. Students shared about the burden of not being thought of as smart as their White peers. In another instance, Michael, an 11th grade Latino, 3.5 GPA shared an experience of being ignored when he was not told about an academic opportunity that was shared with White students in the class. *"In my Engineering class, my teacher asked all the White students if they wanted to join the Technical Honor Society. He never asked me."* Michael has a 3.5 GPA. The GPA needed to be eligible for the Technical Honor Society is 3.0. Rather than inquire about

Michael's eligibility or interest in the Technical Honor Society were assumptions made that Michael would not qualify or be interested? Students shared about raising their hands for help, being told they would be helped then having other students who raised their hands afterwards receive help first. Students shared that they were helped last and sometimes the bell rang and they never received the help needed. Two students shared that students who were already doing well received more attention than the students who needed the help.

What White Students Say About Us

In addition to the treatment by teachers, Latino and African American students also endured hostile treatment by some White students at Coventry Midlands High School. Many of the comments made by White students were insulting, derogatory remarks. They were directed primarily at Latino students based on their perceived immigration status, language ability or race. Of the 12 Latino students interviewed, seven reported oppressive treatment by White students, two reported no negative interactions with White students with a caveat. Only three of the 12 reported that they had no negative interactions at all with White students. This study centered on effective teachers of African American and Latino students so it is intriguing that Latino students' interactions with White students has became a central part of this study. In the course of asking Latino students if teachers had treated them differently than their White peers, Latino students shared their experiences with White students. White students told them that they did not belong here, that they were not as smart as other students, criticized them for speaking Spanish, subjected them to coarse joking and made assumptions about

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where they lived and the types of courses they should be taking. African American students did not share specific examples of oppressive treatment by White students.

Critical Race Theory states that race and racism are endemic in society in the United States and that racism is a historic and contemporary reality. Oppression can be more fully understood through the intersectionality of race, class, gender, language and immigration status. Villalpando (2004) theorized that different parts of a Latino person's identity may be subjected to oppression at a given time. A lower middle class, newly-arrived immigrant Latina female who speaks only Spanish may be subject to oppression based class, gender, language, race or immigration status. These experiences with oppression highlight the permanence of racism at Coventry Midlands High School.

We're not supposed to be here.

People call us names as a whole group. I feel discriminated against. We're not supposed to be here. (They say) We should go back and get our own jobs in our own country. They (White students) sit in their groups and they talk to each other about something that happened in the news and I overhear it."

Michael, an 11th grade Latino student 3.5 GPA overheard a White student making a general statement about Latinos not belonging in this country. The students inaccurately associated being Latino with being an illegal immigrant. The statement ignored the fact that there are many Latinos who were born in this country who are here legally. Michael did not explain the context in which this statement was made, but he indicated that the statement the White student made was based on information from the news. While the student may not have said that Michael did not belong here, because of Michael's affinity with his membership group (other Latinos), a statement made about

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Latinos in general, affects him as a Latino individually. When asked if he said anything to the students, Michael stated that he did not confront them. Another Latino student shared her story about being told by a White female student that Latino people have ruined this country. While not explicitly saying that Latinos do not belong here, her statement questions the presence of Latinos in the United States. In her limited English, Adriana, a 10th grade Latina, 1.58 GPA shared that while in class, a White female student said to another student that "*Latino people came over here (the United States) to make a disaster. I said to myself not all (Latino) people come like that. Some people were born here. Some people came to make a better life and have a success in life. She (the White student) was talking softly, but you could hear it.*" The White student made a broad generalization about Latino people negatively impacting the United States. Absent from her statement was any acknowledgement of positive contributions of Latinos or the reality that not all Latinos came here, some were born here. Both statements were made to belittle and ostracize Latino students. Neither Michael nor Adriana confronted the White students about their comments. These stories provided two examples of White students insulting Latino students based on their perceived immigration status and making assertions about their academic ability.

You're in America, speak english or <u>you</u> speak spanish?

This statement referred to the level of discomfort that some Latino students experience when they speak Spanish or associate with a Spanish name. Pressure comes from White students who think that Latino students should only be speaking in English or surprise is expressed when White Latino students speak Spanish. Their surprise comes from the assumption that Latino people cannot be both Latino and White. In fact, the

distance from whiteness is so clearly marked that even some Latinos have not comfortably reconciled both of those sides of themselves. Lilly, 10th grade Latina, proudly stated that she was Dominican, not White when in fact she was both Dominican and White. She felt it necessary to disassociate with being White in order to express her Latina pride.   Lilly and Chris both indicated that they did not have any negative interactions with White students, with a caveat. In Chris' case, he was regularly questioned because of his Spanish name. Chris, 9th grade Latino, EOG Math - 4, EOG Reading - 3 shared, *"It wasn't because I spoke Spanish. It was because of my name. It's just like a Spanish name."*   Chris was often asked to give the English translation of his Spanish name which he used rather than an English version of his name. Chris was regularly questioned about the "odd" nature of his name and he felt compelled to give an explanation. Lilly, 10th grade Latina, 4.14 GPA shared her experience with students asking her to prove that she could actually speak Spanish because they were in disbelief, *"People always want me to speak Spanish. They are really surprised when I speak Spanish. They don't think I'm Hispanic. I am Dominican. I am Hispanic. I am not White."*

Two students shared their experience with being teased because they spoke Spanish*. "It's more reverse. I'm stuck in a place where I get made fun of for being White and made fun of for being Hispanic. I only get made fun of talking Spanish with my friends."* Andy, 11th grade Latino, 2.73 GPA.   Another student**,** Kia, 11th grade Latina, 2.23 GPA said, *"How they look at you funny when you talk. I speak funny when I talk. They don't understand. I talk too low. Sometimes they make fun of me because I talk kind of weird."* Kia shared that even though she was born in California, she still speaks

English with an accent and is teased by students because of her accent. Kia was subjected to ridicule because she spoke English with an accent.

Latino students shared the mixed messages they received when they spoke Spanish. The White Latino students were questioned because people were surprised they spoke Spanish, some were teased for speaking Spanish and others were told to simply, speak English.

Some people think just because I am Hispanic, I should be living in a trailer.

In addition to general comments about Latinos not belonging here, and questioning Latino students about speaking Spanish, White students also made assumptions about where Latino students lived, the types of courses they should be taking and made ethnic jokes. Elisa, 10th grade Latina (Mexican) 2.66 GPA shared about stereotypes her friends have about where she lives and the types of classes she should be taking. Other students shared about coarse jokes they were subjected to.

Some people think just because I am Hispanic, I should be living in a trailer. They think I should be in regular classes (not honors) and not doing as well as I am. Some people are surprised that I am not hanging out with all Hispanics or speaking Spanish. On my bus, more than half the bus gets off at Lake Westcott. My friend said, hey do you get off with them (meaning the people who live in the trailers)? - Where do you live? Someone else said, I thought they (all the Hispanics) got off at the trailers.

Elisa was burdened with the stereotype that she should be living in a trailer taking regular classes. She was compelled to explain to her friends where she really lives. Three middle and upper level students: Andy (Mexican), Kelly (Mexican) and Pam

(Colombian) shared coarse jokes made by people they considered to be friends. Two of the three Latino students lightly dismissed their friends' statements as crude humor and took the stance of tolerating racist jokes. The two students did not seem to be disturbed by the offensive nature of the jokes and even described the originators of the jokes as friends.

One Latina female, 12th grade Kelly, 3.28 GPA shared a coarse joke. *What doesn't exist, Santa Claus, a smart Mexican or a stupid Mexican?* Her response was, a smart Mexican. After telling the joke, she admitted that she had not heard it at school, *"I think I heard it on the radio or somewhere. I thought it was funny. I told it to my sister and she said it was offensive. I don't take the racial stuff personally unless it was said serious. People here say stuff. I hear people talk about how segregated the cafeteria is."* Another student, 11th grade Andy, 2.73 GPA stated, *"It's not like a put down racist. It's a way to be funny, not being racist. Border hopping is a stereotypical thing. They'll say, Oh, Andy, are you wearing those gloves so you can jump the border better? It's crude humor."* A Latina female, 12th grade**,** Pam, 4.17 GPA stated that, *"Maybe someone (White student) will say some kind of word that is part of their daily language, like a Mexican remark – jumping bean. That jumping bean did that. Lots of times they (White students) don't think about what they are saying. It is what they are used to saying."* Pam did not state whether these remarks were made in a class. Pam was the only one of the three that did not justify the remarks she heard. She was aware that for some students, the jokes may be part of their language, but she did not justify or dismiss the offensive nature of the jokes.

Most of the Things We Study are About White People

The paradox discovered during the student interviews was that students at Coventry Midlands High School are learning in a racialized environment with the absence of explicit conversations about race. While students shared about an infusion of instruction about diverse cultures in World History, World Literature in English, and historical issues with race in US History, they also commented on a general absence of discussions from their racial perspective. Michael, 11th grade Latino, 3.5 GPA summed it up this way, *"Most of the things we study are about Caucasian people. We don't study much about other cultures. I don't really have that opportunity."*

Summary of First Part of the Chapter

The focus of this part of the chapter was to describe the context in which African American and Latino students experience school at Coventry Midlands High School. It became evident that racism affects the learning experiences of some African American and Latino Students. This study examined how the emerging data corresponded to concepts in Critical Race Theory. The two CRT themes that emerged as relevant were the students' experiences with bias, and deficit thinking.

As anticipated, most Latino and African American students indicated that their favorite teachers treated them like their White peers and did not show evidence of bias or deficit thinking. Other teachers at Coventry Midlands High School, however displayed biased actions that were evident of deficit thinking. For example those African American and Latino students interviewed perceived that they were targeted for unsolicited help, eyed suspiciously or ignored because they were believed to be incapable of achieving at the level of White students. White students at Coventry Midlands High School also

subjected Latino students to crude jokes, stereotypical remarks, and ridicule based on language or perceived immigration status. Paradoxically, very little classroom time is spent learning about positive contributions or realities of African American or Latino people, examining historical or contemporary issues of race to counter these negative experiences.

Having examined the experiences that African American and Latino students have at Coventry Midlands High School, it becomes apparent why it is imperative for teachers to have on-going discussions about race, racism and the positive contributions and realities of African American and Latino people. If teachers nominated by students as favorite teachers were aware of the hostile environment their students often navigate before coming to their classes, it would make sense why it was important to introduce a counternarrative. This section begins with an introduction of the six teachers who were chosen by students as their favorite teachers. The second section includes the themes that evolved as students described the learning environment in their favorite teacher's classroom. During the teacher interviews, teachers were asked to reflect on the strategies that students stated were most effective for them. Each teacher shared their philosophy of educating students.

Coventry Midlands High School Themes

Context of Race Navigated by African American and Latino Students

- The Role of Racism in the Learning Experiences of African American and Latino Students

- No Bias (Generally Speaking) from Favorite Teachers

- Deficit Thinking and Bias

- Targeted for unsolicited help.

- Ignored because most teachers think that because you are Latino, you won't do as good as other students.

- What White Students Say About Us

  - We're not supposed to be here.

  - You're in America, speak English or <u>you</u> speak Spanish?

  - Some people think I should be living in a trailer.

- Most of the Things We Study Are About White People

Six Coventry Midlands High School Teachers Interviewed - Their Philosophy

Mr. Gaston, B.S., Social Studies teacher, 4 years teaching experience

Always making the conscious effort to include diverse voices. It is easier in the African American Studies Seminar class. Whenever I see the opportunity to bring in the minority voice. It is harder in Civics. I try to physically show through visual pictures – diversity in diverse pictures. They automatically feel welcome – I'm celebrated in this space. If someone says something (stereotypical) that is not conducive, I make that an issue. I remind students about respect. I'm authentic and comfortable with myself and they can be comfortable. Mr. Gaston expressed his philosophy which included consciously including diverse voices, displaying diverse images and countering stereotypical behavior.

Ms. Jensen, M.Ed, English teacher, 5 years teaching experience

Ms. Jensen shared that "cultural knowledge is first. Pop culture is usually the start, then religious culture, ethnic culture and regional culture. Letting them know I know a little about what they'll be listening to, what they watch on TV."

Ms. Jensen stated that before her students take a test in her class, she tells them, *"Take your time. Do your best and I'm sure you'll do well. Saying that to students puts them in the mind frame that they think they know some of the answers.* She also talked about using praise (not empty praise) to motivate students and said, *"I stay really excited all the time."* Ms. Jensen emphasized the importance of learning about her students' cultures and motivating her students with praise.

Ms. Lumberton, M.A.T., Social Studies teacher, 6 years teaching experience

I try to motivate them to be the best they can be every day. Some are just learning the (English) language. Another strategy (to motivate students to work hard) - Let them know if they are not doing their best - they are disrespectful to me. I will give my best every day and I expect the same from them. I think it is the community thing. Something that will help in your career is if you can <u>like</u> your students. If they are sick, I tell them (when they come back) that I miss them. Every class is a different family. They feel that they're part of it. Ms. Lumberton shared about the community culture in her classroom and stated that she gives her best every day and expects her students to do the same.

Mr. Monroe, M.Ed., Social Studies teacher, 17 years teaching experience

I'm not afraid to use myself as an example and dress up in costumes and use the students as examples. Usually history is taught - stop and start. Humans evolved along the same line. I like to try to make it real. This is how it (history) impacted every day people. Mr. Monroe's approach is to make history real and to use himself or his students as examples as he makes history come alive in his classroom.

Ms. Terry, M.Ed., English teacher, 33 years teaching experience

I hear about students who take 5-6 years to graduate (from college). I tell them you complain about how hard my class is. I have kids tell me how easy college is. That's my gift. Y'all can complain. I'm not going to lower my expectations, to give into their wines or complaints about it being too hard. It's taking the easy way out. Ms. Terry prides herself on setting high standards and preparing her seniors for their freshmen year in college.

Mr. Willis, MAT, Biology teacher - 23 years teaching experience

I try to make class as hands on and relevant as I can. I try to have a decent sense of humor - when appropriate. I'm fair and consistent. With mastery teaching, that provides an opportunity for students to learn from their mistakes. Removes the pressure of getting it right the first time. Students learn at different rates. My goal is for every student to get an A. Mastery teaching forces students to think through it. The benefits outweigh it. Mr. Willis shared that he believes in mastery teaching. He provides multiple opportunities for students to master material by multiple retakes and numerous assignments.

With the exception of this first theme which was a deductive theme based on Critical Race Theory and Culturally Responsive Teaching, all of the other themes evolved. When students were asked what their favorite teacher did that made him or her effective, students did not list the fact that they led discussions about race or racism or the positive contributions of African American or Latino people. This information was derived from questions designed to elicit responses about the presence of CRT. In other words, the literature on culturally responsive teaching states that effective teachers of

African American and Latino student include students in the classroom discourse, include multicultural content, utilize culturally relevant conceptual examples and teachers have positive classroom climates (relationships with students). According to CRT, classrooms should be places that challenge the existence of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and a meritocracy (Gay, 1999; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2006) These classrooms also interrogate racism and dominant racial ideology that promotes deficit thinking, bias and colorblind thinking and center the experiences of African American and Latino high school students in order to learn about their experiences with race.

Lead Discussions about Race, Racism and/or Positive Contributions of African American and Latino People

In the context of this study, leading discussions about race, racism and/or the positive contributions of African American and Latino people refers to teachers prioritizing the integration of a diverse curriculum as part of their classroom instructional practices. Teachers lead discussions about race, racism and the positive contributions of African American and Latinos as an integral part of classroom lessons. Teachers are conscious of the diverse group of students they are teaching and they intentionally incorporate the cultures of their students into their lessons. Teachers also provide opportunities for students to share insights from their racial perspective. Mr. Willis, MAT, Biology teacher, with 23 years teaching experience gave a brief, but honest response about his attempts to integrate race, but also acknowledged that for his subject area, few opportunities present themselves.

