

**Does Race Matter? How Teaching Students of Color Shape White Teachers'
Identities?**

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Abstract

In the United States, as the student population continues to become more diverse across the country, the demographics of the teaching force continues to stay White, female, and middle-class. Many of these teachers grow up in predominantly all-White neighborhoods and attend predominantly all-White schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade; they usually have very little exposure to others racially different from them. Eight White female teachers were interviewed at Clay High School in South Bend, IN, a school where 47.1% were students of color. The purpose of the study was to learn how a teacher's race shapes her identity in a classroom that contains many students of color. One interpretation suggests that teacher's did notice their own racial identity after entering into a diverse school, but were colorblind to racial differences when in the classroom.

In the United States, the student population in schools across the country continues to become more diverse, while the demographics of the teaching force continue to be predominantly White middle-class female teachers (LeCompte and McCray, 2002). Differences in racial and cultural identity can lead to challenges in the classroom due to a lack of diverse experiences. The teachers who comprise the education force today often come from neighborhoods and schools with low levels of racial and cultural diversity. Without any exposure to these different groups, teaching in these classrooms can become more difficult, and research has shown that there is an achievement gap in schools with higher diverse populations (Friend, 2007).

Social factors, such as socioeconomic status, gender, and race, impact how White teachers relate to and understand populations that are different from them. These can create obstacles for teachers to be able to successfully relate to and effectively teach students of color. If the teacher does not understand the students, it is difficult for the classroom experience to be successful. In order to change this, exposure to other cultures and races is very important. Teachers have reported that they do not have the cultural knowledge, experience, or diverse training that is needed when teaching many students of color (Robinson and Clardy, 2011). This exposure to different races and cultures has made teachers more aware of their own racial identity.

This study examines White, female teachers who teach in racially diverse classrooms, specifically teachers at Clay High School in South Bend, IN. The rationale for this study is to learn the stories and experiences of White female teachers who teach students that are racially and culturally different from them. Through in-depth interviews with teachers from Clay High School, this study examines how teachers construct their racial identity in a high school

classroom that contains many students of color. White female teachers are aware of their own whiteness in the classroom with many students of color; however, they are colorblind to race and justify cultural differences based on social class in their classroom environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Past research studies discuss how White middle-class female teachers tend to lack diverse experience growing up which can lead to difficulty when entering into classrooms that contain many students of color. Lesko and Bloom (1998) and Michie (2007) discussed how teachers handle this lack of diverse experience by practicing colorblindness in the classroom because the culture in which most White female teachers live is not always similar to those of their students. Past research has examined how White female middle-class teachers adjust their racial identity when entering a classroom that contains many students of color.

Lack of Diverse Experience

The student population continues to grow more diverse while the teaching force demographics stay the same (Dickar, 2008; McDonough, 2009; Robinson and Clardy, 2011). Dickar (2008) discusses the demographic divide taking places in classrooms. This leads teachers to become less aware of the student's home culture and language. According to Robinson and Clardy (2011), teachers have reported that they do not have the cultural knowledge, experience, or diverse training that is needed when teaching many students of color; this lack of experience and knowledge leads to the unlikelihood of the teacher being able to successfully teach classes that contain mostly students of color.

Robinson and Clardy (2011) explain that every culture has different linguistics and the domination of Standard English in our education system and the curriculum can stunt the growth of a student who may speak an unknown dialectic and therefore be seen as uneducated. This

often takes place in classrooms because the majority of teachers, who are White female and middle-class, are unfamiliar with these differences. This tends to lead to incorrect perceptions of minority students. In fact, this can be an obstacle in parent-teacher relationships due to the cultural differences that a White female middle-class teacher may never have encountered before and therefore do not understand and have a more difficult time building rapport with the parents.

