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“I NEVER HEAR IT TALKED ABOUT”:
EXPLORING DISCOURSES OF WHITENESS
IN A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“I Never Hear It Talked About”:

Exploring Discourses of Whiteness in a Predominantly White Elementary School

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Much is known about the practices, beliefs, assumptions, and discourses of teachers as they look at issues of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity but little has been done to understand how racial injustice is sustained in these school settings and how whiteness operates in predominantly white educational contexts. White elementary school teachers committed to providing quality education in predominantly white settings offer researchers an opportunity to examine how whiteness operates and how it is sustained or disrupted through the work of these white teachers. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do overarching discourses of whiteness operate in this predominantly white elementary school?
2. How do these white teachers resist/disrupt/challenge or perpetuate/contribute to/sustain the discourses of whiteness through their images, practices, and talk?

Data for this qualitative study was collected using ethnographic data collection techniques such as critical interviews, participant observation, artifact and document analysis, and field notes in order to focus on whiteness and examine how it is reified or challenged through the discourses of two white male first grade teachers. Whiteness

studies and critical theory were used as a theoretical lens to guide interpretative qualitative analysis in order to fully investigate the data within its multiple and varied contexts.

In this predominantly white environment it was found that whiteness operated in two fundamental ways. First, it functioned through a discourse of silence that was supported by a pervasive ideology of colorblindness. Second, it functioned through a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility that utilized a conflation of culture and race to render culture hypervisible, while at the same time making race invisible. What these findings indicate is a need for continued research with white educators a) to investigate how the discourses of whiteness impact their implementation of multicultural education in the classroom and b) to challenge them to critically analyze the unexamined power of whiteness at work in these elementary school settings.

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Dedication

To my amazing family,

You have been the source of such strength that I dedicate this to all of you.

To my mom and dad, Joan and Rick, for never giving up hope and for reminding me that this all would be worth it in the end. You drove great distances, spent long hours, and sacrificed so much to help me achieve my goals. Thank you for giving me the support I didn't know how to ask for and for showing me an example of how powerful love can be.

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“I Never Hear It Talked About”:

Exploring Discourses of Whiteness in a Predominantly White Elementary School

Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem

“Why does color matter? When I hear this question, I often just sigh. Deeply. It’s almost too basic a question to be answered... But the need for an explanation is symptomatic of our divisions.” (Edley, 1996, p. 136)

Issues of race are far too often removed from conversations about schools, teachers, students, and education. While the populations of students attending our public schools are becoming more racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse, an alarming trend of whiteness in the K-12 teaching profession continues (Sleeter, 2001). Although the percentage of white teachers working in schools decreased slightly from 89 percent in 1996 to 85 percent in 2005 to 83 percent in 2008 (Boser, 2011; KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007; National Center for Education Information, 2005), this remains an under-investigated statistic. A 2008 study done by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of public school membership in the U.S. found that 56 percent of students reporting identified themselves as white, and in New Jersey alone, approximately 63 percent of all high school graduates are white (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008; Sable & Garofano, 2007). A further analysis of NCES data (Figure 1) showed evidence that whites are the most segregated group in U.S. schools (E. Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003) because they are the “most isolated within their own racial group – attending schools where almost four-fifths of the students are white” (Orfield & Lee, 2005, p. 11). While the research literature on diversity and multicultural education looks at issues of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in schools, little has been done to understand how racial injustice is sustained and how whiteness, as a system of

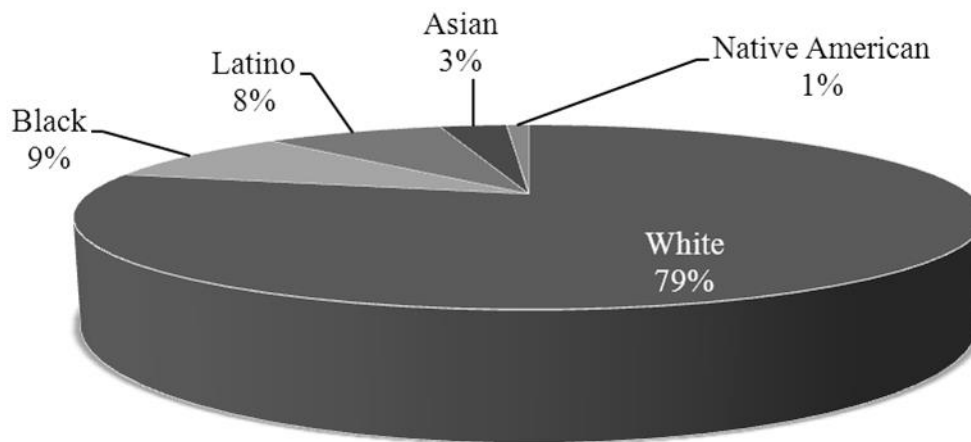


Figure 1. Racial composition of school attended by average white student, 2002-03 (Orfield & Lee, 2005).

power that functions to normalize and privilege whites, operates in predominantly white educational contexts.

From the relatively large body of research on multicultural practices in K-12 classrooms, much is known about the practices, beliefs, assumptions, and overarching discourses that are empowering to students of color as well as those practices that serve to maintain the status quo in contexts serving those same students of color in schools (A. F. Ball, 2000; Cooper, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Milner, 2005; Singer & Smith, 2003). But critical questions still remain – “Who teaches white teachers about the meaning of race...[and how] well prepared are white teachers to understand their own ‘whiteness’...? How cognizant are they of their own racial socialization and how it may influence their perceptions...?” (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997b, p. 333) In predominantly white educational settings, an unexamined system of whiteness operates in ways that has gone largely unchecked. The work of teaching and teacher preparation has created a history for white educators where their white perspectives have been nurtured, privileged, and supported; often while systematically othering people and teachers of color. “It is a

past in which our subjectivities are embedded, whether we are conscious of it or not. We have reached a point when that past must be reinterpreted and reincarnated in the light of what we have learned.” (Greene, 1996, p. 28)

Not enough research has looked at how these powerful discourses of whiteness operate in school settings and how they are sustained or disrupted through the images, practices, and talk of white teachers at work. As an elementary school teacher and now teacher educator, I know how difficult it is to be aware of how one’s own whiteness impacts how one works with students around diversity issues. During my time as a former teacher in the elementary school site utilized for this study, I felt that I was a reflective practitioner who was fully aware of my own teaching practices and I consistently expressed a commitment to addressing issues of social justice and diversity. After leaving my teaching position, I reflected upon my experiences at Fulton Elementary School and I began to realize my own participation in the subtle, yet troubling discourses of whiteness that operated in my classroom and in the school culture at large. These powerful discourses acted in ways that silenced conversations around critical issues of race and inequity, all while privileging a colorblind ideology and empowering white individuals and institutions. In my teaching position, my own whiteness went unexamined despite my commitment otherwise.

According to whiteness theory, without an understanding of how white privilege operates in the everyday, it will never be possible to enact equity pedagogies as the white perspective will always be foregrounded in curriculum and teaching. By investigating the discourses of whiteness and how these white teachers see themselves working in their settings and building on their commitment to multicultural practices in their

predominantly white classrooms, more can be learned about how ideas, thoughts, behaviors, and strategies operate within the context of schools that so often serve to replicate the same racial situations that have been long occurring in U.S. schools, communities, and educational settings. In these settings, teachers are all “subject to discourse but [they] are also centrally involved in the propagation and selective dissemination of discourses, the ‘social appropriation’ of discourses” (S. J. Ball, 1990, p. 3). Therefore, this qualitative research study aims to investigate whiteness and how it operates through the discourses of white teachers in a dominantly white elementary school setting. Ethnographic data collection techniques were employed to focus on whiteness and examined how it was reified or challenged through the discourses of two white K-2 teachers situated within their school and classroom contexts. Using whiteness studies and a critical theoretical lens to analyze interviews, observations, and artifacts, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do overarching discourses of whiteness operate in this predominantly white elementary school?
2. How do these white teachers resist/disrupt/challenge or perpetuate/contribute to/sustain the discourses of whiteness through their images, practices, and talk?

Definitions

For the purposes of this research, I have defined the following terms as they have been used within the context of this study.

Race is considered a historically and socially constructed concept that functions overwhelmingly to label and separate groups of individuals who share common physical, ethnic, cultural, and language characteristics. While it is often mistakenly seen as

biologically based, race is socially constructed and works on a variety of levels and is inextricably linked to the social, political, and economic arenas in our society (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; Painter, 2003; Tehranian, 2000). Race is commonly identified through the discourse of others (external) and often individuals who are identified as the same race do not share the same cultural worldview. For example, someone who is Afro-Cuban can be racially identified as black and not share the same cultural experiences with someone who is also racially identified as black but who culturally identifies as African American. Race is essentially a set of categories constructed by the society in which we live (in this case, The United States) that function to sort and categorize people – based primarily on skin color, phenotype, and ethnicity – into a set position within a hierarchy of privilege and marginalization.

Culture includes both the tangible and intangible aspects that make up the “values, traditions, worldview, and social and political relationships created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, religion, or other shared identity” (Nieto, 2008, p. 171). By its very nature, culture intersects with the concept of race and these terms are often incorrectly used interchangeably to describe differences and similarities between individuals and groups (J. A. Banks & Banks, 2001; Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), 2013; Nieto, 2008; Spradlin & Parsons, 2008). Cultural identification is done primarily through the personal construction of a discourse (internal) where individuals are included as members in a larger group that shares values, norms, and artifacts that can transcend geography and place. Culture and race are often confounded in discussions of difference. Race is dictated by those in power and is used

as a tool to divide and categorize, whereas culture is self-determined and used to unify and celebrate commonalities. For example, when the Irish first immigrated to the United States they were considered part of an Irish American cultural group but were not seen as white. In time, “they earned the prerogatives and social standing of whites by joining labor unions, by swearing fealty to the Democratic Party, and by acquiring wealth” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 77) and fought to be reconsidered as white, yet all the while they remained Irish American in culture.

Whiteness is a racially based system of power created by whites that serves to privilege whites as individuals or institutions over other races. Although often unrecognized by the larger society as an institutionally supported and encouraged hegemony, it functions to normalize the state of being white as an undefined, desirable, and powerful identification (R. Frankenberg, 1993, 1999, 2001; McLaren, 2000; Ratcliffe, 2005).

Multicultural education is both a theoretical and pedagogical approach that is defined as “an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that...members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school” (J. A. Banks & Banks, 2001, p. 1).

Discourse is any type of text (written, spoken, acted, or expressed) that, broadly defined, contains, transmits, and communicates meaning, intentional or unintentional, in any form (Cazden, 2001; Fairclough, 2003; Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & Joseph, 2005). The term discourse embodies the following three dimensions: a) language use, b) the communication of beliefs, and c) interaction in social situations (van

Dijk, 1997, p. 2). This study uses Foucault's interpretation of discourse in a way that situates discourse as being "about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations" (S. J. Ball, 1990, p. 2).

In the next section, I examine the recent literature on ways in which race and diversity have been addressed in K-12 and higher educational settings, while also focusing on whiteness and the ways in which white educators address these topics in their own educational contexts. Finally, the theoretical framework is examined as this research situates itself in critical theory, specifically the work of Michel Foucault, and in whiteness studies as a lens to fully examine discursive structures in action.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

“It is what we think we know already that often prevents us from learning.”
– Claude Bernard, 1813-1878

Research focusing on the development of teachers’ personal and professional attitudes towards an implementation of diversity and multicultural principles in education is widespread. Encouraging teachers to become more aware of their own behaviors and thought processes is often a first step in teaching for diversity. The literature in this review is organized to first look at the various ways teachers work with issues of diversity and social justice in the classroom by investigating the historical roots of multicultural education, as it is the primary way teachers are addressing issues of race in current schools and classrooms. Next, the research on how teachers develop and articulate their personal beliefs and understandings regarding multicultural and diversity education are examined, as well as how these components intersect with their curriculum and practices in schools and classrooms. The last group of studies looks at ways whiteness has been addressed in elementary school settings, and in conclusion, whiteness as the theoretical framework used to frame and guide this critical qualitative research study is explored. Through this analysis, the current research (1992 – present) on whiteness, diversity, and multicultural education in school settings will be defined, debriefed, and debunked in a continuing effort to emphasize the importance of this long standing, yet misunderstood, educational necessity.

Using Multicultural Education to Address Issues of Race

Multicultural education in the United States has in many ways been used to define teachers’ efforts to infuse their classrooms with themes of diversity and social justice (Banister & Maher, 1998; J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2003;

Haberman & Post, 1998; Nieto, 2008). Particularly in predominantly white settings, multicultural initiatives have become ways to insert moments of difference into what are often viewed as monocultural settings. Investigations into the roots of multicultural education and the ways it is enacted begin to shed light on how it functions in predominantly white educational settings more than it does in settings where students and staff have been labeled as marginalized.

Multicultural education finds its roots in the assimilationist and nationalistic philosophies of the early 1900s (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997), in the post-World War II intercultural education initiatives (Cook & Cook, 1954; Ramsey, Vold, & Williams, 1989; Taba, Brady, & Robinson, 1952), in the culturally pluralistic imperatives of the ethnic studies movement of the 1960s (J. A. Banks, 1997, 2003; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006), and now finally in the diverse post-Civil Rights climate of today's multiculturally forward schools and universities (Ambrosio, Seguin, Hogan, & Miller, 2001; C. A. M. Banks & Banks, 1995; Bennett, 2007; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Nieto, 2008; Sleeter & Grant, 1994). A more modern critique of multiculturalism in schools includes a critical examination of its breadth as it includes the traditions of many different philosophies of diversity; but, as broad as this diverse perspective can be, critics continue to point out that the lack of emphasis multiculturalism has on depth and dedication to issues of social justice and institutional reform is an extremely troubling issue. Due to its sordid past and wide scope, research on multicultural education for teacher development and education ranges from teaching strategies and personal beliefs to mandatory programs and curriculum initiatives.

Overview of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a philosophical concept and an educational process... built upon philosophical ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity contained in the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence. (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 171)

To provide a useful and thoughtful analysis of how whiteness operates in settings with teachers in predominantly white elementary school contexts, it is essential to look at how diversity issues have been addressed. Multicultural education has all too often been interpreted as a character-building (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007), respect-developing (Young & Tran, 2001), ethnicity-celebrating (Jennings & Smith, 2002; E. Lee, Menkart, & Okazawa-Rey, 2002), cultural-food-fair-laden way (Nieto, 2006) of instructing students to look at themselves and others in the world. School-wide assemblies, classroom lesson plans, teacher-focused worksheet booklets, and token artifact show-and-tell days for students has reduced multicultural education into a concept about which, to be honest, many people are tired of hearing. However, as the historical roots of multicultural education are unearthed and the detailed approaches to its implementation are analyzed, the movement described as multicultural becomes one that moves beyond isolated instruction into the realm of social justice and democratic citizenship (Bennett, 2007; Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; Nieto, 2008). Still, some “authors define multicultural education as a process-oriented creation of learning experiences that foster awareness of, respect for, and enjoyment of the diversity of our society and world” (Ramsey et al., 1989, p. ix). After much research and reading, though, it seems more holistically appropriate to broaden the more common definition and say that “multicultural education [is] the process whereby a person develops competencies in multiple systems of standards for perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing” (Gibson, 1984, p. 112). By this

definition, all students in all subject areas *require* multicultural education to be part of their studies if they are to become schooled in not just diversity, but in the critical analysis of society itself.

Historical Progression of Multicultural Education in the U.S.

While the term multiculturalism and multicultural education began only as recently as the 1970s (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997) to be used to describe the intentional educational focus on teaching to and about diversity, its roots can be traced back to movements that began as early as pre-1900 when an assimilationist ideology dominated the United States' national political, social, economic, and educational scene. This "melting pot" school of thought was embraced as a powerful concept (Kraus, 1999; Shumsky, 1975) and led to the development of the intergroup education movement as a way to effectively handle diversity in schools (Cook & Cook, 1954; Taba et al., 1952). These concepts later gave rise to cultural pluralism (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007) which led theorists and scholars to look towards ethnic studies (J. A. Banks, 1997), multicultural education (Sleeter & Grant, 1994), and then beyond for ways to teach more effectively while meeting the needs of all students and citizens in the classroom (Allen, 2004; Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Sogunro, 2001).

Nativism. As increasing numbers of immigrants arrived at the turn of the century, U.S. policy toward education became one that could best be described as assimilationist. Grant and Ladson-Billings (1997) define assimilation as "the process by which a person or group is absorbed into the social structures and cultural life of another person, group, or society" (p. 24) and this philosophy became increasingly more popular

as the population of the United States continued to expand and change. Beginning as a movement in the years prior to 1900, nativism was fueled by the wave of Western European immigrants entering the United States. Its supporters “argued for 100 percent Americanism and said that America should be for ‘Americans’” (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 39).

Nativism’s assimilationist ideals were exemplified in Israel Zangwill’s 1909 play *The Melting Pot*. Written in response to the new immigrants entering the U.S., it told a story about the blending of many different people from various backgrounds into one common race (Zangwill, 1909). The characters were of predominantly Western European descent with its main character, David Quixano, depicted as a Russian Jewish immigrant who sought to succeed in this changing American society. This popular play highlighted the limitations of the nativist approach to diversity (Kraus, 1999; Shumsky, 1975) in that the melting functioned for Western Europeans (predominantly white and thought to be of Anglo-Saxon descent) but was not a potential choice for non-Western immigrants who “stuck to the bottom of the mythical melting pot” (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 40).

The support of assimilationism as a national philosophy and the rise of the nativist movement during World War I led educational leaders to advocate for school curricula that were monocultural in theory and in practice. J. A. Banks (2006) states that two important goals of schools in the U.S. during this time were “to rid ethnic groups of the ethnic characteristics and to force them to acquire Anglo-Saxon values and behavior” (p. 40). Essentially, this process sought to integrate those who were white into an already Eurocentrically focused system of schooling, and as a result, those who did not so easily

fit this new American mold were left out of the process all together. Many racial, ethnic, and cultural groups who lived in the United States during this time were marginalized by the structures of schooling that supported assimilation as a way to create the common image of one united, cultural “American” (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997). “Salad bowl” was another alternative label for the diversity of the United States as coined by Kallen, Bourne, and Drachsler to contrast the assimilationist melting pot theory (J. A. Banks, 2006). During World War I, they explored these ideals, but with the Immigration Acts of 1917 (Clark & Marshall, 1917) and 1924 (Eckerson, 1966), it would only be later in the 20th century that cultural pluralism would develop into a popular and widely embraced ideology for learning about diversity (Bennett, 2007; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006).

Intergroup education movement. After WWI, the massive wave of immigration that took place earlier in the century was coming to a halt and “there was a need to establish a sense of national belonging and loyalty, and to have people identify with the traditions of America as a country rather than with the traditions of the country from which they or their ancestors had immigrated” (Ramsey et al., 1989, p. 5). Monocultural and Eurocentric ideals were still felt to be well within reach by many in the educational and political community, but an increasing conflict was brewing between the African Americans who continued to be institutionally and culturally marginalized and the whites (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007). Although slavery had legally ended decades before (Lincoln, 1863; Majerol, 2013), the minority populations (particularly that of African Americans) increased in the Northern cities where riots, employment struggles, and the integration of schools were occurring in response to past and present injustices based on

race, culture, and ethnicity. These tumultuous events created an environment ripe for the development of a new educational perspective that could more equitably handle the racial and ethnic differences among members of the U.S. population.

With the goal “to reduce prejudice and discrimination among U.S. Americans” (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 149), the intergroup education movement began. This differed from the nativist and assimilationist views in that it sought to address the differing sociological and psychological needs of the population that were emerging as a result of the events prior to and during WWII rather than focusing on a blending of everyone under the dictated common goals of U.S. society (Cook & Cook, 1954; Taba et al., 1952). Intergroup education scholars and practitioners used strategies and

activities designed to reduce prejudice and to increase interracial understanding [and these activities] included the teaching of isolated instructional units on various ethnic groups, exhortations against prejudice, organizing assemblies and cultural get-togethers, disseminating information on racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and banning books considered stereotypic and demeaning to ethnic groups (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 43).

These activities and programs were intended to help teachers and students develop themselves in schools as more responsible democratic citizens who would “seek out prejudice and discrimination [and] move on it” (Cook & Cook, 1954, p. 12).

An influential researcher of this movement, Hilda Taba directed The Intergroup Education in Cooperating Schools project for elementary and secondary schools which “aimed at the development of a systematic program [intergroup education] as part of public school education” (Taba et al., 1952, pp. 3-4). This study began to lay out a plan of action for educators to use in implementing reforms based on the intergroup education movement’s teachings and philosophies. Another key supporter of intergroup education was Lloyd Allen Cook (1954), director of the College Study in Intergroup Relations in

1950 (also sponsored by the American Council on Education), the “first cooperative effort in the United States to improve the intercultural component of teacher education” (J. A. Banks, 2006, pp. 43-44). However successful this movement seemed to be at the time, as WWII drew to a close, the intergroup education movement lost its momentum and became less of a focus for schools and universities across the country.

Ethnic studies. The new assimilationist wave revitalized the idea of ethnic and cultural unity for the United States as the country crossed the mid-way point of the 20th century (Kraus, 1999). Traditional American values became an important focus for education of the nation’s students as the country strove to become unified under what now seem like misguided intentions. Regardless of the desire for assimilation, the era of a “New Pluralism” was fast approaching as civil and political unrest began to sweep across the nation in the 1960s (Bennett, 2007; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006).

Originally, cultural pluralism was an idea formed prior to the intergroup education movement and it was a guiding philosophy behind the Ethnic Studies Movement that actually began with the Black Civil Rights Movement in the United States. As “an idea born during the turn of the century was refashioned to fit the hopes, aspirations, and dreams of disillusioned and alienated people of color in the 1960s” (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 46) it sought to promote “a group’s right to preserve and develop its own cultural patterns” (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 63). In a system working from a culturally pluralistic perspective, “individual and group differences are valued and not viewed as inferior to others; as a result, no single group rules over or exploits one another. It extols the value of *e pluribus unum*...” (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 64). Ethnic studies would eventually encompass concerns of many other politically, economically, socially,

and educationally marginalized populations in the U.S. in order to bring to light the varied histories, cultures, and lived experiences of the ethnic groups living in the United States (J. A. Banks, 2003; J. A. Banks & Banks, 2001).

As part of the push to include ethnic studies curriculum components in all educational settings, demands were made by supporters for “more control over the institutions in [the] communities and that all institutions, including the schools, more accurately reflect their ethnic cultures” (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 46). Making available courses and materials to supplement the traditional Eurocentric teachings of schools in the U.S., the ethnic studies movement intended to expand the breadth of knowledge to which students were exposed. Students would not only gain an appreciation for other cultures and ethnicities, they would also develop a strong self-concept about themselves and critically reflect upon the construction of their own identities (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007). As ethnic studies became a more popular educational alternative, different educational settings handled these new demands in varying ways.

J. A. Banks (1997) created a model for the curriculum reform of ethnic studies in which he delineated the steps schools can take in their efforts to embrace these new ethnic studies. The first model (Model A) was the Mainstream Centric Model in which content is taught from the perspective of the mainstream and little else is included. Schools find themselves often moving from this Model A to a Model B, the Ethnic Additive Model, in which the mainstream curriculum remains unchanged as ethnic materials and content are added. In the Multiethnic Model, Model C, an event or topic is studied from not only the mainstream perspective but also from diverse perspectives of other ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender related positions. The recommendation, if at all

possible, is that schools move directly from Model A to Model C because Banks describes the difficulty recognizing instruction when the additive approach has already been accepted and entrenched in the teachings of the school. The last model, Model D, the Ethno-National Model, takes a global perspective from which events and topics are studied from the perspective of not just different countries, but of different groups within those countries. If the intention is for schools to create global citizens who can think critically and completely about their learnings and understandings, the Ethno-National Model is the most desirable place from which to work with students.

Multicultural education. While many supported the new ethnic studies movement, others noted its limitations (J. A. Banks, 2003; Bennett, 2007; Nieto, 2008). Ethnic studies was a pedagogical and educational concept that was being implemented in a variety of ways depending on the needs and composition of the school and student community it was representing. Students were still, in most cases, relying on predominantly Eurocentric retellings of history as the core for their understanding of events, their causes, and later, their related effects (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). With the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 (made effective in 1968) initiating the largest influx of immigrants to the United States since 1900, a unique group labeled The New Immigrants came “to the United States from non-European nations, and the relatively low birthrate among Whites compared to that of most groups of color, [had] a significant influence on U.S. society, particularly on its demographic characteristics” (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 47). The educational community, looking to expand upon the base of the ethnic studies movement, needed to create a new conceptualization of diversity and an enhanced vision for the critical study of difference.

Coined in the 1970s, multicultural education differed from ethnic studies predominantly because it embraces both a theory and a pedagogy that does not just focus on race and ethnicity as the defining factors of difference for students. Multicultural education describes “education policies and practices that recognize, accept, and affirm human differences and similarities related to gender, race, disability, class and (increasingly) sexual preference” (Sleeter & Grant, 1994, p. 167). As a theory, multicultural education was developed with the intention of embodying many aspects from the previously outlined educational movements. “Students of color made up forty percent of the students enrolled in public schools in grades one through twelve in 2000” (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 47), and in response to these types of statistics, multicultural education has also sought to address the issues of achievement as being of chief importance as certain racial and ethnic groups still have disproportionately low achievement rates in school.

A pedagogy of multicultural education emerged over time from many different traditions. According to J. A. Banks (2006), multicultural education emerges in four phases. Phase I focuses its attention on Mono-ethnic Courses in which ethnic studies courses are taught only by a member of that ethnic group and are seen as needed only by members of that ethnic group. As a way to meet their specific needs, courses are structured around specific areas and the focus is on “White racism and on how Whites have oppressed ethnic groups of color” (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 49). In Phase II, ethnic courses are developed and become broader in scope. These Multiethnic Studies Courses tend to encompass previously overlooked ethnic groups of European decent and religious background and are open for all students to take. Moving beyond the first phase, Phase II

places emphasis on the similarities and differences between the experiences of ethnic groups in the United States and focuses on creating courses that are “more global, conceptual, and scholarly” (p. 49). Over time, scholars recognized that individual course design efforts were not enough to improve failing scores of certain ethnic and racial groups. Labeled Multiethnic Education, Phase III identified teachers as the critical factor in the implementation of successful programs and educators “began to view the total school as the unit of change, and not just any one variable within the educational environment, such as materials or teaching strategies” (p. 50). Unfortunately, past experiences and negative attitudes of the teaching professionals in the classroom often did more harm than good when it came to this kind of comprehensive implementation of a multiculturally focused curriculum.

Multicultural Education, Phase IV, focuses on more broad based studies and issues to include not only race but also issues of religion, gender, disability, and social/regional class difference. In this stage, materials and funds can be combined to address a wide variety of diversity concerns in school curricula and environment. Despite this seeming advantage, many educators still have concerns about multicultural education (Banister & Maher, 1998; C. A. M. Banks & Banks, 1995; Gay, 2000). The concern is that the portion of the population who is the neediest will no longer be a primary focus for racial, cultural, and ethnic studies. Individuals who are taking initiatives in implementing multicultural education are also apprehensive, for they worry that the original purpose of multicultural education – discrimination reduction – will be lost in such a broad scope of study. Institutionalization Process Phase V is a stage that is not typically included in practitioner models of multicultural education. In this phase,

reform of the “total educational environment” and the incorporation of “the key and most effective components of Phases I through IV” is necessary in order to create lasting and powerful effects with multicultural education initiatives (J. A. Banks, 2006, p. 52). “As we try to reconceptualize world and U.S. history and literature, it is reasonable to expect this process to take considerable time and to require continuing effort and commitment by everyone involved in the educational process” (p. 52). Banks’ descriptions of the five phases of development for multicultural education reform are comprehensive and it is clear that many of the movements prior to multicultural education contributed to this newer approach to dealing with diversity in schools and in society.

The past influences of multicultural education are leading many to question where the field is headed. A more recent offshoot from the original concept of multicultural education, critical multiculturalism supports a refocusing of what is now labeled multicultural education using a more critical lens to interrogate institutional and social factors affecting the power, privilege, and treatment of many groups in the U.S. today. It seems that in each new piece of scholarly writing that is published, a new approach or concept for multicultural education is being presented as the development of this all important body of research continues to expand with the changing needs of the learners in our society.

The future of multicultural education. As the study and implementation of multicultural education enters its fifth decade, it is important not only to look at new developments in the field but also to analyze past movements and present approaches and critiques. Critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and anti-racist education (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004) are positioned to respond to the perceived limitations of multicultural

education. While some overlap with multicultural education theories and practices exists, each addresses specific concerns that are not well defined in the theoretical work and pedagogy surrounding multicultural education in the United States.