> *We discuss non-random mating, how individuals select someone of similar*
>
> *phenotypes and how that can be bad (outbreeding vs. inbreeding). We talk about*

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the ethnicities in Genetics and evolution - how the different races came about. We talk about variation is the fuel for evolution. To be quite honest, there's not a whole lot of discussion in class. I will stop from time to time to ask if the students really understood. There is time to reflect during the labs. Biology isn't really discussion based.

Mr. Gaston, BS, Social Studies teacher, with 4 years teaching experience mentioned that he looks for ways to include diverse voices in his classroom.

In African American Studies, we have an ongoing series of lessons about "good hair" and internalized racism within the African American community. It is easier. In Civics, I've had plenty of opportunities when students have said something that is racially tinged like asking the only African American student in class about a sport. That is not acceptable. Stereotypes. That leads to a greater discussion.

Ms. Jensen, M.Ed, English teacher, with 5 years teaching experience shared about how she integrates World Literature into her English class. Given the nature of the curriculum, Ms. Jensen stated that she has many opportunities to introduce culture in her classroom. "*World Literature (North Carolina curriculum for 10th grade) is a natural fit. The culture of the novel dictates what comes out. The last novel- "Nectar in a Sieve", is all about Hinduism. The Trimurti, a religious concept of the three chiefs. I teach about Hinduism as a faith. If we were talking about a Judeo-Christian tradition, I'd mention the Trinity and it helps to click for some. As odd as the culture may be, I try to bring in analogous terms that would be familiar to the students. The next thing we're going to study is "Night". "White*

makes might" was Hitler's philosophy.   We talk about the power structure. We

also discuss colonialism in "Nectar in a Sieve".

With the exception of Mr. Gaston, teachers shared experiences exposing students

to other cultures, but did not provide specific examples of discussions about

racism in their classes**.** Some teachers, however, indicated that discussions on

racism take place in their classes. Ms. Lumberton, M.A.T., Social Studies

teacher, 6 years teaching experience shared how she integrates different cultures

and ethnicities in her Social Studies classes. *"In Civics and Economics and US*

History, I try to draw on the experiences of people in my class - different cultures

and ethnicities. Not every teacher in this building has this opportunity. I've been

fortunate enough to have that. In U.S. History when we talk about World War II,

we looked at a news article that showed a profile about a Chinese person and a

Japanese person. We use that to talk about who we consider our friend or our

enemy. We talk about Imperial powers carving up the world."

Ms. Terry, M.Ed, English teacher, 33 years teaching experience said, *I try to*

relate it to British Literature (curriculum for English IV). It is waspish. When we

*did Ballads***.** *I did some research on the "Ballard of Birmingham" and a Ballad*

*written by Langston Hughes. Later on we get to the unit on "Paradise Lost"***.**

When I ask a story about the Bible, my African American students know it. I

haven't thought about how to bring Latino literature into the curriculum. I

might do that.

Table 4.2   Coventry Midlands High School Themes

Characteristics or Practices of Effective Teachers of African American and Latino Students

- Lead discussions about Race, Racism and/or Positive Contributions of African American and Latino People

- Dedicated to the Success of Students

    - Utilize a variety of instructional strategies.

    - Require students to complete work.

    - Gave students individual attention.

    - Demonstrated caring.

- *Break it Down to the Ground*

- Everyone Gets Called On

    - Teachers utilized a transparent process to intentionally include everyone.

    - Noticed when students needed help before it was even articulated.

    - When students responded to questions, it was evident that the teacher valued the student perspective.

- Passion about the Subject Matter

    Passion equated with enthusiasm.

    Finding creative ways to interest students in the subject matter.

- Highly Structured Classroom Environments

    - Strict and well organized.

    - Rigorous environment and holds clear expectations.

In addition to leading discussions about race, racism and/or positive contributions of African American and Latino people, effective teachers were dedicated to student success, *break it down to the ground*, call on everyone, are passionate about the subject matter and manage highly structured classroom environments.

Dedicated to the Success of Students

Teachers that were described as being dedicated to student success utilized a variety of strategies to help students understand the material, required students to complete work, gave students individual attention and demonstrated caring

He'll do anything to help you pass or succeed or know what he's talking about. Anytime you're missing anything or if he feels you don't understand, he'll let you come in during lunch or he'll pull you aside. He'll stay on you until you get things straight. If you're missing something, he'll remind you every single day until you get it in.

This statement made by Robert, a 10th grade African American student, 1.21 GPA captured the sentiment of at least eight other students who remarked that their favorite teachers were dedicated to their success.

Utilize a variety of instructional strategies.

Some of the strategies teachers used included drawings, cause and effect charts, games, interactive assignments, mnemonic devices, stories, and assigning students to work in small groups. Michael, 11th grade Latino, 3.5 GPA shared, *"She tries to put things in a way that we understand it more. She makes drawings, makes us interact with each other and with her."* Another Latino male student, Eddy, 9th grade Latino student, EOG Math -3, EOG Reading -3 shared that his teacher uses mnemonic devices to help

them remember the countries and rivers in Africa. "*He teaches us the stuff, but he teaches it in a fun way, not just write down the stuff in the textbook. To memorize the countries, he gave us these cool, fun rhythms, "Zebra in Zimbabwe drink from the Zambezi*." Several students mentioned enjoying listening to the stories that their teachers told, particularly those stories that were able to lighten the mood if students were having a bad day. Donna, 9th grade African American student, EOG Math -4, EOG Reading-3 shared about her Social Studies teacher, *"He doesn't have a stressed out mood. He tells stories which lighten the mood if you are in a bad mood that day.*" Students also talked about the stories teachers told. Students mentioned that their Social Studies teachers told them stories and also asked them to tell him stories about their ancestors. An English teacher, Ms. Terry shared that she told stories about her own children in order to connect with students and encourage some of the shy students to participate.

Ms. Lumberton, M.A.T., Social Studies teacher, 6 years teaching experience, stated, *I try to use a variety of teaching methods, a lot of direct instruction, partner work, group work, and class discussion. I try to get to know all of them (my students) as individuals. I use a notebook strategy. The right side is the teacher side. I like them to respond in writing on their left first. That gets people who are hesitant to react, kids who are shy."* Ms. Lumberton gave an example of some of the effective teaching strategies she uses.

Mr. Gaston, B.S. Social Studies teacher, 4 years teaching experience stated, "*A lot of vocabulary strategies. Understanding vocabulary, that is an inhibitor. I use a lot of technology as well as audiovisual. I like to set up strategies to work on vocabulary and jigsaw strategies, connect with current events, makes things real.*" Mr. Gaston

mentioned the importance of vocabulary and making sure it is not a hindrance that gets in the way of learning. He also shared about his utilization of technology and current events.

Require students to complete work.

Students mentioned that their favorite teachers required them to complete work and keep trying. India, a 12th grade African American female, 2.86 GPA added, *"My teacher is really enthusiastic and makes sure people learn".* These teachers made sure students learned the material by repeating it day after day until students learned it. Interestingly one student commented that a teacher she said was one of her favorite teachers was a teacher that she did not even like when she was taking her class. It was not until afterwards when she reflected on her classroom experience that she valued that teacher. Elisa, 10th grade Latina, 2.66 GPA said, *"I didn't like her when I was taking the class. It was an honors class. She gave us a lot of work. She would not let you not try. She was a really good teacher especially when you were one on one. She explains everything. She makes Math seem easy."* Not every student liked constant reminders or being chided if they were missing work. Sandra, a 12th grade Latina 2.29 GPA mentioned that she liked the fact that her teachers reminded her once that she was missing something, but didn't "pick" at her. *"She talks to us a lot in class. If we're missing something, she'll tell us once. She won't be picking on you."* For Sandra, constant reminders were not perceived as helpful.

Gave students individual attention.

Part of the dedication to student success involved giving students individual attention by checking for understanding, answering individual students' questions and

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being available to help students outside of class. Nine students mentioned the importance

of teachers responding to their questions and checking for understanding. Students

mentioned that their favorite teachers checked to make sure everyone understood before

moving on. Kenya, a 10th grade African American student, 3.28 GPA added about her

favorite teacher, *"She'll see if everyone understands before she moves on."* The students

also talked about knowing that teachers would give them individual attention when

needed and help them. Students valued teachers taking time to work with them

individually in class and outside of class to answer their questions. Gary, 11th grade

African American student, 2.0 GPA mentioned that his favorite teacher *"takes time with*

individual people, making sure they understand, it. He helps us out if we have questions."

The students talked repeatedly about having access to their favorite teachers who were

described as always being there whenever they needed help whether that was before

school, after school or at lunch.

Mr. Monroe, M.Ed, Social Studies teacher, 17 years teaching experience

communicated about how he provides students with individual attention, *"I work hard*

and feed off your energy. The harder you work, the harder I'll work for you. I pick the

task I like to do least and get it out of the way. I'm here for you. If you have a question.

If you need a place to eat lunch, need a kleenex. When I was in school, it was very

impersonal."

Demonstrated caring.

Teachers who were deemed dedicated to student success showed that they cared

about students. Students noted that they felt that their favorite teacher cared about them

as students but also personally. India, 12th grade African American, 2.86 GPA stated

"Not only does she care about me as a student, but she cares about me personally. She always says, if there is a problem either inside or outside of class, feel free to talk to me." Their favorite teachers spoke to them in the halls or offered to talk with them if there was a problem either inside or outside of class. As a suggestion about how other teachers could be more like his favorite teacher, Kaleb, 10th grade African American, 4.0 GPA added, "*Try to relate to individual students more. Ask personal questions. Some teachers are scared to get into students' lives."* Mr. Monroe, M.Ed., Social Studies teacher, 17 years teaching experience spends time connecting with students by being transparent with them and acknowledging the days that are harder emotionally for students than others.

> "*I try to be like a real person. If there are days that aren't going right or if I have a student having a bad day, I try to connect with them so they know that I care about them as people."*

Teachers who were dedicated to students' success integrated a variety of instructional strategies, ensured that students completed assigned work, made time for individual students and demonstrated caring. They related to individual students, asked personal questions and were not afraid to get to know their students.

Break It Down to the Ground

> In a conversation with a 9th grade African American female student about her favorite teacher, she explained, *"He breaks it down to the ground."* She was referring to her teacher's ability to simplify instruction and present material with clarity and simplicity. "*She doesn't explain the way a teacher would. She explains like I would talk to my best friend. She doesn't use big words that sound smart. She'll see if everyone understands before she moves on."*

Kenya, a 10th grade African American student, 3.28 GPA offered this insight about her English teacher. To further illustrate this point, Lilly**,** a 10th grade Latina, 4.14 GPA expressed, "*She makes sure you understand. She explains things well. She makes sure you are learning. She does a lot of things to keep our interest. Whenever we read something, she puts something in a way high schoolers would understand. It is plain and simple.*" Several students mentioned that their favorite teachers were thorough and included lots of details when they explained a concept. Students described their favorite teachers' keen ability to explain a concept using straightforward, easy to understand language. Students' communication with their teachers was described as akin to talking to their best friend or a college student in a language they could understand.

Pam**,** a 12th grade Latina, 4.17 GPA shared an example of how a Biology teacher *breaks it down to the ground*. When Pam needed help understanding photosynthesis, Mr. Willis first required her to explain what specifically she did not understand about photosynthesis then he retaught the steps. *"When you're asking for help, you have to know what you're asking for help for. He makes you think. He makes you help yourself first. For photosynthesis, he went step by step through it. I repeated it back to him until it clicked."* In a teacher interview with Mr. Willis, he explained how he challenges students to think and ask questions. *"I don't have kids raise their hands, but you have to ask a question. 'I don't understand' is not a question. Tell me where you don't understand. It forces them to go through the material and stop where they don't understand. I don't usually answer a question straight on. I give them hints. I tell them they take notes for a reason to refer to them at a later date."*

Six students commented that their favorite teacher makes sure students understand the material. Students also stated that teachers explained the classroom material until students understood it without getting frustrated with them. At least three students mentioned that their teachers' focus on making it easy for them to follow and the patience teachers exhibited if they were asked to explain the material in a different way.   Dale, a 12th grade African American male, 1.86 GPA added, "*She helps you understand why something is the way it is.*"

As was stated, *Breaks it down to the ground* refers to the teachers' ability to present simple, clear and careful explanations. Students stated that these teachers explained everything in a way that high school students could understand.

Everyone Gets Called on

In classrooms where "everyone gets called on", teachers developed a process to ensure that they included everyone, noticed when students needed help before it was even articulated and when students responded to questions, it was evident that the teacher valued the student perspective.

Teachers utilized a transparent process to intentionally include everyone.

*"*Everyone gets called on" referred to teachers utilizing questioning techniques that ensured that every one participated. Kenya, a 10th grade African American female, 3.28 GPA stated, *"Ms. Jenkins is the type where you don't have to raise your hand in class to get called on. You might as well be ready to get called on."* Two Latino students mentioned that their favorite teachers included everyone in the classroom discourse. Lilly**,** a 10th grade Latina, 4.14 GPA mentioned about an English teacher, *"She doesn't call on the same people all the time. She tries to get to everyone."*   In fact, five students

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mentioned that their favorite teachers focused on quiet students and made sure that every one participated. Both African American and Latino students talked about being required to participate in their favorite teacher's class.

Mr. Gaston, B.S. Social Studies teacher, 4 years teaching experience commented on the importance of including all students and reflected on how praise encouraged students to participate more often in class.

I try to call on all students. Today I reflected on that. I need to call on students that never speak. I don't want to discourage the voices that always speak. I also go from group to group. Someone from each group speaks. When students don't speak or do speak, I ensure that they receive praise - from then on, they are excited. When you get something that is right, I'm astonished that all of a sudden they want to participate more. When you say something positive about what they said, showing the appreciation.

Ms. Jensen, M.Ed, English teacher, 4 years teaching experience said that she consciously called on students in the back of the room so students could not hide to avoid being called on. "*I popcorn around the class all the time. I call on my students that sit in the back first so they know that the back of the room is not a safe place to be."* These teachers have developed an effective process to engage all students in the classroom discourse.

Noticed when students needed help before it was even articulated.

Teachers who noticed when students needed help used non-verbal clues to determine if students understood the material. These teachers also listened to student responses carefully to determine if there was an appropriate level of understanding. Even

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students who are typically quiet were engaged to make sure they did not have questions. Michael, an 11th grade Latino male, 3.5 GPA commented, *"She doesn't leave the quiet people out. She tends to focus more on the quiet people."* Students shared that teachers noticed when students had questions whether they raised their hands or not. Dale**,** 12th grade African American male student, 1.86 GPA added, *"I feel that she is there to help us at all times. She takes time to listen. If you give a look like you don't understand, she'll come to help you."* These teachers were very aware of the level of student engagement in the classroom.

Mr. Monroe, M.Ed., Social Studies teacher, 17 years teaching experience used note cards with students' names on them so he could make sure that everyone had a chance to respond. *"That is the trick. You always have the student who knows what' s going on, but doesn't want to volunteer. You have to build the environment. I am more worried about you learning something than getting a 95%. I use participation cards to find out what their interest is. Everybody's got a strength. You don't want to call on them all the time - the dominant kids."* Mr. Monroe communicated about noticing the students who need help and making sure everyone was called on.

When students responded to questions, it was evident that the teacher valued the student perspective.