Hyland (2005) argues that one's race is socially constructed due to history, politics, and economics and is not biologically determined. Due to the social construct of race, "in-groups" are created leading to the development of "out-groups." According to Hyland (2005), the "in-group" or dominant group, are those who are White, and the "out-group" are those not considered White and become disadvantaged. White female teachers make up the majority of the teaching force today, and they have little exposure to the "out-group" (Hyland, 2005). Although these teachers tend to describe themselves as good and effective teachers in classrooms that consist of many students of color, Hyland argues that these teachers may enable the racial status quo that hurts both them and the classroom.

Teacher's Racial Identity in the Classroom

White teachers who feel like outsiders have to find unique ways to create meaningful relationships with their students unlike Black teachers whose identity are similar (Dickar, 2008; Saffold and Longwell-Grice, 2008). Dickar (2008) states that "studies of the ways race informs the work of White teachers have often chronicled one individual's journey toward a critical understanding of Whiteness and White privilege." Many of these teachers may have never thought about their own racial identity before entering an environment where they are the minority. Most of the time, people in higher positions or in the majority do not realize the privilege that comes with their race or social class. These studies have also called attention to the

relationships between students of color and White teachers and ways in which to overcome these racial differences and be successful in a classroom that contains mostly students of color.

Recent studies have showed that White students and teachers in racially different environments cling to colorblind ideologies (Dickar, 2008; Lesko and Bloom, 1998). In general, they prefer to avoid seeing, hearing, or talking about race (Dickar, 2008). These tendencies only contribute to colorblind ideologies because people within these structures refuse to talk about it and try to find a way to overcome the racial divide and make the school academically successful. In fact, it is important to develop critical awareness; teachers need to critically think about themselves and critique their identity in order to change their ways of thinking and better relate to their students (Lesko and Bloom, 1998). However, it is important that they are given the right tools to accomplish it. Milner (2011) discusses how most of the time teachers are not offered the tools needed in order to develop this critical awareness necessary to understand others who are different from them.

LeCompte and McCray (2002) argue that teachers need to critically explore race, culture, and ethnicity, and rethink their own racial identity if White teachers are to be successful in racially diverse classrooms. It is important for teachers to know and understand themselves before they can know, understand, and effectively help minority students because the student population continues to become more racially diverse. Although the researchers agree that cultural awareness and sensitivity training are important for preservice teachers, they argue that this training will not be effective if the teachers do not examine their own identities first. These researchers found that prospective White teachers are often unable to see the power and privilege they have due to being White. For this reason, LeCompte and McCray (2002) believe that

teachers must come to terms with their own cultural and personal identities before they can effectively teach students who are different from them.

Changing the Classroom

In order for the classroom to change and become successful for all students, teachers must receive multicultural training (Hill-Jackson, 2007; Toohey and Beynon, 2005; Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse, 2006). Hill-Jackson (2007) argues that multicultural education for teachers is crucial because it helps teachers develop positive multicultural perspectives. Without these perspectives, equality in education will be difficult to obtain. More than one course on multicultural education is necessary in order to reach equity in pedagogy because the teaching force still consists mostly of White, female teachers and the student population continues to become more diverse. By having teachers become aware of their own identities the classroom can begin to change.

Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2006) argue that preservice teachers, those who have not been in the classroom yet, are better prepared to teach classrooms that consist of many students of color than in-service teachers, those who have been in the classroom for some time. Preservice teachers are more positive about their ability to teach and adjust to the needs of Black students in the classroom. They contribute this to a single 10-week entry level course on multicultural teacher preparation; this was found to change the preservice teacher's belief about diversity in the classroom. However, it is important for teachers to continue ongoing multicultural training if there is to be a long-term effect on teacher's beliefs towards race and social class (Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse, 2006).

Toohey and Beynon (2005) argue that Teach for Diversity (TFD) successfully helps to prepare teachers for diverse classrooms. By examining factors like academic achievement and

cultural competence, teachers can begin to become culturally aware of their own differences from their students. TFD requires prospective teachers to spend their first six weeks in community settings under an experienced teacher and community activist. Toohey and Beynon (2005) argue that this helps prepare teachers for the adversities they will face in the classroom and helps teachers begin to see both their own identities and their student's identities. These teachers began to see race as a system of power and privilege and how important it is to learn about cultures different from them.