Emerging from the work of The Frankfurt School (M. Jay, 1996) and Paulo Freire (2000), critical pedagogy is an approach that helps educators understand power differentials and social class systems while analyzing such systems as they function within and outside the educational sphere. “Critical pedagogy focuses mostly on the culture of everyday life, viewing culture as created within historic as well as contemporary power struggles” (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004, p. 253). Seeing students as the “creators of knowledge” (p. 243), students can create spaces where they use their knowledge to begin to wield equal power. While this theory more intimately investigates the relationships and power struggles students negotiate in education, some critics see it as too focused on theory with limited support for the teacher-practitioner who seeks to enact this tradition in the classroom setting (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). With regards to multicultural education, critical pedagogy embodies the techniques advocated in the highest levels of multicultural education (Allen, 2004; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004).

Another theoretical approach that addresses issues of power, Critical Race Theory (CRT) centralizes race as a way to analyze larger concerns around power and subjectivity. Originally begun as Critical Legal Studies (CLS) in the 1970s, CRT developed into critical race theory in the 1980s in order to better meet the needs of and address the issues of racism that were facing people of color in the U.S. Described as “an analytical framework developed predominantly, though not exclusively, by legal scholars of color to address social justice and racial oppression in U.S. society” (Sleeter & Bernal,

2004, p. 245), CRT works with “race as an analytical tool...[to] deepen the analysis of educational barriers for people of color, as well as illuminate how they resist and overcome these barriers” (p. 246). Using the concepts of storytelling and counterstorytelling as tools to relate the lived experiences of individuals whose voices are not usually privileged (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004), CRT seeks to empower those individuals and groups who have traditionally been marginalized from the educational, political, social and economic realms of mainstream U.S. society. Exploring criticisms of CRT, Sleeter and Bernal (2004) state that CRT tends to focus predominantly on race as the central category of difference, while multicultural education encourages the analysis of multiple groups of difference. However, multicultural education too often tries to be all things to all people and for that reason, it is often not theorized as deeply as critical pedagogy or CRT.

A pedagogical tradition built in response to CRT’s centralizing and problematizing of race, Anti-racist Education addresses race as it “challenges the total school environment to understand the ways in which racism is manifested in schools and society” (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 20). It focuses on the institutional racism that is present in the structures of school and society (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004), an area that is too often neglected in the practice of multicultural education. This movement encourages schools to look at how racism can be challenged and how educators can help students to recognize and then work against the racism present in their typically Eurocentric school settings. By treating racism as central, supporters of anti-racist curriculum reform see the process as one that “begins with educating administrators and teachers to understand racial oppression and racial identity issues, as well as racist

conditioning and internalized oppression” (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 20). As previously mentioned, this concept of anti-racist education tends to be combined or confused with the practice of multicultural education when in fact anti-racist education is the pedagogical outgrowth of CRT. Unlike multicultural education, anti-racist education focuses on problematizing race and racism while looking critically at whiteness as a problematic system of power and privilege (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004).

While critical theory, CRT, and anti-racist education all address components that should shape the future development of multicultural education in schools, they lack a specific focus on the power and privileges of whiteness. In response to this concern, the field of Whiteness Studies emerged in the early 1990s as a formidable area of study as academics, researchers and practitioners made a demanded “an analysis of ‘white’ as a racialized category” (Keating, 1995, p. 901). This growing body of literature (Allen, 2004; Ignatiev, 1995; G. S. Jay, 2007, 2012; G. S. Jay & Jones, 2005; Keating, 1995; Kolchin, 2002; McIntosh, 1990; Roediger, 1991) marked “a defining moment in the study of American culture. For in the early 1990s, our ideas of ‘whiteness’ were interrogated, our ideas of ‘blackness’ were complicated, and the terrain we call ‘American culture’ began to be remapped” (Fishkin, 1995, pp. 428-429). Identifying a need to interrogate how whiteness operated, whiteness studies grew out of the idea that the white role in marginalization and oppression had been ignored and that it was necessary to include if positive changes were ever to be made. While the emergence of this critical field of study was important in the studies of race, identity, and power, it had

a much greater impact on the research, teaching, and curricula in the classrooms of higher education than it did in any PreK-12 schools amongst practicing teachers.

...Whiteness studies belongs to the general effort to create a “critical multiculturalism” as an alternative to the “celebratory multiculturalism” popular since the 1970s and still largely influential in our classrooms (especially K-12)...[It] is an attempt to think critically about how white skin preference has operated systematically, structurally, and sometimes unconsciously as a dominant force in American—and indeed in global—society and culture. (G. S. Jay & Jones, 2005)

Educators of all races, inside and outside of classrooms, need to continue to challenge themselves and their students to think in a critical and global way about systems of oppression (Allen, 2004; McCarthy, 2003; Trainor, 2002). The necessity of focusing on more than just race and ethnicity is paramount if students are to understand the complexity of their own identities in terms of aspects such as gender and social class (Johnson, 2002; Jupp & Slattery Jr, 2010; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; Tehranian, 2000). All of the theories and pedagogies described have explicit goals to increase educational, social, and economic equity for historically marginalized groups and the separation between each approach is not so large a gap; if schools are to truly function as education centers to prepare our students to grow into lifelong thinkers and learners, these approaches must be studied, analyzed, and enacted in our future plans for U.S. education. So, while racism and systems of privilege in our society must be intentionally included in curriculum development models if educators are to prepare students as active and critically thinking citizens, we also need to look critically at how white teachers enact and communicate about their own whiteness in their classrooms.

Much of the literature on multicultural education is presented pedagogically and aims to help students, teachers, and schools engage in a deep and abiding appreciation for

each other through investigations of personal beliefs and the debunking of preconceived notions about the diverse identities of oneself and others (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998; Jennings & Smith, 2002; Singer & Smith, 2003; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). While immediate changes in personal feelings toward multicultural education are important, “multicultural education must be viewed as an on-going process, and not as something that we ‘do’ and thereby solve the problems that are the targets of multicultural educational reform” (J. A. Banks & Banks, 2001, p. 4). While white pre-service and in-service educators alike need a deep understanding of multicultural education on a personal level, it is equally important, if not more so, that they see it also as a developing and strategic professional, social, and institutional philosophy. White teachers who enact multicultural education in their classrooms typically do so in an attempt to address topics such as prejudice, stereotyping and bullying. Their own white racial identities (and the racial identities of their white students) are not considered as these teachers present, act and communicate in ways that too often reaffirm the already othered status of the students of color in their communities. Without a more critical understanding of whiteness in action, the goals of multicultural education, “such as educational equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination – can never be fully achieved in a human society” (p. 25).

Multicultural education in K-12 educational settings is enacted in a wide array of configurations. Although much of the teaching is conceptualized with some form of diversity in mind, it does not fully engage students in the “pedagogy of liberation” necessary to fully actualize critical multicultural education and appropriately situate it within a larger socio-political context (M. Tucker & Banks, 1998). While critical

multicultural education is supposed to be focused on critically investigating issues of race, culture, identity and power with students (Kanpol & McLaren, 1995; Sleeter, 1996), most of its iterations merely serve to enable white educators to avoid addressing larger issues about whiteness, white privilege and institutional power and racism (May, 1999). In order to transcend the replication of the status quo, various conceptual frameworks have been developed to outline different dimensions for multicultural education and teaching in the classroom (C. A. M. Banks & Banks, 1995; J. A. Banks, 2003; J. A. Banks & Banks, 2001; Bennett, 2007). Figure 2 depicts the most widely referenced multicultural framework cited in the recent literature (Banister & Maher, 1998; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; McNeal, 2005; Milner, 2005). Developed by J. A. Banks (2003), it follows five categories for the dimensions of multicultural education, listed from least to most desirable: 1) content integration, 2) knowledge construction, 3) prejudice reduction, 4) equity pedagogy, and 5) empowering school culture. As institutions and education professionals approach this fifth dimension (which involves recognizing power and its place among students, teachers, and schools) they begin to embrace the intended critical nature of multicultural education and engage in the authentic teaching for social justice.

Overlapping substantially with critical multicultural education, the terms culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive teaching, anti-racist education, and teaching for social justice are often used by researchers to describe teaching that would occur in settings that have achieved the highest levels on the aforementioned dimensions of multicultural education – equity pedagogy and empowering school culture (J. A. Banks & Banks, 2010). The ideals of culturally relevant education and culturally

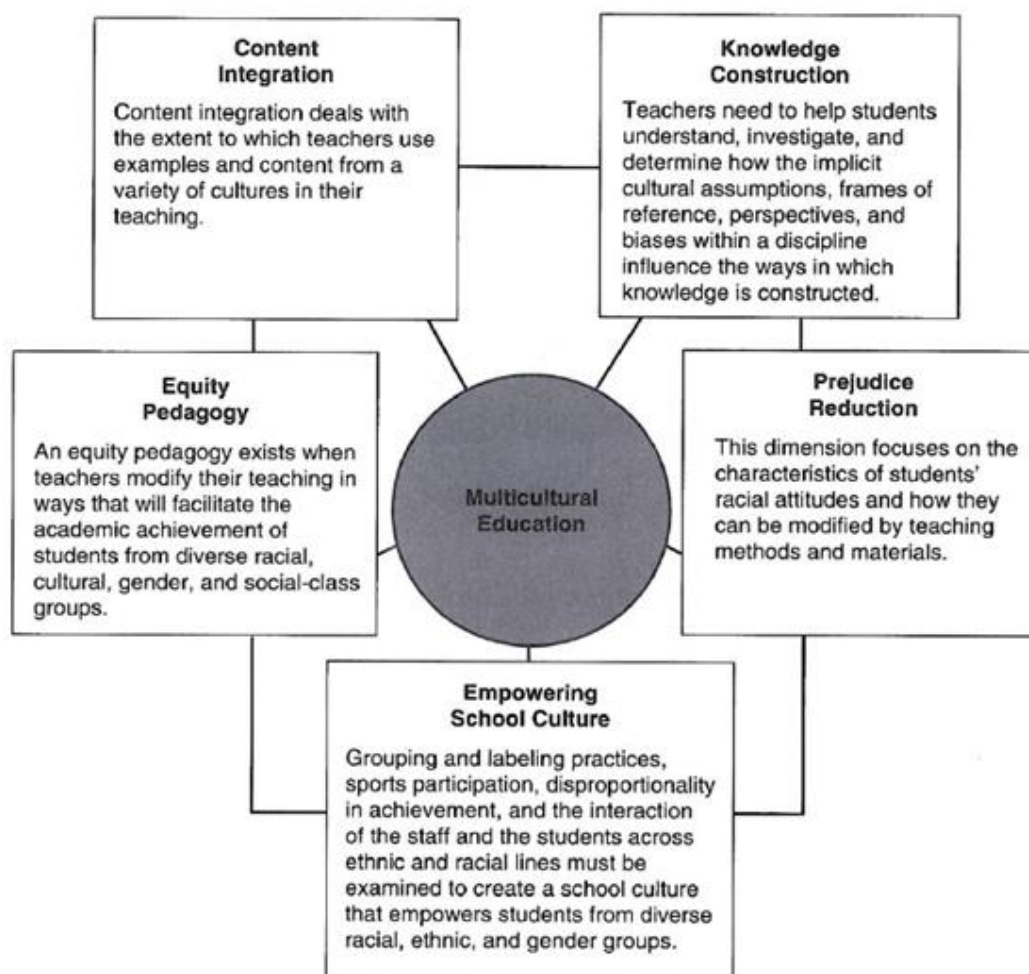


Figure 2. Dimensions of Multicultural Education (J. A. Banks & Banks, 2010).

responsive teaching rest on the ideas that “teachers practice culturally responsive teaching when an equity pedagogy [of multicultural education] is implemented,” and in doing so “they use instructional materials and practices that incorporate important aspects of the family and community culture of their students” (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007). Educators need to be culturally responsive to ensure that they are “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2000, p. 29). Anti-racist education attempts to address critical issues with its focus on assisting students and teachers in developing a more multicultural worldview as well

as encouraging them to challenge the racist norms present in our educational systems and schools. Teaching for social justice embraces the in-depth analysis of the norms and challenging of institutional power structures functioning within and being perpetuated by educational sites and settings. In actuality, since the majority of our K-12 teachers are white this kind of culturally responsive pedagogy has been occurring for years in U.S. schools; by reifying the experiences and realities of white students, white teachers have been reinforcing whiteness and have not done enough to challenge the racial power structure this kind of education affirms.

The historic evolution of multicultural education is part of the problem of why multicultural education is so misunderstood by educators. Over time, it has evolved from ethnic studies and intercultural education and has since tried to become more centered on issues of social justice through the ideals of critical multiculturalism and anti-racist education. But with this evolution, much of the writing on multicultural education is still rooted in past perspectives and this confusion lends itself to encouraging teachers and professionals to pick and choose iterations of multicultural education from history; the configurations of multicultural education with which most educators tend to align themselves reinforce their pre-existing beliefs and work to reaffirm their own identities rather than challenge their larger ideologies and misconceptions about power and difference.

Multicultural education, in its most desirable form, should embrace critical perspectives at an individual and institutional level while also considering the other approaches that look at the practices of teachers and students and how they personally, socially, and politically identify and position themselves within that learning environment

and larger institutional context (J. A. Banks, 2003; J. A. Banks & Banks, 2001; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997). Though multicultural education is often depicted as an “educational strategy in which students’ cultural backgrounds are used to develop effective classroom instruction and school environments,” it takes on a larger field than other more specifically labeled approaches as it works to support and extend “the concepts of culture, diversity, equality, social justice, and democracy in the school setting” (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006, p. 5). Initially, the difference may seem slight, but this distinction needs to be made in order to thoroughly and critically examine the comprehensive body of research on multicultural education, pre-service and in-service teachers, and whiteness studies.

Teachers’ Beliefs, Practices, and Understandings

If the profession is to move toward teacher education that is both multicultural and critical, we will need more than the efforts of individual teacher educators who urge prospective teachers to rethink their own beliefs and attitudes about difference, privilege, diversity, and culture (although efforts of this kind are surely important). (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 3)

Although training and curriculum development in school settings are important and “how to address the issue of teaching for diversity is not new to teacher preparation” (Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005, p. 36), teachers’ own personal beliefs and understandings are vital to the success of diversity education in classrooms. “Because teachers handle the bulk of day-to-day interactions with students, their perceptions of multiculturalism are central” (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 182). Therefore, many research studies explore teachers’ attitudes in order to better understand how race, diversity, and multicultural education are realized by teachers.

Interviewing white teachers about their perceptions of multicultural education for their diverse student populations, Banister and Maher (1998) found the following emergent themes – “multiculturalism means diversity,” “it is difference and the melting pot,” “we don’t need it here,” and “we lack the resources and the means” (p. 190). These themes revealed a strong tendency on the teachers’ part to adopt philosophies that indicated a lack of critical examination about multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Looking beyond in-school perceptions, Paccione (2000) surveyed teachers involved in the National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) to explore teachers’ commitment to multicultural education and practices and found that “the key to developing a sustained commitment to multicultural education lies in transformative awareness” (p. 1003). This can be developed through a stage theory of sorts, moving from contextual to emergent to transformational awareness and then to a stage entitled “committed action” (p. 989). However, this process only looked at in-service educators who were already predisposed to multicultural education because of their membership in the NAME organization and not the majority of teachers who possess no such membership or organization to draw from for information and support.

Alternatively, Milner (2005) interviewed and observed an African American female high school English teacher to best understand and highlight the experiences and practices of teachers who are racially different from their student populations. As an African American educator, this teacher’s position allowed her to see and act upon the idea that

students of color need to encounter and experience a curriculum that highlights, showcases, and speaks from the point of view of the life experiences and contributions of people of color, women, and other marginalized groups, not just those of the White mainstream (Milner, 2005, p. 392).

It is for this very reason that the ways in which this in-service educator “helped the students think about themselves and [about] how privilege, power, and marginalization connected to their experience” (Milner, 2005, p. 419) assisted in fulfilling the principle requirements of the prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education. This research suggests that

who teachers are as racial and cultural beings often emerges in their curricular selections and implementation. What and how a teacher teaches reflect how that teacher perceives himself or herself and who and what a teacher stands for. Moreover, we know that who teachers are, their experiences, and stories often find themselves in their work with students. Thus, teaching, on certain level, is almost always a personal and political endeavor, and helping teachers understand themselves (their beliefs, politics, values, and philosophies) will make them more effective and efficacious with their diverse students (Milner, 2005, p. 421).

Much of the qualitative and quantitative literature on teacher education programs focuses on the development and analysis of coursework intended to assist pre-service teachers in developing their multicultural repertoire. The research focuses in one of two areas, either on teacher education programs and their infusion of multicultural concepts or on multicultural specialization classes in teacher education programs. Studies typically address the beliefs, understandings, and awareness levels of pre-service teachers within the contexts of their teacher education classes, while few discuss actual practices that might encourage a more attentive, critical multicultural classroom in the field.

Missing from the literature are studies that focus on how “teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline,” as well as studies that “relate to the extent to which teachers help students understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and

biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it” (J. A. Banks, 2003, p. 5). This disconnect between the beliefs and practices of classroom teachers working with multicultural education is problematic for both schools and students alike. Although many schools and institutions of higher education place importance on education for diverse populations, more research needs to look at how teachers’ beliefs about race, inequity, or social justice translate into multicultural teaching in the classrooms at all levels. The current research that predominantly examines changes in white teachers’ personal beliefs and understandings of multicultural education is insufficient if appropriate images of successful white educators in predominantly white educational settings are to be created and studied.

Curriculum as a Tool for Addressing Diversity

To better understand the implications of professional development on helping educators better relate diversity to their classroom context, studies around teachers using their own course material and curricula in practice around issues of diversity and multicultural education are important. While these studies have been done, few explore the motivations and intentions of teachers enacting curriculum in predominantly white settings as a way to address issues of diversity.

For teachers who are already working and teaching in our schools and classrooms, professional development courses and activities for in-service teachers are just one way for multicultural issues to be addressed (Guyton & Wesche, 2005; Howard, 2001; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997a; Ponterotito, Baluch, Greig, & Rivera, 1998; Troutman Jr, Unger, Ramirez, & Saddler, 2001). The recent studies in this area range from voluntary in-service classes (Banister & Maher, 1998) to intervention workshops for cultural

sensitivity (C. M. Tucker et al., 2005) to multicultural dance training sessions (Chan, 2002). Another set of investigations focus on how white teachers internalize and understand multicultural diversity training outside of the classroom and university or higher education academic setting (Chan, 2002; Schniedewind, 2001; C. M. Tucker et al., 2005). Some workshops can be voluntary (Schniedewind, 2001) while others remain mandated by schools and their related districts (C. M. Tucker et al., 2005). Both types provide teachers with important information regarding topics such as “making diversity education part of the fabric of school life” (p. 24), “introducing new multicultural initiatives” (p. 25), and implementing “school-wide and district-wide change” (p. 26) regarding multicultural education.

Also stressed was the importance of teacher beliefs and awareness about diversity initiatives. It is “the focus of the professional development program on diversity education as an *approach* to teaching that brings consciousness about inequality to all aspects of school life, as much as a particular curriculum or program” (Schniedewind, 2001, p. 27). In this way, research on in-service teacher professional development courses regarding multicultural education looks predominantly at how “teachers can... provide learning experiences that are designed specifically to promote the self-empowerment of culturally diverse students and all other students in their classrooms” (C. M. Tucker et al., 2005, p. 32). However, researchers need to follow educators into the field to examine whether the implementation of multicultural education is actually occurring in classrooms to deal with issues of inequity and social justice.

Different, more non-traditional professional development and in-service training opportunities can also be presented to teachers. Understandings and experiences with

multicultural education provided an initial step for some in-service teachers through the use of cross-cultural movement experiences where teachers were taught five different cultural movements (yoga, jazz, Korean and Caribbean dance, and tai chi chuan practice) (Chan, 2002). “Teacher educators [were introduced] to a new theoretical and practice-oriented paradigm of embodiment in which the body is to be considered as an active experiencing agent” (p. 246) in an effort to increase development of the teachers’ multicultural attitudes. Students from the participating elementary schools were also included in these activities as teachers engaged “the living body in cross-cultural movement practices...[which was] considered as one more way in preparing teachers to work effectively in diverse educational settings” (p. 255). This type of professional development is intended to create a space for the multicultural exploration of teachers, but it focused little on the critical and transformative process necessary for white classroom teachers to enact these diversity pedagogies in their classrooms. How white teachers in predominantly white settings respond to and enact professional development and training focused on diversity and multicultural education must be further investigated in the research so that effective education for teachers of white students can begin to transcend what has unfortunately become the status quo for teaching and learning around issues of racial inequity and cultural diversity.

Multicultural education has also been researched as it applies to the teachings and courses of other subject areas required by many teacher education programs. Upon observing the techniques of teacher education faculty, Wasonga and Piveral (2004) determined that the modeling of multicultural principles within various content area courses had the potential to “provide a quality living-learning environment” (p. 42) for

pre-service teacher education students. After observing university classes for eight weeks, the pre-service teachers completed surveys indicating that multicultural modeling by teacher educators allowed “students to observe multicultural teaching” and had the potential to “enhance the internalization of knowledge and dispositions regarding teaching for diversity” (p. 43). Singer and Smith (2003) found that often “university faculty may not find it necessary to integrate multiculturalism in the curriculum because of the homogeneous nature of the pre-service teacher and faculty population” (p. 46) and determined that steps need to be taken to ensure that all teacher educators, regardless of race, embrace the inclusion of multicultural education and teaching strategies for diversity throughout pre-service teacher training programs. This need for multicultural education courses is noted often throughout the literature on pre-service teacher education programs (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998; McShay & Randolph Leigh, 2005; Valentin, 2006; Zeichner et al., 1998), but still the question remains – what do these initiatives look like during in-service teaching practices in classrooms?

Many of the fieldwork experiences described in the literature are specifically designed and guided by faculty members to involve pre-service teachers of limited cultural knowledge and experience with their assigned school community in working towards a deeper appreciation and understanding of differences and diversity components. However, additional evidence is needed to look at the impact on future teaching for these pre-service teacher education students after they undergo more rigorous cultural immersion/case based experiences.

[It] is unclear whether [pre-service teachers] see it as a tool to address injustice, or ...how much of an impact we are having on their later practice. We realize that although students report that they would like to teach in these ways, it is

important to follow up with them after graduation to determine how and whether they use such practices. (Hyland & Noffke, 2005, p. 377)

When pre-service teachers graduate and enter professional teaching situations, these carefully constructed assignments and shared reflection components from their programs' coursework are no longer readily available; therefore, more research is required to examine the effects of these multicultural courses, projects, and experiences on the teaching of pre-service students in real-life professional teaching situations.

Many teacher education programs invest in a multicultural specialization course intended to instruct pre-service teachers in the different aspects, issues, and strategies of multicultural education, and these classes tended to focus on changing the beliefs and understandings of pre-service teacher education students (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998; Gayle-Evans & Michael, 2006; Jennings & Smith, 2002) through activities and coursework coupled with field placements and student-driven action research projects. These multicultural intensives (one semester or less) (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998) have detailed and ambitious goals for pre-service teachers. It is often the hope that in the end pre-service students will "emphasize not only the role of pedagogical knowledge (e.g., instructional strategies), but also the importance of their own perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs; the role of sociocultural variables in human development; the role of power in school settings; and the need to act as critical inquirers and agents of change in schools" (p. 196). Even in classes and settings where pre-service teachers presented themselves as a racially mixed cohort, "teacher educators in these training sessions frequently present broad generalizations about pupils of particular racial/ethnic and linguistic backgrounds" (p. 190). By "overcom[ing] their racism, classism, and negative attitudes," pre-service teachers will *hopefully* construct a "clear understanding of multicultural education..."

[and] develop educational objectives that are equitable” as well as “how to implement activities and use material in their classrooms” (Gayle-Evans & Michael, 2006, p. 50). Unfortunately, too many times this ambitious *hope* for pre-service teachers to carry through on their apparently transformed beliefs, attitudes, and practices is just that, a hope with no assurance of eventual fulfillment.

Jennings and Smith (2002) followed fourteen white pre-service teachers, who had completed a doctoral level class in multicultural education as part of their teacher training process, into elementary classrooms where they were asked to create action plans. One of the teachers was followed as she worked with her action plan to enact social studies in a critical and multicultural way. She wanted to assist staff and students “to develop conceptualizations of multicultural education more complex than the simplistic ‘tourist’ approaches of teaching about others” (Jennings & Smith, 2002, p. 458), and as a result, found that “many of these teachers [in the schools] commented that they had not before considered looking at different cultural perspectives of history, questioning the limits of the history book, or using inquiry for social studies” (p. 473). In order to effectively investigate the effects of specifically designed multicultural education coursework on pre-service teachers, more extensive research must be done in this area. Do white in-service teachers in predominantly white contexts utilize these multiculturally-focused pre-service experiences when they teach in their classrooms?

Practices in Schools and Classrooms

Moving from school-wide professional development programs and individual beliefs and understandings, the research on teacher preparation for diversity and multicultural education narrows its focus onto teachers’ practices in school and classroom

settings. With the increasing numbers of white students entering pre-service teacher education programs, the issues of awareness and identity development remain a concern. Indeed, the gap between multicultural preparation through higher education experiences and the multicultural experiences of full-time teachers in the classroom must be taken seriously. Data-based research studies on pre-service teacher preparation in multicultural schools reveal that in the “overwhelming presence of whiteness” (Sleeter, 2001, p. 94) pre-service programs can take two avenues to counteract the lack of identity development, awareness, and understanding of non-diverse students; programs can admit and recruit a more culturally diverse group of teacher education students, and/or they can focus more attention on taking multicultural stances in their attitudes and teachings in the predominantly white, middle-class, female teacher education programs. “Continuing business as usual in pre-service teacher education will only continue to widen the gap between teachers and children in schools” (p. 96).

The focus of the Metropolitan Multicultural Teacher Education Program (Haberman & Post, 1998) in the Milwaukee Public Schools “is on preparing the interprofessional practitioner” (p. 102) who possesses “elements of the knowledge base ...[that] are not forms of knowledge found in genes or gained in university courses” (p. 99). These star teachers, with their inherent characteristics and self-awareness based on life and cultural experiences, are “constantly involved in learning more about their children, their families and communities, and what it means to grow up in particular settings” (p. 100) and can resist the overpowering presence of what they might call “street values” in the classroom.

Before urban schools can become more multicultural, they must first become effective in resisting street values which, like other viruses, are carried into school

each day by infected children. At present, students control the urban school's agenda by making educators spend most of their time and energy reacting to street values rather than proactively implementing the stated curriculum... The goal of overcoming street values must be separated from the goal of making school more multicultural. The former deals with issues such as whether or not schools should use metal detectors; the latter deals with teaching and learning about self-identity, enhancing community cultures, and functioning effectively in American society. (Haberman & Post, 1998, pp. 96-97)

Although this research takes a new look at the recruitment of teachers in diverse settings, it also uncomfortably assumes that “street values” are inherently negative and must be counteracted by teachers and education. With the incoming teaching force remaining predominantly white and female, whose knowledge and experiences are being valued and transmitted to students if use of this “star teacher” model is to be used?

Research on pre-service teacher education spans all grade levels, from the primary grades through high school (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998; McNeal, 2005; Singer & Smith, 2003), includes qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies (Gayle-Evans & Michael, 2006; Jennings & Smith, 2002; McIntyre, 1997; Wasonga & Piveral, 2004), and targets all four components of Valentín's (2006) evaluation for diversity checklist. White and diverse populations of pre-service teachers are encountered working on class assignments, community connections, and personal journeys of self-discovery (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998; Singer & Smith, 2003; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). However, the recent research in education does not do enough to look at the connections between effective pre-service teacher education programs and the success of the pre-service students once they enter the field of teaching as full time professionals in the classroom.

Designed to help determine if teachers believe they have the ability to enact successful multicultural education in their classrooms, efforts have been made in the development of multicultural teacher efficacy rating scales (Guyton & Wesche, 2005).

“One strength of [this] scale is that it goes beyond multicultural attitudes and measures multicultural efficacy. An attitude or belief does not necessarily mean that a teacher can incorporate the attitude into classroom action” (Guyton & Wesche, 2005, p. 25). While this quantitative scale is useful in “measuring changes in pre-service teachers as they are trained in multicultural education, pointing out relative strengths and weaknesses of multicultural teacher education programs, predicting teacher success in teaching diverse learners, and diagnosing levels of multicultural efficacy” (p. 26), this self-reporting tool asks undergraduate and graduate teacher education students about their perceived efficacy in the classroom without actually examining any actual classroom practices and/or teaching behaviors.