Students commented that their favorite teachers were genuinely interested in their opinions. *"He looks at us when we are talking to him. He pays attention to what you have to say."* Janet, 9th grade Latina, Math EOG – 2; Reading EOG– 2. Another student commented that her teacher was interested in the student perspective. India, a 12th grade African American female, 2.86 GPA said her English teacher "*likes to hear opinions from*

kids' point of view. A lot of adults don't give us the opportunity to voice our opinions. She cares about our opinions." Students talked about enjoying the dialogue in their favorite teacher's classroom. In their favorite teacher's class, students were asked to elaborate or provide a deeper explanation. In other classes, students said that they were not given the opportunity to voice their opinions.

Ms. Terry, Ed.M., English teacher, 33 years teaching experience mentioned her approach to including all voices in her classroom and showing that she valued hearing students' perspectives.

> *That's really hard sometimes to get them to read aloud. I use humor and cajoling. I call on the kid whose voice I hardly hear. Sometimes getting off topic will get kids to speak who don't speak to share about their interests or passions. When I talk about "Arthur" to find out about their interests and what they are passionate about. They are all my kids and I have expectations for them. I won't let the African Americans and Latinos to sit quietly. I'm not going to let them do it. They'll sit back and let the White kids dominate.*

As has been stated, students reported that their favorite teachers called on everyone using techniques such as note cards with students' names to make sure every one was called on or asked questions by sections of the room. In classes where "Everyone gets called on" teachers had developed effective questioning strategies to make sure that all students were part of the dialogue. Students noticed who was part of the classroom dialogue and whether students had to volunteer to participate. Their favorite teachers were interested in their opinions.

Passion About the Subject Matter

Teachers who were described as passionate were enthusiastic, and found creative ways to interest students in the subject matter.

Passion equated with enthusiasm.

Teachers who were described as passionate were genuinely excited about their subject area. Nine students described their favorite teacher as being passionate, energetic, upbeat or enthusiastic about their subject matter. In one case, passion provided inspiration. April, a 12th grade African American female student, 3.59 GPA talked about her Biology teacher, Mr Willis. "*He's really passionate about Biology. When a teacher is passionate it shows. Now I want to major in Biology.*" Not surprisingly, the teacher's energy or passion affected how students felt about the classroom environment. "*She (Ms. Lumberton) always has a positive mindset. All the negativity she avoids. It was energetic even at the beginning of the day. Everybody wanted to be there even if it was a crazy topic. It was a positive environment. It started my day off so well every day.*" Dale**,** a 12th grade African American male, 1.86 GPA shared his insights about the role an enthusiastic teacher played in setting the tone for his day. Commenting about the same History teacher, Lilly, a 10th grade Latina 4.14 GPA added, *"Her attitude is cheerful and energetic. There is an upbeat vibe. Other subjects are monotonous."* The environment created was such that students wanted to be there regardless of the topic.

Finding creative ways to interest students in the subject matter.

As four students reported, the teacher's passion even made what they described as a" boring" topic enjoyable. Students described the passion their teachers exuded that led to making boring subjects interesting. In some cases, their favorite teachers were able to

make work not seem like work. Elisa, 10th grade Latina, 2.66 GPA stated, *"He teaches in a different way. You don't think you're learning. You're learning English, but you don't realize you're learning English. He codes it. He reads stories. While he is reading it, we latch onto vocabulary or grammar.* Another student, Donna, 9th grade African American student, Math EOG -4; Reading EOG -3 shared that her teacher used visuals and contemporary references to interest them in Social Studies. *"He's visual. He'll use examples from this time so you can understand it better."* Another student, Kia, 11th grade Latina, 2.23 GPA also added that her teacher (Ms. Jensen) uses contemporary references related to the subject matter, "*I like how she would relate to a topic, make it something more modern. If it was something real old, she would make it seem like it was something from this time. It makes it not that boring."*

In some cases, upbeat or energetic was equated with "active". In contrast to a strict, quiet, highly structured environment that some students preferred, other students enjoyed the freedom to engage actively in the lesson through small group activities Brenda, 9th grade African American student, Math EOG -2; Reading EOG -2 said,
"*He makes class fun, but we still do our work. It's more like my kind (of class). I would rather not sit in a class that is silent. I have ADHD. I get kind of jittery. When I get into that class, it is upbeat. We're moving around. I feel more in my element- that I can work better."*

When teachers were asked how they connect with students or about strategies they use to motivate students, five of the six teachers described themselves as passionate, excited or enthusiastic. This was before sharing with teachers that their students had used the same language to describe them. Mr. Gaston, B.S. Social Studies teacher, 4 years

teaching experience stated, *"By setting an example of myself. I try to show a level of passion. Remind them on a continual basis of the big picture. Get the most out of your time here. They work harder when I remind them of their purpose, (this class is a) step to graduation. I always bring up Math. Math was my worst subject."* Mr. Gaston shared personal stories with his students about his own

academic challenges with Math while he was a student and how he had to work hard to overcome them. He also shared about strategies he uses to engage students with the classroom material.

As mentioned passionate teachers were described as upbeat or enthusiastic and were able to generate student interest in their subject matter. Of the six teachers interviewed, five of the six also described themselves as passionate, excited or energetic.

Highly Structured Classroom Environments

"Highly structured classroom environments" are described as classrooms led by teachers that are strict and very organized, maintain a rigorous environment and hold clear expectations.

Strict and well organized.

Four African American students and two Latino students commented about the importance of structure and organization. Students discussed how organized and quiet their favorite teachers' classrooms were. There were no side conversations or students off task. Their teachers let them know they did not play games on the first day. Robert, a 10th grade African American male 1.21 GPA described his favorite teacher's classroom, *"Very organized and quiet at all times. There is no noise, but Mr. Gaston unless you are called on. In terms of side talking or (students being) off task, it doesn't happen. He let's*

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you know he plays no games the first day." Sandra, a 12th grade Latina, 2.29 GPA stated the importance of having a teacher (Ms. Terry) who was strict and had clear expectations. "*I like it when I get, not a mean teacher, but a strict teacher. Her attitude gives you a reason to do the work. Sometimes if you get a really nice teacher, you think, I don't have to turn in my work. She won't mind if I turn it in tomorrow. If you have a strict teacher, you'll actually want to turn it in."* In these structured environments their teachers were also organized and thorough.

Rigorous environment and holds clear expectations.

In order to do well, students commented that you had to pay attention. Their teachers demanded respect. Kaleb, 10th, African American, 4.0 GPA shared about his French teacher, "*Thorough when she goes through a topic. It helps a lot. She goes through the details. She explains it very well. You have to pay attention. She demands respect. She knows you won't do well unless you pay attention. The environment is hardnose."* It was fascinating to hear Sandra, a 12th grade Latina female, 2.29 GPA state that the reason Ms. Terry was her favorite teacher was because she treated the class like an advanced class and gave the students challenging work. *"It's like a regular class, but she makes it seem like it's an advanced class because she gives you so much work and she encourages you to do it. Some teachers give really easy work., but you're kind of lazy to do it because it's too easy. One of my teachers would give me homework to color code (not all the time).* One of Sandra's other teachers gave her a homework assignment that involved color coding. She thought the work was too easy. Another student, Shayla, 9th grade African American student, Math EOG -3; Reading EOG-3 shared about that she also appreciated the rigor and independence she experienced in her favorite teacher's

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class. *"Instead of him always speaking or always teaching, he lets us teach ourselves. If we don't understand something, he lets us figure it out. He never flats out gives us the answer. If he asks us a question, and we don't know the answer, he'll say, look back in your textbook or look at your notes. He doesn't just give us the answer."* Some students appreciated being allowed to figure things out for themselves. Others complained that when they had questions and asked teachers, they didn't get a specific response that helped them to figure out what direction to go in. The level of teacher explanation required may depend on the subject matter and the student. Shayla was referring to her experience in a 9th grade Social Studies class. She may have had a very different response were she in an advanced placement Math or Science class. Students also shared about the clear expectations in those highly structured classroom environments.

Kelly, 12th grade Latina 3.28 GPA, shared about the fact that there was no wasted time in Mr. Gaston's class and she also mentioned his clear expectations and organization. *"You didn't have a break even if you were watching a movie. You had to write 25 interesting facts. I liked his organization. His way of making sure you learned it. Picking out the main points of what he is teaching so you'll know what to expect on tests. The way he teaches is as hard as his tests. When it comes to History, if you talk about the Black Plague, Mr. Gaston would say why it happened, what led to it, with bullet points. It was simplified."*

Mr. Gaston, B.S. Social Studies teacher, 4 years experience shared how he organizes his classroom.

I start with a very structured day with a plan in place that is well thought out. I start with a warm up to connect to students lives personally. Having a question

or assignment that helps the students reflect on themselves then connect to the

actual material. There's no movement while I am instructing. When I first started

teaching, I was more worried about facilitating group discussions. I'm more

confident allowing groups now, in terms of my evolution as a teacher. I don't

believe in breaks - requiring them to give 120%. I have high expectations. If you

are not working, why are you not working? Is there an illness? (I believe) in

keeping them accountable. They see that I'm serious and I work hard. Success is

the only option in this classroom.

As stated, *s*tudents appreciated knowing what to expect on tests, that the teacher used graphic organizers to visually communicate information and that teachers were strict, organized, had rigorous standards and held clear expectations. There were no surprises for students in these highly structured environments.

Summary of Findings

This study was comprised of 147 legible surveys from African American and Latino students as part of a secondary student survey, 24 qualitative student interviews and 6 teacher interviews. The student survey focused on classroom conditions and school environment. The results indicated that 1/3 of African American students at Coventry Midlands High School reported being preoccupied by what others think and about 1/2 held back from doing their best. Sixty percent of African American students stated that they were worried about not being as smart as others, about 1/2 mentioned being uncomfortable asking questions and about 1/2 said that they felt that they did not "fit in" their favorite teacher's class. About 50% of Latino students reported that they believed that their favorite teacher cared about them, 72% of Latinos reported being worried about

not doing as well as others, 84% of Latinos indicated that understanding class work was important and just over 50% were uncomfortable asking questions. These results were given in the context of their favorite teacher's class.   It is unsettling that there is such a high number of African American and Latino students that are experiencing this high level of anxiety and low level of trust and belonging even in their favorite teacher's class.

Like the student survey, the interview instrument also focused on student perceptions. The study examined the context of race in the learning experiences of 24 African American and Latino students and their perceptions of effective instruction as delivered by their favorite teachers. The results were interrogated using the lens of Critical Race Theory with particular attention paid to two CRT themes, bias and deficit thinking. The study answered the research question, how do the emerging data correspond to concepts in Critical Race Theory? As expected, most Latino and African American students said that their favorite teachers treated them like the White students in their classes and students did not report bias treatment or indications of deficit thinking. Outside of their favorite teachers' classes, however, students stated that some Coventry Midlands High School teachers displayed biased actions that could be evident of deficit thinking. African American and Latino students received unsolicited help, were eyed suspiciously or ignored because they were believed to be incapable of achieving at the level of White students. Latino students also stated that White students told them crude jokes, questioned their right to be in the United States, and either teased them for speaking Spanish or questioned their Spanish speaking ability because they did not appear to be "Latino". The study also found that paradoxically, very limited time is focused on positive contributions of African Americans and Latinos or historical and

contemporary issues of race to counter these negative experiences. In addition to examining the context of race in which Coventry Midlands African American and Latino students experience school, six themes emerged that answered the first research question, what are the characteristics and/or practices of teachers that African American and Latino students identify as more successful than others? The characteristics or practices are:

- Lead discussions about Race, Racism and/or Positive Contributions of African American and Latino People

- Dedicated to the Success of Students

- *Break it Down to the Ground*

- Everyone Gets Called on

- Passion about the Subject Matter

- Maintain Highly Structured Classroom Environments

These effective classroom teachers utilize a diverse curriculum and include discussions about race, racism and the positive contributions of African Americans and Latinos which are able to serve as counterstories to the negative experiences students have outside of their classrooms. The literature states that effective teachers also interrogate racism and dominant racial ideology that promotes deficit thinking, bias and colorblind thinking and center the experiences of African American and Latino high school students in order to learn about their experiences with race (Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W.F., 2006; Marshall, C. 2010; and Yosso, T. 2006).

As was stated, effective teachers are dedicated to student success meaning they utilize a variety of strategies to help students understand the material, require students to complete work, give students individual attention and demonstrate caring. Effective

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teachers of African American and Latino students at Coventry Midlands High School

Break it down to the ground by presenting simple, clear and careful explanations that

students can understand. Effective teachers also utilize a transparent process to

intentionally include everyone, notice when students need help before it can even be

articulated and when students respond to questions. These teachers show that they value

the student perspective. These teachers also develop effective questioning strategies to

make sure that all students are part of the dialogue whether they volunteer or not.

Effective teachers can be described as passionate, enthusiastic or upbeat and they find

creative ways to interest students in the subject matter. These teachers maintain strict,

highly organized, rigorous environments and hold clear expectations for their students.

The next chapter will summarize and present the findings of this study.

Coventry Midlands High School
Table 4.3 Student Profiles (Using Pseudonyms)

Student's Name (Pseudonym)	Grade	Race/Ethnicity	Weighted GPA/EOG Level
Janet	9th	Latino, Mexican	EOG Math -2 EOG Reading - 2
Eddy	9th	Latino, Puerto Rican	EOG Math – 3 EOG Reading - 3
Chris	9th	Latino, Mexican	EOG Math – 4 EOG Reading - 3
Adriana	10th	Latina, Mexican	1.58 GPA
Elisa	10th	Latina, Mexican	2.66 GPA
Lilly	10th	Latina, Dominican	4.14 GPA
Kia	11th	Latina, Guatemalan	2.23 GPA
Andy	11th	Latino, Mexican	2.73 GPA

Michael	11th	Latino, Mexican	3.5 GPA
Sandra	12th	Latina, Mexican	2.29 GPA
Kelly	12th	Latina, Mexican	3.28 GPA
Pam	12th	Latina, Colombian	4.17 GPA
Brenda	9th	African American	EOG Math – 2 EOG Reading - 2
Shayla	9th	African American	EOG Math – 3 EOG Reading - 3
Donna	9th	African American	EOG Math – 4 EOG Reading - 3
Robert	10th	African American	1.21 GPA
Kenya	10th	African American	3.28 GPA
Kaleb	10th	African American	4.0 GPA
Gary	11th	African American	2.0 GPA
Christine	11th	African American	2.74 GPA
Cathy	11th	African American	3.55 GPA
Dale	12th	African American	1.86 GPA
India	12th	African American	2.86 GPA
April	12th	African American	3.59 GPA

Coventry Midlands High School (CMHS)
Table 4.4 Teacher Profiles (Using Pseudonyms)

Teacher's Name (Pseudonym)	Race	Subject Taught	Degrees Earned	# of Years Teaching	# of Years at CMHS	Grades Taught
Mr. Gaston	White	Social Studies	B.S. Education	4	4	10-12
Ms. Jensen	African American	English	M.Ed Education	5	5	10
Ms. Lumberton	White	Social Studies	M.A.T. Social Studies	6	5	9-12
Mr. Monroe	White	Social Studies	M.Ed Social Studies	17	15	9-12
Ms. Terry	White	English	M.Ed English	33	25	11-12
Mr. Willis	Multi-Racial	Biology	B.S. Science, M.A.T, Science	23	18	9-12

CHAPTER 5
OVERVIEW, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This final chapter will include three sections. The first section reviews the problem explored in this study. The second section examines the methodology that was used. The third section consists of a discussion of the findings. This third and final section will include three subsections: a) interpretation of findings and relevance to current research; b) implications for practice; and c) recommendations for further study. This chapter encompasses both the research process and findings.