THEORY

Sociology studies the interactions of people, examines structures that exist in our society, and try to make sense of the world. Theorists try to understand the social world. Standpoint Theory holds that individual's perspectives are shaped by his or her experiences in certain social locations and social groups. This theory can be applied to numerous settings, including education. This paper addresses how Standpoint Theory can be used to understand how a teacher's identity forms when teaching a classroom that has mainly students of color. Although Standpoint Theory has rarely been used to examine teachers, this paper will argue that Standpoint Theory explains how race shapes a White teacher's identity in a high school classroom that consists mostly of students of color.

Standpoint Theory is a postmodern theory that emphasizes how ordinary people's own knowledge and has the power to shape one's social experiences. For example, a woman's race shapes her experiences in society and her perspective about society. If a woman is in the dominant racial group, her everyday knowledge of racial discrimination may be underdeveloped. Whereas a woman in the subordinate racial group may experience racial discrimination on a

daily basis. According to Standpoint Theory, individuals' perspectives are the central point of view in how they see the world.

One proponent of Standpoint Theory, Blackwell (2010) examines the classroom from her standpoint theory as a feminist. Blackwell (2012:488) states that Standpoint Theory "establishes a powerful link between racial subjugation and consciousness." Previous research has established how race operates in a classroom as both white privilege and the politics of difference and identity (Blackwell, 2012; Solomon, 2009; Sosulski, 2009). Standpoint Theory suggests the educational benefits for students of color can be considered by looking at the classroom from the lens of marginalized students.

A second proponent of Standpoint Theory, Solomon (2009) discusses how writing about Standpoint Theories, instead of a Standpoint Theory, can help students to understand various marginalized groups from their perspectives. According to Solomon (2009: 232), theorists such as Smith, Rose, Hartsock, and Harding helped to develop classic feminist Standpoint Theory from Marxist epistemology. "They argue that those who are politically disadvantaged are in a position to know more, and thus have epistemic advantage over others in the same society who are politically advantaged." Although Standpoint Theory has been frequently used by feminists, it is not just a theory from a woman's perspective. Solomon argues that Standpoint Theory can be used to understand different social positions of disadvantaged groups.

A third proponent of Standpoint Theory, Sosulski (2009) discusses how people in marginalized groups develop multiple consciousnesses about their circumstances because "to survive, they must understand themselves and the world in terms of those at the center of power" (227). This complex understanding of their own perspective and that of the dominant group is the standpoint that people use regarding different situations. Sosulski claims that the dominant

group does not have to view an issue from different perspectives to survive because they are the majority who set the social norms. The dominant group members do not recognize their privileges, such as "white privilege." By using Standpoint theory, Sosulski emphasizes the importance of listening to the voices of marginalized "insiders" who use different lenses to understand power in society.

Finally, Swigonski (1996), a proponent of Standpoint Theory discusses the concept of "privilege" in order to understand the standpoints of other groups. Swigonski (1996: 154) defines privilege as "unearned advantages enjoyed by a group simply because of membership in that group." Examples of privileges include: white privilege, male privilege, socioeconomic privilege, and heterosexual privilege. However, Swigonski believes that people with privilege fail to see it because they are the dominant group. Swigonski observes that middle-class white people have the privilege of forgetting that they are white and middle-class because that is the norm. However, for marginalized groups this is not the case. Marginalized groups have unfair and unequal advantages of privilege because of their standpoint as marginalized. By using Standpoint Theory, people can recognize the privileges of some, and the disadvantage of others. Swigonski (1996) claims that it is by viewing the world experience as an outsider, or a marginalized person, that allows one to recognize the differences in society among certain groups.