Even looking at a pre-service teacher’s perceived ability to teach in a multicultural way, little connects actual teaching practices to teacher education programs. Conducting a multi-site case study on two novice high school English teachers (one white, one black), McNeal (2005) found that general multicultural practices were implemented through the use of multicultural literature, active learning techniques, student choice, critical pedagogy, real-life application, cultural physical adaptations, cooperative grouping, and the giving of individual attention (p. 410). While a relatively new avenue, the “study revealed many of the particular ways in which the MTEP [multicultural teacher education programs] helped these teachers, who entered their teacher preparation program with positive experiences with multiculturalism and with strong, positive beliefs about students from diverse backgrounds, interpret their extensive background knowledge into effective multicultural practice and theory” (p. 417). Still, further research is required that looks at pre-service teachers entering as novice

(particularly elementary school) teachers who do not have extended prior experience with multiculturalism.

Because added [multicultural education] courses are often optional, students can complete their teacher education programs without receiving any preparation whatsoever in issues of diversity. Furthermore, unless the ideas introduced in the added courses are reinforced and expanded on in other courses, prospective teachers are not apt to embrace them as their own, particularly if those ideas clash with the views they bring into teacher education. Worse still, if the new ways of thinking are contradicted by courses comprising the “regular” curriculum, any positive effect of the added courses will likely wash out. (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 20)

Studies of these teachers’ perceived and actual effectiveness with regards to their past teacher education programs and their resultant implementation of multicultural theories, philosophies, techniques, and strategies in the classroom are warranted to expand this base of pre-service teacher literature.

By expanding the definition of multicultural education to include the practices and theories associated with it, terms such as “culturally relevant” or “culturally responsive” describe the teaching and learning linked to multicultural pedagogies of equity (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1999; Gay, 1997, 2000, 2005; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995a; Phuntsog, 2001). J. A. Banks (2003) states that,

an equity pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that facilitate that academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, and social-class groups. This includes using a variety of teaching styles that are consistent with the wide range of learning styles within various cultural and ethnic groups (p. 5).

Some of these studies examine the roles of African American teachers as well as their teaching of African American students in schools (A. F. Ball, 2000; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995a). In exploring the notion of culturally sensitive pedagogy, Howard (2001) believes that good multicultural instruction “is tied to the belief that if

learning structures and stimuli are grounded in a cultural context familiar to students, the potential for cognitive expansion is enhanced” (p. 182). Working with both teachers and students who identified as African American, he discovered that “effective teachers of African American students are not exclusively concerned about students’ academic and cognitive development but about their social, emotional, and moral growth as well” (p. 186). It was this dimension of their practice, the in-service teachers’ ability to connect academically as well as culturally, that transformed their teaching and learning practices. Looking at a similar racial population, Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999) proposes a modification to terms culturally relevant and argues,

in order to emphasize the political understanding of social systems of power and a personal commitment to educating children regardless of their social origins, I have renamed culturally relevant teaching as *politically* relevant teaching. This renaming is an attempt to expand the concept of culturally relevant teaching, by drawing attention to the political clarity, or the courage and savvy, of such educators committed to reaching out to and successfully educating “other people’s children” (p. 718).

She concludes that “culturally relevant teachers feel personally, and not simply professionally, invested in educating children of color” which creates a space where “often...commitment derives from the fact [the teachers] share and understand the culture of students” (p. 703). The notion that equity in multicultural education can be derived from common cultural, personal, and political experiences is a powerful tool in rethinking multicultural education in schools and warrants an exploration of populations of teachers and students who are not as typically marginalized by systems of schooling.

Ladson-Billings (1992, 1995a) writes about how culturally relevant instruction is “just good teaching” and identifies three criteria for effective culturally relevant pedagogy: “(a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop

and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160). The teachers of the African American students in the study “identified strongly with teaching” and made it clear that they saw “themselves as a part of the community and teaching as a way to give back to the community” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 163). This philosophical and practical notion of commitment to teaching as a cultural being reinforces the importance of doing research in the realm as it allows teachers to create spaces for interactive and meaningful multicultural action and learning in the classroom. But what of the teachers who do not yet conceptualize themselves as being part of a larger and more invisible culture of whiteness? The power of these white teachers to instill and preserve the status quo in classrooms with students who are similar to them in their levels of multicultural awareness is great and warrants further examination.

The research literature on in-service teachers’ multicultural practices focuses mainly on culturally relevant pedagogy and the experiences of African American students and their teachers (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1999; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1992). Claiming that “the real test of culturally responsive teaching may indeed lie in its ability to create classrooms where race, culture, and ethnicity are not seen as barriers to overcome but are sources of enrichment for all” (Phuntsog, 2001, p. 63), Phuntsog (2001) chose to ask in-service teachers from a multicultural training program what they thought about culturally relevant teaching. He found that teachers’ attitudes “toward culturally responsive teaching practice is...vital” (p. 52) and can directly affect their beliefs and feelings about other general multicultural practices but neglected to challenge teachers’

implicit definitions of culturally relevant teaching and multicultural education as it applies to them professionally and personally. Working with white elementary school teachers of African American students, Cooper (2003) found that white teachers used techniques in their classrooms that were similar to those described in the research on effective African American teachers of like students. But, “unlike the Black teachers described in the literature and some of the independent white teachers, the teachers in the study did not engage in classroom discussion with the children around issues related to their own experience with racism” (p. 425), most likely due to the fact that the white teachers did not share congruent racial experiences with the students in their classrooms.

As the educational community continues to search for studies investigating what white teachers do for multicultural education with white students, the absence of dialogue around issues of racism and ethnic and cultural marginalization is indicative of larger problems. In fact,

the argument can be made that White, middle-class students do well in school because they benefit from culturally centered or culturally responsive teaching. The entire educational enterprise – from its structure to its procedures, policies, images, symbols, sanctions, and actions – is grounded in the cultural values, assumptions, beliefs, heritages, content, decorum, and protocols of European Americans. The learning climates, environments, and materials they produce provide cultural validation, affirmation and support for the White students, which, in turn, facilitate learning and achievement of academic, social, and personal development tasks (Gay, 1997, p. 156).

Therefore, the emphasis on multicultural education for marginalized and diverse populations as enacted and conceptualized through culturally relevant practices of in-service teachers represents a “new” area of study. What does not yet seem to be a concern is how the culturally relevant and multicultural practices of white teachers with affluent, white, non-marginalized populations of students are reified in the elementary

school classrooms and learning environments. Is it perhaps just too obvious to mention, or are the practices of white educators so culturally relevant that they exclude those who present a culture of difference in our schools? What is the consequence to our students if white teachers of predominantly white students continue to teach in white culturally relevant ways? Too often the idea that white educational environments do not need to challenge the status quo of racial injustice because the community is predominantly monocultural is not questioned or problematized.

Overall, the research shows a comprehensive understanding of what teachers and teacher educators can do to create a more equitable learning environment that is empowering to students and describes the limitations and unsuccessful practices teachers encounter in our schools. Whiteness, however, has not been used to frame this work. By expanding the research on these white populations and white teachers' approaches to multicultural education, more emphasis can be placed on how white teachers in these settings sustain or disrupt the power of whiteness through strategies that are critical, transformative, and actively working towards teaching for social justice.

Whiteness at Work

As a theoretical framework for this study, whiteness is used as a lens to critically look at race in a critical, socio-political context (Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000; Rogers & Mosley, 2006). For example, Rogers' & Mosley's (2006) case study of a second grade white teacher uncovered how race informs students' construction of how "literate positions are acquired and constructed through the lenses of whiteness and race" (p. 465). Using discursive theories of whiteness, this study looked at students in a racially diverse classroom using interviews, researcher journals, document collection, and critical

discourse analysis (CDA). From the data, key themes such as the noticing and naming of race, a reiterating of white privilege, and the disrupting of whiteness/development of white allies emerged. Critical collaboration between practitioners in the field and researchers in the academy sheds light on not only how students use race to create and reshape their identities but how teachers manage this same process in the classroom as they work to teach and learn alongside their own students.

An integral part of looking at how whiteness is enacted in a variety of educational contexts is the investigation of teachers and their identity development (Johnson, 2002; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; Martin, Krizek, Nakayama, & Bradford, 1999; McCarthy, 2003; Sleeter, 1993). In general, teacher education programs tend to be staffed and attended by predominantly white females (Cross, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Wiggins, Follo, & Eberly, 2007), and to consider how their own racial identity affects the ways in which they choose to infuse content regarding diversity into the curriculum, teachers in general may first need to examine their own racial and cultural positions in an educational realm.

In a seminal piece on whiteness in teacher education, McIntyre (1997) conducted an action research study situated within a teacher training program of thirteen white, female pre-service teachers as they investigated their positions as white educators and how this might affect their teaching and learning of general education content. She found that while the teachers possessed various conceptions usually attributed to white educators – seeing themselves as saviors, identifying colorblindness as an asset, expressing difficulty seeing the duality of their positions as white and privileged – they also were not being provided with enough intellectual and emotional space in teacher

education programs to engage in dialogues and discussions about these very concepts. She suggested that “white educators should make our whiteness public and join white colleagues and colleagues of color in self- and collective-dialogue about the multiple meanings of whiteness and its relationship to education” (McIntyre, 1997, p. 677).

In another study, McIntyre (2002) examined white teacher identity with pre-service teachers with the intention of “disrupting students’ dysconscious racism by illustrating how I provide students with an opportunity to examine and critique whiteness” (p. 31). Using collages to understand how students negotiated the multiple meanings of whiteness, McIntyre found that students demonstrate a view of their own white racial identity as normal. This study illustrates a set of findings that one might expect after reading the literature on whiteness; the students demonstrated themes such as resistance to whiteness as oppressive, denial of individual responsibility, and a reluctant acknowledgement of white privilege. Indeed, these themes demonstrate a need to examine our in-service teaching force and the ways in which discourses of whiteness are enacted in the everyday practices of white teachers in schools and classrooms.

The racial awareness of in-service teachers also needs to be a priority if research on whiteness, classroom practice, and identity development is to be effectively undertaken. Johnson (2002) worked with six white female teachers to develop their individual autobiographical narratives from a series of interviews and observations in an effort to answer the following questions.

How do White teachers learn to go beyond the color-blind approach and “see” race? What experiences in childhood and adolescence shape their views? What is the influence of their professional education? How does awareness of race influence their personal identities as teachers and their views of their classroom practice? (Johnson, 2002, p. 154)

These questions enabled Johnson to look beyond classroom practices and professional development workshops in isolation to uncover teachers thoughts about race and diversity issues in the classroom and go on to say that further work is needed if teachers are to begin the process of “[critiquing] their complicity in maintaining racial privilege” (p. 164).

Often popular ways of addressing large audiences of teachers, in-service professional development workshops are intended to provide teachers experience with diversity and time to investigate their own feelings about race and difference. Lawrence and Tatum (1997a) used this type of approach to teach a course called Anti-Racist and Effective Classroom Practice for All Students, the goal of which was to “create an intervention that might positively impact teacher effectiveness in working with black students participating in the METCO program [a voluntary school desegregation program in the Boston area]” (p. 165). Using their documents for this class, the work of 84 white participants was analyzed for anti-racist classroom practices. They found that teachers focused their anti-racist practices on activities towards the community/school, curricular concerns, and institutional efforts although this course was different than many other commonly conceived professional development courses for predominantly white educators. Spread out over the semester to allow for continuing contact and feedback regarding issues and topics brought up in the course, it was also intentional about unmasking racism and the ways it operates to privilege and marginalize in schools and in society. While this program seems effective in enabling teachers to look outside themselves, their attitudes and beliefs and towards anti-racist practices in action, the teachers “expressed some anxiety about becoming isolated in their schools as lone anti-

racist voices” (p. 176). Consideration of how particularly white teachers will “re-enter” a culture of whiteness as newly aware, anti-racist educators is an essential concern to consider if the patterns of whiteness and white privilege are to be successfully brought to light in settings where issues of race and identity often go unnoticed and unmentioned.

Using ethnographic data collection techniques such as participant observation, interviewing and artifact analysis, Lewis (2003) immersed herself in three schools (one white suburban, one diverse urban, and one biracial/non-white) in Southern California. Writing critically about how race, identity and power were negotiated in each educational space, she unpacked the white suburban setting of Foresthills Elementary School in ways that no other recent research has; by looking at race (not specifically whiteness) she was able to examine the colorblind/color-conscious mentality of the predominantly white educational community and compare it to the ways race was addressed and complicated in the other two settings. While the research done in the white suburban school found that “multiculturalism as currently manifested not only does little to challenge students’ understanding of culture, difference, and race but in fact serves to defend the status quo” (Lewis, 2003, p. 35), it mainly looked at the ways in which race in general was negotiated in the school, not specifically whiteness. Lewis compared the ways each setting dealt with race but spent little time with the white teachers to do more than make generalized recommendations as to what schools can do to encourage white teachers, students, and families to talk more about race, power, and critical thinking about issues of social justice and marginalization.

While much research has focused on whiteness and multicultural initiative in education (Hyttén & Adkins, 2002; McCarthy, 2003; Richardson & Villenas, 2000;

Sleeter, 2001; Trainor, 2002), the majority of studies on whiteness in K-12 school settings examine how teachers see and grapple with their own white identity. Although this is essential in understanding how white teachers construct their racial identities, research also needs to ask – how do these white teachers resist/disrupt/challenge or perpetuate/contribute to/sustain the discourses of whiteness operating in educational settings that remain predominantly white? If teachers are asked to consider their race, then they must also be asked to consider how that race functions within their classrooms and communities. Without this critical component, teachers may indeed walk away from researchers' efforts with little idea of how to act in ways that support anti-racist, critically multicultural, and truly socially just efforts to dynamically change the ways they consider teaching and learning.

Theoretical Framework

Investigating the discourses of whiteness calls for the use of a critical theoretical lens in an effort to uncover the varied experiences and understandings of these teachers. The intersections of these discourses can be considered in ways that illuminate how whiteness functions within the lives and professional practices of white teachers in predominantly white settings. How do teachers in these settings construct and resist images of whiteness? Do their practices reify, reconstruct, or redefine discourses that perpetuate the racially influenced social, economic, political, and educational hierarchies in the U.S.? This study sought to understand how power and whiteness operated with white teachers in a predominantly white elementary school. To frame this work, I drew upon two theoretical lenses – critical theory, specifically the work of post-structuralist Michel Foucault, and whiteness studies, a critical theory that builds on the work of

Foucault to specifically examine the social construction of whiteness, white privilege, and a colorblind ideology in action.

Critical Theory of Foucault

A critical theoretical lens “is best understood as a state of mind, a critical, self-referential posture and style, a different way of seeing and working, rather than a fixed body of ideas, a clearly worked-out position or a set of critical methods and techniques” (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 2) and this type of reflexive critique can effectively act to shape not only data and information, but the design of the research study itself. The work of Michel Foucault is central to understanding how critical theory shapes an understanding of how “discourses exist both in written and oral forms and in the social practices of everyday life....To be effective, they require activation through the agency of the individuals whom they constitute and govern in particular ways as embodied subjects” (Weedon, 1997, p. 108). The use of a critical theoretical lens in this research allows for a closer examination of how discourses of whiteness operate within the school context and how they govern teachers, students, and families as embodied subjects. Discourse can be seen in the images, practices, and talk of teachers as it operates to position individuals in particular roles and subjectivities within the larger socio-political and educational context.

Discourses, in Foucault’s work, are ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects which they seek to govern. (Weedon, 1997, p. 105)

Foucault uses the interrelated themes of discourse, power, knowledge, and subjectivity in his approach to representation and language (Hall, 1997) and centrally

locates discourse as being “about the production of knowledge through language” (Hall, 1992, pp. 201-202). As defined earlier, discourse is any type of text that intentionally or unintentionally contains, transmits, and communicates meaning in any form (Cazden, 2001; Fairclough, 2003; Rogers et al., 2005). Foucault’s understanding of power stems from this idea that discourse often “speaks but is yet silent – it is an absent presence, yet a powerful one” that works to create rules and limitations that often “author-ises certain people to speak and correspondingly silences others, or at least makes their voices authoritative” (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 90). Acting in privileging and marginalizing ways, discourse is therefore able to “[empower] certain agents to create representations, and thereby to authoritatively pronounce on the shape and form of the world” (Prior, 2004, p. 325).

This relationship between discourse and power serves to complicate existing structures, as well as bring into question issues of knowledge production and ownership. Foucault describes power as “a relation....[that] is exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects” (Weedon, 1997, p. 110) and through these power discursive negotiations, knowledge is created, transmitted, and maintained “to regulate the conduct of others” (Hall, 1997, p. 47). So while “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it” (Foucault, 1981, p. 101, as cited in Weedon, 1997, p. 107) by creating “regimes of truth” where knowledge “does not simply represent the truth of what is but, rather, constitutes what is taken to be true” by the subjects of that same discursive process (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 87).

Subjectivity refers to the ways individuals experience the world in ways that make them subject to the discourses with which they interact. Foucault’s significant

contributions to critical theory indicate that it is not the subject who wields the power to create discourse; it is the discourse that produces the subject themselves within powerful discursive systems of representation, meaning, and interpretation.

Indeed, this is one of Foucault's most radical propositions: the 'subject' is produced within discourse. This subject of discourse cannot be outside discourse, because it must be subjected to discourse....The subject can become the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces. It can become the object through which power is relayed. (Hall, 1997, p. 55)

Critical theory encourages researchers to investigate how these ideas of discourse, power, knowledge, and subjectivity inform and create the lived experiences of individuals, communities, and institutions. By looking at how these concepts shape "immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, [and] imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize" (Foucault, 1982, p. 781), critical theoretical and pedagogical approaches attempt to explore and unpack these complex negotiations of power and discourse. One form of this critical approach can be found in theories and approaches to whiteness, a powerful discursive system that shapes the lived experiences of both whites and people of color as it creates a complex and normalized regime of truth.

Whiteness Studies

While "the connection between critical pedagogy and multicultural education has been developed in stronger theoretical terms" (Nieto, 1995, p. 192) in the past few decades, criticisms of multicultural education cite that it has been trivialized and has not fully addressed whiteness and by this omission, often renders whiteness invisible (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Nieto, 1995; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). To make whiteness

visible, continued work is necessary to compel white individuals and institutions to question the taken for granted discursive power dynamics at work in predominantly white settings. Researchers need to continue to look at issues in education, such as whiteness, as being created by but also subject to the discursive systems at work within schools and the larger socio-political contexts of education. Theories of whiteness and critical whiteness studies strongly relate to the critical postmodern nature of this research; by accessing “the usefulness of a critical theory of whiteness...to contribute socio-theoretic clarity to the struggle to disrupt and dismantle the structures of racial oppression” (Owen, 2007, p. 218), the powerful discourses of white teachers in predominantly white settings can be examined further. Postmodernists would say that the realities that are present in teachers’ daily lives are not absolute in their existence; these very ‘real’ experiences are “constructed by representations and therefore of multiple perspectives where representations become reality and where reality is always, necessarily, represented.” (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 14)

As the discourses of teachers in these predominantly white settings are identified, these daily ‘realities’ can be unpacked and analyzed. By using a critical theoretical lens to explore the discourses of whiteness, the ways in which these powerful discursive structures are created and maintained can be realized. Too often

for those who speak it, a discourse is a given – it operates ‘behind their backs,’ it is an ‘unthought.’ It is not itself questioned although it is the means by which questions are asked. One consequence of this is that discourses not only constitute objects but ‘in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention’ (Foucault, 1974, p. 49, as cited in Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 90).

For this reason, whiteness is defined as a system of power historically created by whites that serves to privilege white people through institutional practices and discourses.

Whiteness also serves to marginalize people of color by utilizing discourses that are so insidious they often go unrecognized.

Working with the understanding that “subjectivity is discursively produced in social institutions and processes” (Weedon, 1997, p. 49), the discourses of whiteness often function to minimize the subjective experiences of people of color and deny “the ways in which people make sense of their lives [which is] a necessary starting point for understanding how power relations structure society” (p. 8). As a system of power, it also functions in ways that too often normalize the state of being white as the undefined, yet most desirable “right way” for anyone to be. By creating a hegemonic system, whiteness works to perpetuate itself by dominating those often labeled as racial “Others”, while at the same time working to bestow invitations of limited inclusion upon these same previously marginalized groups.

Whiteness has been examined in various ways (R. Frankenberg, 1999; Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997; Rasmussen, Klinenberg, Nexica, & Wray, 2001; Ratcliffe, 2005; Tehranian, 2000). Michael Eric Dyson (Chennault, 1998; McLaren, 2000) provides a comprehensive look at whiteness as he defines it through three different elements: *whiteness as identity*, described as the association with a type of American cultural mindset that positions and defines its whiteness only through its opposition to blackness or the Other; *whiteness as ideology*, depicted as the powerful and dominating force whiteness has played in infiltrating systems of thought and action in the continued development of this country; and *whiteness as an institution*, where whiteness is virtually inscribed in the very foundations of our nation’s most influential institutions.

These elements of whiteness – identity, ideology, and institution – are articulated and reinforced over space and time. They substantiate the argument that Whites

don't understand themselves in abstraction from the cultural institutions and the critical mythologies that accrete around whiteness. What we've witnessed over the last decade is a crisis in the myth of whiteness; that is, it has been exposed as a visible and specific identity, not something that is invisible and universal. Whiteness has been "outed," and as a consequence of its outing, it has to contend with its own genealogy as one ethnicity among other ethnicities, as one race among other races. (Chennault, 1998, p. 303)

Whiteness is not always a tangible property, and its creation is not necessarily purposeful as it shapes and changes the identities of those who fall within its confines. It works, very often, as an unmarked racial category, and "is always constructed, always in the process of being made and unmade. Indeed, its characterization as unmarked marker is itself an 'ideological' effect that seeks to cover the tracks of its constructedness, specificity, and localness, even as they appear" (R. Frankenberg, 1999, p. 16).

Many teachers labor under the false idea that race is based in the biology of an individual, somehow etched into the genetic codes that make each person who he or she claims to be. In actuality, race is a socially constructed concept (R. Frankenberg, 1999; Roediger, 1991) based on years of legal rulings and historically substantiated systems of hegemony.

Race is not something we are born with (in that it is not a genetic or biological fact) but something that is mapped into us from the first moments of life (with the listing of race on the birth certificate). ...Race then is not a real or innate characteristic of bodies but a set of signifiers projected onto these bodies – signifiers we must learn about and negotiate in order to successfully move through the social world. (Lewis, 2003, p. 6)

This trope of race is a stereotypical image or typically occurring representation of racial identity, and is used in many ways to name and predict characteristics from behavior to political affiliation (R. Frankenberg, 1999; Ratcliffe, 2005). Ratcliffe (2005) remarks how the trope of race is used as a *biological essence* – determinant of character, moral, and intellectual traits, as *biological ancestry* – inherited physical attributes, as *ethnic*

ancestry – communication of cultural heritage, as a *cultural position* – categorical ways to position individuals, ideas, and objects, and as a *political class* – ways in which people are linked for political action (p. 16). This multifunctional trope of race is one that possesses within itself the power to include or exclude individuals or groups; without careful and critical examination, these stereotypical images of racial identity and orientation are often ones that are unconsciously passed on by our white teachers to students like themselves in their classrooms who do not recognize the power they possess in just being white. “In the absence of the reality of whiteness, I learned as a child that to be ‘safe’ it was important to recognize the power of whiteness, even to fear it, and to avoid encountering it” (hooks, 1999, p. 175). By perpetuating this overly concrete image of race in the absence of any historical or socio-political context, white teachers create pathways for diversity in which their own racial identification or status cannot be brought into question.

Power and privilege are terms that are closely linked in discussions and debates regarding whiteness studies and they are often complicated by the apparent (and actual) slipperiness of whiteness itself. “[I] am struck by the extraordinary ease with which (especially white) individuals can slide from awareness of whiteness to the lack thereof and, related to that slippage, from race-consciousness to unconsciousness and from antiracism to racism” (R. Frankenberg, 2001, p. 77). This lack of awareness of racial identification leads many theorists to claim that “whiteness needs to be understood as conjunctural, as a composite term that shifts in denotive and connotative emphasis, depending on how its elements are combined and on the contexts in which it operates” (McLaren, 2000, p. 66). Critical theory combined with ideas of interconnectedness and

positionality help to address this issue, but pinning down whiteness in the minds and lives of white teachers surrounded in white contexts of schooling continues to be problematic. Because white teachers in predominantly white settings have very little to challenge their own experiences as less than normal, they are more than likely working from a standpoint that is privileged by the very whiteness they cannot begin to bring into focus.

However, white people's conscious racialization of others does not necessarily lead to a conscious racialization of the white self. Indeed, here we return to the proposition with which we began: that whiteness makes itself invisible precisely by asserting its normalcy, its transparency, in contrast with the marking of others on which its transparency depends. (R. Frankenberg, 1999, p. 6)

The recent literature on the theories and practices of white elementary school teachers in predominantly white settings is limited in its scope. Studies on multicultural education do much to investigate the beliefs, understandings, attitudes, and practices of both pre-service and in-service teachers, and while the bulk of pre-service studies intend to help reconceptualize programs and the implementation of models of multicultural teacher education in institutions of higher education, very few studies follow pre-service education students into their elementary classrooms to see how multicultural education is implemented and realized within the schools' curricula and with students. Studies that focus on current in-service teachers' experiences in either pre-service or professional development programs are needed so that the research can move beyond the quantification of personal attitudes and beliefs as sufficient qualities of an effective multicultural educator. "Research in teacher education needs to follow graduates into the classroom, and our work needs to extend beyond pre-service education, linking pre-service education with community-based learning and with ongoing professional development and school reform" (Sleeter, 2001, p. 103).

While the literature often has no choice but to consider the beliefs, attitudes, and identities of white, female students (due to the prevalently decreasing diversity of our teacher education programs), the research does not follow into practice those teachers who eventually teach in predominantly white contexts. White teachers working with communities of students who are identified as predominantly white (monocultural) need to be considered as researchers look at issues of whiteness and multicultural education in elementary school classrooms. Schools serving our youngest students who are privileged as part of the dominant racial/cultural group in the United States must be investigated to reveal what white teachers are doing to encourage not just culturally relevant, but also diverse, multicultural understandings and actions in classrooms and learning environments. Research needs to be done to look at how discourses of whiteness operate in these settings and within the practices of these white teachers. By exploring how these teachers challenge or sustain discourses in predominantly white school settings, research can begin to examine how diversity education is working within communities where race and cultural diversity are not always a necessary part of the educational conversation. To ignore the importance of this missing link is to rely too heavily on those who have already been racially and culturally marginalized by our systems of schooling to provide effective multicultural education for teachers and students alike.

Across most settings and contexts, the research literature looks at curricular elements, beliefs systems, and strategies for success, but with pre-service teacher education research focusing on predominantly white students in higher education programs and research on in-service teachers honing in on teachers of color instructing diverse classrooms of predominantly marginalized students of color; is there space left to

consider what is happening with regard to whiteness and how it functions with white teachers who are teaching predominantly white student populations? The literature is thorough in its coverage of teaching for diversity within racially and ethnically diverse settings by diverse educators, but considering the structures of power and entitlement in our society, the ways whiteness operates through the discourses of white teachers in white educational contexts needs to be considered if any type of teaching for social justice and transformation is to be taken seriously in our most privileged of settings.

Certain critical key questions must be considered if a review of the research on whiteness, diversity, and multicultural education is to serve the educational community. Most of the current research explores teachers who serve historically marginalized populations of students in urban schools, predominantly teaching students of color. If the goal “is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school” (J. A. Banks & Banks, 2001, p. 1), then the schools, teachers, and students who benefit from the institutional power of whiteness must be investigated as well. What is happening in these white educational contexts? What are the discourses white teachers use in these predominantly white settings? Is there change happening there with regards to the goals and purposes of multicultural education? What does it look like in these classrooms? If this research is not done, there is danger in continuing to serve and preserve the status quo. Using teachers as a lens to see how whiteness functions in predominantly white school settings allows topics like multicultural education, professional training and development, teachers’ personal beliefs, and classroom

practices to be seen as tools teachers utilize as they work to either challenge or sustain patterns of inequity and white superiority in their school environments. The next section of this paper will outline the methodology of this study as it proposes to investigate the discourses of whiteness and how white teachers in predominantly white schools operate to perpetuate or challenge patterns of racial injustice and white superiority in elementary schools and classrooms.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The recent literature on whiteness and multicultural issues in education highlights the need for additional research focusing on how whiteness operates in predominantly white settings where these teachers may operate to resist or reify the power and privilege of whiteness. Using ethnographic data collection techniques, this study examined whiteness and how it operated through the discourses of two white K-2 teachers situated within their predominantly white school and classroom contexts. To analyze interviews, observations, artifacts, and field notes, interpretative qualitative analysis and inductive coding using whiteness studies and a critical theoretical lens were employed to investigate the data within its multiple and varied contexts.