Introduction

A couple of years ago, I was in a conference with an African American 12th grade student, Nathan (pseudonym) and his Algebra 2 teacher, a White female teacher who no longer works at Coventry Midlands High School. The student was failing Algebra 2 and in danger of not graduating. During the conference, the teacher told the student that she cared about him and wanted to him to pass her class. In a calm and polite tone, but with a puzzled look, Nathan inquired, if she cared about him so much why had she allowed him to sleep in her class every day? At an earlier meeting, Nathan had disclosed to me that he had asked this teacher for help before and she had not helped him so he consciously chose not to ask her for help again or to participate in class. There really was not a way to explain her actions so though the teacher gave a response, she focused on how she could help Nathan from that point forward. To the teacher's credit, although she was taken off guard by Nathan's remark, she extended the olive branch and let him know that he could still salvage his Algebra 2 grade. She offered him a contract and expressed a willingness to change his first semester failing grade, if he would double his

efforts and show at least B level work on tests and quizzes. Nathan accepted her offer.

Though he did not pass her class, he was able to pass Algebra 2 through online credit

recovery and graduate on time.

This story was shared to highlight the absence of high expectations and accountability in some classrooms and to contrast this classroom with highly effective classrooms that were described in the last chapter. Nathan was well aware that he was sleeping in class and not completing his work. He was able to articulate what a caring teacher would do and it was clear to him that caring did not include allowing him to sleep in class. Nathan was not successful because he chose not to work in his Algebra class. His teacher was reinforcing his lack of success by allowing him to engage in behavior that allowed him to fall further behind. The problem explored in this study attempted to uncover how teachers were effectively educating African American and Latino students at Coventry Midlands High School. Part of this exploration involved examining stories that illustrate the existence of this problem, as well as some solutions.

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

In Chapter one of this dissertation, it was communicated that a burgeoning number of Latino and African American students have not been successful in public high schools. African American and Latino students have not been as successful as White students on Advanced Placement tests, SATs, college placement rates and NAEP Reading and Math scores. This researcher's intention was to uncover the knowledge, behavior and dispositions of teachers that resulted in effective instruction for African American and Latino high school students as perceived by them. Critical race theorists state that our solutions to the problem of Black and Latino underachievement cannot be

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found in the majoritarian dialogue.   For this reason, the voices of African American and Latino students were highlighted and used, along with teacher perspectives, to explore the research questions. The overall research question explored by this study was: Can the perceptions and experiences of African American and Latino High School students inform classroom instruction by pointing towards practices and beliefs which in their eyes account for their success in school? From this question, the study more specifically investigated:

A) What are the characteristics and/ or practices of teachers that African American and Latino students identify as more successful than others?

B) If found to be applicable, how do the emerging data correspond to concepts in Critical Race Theory?

This study also explored the classroom experiences of African American and Latino students and their perceptions of what was helpful or not helpful in their high school classrooms.   This study used Critical Race Theory (CRT) to determine how students of color interpret their school experiences and how this information could be used to create more effective learning environments for them.

This study focuses more specifically on three areas of CRT analysis (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2006):

- Interrogating racism and dominant racial ideology that promotes deficit thinking, bias and colorblind thinking (Challenging claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy).

- Centering the experiences of African American and Latino high school students in order to learn about their experiences with race and using their counterstories to challenge the stories of the dominant group

- Centering the knowledge, behaviors and dispositions necessary to create successful learning environments for African American and Latino students.

The major themes illuminated in the research are listed following a discussion of the methodology used for this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study was designed as an exploratory mixed methods case study of one North Carolina high school. This study examined the perceptions that African American and Latino students had of effective teachers at this high school. Of the 1400 students at Coventry Midlands High School, 207 are African American and 122 are Latino. Quantitative secondary student survey data was utilized from a school administered survey . This survey reported students' perceptions of engagement, environment and effort students put forth in the classroom. Students were asked to select a particular teacher's class in which they have experienced success and adapt their responses to that class. In addition, qualitative student interviews, and teacher interview were an integral part of this study. The sample of African American and Latino students interviewed were stratified by grade, achievement and race with an equal number of high achieving, average and low achieving students as determined by GPA and EOG (End of Grade) scores. Although students were randomly selected to partake in this study, an equal number of Latinos and African Americans, three from each grade level and race were selected. Twenty four African American and Latino students and six teachers were

interviewed as part of this study. Twenty-four students were asked a total of 20 questions about their experiences and interviewed for 25-45 minutes during the duration of a class period. Six teachers were asked 14 questions initially about their own teaching, then in relation to feedback that was shared from student interviews and surveys. Using Critical Race Theory as a framework, this study sought to highlight the knowledge, behaviors and dispositions that help African American and Latino students to be successful as well as to create an opportunity to share feedback with teachers.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Interpretation of Findings and Relevance to Current Research

This dissertation clearly illustrates that effective education of African American and Latino students does not take place outside of the context of race and racism. As stated in chapter two, effective teachers integrate their students' backgrounds into classroom instruction and reject the notion of colorblind thinking (Martin, 2007; Gay 1999). CRT experts emphasize the permanence of racism in society in the United States (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2006). More specifically, deficit thinking and bias were important themes raised by students. In an attempt to illuminate the role of race in the context of the learning experiences of African American and Latino students at Coventry Midlands High School, it was posited that deficit thinking and bias are relevant because biased treatment impacts the performance of African American and Latino students. Effective learning environments are free from deficit thinking and bias.

Deficit Thinking, and Bias

This researcher anticipated that students would share positive experiences from their favorite teachers' classes, and that in those classes students would state that their

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favorite teacher did not treat them as if they were culturally disadvantaged. This researcher also expected the research to show that students would express that in their favorite teacher's class, i.e., they did not experience differential treatment based on race, and that their favorite teacher would demonstrate a comfort level in talking about race and racism. These assumptions proved to be correct.   As has been stated, the majority of students' (14 of 24) interviewed stated that their favorite teacher did not treat them differently than White students. Kelly, 12th grade Latina, 3.28 GPA added, *"I don't feel like I've ever been discriminated against because of my race. Honestly I don't feel like anything has happened to me. They're (teachers) are hard on me like other students. They treat me the same. They want every student to do well."* In only one case, Elisa, a 10th grade Latina student, 2.66 GPA communicated that one of her favorite teachers, Ms. Brown was biased. She claimed that Ms. Brown expected her to need help because she was a Latina. Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006) asserted that racism is a permanent part of U.S. society. What was not surprising, therefore, was that because of the permanence of racism in society, outside of their favorite teacher's class, some students reported that they were treated in a way that was biased. This became an important focus of the study and deserves attention here.

As was previously stated, at least ten of the 24 students experienced being treated differently from their White peers by an adult at school. Bias exists at Coventry Midlands High School though not in the students' favorite classrooms.   Biased treatment, defined as deviation from neutrality seemed to come from beliefs about deficit thinking. Some students indicated that they were targeted for unsolicited help or they felt that they were ignored by teachers and even though they had asked for help, they did not

receive teacher assistance. These students perceived that White students were helped

instead. As stated, the two themes that emanated from beliefs about deficit thinking and

resulted in biased treatment were:

- Targeted for Unsolicited Help

- Ignored Because Most Teachers Think that Because You are Latino, You Won't

  Do as Good as Other Students.

This biased treatment led to an experience termed *forced race consciousness. Forced

race consciousness* is a term that emanated from this research and is introduced and

defined by this researcher. *Forced culture consciousness* is another term that will be

described later in this chapter.

Forced race consciousness.

Forced race consciousness is an experience that propels people of color to think

about their membership as part of a racial or ethnic group. The associations made with

the person's racial or ethnic group are negative, stereotypical, and assumptions are made

about the person's intellectual inferiority. This awareness negatively impacts the

students' school experience and detracts from their ability to be academically successful.

Noguera (2008) stated that schools are important places of socialization where many

students formulate their understandings about the significance of race.

African American and Latino students reported that they experienced biased

treatment that created *forced race consciousness* and negatively impacted their school

experience. In his landmark research called *stereotype threat*, Steele (2003) found that

during testing, the performance of African Americans and women worsened when they

were made conscious of their race or gender. The women and African Americans did not

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do as well in situations where it was communicated that their race or gender was expected to impact performance. Steele found that students were strongly affected by stereotypes associated with intellectual ability. When operating, *stereotype threat* affected the academic performance of students. Some teachers at Coventry Midlands High School created *forced race consciousness* in African American and Latino students by providing students with unsolicited help. April, a 12th grade African American student**,** 3.59 GPA shared about how disturbed she was by this treatment. *"Our first test, Mr. Gold pulled all of the Black students aside. There were four students. He asked us if we wanted separate testing. The girl I sit next to is White and she asked us, what was that about? She asked, was it because we were all Black? I was so shocked. I was like, what?"* As previously mentioned, only students receiving Special Education services had separate setting at this high school. Mr. Gold was making assumptions that April qualified for Special Education. April described being forced to think about her membership in her racial group and to make associations between that membership and the notion of intellectual inferiority. This interaction may have also caused April to question her own ability. As another illustration of *forced race consciousness,* Elisa, 10th grade Latina, with a 2.66 GPA shared. *" Ms. Law would target us as well. When she explained something, she would ask me to see if I was getting it or she would look at me. Whenever we took a test, they would stare at me to make sure I didn't cheat."* Elisa described being singled out and offered help that she described as targeted and unsolicited. This was a poignant example of how some Latino students at Coventry Midlands High School were targeted for unsolicited help.

For those students who were targeted for unsolicited help, in some cases, the students were successful academically and did not need or request the additional help. Assessment data should be what drives the decisions about who gets additional help and additional help should be offered to all. Many African American and Latino students are well aware of how other students in the classroom are being treated. They are sensitive about fitting in and are preoccupied with whether or other students think they are smart. As noted in the Student Surveys, about half of African American students and 37.21% of Latinos felt out of place even in their favorite teacher's class. Data about how students feel about all of their other classes though not included in the survey would likely be higher for classes other than their favorite classes. Singling out African American and Latino students for help before gathering data from assessments further exacerbates the issue some 33% of African Americans and 17.78% of Latinos have, namely that others at Coventry Midlands High School will think that they are not smart.

African American and Latino students at Coventry Midlands High School also described being ignored by some teachers and how those experiences with teachers resulted in *forced race consciousness.* For the students who were ignored, this treatment also could have an impact on their academic performance or access to academic opportunities. Not receiving their teacher's assistance could impact their ability to correctly respond to class work, homework assignments and/or tests. As was previously stated, some students requested teacher assistance, but did not receive that assistance during class or during extra help sessions. Students noted that White students or other students who were more academically advanced received assistance instead. For some African American and Latino students, being ignored by teachers created *forced race*

consciousness. India**,** a 12th grade African American student, 2.86 GPA stated, *"I've seen teachers tend to focus on the kids who are already doing well. The kids who are struggling are left behind. Kids needing help, but the teacher not being motivated to help. If a White kid needs help, it's not a big deal. They willingly help them."* In these interactions, India was forced to think about how her race impacted her membership in the class. India described African American students being treated differently than White students and teachers who appeared to be less willing to help African American students.

As has been stated, "Ignored" also refers to not being presented with an academic opportunity that White students were offered such as not being given information about National Technical Honor Society. Michael an 11th grade Latino, 3.5 GPA shared an experience of *forced race consciousness*, *"In my Engineering class, my teacher asked all the White students if they wanted to join the Technical Honor Society. He never asked me."* Michael has a 3.5 GPA which is high enough to be eligible for the Technical Honor Society (minimum GPA is 3.0) yet he was not invited to participate. The issue was not simply that the students missed out on receiving teacher assistance or not being told about an academic opportunity. From the students' perspective, the reason for not getting the help or being informed about an academic opportunity was because they were African American or Latino. In these experiences, teachers created *forced race consciousness.* Michael was forced to question why he had not been informed about an educational opportunity when his White peers had been invited to participate. When these students did not receive the same treatment as their White peers, they were compelled to consider how their membership in their racial or ethnic group influenced how they were treated and the notion of intellectual inferiority was raised. These actions by teachers were also

related to deficit thinking in that African American and Latino students were treated as if the teachers believed that the students were incapable of achieving at the levels of White students so assistance was given consciously or unconsciously to other students or students were ignored. This dissertation research argues that part of the effect of such harmful treatment may result in a negative impact on academic performance which then contributes to the underachievement of African American and Latino students.

For those students who described being ignored, rival explanations could point to teachers having good intentions but simply not having time to get to all of the students needing assistance. That rival explanation is based in the majoritarian perspective and dismisses the perspectives of these students. This researcher has posited that targeting African American or Latino students for unsolicited help or "ignoring" them causes *forced race consciousness.* These students were forced to consider their membership as part of a racial or ethnic minority and the relationship to their treatment. Students' focus on this consciousness detracts from their ability to focus on academics which may be a factor in the performance or underachievement of some African American and Latino students.

In addition to being forced to think about race, students also described being forced to think about culture. *Forced culture consciousness* is a term that emanated from this research and is introduced and defined by this researcher.

Forced culture consciousness.

Forced culture consciousness is described as an experience that propels people of color to think about their membership as part of a racial or ethnic group. The associations made with the person's racial or ethnic group are negative, stereotypical and

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assumptions are made about language, ethnicity or immigration status. This awareness negatively impacts the students' school experience and detracts from their ability to be academically successful. Although other people of color may experience *forced culture consciousness*, in this study, only Latino students shared experiences with White students that created *forced culture consciousness.*

Latino students shared about being forced to notice that they spoke differently, to prove that they could really speak Spanish, to explain why they spoke Spanish or to translate a Spanish name. In some cases, students were noticeably disturbed by the remarks. In other cases, the remarks or jokes were dismissed as not being "put down racist". The stories Latino students shared about what White students at Coventry Midlands High School said about them served as counters to the dominant society's stories about reality. Michael, an 11th grade Latino student 3.5 GPA overheard a White student making a general statement about Latinos not belonging in this country and described his experience with *forced culture consciousness.* **"*People call us names as a whole group. I feel discriminated against. We're not supposed to be here. (They say) We should go back and get our own jobs in our own country. They (White students) sit in their groups and they talk to each other about something that happened in the news and I overhear it."* The statements made by White students were also riddled with inaccuracies and displayed assumptions about who is considered American. Adriana, 10th grade Latina, 1.58 GPA said, "When someone looks at you up and down or tells a friend that she isn't going to be able to graduate because she isn't smart." A White student told Adriana's friend that she was not going to be able to graduate because she was not smart. Adriana is only in 10th grade. Her ability to graduate or not graduate is not determined

this early in her academic career. Adriana shared that she believed that this statement was made because she is a Latina. In talking about her favorite teacher's class, Kia, 11th grade Latina, 2.23 GPA added, "I liked how we used to make presentations, but no one makes fun of you." Kia shared about how White students in her other classes stared at her and made fun of her because she spoke English with an accent. Kia commented about how refreshing it was to be able to make presentations in her favorite teacher's class without being ridiculed. In these instances of *Forced culture consciousness*, students were forced to think about being Latina or speaking English with an accent and make negative associations.

It is theorized that these interactions create a hostile learning environment and negatively impact how Latino students feel about their membership in the school community. These negative interactions impede the ability of Latino students to be successful because they detract from the students' ability to focus on academic endeavors. The students shared about the need to respond to questions about not belonging here (in the United States), why they spoke Spanish or where they lived. "*I'll be talking to a friend and someone says, you're in America, speak English. I said, I'm supposed to be in America. I can speak any language I want.*" Adriana, 10th grade Latina, 1.58 GPA shared her experience being told that she should not speak Spanish, her first language (An African American female student made this statement). Adriana questioned how other students could think that they had the right to dictate the language she chose to speak. These experiences are examples of ways that Latino students experience *forced culture consciousness* and are subjected to treatment that negatively impacts their school performance.