Standpoint Theory can be used as the theoretical framework for research that examines how race shapes the identity of a White female teacher in a high school classroom that contains mostly students of color. In the U.S. today, high school teachers are mostly of White middle-class females (Swigonski, 1996). Therefore, it may be difficult for students of color to relate to all of their teachers. According to Solomon (2009), most teachers grew up in predominantly

White neighborhoods and attended school where the majority of the student body was White. They may not have a lot of experience with people who are racially or economically different from them. Standpoint Theory will be used to understand the experiences of White female teachers at Clay High School who teach many students of color and to understand how these teachers shaped their points of view and perspectives on minority populations while teaching at Clay High School.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample consisted of eight White female teachers at Clay High School in South Bend, Indiana, where the Black student population is 33.8%, the Multiracial student population is 6.7%, the Hispanic student population is 5.4%, and the Asian student population is 1.2% (Clay High School Website). Teachers who identify themselves as both White and female are full-time teachers of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors at Clay High School were invited to participate in this study. The years the participants have taught at Clay ranged from 5-26 with the average being 13 years, and the ages of the participants ranged from 34-59.

One participant taught economics and Education Professionals, two participants taught English, one participant taught music and arts, one participant was an English teacher but now teaches dance, one participant taught business education and Career and Technological Education (CTE), and one participant taught the life skills students. Seven out of the eight participants (88%) grew up in predominantly White neighborhoods and attended predominately White schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Methodology

Interviews were used to collect data on this particular population. The interviews took place at Clay High School in the teachers' classrooms or in the main office. Each teacher responded to the same interview questions with the exception of questions focusing on the specific subject they teach and the direction taken during each conversation (Appendix A). A few participants were asked more questions than others depending on whether elaboration of the questions was needed or the participants brought up topics not yet discussed. The interviews lasted between 17 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes, with the average interview lasting 34 minutes. Through face-to-face interviews, White, female teachers shared their stories and experiences of working with students of color.

Both manifest coding and latent coding were used in coding the data for this study. After transcribing each interview, words, phrases, and symbols that are visible and direct were analyzed. Words like social class, culture, race, racism, freshman, individuals, personal problems, and home life were commonly used. Also, teachers discussed using colorblindness in the classroom, the cultural differences between them and their students, the varying levels of social class, their own racial identity in the classroom, and providing advice on how to better prepare future educators who will enter into diverse classrooms (Appendix B).

Interviews were used to understand the construction of racial identities in the classroom among White female teachers. The participants were interviewed at Clay High School, their own space and comfort zone. The participants chose where in the school the interview would take place; either their classroom or the main office was chosen. Although holding interviews in the main office was less convenient because other people were present, it still gave each participant the choice of where they felt the most comfortable. A second advantage is sharing the same

identity as the participants that allowed for rapport, as both the participants and the researcher are both White and female. A third advantage is the ability to obtain in-depth, detailed information through interviews that could not be gathered other methods. Nonverbal behavior, such as facial expressions were observed along with the different pauses, sighs, and laughs on different questions. A fourth advantage was the use of probes, especially if more details were needed from the participants on their answers. However, most of the participants gave me very in-depth answers and really reflected on the questions being asked, anyway.

FINDINGS

The results are organized by themes that included the following: cultural differences between White teachers and students of color, social class differences, construction of racial identity in the classroom, colorblindness, and how diverse classrooms can be changed for the future. These themes are supported by the responses from the interviews. Quotations will be used to better understand the teachers' perspective. While all eight teachers interviewed identified themselves as White, there are differences in their perspectives and experiences in classrooms that have many students of color.

Cultural Differences

All eight participants identified themselves as White when asked the question, "Do you identify yourself as White?" Seven of the eight participants (88%) discussed how they grew up in predominantly White, upper-middle or middle class neighborhoods and their schools were mostly all-White, with very little exposure to diversity. One participant stated that she grew up in Mishawaka, IN and did not have a lot of diverse experiences in this way:

Well, let's see, my neighborhood growing up, uh, like I said I grew up in Mishawaka, and there wasn't a whole lot of diversity in my neighborhood. For elementary school, kindergarten to eighth grade, I went to a private school; I went to St. Joe Elementary in

Mishawaka, and definitely not a whole lot of diversity there. Um, so it was, yeah, I guess you could say it was kind of like a sheltered childhood in a better word.