Setting

This critical research study was conducted in the Norris School District in Spokesbury, New Jersey at Fulton Elementary School,¹ a K-2 school that offers 16 sections of half day Kindergarten, 18 full day first grade classes, and 19 full day second grade classes. According to the 2009-10 New Jersey Department of Education – School Report Cards online (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009), the student enrollment is 240 half-day Kindergarten, 332 first grade students, and 322 second grade students with the average class size for the entire school at 19.4 students and 11.5 students per faculty member. The percentage of students with limited English proficiency is 2.6% with 74.4% of the students in the district speaking English as a first language in their homes. No suspensions or expulsions were reported and the district's total cost per pupil

¹ All names of people and locations in this study have been changed to protect the identities of the participants, the school, and the surrounding community.

was \$15,858. Spokesbury's population racially identified as 67.7% White, 2.8% Black or African American, 25.6% Asian, 0.0% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 1.3% of some other race, with 4.6% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino (United States Bureau of the Census, 2010). Fulton Elementary School was selected for this study based on the approximately 61.2% Caucasian/White student population (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005-06) with over 95% Caucasian/White teaching/administrative staff and faculty.

The township's population is 22,254 with a median age of 40.8 years and is comprised of mainly upper to upper-middle socio-economic class residents and families, with a median family income of \$156,621 with a margin of error of +/- \$19,943 (United States Bureau of the Census, 2009, 2010). While the school policies and administrative statements support, embrace, and encourage the diversity of its student body, many other sources have difficulty embracing the idea that Spokesbury is a changing community. With a growing population of Asian students attending its elementary schools (and later moving into its middle and high school), this elementary school is positioned uniquely within the district as the most diverse racially and looked at as responsible for educating the youngest students entering Norris School District. Several newspaper articles described Spokesbury as a place that is specifically being chosen by Asian families as a highly desirable place to live. For example, one article in particular interviewed a local resident about the changing demographics of the community, who responded by saying that the Asian residents enjoy the new homes, the good schools, and the location of this community as it is close to transportation, ethnic supermarkets, and employment locations (Gebeloff & Patterson, 2006).

Many of the media statements send mixed and stereotypical messages about life and the changing demographics of communities such as Spokesbury, which has been identified as historically white. Often, Asian students are not seen as diverse as they represent a model minority, a group who “successfully internalizes the worldview...of the dominant culture” (Kramer, 2003, p. 5). This concept has developed over time due to social, political, and historical trends and changes in the U.S. “The model minority myth derives from the perception that Asian cultural values of hard work, family cohesion, self-sufficiency and a drive for success propelled recent immigrants into and beyond the American middle class within a generation or two” (Lowery, 2007, para. 1). This myth places Asian individuals and communities in the U.S. in a position where their ability to be seen or ignored is based solely on the constructs of a historically powerful white majority. Through the power of this whiteness Asians (and other marginalized groups) are rendered both hypervisible and invisible simultaneously; only through their contrast or similarity to the qualities privileged by a system dominated by the constructs of whiteness are they ultimately positioned in local and national communities (R. Frankenberg, 1993).

When I began working as a teacher in the Norris School District in 1999, the population’s racial makeup was much different than it was at the time of this research project. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000), the total population of Spokesbury was 17,481 people in 2000 and the statistics show the population as being 84.6% White, 2.1% Black or African American, 0.0% American Indian and Alaska Native, 11.5% Asian, 0.0% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 0.0% Other and 1.3% as more than one race, with a 0.0% Latino representation (p. 57). The student

populations in Spokesbury's K-12 schools reflected this predominantly white demographic and it was not uncommon for teachers, administrators, and community members to refer to Fulton Elementary as a "white" or "not diverse" school. As time went on, the percentage of white students fell and the numbers of Asian (primarily Chinese) and Southeast Asian (primarily Indian) began to increase (Figure 3); yet people continued to ignore these changing racial demographics and refer to the setting as a predominantly white school, which is in sharp contrast to the ways that many white people overestimate the percentages of African American students (Gallagher, 2003b). Therefore, throughout this paper I will use the local discourse in referring to this setting as *predominantly white* (Orfield & Lee, 2005) and show through the data how this notion (albeit not supported by demographics) is endorsed and reinforced through the discourses of whiteness in Fulton Elementary School.

As the community within and around Fulton Elementary changed, it was necessary for this study to investigate how these white teachers have addressed the infusion of more students of color into their educational settings. Will the changing population create a context in which a school must rethink its values, assumptions, and messages? How does the myth of multiculturalism express itself in this predominantly white educational setting? How do white elementary school teachers operate in predominantly white educational contexts? How do overarching discourses of whiteness operate in these elementary school settings and within the practices of these white teachers? How do the teachers resist/disrupt/challenge or perpetuate/contribute to/sustain whiteness through these discourses? Fulton Elementary School, a predominantly white elementary education setting with a changing population of Asian and Southeast Asian

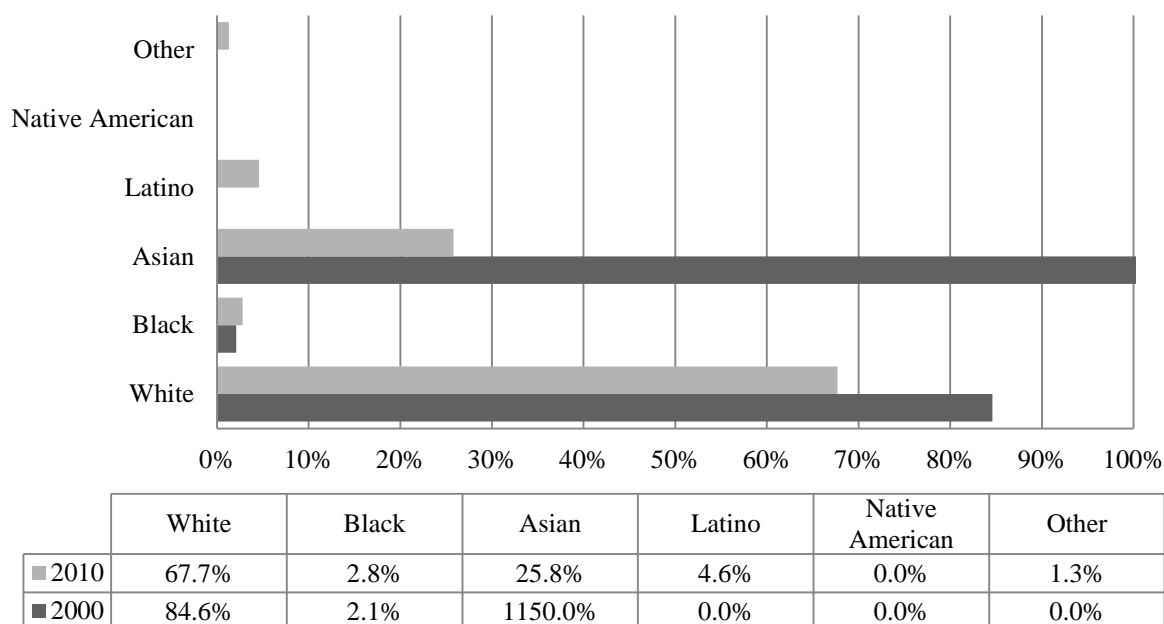


Figure 3. Population percentages in Spokesbury Township, by Race, 2000-2010 (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000, 2010).

students and a dedication to maintaining high education standards, provided a location rich with opportunities to investigate how white teachers in schools that are perceived as predominantly white work to create images of themselves, their teaching practices, and the power structures that function within this school environment.

Participants

The key participants of this study, two white, male elementary school teachers, Steven and Michael, were selected to take part in this study based on self-nomination and administrative/principal recommendation. In recruiting potential participants, I presented a brief summary of the research study and handed out a survey to all of the kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers at Fulton Elementary School at their monthly grade level meetings. The survey shown in Appendix A asked the teachers questions about their racial and cultural identity as well as their interest in a research project about white

teachers, whiteness, race and their own teaching practices. The presentation explained that the study would be an exploration of how white teachers in predominantly white contexts work and interact with the concepts of race and culture, the principles of diversity and their related practices. The teachers were informed of the time requirements that participating in the study would entail as well as the benefits and risks of their potential participation. I explained that this study could potentially help them to look more deeply into their own teaching practices and the ways that they represent themselves and teach in their classrooms. Each teacher completed the aforementioned demographic background questionnaire and indicated their level of interest for participating in this study. The results of the questionnaire are provided in Appendix B. The survey results were then reviewed to gauge each teacher's willingness to participate on a scale of 1 (not interested) to 5 (very interested) as well as their reasons for wanting to look at their teaching through the critical lens of this study.

Based on these responses, nine potential participants were rated a high interest level of either 4 or 5, shown in Table 1. Two of these teachers were eliminated because they were not white. (They were, however, contacted later to participate in interviews with teachers of color.) A reading support teacher was not selected because she did not teach full-time in the classroom. In addition, the first grade teacher with 13 years of experience assisting and teaching in PreK/K was not asked to participate as she was new to her grade level at Fulton. Moreover, two teachers in Kindergarten and first grade (three and four years teaching experience respectively) were not asked to participate because I had past supervisory relationships with them when I worked in the district as a teacher. To ensure the study's integrity, I felt that this power dynamic might not be

Table 1

Partial Section from Participant Selection Table

Name (#)	Sex	Grade Level Taught	Years of Experience Teaching	Race/Ethnicity	Language(s) Spoken	Interest Level (1-5)
01	M	1	13	White	English	5
02	M	1	10	Caucasian	English	5
03	F	1	3	White	English	5
04	F	2	3	Pakistani	English, Urdu	5
05	F	1	9	Caucasian	English	5
06	F	1	13	Caucasian	English	5
07	F	RR	8	Caucasian	English	5
08	F	K	4	Caucasian	English	4
09	F	2	3	Chinese	English	4

appropriate. For the three remaining teachers, I solicited recommendations from the chief school administrator. Based on this conversation, two white male, first grade teachers (Steven and Michael) were asked to participate as key informants in this study.

Data Collection

The data in the study was collected through in-depth interviews with teachers, parents, and administrators; observations in classrooms, professional spaces, and faculty meetings; researcher field notes; and document review/artifact analysis. I used a system of prolonged engagement and close interaction (interviews, observations and self-reflection), with the focus of inquiry being placed on the individuals and the images, practices, and discourses in which they engaged within the classrooms and the school. A

timeline for engagement is provided in Appendix C. This approach to data collection and analysis in this study sought to make connections between all possible core meanings and themes that were eventually reduced from the data sample collected (Creswell, 1998).

The following sections describe in depth the types of data used, how each type was collected, and the ways it addressed the study's research questions about how whiteness operated in predominantly white elementary school settings.

Critical Interviews

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant in the study. Steven and Michael each participated in eleven semi-structured interviews (one pre-interview before observations begin, one reflective post-observation interview, and a minimum of nine formal interviews during the study) that lasted approximately 30 minutes each, as well as classroom and school observations occurring 2-3 times a week for a four month period that occurred at convenient times for each participant. These interviews were not only important in uncovering their perceptions of whiteness but also assisted in creating a comfortable, intellectual space where candid conversations could occur around topics of diversity, racism, power, identity and multicultural education in their classrooms. Sample interview questions and observation topics are shown in Appendices D and E.

In addition to the two teacher participants, two chief school administrators (Administrator 1 and 2, both white), two teachers of color (one Asian and one Middle Eastern), and four classroom parents (two white parents, one African American parent, and one Indian parent) were sought out as informants for their perceptions of whiteness at work within Fulton Elementary School and Norris School District. In order to gather

more information about how whiteness operated in the school and community setting, the administrators at the school were interviewed for approximately 45 minutes each while the two teachers and four parents' interviews ranged from 10 minutes to 30 minutes. These critical interviews acted "more like conversations than formal events with pre-determined response categories" and allowed for the investigation of the participants' ideas and perceptions while still "respect[ing] how the participant frame[d] and structure[d] the responses" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 108).

Following a feminist research tradition, the interviews with the participants involved the use of a dialectic method in which both the interviewer and interviewee engaged in the critical co-construction of concepts, knowledge, understanding, and context as it related to the situation in question (Sarantakos, 2004). I structured each weekly conversation (see Table 2) around key questions and guiding topics that sought to facilitate the collaborative knowledge construction process with both Steven and Michael during their personal interviews. The interviews took place in each teacher's classroom at a time convenient to them (lunch hours, prep periods, before or after school) and the interviews usually began by me asking an experience question (Patton, 1990) before moving onto topics based on theory and my observations in the classroom and school. Using a feminist interview approach, I tried to structure the interviews as a conversation where I would be able to share my own perspectives while helping to demonstrate a critical approach to talking about whiteness. These conversations continued until the students returned to the classroom for instruction or we had exhausted the theme for the day. Trying to disrupt the power dynamic that typically exists between researcher and subject, this approach allowed me to see the participants as partners in this research

Table 2

Weekly Guiding Interview Topics and Questions for Steven and Michael

Interview	Guiding Topics and Questions
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Could you please describe yourself? ▪ What made you want to become a teacher? ▪ Can you talk about your teacher preparation program(s)?
2	<i>Reflections on observations: SS curriculum meeting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can you describe Norris School District (race, class, historical perspectives, etc.)?
3	<i>Reflections on observations: Lesson planning and Classroom environment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do you see your role as the teacher? ▪ What is your philosophy of teaching? ▪ Can you define your own racial identity?
4	<i>Reflections on observations: Language use and Professional development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are there intersections of race, class, culture in Norris School District?
5	<i>Reflections on observations: Preparation for International Day</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In what ways is race discussed in school? ▪ Does your white racial identity impact your teaching in the classroom? ▪ Do your white students ever talk about being white? ▪ Describe “The Family Book” conversation at Fulton
6	<i>Reflections on observations: Internationally Day recap</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What does it mean to be American?
7	<i>Reflections on observations: Culturally themed months and celebrations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do you feel about a heroes and holidays approach to diversity in school? How do parents react to this approach? ▪ Does the concept of being ‘politically correct’ influence your work?
8	<i>Reflections on observation: Academic instruction in the classroom</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you feel that people at Fulton are privileged/disadvantaged based on their race? ▪ Do you ever feel privileged because you are white?
9	<i>Reflections on observations: Student services for academic assistance</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you feel the effects of white privilege? ▪ How would you describe your relationship with the parents in your classroom?
10	<i>Reflections on observations: Personal beliefs and Guiding principles</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does your gender identity operate in the school environment?
11	<i>Reflections on observations: Linger issues/topics/questions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What were some of the highlights and/or lowlights of this research process for you? ▪ What are some things you would like to see done or talked about in school around issues of social justice or race? ▪ How do you think these ideas should be implemented at Fulton?

process, and as partners, they would often send me emails or phone messages when topics occurred to them during the duration of the study. (e.g., “Next time, remind me to talk about the incident with the doll that happened Thursday during that parent-teacher meeting.”)

All interviews were audio-recorded to facilitate transcription of the information that was provided by each participant and these recordings were kept in a secure and locked location for the duration of the study along with any other data that was collected. All participants also reviewed and signed the teacher consent, administrative consent, and audio-recording consent forms and those interviews and observations were audio-recorded and transcribed to facilitate the incorporation of information from field notes and observational records for later analysis. Templates of these forms are provided in Appendices F, G, and H. The engagement in critical conversations on whiteness with the teachers, administrators and families helped to unpack the discourses (images, practices, and talk) of white educators in a predominantly white setting which then enabled a further exploration in the larger context.

Observations and Field Notes

Observations and informal field notes were taken during the study in order to provide ample and adequate context for events and details. These notes were “detailed, non-judgmental, concrete descriptions of what [had] been observed” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 107) and were dated, transcribed, and placed within the interview or event data to which they applied. I was in the classrooms of these two teachers and observing at Fulton Elementary School two to three days a week for four months. In addition, I attended faculty meetings, curriculum development sessions, before and after

school activities, as well as community events in order to create a close link between myself and the larger school community. Using multiple observation settings in this study (e.g., the teachers' classrooms, the teachers' lounge, parent sponsored events, special area classes, etc.) assisted in the uncovering and discovery of "complex interactions in natural social settings" (p. 107) where other more intrusive research methods might have worked to obscure, rather than unpack, the intricacies of how whiteness functioned in this school setting. When ideas initially began to form in my mind, I recorded my reflections alongside observations in a research journal with field notes to aid in identifying and locating common themes and codes that were later used in the analysis of the data, as shown on the form in Appendix I. This type of data collection acted as preliminary data analysis and was particularly useful in that it allowed for the gathering of data about not only Steven and Michael and their specific teaching practices, but also about how they constructed, designed, and operated within the contexts of their classrooms and larger educational settings to sustain or resist whiteness.

Document Review/Artifact Analysis

Public schools are situated in ways within larger communities and neighborhoods that enable them to reflect and communicate important ideas, values, and beliefs that are embraced by the privileged within those socio-political and educational settings. For this reason, the documents published and made public by the teachers, school, and community identified for this study such as classroom newsletters, event advertisements, and literature available to families in the main office were collected and analyzed as data to further investigate how these predominantly white educational settings function as "the review of documents is an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs

of participants in the setting” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 116). These documents and artifact data are not limited to the materials meant solely for the population outside of the school and classroom; also included were materials present and displayed in the teachers’ classrooms such as educational posters present in classrooms and hallways as well as celebratory displays of students’ artwork. This type of data collection and analysis further informed the study by illuminating the ways in which the discourses of whiteness operated in the teachers’ classrooms and in the larger educational community of the school and school district.

Both the interviews and observations provided information exploring how whiteness functions on a daily basis in this setting. Brief, more informal conversations with the participants after key observations and/or events, as well as reflective field notes made by the researcher, were collected and transcribed/analyzed along with information gathered from classroom, school, and district artifacts. The data collected was analyzed using the coding of common themes, concepts, and ideas that were uncovered during this study. To show how whiteness operated in these settings, these transcripts, observations, notes and artifacts were used to address the research questions as outlined in Table 3.

Role of the Researcher

As part of this study it is important to note that I, the researcher, was a former teacher at this particular school had prior relationships built with the staff, administration, and community which served to create an atmosphere in which the research itself became a collaborative process between me and the other professionals in the building. Because this investigation raised issues that many of these teachers may never have considered, my insider perspective as a white educator assisted in this process but my involvement

Table 3

Summary of Data Collection Methods aligned with Research Questions

Research Questions	Data Sources			
	Interviews	Observations	Field Notes/ Researcher Journal	Artifacts and Documents
1. How do overarching discourses of whiteness operate in this predominantly white elementary school?	X	X	X	X
2. How do these white teachers resist/disrupt/challenge or perpetuate/ contribute to/sustain the discourses of whiteness through their images, practices, and talk?	X	X	X	

and perspective still required careful and thoughtful monitoring and consideration. While I do need to acknowledge and make clear my own prior assumptions about this setting, my more familiar role in this setting assisted in accomplishing the purpose of this study which was to investigate how these white teachers worked within these predominantly

white settings to create, reject, critique, and/or possibly ignore the influence of their racial perspective within the larger school and classroom environment.

It is imperative that “confidence and trust emerge over time through complex interactions” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 86) and that these interactions and the trust surrounding them be of utmost importance to the researcher. Issues of informed consent, reciprocity, deception, and right to privacy are all areas where critical and ethnographic researchers must be as careful as all others when it comes to monitoring and recording the effects that these ethical issues have on the study, its design, and its participants and their reactions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In this setting, I was very much aware of how my comments, conversations, and interactions could impact the professional lives (and perhaps personal as well) of these two teachers. Maintaining an open and honest relationship between the researcher and participant as critical interviews and observations were taking place was essential for the integrity of this research study. Having intricate and trusting relationships with the participants, as well as being in sole control of the ethical and quality issues of the information collected, was illustrative of my role as a responsible researcher who intended to use the rich, authentic data collected to shape practices and ideas in my own professional learning community.

Data Analysis

Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as “complex, involving fieldwork for prolonged periods of time, collecting words and pictures, analyzing this information inductively while focusing on participant views, and writing about the process using expressive and persuasive language” (p. 24) and the following data analysis plan (based on Creswell’s spiraling stages of data analysis) gives a clear and detailed representation

of how I processed and interpreted the data I collected during the course of my research study.

Phase 1 – Data Management/Early Analysis

As the study began, it was essential to develop a comprehensive analysis plan to guide my research project from start to finish. This kind of planning encouraged the “back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data...[and] we advise interweaving data collection and analysis from the start” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 50). Therefore, the objective of this phase was to collect and maintain organized and complete data records that would complement later data analysis. During this early analysis period, I used contact summary sheets and kept detailed data records and descriptions, provided in Appendix J and Appendix K. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that “a contact summary sheet is a single sheet with some focusing or summarizing questions about a particular field contact” (p. 51) and I used it with each participant after each interview and observation. In these records, I recorded initial impressions, follow-up questions, and overall remarks regarding the data collection session. These records aided in the collection and accessibility of the data by noting the type, locations, and stage of preparedness for each piece of data. If an interview was cut short by a fire drill or if many students in the class were out sick during an observation, I was able to use these contact summary sheets to give the data context even after the events had long since taken place. All of these pieces were be stored in a file box that contained chronologically organized records for each participant in the study.

Audio recordings of the interviews as well as the handwritten observation records and field notes were reviewed immediately after each visit to the school. Formal transcription of the data sources for this study was done after all data had been collected and a series of codes was used to indicate the participant as well as the time and date when an event occurred. For example, a notation of (M 090319) indicated that the interview with Michael was completed on March 19, 2009 and that there was only one tape and/or transcribed record of this data. A reference to (S 090529b) would indicate an interview done with Steven on May 29, 2009 that was the second part of a two part data/transcript series. Codes used to organize the interview transcripts and observations were KH for myself, S for Steven, M for Michael, A for Administrator 1 (Admin 1), AA for Administrator 2 (Admin 2), T for Teacher 1, TT for Teacher 2, P #1-4 for Parents 1, 2, 3 and 4, and OB for Observations. Observation records were also labeled in the research journal with the date and time of the observation as well as a note about the location where the observation took place (ex. OB 090616, 7:45-8:30am, Grade 1 Meeting). The transcripts were entered into Microsoft Word and the necessary coding schemes were used to attempt to label and sort the data electronically.

Phase 2 – Reading and Memoing

While undertaking qualitative research, “writing about what you expect to have happen – or what you expect to find out – can help you and others see ways to check out those assumptions and question them throughout your data analysis” (MacLean & Mohr, 1999, p. 59). Therefore, the objective of this phase was to assist me in stating my own pre-conceived notions by recording personal observations and connections observed within and between the data itself. This was accomplished through the process of writing

memos, both in journals and recorded on audiotape, that were used to “go beyond codes [to] tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 72). For example, before I went to the district-wide International Night celebration I recorded several voice memos that were later transcribed detailing what I thought I would see at the event, what groups I thought would be participating, and what pre-existing reservations I had, given the lengthy conversations with other teachers who would not be attending this event. These kinds of memos helped me to reflect and record ideas and patterns that later helped in focusing of the analysis through coding and narrative writing. The results of this phase were frequent journaled memos that were also kept chronologically in the data storage file box to later be used in connection with the coding of the data.

Phase 3 – Classifying and Describing

The purpose of this phase was to sort and organize the data in ways that encouraged the emergence of patterns and relationships within and among data sources the preliminary coding outline. Therefore, codes were “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. They [took on] the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex one (e.g. a metaphor)” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Found in the literature on whiteness and critical discourse analysis, these preliminary codes were expanded later in the data analysis but were initially used to scaffold and create appropriate interview questions and probes to be used with the study participants. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate examples of these two types of coding outlines. For example, one of the initial deductive coding schemes was the multiple ways whiteness functions – through white privilege (McIntosh, 1990),

Table 4

Initial Inductive Coding – Partial Example

<u>Teachers...</u>	<u>But the teachers also...</u>
Show difficulty differentiating between race, culture, ethnicity, and socio-economic class	Have little trouble labeling those categories in others around them
Use methods that are “culturally relevant” to those students present in their classroom	Still work predominantly from curricular pieces and their own personal points of view
Are acutely aware of the ways in which they overtly talk about race and culture	Use more standardized tropes about race, gender, and culture without questioning their effects

Table 5

Initial Deductive Coding – Partial Example

<u>Theories of Whiteness</u>	<u>Resisting</u>	<u>Sustaining</u>
Ideology of power & Unmarked racial category	- Dedicating time to supporting those who are obviously marginalized	- Maintaining connections between socio-economic class and race
Social amnesia	- Broadening scope beyond Heroes & Holidays	- Following given curriculum and materials
Whiteness goes underground	- Dedication to “discussing and dealing” - Culture is touchable and approached	- Discussing and dealing with only certain topics for certain races - Race is difficult and removed

as a system of power (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998) and an unmarked racial category (R. Frankenberg, 1999), in the act of whiteness going underground (R. Frankenberg, 2001), and with the surfacing of a white social amnesia (McLaren, 2000). A coding outline

(first deductive, then inductive) initially aided in looking at the data in a way that led to the logical representations based on found relationships within the data itself.

Comparisons and analyses were done and printed for future use in the next phase.

Phase 4 – Representing and Analyzing

Once the data had been reduced through classification and description, I began to “decide on an order, a logical progression, for [the] data and try it out. [The researcher] might organize chronologically, by chain of events, by frequency of occurrence, or by degrees or importance” (MacLean & Mohr, 1999, p. 61). This phase was used to code and represent the data collected in a way that made sense and illustrated connections and relationships within and among data sources. The above mentioned codes (along with the themes from my research questions about images, practices and talk) were used in an initial deductive analysis of the transcribed interviews, memos, observations, and notes; then as the data continued to present itself in more complex ways, inductive coding was the most effective. This inductive coding approach allowed for more detailed and nuanced codes to develop (open coding) based on the lived experiences of the participants and the observational notes of the researcher.

Electronic data tables and digital/paper folders were constructed to sort the data and aid in the final step to make connections across the participants. As the larger deductive codes were analyzed, more intricate relationships began to form not only within and between the two teachers, but amongst the discourse of the administrators, curriculum and school district itself. The results of this phase were electronic data charts of transcribed data, detailing information found for each of the larger coding categories or themes as well as outlines for the data that supported the more inductive themes that

emerged from the patterns and connections in the data collected. It became clear that images, practices, and talk could not function as standalone sub-categories; rather, it was these images, practices, and talk that gave life to the discourses of whiteness that shaped the power of the teachers and administrators who worked within this elementary school.

In order to thoroughly analyze data regarding the discourses of white teachers in predominantly white settings, a variety of analysis techniques were employed. Looking at who teachers were, what they did in their classrooms, and how they built communities in their schools required a critical analysis of data on multiple levels. The analysis of some of the data collected during the interviews, observations, artifact and document collections, and field notes used a technique referred to as critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2004, 2005; Rogers et al., 2005) to better understand how the discourses shaped teachers' images, practices, and talk as they were constructed and executed in the research setting.

Critical discourse analysis is an approach that focuses on not only the language and text collected through research (e.g., observations, interviews, field notes, documents, event narrations), but also on the meanings created when these texts are analyzed using a critical sociopolitical lens. This type of analysis "argues that language in use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices, and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power" (Gee, 2004, p. 33). As this study investigated whiteness through the discourses of white teachers, much of the focus of the data analysis was on the meanings and themes imbedded within and uncovered throughout the discourse collected. As teachers work and function in their educational

settings, their use of language does not necessarily limit itself to the spoken word; often communication can be witnessed through observations and interactions, rather than heard in conversations and lessons taught.

We continually and actively build and rebuild our worlds not just through language but through language used in tandem with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbols systems, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing. Sometimes what we build is quite similar to what we have built before; sometimes it is not. But language-in-action is always and everywhere an active building process. (Gee, 2005, p. 10)

Just as letters build words and words build phrases, the analysis of discourse as language-in-action helped to build a larger understanding of the meanings and social practices of these teachers and their perceptions and representations of whiteness.

“Language has meaning only in and through social practices, practices which often leave us morally complicit with harm and injustice unless we attempt to transform them” (Gee, 2005, p. 8). This transformation was revealed as the discourses of white teachers in predominantly white contexts were investigated and I was able to critically explore the intricacies of the interviews, observations, artifact and document collections, and field notes using the critical and socially conscious methodological and analytical tools outlined above.

Sites such as schools and classrooms can provide rich and abundant opportunities for meaning making, and as such, they and the teachers and students who work within them, need to be considered complex and valuable sources for research and data, too. As a result, the use of the term “critical” is intended to imply that, “because language is a social practice and because not all social practices are created and treated equally, all analysis of language is inherently critical” (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 367). This idea of imbedded and contextual meaning denotes

differences in how something is said, and even when, can be matters of only temporary adjustment, or they can seriously impair effective teaching and accurate evaluation. For all these reasons, it is essential to consider the classroom communication system as a problematic medium that cannot be ignored, or viewed as transparent, by anyone interested in teaching and learning (Cazden, 2001, p. 3).