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As previously stated, two students shared their experiences with being teased because they spoke Spanish. These experiences forced students to think about their linguistic heritage, ethnicity or immigration status. "*It's more reverse. I'm stuck in a place where I get made fun of for being White and made fun of for being Hispanic. I only get made fun of talking Spanish with my friends.*" Andy, 11th grade Latino, 2.73 GPA. Another student**,** Kia, 11th grade Latina, 2.23 GPA said, *"How they look at you funny when you talk. I speak funny when I talk. They don't understand. I talk too low. Sometimes they make fun of me because I talk kind of weird."* Kia has internalized the message that because she has an accent that she speaks "weird". One Latina female, 12th grade Kelly, 3.28 GPA shared a coarse joke, but then added, "*I don't take the racial stuff personally unless it was said serious.*" Another student, 11th grade Andy, 2.73 GPA stated, *"It's not like a put down racist. It's a way to be funny, not being racist. Border hopping is a stereotypical thing. They'll say, Oh, Andy, are you wearing those gloves so you can jump the border better? It's crude humor."* A Latina female, 12th grade**,** Pam, 4.17 GPA stated that, *"Maybe someone (White student) will say some kind of word that is part of their daily language, like a Mexican remark – jumping bean. That jumping bean did that. Lots of times they (White students) don't think about what they are saying. It is what they are used to saying."* Pam was the only one of the three that did not ignore the offensive nature of the jokes. Latino students shared the many contradictions they experienced when they spoke Spanish. The White Latino students were questioned with disbelief for speaking Spanish, some were ridiculed for speaking Spanish and others were told to speak English. This researcher attributes the willingness of the Latino students who were interviewed to participate in joking about their own ethnic group as a lack of

education about the racial history of Latinos, especially Mexicans in this country. To not only condone the use of derogatory language by their friends, but also to dismiss its significance contributes to an environment where racially charged joking is tolerated. An environment where racially charged joking is tolerated contributes to an environment of racism. As these experiences pertain to CRT, they were described as behaviors that further entrenched the permanence of racism (a CRT tenet) at Coventry Midlands High School (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 2006). By dismissing the negativity of the jokes, these Latino students are teaching White students that it is acceptable to make stereotypical jokes about Latinos because even Latinos are not offended. Whether students are conscious of the impact or not, the stereotypical remarks serve as a reminder that Latino students are different than their White (non-Latino) peers and at times they will be ridiculed because of these differences.

Students at Coventry Midlands High School are talking about issues of race and racism, if not in the classroom, then in the cafeteria, buses and hallways. By leaving discussions about race and racism to these informal venues, there are important negative assumptions that go unchallenged. Where do students get the language to counter the coarse jokes or to challenge the negative assumptions? In the absence of a counter story, these misconceptions will go uncontested. As students talked, the inherent contradictions that exist within the liberal community of Coventry Midlands became apparent as did the students' exposure to biased treatment which led to their experiences with *forced race consciousness* and *forced culture consciousness.*

The above-mentioned experiences took place with some White students and in classrooms outside of favorite teachers' classes.   As African American and Latino

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students shared their experiences in their favorite teachers' classes, several commonalities became apparent. The characteristics or practices of effective teachers that emerged from the student interviews have been described as a *cultural symphony*.

The Cultural Symphony

This researcher has only ever been to the symphony once. It was a rare pleasure one evening at the Boston Symphony on a fall evening. What I remember is the precise manner in which the stage was set. The location of the first and second violins, the clarinets, French horns and cellos was certainly not arbitrary. Though each section had a specific function, each retained its uniqueness which enhanced the musical experience. The conductor, Seiji Ozawa, at the time, was fully aware of the power possessed by each instrument and at the appropriate time, moved from a silent, morose tempo to a crescendo that brought deafening applause at its conclusion. Ozawa created the mood with his direction, his reliance on composers like Austrian, Gustav Mahler, and French composer, Berlioz; and engaged the audience with the complexity of instrumentation and synchronization. There is a certain air of snobbery and class consciousness at the Symphony. Even following the movements requires an appreciation for other languages and cultures, a measure of background knowledge about composers and why they chose to create a certain work as well as a degree of familiarity with the social and historical context of a piece of music. There is also acceptable and unacceptable attire for the Symphony. Unlike the Boston Pops Orchestra that customarily plays outdoors on Independence Day to Boston enthusiasts clad in shorts and tank tops, the Symphony is a decidedly formal affair. It is therefore quite interesting to lend a comparison between a musical symphony that takes place on a stage and a *cultural symphony* that takes place in

the classroom. The description of a *cultural symphony* evolved as part of the research of this study and is defined by this researcher as it relates to creating effective environments for African American and Latino students.

The Cultural Symphony in Schools

Creating a *cultural symphony* involves recognizing the uniqueness of each student in the classroom and intentionally utilizing their cultural heritage and strength. Each student's culture is not immaterial, rather it is intrinsic in order to produce a well orchestrated lesson. Each student understands their role and the contributions that are expected which is why they each contribute to the dialogue in a predetermined and transparent manner. Expectations are set for presentation, attitude and the mood with every lesson. Each gathering is a unique event that is highly structured and pre-planned. Before the public performance, the teacher takes complex material and simplifies it - *breaks it down to the ground* so that the critical knowledge that each student needs to demonstrate mastery becomes evident. The teacher is dedicated to the success of each student because without each student's optimal performance, elements of the classroom experience would be deficient. The classroom teacher is passionate and creates an energy that shapes the mood, making even trivial material seem exhilarating. In other words, creating a *cultural symphony* involves leading discussions about race, racism and the positive contributions of African American and Latino people; being dedicated to the success of students; *breaking it down to the ground;* calling on everyone; demonstrating passion about the subject matter and maintaining highly structured classroom environments.

With the exception of the first theme which was a deductive theme based on Critical Race Theory and Culturally Responsive Teaching, all of the other themes evolved from research at Coventry Midlands High School.

Characteristics or Practices of Effective Teachers of African American and Latino Students

As stated in chapter four, during data analysis the characteristics or practices of effective teachers that emerged were:

- Lead discussions about Race, Racism and/or Positive Contributions of African American and Latino People

- Dedicated to the Success of Students

- *Break it Down to the Ground*

- Everyone Gets Called on

- Passion about the Subject Matter

- Maintain Highly Structured Classroom Environments

Lead discussions about Race, Racism and/or Positive Contributions of African American and Latino People

Gay (1999) and Martin (2007) contended that African American and Latino students will be more successful in classrooms that integrate prior knowledge, cultural backgrounds and make connections between content and the students' current realities. Gay (1999) pointed to the importance of classrooms where teachers provide culturally relevant conceptual examples and deliver multicultural curricula. Martin (2007) highlighted anti-racist education as a vital component of effectively educating African American and Latino students. Ms. Jensen, M.Ed, English teacher, with 5 years teaching

experience shared about how she incorporates World Literature into her English class. Ms. Jensen mentioned that she has many opportunities to include culture in her classroom since World literature is the focus of the 10th grade English curriculum. Although several teachers shared experiences introducing students to other cultures, they did not share specific instances of how they included discussions about race or racism in their classes. Mr. Gaston, B.S, Social Studies teacher with four years teaching experience however, stated:

> *In African American Studies, we have an ongoing series of lessons about "good hair" and internalized racism within the African American community. It is easier. In Civics, I've had plenty of opportunities when students have said something that is racially tinged like asking the only African American student in class about a sport. That is not acceptable. Stereotypes. That leads to a greater discussion.*

Mr. Gaston mentioned that he looks for ways to include diverse voices in his classroom. Ms. Terry, M.Ed, English teacher, 33 years teaching experience looked for ways to relate her curriculum to all of her students she said,

> *I try to relate it to British Literature (curriculum for English IV). It is waspish. When we did Ballads. I did some research on the "Ballad of Birmingham" and a Ballad written by Langston Hughes. Later on we get to the unit on "Paradise Lost". When I ask a story about the Bible, my African American students know it. I haven't thought about how to bring Latino literature into the curriculum. I might do that.*

Effective teachers of African American and Latino students create a *cultural symphony,* that is they understand the context in which students attend school and therefore find ways to include their students' voices and experiences in their classrooms. The diverse contributions of African Americans and Latinos and issues of race and racism are included as part of classroom instruction. Effective teachers are also dedicated to the success of students, *break it down to the ground*, call on everyone, are passionate about their subject matter and develop highly structured classroom environments. Noguera's 2007 study of 150 10th grade students attending 10 Boston public schools found similar characteristics of effective teachers as those that emerged from this study. Noguera found that teachers were organized, patient, inquired if students understood the material, were passionate about the subjects taught, showed respect for students and were firm.

Dedicated to the Success of Students

Teachers who were dedicated to the success of students created a *cultural symphony* in their classrooms by integrating a variety of instructional strategies, ensuring that students completed assigned work, making time for individual students and demonstrating caring. These teachers related to individual students, asked personal questions and were not afraid to get to know their students. The teachers were described as being less concerned with covering material and more concerned with making sure students were successful. Elisa, a 10th grade Latina, 2.66 GPA added, "*A lot of teachers, I guess all they want to do is get the material across and make sure people learn, but they don't dedicate themselves to the success of students as much."* Mr. Willis, MAT, Biology teacher - 23 years teaching experience shared, "*I try to make class as hands on and relevant as I can. I'm accessible before school, after school, during lunch."* Effective

teachers were described by students as willing to commit time during class or outside of class time to help their students be successful. These teachers also created assignments that interested students.

Utilize a variety of instructional strategies.

Darling-Hammond (2007) stated that effective teachers developed active learning activities such as creating models, participating in demonstrations, and participating in debates. Students interviewed described active learning activities that this researcher defined as a variety of instructional strategies. Elisa, 10th grade Latina, 2.66 GPA shared about her English teacher, *"He keeps the class interesting. A lot of my teachers don't do that."* Speaking about Ms. Lumberton, Lilly, 10th grade Latina, 4.14 GPA stated, *"Civics is a boring subject. She makes it interesting. She has fun activities for us to do."* Also referring to Ms. Lumberton, Michael, 11th grade Latino, 3.5 GPA mentioned, *"She was really active. We did a lot of interactive things. She made World History fun."*

As shared in chapter four, Ms. Lumberton, M.A.T., Social Studies teacher, 6 years teaching experience, stated, "*I try to use a variety of teaching methods, a lot of direct instruction, partner work, group work, and class discussion. I try to get to know all of them (my students) as individuals. I use a notebook strategy. The right side is the teacher side. I like them to respond in writing on their left first. That gets people who are hesitant to react, kids who are shy."* As has been shared, several African American and Latino students commented on how much they valued working in an active and participatory classroom environment.

Require students to complete work.

Teachers described as effective by African American and Latino students cajoled them when assignments were not submitted on time, worked with students individually and made it clear that they cared about their students. Lilly, 10th grade, Latina, 4.14 GPA stated, "*She makes sure you understand. She explains things well. If she sees you are dosing off, she asks if you are okay. She makes sure you are learning.*" The teachers' insistence that students work hard and keep trying was based on the belief that students could achieve success by working hard. In accordance with research conducted by Perry (2003), these teachers' actions served as counternarratives to the majoritarian view of the intellectual inferiority of African Americans and Latinos. As shared in chapter two, Perry, Steele and Hilliard (2003) defined counternarratives as messages passed consistently and intentionally on in a group setting. Mr. Gaston**,** B.S., Social Studies teacher, 4 years teaching experience affirmed his belief in his students, by saying, "*I have high expectations. I can't have students see a lower standard. As a way, there is no other standard, but the one I set.*" Ms. Jensen, M.Ed, English teacher, 5 years teaching experience shared the counternarrative that she communicates to her students. *"I start from the assumption that they are capable of excellence. I am expecting to be impressed"*.

Gave students individual attention.

Part of teachers' dedication to student success included giving students individual attention by checking for understanding, answering individual students' questions and being available to help students outside of class. Students stated that their favorite teachers made sure everyone understood before moving to new material. Brenda, 9th

grade African American female, EOG Math -2, EOG Reading -2 , stated, *"If one of us is failing behind, he'll wait and help us before he moves on."* The students also talked about knowing that teachers would help them and give them individual attention when needed. In culturally responsive classrooms, time is made for individual, personal connections with students. Gay (1999) in her discussion of classroom climate cited the work of Moos (1979) who indicated that personal experiences are essential aspects of facilitating student learning. Teachers who take time to help individual students make the connections between their experiences and the curriculum ensure that each learner's needs are met.

`   **Demonstrated caring.**

Effective teachers demonstrated caring. Mr. Monroe, M.Ed., Social Studies teacher, 17 years teaching experience connected with students by being transparent with them and showing that he cared about them as people. "*When I review, I say, tell me something about yourself you want me to know. It helps me. If I have a student who works at a job at a restaurant and I have a choice to go to that restaurant, I go."*

Nieto (2005) affirmed the importance of caring by stating that some of the characteristics of effective teachers include: connecting learning to students' lives, having high expectations for all students, caring about, respecting, and loving their students. Noddings (2005) added that caring teachers make connections between school and real life as well as the student's needs and the lesson's objectives. Ms. Terry, M.Ed., English teacher, 33 years teaching experience shared stories about her own sons to connect with her students. "*One of the things I really want to get across is that I really care about them. I want them to be at the top of their game. I tell them personal stories about my*

own boys." Storytelling was utilized by effective teachers to connect with students. Storytelling though used differently by these teachers is also a CRT strategy. Donna, 9th grade African American student, EOG Math -4, EOG Reading-3 shared about her Social Studies teacher, *"He doesn't have a stressed out mood. He tells stories which lighten the mood if you are in a bad mood that day.*" Students talked about enjoying the stories that teachers told. An English teacher, Ms. Terry shared that she told stories about her own children in order to connect with students and encourage some of the shy students to participate.

Break It Down to the Ground

A 9th grade African American female student described how her favorite teacher created a *cultural symphony* in the classroom. *"He breaks it down to the ground."* This teacher was able to make complex material accessible to all students. The phrase, *breaks it down,* was used by three other students. Gary, an 11th grade African American student, 2.0 GPA shared about his teacher's keen ability to explain, simplify instruction and make sure students understood. *"Cause he broke it down that helps me understand. Most teachers do it all in one day. He takes time with individual people, making sure they understand."* Gary was explaining that other teachers explain a complex concept all at once rather than sharing a little at a time. Cathy, an 11th grade African American student, 3.55 GPA shared her Science teacher's ability to relate and explain in terms students could understand. *"He understands what we are talking about. He relates to things that are current. He doesn't make everything Science. He breaks it down for you."* Dale, a 12th grade African American male, 1.86 GPA said, *"She'll break it down. She'll*

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take it back. If you ask a question, she'll expand on the question you ask and give you more information."

In Noguera's research (2007) students communicated the importance of teachers exercising patience and providing students with careful explanations. Teachers explained concepts in a straightforward language that students could understand. Why the emphasis on understanding material? To an insider who formerly worked at this high school, what is evident is the pace and volume of work that can at times, be overwhelming. Given the nature of this college preparatory high school, it is incumbent upon students to understand a great deal of material that very often needs to be learned in a short period of time. Graduates from Coventry Midlands High School often finish a year or two of college class work, placing into the 2nd or 3rd year of a college foreign language, the 2nd year of Calculus or placing out of other freshmen courses because of Advanced Placement tests or advanced classroom preparation.