McDonough (2010) argues that many White teachers enter schools with hardly any previous contact with racial groups other than their own. Growing up in neighborhoods and going to schools that are similar to their own racial identity may lead to a lack of experience with minorities and may make it harder for the teacher in their first few years. However, when asked about the challenge of teaching class with many students of color, five out of the eight participants (63%) addressed how the cultural differences are more of the problem than race. These participant's discussed the different beliefs and values that some of their students have that are unfamiliar to them due to their upbringing and past experiences that can make the classroom more difficult.

Four of the eight participants (50 %) stated how their first couple years at Clay High School were very hard when asked the question "what was your first teaching experience like at this high school?" They talked about the racial demographics they experienced in their first year in comparison to their upbringing and past experiences. One participant explained the cultural differences while elaborating on the diversity of students, about 47% Black in her class, in this way:

And then, it's not really necessarily a color issue, that's just a diversity issue. And, sometimes, there are multiple families living in one household too, and that is a cultural thing. There's could be fourteen, fifteen people living in one house in that culture, and that doesn't happen in our culture. I do think, so that is an issue, that is a real issue that you sort of learn through interaction and experiences.

Six of the eight participants (75%) talked about the different values and beliefs that their minority students have compared to themselves and even their other White students. Body

language, such as eye contact, is very different for Black culture and White culture. Looking a person in the eyes in Black culture is disrespectful, while in White culture it is expected. One participant talked about the language used by some of the students of color that made her feel uncomfortable in this way:

And mostly um with the word "nigga," because the kids use it frequently here, and I tell them every time I hear it I don't like that word because I know the history behind it where they might not, and, so, they always get on me because I shouldn't feel any problem with that word because I'm not, so.

These cultural differences can make the learning environment more difficult, especially when trying to engage students. Of the eight participants, three are currently English teachers, while another had moved from teaching English to Dance. Among these four teachers, two stated that they felt like they had some leeway in their curriculum, while the other two thought it needed to be changed. However, all four of them discussed how they try to bring in more multicultural books. One book they all taught to their students is To Kill A Mockingbird. All the teachers agreed that teaching material that relates to the student helps them to be more engaged and more successful. One teacher expressed it in this way:

I do think it makes a difference in the students engaging, and not only does it engage them more, they show more interest, especially if it's something that's different to them, but I think you should expose them to something different because, I mean, they're going to get out there in the world and you don't want them to be at a loss. You want them to have the advantage.

It is important to use resources that interest the student in order to engage them in the conversation in the classroom. By bringing in more multicultural books, the teachers are helping

to enable the student so they can learn better. The more students are interested, the more successful they will be in the classroom and in school.

Social Class

Although all the participants acknowledged race, they thought social class was more noticeable today than race. All the participants discussed how hunger is a very big problem in the classroom, because 70% of students are on the free or reduced lunch program. When students are hungry, it makes it more difficult for that student to concentrate on what is taking place in the classroom. One participant expressed it in this way:

More than half our students are on the free lunch program, so hunger is an issue. And then you have, um, and I don't have it so much here, but when I was in the middle school I still remember kids with separated or divorced parents, but they would not know whose house to go to and what bus to get on, and that would be a constant issue.

When asked the question, "are there any differences with students are not similar to you?," all eight participants acknowledged that many of their students have issues at home that inevitably carry over to school. Out of the eight participants, three (37%) discussed issues with parents and parental contact in general. One participant discussed how obtaining contact information and making contact with parents is very difficult because they either do not have landlines or they use cell phone minutes. She stated:

I've even had a parent say they weren't gonna waste their cell phone minutes talking to me about their child, so. That one was an eye opener. After hearing the mom say that, it was like wow your child's doing pretty well now that I've talked to you for just a minute.

It can be difficult to successfully teach a student without any parental support for the child. One participant discussed that some of her students do not have the basic school supplies

needed which leads to her buying the supplies for them. The participants compared their student's home life to their own, with two participants stating they are more appreciative of their parents today because of their teaching experience at Clay High School.