Another technique that was used to look at the data from the interviews and the focus group transcripts was an inductive critical analytic approach. In this approach, I investigated the discourses surrounding these white teachers in predominantly white elementary school settings; this involved a careful and critical reading of the transcripts allowing for codes and themes to emerge from the data, rather than having them imposed or constructed by an outside source. An example of this occurred after the initial deductive coding was completed (using themes from the research on whiteness) and I found that there was too much data left uncategorized. Moving away from the deductive codes allowed the data to speak for itself, and in this way, inductive codes began to emerge around the ways white privilege and colorblind ideology operates through the discourses of whiteness in this setting. When research is done in classrooms, issues of meaning must be carefully considered. What appears one way to a researcher might, upon further critical analysis, take on a different meaning altogether from what a teacher may have intended to convey or what the students in the classroom experienced. By using critical analysis as a tool for analysis, the various ways the teachers communicate and express their understandings were considered fully across perspectives and situations (Gee, 2004; Rogers, 2004; Rogers et al., 2005; Sarantakos, 2004).

This kind of critical reflexivity “is not just a matter of being aware of one’s prejudices and standpoints but of recognizing that through language, discourse and text, worlds are created and re-created in ways of which we are rarely aware” (Usher &

Edwards, 1994, p. 16). During analysis, it was necessary to consider the ethical and research implications of a white researcher doing work with white teachers in a predominantly white setting. It must be noted that not all researchers in these types of situations can “recognize that we are subjects within language and within particular historical, cultural and social frameworks. The key questions then become how we both constitute and are constituted by language, and where lies the power to interpret and control meaning” (p. 16). As a result, the use of ideas such as rhetorical listening allowed for the “performance of a person’s conscious choice to assume an open stance in relation to any person, text, or culture, rhetorical listening challenges the divided logos of Western civilization” (Ratcliffe, 2005, p. 26). Together these tools for critical analysis were employed to assist in the in-depth and thoughtful analysis of data in an area in which more research needs to be done.

Phase 5 – Interpretation and Implications

Data analysis is “an interpretive task that allows you to see and know what you think to be true based on your study. ...As a result of the meanings you constructed from your data you now know that you have reason to teach in a particular way. Your ideas about how you might teach are the implications of your finding for your practice” (MacLean & Mohr, 1999, p. 71). This necessary phase helped to make connections within the data and then state the implications these relationships and findings might reveal. I drafted notes to create summaries of the settings and classrooms, outlined narratives for each participant and the reasons why they were chosen to participate in the study, and finally, created a graphic organizer to illustrate the data and relationships that could be used to create thematic summaries of the findings.

Phase 6 – Validity and Reliability: Validating the Accuracy of the Findings

“Designed to challenge assumptions and to validate your research” (MacLean & Mohr, 1999, p. 61), I aimed to verify the internal validity of the research findings of this study. First, I devoted time to looking at the internal validity of the research and study itself. In reviewing the interviews, observations, field notes and researcher journals and artifact and document analysis collection, I used “multiple methods, or triangulation, [to reflect] an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5). This triangulation of sources expanded my data collection base and made my coding all the more valid. Steven and Michael both made themselves available to discuss questions or clarifications that arose during the transcription and analysis and to ensure the construction of thick, rich descriptions (Creswell, 1998) from the data about the ways whiteness operated through the images, practices and talk of teachers at Fulton Elementary School. Also, informal peer examination was done on numerous occasions by other members of a doctoral-student-workgroup and other professional work associates. In addition, I regularly kept reflection notes in my research journal so that I could more fully question myself regarding the research at Fulton Elementary School. I also shared my anonymously coded data and conclusions with other professionals in my field as well as re-reading transcripts over with the teachers involved in the study.

Since this was a qualitative study using ethnographic techniques to help understand how two elementary school teachers understand their whiteness and either perpetuate or disrupt the culture of whiteness within their particular school context, it has to be acknowledged that this context and setting is not the same for everyone. In order for my research to be reliable, I provide sufficient information about the local community

and school district, the elementary school, and the classrooms for the reader to be able to make reasonable comparisons to their own situations and contexts (MacLean & Mohr, 1999, p. 121). The detailed methodology and data collection reports provided can also aid others in using the discoveries made about the overarching discourses of whiteness, how they operate in these settings and within the practices of these white teachers, and how the teachers disrupt or contribute to whiteness through these images, practices, and talk.

Conclusions

White teachers, in predominantly white elementary schools, are a virtually unexplored territory in the world of educational research about race. Little is known about how they enact multicultural education and how the discourses of these educators serve their predominantly white student populations. Even less is known about how white teachers work in their settings to serve the status quo of racism and white supremacy. In doing this study, my hope was to find that by using the participating teachers as a lens, I could examine the ways in which the discourses of whiteness operated and were challenged or reified in these settings using the images, practices, and talk of these teachers. Critical analysis of one's own teaching practice is essential if true professional growth is to be achieved in any classroom. More research needs to be done to investigate the ways in which these settings function to sustain, disrupt, and/or transform the status quo in the schools and communities who benefit from racial and cultural privilege. Only then can we determine how whiteness functions in these elementary school settings where race is not commonly considered a factor, where difference may be noticed but not embraced, and where changes to the existing power

structures are rarely if ever considered because the deafening silence of white privilege consistently suffocates a more thoughtful examination that could ultimately lead to a meaningful and total educational transformation. The next chapter will address how whiteness is reified through both a discourse of silence and a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility that is present in the context of Fulton Elementary School and within the contexts of the two teachers who were the primary participants in this research.

Chapter 4 – The School Context

We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment – and that is not easy. (Delpit, 1995, p. 46)

This study began as an exploration of how two white elementary school teachers in a predominantly white context enacted or resisted whiteness but as the data accumulated, clearly what was happening in this setting was embedded in a larger context. “How does whiteness speak? How does white racialness remain a significant material fact that informs or provides the background for social interactions of whites, quite apart from their personal sentiments, beliefs, or intentions?” (Hartigan, 1999, p. 151) The themes that emerged presented intricate and powerful discourses of whiteness at work, and while the majority of the interview transcripts were of conversations with the two key male teachers, it was impossible to look at the two teachers outside of the context of the school, the students, and the other individuals present in this setting.

The findings that are presented in the following chapter address the research questions posed in this study: “How do overarching discourses of whiteness operate in this predominantly white elementary school?” and “How do these white teachers resist/disrupt/challenge or perpetuate/contribute to/sustain the discourses of whiteness through their images, practices, and talk?” The interviews, observations, field notes, artifacts, and photographs were analyzed and organized to illustrate two fundamental ways that the discourses of whiteness operated in this setting. First, it functions to silence people of color through a pervasive ideology of colorblindness that “presumes or asserts a race-neutral social context (e.g., race does not matter here)” (Lewis, 2001, p. 800). Second, a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility is sustained by the conflation of culture

and race which paradoxically functions to render people of color as both hypervisible and invisible. By persistently focusing on culture, it is culture that is made hypervisible; but in so doing, race is made invisible in both the school and teacher contexts. Both of these discourses (silence and hypervisibility/invisibility) are discourses of whiteness that work to sustain whiteness as a social organizing structure that sustains a system of white supremacy.

In the findings that follow, I will be looking at ways that the images, practices, and talk of white educators in this predominantly white school both sustained and challenged powerful discourses of whiteness. In the first section, I describe the school context for this study and explore how the school sustained 1) a discourse of silence through its lack of acknowledgement of a white racial identity, through nonexistent expectations for critical talk about race, through the use of a colorblind ideology, and by ignoring the realities of people of color, and 2) a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility through a conflation of culture and race to functionally make culture hypervisible and race invisible through the creation of a non-raced American identity and through a focus on cultural celebrations of the Other. The second section describes the two teachers, Michael and Steven, and examines how, as nested participants within the larger institutional context of the school, they sustain and/or disrupt whiteness by 1) individually attempting to challenge a discourse of silence and 2) sustaining a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility as they express uncertainty around their white identities and use multicultural education in ways that ultimately works to render whiteness invisible. In both contexts, these overarching discourses of silence and hypervisibility/invisibility

work to sustain whiteness as a system of power that operates to maintain the prevailing racial hierarchy in this predominantly white setting.

Fulton Elementary School

The first impression one gets when approaching Fulton elementary school is relatively unremarkable. Across the street is a cow pasture and the front and side lots of the school are paved and packed with cars belonging to teachers, staff members, various volunteers, and guests of the school. As with most elementary schools in New Jersey, I was required to be buzzed in by one of the secretaries in order to enter the building and sign in at the visitors' desk. I am given a badge and told to have a great day as I walked down the hallway surrounded by decorations (see Figure 4) and colorful displays of children's artwork illuminated by the skylights above.

The school is very large, and for only three grade levels, there are over 940 students who enter the school on a daily basis. Once designed to function as two separate elementary schools, this enormous building has two main offices and more than 95 staff and faculty members. Fulton Elementary School provides for its students: two full-size gymnasiums, a fully equipped cafeteria and auditorium, two performance stages, a tastefully designed and well stocked media center, a designated art room and a separate music room, a guidance office, two outdoor playgrounds and two large soccer fields, a renovated computer lab with 30 student computers and two laser printers, and a butterfly rock garden. Spokesbury Township covers 32 acres and the students arrive and depart from school via the Norris Township bussing system as the district does not permit its students to walk to school.



Figure 4. Class sign in hallway from Fulton Elementary School (Observation, May 8, 2009).

Originally a rural community with a strong farming and agricultural base, Norris School District has evolved into a rapidly growing township where most of the land is zoned for both open spaces and “Green Acres” (protected farmland) or for residential development. With high educational and professional expectations for its students and schools, parents, and families of the students are an integral part of the learning and educational community. “They are very active with the parents in that they are very responsive to the parents with students. I almost think too much.” (Parent 3, personal communication, June 19, 2009) The district offers extra-curricular programs as well as continuing education workshops and seminars for teachers employed in the district. The school profile statement describes the school as

devoted to the needs of primary age children and committed to providing learning experiences that will start Norris School District children on the path to success. The learning environment at Fulton Elementary School is alive with children who are eager to discover, parents who support and share in their children's academic development, and teachers who are knowledgeable and successful in stimulating and guiding each child through the instructional program (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006).

Norris School District is a high performing school district and their schools have been awarded Blue Ribbon School awards. A Blue Ribbon School is identified by the U.S. Department of Education as a school "where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' academic achievement" (Knowledge Applications Division, 2002; United States Department of Education, 2013). Expressed in both public and private conversations, the pride which the administration, teachers, and community have in their academic success was palpable. For example, Administrator 1 detailed the district's strategic plan for the following year by saying, "We will design and implement the highest caliber programs, curricula, and assessments to guarantee successful, culturally prepared, self-directed learners." (personal communication, June 16, 2009) While Administrator 1 calculates Fulton Elementary School's population as comprised of 35% Asian students, it was previous discussed that this school and larger district are perceived as being predominantly white despite the growing racial diversity of their student body and surrounding community.

KH: How would you describe the make-up of this school racially [and has it changed since I was a teacher here]?

Admin 2: I think there's lot more Chinese, I think. When I walk into the lunch room and I see them in the lunch line, I see a lot of Chinese children.

KH: Do you think outside of this school that this school is seen as having as a diverse population?

Admin 2: In the community? I am not sure, I don't think so.

KH: Okay.

Admin 2: I don't think so. When I talk to people in my community, I don't live in Spokesbury, when I talked to people outside of Spokesbury and they hear the size of the school and then I say, "Yeah, you know when I take the percentages of you know South Eastern Asian and they are like "Really?" So they're kind of surprised so I don't, I don't think they know that. (personal communication, June 3, 2009)

In the hallways of Fulton, students are often seen traveling in pairs, delivering notices to the main office or to other teachers' classrooms, while occasionally larger groups pass in relatively straight lines on their way to one special area class or another. The building is designed to be long, not wide; the whole building is almost a fifth of a mile long. During my observations at the school, this sometimes posed a problem as students would leave to drop off a paper and return to the classroom 10 minutes after departure. Evidence of student art work and school work is everywhere. Bulletin boards, mounted cork strips, and glass display cabinets all contained evidence that students' learning was central to the identity and image of the school. In this increasingly diverse school, public messages about learning were presented as biologically neutral rather than complicated by the messiness of race and culture.

It is beneficial that we all understand that, whether big or small, young or old, we all require time to learn and grow. Learning is a complex process about which we continue to learn from science and medicine. We are learning more and more about how the brain functions and how we can, as parents and educators, enhance our children's knowledge, skills and attitudes with precision. This growing knowledge has enabled us to approach what we do each day with a sense of purpose and direction. (Fulton Elementary School Newsletter, April 2009, p. 1)

Classrooms were well stocked with school supplies and educational materials such as books, math manipulatives, and learning centers; diverse, multicultural store-bought

decorations were on classroom doors and hallway walls to proclaim Fulton's commitment to an inclusive environment for all its students (see Figure 5). This kind of glossy, store-bought, multicultural veneer was illustrative of the ways this institution conveyed a commitment to whiteness by perpetuating several discourses.

In the next two sections, I will focus on the school context – first, examining how a discourse of silence was sustained through the lack of acknowledgement of a white racial identity, through nonexistent expectations for critical talk about race, through the use of a colorblind ideology, and by ignoring the realities of people of color; and then explore how a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility was sustained by a conflation of race and culture, through the creation of a “non-raced” American identity, and through a focus on cultural celebrations of the Other.

Sustaining a Discourse of Silence

Schools are social institutions with enormous power. They work in both positive and negative ways to influence the lives of the students and families by creating and maintaining powerful discursive practices. Unfortunately, this power is not always critically and thoughtfully considered when issues of race and identity are concerned. The idea that a discourse of silence must be recognized to understand how whiteness operates in these white schools as they utilize the tools of white privilege to maintain a marginalizing system for people of color as well as a colorblind ideology to sustain “the idea that ignoring or overlooking racial and ethnic differences promotes racial harmony” (Scruggs, 2009, para. 5). Unacknowledged, a discourse of silence operated at Fulton Elementary School to sustain whiteness in the following ways: 1) through the lack of



Figure 5. Hallway decorations from Fulton Elementary School (Observation, May 8, 2009).

acknowledgement of a white racial identity, 2) through nonexistent expectations for critical talk about race, 3) through the use of a colorblind ideology, and 4) by ignoring the realities of people of color. By never challenging or acknowledging white individuals' privilege in these predominantly white settings, the district and administrators supported an institutional discourse of silence that functioned to sustain the dominance of whiteness it so actively embraced.

Through the Lack of Acknowledgement of a White Racial Identity

Too often, a kind of dysfunctional silence (Ratcliffe, 2005) occurs in educational settings when white educators begin seeing the process of talking critically about race in schools as something inappropriate and unnecessary. Characteristic of this context, there

was a marked silence around race, and in particular, whiteness. There are three ways a discourse of silence manifested itself through the lack of acknowledgement of a white racial identity: a) in a total blindness to whiteness, b) in some acknowledgement of that blindness, with no real attention paid to it, and c) in a denial of the blindness, even in the face of whiteness.

A total blindness to whiteness. This first way this complex discourse of silence was perpetuated was through a pervasive refusal, or a total blindness, to name whiteness. Rendering whiteness virtually non-existent, this outright denial of what it means to be white encouraged and contributed to the further development of silence around the existence of a white racial identity.

KH: Do teachers talk about what it means to be white?

Steven: No. Well, I've never had that conversation. (personal communication, April 29, 2009)

Fulton Elementary school endorsed a colorblind ideology that involved encouraging teachers to not only silence race, but to ideally ignore their own identities as racialized beings. In cultivating this kind of discourse, the teachers exerted a type of “white blindness” as they continued to remain colorblind to their own white identities and access to white privilege.

Some acknowledgement of blindness, with no real attention paid to it. Even in school contexts such as this, a discourse of silence operates to ensure that there is no real attention paid to whiteness, and it is through this partial acknowledgement that whiteness is normalized. Multicultural decorations and holiday celebrations allow this school to see difference without identifying the central characteristic they are judging this “difference” against. As a way to investigate the institutional support structures for this

silence, both administrators who participated in this study were asked, “Does the idea of being just white ever come into the conversations [at school]?”

Admin 2: I don’t believe it does.

KH: Okay.

Admin 2: That’s an interesting question.

KH: Why is it interesting?

Admin 2: I don’t know. It’s like I never thought of that – you know how would it come into a conversation with kids? I mean, I think they talk about more of the differences...I don’t think it is talked about. It’s just kind of...I think they talk about differences with kids at this age. It’s like, I mean, they do the whole – how are we alike, how are we different? You know, the hair color – it could be skin color, it could be you wear glasses, you’re short, I’m tall. But I don’t think they focus so much on you know the idea of being white. (personal communication, June 3, 2009)

As school administrators continued their conversations, a discourse of silence was sustained through their lack of leadership in assisting teachers and the community to engage in targeted and specific conversations about race and power at Fulton. A follow-up conversation attempted to investigate why the teachers never focus on “being white” in their classroom discussions.

KH: Does the idea of being white ever come up with the teachers or is it only the idea that some students were different?

Admin 1: I think there is an expectation that’s different if the children are white.

KH: How so?

Admin 1: I think [the teachers] will automatically assume that they are well-off, which, of course they are not. They will assume that they are from functional families and [the teachers] will probably set higher expectations.

KH: And the teachers wouldn't say, "It's because they are white." They will just say it is because...?

Admin 1: I have never heard any staff member say white is better, white is smart or anything. I don't think that they see that, but that's because they are white, so they are having expectations that they could transfer to their own children if they went to school.
(personal communication, June 16, 2009)

These responses from the school's administrators highlight a discourse that is sustained by the silence of the teachers who are not expected to challenge the ways white privilege operates. The conclusion was reached that the white teachers did not seem to know that they were white and were therefore not identifying themselves as taking part or benefiting from a culture of whiteness.

A denial of the blindness, even in the face of whiteness. Finally, by denying the existence of a white culture even when presented with evidence to the contrary (such as the community's use of the term American as synonymous for white), it was difficult to have conversations about how this white culture functioned to sustain a discourse of silence in this school.

KH: Do you think there is a white culture [at Fulton Elementary School]?

Admin 2: No.

KH: Okay. We talked about people using the description of understanding our ways of doing things in school, the American way of schooling and those terms American and white are often not linked as being synonymous. So you don't think there is a culture of whiteness.

Admin 2: I don't think so. I think what you said [is correct] – we don't have a culture of whiteness.

KH: Could that itself be part of a culture of whiteness?

Admin 2: Being American?

KH: ...Of not knowing? (personal communication, June 3, 2009)

The denial of a white culture is one way that teachers and administrators in this setting worked to sustain whiteness and “this culture of denial is made manifest and expressed in many forms in our society....The constant denial of the existence of such a curriculum of whiteness relegates oppression or ‘white supremacy’ to a triviality” (Semali, 1998, p. 181).

Engulfed in a system meant to benefit us, White people may have much to lose by explicitly addressing race and racism. In schools serving primarily students of color, however, race talk would likely resonate with the everyday experiences of students, which could in turn lead to improved academic achievement through the development of critical thinking about real-world issues. And in all school settings, such discussions are important for working toward structural and ideological social change—a move that contradicts the entrenched nature of Whiteness, but that is necessary if we hope to bring about greater equity in schools and the larger society. (Castagno, 2008, p. 330)

This idea that white privilege and the identification of a white identity are not seen as linked is important because it supports the literature which explains that white privilege involves powerful moves made by white educators who remain seemingly unaware of the power of their own race. “Through both teacher silence and demands for student silence around issues of race and racism, teachers exhibit an overwhelming aversion to acknowledgments that race exists or matters.” (Castagno, 2008, p. 329) In reality, white privilege requires nothing of white people in order to operate, and in this way it is often silently and unconsciously sustained, going unnoticed by the very population it has helped to advantage.

Through Nonexistent Expectations for Critical Talk about Race

When the articulation of whiteness goes underground through a discourse of silence, conversations surrounding race in predominantly white settings tend to go

underground as well. “The view that silence does not convey meaning misses a major facet of silence in social, educational and political contexts” (Jungkunz, 2011, p. 6) and talking about race in these settings has become a topic that has become increasingly more “hands-off.” As a result, the overwhelming epidemic of colorblindness has created situations where white individuals cannot even begin to imagine how they might engage in this kind of critical race talk or why it might be important. Critical talk about race is silenced at Fulton in the following ways: a) through the generalized fear of talking about race, b) in efforts to be politically correct, and c) as a colorblind approach to racism as being all human relations where anyone can be a victim.

Generalized fear of talking about race. Whiteness was not a topic that any of the participants felt particularly comfortable talking about with their students or with other teachers in their building; they stated in their interviews that they truly did not see the need to talk about whiteness in the classroom, and even if they did, felt fearfully unequipped and unprepared to do so (Hayes & Juárez, 2012; Weilbacher, 2012). This was another place where a discourse of silence was at work to sustain white privilege; in their fear of talking about race, white teachers choose not to engage in critical conversations about how schools and educational settings work to create and maintain systems of power, privilege, and marginalization. This lack of critical race talk inevitably worked to sustain a discourse of silence around the identities of those individuals and groups who are not white themselves. Race was not only unexamined at Fulton Elementary School, it was considered a taboo topic of conversation, one that was specifically avoided at all costs.

This reluctance/fear to engage in critical conversations about race resulted in my having to spend a good deal of time trying to convince other white teachers to join me in attending the PTO sponsored International Night event. Unfortunately, most shared a wary and disappointed perspective on this diversity celebration. One of the most critical points they noticed was that despite all the advertising for the event, there was no intention for anyone in attendance to deeply discuss issues of race, culture, or ethnicity.

KH: Now here's a question. Because it's called International Night and it celebrates culture, is there ever any discussion of race?

Steven: No.

KH: You say that as if there's no way.

Steven: I honestly think race is one of those topics, it's just not discussed.

KH: Here?

Steven: I think in most places, quite honestly.

KH: Okay. Why do you think that is?

Steven: Because I think people are terribly uncomfortable talking about race.

KH: All people?

Steven: A lot of them. I wouldn't say all people. If – I'll go there, but I don't believe that – I think there are teachers, especially young teachers, who are afraid to discuss it, not knowing how a parent's going to react and what is a parent going to bring to the table that maybe a young teacher either doesn't have the experience or the empowerment to stand up to a parent. (personal communication, April 23, 2009)

Throughout the research, Steven noticed that other teachers, even he himself at times, were silent and reluctant when it came to talking about race. A discourse of silence worked in ways to eliminate these conversations about race. The intent seemed to be that

if no one in the school brought up critical topics of race or whiteness or social justice, than no one was likely to talk about them on their own.

Indicating an underlying fear, the above example illustrates how a discourse of silence perpetuated the power of whiteness to connect with and understand the lives of students and their families. This fear, then, sustained whiteness as the norm and failed to acknowledge the realities of what it is to be a student of color at the school or in the world. This silence around race is a function of white privilege and it creates a climate that does not encourage teachers or administrators to act intentionally to disrupt the status quo or the power structures that whiteness has set into place. When asked if there were opportunities at Fulton for teachers to talk about race, culture, or difference, Administrator 1 replied, “Only through the lens of differentiation, that’s all. I never hear it talked about. It’s not talked about in the district.” (personal communication, June 16, 2009) In the absence of opportunities to have critical conversations, a discourse of silence works to sustain systems that marginalize people of color and people who are designated as alien to the mainstream white experience, as well as absolve white teachers from talking about race. Critical race talk is assumed to be the job of people of color, but at this white dominated institution, what is not considered is the cost of sending these kinds of marginalizing discursive messages about silence and power.

Efforts to be politically correct. Many of the participants used the term “politically correct” to describe the ways in which a discourse of silence accesses an ideology of colorblindness in settings where differences and diversity are viewed as hands-off topics for conversation among white teachers and administrators. At Fulton, being politically correct (PC) was used as a euphemism for polite, appropriate, non-

confrontational, non-critical, surface level kinds of colorblind communication that happened amongst even the most well intentioned white teachers (Simpson, 2008).

Michael explained,

There is a lot of whitewashing of everything. Like we are going to be PC about it – all one world [the theme for the International Day celebration], we are going to ignore major differences and just say everything is the same. It's very relativistic...we don't deal with opposition or difference. I am serious! You have a difference of opinion? Differences of opinion are respected, but – I find nowadays people just don't want to fight about stuff and they don't want to cause waves, cause problems and we've lost – in our culture – the ability to critically think things through. (personal communication, April 23, 2009)

The unexamined ways whiteness operated to maintain a discourse of silence in this school was particularly problematic, especially since conversations identified in breach of those polite boundaries were dismissed as not being politically correct.

It is whiteness that gives this language of being politically correct so much influence; it serves to make white teachers feel comfortable in their own cultural sphere, while serving to ignore the needs of “the other” by engaging in civil interactions that do not require much emotional investment or critical thought. In the past, “talking about whiteness became associated in the dominant white culture with racists and white supremacist groups [and as] a result... polite white society deemed it bad manners to discuss whiteness in public” (Ratcliffe, 2005, p. 14). This kind of polite race talk not only silences talk about whiteness, it silences critical talk about all races. I began to wonder how we can re-conceptualize and transform our educational systems if the teachers in our most academically successful schools are not expected to critically reflect and challenge cultural and societal norms. If white educators are being supported to maintain their discourse of silence and institutions continue to endorse practices that

privilege some and marginalize others, can students and families of color truly feel included, acknowledged, and appreciated in their own communities?

A colorblind approach to racism. While an enthusiastic narrative around academic and educative practices existed in Norris School District and a strong commitment to professionalism was present at Fulton Elementary School, issues of race, difference, and even discrimination were not discussed. One of the conversations that was silenced in the school community was that of racism and of acts being labeled as racist.

KH: How would you define being racist?

Steven: Yikes. Attributing a level of superiority to one race towards another or more inferiority of one? Denying opportunities, denying respect –

KH: Different than prejudice or discrimination?

Steven: I guess just, my initial thought is they are all so interconnected. I don't know how you separate one from the other but for some reason – and I don't know why they are different – when I hear racism I have a stronger reaction to that word than I do prejudice. And I think, not that one is any less inappropriate. To me it is so targeted and in fairness I immediately think black regardless of –

KH: Against Blacks?

Steven: Against Blacks.

KH: Okay.

Steven: There is also, I do believe, a racism [for] black against whites. I don't think outside of certain areas, neighborhoods, I don't think it's as prevalent. My experience having worked in [an urban area] with racism, black against white, pretty scary. I've been there. Not to say that racism, white against black, I think it is equally scary. There's a cruelty to it. And maybe that cruelty is, maybe it seems so alive because it's rooted in history and it has been so longstanding. (personal communication, April 3, 2009)

While Steven was uncomfortable talking about these critical definitions, he continued to develop his ideas about race and racism throughout the study; but overall this kind of inquiry was decidedly missing from the discourses of the school (Aal, 2001; Hytten & Adkins, 2002; Hytten & Warren, 2003).

Showing a willingness to disrupt the discourse of silence, Steven has very few opportunities to discuss these issues in his teaching and working environment. More invitations to engage in these critical conversations might allow Steven to see things such as the false equivalence between white on black racism and black on white “racism.” When teachers are not sure whether or not they are supposed to see race, how can a discussion critically investigating social power structures that create and support those insider and outsider groups begin amongst professionals? As a result of this discourse of silence around issues of race and racism, Fulton positions racism as being about human relations rather than as an institutionalized structure that has the power to privilege one race over another. If these conversations cannot occur between teachers, then they certainly cannot be happening in the classrooms with the students.

Through the Use of a Colorblind Ideology

In many ways, institutional practices within this setting serve to preserve the discourse of silence which functions to privilege and power of white teachers who have commitments or beliefs that are in line with the mainstream white perspective embraced at Fulton Elementary School. Conversations about a) the lack of diversity in administrative hiring practices and b) the limited discussions around social studies curriculum development illustrated the most basic kinds of institutional practices that served to fortify this discourse of silence through an ideology of colorblindness.

Lack of diversity in administrative hiring practices. Without completely ignoring race, a colorblind ideology was used as a tool by Fulton's administrators and teachers to "[acknowledge] race while disregarding racial hierarchy" (Gallagher, 2003a, p. 5) so that the school environment could be free from "any taint or suggestion of white supremacy or white guilt while legitimating the existing social, political, and economic arrangements which privilege whites" (p. 6). For example, when asked about the existence of any diverse hiring practices at the school, Administrator 2 communicates an appreciation for the idea without concern for its lack of implementation.

KH: You're in charge of the hiring committee for the school with teachers. Do you have any sort of mission, or express a goal to integrate more diverse teachers or are you focused on something else?

Admin 2: I think it is always great if you can have, bring in more diversity to teaching students. You know I think if we see one on paper, if you can tell on paper, oh that's great. If she looks good on paper, we don't get a lot.

KH: Why do you think that is?

Admin 2: I don't know. We don't have a black teacher.

KH: I noticed. Is that because there are just very few black applicants?

Admin 2: Right. We haven't gotten them.