Everyone Gets Called on

In classrooms where teachers created a *cultural symphony* and "everyone gets called on", teachers utilized a transparent process designed to intentionally include everyone. Teachers in these classrooms noticed when students needed help before it was even communicated and when students responded to questions, it was clear that the teacher valued the student's opinion. *"*Everyone gets called on" referred to teachers utilizing questioning techniques that ensured that everyone, not just the students who volunteered were called on. Brenda, 9th grade African American female, Math EOG - 2, Reading- 2 said, *"He lets all of us take turns answering the question. He doesn't focus on one student."*   Ms. Jensen, M.Ed, English teacher, 4 years teaching experience stated

that sometimes she asked questions by sections of the room so she could ensure that she called on everyone. " *Sometimes I may focus on a section of the room. As I'm going through the week making sure - have I heard the voice of every kid?"*

As has been stated, students reported that their favorite teachers called on everyone using techniques such as note cards with students' names to make sure every one was called on or asked questions by sections of the room. In classes where "Everyone gets called on" teachers had developed effective questioning strategies to make sure that all students were part of the dialogue. Students noticed who was part of the classroom dialogue and whether students had to volunteer to participate. Their favorite teachers were interested in their opinions. These findings are consistent with the research by Gay (1999) in chapter two in which Gay asserted that teachers control the discourse in their classrooms. The degree to which culturally diverse learners participate in the classroom discourse will depend upon "turn-taking rules, attending and attention-getting behaviors, wait time for responses, length of speech exchanges, questioning strategies, and feedback mechanisms. Teachers need to intentionally extend wait time, integrate active learning strategies and incorporate questions that require higher-order thinking skills. Students also need opportunities to "talk through learning tasks together – posing questions, finding solutions, and demonstrating mastery." These types of activities promote learning of African American students.

Passion about the Subject Matter

Nieto (2005) described effective teachers by concluding that effective teachers were enthusiastic, lifelong learners who prioritized excellent education for all of their students and also valued excellence in themselves.   The participants in Noguera's study

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(2007) also pointed to passion as an important criteria of effective teachers. The findings from this study where teachers created a *cultural symphony* in their classrooms are consistent with Nieto and Noguera's research. Five of the six teachers interviewed described themselves as passionate, excited or enthusiastic. This was before the teachers were made aware that their students had used similar adjectives to describe them**.** Ms. Jensen, M.Ed, English teacher, 5 years teaching experience shared, *"It's a good start for letting them know I am as passionate as I am about learning that hopefully they'll be interested in the book (we're reading)".* Ms. Terry, M.Ed., English teacher, 33 years teaching experience concurred and expressed her level of energy even after 33 years in the classroom. *"I'm enthusiastic about what I teach. This is what I want them to get from me."*

The teachers that were able to build trusting relationships were able to engage students in what Noddings (2005) termed, "even trivial material" or in Ms. Lumberton's case, a "crazy topic".   Dale**,** a 12th grade African American male, 1.86 GPA shared his insights about the role an enthusiastic teacher, Ms. Lumberton played in setting the tone for his day. "*She always has a positive mindset. All the negativity she avoids. It was energetic even at the beginning of the day. Everybody wanted to be there even if it was a crazy topic. It was a positive environment. It started my day off so well every day."* Commenting about the same History teacher, Lilly, a 10th grade Latina 4.14 GPA added, *"Her attitude is cheerful and energetic. There is an upbeat vibe. Other subjects are monotonous."* Teachers who were passionate were able to create an environment that caused students to want to be in their classes regardless of the topic.

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Highly Structured Classroom Environments

"Highly structured classroom environments" were described as classrooms led by teachers that are strict and very organized, maintain a rigorous environment and hold clear expectations. Teachers created a *cultural symphony* by maintaining a structured learning environment. April, 12th grade African American, 3.59 GPA shared an assessment of the structure and organization in Mr. Willis' s Biology class that helped to make her successful.

The structure. You know what will happen- lecture, then lab. You always know what is expected. He has high expectations of you. It motivates students to do their best in the class. I like to know what the teacher expects, what we're going to be doing in the class. He can be strict, but it is to help us do better. He first intimidates us on the first day, then he slows things down. Mr. Monroe, M.Ed., Social Studies teacher, 17 years teaching experience shared about his high expectations. "*It's an expectation. You can choose to take the class. You cannot walk out of here and not be successful."* In his classroom and in the classroom of other effective teachers at Coventry Midlands High School, the structure and expectations were clearly communicated.

Gay (1999) in her discussion of classroom climate cited the work of Moos (1979) who suggested that research demonstrated that improved satisfaction, performance and student growth existed in highly organized classes where students had positive relationships with teachers and were rewarded for improved academic performance.

Implications for Practice

It should be restated that this was an exploratory case study of 24 African American and Latino students at one North Carolina High School so the results from this

study may not be generalizable to African American and Latino students in other settings. The implications for practice will be centered in two areas which are directly related to the research questions explored in this study. The first area will focus on what can be changed in classrooms to improve the experiences that African American and Latino students have given their experiences with bias, deficit thinking, *forced race consciousness* and *forced culture consciousness*.   The second area looks at the creation of a *cultural symphony*, that is the practices and characteristics of teachers who were identified by African American and Latino students as being effective. Regarding this second area, the focus is on the role of school administrators in promoting these practices and the role of teachers in utilizing these strategies in their classrooms.

Classroom Changes Given African American and Latino Student Experiences

Part of the purpose of this research became raising teacher awareness of the negative effects of targeting African American and Latino students for unsolicited help or ignoring African American and Latino students. The implications for practice would be to not provide help to African American and Latino students if not requested unless the same help is offered to other students based on transparent criteria. Additionally, the perception of some African American and Latino students was that they were ignored because they were believed to not do as well academically as other students. Therefore being conscious of this perception, if African and Latino students indicate to teachers that they need assistance, that assistance should be provided in a timely way. It is conceivable that there are other actions that could result in *forced race consciousness* or *forced culture consciousness*. Teachers should avoid behaviors that emanate from deficit thinking or bias and result in students experiencing *forced race consciousness* or *forced*

culture consciousness. In addition, teachers should provide instruction about racism, privilege and positive contributions of African Americans and Latinos as a counterstory.

It is vital that educators are aware of the racial stories of African American and Latino students and know how to effectively engage in conversations about racism so that counterstories can be introduced. It is striking that some Latino students reported experiencing racism outside of the classroom, but inside of the classroom there was an absence of a racialized dialogue. There is also a need for education about racism, privilege and cultural knowledge for White, African American and Latino students as well as Coventry Midlands teachers. Schools need to see it as their responsibility to counter the harmful negative societal messages that African American and Latino students are bombarded with. There is clearly some education needed to counter the belief that some Latino students at Coventry Midlands have that it is acceptable for White friends to tell jokes about Latinos. There is also little instruction about the contributions, history and reality of Latino people so this void needs to be filled. With the exception of World Literature in English II and some opportunities in World History, Civics and U. S. History, neither students or teachers shared that the curriculum focused on racial issues or on the contributions of African Americans or Latinos. In fact, Michael, 11th grade Latino, 3.5 GPA summed it up this way, *"Most of the things we study are about Caucasian people. We don't study much about other cultures. I don't really have that opportunity."* One recommendation is to introduce a semester course for high school students that focuses on racism and privilege. When this researcher was a classroom teacher, she developed the curriculum and taught such a course. There is a need for a high school course that focuses primarily on issues of racism and privilege. Of particular

importance is how these issues affect people of color today and have affected people of color in history. It may appear contradictory to promote a course on racism while disparaging *forced race consciousness*. That is the majoritarian viewpoint. The counterstory does not equate the merits of uncovering the contemporary and historical contributions and realities of people of color with forcing students to make negative racial associations engendered by a deficit perspective.   Denigrating *forced race consciousness* or *forced culture consciousness* should also not be confused with advocating color blind thinking. Color blind thinking ignores differences at the detriment of students of color while purporting that this aversion is beneficial. This research amplifies the inherent issues with compelling students of color to view their racial membership negatively. Rather the awareness of one's race or culture is aggrandized while dispelling myths of racial intellectual inferiority. A course proposal is listed in Appendix K.

Creating a *Cultural Symphony:* The Role of Administrators and Teachers in the Promotion of Identified Effective Practices.

Synchronization and uniformity characterize the symphony. The hierarchy illustrated by the composer leaves no room for improvisation. Given this structure, some may question whether the symphony is the best metaphor to utilize here, however, this researcher asserts that by creating a cultural symphony, teachers engage in effective instruction for African American and Latino students.   Effective teachers create a cultural symphony in the classroom by leading discussions about race and racism, being dedicated to student success, being able to *break it down to the ground*, calling on every one, being passionate and maintaining highly structured classroom environments.

Administrators can create expectations that teachers demonstrate dedication to student success by being available to help students before school, after school or if schedule permits, at lunch. Administrators can also ensure that they hire teachers who have exhibited prior dedication to their students' success and who are passionate about their subject matter. Caring cannot be mandated, but systems of care can be put in place to ensure that students complete assignments such as the CARE Team/Academic Plan structure in place at Coventry Midlands High School. As part of this structure, a group of 100+ students (CARE Team) meet on a weekly basis with their assistant principal or counselor and are required to meet on a weekly basis with their teachers to get additional tutoring support. If teacher meetings do not occur and/or assignments are not completed, students are assigned lunch detentions by their assistant principal. The required weekly meetings with teachers also provide a way for students to get individual attention from their teachers. Administrators can also communicate expectations that the effective practices described by students will be a focus that will be monitored through regular classroom walkthroughs.

In terms of the role of teachers, teachers can meet together during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) or during common planning time to develop ways to simplify instruction (*Break it down*). Teachers can also implement a transparent process designed to include everyone in the classroom discourse so that not just the students who raise their hands are called on. A systematic process that includes everyone will encourage culturally diverse learners to participate in the dialogue. Teachers can also share best practices with one another for developing highly structured classroom environments.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Further research is recommended to determine how widespread the issues of racism, *forced race consciousness* and *forced culture consciousness* are that students described. As has been mentioned earlier in this study, the teachers interviewed were selected by students as favorite teachers through a school-administered survey separate and apart from this study. Given the limitations of how the quantitative data collected as part of the school's separate study could be utilized, it was not possible to determine how many of Coventry Midland's 83 teachers were actually named as favorite teachers by African American and Latino students. Nor was it possible to ascertain the number of teachers who were left unnamed by any Coventry Midlands students as favorite teachers. With the exception of teachers named by the students who were interviewed, it was not readily apparent how many other teachers may have caused *forced race consciousness or forced culture consciousness.*

The final question in the teacher interview instrument states that given the feedback from students and your own reflection, what changes would you consider making to your teaching practice? While some conversation was stimulated from this question, in reality, given that the students interviewed had named those teachers as their favorites, very little needed to change based on the student feedback. Two teachers considered making substantive changes. Ms. Jensen mentioned wanting to increase her knowledge about Asian cultures and Ms. Terry indicated that she would consider incorporating Latino literature into the curriculum. A recommendation for further study would be to interview some of the teachers that students mentioned were their least

favorite teachers in order to get a more balanced perspective and also as a mechanism for providing those teachers with student feedback. The challenge with conducting those interviews would be convincing teachers that meeting to hear negative feedback from students had legitimacy.

Another recommendation for further study would be to examine how White students at Coventry Midlands High School describe their favorite teachers. It would be valuable to note whether there were similarities or differences as compared to the perceptions that African American and Latino students have of effective teachers. A research question to explore could be, are effective teachers of African American and Latino students also effective teachers of White students?

Other Observations

It was noted that students in grades 10-12 provided responses with greater depth and thoughtfulness than most of the 9th graders interviewed. A factor may have been the 9th graders' limited experience with teachers at the high school as well as their maturity and ability to reflect on and articulate their experiences.

An assertion of this study was that student experiences describing favorite teachers would differ by race regardless of the grade level. This did not prove to be true. No differences by race or achievement level emerged from this study, with the exception of the Latino students being the only group that shared that White students told them ethnic jokes or made insulting ethnic remarks. One surprise noted was that only one student, Gary, 11th grade African American male, 2.0 GPA mentioned that he liked his favorite teacher because in his favorite teacher's class, he was assigned very little homework. No other students equated their favorite teacher with a teacher who assigned

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minimal work. Sandra, 12th grade Latina, 2.29 GPA, was another student who associated her favorite teacher with the amount of work assigned, but the teacher was her favorite because she assigned challenging work. Sandra chose her English teacher, Ms. Terry as a favorite teacher because "It's like a regular class, but she makes it seem like it's an advanced class because she gives you so much work and she encourages you to do it. Some teachers give really easy work, but you're kind of lazy to do it because it's too easy." Sandra was engaged by the challenge presented to her in Ms. Terry's class but rebuffed another teacher for assigning work that was too easy.

Final thoughts

This research conducted at Coventry Midlands High School focused on discovering effective learning environments for African American and Latino students. A counterhegemonic school-community is called for that recognizes the context in which African American and Latino students attend school and that promotes effective teaching. Effective teachers of African American and Latino students create a *cultural symphony* in their classrooms by leading discussions about race, racism and/or positive contributions of African American and Latino people, being dedicated to the success of students, *breaking it down to the ground*, calling on everyone, being passionate about their subject matter and maintaining highly structured classroom environments. These themes emerged from interviews with African American and Latino students at Coventry Midlands High School as they shared aspects of their favorite teachers most effective practices. Great potential exists to learn from these student experiences and utilize them to improve

instruction and classroom environments for students of color. We have much to learn

from students as Noguera points out, "Students may very well have ideas and insights

that adults are not privy to, and that could prove to be very helpful in improving schools

if adults are willing to listen" (Noguera, 2007, p.209).

Appendices

Appendix A: Executive Director of Testing/Program Evaluation Permission for School Involvement

Dear Executive Director of Testing/Program Evaluation:

Closing the achievement gap between minority students and White students is a state and national priority and the numbers of minority students in your district are increasing. Given this, your district is invited to participate in a doctoral research study designed to examine the perceptions that African American and Latino high school students have of effective classroom instruction. The findings will give educators important information about practices of teachers that African American and Latino students identify as successful.

The study will involve individual interviews to determine what effective teachers at one high school in your district do to help African American and Latino students be successful. Twenty four students and six teacher research participants will take part in one 50 minute interview.

To provide an appropriate sample of students, I would like to use existing documentation of student GPA and/or EOG scores. Please note that I do not want or need to have access to individually identifiable GPA or EOG information. Instead, I would like to work with an intermediary, such as the Manager of Student Information Systems or another designee(s). The data should include the NC Wise Student ID number, gender, race, ethnicity and GPA of all African American and Latino students in grades 10-12. The designee will also provide me with an Excel spreadsheet or Word document that includes 9th graders' NC Wise Student ID numbers, 8th grade EOG scores, race, and gender of all African American and Latino students. Student names will not be included in any of these data.

The designee and I would together create an Excel spreadsheet or Word document that is sorted, based on GPA information and/or EOG scores, in a way that will ensure that students who are invited to participate in interviews will have a wide range of past academic performance.

I will randomly select about three to five African American students and three to five Latino students at each grade level who are high, average or low achievers. This process would create 6 groups of students in each grade, each with about 3-5 students in the group; 3 of the groups would include African American students and 3 would include Latino students. A single group could be characterized, for example, as that which included Latino 10th graders with high GPAs.

Once the sets of students have been randomly selected to be potential interview participants, the designee will provide the names that match the NCWise IDs that are in each grade level and achievement grouping (e.g., Latino, medium GPA/EOG). I will then invite students in those groups to participate in my study, and send home parental permission forms and student assent forms to be signed and returned to me. Following the student interviews, I will then invite teachers, entirely or almost entirely from among those named by the 24 student participants as their favorites, to also be in my study. For both students and teachers, I will invite more individuals than I need, as I anticipate that participation will not be convenient or desired by all, and I want to ensure voluntariness.