Racial Identity in the Classroom

When asked, "have you ever felt uncomfortable about your racial identity at this high school," seven of the eight participants (88%) responded negatively. However, when asked if they felt any pressure or uncomfortable in the classroom because of their racial identity, four of the eight participants (50%) said positively. These participants who responded positively discussed how students already have preconceived notions of the teacher and the teacher may also have some preconceived notions of the students due to past experiences.

Four of the eight participants (50%) stated that there was an increase in awareness of their own racial identity since teaching at Clay High School. They discussed how being White is an advantage in this country, especially after interacting with their students at Clay. These participants contributed their racial awareness to their upbringing and lack of diverse experience in their lives.

Five of the eight participants (63%) felt the students perceive them in specific ways in relation to their racial identity. These participants discussed how the students' prior learning experience may inhibit their views on them as teachers when they arrive to Clay. One participant explained an interaction she had with a disruptive student and her mother that led to an accusation against her in this way:

So, I wrote her up and sent her to the office and got rid of her and got to have class. Her mother called, no I got a message from the assistant principal to call the mother, which I did, and the mother called me a racist and said she was going to go to the school board and other parents had told her I was a racist, and that they were going to get rid of me. I was very upset, I had never been called that before, and, I mean, I was so shocked.

Entering into the classroom, the students may have preconceived notions about the teacher due to their past experiences with White female teachers. Also, teachers may have preconceived notions about the students entering into the classroom because of their lack of diverse experience growing up. Breaking down these barriers between the teachers and the students can be difficult but is important in order to effectively teach many students of color.

Colorblindness

The participants were asked "are there any differences in your relationships with students who are or are not similar to you?" All eight participants stated that they do not see skin color in their classroom and all eight agreed that color is not an issue in their classroom. However, the participants discussed how some students view race as issue in their classroom, even though they treat all there students the same way. In this way, they maintain their colorblind perspective in the classroom at all times. They believe that race has nothing to do with achieving well academically. One participant explained it in this way:

I try to be as fair to all and usually, if you're being fair to them, I don't think they care whether you're Black or White or Hispanic or anything. Um, but you have to be fair and one thing I try to do too is, I can be made as a Hornet at a kid one day, but the next day that's gone. You know what I mean? I try not to, um, hold grudges. Sometimes the kids feel like the teachers hold grudges, like I have no redemption.

When asked how they handled their racial identity in classrooms with many students of color, all eight participants expressed honesty and integrity as important qualities. Three participants again expressed fairness to all their students as important.

Future Classrooms

When asked "are there any ways that colleges could better prepare future educators?" seven of the eight participants (88%) replied yes, while one participant (13%) said no. The

majority of the participants stated that colleges could better prepare future educators with multicultural education, multicultural training, and requiring student teaching to be in the public schools. This will allow teachers to have that exposure to diversity before entering into the classroom.

The three participants who majored in Education were asked how well they felt prepared coming into the education system as a teacher, all three stated that they did not feel well prepared. Among these three participants, only one stated she felt prepared. The other two participants stated that they had received an excellent education, but they were not prepared for the diversity in the classrooms.

DISCUSSION

White, female teachers did notice their racial identity in high school classroom that contains many students of color. The participants acknowledged that although they had never felt uncomfortable at Clay High School because of their racial identity, six out of eight participants (75%) said they did notice their racial identity when in the classroom and it did make them feel uncomfortable. Dickar (2008) discusses how many teachers may have never thought of their own racial identity before entering an environment where they are the minority. Out of the eight participants, six stated that their first couple of years at Clay were more difficult because they were unfamiliar with the environment. At Clay High School, White female teachers constructed cultural differences among the students and themselves not based on race, but rather based on social class.

Colorblindness is rampant among White female teachers. All eight participants discussed how they do not see skin color in their classroom and it does not play a role in the classroom environment; however, they did not use the term colorblindness. All the participants expressed

that race is not linked to academic success. Dickar (2008) discusses how White teachers cling to colorblind ideologies in racially different environments. However, Lesko and Bloom (1998) argue that it is important to develop critical awareness because colorblindness only contributes to more problems in schools being successful.