KH: Why do you think that is?

Admin 2: In my time here, you know I don't think I ever interviewed a black candidate.

KH: How about an Indian teacher?

Admin 2: We have some substitutes that are Indian.
(personal communication, June 3, 2009)

The casual and very direct nature of this conversation is indicative of the administration's lack of commitment to enacting any kind of diverse hiring initiative in the school. With over 95% of the teachers at Fulton Elementary School identified as white and the district itself putting forth limited messages encouraging critical thinking about issues of diversity and social justice, it is not a surprise that an "amnesia of whiteness" (McLaren, 2000, p. 66) that serves to normalize the state of being white prevails silently across everything from hiring practices to in-class discussions and content lessons.

Limited discussions around social studies curriculum development. Social studies is an enormously rich content area (Cherryholmes, 1983) where students can learn about and explore issues of power and identity, but Steven and Michael are two of the few white teachers who use curriculum and instruction as ways to challenge an ideology of colorblindness to explore and ideas conversations about race and power with their students.

At a curriculum meeting, the supervisor for social studies stated, "Social studies is in competition with this scarce thing called time. The strength of the social studies program comes from the teachers and I have done almost nothing with a directive to do it one particular way. Social studies is blended appropriately with science and language arts to make the most of it in the school day." Michael comments that, at best, kindergarten has 13 weeks, first grade has 15 weeks, and second grade has 11 weeks available to teach social studies per academic year that have not already been previously scheduled for science or other content area activities. (Observation, March 23, 2009)

There was neither coherence nor organization in the K-2 social studies curriculum in Norris School District and Michael was the only teacher to take the initiative and develop a first grade social studies curriculum that focused on pivotal events and persons in U.S. history (Observation, March 23 & April 23, 2009). Observing Michael's social



Figure 6. U.S. History timeline display from Michael's classroom (Observation, March 30, 2009).

studies instruction in the classroom, I saw that he professed a commitment to presenting students with a relevant, yet chronological view of history. The bulletin board in Figure 6 illustrates how he used historical figures as a way of exploring difference (Observation, April 23, 2009). I asked Michael if he felt like his classroom was a place where students get experience in critically thinking about race and culture in a global and political way. He responded,

I mean generally my classroom and if they thought about social studies they could remember the American history from our class's timeline up there and everything, but they won't probably say, "Man, we really explore the different cultures of the world and my culture and your culture and how it interacts." They wouldn't say about my room, they might say that about another classroom, another teacher classroom that comes to mind, maybe, but they wouldn't necessarily say it about my room. So, I know I can be doing it better, that's for sure. (Michael, personal communication, April 24, 2009)

While Michael might have felt as if he could be doing more to use instructional and educational practices in critical ways to challenge and examine the discourses of whiteness, through its lack of curriculum the school itself was advocating for an academically powerful discourse of silence. Neither the school's hiring practices nor the district's curriculum plans challenged the overarching discourse of silence, so even if the white teachers were not always aware that they were sustaining a discourse of silence, they were not encouraged to challenge this troubling trend.

By Ignoring the Realities of People of Color

White educators at Fulton were not challenged to think about how their discursive practices acted in ways to privilege white culture over other cultures. As a result, a discourse of silence operated to encourage the purposeful ignorance of the realities and experiences of those students and families of color in the following ways: a) by limiting articulation around the different lived experiences of people of color, b) through inadequate recognition of insider and outsider realities, c) by only people of color being willing to fully acknowledge the marginalization of a discourse of silence, and d) through a reluctance for people of color to participate in the school community as a result of being marginalized.

Limited articulation around different lived experiences for whites and people of color. Resistance to this discourse of silence was fairly localized in the classrooms and in the conversations I had with the two main teacher participants. I encountered one of the first challenges to the discourse of silence through Michael's acknowledgement that whites have a different experience than people of other races and cultures.

KH: Do you think your position as a white American is different than an American of a different race?

Michael: I think I see history differently. I think I experience life differently in America. You know, people said, “In America everybody gets an equal chance at everything.” And I go, “Yeah – don’t think so.” I would like to think so, but I don’t think so. I think everybody has an equal shot in the sense that anybody can make it, but we all don’t seem to start at the same starting line. (personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Michael expressed an understanding that Americans do not all start at the same place when it comes to future success; however, it is important to notice that he did not specifically label those individuals or groups who are not privileged at the same starting line as whites. This theme of talking about inequality in very broad and non-specific racial terms was a way in which the school sustained a discourse of silence in conversations when educators were confronted by potentially unpleasant realizations about their own white privilege.

Inadequate recognition of insider and outsider realities. Steven spoke about this idea of perpetuating a discourse of silence with concern. He reflected on the idea that the education he was providing might not be considering the lived experiences of the families of color in his classroom. In a graduate level education class held at Fulton, Steven recalled that

the conversation came up around, “Do black people need to be somewhat disingenuous to themselves and play a role to have those opportunities?” And I thought of conversations that I had with an [administrator of color] taking my bilingual class and we were debating about – I remember she very clearly said to me, “How I behave and dress and conduct myself here verbally or nonverbally is one way. How I speak to my nieces and nephews at my parent’s home on the weekend is very different.” That’s gotta be a really tough reality. (Steven, personal communication, April 3, 2009)

These “alternative” realities were neither considered nor lamented by the white teachers or administrators and as a result, these experiences were silenced and not reflected in the practices or instruction occurring in the classrooms with students. The reality of having to sustain multiple insider and outsider identities was a required challenge for those students and families of color who were marginalized at Fulton Elementary School by their lack of voice in what was the larger, more powerful discourse of silence, which sustained the dominance of whiteness.

Only people of color are willing to fully acknowledge the marginalization. In many ways, the parents of color had to be complicit in the discourse of silence in order to gain access to Fulton’s status as a “Blue Ribbon School.” The difference seemed to be that the parents of color were able to name this predicament, while the white teachers were not. For whites, there was an inability to recognize and acknowledge Fulton Elementary School’s and Norris School District’s lack of effort to intentionally include those who were not white.

I think that it is...the floor is open in a way, but the school isn’t providing it. If you want to have the kids in your child’s class learn about being Muslim or being Hindu or whatever it is then it’s incumbent on the parent to come in [and do something with the class] rather than it being part of the curriculum. I think based on the demographic we have here. It would be nice we are really part of the curriculum. (Parent 4, personal communication, June 19, 2009)

I intentionally sought the participation of parents from Michael’s and Steven’s classrooms in this research but received very little response. The first parent to volunteer, Parent 1, self-identified as black and had a daughter in Steven’s first grade class. She was vocal and enthusiastic as she invited me to her house to have a conversation about whiteness and how it operated at Fulton Elementary School. Her reflections were candid and very different from the few other parents of color with whom I had made contact and

she spoke honestly about some of her and her daughter's more frustrating experiences in Steven's classroom.

Not that I'm saying cater to me [as a Black parent]. You know that there's something just a little off so just kind of...pick it up. If you pick up one person and another person picks up another person, then we'll all be picked up and we'll be at the same level. But no one is picking that slack there, it's like the black parents working, working, working, working, working and the white parents just have to work and they're already up here [*holds hand up above her head*] and it's like, "Whoa – the black person has to work, work, work [*moves both hands above head*] to catch right back up to that hand and the white person is just up here. It's easier. [Black parents] don't have other parents stepping in – or if the teacher doesn't get it – to bring it to the teacher's attention...you know then the teacher and the parent can work together or maybe the teachers can handle it and say, "Hey, I noticed your mom's not coming to Parents' Reading. Is she getting [the announcements]?" You know, I teach preschool myself, [and] you think that I would never want to come and read story for my kid? Obviously there was a reason why I wasn't there. And I didn't find out until the end of the school year. (Parent 1, personal communication, June 19, 2009)

Although Steven had expressed an outward commitment to challenging Fulton's discourse of silence, this parent expressed the idea that people at the school did not know or understand her reality. She told me that,

As a black parent the only thing you can do is instilling in your child, "You are you. Be you. Be proud of who you are. I tell [my daughter] when she first started school, I didn't know how many black kids are going to be in the classroom but I had a pretty good guess that there was going to be none. And I told [her], "First thing, look for somebody, someone in your school that looks like you. You don't have to be like anybody else..." (Parent 1, personal communication, June 18, 2009)

She was one of the only black parents in the school and she understood that if she did not come in for family reading and show her active involvement in her daughter's education, if she did not proactively encourage her daughter to be strong and seek allies in her environment who would not ignore her experiences, that no one else at Fulton would do this for her. The teachers, other parents, and the school as an institution of the community – none of them understood her reality. It is this powerful discourse of silence

that works to, at the most basic and influential levels, marginalize and dismiss people of color. However, Parent 1 understood her predicament within this discourse of silence and she chose to actively contest it by participating in these interviews.

A reluctance of people of color to participate as a result of being marginalized. A frustrating aspect of this research was the overall lack of feedback from informants of color at Fulton Elementary School. In the interviews with two teachers of color and the remaining Indian parent who volunteered to participate, they spoke mainly about their own life experiences and their attempts to assimilate into the culture of the United States. When the conversation turned towards a more critical look at the silencing discursive practices of the teachers and in the school, they were hesitant to engage in this kind of conversation. While they recognized their overall difficulties as non-white members of the community and had been dealing with this discourse of silence at Fulton before I had arrived, they participated in sustaining their own silence in the community by not speaking out more readily against those discourses of whiteness at work in the school. For example:

To deal with it is to simply cope with it. There's nothing you can do about it because if you come to a white principal or in a white assistant principal – what more are they going to say about it? But they are either going to accommodate you or they're going to, you know, they listen to what you say and when you walk out of the door, it's like, "Oh yeah – that lady is crazy. Yeah, what does she want us to do? You know – have a picture of Martin Luther King in every corner?" That they might think if a black person comes to them and says that they are [concerned] that we just want the whole school to be black. That's not what black people think! We're saying our kids are [being] raised too. Teach our kids about *our* kids. Teach them about themselves. They know nothing about themselves. (Parent 1, personal communication, June 18, 2009)

My position as a white outsider to the school system did not help the situation.

"Skin color does not necessarily allow one to automatically pass into and have access to

individuals or communities because of shared ascribed characteristics” (Gallagher, 2004, p. 205). Fortunately, Parent 1 was enthusiastic about embarking on this kind of critical conversation and she recalled that

I was so adamant already about the whole [racial] hierarchy thing, so when I got the email from this Mr. Steven and we were, in fact, we were talking about culture at that parent conference when he mentioned your name. And I talked to my neighbor and I was like, “I am doing it.” And she was like, “You’re crazy. Why do you feel the need to explain yourself?” And again, that’s like another stepping stone in the hierarchy, you know? Like my friend who’s probably more well off than me, she feels like...she was like, “No, I’m not doing that. I’m not explaining my culture and my life to a white individual for them, to what, mock it?” But I feel differently, I feel that I will explain my culture and I will voice what I have to say. Maybe it will change. Maybe if – I don’t care what you do with the recording or the questions or maybe put it in the newspaper. Maybe something will change. (Parent 1, personal communication, June 19, 2009)

This conversation with Parent 1 was the exception, as most parents and teachers of color seemed to see me as a white person from an institution of higher education who did not typically invite them into these kinds of critical conversations. So, even when they were given the opportunity to share their opinions about their experiences about power, race and privilege, they chose not to engage and remained silent.

White teachers cannot continue to look towards those professionals, students, and families of color whom they have already silenced and expect them to unpack the marginalizing images, dismantle the discriminatory practices, or forge new and critical conversations around issues of diversity and social justice. Because this predominantly white school continued to support the ignorance of their white teachers around issues of white privilege and an ideology of colorblindness, the teachers continued to look towards people of color to begin remediating their own marginalization. “As long as diversity is understood to be the property only of the people marked as different, they bear the burden of change” (Abu El-Haj, 2006, p. 85), and in this way, a discourse of silence worked to

sustain the power of whiteness and obscure people of color from the larger conversations being had at Fulton Elementary School. It is expected that white individuals and institutions take responsibility to expose the privileges and powers of whiteness and act in ways that expose injustice for the betterment of the community at large. The next section explores how another powerful discourse, a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility, is sustained through the conflation of culture and race in the context of this predominantly white school.

Sustaining a Discourse of Hypervisibility/Invisibility

A discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility at Fulton Elementary School worked to sustain a historically and socially based idea that “If I can’t see you, then you can’t see me – or critique or question or challenge or identify my words or actions.” This kind of hypervisibility/invisibility (R. Frankenberg, 1999) is often used by white educators to position students and families of color as alien to the mainstream education experience in the school itself. In this predominantly white setting, whiteness was sustained through discourses of hypervisibility/invisibility of racialized others primarily by conflating the concepts of race and culture. “Culture” was used to render people of color hypervisible through celebrations and superficial acknowledgment of their difference from the silent white majority, whose culture and race were rendered even more normal through this process of hypervisibility.

On the other hand, the lack of attention to the racialized aspects of the identities of the people of color rendered their race invisible. Therefore, the discursive act of making hypervisible the superficial cultural artifacts of people of color, combined with the lack of attention to issues of race and power, rendered their racial identities invisible. The

“difference” was marked by nothing more than the exoticized cultural artifacts of people of color, which allowed for all racialized power differences to go unexamined and fall into a state of invisibility. In the following sections, I describe in detail three ways that a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility operated at Fulton Elementary School: 1) by conflating culture and race, 2) through the creation of a “non-raced” American identity, and 3) through a focus on cultural celebrations of the Other.

By Conflating Culture and Race

Used as a tool to reify a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility, conflating the concepts of culture and race operates to functionally (and mistakenly) equate race with culture and culture with race. This confusion ultimately results in the hypervisibility of culture as a less intimidating topic for whites to address, and subsequently the invisibility of race is often seen by whites as a politically charged topic that should generally be avoided.

As described in Chapter 1 – Definitions, culture and race are often used interchangeably by whites to describe and quantify difference when referencing people of color. These two concepts are, however, distinct and should not be used one for the other. Race is a socially constructed concept that operates with the powers of privilege and marginalization to sustain a hierarchical sorting model for different groups of people. Since race is most often dictated by the discourse of others, people of the same race need not share the same culture. Made up of “not only tangibles such as foods, holidays, dress, and artistic expression but also less tangible manifestations such as communication style, attitudes, values, and family relationships” (Nieto, 2008, p. 171), culture is part of a group membership where there is some sort of choice, while race is a label that is largely

determined and assigned by those in power. As a white dominated institution, this tension between culture and race has led to much confusion at Fulton where culture is widely embraced as a much gentler way to approach talking about difference because it does not entail an acknowledgement of race (or whiteness).

Professing a clear dislike for talking about race, Administrator 1 attempted to articulate the separation between race and culture when he talked about the increasing percentages of students of color entering the school system.

Admin 1: Well there are...residents who don't love change like that. Sort of more modern cosmopolitan white folks actually move here for that. I have one parent saying very stereotypically, "I really like that my son is around Asian people, because they work harder than my people."

KH: How do you respond to that as an administrator?

Admin 1: [I might say], "What makes you think Asians work harder?" "Well, look at them. They are all doctors and lawyers and Indian chiefs." "Go to India and go to China, see if all of them are doctors, lawyers or Indian chiefs." So, it's just people are, it's a great resource here and race, I don't really like talking about race.

KH: You mentioned culture...

Admin 1: Culture is a great source for educational purposes. The best we do actually is actually sort of add-on. I would love it if we got to – in Banks' levels of cultural integration – if we got to like the level 5 that would be awesome.

KH: That would be great. Do you see that happening here?

Admin 1: No. (personal communication, June 16, 2009)

It was discouraging to see the vision of achieving high levels on Banks' model pushed aside by a leading white administrator in power. However, the ways in which he challenged the racial stereotypes showed his intellectual commitment to inclusive and critical education, even though he then returned to his stance of pushing race aside in

deference to culture when he was asked about white teachers and their understandings of race and culture.

Well, they don't have their minds wrapped around that [idea of race], because they are white. They are like me, even though they may not be. You know we have Europeans who are white, Danish, Swedish, German. When talking about race they're the same, but I think race is not as interesting. Culture...culture is more interesting. (Administrator 1, personal communication, June 16, 2009)

By continuing to focus on culture, this administrator silenced race and ignored the ways race has been historically and socially constructed to divide and differentially marginalize others; race is not always such a neat overlay onto culture. Through a conflation of culture and race, this school sent influential discursive messages to teachers, students, and families in many ways when it came to discussing difference. A discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility works to privilege certain groups while displacing the voices of others.

Through the Creation of a “Non-Raced” American Identity

The whiteness at work in this school culture focused on making the cultural practices of non-white students and families hypervisible and exotic, while reinforcing the idea of a non-raced American culture. This discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility which functioned to obscure (or render invisible) both whiteness and the experience of racial domination that whiteness exacts on people of color was expressed in the following ways: a) as school-wide support for a race-neutral view of teaching and learning, b) using “foreign” Others to mask the significance of race, and c) by attempting to create a cultural equivalence for whites and people of color at International Night.

School-wide support for a race-neutral view of teaching and learning. Fulton Elementary School supports an educational philosophy that makes hypervisible an

American, non-raced (but actually white) standard for teaching and learning and expresses this sentiment in classrooms, at faculty trainings and meetings, and with parents and community members whose children attend the school. In its monthly newsletter, the school's administrators advised parents that,

As the spring conferences approach and you have had some time to look over your child's report card, it is time to consider how to ensure that you know and understand your child's strengths and weaknesses. Whether your child did extremely well or had areas of improvement, you still might get a little nervous speaking to the teacher about how you can both help your son/daughter, challenge them, make sure they keep doing what they are doing, and most importantly, keep them HAPPY. (Fulton Elementary School Newsletter, Spring 2008, p. 1)

Michael reflected on how a perspective that focused on cultural difference influenced communications at parent-teacher conferences.

You know, I know that there are differences in how you interact even as teachers. And at conferences with Caucasian parents versus your Asian parents sometimes those differences work, sometimes they don't. There are a lot of times where, I know that most of my Asian families, excuse me, want the data about their kids. My Caucasian families don't always want the data. They want to know...they are much more focused on the social part but every now and then you have a family who is walking in with a background from India. They are like, you know, I know my kid can't read and write, they are just doing fine but do they get along? And you just get so refreshed by that because you know with, stereotypically with your Asian families you kind of struggle with, "Please see that they need this social piece too." (Michael, personal communication, March 30, 2009)

Michael expressed that he was "refreshed" by the Indian family holding more of a traditionally white, American educational system perspective and his choice of words is key; he chose to frame this as a purely cultural phenomenon that has little to do with a racialized system that positions people of color as having to work harder and achieve more just to attain the same social status as whites who may not have to be as diligent. This race-neutral, American educational approach is a product of whiteness and is universally understood in these predominantly white settings as the "right" way to teach

students; it thereby acts to eliminate any arguments against itself and subsequently, this approach perpetuates a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility.

Using “foreign” Others to mask the significance of race. Hiding behind the mystique of an American culture, whiteness maintains power in this school through a discourse that makes race invisible and makes culture hypervisible. When people talk about culture, they don’t need to talk about white, or black, or Asian. It is culture that is made so hypervisible by whiteness at the institutional level and white individuals use this as a tool to obfuscate their own whiteness (white race). Safely shielded by this epic conflation of race and culture, whites can avoid talking about race and can refer to themselves culturally as Americans. Reifying this divide, the school’s administrators even went as far as to invite groups of parents (who were considered to be to foreign) to participate in a conversation with teachers about the parents’ experiences with schooling in different countries.

On February 15th, our professional development day, the teachers... sat together to listen to a panel of 8 parents who volunteered to speak to the teachers about their experiences in their country of birth. You will recall that I had asked for volunteers for this purpose in my prior newsletter. I thank Mrs. B., Mrs. Z., Mrs. W., Mrs. V., Mrs. V., Mr. P., Mrs. S., and Mrs. S. The parents were asked to respond to a few guiding questions that enabled them to share what attending school was like when they were the age of their children, a brief discussion of life in their country of origin, their experiences in the USA and what expectations they have for their children as students in this country. The parents described many differences and several similarities between their experiences in China, India and Belgium and their experiences or the experiences of their children in the USA. Most importantly, however, this was an excellent first step in opening up a dialog about cultures and about the educational practices and expectations imbedded in these cultures. I hope to create opportunities for many more conversations like this one. Be looking for an on-line survey to which I hope you will respond, providing [the school] with more information about cultures and expectations that will help us to respond precisely and personally to your children. (Fulton Elementary School Newsletter, Spring 2008, p. 1)

This attempt was initially met with open arms by the teachers who were asked to attend, but ended up only being a way to reinforce the powerful discourses of whiteness and the importance of their own practices within classrooms that did not address or embrace conversations about critical racial or cultural identity issues. For example, based on the parents' stories, the teachers felt justified in their racist white discourse around stereotypical "tiger mother" (Chua, 2011) views of Asian parents on student academics and performance in the classroom. The intentional focus of the parents' culture, rather than race, at this event functioned to make culture hypervisible, make race invisible, and reinforce the power structures that sustain white privilege. Talking with Chinese, Indian, and Belgian parents about their foreign experiences did not interrupt whiteness at work in this school. It did not address race, it focused on culture. A focus on culture renders the Chinese and Belgian parents as virtually the same, even though one is racially identified as Asian and the other as white – they both have non-American experiences and can therefore both be positioned as alien to the larger system of whiteness at this school.

Attempting to create a cultural equivalence for whites and people of color.

Similarly, this hypervisibility of culture and invisibility of race was pervasive at International Night. The school set up booths and craft stations for the students to visit in the gymnasium and a sign greeted them with "Welcome U.S.A." (Figure 7). Tables were constructed to represent crafts, foods, and facts from Zimbabwe, Italy, Japan, Chile, China, Israel, Iraq, France, India, Australia, New Zealand, and England during the Middle Ages and Victorian period (see Figure 8). The confusion of the white families was evident as they moved from the Italy table to the Australian table and then to the Medieval England table. With race invisible, culture became hypervisible; so while the



Figure 7. Welcome sign from craft and poster room for International Night event (Observation, May 8, 2009).

white families saw Italian and Australian as typical white cultural identities, they were not sure where to place the Medieval and Victorian English cultural references – weren't they just white? (Observation May 8, 2009) It seemed to be a habit of whiteness; this flipping from culture to race and back to culture. Whiteness renders whites as not able to recognize their own race but also to not recognize the racial implications of other people's identities. Events like International Night function very well in predominantly



Figure 8. English historical figure decorations from International Night event (Observation, May 8, 2009).

white environments to equilibrate the cultural (and racial) hierarchies in predominantly white settings because these events are focused on celebrating “America” and that idea doesn’t disrupt the existing power structures of whiteness.

Through a Focus on Cultural Celebrations of the Other

Whiteness also operated in this school through Norris School District’s curriculum that focused on celebratory history and cultural appreciation months (J. A. Banks, 2003; E. Lee et al., 2002). Posters in classrooms, special area classroom projects, common area decorations, and library book displays (Observation, May 6, 2009) all served to render the culture of people of color hypervisible.

Celebrate the Arts: Kindergarteners have been introduced to several authors who write fabulous series. During your next visit to the public library they may be

attracted to books by Cynthia Rylant, James Marshal and Lauren Child. During the month we celebrated the contributions of African-American culture with retellings of Anansi the Spider stories. (Fulton Elementary School Newsletter, Spring 2008, p. 5)

Technology Tidbits: The first graders have been applying their knowledge of using the Kid Pix program to create projects related to Groundhog Day and Chinese New Year. We shared a book called ‘Grandfather Tang’s Story’ and the students went on a website to practice making pictures with Tangram shapes....The second graders have been exploring information on the Internet to gather data and answer questions related to groundhogs for Groundhog Day. They also accessed a website and learned to write the numbers 1 – 12 in Chinese. Our Chinese friends helped us learn how to count those numbers out loud! (Fulton Elementary School Newsletter, Spring 2008, p. 7)

Through these hypervisible indications of appreciation, the school’s participation in a) celebratory history and holidays, b) Black History Month, c) Chinese New Year, and d) International Night were all ways teachers and students at Fulton were expected to maintain a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility through the hypervisibility of non-white racial and cultural perspectives, while obscuring any connections to race.

Celebratory history and holidays. Celebratory history was a popular theme at Fulton and when I attended library one afternoon, I noticed that the Women’s History Month books that had been prominently on display for March had quickly been replaced by Earth Day books (Observation, April 23, 2009). Asking the staff, they quickly pointed out that the books displayed change for each themed month – Black History, Women’s History – even books on display at the beginning of February for Burn Awareness Week (Shriners Hospitals for Children, 2012). Upon further investigation, I discovered (not surprisingly) that much of the materials and curriculum in the school and classrooms supported a white, Judeo-Christian belief system. Figure 9 shows the distribution of books according to the number of library shelves they occupied.

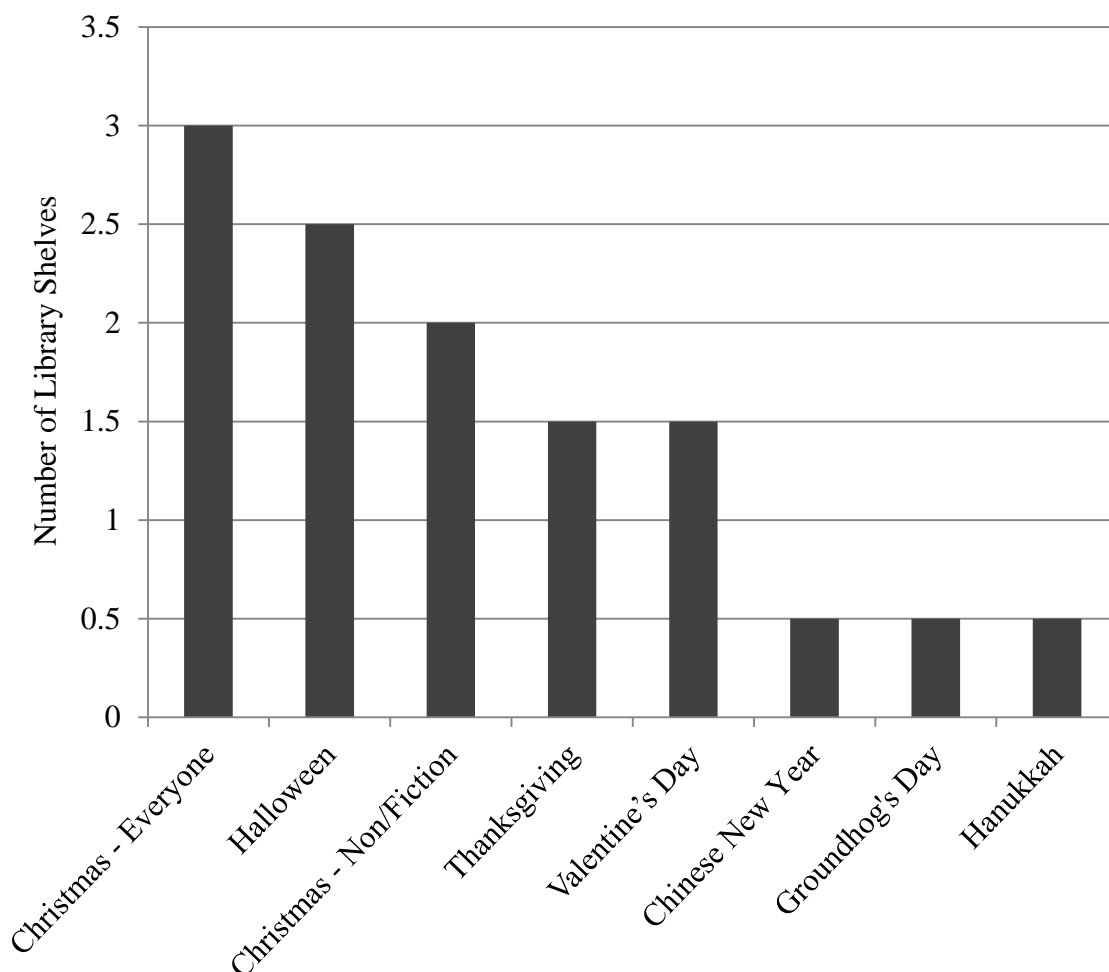


Figure 9. Number of library shelves for holiday books at Fulton Elementary School, (Observation, March 30, 2009).

Holidays and history months appeared to be the focus of the organizational plan but what seemed to be cultural celebrations actually reinforced the white, Christian beliefs that were supported in the curriculum. Christmas was given top billing and Groundhog's Day, Chinese New Year, and Hanukkah were all assigned the same lower level of importance (based on the numbers of books purchased). Asked to reflect on the experiences or activities at Fulton that address issues of diversity, Administrator 2 responded,

I know a lot of times during the holiday season [in] December, a lot of our classrooms do a rotation and they'll invite parents to come in to either speak in

their classrooms about [things like], “What do you celebrate at this end of the year?” Or the teachers themselves have set up a rotation to different classes [each] looking at – “You take Diwali, you take...” They might even throw in Chinese New Year or something and the kids go around and they will see, learn about different celebrations around the world. That’s what I see. That’s the one time here. (Administrator 2, personal communication, June 3, 2009)

This evidence supports the notion that a discourse of invisibility around race (and religion as well) functioned to maintain academic expectations that worked to make culture hypervisible and cultivated a generic appreciation and tolerance for others.