Agreement for participation in this study will be requested from the school principal, classroom teachers, parents and students. ID codes rather than names will be used to protect the

identity of participants. It is possible that when the results are prepared for dissemination, I will want to use pseudonyms for participants and this school district.

Once the study has concluded, a summary of the results will be provided to district and school administrators. NO identifiable data about individual teachers or students or the identity of the school or school district will be released.

I expect that participation in this study will provide educators in your district with valuable information and some will receive specific feedback about important ways that teachers can address the unique needs of African American and Latino high school students.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Behavioral Institutional Review Board (Behavioral IRB) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. You may contact the Behavioral IRB if you have any questions or concerns about the rights of your teachers and/or your students as research participants in this study at (919) 962-7761 or at IRB_subjects@unc.edu

If you have any comments or questions about this study please contact me or Dr. Fenwick English , my advisor, with the information provided below. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Dionne McLaughlin   Dr. Fenwick English
Principal Investigator   Professor & Research Advisor
School of Education, UNC-CH   School of Education
Chapel Hill, NC   University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
                                            121 C Peabody Hall, CB #3500
                                            Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Please indicate below whether or not you are willing to allow me to conduct this study in your school district. Please sign both copies of this letter, retaining one for your records and returning the other to this researcher. I have provided a self-addressed envelope.

_____YES, I DO grant permission for a high school in my district to participate in this research study, and I grant permission for the principal of that high school to be contacted about the participation of the schools teachers and students..

_____ No, I DO NOT grant permission for a high school in my school district to participate in this research study.

Signature:_____ Date _____

Appendix B: [Principal Permission Letter for School Involvement]

Dear Principal:

Closing the achievement gap between minority students and White students is a state and national priority and the numbers of minority students in your district are increasing. Given this, your school district's Executive Director or Testing/Program Evaluation, [name] has granted permission for me to invite teachers and students at your school to participate in a doctoral research study.

The study is designed to examine the perceptions that 24 students, who are either African American or Latino, have of effective classroom instruction. Six teachers at the high school will also be asked about their strategies that have been successful in helping minority student achieve academic success. They will also be asked to reflect on the experiences that the 24 students shared with me in those interviews. Student and teacher research participants will take part in one individual 50 minute interview that will be audio-recorded if they give their permission; if not, then I will just take notes. The findings will give educators important information about practices of teachers that African American and Latino students identify as successful.
.
To provide an appropriate sample of students, I would like to use existing documentation of student GPA and/or EOG scores. Please note that I do not want or need to have access to individually identifiable GPA or EOG information. Instead, I would like to work with an intermediary, such as the Manager of Student Information Systems or another designee(s). The data should include the NC Wise Student ID number, gender, race, ethnicity and GPA of all African American and Latino students in grades 10-12. The designee will also provide me with an Excel spreadsheet or Word document that includes 9th graders' NC Wise Student ID numbers, 8th grade EOG scores, race, and gender of all African American and Latino students. Student names will not be included in any of these data.

The designee and I would together create an Excel spreadsheet or Word document that is sorted, based on GPA information and/or EOG scores, in a way that will ensure that students who are invited to participate in interviews will have a wide range of past academic performance.

I will randomly select about three to five African American students and three to five Latino students at each grade level who are high, average or low achievers. This process would create 6 groups of students in each grade, each with about 3-5 students in the group; 3 of the groups would include African American students and 3 would include Latino students. A single group could be characterized, for example, as that which included Latino 10th graders with high GPAs.

Once the sets of students have been randomly selected to be potential interview participants, the designee will provide the names that match the NCWise IDs that are in each grade level and achievement grouping (e.g., Latino, medium GPA/EOG). I will then invite students in those groups to participate in my study, and send home parental permission forms and student assent forms to be signed and returned to me. Following the student interviews, I will then invite teachers, entirely or almost entirely from among those named by the 24 student participants as their favorites, to also be in my study. For both students and teachers, I will invite more individuals than I need, as I anticipate that participation will not be convenient or desired by all, and I want to ensure voluntariness.

Agreement for participation in this study will be requested from the classroom teachers, parents and students. ID codes rather than names will be used to protect the identity of participants. It is possible that when the results are prepared for dissemination, I will want to use pseudonyms for participants and this school district.

Once the study has concluded, a summary of the results will be provided to district and school administrators. NO identifiable data about individual teachers or students or the identity of the school will be released.

I expect that participation in this study will provide educators in your school with valuable information, and some will receive specific feedback about important ways that teachers can address the unique needs of African American and Latino high school students.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Behavioral Institutional Review Board (Behavioral IRB) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. You may contact the Behavioral IRB if you have any questions or concerns about the rights of your teachers and/or your students as research participants in this study at (919) 962-7761 or at IRB_subjects@unc.edu

If you have any comments or questions about this study, please contact me or Dr. Fenwick English, my advisor, with the information provided below. Thank you for your support

Sincerely,

Dionne McLaughlin   Dr. Fenwick English
Principal Investigator   Professor & Research Advisor
School of Education, UNC-CH   School of Education
Chapel Hill, NC   University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
                                                       121 C Peabody Hall, CB #3500
                                                       Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Please indicate below whether or not you are willing to allow me to conduct this study at your school. Please sign both copies of this letter, retaining one for your records and returning the other to this researcher. I have provided a self-addressed envelope.

_____YES, I DO grant permission for teachers and students in my high school to be invited to 2participate in this research study.

_____No, I DO NOT grant permission for teachers and students my high school to be invited to participate in this research study.

Signature: _____ Date _____

Appendix C:
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Teacher Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Social Behavioral Form

_____

IRB Study #___10-1530_____
Consent Form Version Date: _August 24, 2010_____

Title of Study: African American and Latino Students' Perceptions of Effective Teachers
Principal Investigator: Dionne McLaughlin
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Education – Educational Leadership
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 919-843-4572
Email Address: mdionne@email.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Fenwick English, Ph.D., 919-843-4572; fenglish@email.unc.edu

Study Contact telephone number: 919-843-4572
Study Contact email: mdionne@email.unc.edu

_____

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this study is to learn more about what effective teachers at this high school do to help African American and Latino students be successful.

You are being asked to be in the study because African American and Latino students at this high school selected you as one of their favorite teachers.

How many people will take part in this study?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 6 teachers in this research study. In addition, approximately 24 students will also be in this study.

How long will your part in this study last?
If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in one 50 minute interview.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
This study will take place at this high school. If you participate in this study, you will be interviewed; the interview will last no longer than the duration of one class period, or 50 minutes. It is possible that after I start looking at the information I have gathered that I may need to call or email you to ask about something that I do not fully understand—that contact would be very brief. Your responses to questions will not be shared with anyone. Your identity will be kept completely confidential.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. It is possible that you may appreciate receiving some specific feedback from students who have named you as their favorite teacher. That information will not have any names attached, but it may be encouraging to hear what those students have said.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?
This researcher plans to identify the research site and present findings to teachers and school district representatives, and so even though this researcher will not identify any interviewee by name, the possibility remains that readers of the report created about the study could deduce the identities of some subjects who may be closely associated with certain opinions.

You can say as much or as little as you like in response to any of the questions, and you can choose not to answer a question or stop at any time. Much of the interview will focus on what you do to help students be successful; some questions also relate to students' experiences with race and racism during their high school years, and how teachers can help them with those experiences.

How will your privacy be protected?
This interview will be audio taped if you grant permission. If you do not, I will just take notes. Even if you agree initially for the interview to be taped, if you change your mind, I will turn off the recorder whenever you ask.
Check the line that best matches your choice:
_____ OK to record me during the study
_____ Not OK to record me during the study

I will know the names of the participants, but to protect confidentiality, I will not use any names on the recordings, or the notes I take about the interview, and there will be no names in anything that I write or say about this study. You will not be identified in any report or publication about this study

Audio-tapes and written data analysis will be kept in a locked office in my residence.

Written data will be kept on a computer with a secure password. Only I will have access to the password.

At the conclusion of the study, the audiotapes will be destroyed. After the final data analysis is complete, all identifying data will be shredded. I will keep the signed consent forms for three years in a locked file, and then destroy those.
.

What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?
You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty. There will be no consequences to you for deciding not to continue with this study.

Will you receive anything for being in this study?
You will not receive any compensation for taking part in this study.

Will it cost you anything to be in this study?
There will be no costs for being in the study.

What if you have questions about this study?
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

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Title of Study: African American and Latino Students' Perceptions of Effective Teachers

Principal Investigator: Dionne McLaughlin, Primary Investigator and Dr. Fenwick English, Committee Chair

Participant's Agreement:
I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____   _____
Signature of Research Participant   Date

_____
Printed Name of Research Participant

Appendix D
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Parental Permission for a Minor Child to Participate in a Research Study
Social Behavioral Form

_____

IRB Study # _10-1530_____
Consent Form Version Date: _August 24, 2010_

Title of Study: African American and Latino Students' Perceptions of Effective Teachers
Principal Investigator: Dionne McLaughlin
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Education, Educational Leadership
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 919-843-4572
Email Address: mdionne@email.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Fenwick English, Ph.D., 919-843-4572; fenglish@email.unc.edu

Study Contact telephone number: 919-843-4572
Study Contact email: mdionne@email.unc.edu

_____

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to allow your child to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to give permission, or you may withdraw your permission for your child to be in the study, for any reason. Even if you give your permission, your child can decide not to be in the study or to leave the study early.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. Your child may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you and your child can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this permission form to keep. You and your child should ask the researchers named above any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
I would like to know what effective teachers at this high school do to help African American and Latino students to be successful. African American and Latino students who are in the 9th through the 12th grade are being asked to be in the study. They will be asked to share their perceptions of and experiences with their favorite teachers.

How many people will take part in this study?
If your child participates, your child will be one of approximately 24 high school students

in this research study. Six teachers at the high school will also be in the study.

How long will your child's part in this study last?
If you decide to allow your child to be in this study, he/she will be asked to participate in a single 50-minute interview.

What will happen if your child takes part in the study?
This study will take place at your child's school. Students who participate will be asked to meet once for approximately 50 minutes at their convenience: during lunch, before school, after school or during a study hall or AVID. Students will be asked questions that focus on their experiences in their favorite teacher's classroom. They will also be asked about any experiences they may have had where they felt they were treated differently than other students. It is possible that I will need to call or email your child after the interview, if I need help understanding something that your child said, but this contact will be very brief.

Your son/daughter's answers to questions will not be shared with anyone and his/her identity will be kept completely confidential.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. Your child may not benefit personally from being in this research study, but your child may enjoy talking about the things your child likes about his or her favorite teacher..

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?
This researcher plans to identify the research site and present findings to teachers and school district representatives, and so even though this researcher will not identify any interviewee by name, the possibility remains that readers of the report created about the study could deduce the identities of some subjects who may be closely associated with certain opinions.

Your child can say as much or as little as desired in response to any question, and can stop at any time.

How will your child's privacy be protected?
This interview will be audio taped if you grant permission and your child also agrees. If you and your child are willing to have the interview recorded, but your child then changes his or her mind, then the audio recorder will be turned off whenever your child makes this request. I will know the names of the participants, but to protect confidentiality, there will be no names on your child's recording or the transcript I make of your child's comments. No one will know which student said what during the interviews.

I prefer to tape the interview, so I am sure that I know what your child has told me, but if you or your child do not want the interview to be recorded, then I will just take notes. Check the line that best matches your choice:

_____ OK to record my son/daughter during the study
_____ Not OK to record my son/daughter during the study

I may share some statements that several students made in their interviews with some of the 6 teachers in the school who are in the study too, but no names will be shared, and the statements will be introduced with something like "Some students said…."

Audio-tapes and written notes about the interviews will be kept in a locked office in my residence. Written information will be kept on a computer with a secure password. Only I will have access to the password, so no one else will be able to see the information..

At the conclusion of the study, the audiotapes will be destroyed. After the final data analysis is complete, all identifying information will be shredded.

What are the best times for your child to meet with me if he/she participates in this study?

_____Before school   _____At lunch

_____After school   _____During Study period or AVID

Will your child receive anything for being in this study?
Your child will receive $20 as a token of appreciation for taking part in this study even if your child withdraws early from the study.

Will it cost you anything for your child to be in this study?
There will be no costs for being in the study.

What if you or your child has questions about this study?
You and your child have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, complaints or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you or your child has questions about your child's rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you or your child has questions or concerns about your child's rights as part of a research study, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.
- -
Title of Study: African American and Latino Students' Perceptions of Effective Teachers
Principal Investigator: Dionne McLaughlin, Primary Investigator and Dr. Fenwick English, Committee Chair

Parent's Agreement:
I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily give permission to allow my child to participate in this research study.

_____   _____
Printed Name of Research Participant (Child)   Date

_____   _____
Printed Name of Parent   Signature of Parent

PLEASE KEEP ONE COPY OF THE FORM AND
SEND THE SIGNED COPY TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD.

YOUR CHILD HAS HIS OR HER OWN FORM TO SIGN TOO.

Appendix E
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Assent to Participate in a Research Study
Adolescent Participants age 14-18
Social Behavioral Form

_____

IRB Study #__10-1530_____
Assent Form Version Date: August 24, 2010
Title of Study: African American and Latino Students' Perceptions of Effective Teachers
Principal Investigator: Dionne McLaughlin,
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Education, Educational Leadership
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 919-843-4572
Email Address: mdionne@email.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Fenwick English,Ph.D.,919-843-4572; fenglish@email.unc.edu

Study Contact telephone number: 919-843-4572
Study Contact email: mdionne@email.unc.edu

_____
The people named above are doing a research study.

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your parent needs to give permission for you to be in this study. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to, even if your parent has already given permission.

You may stop being in the study at any time. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you.

Sometimes good things happen to people who take part in studies, and sometimes things we may not like happen. We will tell you more about these things below.

What is the purpose of this study?
I would like to find out what effective teachers at this high school do to help African American and Latino students to be successful. I would also like to know more about students' thoughts about times when some students are treated differently than other students, and how teachers can help.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
A group of 9th -12th grade African American and Latino students are being asked to be part of the study to share their perceptions and experiences about their favorite teachers.

How long will your part in this study last?
If you decide to be part of this study, you will meet for one 50 minute private interview.

How many people will take part in this study?
If you decide to be part of this study, you will be one of 24 students in this study. Six teachers in this school will also be invited to be interviewed.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
This study will take place at your high school. Students who participate will be asked to meet once for approximately 50 minutes at their convenience: during lunch, before school, after school or during a study hall.

Students will be asked to respond to questions that primarily focus on their experiences in their favorite teacher's classroom. It is possible that I may need to call or email you to clarify something or help me understand something that you had said in the interview. If I do need to contact you, that contact will be very brief.

Your responses to questions will not be shared with anyone and your identity will be kept completely confidential.

This interview will be audio taped if your parents and you grant permission. If you or your parents do not want the interview to be taped, then I will just take notes. I prefer to tape so I can be sure that I know exactly what you have said. Even if you indicate that the interview may be recorded, if you change your mind at any time, just tell me and I will turn off the recorder.
Check the line that best matches your choice
_____ OK to record me during the study
_____ Not OK to record me during the study

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study, but you might appreciate the opportunity to talk about your favorite teacher.

What are the possible risks or discomforts from being in this study?
This researcher plans to identify the research site and present findings to teachers and school district representatives, and so even though this researcher will not identify any interviewee by name, the possibility remains that readers of the report created about the study could deduce the identities of some subjects who may be closely associated with certain opinions.

You can say as much or as little as you like in response to the questions, you can skip over any question you do not want to answer, and you can stop at any time. Most of the questions relate to what you like about your favorite teacher, although some questions also ask about times in school that you think students are treated differently than others are treated, and how teachers do or do not help with that.