Growing up in a relatively segregated environment puts teachers at a disadvantage in the long-run, especially if they work in diverse public high schools. Seven out of the eight participants (87%) grew up in neighborhoods that were predominantly White, upper-middle class, and attended schools that were predominantly White. McDonough (2009) discusses how many White preservice teachers enter schools with hardly any previous contact with racial groups other than their own. It is argued that teachers need to be aware of race and racism and also think critically of themselves and the privilege and power that come with being White, which all the participants acknowledged. Also, Robinson and Clardy (2011) have argued that teachers often report that they did not have any cultural knowledge or experience when teaching mostly students of color.

Although this study focused specifically on race, the participants discussed how cultural differences and social class have more of an effect than race in the classroom today. Six out of the eight participants (75%) talked about their lack of awareness and understanding for other cultures and the beliefs and values of them. The participants addressed the student's home life and the struggles and adversities some of their minority students have gone through. All eight participants discussed how it is important to develop empathy, patience, and understanding towards these students because they have a lot of issues at home. This shows that the teachers, after teaching at Clay, recognized the problems and adversities their minority students have to

overcome by critically exploring their race, culture, and ethnicity. These participants showed the development of cultural awareness after their teaching experiences at Clay High School.

All eight participants discussed the problem of hunger at their school; seventy percent of Clay students are on the free or reduced lunch program. This shows the difference in social class compared to the neighborhoods and schools where the teachers grew up. The participants discussed how students have a hard time concentrating due to their hunger. Previous research studies have not address hunger as a class issue. Instead, other reasons were used to explain the academic achievement gap in urban schools Perhaps further research on hunger as a class issue is needed in order to see what effects it has on a student's performance in the classroom, since teachers are aware of hunger as a class issue.

Teachers must receive some type of multicultural training to have a successful classroom with a diverse student body. Seven out of eight participants (88%) discussed how there are ways that teachers can be better prepared entering the education system, especially if they are going into diverse high schools. Due to the fact that only three out of the eight participants (38%) actually intended on becoming teachers, the other five participants (63%) had no prior multicultural training and therefore did not feel prepared. One participant discussed how she took multicultural courses in college that taught her a lot about different cultures and perspectives. Hill-Jackson (2007) argues that multicultural education for teachers is crucial in order to be successful in the classroom. However, since five out of the eight participants did not plan on becoming teachers, they had to learn as they taught. In order for the classroom to change and be successful for all students, no matter their race, gender, or ethnicity, educators need to have training in multicultural education.

Standpoint Theory argues that an individual's perspectives are shaped by his or her experiences in certain social locations and social groups. This theory emphasizes how an individual's own knowledge and experiences have the power to shape one's social experiences. This research supports Standpoint Theory because White female teachers' race does shape her identity in a classroom that contains many students of color. The participants in this study grew up in predominantly White neighborhoods and went to predominantly White schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade, so they do not have a lot of experiences or interactions with people racially and culturally different from them. A lack of racial and cultural awareness takes place when they enter into diverse classrooms. At the same time, these teachers are exposed to new knowledge and new social experiences that may have the power to reshape their perspectives.

Despite the many advantages of interviewing participants, limitations are also apparent. One limitation of this project is that these are case studies of teachers in one school. Interviewing teachers from other high schools may provide information that is different from the participants interviewed at Clay. Their response may not be generalizable to other school settings. A second limitation is that the interviews were administered during a three week period; it is not a longitudinal study where attitude changes may be observed. Finally, race relations is a sensitive topic for White female teachers to discuss with an outsider; they may choose to only share aspects that they feel comfortable.