Black History Month. The discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility was maintained as the separating out of specific cultural groups from the mainstream classroom curriculum served to reinforce the idea that in-groups and out-groups of students and families were present in the school and in the community at large. The superintendent himself apparently had recently requested information from the teachers about how they embraced the teaching of Black History Month in their classrooms.

Michael: People mention they do stuff for Black History Month – stuff like that, and we did get an email from [the building administrators] directed from the superintendent requesting information about what activities do we do for those two months only. I rattled off a couple of things that I do – I mentioned we happen to study Martin Luther King on Martin Luther King Day. We will study him more later but I put that in there. I mentioned that I happen to have been studying the Civil War during that month...it wasn’t because it was anything in particular, and that I was playing a CD with Southern songs some of which were African slave songs. And what else did I mention...I think I mentioned a bunch of my stories in the book/war unit (which wasn’t in February) that were from different parts in Africa but I didn’t get into anything with doing more, more balanced like this scientist and this inventor and things like that. Because that’s one piece that I really try to balance out later on in the year. Actually get past the Civil War – there is a whole lot more. There are a couple of free blacks that have children’s books about them or things like that but I really try to as we get to the 20th century and highlight a lot more contributions. Just so it’s not this hopefully one sided view that you know –

anyway so there is no real coordinated effort [in the school between the teachers and administrators].

KH: And there is no Asian history month or Latino history month?

Michael: No. I think. I don't know why the superintendent made this request but I know that it had to be on a website somewhere and I believe it had might have had something to do with the state. The state does identify the need to talk about Jewish history, Women's history, African American history and I think that the new standards will just include all cultures and they will probably also list someone with Spanish origins, someone with Asian origins and move on.

KH: Okay how do you feel about the months with the specific themes?

Michael: I think they are okay for highlighting but you know highlighter means nothing if there isn't actual stuff to highlight so I like to keep them in the general scope of history so when we are talking about this time period, we will talk about what's going on with everybody. And what we are talking about this time we will talk about whatever, what's going on with these people over here. (personal communication, May 6, 2009)

This practice of highlighting cultural groups (and making them hypervisible) in specific educative contexts presents the idea that race has very little relationship to people, their successes, or their core identities.

Parent 1: Slavery is not the only thing. I mean, do you relate black people with slavery? I mean, that's the only thing that's related. Because when we talk about Martin Luther and there were a lot of slaves and they are like, "Where did you come from?"

KH: So if you were to ask students who freed the slaves, they might answer...Martin Luther King?

Parent 1: Because you talk about slavery and then you talk out Martin Luther King so what else would you expect of a first grader. (personal communication, June 18, 2009)

What Parent 1 points out is that, as Fulton creates and sustains this discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility, the school is advocating and actively supporting a focus on

culture in the curriculum and perpetuating misconceptions for the students around these complex issues of race and culture. Actually, this discourse operates to render race at Fulton (both the race of people of color and the race of white people) virtually invisible.

As she articulates below, while the idea of a Black History Month is positive, the practices used to celebrate it in the classrooms and curriculum at Fulton are not.

KH: Do you feel like [the school is doing] enough academically when they highlight Black History Month?

Parent 1: Absolutely not. Just celebrating Black History Month – Martin Luther King in the month of January – I can't stand it because it's just the same old ritual. It's not even an academic lesson, it's a ritual because everybody did it back in 1939 so let's keep up with it. And Martin Luther King, listen, Martin Luther King was a great man and that's coming from a black person. He was a great man but there are other people who did things for the United States of America who brought, you know the light bulb, peanut butter and inventions that were created by people [other than black]. If you want to teach the kids about something teach them about other people. Let them, you know, let them be open. Just like we learn about Columbus and all these other people – why is it only just Martin Luther King...and in February. It is the same, that's what makes me think it's the same old ritual. It's the same old thing.

KH: So you don't see it being carried through the rest of the curriculum?

Parent 1: The rest of the curriculum – if you want to teach the kids about Martin Luther King how about opening up in September? Hey, because that's when kids actually are coming in and meeting each other. “Oh you're white, I'm black. You're Indian, you're Chinese.” That would be a good time to talk about Martin Luther King if you do want to talk about Martin Luther King. You know, talk about how everything is there and what Martin Luther King wanted and you know how he wanted everybody to be treated the same? It would be a good time to reach something like that in September. Make it into your lesson or around Christmas time...teach about Martin Luther King. You know, how Martin Luther King wanted everybody to have peace. You know, bring it into Christmas, into love and peace and don't just keep it there. It's like the same old thing. I think a lot of parents...they are like I

think. Like, “Yeah, they had to do it because this was in there February curriculum garbage.” Sitting at home and teaching your kid about Martin Luther King is nothing to a black person. It’s garbage because you actually make black people feel like, “Oh – this is something that you had to do because you did it in February.” And then you had to do it. You didn’t want to talk about Martin Luther King. You didn’t really care if your kids learned about Martin Luther King or not. It was forced. If something is forced and it’s in the curriculum and you’re following the curriculum...which is what you’re supposed to do. (personal communication, June 18, 2009)

This habit of whiteness has been seen before. Through a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility, white individuals and institutions use white privilege and an ideology of colorblindness to obscure their own race and focus on the culture of others. “In many ways color-blindness is powerful precisely because it espouses the ideal Martin Luther King expressed in his “I Have a Dream” speech” (Lewis, 2001, p. 801) and teachers at Fulton Elementary School support and endorse this notion in their classrooms and through their interactions with parents and the community (see Figure 10).

Chinese New Year. Another example of this discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility is the portrayal of the Chinese and Southeast Asian cultures in the school. Figure 11 shows a student-made image of a Chinese dragon who is announcing “Happy New Year” in Chinese, and while 恭 禧 發 財 (Gong Hay Fat Choy in Cantonese) is an appropriate sentiment for the holiday, students and teachers made Asians and the Chinese culture hypervisible in the school community but then did not extend this learning beyond the celebration itself. The hypervisibility of the Chinese dragons renders the voices of Chinese families silent and their experience of being Chinese in white America completely invisible.



Figure 10. Window decorations for Black History Month from Steven's room (Observation, March 30, 2009).

Unfortunately, this Chinese New Year celebration was one of the few acknowledgements of Asian-ness that occurred in my time researching at this school. There were various reasons for excluding Asian students and families from the discourse at Fulton Elementary, such as insufficient numbers of Asian students to warrant a concern or Asian families being seen as “unassimilable foreigners” (S. J. Lee, 1996, p. 4) who, as a model minority, have few issues or problems with which to contend. But this lack of direct communication sends a clear message to educators about the images of students who belong and of those who do not. These moments of racial invisibility are most common at Fulton and they occur because “most Americans do not view Asian



Figure 11. Dragon decoration for Chinese New Year celebration (Observation, March 23, 2009).

Americans as legitimate racial minorities....[they] are not seen as people who add to racial diversity, and thus they are largely absent from the discourse of diversity” (p. 3).

This idea is particularly problematic given that the school’s racial statistics indicate that more than 35% of Fulton students identify themselves as Asian or Southeast Asian (Administrator 1, personal communication, June 16, 2009). “Asian” is identified as more of a cultural category than a racial identification and this has resulted in the white teachers perpetuating a “model minority myth” for Asian families and students.

Unfortunately, “as a result of this myth, important issues facing Asian Americans have been obscured in educational research and policy” (Buenavista, Jayakumar, & Misa-Escalante, 2009, p. 70) and the hypervisibility and consequent invisibility (R.

Frankenberg, 1999) of the Asian population continues to be reinforced in these schools that are perceived as predominantly white. Talk around African American History Month, Kwanzaa, and black historical figures were much more frequent and much more accepted between teachers and with students (Steven, personal communication, April 3 & May 6, 2009; Michael, personal communication, March 24, 2009; Administrator 1, personal communication, June 16, 2009; Administrator 2, personal communication, June 3, 2009; Observation, March 27, 2009).

International Night. Wholly supported by the school and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at Fulton Elementary School, International Night served as another example of how this discourse operated to render people of color hypervisible while conflating race with culture in this predominantly white setting.

Mass email to all staff and families: Celebrate the many cultures and nationalities of [Fulton Elementary School] at INTERNATIONAL NIGHT! Join us for a fun-filled evening of international entertainment, food and festivities. It's a night you won't want to miss and one that you and your family will enjoy. (Michael, personal communication, April 28, 2009)

As part of this study I attended two International Night celebrations at Fulton (see Figures 12 and 13), and Steven described the function of this event best in his interview regarding how International Night was partnered with teachings in the classrooms.

Steven: International Night is put on by the PTO with the intention to celebrate everybody's culture. So my understanding is people come dressed in their "native garb," which is probably more stereotypical than it is actual. I believe there are food tables with specific food that is culturally significant. The teachers are always asked – to join – to create – they're assigned a country, then create that country's flag.

KH: Did you do that this year?

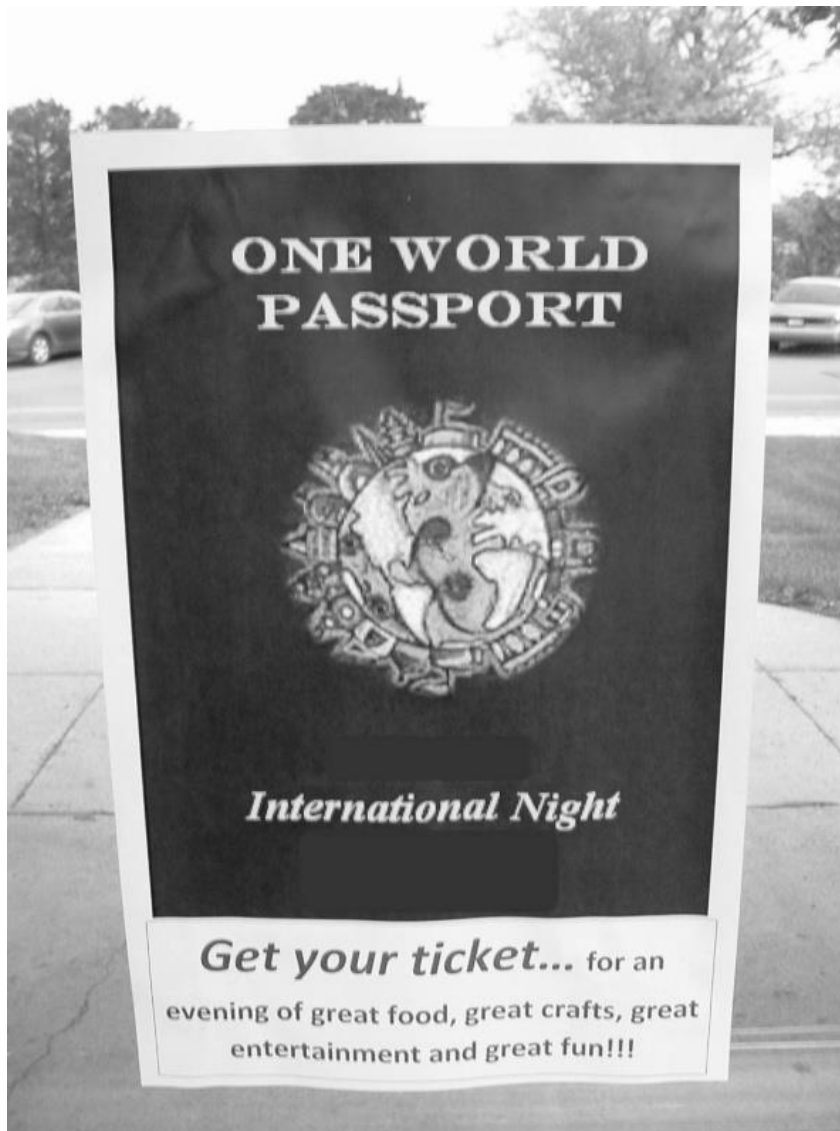


Figure 12. School flier at the entrance of the school for International Night event (Observation, May 8, 2009).

Steven: Yes, but I haven't been given a country yet, so it'll be interesting. One year I was Vietnam and another year, I don't remember what it was.

KH: So it has very little to do with the representation of you or your class?

Steven: No, it has absolutely nothing to do. I'm thinking it's somewhat of a farce, to be perfectly honest. I don't believe that coming in seeing a parent in a kimono and perhaps sitting down and having a piece of chicken to celebrate that she's Japanese. I don't think it tells me a whole lot about her being Japanese, other than leaving



Figure 13. Decorative banners in cafeteria/auditorium for International Night event (Observation, May 8, 2009).

children with the visual memory of, Japanese people wear kimonos.

KH: Okay. Did the PTO expect you to extend International Day into your classrooms or your lives or anything?

Steven: No, that has never – it's never come up, so I don't believe so, no.

KH: Did teachers participate in it?

Steven: Some teachers go. I have not.

KH: Okay. Is there a certain type of teacher that would be more likely to go than not?

Steven: Probably a first year teacher who's not tenured, to be honest. (personal communication, April 28, 2009)

This kind of external motivation is rarely effective in the long term (Einfeld & Collins, 2008) and works to stigmatize these kinds of well-meant efforts while maintaining the hypervisible status of non-white families and students. Although the PTO supported this event, the school's administrators also understood the surface approach of this celebration.

You know, I think that's really sad if that's how we view [diversity in the Norris School District] because it seemed like it was a one shot deal. "Here it is – it's International Night everybody – come on out!" Bring your food. Let's see who's going to dance. I don't think there was any meaningful, purposeful discussions in the classrooms before International Night happened, except every kid got a little cut out paper figure. "You're going to decorate this [to represent you and your culture] and we are going to hang it up on the wall..." (Administrator 2, personal communication, June 3, 2009)

Michael talked about this event's effectiveness in similarly skeptical ways and he explained that, "Some teachers do a good job of integrating it. Other teachers are like, 'I got to do this for the PTO'" (personal communication, April 23, 2009). He also commented, "We are kind of proud because we have our International Night. *[Laughter]* We kind of feel good that we know about those people, you know quote-unquote." (Michael, personal communication, March 30, 2009) Even though the administrators knew that teachers were not fully supportive of this celebration, they did very little to encourage the teachers to take a more critical or reflective stance. When asked if it was surprising that more teachers did not come to International Night, Administrator 1 remarked that, "[the teachers] don't come to much after school if they are not paid." (personal communication, June 16, 2009)

In the next section, I am going to look at the two teachers, Michael and Steven, who were initially selected to participate in this research because they represent examples of how white teachers can attempt to challenge these dominant discourses, but

paradoxically at the same time, reify them. A narrative for each teacher is provided to give context to their images, practices, and talk and evidence will be provided to illustrate a discourse of silence and a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility at work.

Chapter 5: The Teachers

Nested within the Fulton Elementary School context the two teachers, who were the primary units of analysis in the study paradoxically engaged in both sustaining and challenging the discourses of whiteness that operated at Fulton Elementary School. Steven and Michael were seen as participants in the larger discourses of whiteness functioning within this school to assist in the creation and perpetuation of the images, practices, and talk of teachers, parents, students, and administrators. Therefore, the following analysis not only uses the observations, interviews, and artifacts from Steven and Michael, but the data collected from administrators, local events, and the school at large to present the ways discourses of whiteness operated in this predominantly white educational community. This section focuses on the images, practices, and talk of Michael and Steven and will first examine how a discourse of silence was challenged as well as reified by each of two teachers – Michael challenges/reifies silence through the curriculum and through his relationships with parents and Steven challenges/reifies silence through critical conversations with parents and through critical conversations with students. Finally, the ways that each sustains a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility will be explored as Michael and Steven are unique in the ways they sustain this discourse through an uncertain white identity, through a labeling of the Other, and through their implementation of multicultural education.

Narrative of Michael and His Classroom

Walking into Michael's first grade classroom for the first time, it was difficult to find him amongst the students. One reason is that Michael does not have a designated teacher's desk. He chose to give up his desk and replace it with a table and cart on

wheels where he keeps his teacher supplies and materials. Preferring to give his students access to more developmentally appropriate furniture, he utilizes the kidney-shaped reading table as his workstation when students are not there working with him in small groups. Another reason why Michael is often difficult to locate is that he is usually actively engaged with students and chooses to sit in a first grade chair next to them in order to provide the help and encouragement they need.

Students write independently [during Writer's Workshop] and Michael goes around to conference and read with students. He shows some students how to use carats for editing and meets with each student at every table, one by one. Focusing his talk on one thing for each student, Michael says things such as, "You've got good detail" or "How about you start with a drawing?" The students are quiet and respectful of one another during this time. (Observation, March 24, 2009)

His classroom is neat and structured (see Figure 14) and the students know and follow the routines and procedures Michael has set in place.

Students come in, do their jobs, and begin reading independent choice time books. It is their 'double special day' and they have Spanish at 9:20am. Students seem to know exactly where everything goes and what they are expected to do. (Observation, March 24, 2009)

Papers are stacked, attendance is taken, and the morning routine is complete before anyone even knows it has begun.

There is very little clutter on the students' desks but Michael doesn't ever seem to have to ask them to clean up. In the center of each table there is a basket with clear plastic cups that each contains a glue stick, an eraser, a pencil, a pair of scissors, and a set of "multicultural" skin tone colored crayons. (Observation, May 1, 2009)

I feel almost superfluous as I watch the students manage themselves in their classroom environment.



Figure 14. Michael's classroom library bookshelves, arranged by theme (Observation, March 24, 2009).

The schedule for Michael's classroom (see Figure 15) had been determined earlier in the year and the daily subjects of instruction as well as the special area classes (music, art, physical education, etc.) were posted every morning for the students to review. Much of the instruction in the classroom happened in the whole group space on the carpet in front of the easel. Morning greetings, read alouds and story tellings, and even math lessons are taught with the students sitting in a communal space and engaging with their teacher in a cooperative way.

Michael begins to transition the class from arrival activities to the Morning Meeting. Students gather and stand on the edge of the whole group meeting area. Michael stands in the center of the carpet and puts a 'key' into an imaginary randomizer, revs the engine, and presses the invisible 'arms up' button. He raises his arms like a spinner in a carnival game and hits 'spin.' Spinning around in the center, he stops on pairs of students who meet in the middle of the circle to shake hands and formally greet each other with 'Good morning (student's name)!' After each student has had a turn, Michael hits the invisible 'arms down' button and takes the key out of the ignition. He begins with, "Who has something to share today?" (Observation, March 24, 2009)

While there is not much individual spontaneity and unstructured silliness, the students get along with one another and are sure to keep each other on task as the

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
9:00-9:30 Arrival	9:00-9:30 Arrival	9:00-9:30 Arrival	9:00-9:30 Arrival	9:00-9:30 Arrival	9:00-9:30 Arrival
9:30-9:50 Morning Meeting	9:30-9:50 Morning Meeting	9:30-9:50 Morning Meeting	9:30-9:50 Morning Meeting	9:30-9:50 Morning Meeting	9:30-9:50 Morning Meeting
9:50-10:45 Readers' Workshop	9:50-10:45 Readers' Workshop	9:50-10:45 Readers' Workshop	9:50-10:45 Readers' Workshop	9:50-10:05 Snack	9:50-10:45 Readers' Workshop
10:45-10:55 Snack	10:45-10:55 Snack	10:45-10:55 Snack	10:45-10:55 Snack	10:05-10:45 Spanish	10:45-10:55 Snack
10:55-11:30 Writers' Workshop	10:55-11:30 Writers' Workshop	10:55-11:30 Writers' Workshop	10:55-11:30 Writers' Workshop	10:45-11:30 Readers' Workshop	10:55-11:30 Writers' Workshop
11:30-11:50 Word Work	11:30-11:50 Word Work	11:30-11:50 Word Work	11:30-11:50 Word Work	11:30-11:50 Writers' Workshop	11:30-11:50 Word Work
11:50-12:35 Lunch and Recess	11:50-12:35 Lunch and Recess	11:50-12:35 Lunch and Recess	11:50-12:35 Lunch and Recess	11:50-12:35 Lunch and Recess	11:50-12:35 Lunch and Recess
12:35-1:00 Independent Reading	12:35-1:00 Independent Reading	12:35-1:00 Independent Reading	12:35-1:00 Independent Reading	12:35-1:00 Independent Reading	12:35-1:00 Independent Reading
1:00-1:50 Mathematics	1:00-1:50 Mathematics	1:00-1:50 Mathematics	1:00-1:25 Math 1:25-1:45 Library	1:00-1:50 Mathematics	1:00-1:50 Mathematics
1:50-2:30 Art	1:50-2:30 Gym/Health	1:50-2:30 Spanish	1:50-2:30 Gym/Health	1:50-2:30 Music	1:50-2:30 Gym/Health
2:30-3:15 S.S. / Science	2:30-3:15 S.S. / Science	2:30-3:15 S.S. / Science	2:30-3:15 S.S. / Science	2:30-3:15 S.S. / Science	2:30-3:15 S.S. / Science
3:15-3:30 Dismissal	3:15-3:30 Dismissal	3:15-3:30 Dismissal	3:15-3:30 Dismissal	3:15-3:30 Dismissal	3:15-3:30 Dismissal

Figure 15: Michael's Room, Grade 1, Daily Schedule, 2008-2009 (personal communication, March 26, 2009).

morning progresses into the afternoon without a hitch. If there ever is an occasion for Michael to assertively use discipline in the classroom, he uses a technique called a "chill out":

Michael reminded the same student two times to get back to her independent reading work and then asked her to "chill out" which is the classroom equivalent of a time-out for students to reflect on their actions away from the current activity. This student engages in the non-work related behavior again and Michael asks her to do a "think-time" where she needs to complete a form about what they were doing, what they could do to fix it, and then have it signed by the teacher and sent home. Michael has her revise it twice because he feels she is not taking it seriously. He tells her, "This is not funny." (Observation, May 13, 2009)

This system was used infrequently during my observations in Michael's classroom; it was rendered unnecessary as students knew the expectations for their behavior and work and followed them to the letter.

When asked to describe himself, Michael first sees himself and his identity as being strongly rooted in his relationships – with his family, with his work, and predominantly with his Christian faith. His faith is not just a personal identifier; it is who Michael is and how he relates to the world around him. This guiding faith often sets him apart from his peers as he uses his deep religious beliefs to inform his teaching pedagogy and his pursuit of truth, knowledge, and community. Michael is very comfortable talking about how he defines himself and his identity through his relationships, particularly the relationship with key religious figures in his faith.

Michael: So anyway I realized that the more I thought about the more every one of the relationships I was describing was influenced by my relationship with Jesus and that, you know to be a good husband that was influenced by my relationship with the Lord, to be a good dad or a good teacher or a good whatever, so I just realized I got, that was kind of the core. Really I just kind of started seeing an almost certain image of a core relationship that then defined everything else about me.

KH: Do you think that sets you apart from other teachers in the building?

Michael: Not if they have that same relationship with Jesus but yeah, because you find a lot of, you find a lot of folks that don't necessarily have a holistic world view. (personal communication, March 3, 2009)

A devout Christian who identifies himself first through the lens of his faith and relationship with his religious beliefs, it was no surprise that Michael sometimes found it a struggle to integrate his own identity into the more secular Judeo-Christian culture of a public elementary school.

KH: Are there times in school, not to talk about Jesus, but to talk about more holistic world views? Does the education system here provide time for those kinds of conversations?

Michael: Not really, not amongst the staff, not amongst the students. A lot of it is fear of legal action, lack of knowledge of what you can and cannot talk about. You know most teachers don't realize you can actually read the Bible or the Koran or the, name your holy text. You can actually read those texts in the classroom as historical documents. Not as devotional, but then the second question comes why are you doing it, does it help, you know, I don't need to read Luke 2 to teach Christmas, there's a bunch of good Christmas books out right now that you can use instead so you don't cause a big problem. So there is lack of knowledge at times, fear, this overcorrection, you know, we were so dominated by Western thought that now Western thought is all bad and anything you stream is okay and, you know, we are diverse if you mention Buddha or Mohamed or Moses but if you mention Jesus or Paul or someone like that – oh, you are oppressive. (personal communication, March 3, 2009)

Michael is considered the “school history buff” by many other teachers (Steven, Classroom Newsletter, March 23, 2009, p. 4). He regularly teaches his students about historical figures, events, and innovations and his classroom reflects his commitment to educating students about the past and the importance of lifelong learning (see Figure 16).

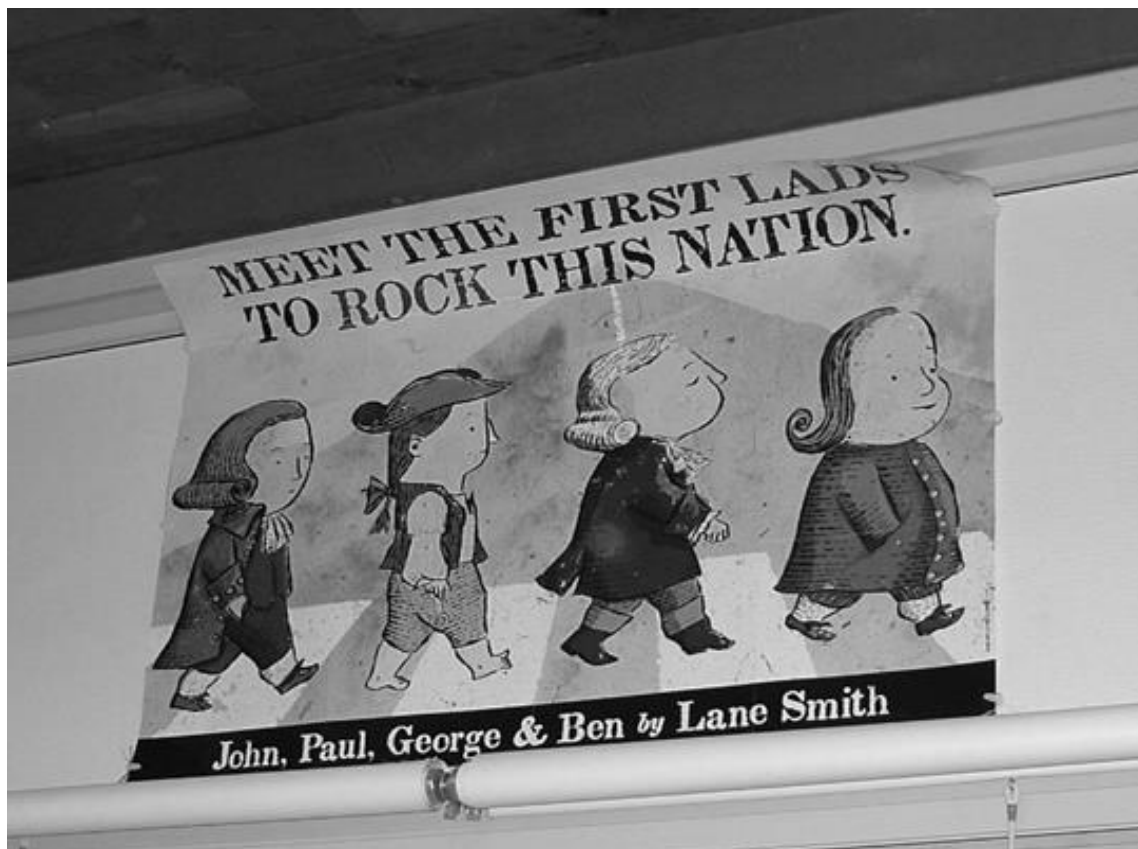


Figure 16. American history poster from Michael's Room (Observation, March 24, 2009).

I began a unit of study this week on The American Journey with the kids. We are exploring Colonial America and how different it is from present time. I will teach about why the colonists came to America and set up the colonies, King George, the Constitution, The Declaration of Independence, The Boston Tea Party, and Benedict Arnold. Be prepared for the kids to recite the two aforementioned documents which I will introduce in a similar fashion as I do poetry. (Steven, Classroom Newsletter, March 23, 2009, p. 2)

Michael uses his life experiences (such as teaching English for a summer in the Gaza Strip), critical thinking skills (engendered from his love of history and pursuit of truth), and religious faith to guide the fundamentals of instruction in his classroom.

Michael: There are times where I tell them, with history (especially when I story tell it), I tell them, "This is Mr. Michael's story about so and so and it is based on a lot of facts but with history sometimes new facts happen. And so you might have a slightly different version of Mr. Michael's story that you learned from other books or from other facts you learned about, so don't just take what I'm saying as

gospel truth when it comes to Henry Box Brown [a slave who mailed himself in a wooden box to abolitionists in Philadelphia] or something.” So I try to help them to not see me as the information piece that knows everything...