How will your privacy be protected?
Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. I will know your name, but your name will not be on the recording, or on any of the notes that I make, or on anything that I write about the study.

Audio-tapes and written notes about the interviews will be kept in a locked office in my residence. Written notes from the interview will be kept on a computer with a secure password. Only I will have access to the password.
I may share some of the nice things that students have said with the teachers who are in the study, but I will not use anyone's name. The teachers will not know who said what.

At the conclusion of the study, the audiotapes will be destroyed. After the final data analysis is complete, all identifying information will be shredded.

What if you or your parents don't want you to be in this study?
Participation in this study is your choice. If you or your parents don't want you to be in this study, you do not have to participate. If you decide after the interview has begun that you do not want to be part of this study, you can tell me that at any time. There are no consequences for deciding not to be in this study.

Will you get any money or gifts for being in this research study?
You will receive $20 for taking part in this study even if you withdraw early from the study.

What are the best times for you to meet if you decide to participate in this study?

_____Before school   _____At lunch

_____After school   _____During Study period or AVID

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions you should ask the people listed on the first page of this form. If you have other questions, complaints or concerns about your rights while you are in this research study you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.
- -
Title of Study: African American and Latino Students' Perceptions of Effective Teachers
Principal Investigator: Dionne McLaughlin

Participant's Agreement:
I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____   _____

Your signature if you agree to be in the study   Date

_____

Printed name if you agree to be in the study

Please return one signed copy of this form with the parental permission form, and keep one c

Appendix F: Student Recruitment Script—face to face

My name is Mrs. McLaughlin. I am a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. I am conducting a research study. I am interested in talking to students about what effective teachers at this high school do to help African American and Latino students to be successful.

I am particularly interested in who students believe is their favorite teacher and what that teacher does that is effective.

Your name has been selected randomly. I understand that high school students are busy, so I expect that some students who are asked to participate will be too busy with other school activities, or just may not be interested in participating. So, I am asking more students than the 24 students needed to be part of the study.

If you are interested, we will meet for one interview for approximately 50 minutes, at a time that works for you: during lunch, before school, after school or during a study hall. You will be asked some questions that primarily focus on your experiences in your favorite teacher's classroom.

I would like to be able to record your responses, but if you or your parents do not want your interview recorded, then I will just take notes. I prefer to record because then I am more certain that I will be able to capture accurately what you say.

The interviews will be completely confidential. Your name will not be mentioned. No one at school or any place else will listen to this recording except me.

If you agree to be part of the study, you will be paid $20.00 as a token of appreciation, for your participation even if you withdraw early from the study. You can also decide not to answer a question if you don't want to answer it. There are no consequences for deciding not to participate. Even if you agree to participate, you can decide at any point not to participate.

Talk it over with your parents. If you are interested in participating, you can return the signed parent permission form and your own student assent form in the next couple of weeks, though sooner is better than later. There are two sets of forms here, one to keep and one to sign and return if you are interested. [GIVE PACKAGE OF FORMS] If you are in the study, I will start interviews right after I have collected all the parent permission and student forms that I need.

If you decide not to be interviewed, it is all right—remember that I am asking a bunch of students. But, you have been selected and most other students have not, so please consider my request. Thanks for your time today.

Appendix G: High School Student Interview Questions

Introductory statement:

"Thank you for your willingness to be in my study, and do this interview with me today. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions that African American and Latino high school students at this high school have of effective classroom instruction. I will ask you about your favorite teacher, and I will also ask you about the things that all your teachers do that positively or negatively impact African American and Latino students. I will also ask you about how issues of race and racism are managed in the classroom.

Your comments will be treated as strictly confidential. Your name will not be linked directly to your comments, and no one else will know who said what. I will share general feedback with a small group of teachers, which could help encourage them to continue some things they are doing, and also to consider making changes to their teaching practices.

Please feel free to say as much or as little as you like to my questions. There is no right answer—I just want to know what you think.

I prefer that we audiotape this interview, so I have an accurate record, but if you prefer, I can just take notes. Even if you agree to be recorded initially, you can still change your mind at any time. May I record our interview?"

IF NO, then "First, I would like to write down a few things, separately from the notes I will take during the interview. I will keep this information, along with your name, separate from these notes of your interview."

> **1) What grade are you in?**
> **2) What do you consider to be your race or ethnicity?**

If YES, then "First, I would like to write down separately, before I start recording, a few things. I will keep this information, along with your name, separate from this recording, and from the transcript of your interview. I am pausing the recorder."

> **1). What grade are you in?**
> **2) What do you consider to be your race or ethnicity?**

OK, now for the interview itself. [turn on recorder for interviews that are recorded]

> **The first set of questions are about how you feel about your ability and the level of academic success you are having.**

1. Which class(es), if any, do you feel most successful in this year?

2. What made you feel successful?

3. What class, if any, do you find to be the most difficult?

4. What made that class difficult?

5. How would you describe yourself as a student? What kind of student are you?

The next set of questions are about your favorite teacher

6. If you had to choose one teacher, who would you say is your favorite teacher at this high school?

7. What does he/she do that makes him/her a good teacher?

8. How is your favorite teacher's classroom different from other teachers' classrooms?

9. What does your favorite teacher do to connect with students?

10. What could other teachers do to be more like your favorite teacher?

The next set of questions are about classroom environments.

11. Think about all the classes that you're taking right now. What gets you to work hard in a class?

12. How comfortable do you feel asking questions, responding to questions or sharing ideas in your favorite class?

13. What does the teacher do to show they value your voice in this class?

Some of the next set of questions are about your experiences at school with race or racism.. Racism is defined as a system of advantage based on race or a defense of racial privilege. Racism is not simply bigotry or prejudice; and it should not be confused with ethnic hostilities.

14. Can you think of a time you engaged in a discussion from your racial perspective in your <u>favorite teacher's class</u>? If yes, can you talk more about this? If no, can you talk about a time when you engaged in a discussion from your racial perspective in <u>another teacher's class</u>?

15. Did your favorite teacher's class or any of your other classes include materials or discussion about different cultures, races, and/or ethnicities? If so, please share an example.

16. Please list any classes that include materials or discussion about racism. Give me one example of how these materials were used or how the discussion was incorporated in the classroom.

17. Did your favorite teacher's class or any of your other classes use positive experiences or contributions of African American or Latino people as part of the lesson? If yes, can you give an example?

18. Do you remember an experience when your favorite teacher or any other teacher treated you differently from your white peers? If yes, can you share about that experience?

If you speak Spanish or are an immigrant, I'd like to ask you a few additional questions. Do you speak Spanish or are you an immigrant?

   IF no, then thank student for his/her time and willingness to talk.

   If YES, then ask the following questions:

19. Do you remember an experience when you were treated differently because you spoke Spanish or English as a second language? If yes, can you share more about that experience?

20. Do you remember an experience at school when you were treated differently because you are an immigrant? If yes, can you share more about that experience?

Appendix H: Email Recruitment Script for Teachers

I am interested in learning more about the perceptions that African American and Latino students at this high school have of effective classroom instruction. I am particularly intrigued by what students believe their favorite teacher does that helps them to be successful. I am also interested in what teachers think that they are doing to help students be successful.

To learn more about these student and teacher perceptions, I would like to interview six teachers. If you decide to be interviewed, the interview will last no more than 50 minutes. You can say as much or as little as you like, can skip over a question you would rather not answer, and you can stop at any time.

Given that teachers are busy, it may be that the timing of these interviews may be inconvenient for some teachers. In addition, some teachers may choose not to participate in the study for other reasons. Therefore, more teachers are being contacted than are needed for this study. Ten to twelve teachers will be asked to be part of the interviews, but only six teachers are needed.

The teachers who are being asked are some of the teachers who were nominated by students at this high school as their favorite teachers.

You can choose not to be interviewed. If, however, you agree to be interviewed, I would prefer to be able to record your interview, but if you do not want to be recorded, then I will just take notes.

Your responses will remain completely confidential. Your name will not be mentioned or attached to the recording or any notes related to the interview.. No one else will listen to this recording.

If you would like to participate, please email me or call me and let me know the best times you are available to meet: before school, after school, at lunch or during your planning period. If you are interested, I can meet with you in your classroom unless you prefer another location.

Thanks for considering this invitation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix I: High School Teacher Interview Questions

Introductory statement:

"Thank you for your willingness to be in my study, and do this interview with me today. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions that African American and Latino high school students at this high school have of effective classroom instruction and to create opportunities for teachers to reflect on student feedback. Teachers are also asked to reflect on their teaching practice, identify specific aspects of their teaching that positively or negatively impact African American and Latino students and consider any changes they might implement based on student feedback and their own reflection.

Twenty four African American and Latino students were interviewed; several of these students indicated that you were their favorite teacher. The students' comments (without any indication of who provided that information) will be shared with you today. Students were asked about behaviors that limit school achievement in addition to what effective teachers at this high school do that help African American and Latino students to be successful. Another question that was explored was how are issues of race and racism are managed in the classroom.

Your comments will be treated as strictly confidential; no names will ever be linked directly to your comments, so no one else will know who said what.

Please feel free to say as much or as little as you like to my questions. There is no right answer—I just want to know what you think.

I prefer that we audiotape this interview, so I have an accurate record, but if you prefer, I can just take notes. Even if you agree to be recorded initially, you can still change your mind at any time. May I record our interview?"

IF NO, then "First, I would like to write down a few things, separately from the notes I will take during the interview. I will keep this information, along with your name, separate from these notes of your interview."

      1) What subject do you currently teach?
      2) What grades do you teach?
      3) What do you consider to be your race or ethnicity?
      4) How many years have you been teaching?
      5) How many years have you been teaching at Coventry Midlands High School?
      6) Where did you attend college and what degrees did you earn?

If YES, then "First, I would like to write down separately, before I start recording, a few things. I will keep this information, along with your name, separate from this recording, and from the transcript of your interview. I am pausing the recorder."
      1) What subject do you currently teach?
      2) What grades do you teach?

3) What do you consider to be your race or ethnicity?
4) How many years have you been teaching?
5) How many years have you been teaching at Coventry Midlands High School?
6) Where did you attend college and what degrees did you earn?
Ok, now for the interview itself. [turn on recorder for interviews that are recorded]

1. What strategies do you use to connect with students?

2. How do you motivate students to work hard?

3. What are your strategies to get students to talk in class or is there anything in particular that you do to show that you value the voice of all students?

4. How do you choose when to include materials on different ethnicities in the class?

5. Have you had discussions about racism in the classroom? Can you share an example?

6. Has a student ever disclosed that he or she was being treated differently based on whether they spoke Spanish or were non-native speakers of English?

7. You were chosen by several students as their favorite teacher. This is what they said about what makes you an effective teacher, what they like most about your class and how you connect with students. [PROVIDE EXAMPLES] To what extent do these reasons match the instructional strategies you believe you currently use?

8. These are the reasons students gave for why they work hard in your class… [PROVIDE EXAMPLES] What other strategies do you use to cause students to work hard?

9. This is what students shared about how they feel about asking questions, responding to questions or sharing ideas in your class. [PROVIDE EXAMPLES] They also talked about what you do to show you them you value their voice in the classroom. [PROVIDE EXAMPLES]   Tell me more about how to determine turn taking, wait time, who to call on and what you do to show you value the voice of all students in your classes?

10. This is what students shared about the materials or discussion in class about different ethnicities, races or positive contributions of African Americans or Latinos. [PROVIDE EXAMPLES   How do you choose when and where to include different ethnicities, races or positive contributions of African Americans or Latinos?

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Some of the following questions deal with the subject of racism. Racism is defined as a system of advantage based on race or a defense of racial privilege. Racism is not simply bigotry or prejudice.

11. This is what students shared about how racism is addressed in classroom materials or discussion. [PROVIDE EXAMPLES] Can you share an example of when you have had discussions about racism in your classroom?

12. This is what students shared about an experience when they felt they were treated differently from their White peers in your classroom or another classroom based on race, based on whether they spoke Spanish or were non-native speakers of English or based on immigration status. [PROVIDE EXAMPLES] Has a student ever disclosed this type of experience to you and if so, what was it like for you to hear this from the student?

13. Given the feedback from students and your own reflection, what specific strategies do you use that you think help African American and Latino students to be more successful?

Given the feedback from students and your own reflection, what changes would you consider making to your teaching practice?

Appendix J: Tripod Data Use/Permission Letter

Apps @

Dionne McLaughlin

Tripod Project data

1 message

Ronald Ferguson <ron.f.ferguson@gmail.com>   **Mon, Jun 21, 2010 at 6:53 PM**
To: dmclaughlin@
Cc: "Chandonnet, Renee" <renee.chandonnet@camb-ed-us.com>

To Whom It May Concern:

Dionne McLaughlin has permission to use the Tripod Project survey instrument for secondary school students to collect data for her dissertation. Further, she has permission to analyze the data and to use the analysis as the basis for writing her dissertation. Finally, she has permission to publish the findings of her dissertation, including a limited number of specific survey items as appropriate.

Ronald F. Ferguson
Tripod Project Founder
Ron.F.Ferguson@gmail.com
617-495-1104

Examples of Scales & Alphas.pdf
39K

Appendix K: New Course Proposal

I.   Course Title and Length: Racism in America: A Historical and
                                                  Contemporary Study – Semester
II.   Rationale: There is a need for a high school course that focuses
            primarily on issues of racism and privilege. Of particular importance is
            how these issues affect people of color today and have affected people of
            color in history. This course should be composed of a racially-balanced
            group of juniors and seniors. Balance could be achieved by requiring that
            students are admitted by permission of instructor.

II.   Goals of the Course

Course Overview: This semester course will address racial issues and privilege in
the United States. By exploring personal experiences, historical references and
examining contemporary issues of relevance to high school students, we will attempt
to describe and understand racial issues as they affect us everyday. During the
semester we will cover the following topics: personal experiences with racism and
working assumptions, white privilege, the historical roots of racism, the Middle
Passage, Pro-slavery ideology, Slave Narratives, Reconstruction, Lynchings, and the
KKK, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, the Harlem Renaissance, Marcus
Garvey, Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement, the Tuskegee Syphilis
Study, and Malcolm X. We will also study contemporary racism in society, Racial
Identity Development, Stereotypes in the Media, Affirmative Action, Racism and its
affect on African Americans, Latinos and Asians, White responses to racism, Issues
of race at this high school, Exemplary education programs, Interracial dating, Racial
Justice and Reparations. Students will also produce an individual or collaborative
plan that works to dismantle an area of racism or privilege, exposes an area of
unacknowledged privilege and/or that succeeds in benefitting an oppressed group.

III.   Content and Skill Objectives

Students are able to…
1. express their earliest experiences with racism or noticing differences and also
    discuss on-going experiences.
2. recognize white privilege in its current forms.
3. determine where they are with regard to the Stages of Racial Identity
    Development
4. identify the role of racism and privilege in history.
5. describe the historical perspectives of prominent people of color.
6. engage in respectful discussions on controversial subjects.
7. examine misinformation, missing and distorted information, and reintegrate this
    information to form a new, more accurate understanding of history.
8. examine accepted societal viewpoints, assumptions, beliefs, and feelings which
    perpetuated racism in the past and perpetuate racism and privilege in the present.
9. explain what they have learned about exemplary education programs.
10. develop an action plan that works to dismantle an area of racism or privilege,
    exposes an area of unacknowledged privilege and/or that succeeds in benefitting
    an oppressed group.

IV.   Materials Needed
DVD: Skin Deep
DVD: Ethnic Notions
DVD: True Colors
DVD: Eyes on the Prize
DVD: Martin Luther King
DVD: Malcolm X

V.   Projected Budget
Cost to produce course packets
Cost of videos
Cost of textbooks

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