Despite having only eight participants for this study, four out of eight participants (50%) stated that they did notice their own racial identity more after coming to Clay High School and four out of eight participants (50%) stated that they had felt pressure and uncomfortable in the classroom because of their racial identity. This shows that race does shape a teacher's identity in

a classroom with many students of color because four of the eight participants noticed their own whiteness in the classroom. However, all eight participants discussed how social factors like cultural differences and social class play more of a role in the classroom rather than race. Participants discussed how different some of their student's home life is compared to theirs growing up. There are problems with students not having basic school supplies and not being fed enough at home. These types of problems hurt the success of the student more than race.

Further research is needed to explore what effects social class, culture differences, and hunger have in a high school classroom with many students of color. As the student population continues to become more diverse, the teaching force demographics continue to stay the same; in order to close the academic achievement gap in schools with many students of color, it is important that teachers have multicultural training that is ongoing.

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Appendix A-Questions Included in Interviews

1. What's your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where are you from?
4. Do you identify yourself as White?
5. What subject do you teach?
6. How did you become a teacher?
7. How did you come to teach at Clay?
8. How many years have you been teaching?
9. How many years have you been teaching at this high school?
10. What was your first impression about this high school?
11. What was your neighborhood/school like growing up? And in college?
12. What was your first teaching experience like at this high school?
13. With the degree you received, how well did you feel prepared coming into the education system as a teacher?
14. Are there any differences in your relationships with students who are/aren't similar to you?
15. Have you ever felt any pressure or uncomfortable in the classroom because of your racial identity? If so, how?
16. Do you feel like students of color perceive you in certain ways because of your racial identity? If so, could you share some examples?
17. What type of reading materials do you have on your syllabus? Is the curriculum strict, or do you have some leeway? (For english teachers)
18. What are your views on teaching a Eurocentric curriculum to students that are largely minorities? Does it make a difference in getting the students to engage and be successful? (For english teachers)
19. Have you ever felt uncomfortable teaching any certain part of history in a classroom with many students of color? (For history teachers)

20. What are some of the joys/successes in teaching classes with many students of color?
21. What are some of the challenges of teaching classes with many students of color?
22. How do you handle your racial identity when teaching classes with many students of color?
23. Have you ever felt uncomfortable about your racial identity at at this high school?
24. Did you notice your racial identity more after entering a school that contains mostly students of color?
25. Are there any ways that colleges could better prepare future educators who will be entering into diverse classrooms?
26. Were there specific ways in which you connected with students that were different from your racial identity?
27. What were some important things you learned about yourself while teaching at this high school?

I want to thank you again for taking time to answer these questions. If you have any further information that you would like to share you can email me at calbre01@saintmarys.edu. Thanks, again.

Courtney Albrecht

Appendix B. Coding Sheet

Manifest Coding

White (46 times)

Black/African American (50 times)

Subjects taught

English (3 teachers)

Dance (1 teacher)

Music and Arts/Orchestra (1 teacher)

Economics/Education Professionals (1 teacher)

Life Skills Class (1 teacher)

Business Education & CTE (1 teacher)

Becoming a teacher

Planned (3 teachers)

Unplanned (5 teachers)

Middle-class/economics/class/SES (12 times)

Freshman (25 times)

Race (21 times)

Diverse/Diversity/Multicultural (28 times)

Culture (15 times)

Language (5 times)

Parents (25 times)

Color (29 times)

Different/Differences (45 times)

Hunger (6 times)

Experience (4 times)

Racist (10 times)

Uncomfortable/pressure in the classroom

Yes (4 times)

No (4 times)

Uncomfortable with racial identity at Clay

Yes (2 times)

No (6 times)

Increase in racial awareness

Yes (4 times)

No (4 times)

Latent Coding

Cultural Differences (theme)

Language, Body language (eye contact and no eye contact), Values & Beliefs, Lack of experience with minorities

Social Class (theme)

Hunger (70% on free/reduced lunch, concentration problems), schools supplies (teacher's own money), parental contact (landlines, cell phone minutes)

Racial Identity in classroom (theme)

Neighborhood/school, white privilege, colorblindness in classroom and with students (theme), white privilege (advantages, awareness), misconceptions

Future Classroom (theme)

Student teaching in public schools with diverse classrooms, experience, multicultural courses and training to bring awareness