KH: Do you think that they have ever expressed being uncomfortable with the idea that there is no one truth?

Michael: Well I don’t say that...just because there is absolute truth, that’s not popular in our culture nowadays but you know, I think if I started to fill my car with sand, I’d discover there is an absolute truth that right now cars run on gasoline. So that’s definitely something different in my room is that we do say there is truth and that we value truth and that’s what we are seeking after. (personal communication, March 30, 2009)

As this description illustrates, Michael is a man who possesses a strong religious belief and who feels a deep and abiding commitment to a pursuit of truth and knowledge. His faith and devotion to Jesus guides his actions and attitudes inside and outside of his classroom. Michael is an excellent teacher who sees education as essential and recognizes teaching as his calling. Without overtly complicating conversations with issues of social justice, power, and marginalization, he chooses to take a critical approach to integrating history into the curriculum. While he creates a context that reaches out to parents and families, he struggles to see race in particular as a salient feature in his life or in the lives of his students. This blindness to race is reflected in the absence of critical race talk in his classroom.

Narrative of Steven and His Classroom

Upon entering Steven’s classroom, a visitor has only to look through a twittering group of eager students and they will find Mr. Steven somewhere in the mix, delighting over a newly found cocoon from the bus ride to school or admiring a picture drawn especially for him by one of his first grade devotees. The students pile into Steven’s

classroom every morning in a loud, boisterous bundle and quickly deposit their personal belongings in the classroom closet. He greets the students with enthusiastic chirps of, “Hey buddy!” and asks them to get settled as quickly as possible.

Students arrive in drips and drabs as morning announcements begin over the loud speaker. They begin to work in their journals and Steven works with individual students to help them think through their writing out loud before they read their writing to him. Some students seem distracted and are aware of Steven’s gaze as they attempt to avoid doing the morning work. (Observation, March 27, 2009)

While it is clear to me while observing that there is a plan for students to get to work on their morning assignments, the students are not as dedicated to following this routine. Instead, they check on the progress of their tadpoles, visit each other’s desks, use the restrooms, and try to remember what work from yesterday went unfinished.

Students seem to have a lot of questions about where things are and what to do. Steven is often quick to admonish students when they aren’t following the directions or the rules of the classroom but students seem confused as to what the expectations are. (Observation, April 28, 2009)

Covered in paperwork and teachers’ manuals, Steven’s traditional teacher’s desk squats proudly in the corner of the classroom. He has made an effort to display student pictures and artwork all around the room as well as behind and on top of his desk. The walls are covered in bright posters and shelves are laden with books, folders, and miscellaneous classroom supplies (see Figure 17). The schedule for the day’s activities and “specials” (special area classes) is usually available to students on a chart in the front of the classroom (see Figure 18).

A typical day begins as Steven asks the students to join him on the carpet so that they can begin their morning responsive classroom greeting.

After announcements, the students meet on the carpet to do calendar and the talk is very conversational. Steven mentions that he will teach the students a new handshake – the ankle shake – on Monday and goes over the plan for the day with



Figure 17. Inspirational classroom posters from Steven's room (Observation, May 6, 2009).

students. The students are visibly excited about the birthday celebration planned for later in the morning. (Observation, March 27, 2009)

Steven devotes much of this time to creating his classroom community (see Figure 19).

When students are off task and fidgety and Steven is quick to redirect; they do not seem bothered and settle in with the rest of the class. Sometimes, "Steven uses a very 'Zen' chime as well as a clapping pattern to get the students' attention in the classroom. This helps to facilitate classroom management as lots of support staff travel in and out of

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
9:00 – 9:15	Morning Business	Morning Business	Morning Business	Morning Business	Morning Business	Morning Business
9:15 – 9:40	Responsive Classroom Morning Mtg.	Responsive Classroom Morning Mtg.	Responsive Classroom Morning Mtg.	Responsive Classroom Morning Mtg.	Spanish	Responsive Classroom Morning Mtg.
9:40 – 9:50	Word Work (Handwriting Without Tears/McCracken)	Word Work (Handwriting Without Tears/McCracken)	Word Work (Handwriting Without Tears/McCracken)	Word Work (Handwriting Without Tears/McCracken)	Word Work (Handwriting Without Tears/McCracken)	Word Work (Handwriting Without Tears/McCracken)
9:50 – 10:30	Writer's Workshop	Writer's Workshop	Writer's Workshop	Writer's Workshop	Writer's Workshop	Writer's Workshop
10:30 – 10:45	Snack/ Independent Reading	Snack/ Independent Reading	Snack/ Independent Reading	Snack/ Independent Reading	Snack/ Independent Reading	Snack/ Independent Reading
10:45 – 11:30	Guided Reading/ Centers	Guided Reading/ Centers	Guided Reading/ Centers	Guided Reading/ Centers	Guided Reading/ Centers	Guided Reading/ Centers
11:35 – 12:15	Art	Health & Physical Ed.	Spanish	Health & Physical Ed.	Music	Health & Physical Ed.
12:25 – 1:35	Everyday Math	Everyday Math	Everyday Math	Everyday Math	Everyday Math	Everyday Math
1:35 – 2:30	Lunch / Recess	Lunch / Recess	Lunch / Recess	Lunch / Recess	Lunch / Recess	Lunch / Recess
2:30 – 3:15	Science/ Social Studies	2:50 – 3:10 Library	Science/ Social Studies	Computer Projects	Science/ Social Studies	Computer Projects
3:15 – 3:30	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

Figure 18. Steven's Room, Grade 1, Daily Schedule, 2008-2009 (Observation, March 27, 2009).

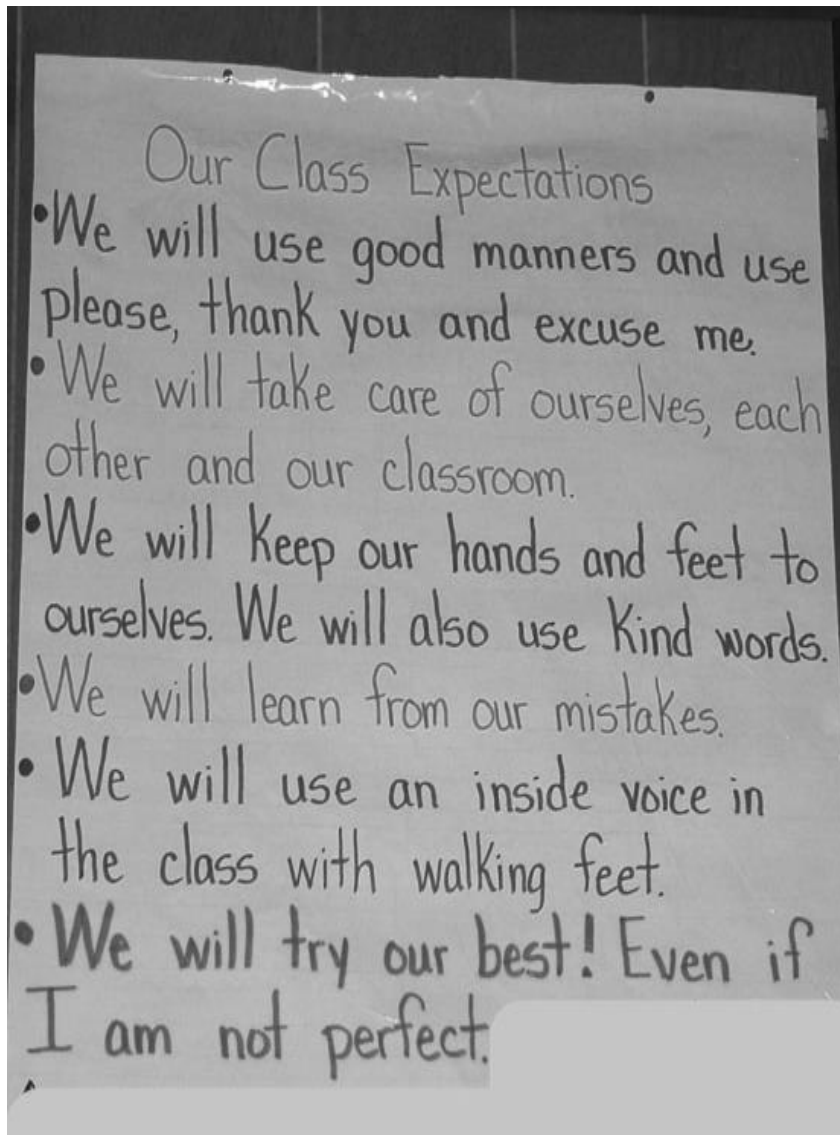


Figure 19. Classroom rules and expectations poster from Steven's room (Observation, March 27, 2009).

Steven's room throughout the day to assist students with reading, writing and math"

(Observation, April 28, 2009). The students giggle to one another and settle in easily as Steven talks about their plans for the week and the exciting adventures they have waiting in store for them.

Steven described that as "a kid [he] knew [he] wanted to be one of three things; a zookeeper, a veterinarian, or a teacher" (personal communication, March 20, 2009) and

he is still very committed to addressing issues of social and environmental justice (Observation, April 23, 2009). Working as an active supporter of causes in which he believes, Steven always tries to involve his students and other classes and teachers in critical conversations around global, ecological, and socio-political topics.

During their morning science lesson, Steven asks students to realize that they can make a difference in the world – even in small ways. “How many of you are proud of yourselves?” Steven mentions the plains in Africa and the rainforests in South America and talks with the students about where they would like to donate the money they are collecting from the bake sale. (Observation, April 23, 2009)

At times, his overzealous conservation efforts work to inadvertently isolate him from the larger population of teachers who do not seem to share his passion for issues such as recycling and global warming (see Figure 20).

KH: Do you think people keep those stereotypes and just look at what you’re doing as different?

Steven: I think oftentimes I am looked at as somewhat of a freak.

KH: Okay, how so?

Steven: I’m the environmental guy here. I’m the one who will push to get recycling started. I’ll get – if there’s a fundraiser or charity, you know I’ll probably jump on. If there’s a social issue during the election I certainly didn’t keep my mouth shut. I was very, very – if there was an in to have the conversation I took it. I’ve just, I think as I get older, social – so much of what I see around me I find so disturbing. I’ve gotten to a point in my own life that I can’t sit idly by. (personal communication, April 23, 2009)

Overall, Steven can be best described as an environmental activist who is seen as a sort of social justice maverick in Fulton Elementary School. Dedicated to his students, his instruction fully engages them in learning and he is not intimidated by the thought of having difficult or challenging conversations about marginalization and injustice with administrators, other teachers, parents, and students. Steven regularly engages others in



Figure 20. Earth Day bulletin board display outside Steven's room (Observation, April 23, 2009).

straightforward dialog that can sometimes border on passionately aggressive and has little institutional support for his attempts to counteract what he sees as egregious. And yet, he too is limited in the ways he critically addresses race and there are times when he is inadvertently operating in ways that sustain the very disparities he is trying to contradict. In the sections that follow, I will expand on the contradictory discourses about race that are enacted by Michael and Steven as both a discourse of silence and a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility are sustained and challenged in their images, practices, and talk.

Michael's and Steven's Contradictory Discourses about Race

At Fulton, evidence of colorblindness and white privilege were seen in countless ways – International Day with its Western European cultural focus on dance, food, and costume; basic skills and remedial education classes that were heavily populated by children of color while their white classmates who also struggled remained in the classrooms; multicultural literature units being taught that highlight people of color but fail to identify the fact that most of the characters in all of the other units are white; monthly designations and displays for historically marginalized groups such as Blacks, Latinos, and women, but no coherent, commonly practiced social studies curriculum; and accounts of parents and guardians asking for their children to be placed in classrooms where the teacher does not have an accent.

Typically, this school functioned from a place that supported white privilege and did not acknowledge the existence of a dominant white culture. Unpacking the discourses in this setting, at times I struggled to articulate the predicament of these white teachers as they were always embedded within the larger context of the school. The next sections will look at how Michael and Steven each challenged and sustained both a discourse of silence and a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility through their images, practices, and talk at Fulton Elementary School.

Challenging (while sustaining) a Discourse of Silence

It was much easier to see how the teachers at Fulton Elementary School challenged whiteness because these instances stood out from the norm. While Michael and Steven each made individual efforts to challenge the ways white privilege and an ideology of colorblindness functioned to sustain a discourse of silence around issues of

race at Fulton Elementary School, the power of whiteness in this setting could not be denied. Unfortunately since “most white teachers have not been taught to see themselves as white...nor have we been taught to think of whiteness as being important to our work in racially diverse classrooms” (Goldstein, 2001, p. 4), Michael and Steven have difficulty challenging this discourse as it operates to sustain whiteness in this predominantly white setting. So while they are making powerful moves to challenge a discourse of silence, they are also unintentionally contributing to its perpetuation.

Michael challenges a discourse of silence. During our first conversation, I asked Michael to describe himself and he simply said,

I am me. Well if I describe myself, I would probably start to describe myself based on relationships. So, [I am my wife]’s husband, I am my daughters’ dad. I am a believer, and I feel called to work with children. Both in schools, but internationally as well, and so I do a lot of work through my church, and through a non-profit to help kids in poverty, education and things like that, and I guess really the whole me comes out of Jesus, you know, without that piece in my life, I can’t really describe the rest of me. (Michael, personal communication, March 19, 2009)

In this description, Michael does not identify his racial identity and this inability to see his own whiteness is in opposition to the ways Michael acted and spoke about wanting to disrupt the lack of talk surrounding issues of race, culture, and knowledge production in his classroom and in the larger school environment. He lamented the way a kind of conversational standoff occurs between those who think differently and those who possess more conservative ideals as he reflects on talking to fellow teachers about critical issues of race.

We are human – just tell me what you think. I will tell you what I think, I will try to do it nicely, and you try to do it nicely and hopefully we agree. And when we don’t, well, ultimately we are trying to do what’s best for the kids, so it doesn’t help matters for me to just sit here and put up a fence. (Michael, personal communication, June 3, 2009)

Michael firmly states that if what he believes is “absolutely true, well...[then] truth will eventually prove itself. So I don’t need to push what I believe. If what I believe is *not* true, I owe it to myself to not believe it anymore and find something that is true” (Michael, personal communication, March 30, 2009). He expresses his dedication to teaching critical thinking about history, to cultivating positive relationships, and in sustaining empathetic expressions that acknowledged the experiences of people of color, Michael makes attempts to challenge the discourse of silence a) through his use of the curriculum and b) through a building of relationships with parents.

Challenging/reifying silence through the curriculum. Addressing the systemic lack of development around a clear social studies curriculum in Norris School District, Michael worked for years to design, create, and help his fellow first grade teachers implement a “A Nation Divided” U.S. history unit. By engaging other teachers in his vision, he worked to challenge the discourse of silence by initiating conversations with his peers to encourage basic, surface level talk around issues of power and culture.

Coming home today is a Guess Who Game culminating our study of the A Nation Divided unit in social studies. The students feel so proud that they know about these people and historical events and will undoubtedly want to share with you. Some of the people in the game were covered quite in depth while others were only touched upon. Also this week we tried out our second Knowledge Graffiti Wall. I posted the names of events, ideas, and people from this unit, and students worked in small groups for 15 minutes apiece over the course of the last two weeks to record as much knowledge as they could about A Nation Divided. Each student visited the Knowledge Graffiti Wall twice (see Figure 21). Students scored 2 points for every original idea and 1 point for an idea that was recorded somewhere else on the wall. Our goal was 250 points by the end of tomorrow, and it looks like we will reach it. (Michael, personal communication, March 19, 2009)

Michael challenges the discourse of silence through this teaching of history and exploration of socio-political figures. As described above, Michael is a history enthusiast



Figure 22. U.S. history timeline from Michael's classroom (Observation, April 4, 2009).

Unfortunately, sometimes in his enthusiasm for the critical study of historical events and figures, Michael did not see race as a key component of how whiteness works to privilege some and silence others. He stated,

But you know, people aren't necessarily important because of their color. They are important because of what they do and sometimes it's related to their color. You know Oprah's not necessarily important because she is black – she is important because of you know you pretty much can't do anything without her approval in the entertainment world. Like you do something on her show, you are set for life. And it is interesting to note, "Hey there is not too many African American women who have that power." So there is some racial tone to it but you know she is big because of what she has done. And you can't get across in a month what you can get that across in a time period. You know, Colin Powell is not important because he is black – he is important because of what he has done for the country, and oh, by the way, he is black. Washington isn't important because he is white... He is important because of what he did, and oh, he is white. (Michael, personal communication, May 6, 2009)

By not seeing race as an essential factor in the important work of historic figures challenging racist trends of marginalization, Michael used this colorblind approach to sustain a discourse of silence that “not only ignores the positive contributions of racialized groups, but also ignores or denies the systemic harms that people of color experience” (Applebaum, 2005, p. 283).

Challenging/reifying silence through relationships with parents. By cultivating a positive relationship with families, Michael translates his outstanding devotion to his own family into high expectations he sets for himself when it comes to including the presence of families in his classroom environment. The silence that often goes unacknowledged between teachers and parents is something that was challenged in Michael’s classroom. While the silence around issues of race was not directly addressed, Michael chose to reach out to the community by creating time – separate from the designated conference or back-to-school nights – to meet with parents and families on a more level playing field.

Every year, for the past three years I think it’s been now, in early October I advertise “Tea with Mr. Michael” and it’s literally tea and although this year I didn’t do hot tea, most times I have the tea kettle going and everything. And cookies. This time we did cookies and iced tea and I say [to the parents that] I think that our relationship – you give me your children...it’s a weird thing we do here in America. You don’t know me at all, but you give me your child, your most precious resource right now and you trust that I am going to do all the right things with that kid. What my world view might be, what my opinions on issues might be, how well educated I might be – there is the sense of it. You know [I tell them], you know your kids better than I do it at this point of the year. I eventually know your kids better than you do in this setting, but I will never know your kids better than you do – ultimately, if you are doing your job right as mom and dad. So I would be foolish to wait until the beginning of November to begin our relationship as parent and teacher. (Michael, personal communication, June 3, 2009)

Even the administrators noticed that he was doing something above and beyond to attempt to break down barriers between himself and the parents in his classroom.

I know last year after he was responsive classroom trained, he brought every parent to this class and you know probably early on like end of September I want to say. And during this prep time and met with every parent I think he served tea and it was the hopes and dreams, “What do you want your child, tell me about your child. I want to get to know them, I want to get to know you, how are we going to work together.” He met with every single parent. And at first I was like, “What is he doing? Meeting the parent – like every week?” And he explained, “I just want to get to know them better. I bring them in – we just sit.”
(Administrator 2, personal communication, June 3, 2009)

The administrators seemed shocked that Michael would decide to do something so labor intensive instead of just doing the traditional back-to-school night presentation to all the parents in his class who could attend the weeknight event, but Michael often goes out of his way to open up lines of communication between himself and his students’ families.

Michael challenged the discourse of silence at Fulton through his expression of a deeper understanding of how the white experience is different than the experiences had by people of color in our country.

Potentially it could and potentially it really got there in a sense of, you know I will never understand fully the black experience in America. I just can’t, I can sympathize with it a certain amount but...in most recent election [of President Barack Obama], even though I didn’t agree with that election, I am still very proud of the country for making that leap forward. But I don’t get the tears that I saw in some people’s eyes, who were alive during the Civil Rights Movement and all the other stuff. Reverend Jackson, I saw him on TV and he wasn’t a big fan of Obama apparently, but he still had lot of emotion and I will never get that. So I’ll never see – potentially – the push that is needed to deal with those issues as much, but at the same time I recognize their worth and their need to be in the classroom. Their need to be real, not faux finished – where it’s just a book, an activity and a worksheet that shows that I did it rather than students deeply understand something in a bunch of pictures...So, I think my whiteness can affect it in a sense that I will never truly get it fully. But at the same time I am able to say, “Okay, I don’t get it totally but that doesn’t mean I don’t have to deal with it.” And it doesn’t mean my kids shouldn’t be engaging with whatever *it* is. (Michael, personal communication, April 23, 2009)

This kind of powerful move made by white teachers in this school is not uncommon. Empathy and the admission of lack of personal understanding are ways in which whites can absolve themselves of having to assume responsibility for remediating any inequities or injustices they themselves may be perpetrating (Aal, 2001; Jenks et al., 2001). Even while he does not fully understand the experiences of people of color, Michael challenged a discourse of silence when he states that his students need to know about these important issues.

Through emails, paper notices, and personal invitations that include tea and treats, Michael worked to include and appreciate everyone. For example, his letters home on Mother's Day and Father's Day were especially touching –

Mothers have one of the most difficult jobs in our world. They are an integral part of the very fabric of our society as they are often the primary caregivers of America's future...our children. Today's post-modern, relativistic culture is not as mother-friendly as previous ones. Motherhood is less valued by the culture, and the invaluable service and role mothers' play often goes unappreciated. (Michael, personal communication, May 8, 2009)

Regrettably, these kinds of heartfelt attempts too often fall short or fail as ways to challenge a discourse of silence and critically examine the power of whiteness. These “narratives may begin a process of adjustment in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 43), but without adjusting the institutional power of whiteness, teachers like Michael cannot remediate the historic discursive silence that works to systematically marginalize people of color.

Steven challenges a discourse of silence. Steven consistently expressed a desire to reflect on his own classroom practices, personal perspectives, and institutional privileges. He chose to challenge the ways in which a discourse of silence operated by a)

engaging parents in critical conversations about race, power, and marginalization and b) engaging students in these kinds of critical conversations as well. He took these critical discussions beyond lessons that used multi-cultural crayons (Observation, March 27, 2009) and even sought out opportunities to engage in social situations (such as dinner events with peers and community support groups for those people with disabilities) outside of school that might encourage his developing critical perspective.

Challenging/reifying silence through critical conversations with parents.

Steven seemed to delight in engaging in critical conversations with the groups and individuals that he sometimes inadvertently silenced by teaching from a white perspective. He recalled a conversation he had with a black parent after being interviewed about how his white identity influenced his teaching.

KH: I wanted to ask you about your talking to [female black student]'s mom about if you teach from a white perspective?

Steven: I came right out and asked her. We were talking about my newsletter and the blurb that was in there about doing research and I said to her, "You know, since we're on that subject. I'm gonna go there." And she already thinks I'm a nutcase anyways and so I just asked her. I was like, "Do you think I teach from a white perspective?" And she said...well her first reaction was she became very stone-like. And she's like, "Should I be honest?" I said, "Well absolutely." She's like, "Um hmm." I was pleased because she gave me credit for being 'better than most' in her words. But she said, "That's what you know." She said, "That's the way black people and white people are..." And I say black because I actually asked her, I was like, "What is appropriate? Did you want me to say black or African American?" She said, "Black." So I'm always worried that this, it's not PC. But she said, "Black people and white people raise their children very differently. Most definitely in this area." She said, "You know, not only is the curriculum just incredibly different." She also wonders would [her daughter] be struggling in [a predominantly black, urban school] like she is here. And I do get there is an inequality in curriculums, but she said, "In [a predominantly black, urban school] your mom will whip your behind," as she put it.

And here she hears so many kids negotiating with their parents. She's like, "Oh I don't negotiate." You know which I appreciate you know. I don't think you need to be militaristic but how do you negotiate with a four year-old who is by definition at an irrational age?

In her interview, Parent 1 recalls these conversations as well. She specifically talks about how she was overlooked when Steven sent out emails inviting parents in to read to the class because she does not have regular access to a computer with email capabilities.

He's a great guy, don't get me wrong. I don't think he really understands the whole, he just doesn't understand it. And it's like this can be brought to him too, because we've had, we're really cool. We've heard black and white conversation so it's not even that - we've had it but I don't think he really understand like, "Oh yeah, I did invite her this week..." [*Remorseful tone*] He thinks that he invited me this week, like, "I did great." But, I'm like no. I don't want to come in June, I wanted to come in April and in September when all the other parents are reading. (Parent 1, personal communication, June 19, 2009)

Steven did not shy away from these kinds of interactions and viewed the parents' feedback as a positive outcome of their relationship. But while in this predominantly white setting, he was unique in his willingness to break through a discourse of silence by initiating and sustaining these kinds of critical conversations. Steven was committed to maintaining this kind of pattern of communication with parents while most teachers and administrators worked under the assumption that these conversations were interesting but non-essential.

KH: Why don't you think white teachers want to talk about race? I mean, they're white...

Steven: Well in fairness, I don't – I think some people believe that – they don't know how the other person's going to react, if it isn't a hot topic for somebody else or am I knowledgeable enough to discuss it. And to be candid, I did not think as much about white culture until we started these interviews. (personal communication, April 23, 2009)

More often than not, most white teachers are not even aware of the need to have these were important conversations as a way of examining the power structures that support and maintain educational work in classrooms district-wide.

Challenging/reifying silence through critical conversations with students.

Among the teachers at Fulton Elementary School, Steven has a unique perspective that is rooted in his past experiences working in a predominantly black school in a local urban area. He describes his experience,

This [experience working in a predominantly black school] was so foreign to me. Kids are – I mean I’m talking droves of children are walking down the street and they are literally just walking over sleeping people. They’re walking over one leg and then walking over the next leg and this boggles my mind. I sat there thinking okay, why – what am I doing, why am I here. I walked into the school. I was at a 4th grade class and this little boy – I’ll never forget this – he looked at me, very first thing he said, damn Mr. Steven is a white boy and I didn’t miss a beat. I was like buddy, as it gets colder out, I’m going to get even whiter. It was actually a friend of mine at the time who had said to me days before; this may be the first positive experience these children will have with someone outside of their race. Those words, I think, still ring in my ears. I think that is a guiding phrase for the kind of teacher that I am or wanted. We ended up moving the chairs back. His teacher, right away, was ready to pounce. She was a screamer, very uncomfortable. I was like, “It’s fine.” We moved the desks back and we sat in a big circle in this very crowded room and I was like, “Let’s talk about this. Here’s the truth, guys. As it gets colder and as it snows, I am going to get whiter and you’re not. I’m not going to get darker; you’re not going to get lighter. Let’s talk about it now.” I remember this little girl, Cynthia, all she wanted to do was touch my hair and she told me that my hair was nasty, which I thought was hysterical. I brought it up in class, you know, the things that come out of children’s mouths are – I don’t believe that most 6-year olds are – have the capacity to really be cruel. I think a lot of what comes out of their mouth that we, as adults, phrase as inappropriate is coming from a real area of truth for who they are. (Steven, personal communication, April 29, 2009)

As a white male in an urban black school, Steven was set apart within that setting but he reacted in ways that acknowledged that difference without trying to make it go away.

But although his attempts were well-intentioned and more than most white teachers are able to do, this superficial approach to critical race talk focused solely on skin color and

not much else. Race is much more than physical appearance and this can be seen through the experiences of light skinned black people who don't enjoy the privileges of whiteness to which a dark skinned white person has access (Keith & Herring, 1991).

Steven, however, continued to expand critical conversations in his classroom by letting students bring in their own lived experiences and understandings.

Morning circle time continued and some students began to raise their hands to join in the conversation. Steven talks with the students about Egypt – the country where Maya's family comes from. Another student, Jennifer, comments that Israel probably does the same thing with time and the clock the Egypt does. Jennifer goes on to talk about the Jewish Bible, a boy named Moses, and how she knows the whole story while Maya only knows half of it. Jennifer tells that class that. "One time when Jews came to Egypt, the pharaoh wasn't OK with that." Steven continues this conversation by asking the rest of the class if they know what a pharaoh is. He says, "It sounds like we need to learn about another interesting word in order to understand your story." He makes connections to the museum exhibit about King Tut that some of the students had recently attended with their families. Later, Steven goes to the map and has the students look at where Israel and Egypt are in relation to one another and in relation to the United States. (Observation, March 27, 2009)

He also did these kinds of activities with his own students at Fulton and has conversations with them about beginning ideas of race and difference that point out the divisions without making them divisive and negative (Observation, April 28, 2009).

These kinds of interactions with his students set him apart from other teachers because his honest and sincere approach to issues of race is unique to his classroom and his style of teaching.

KH: Do you feel like the students of your class are as truthful as that student who said Mr. Steven is a white man? Would your [current] students be as likely to bring that kind of thing up?

Steven: Yeah. I think so. I think so. Yes, I do. I don't think race is – I really do – I don't believe that race is an issue for this class.

KH: Why?

Steven: Because we've literally talked about it since the first day of school. We did a graph about skin color. We talked about how, well, that Jada wasn't the only one with brown skin, Roland also has brown skin. Earlier in the year, I had a Hispanic girl who happened to have moved, but she had brown skin and all their families came from different places. I remember the kids asked me to do a graph who had the lightest skin and then they would – we wanted to put ourselves in order who had the lightest skin to the darkest skin. It was all – it was just all so honest. (personal communication, April 28, 2009)

Overall, most teachers in the school did not directly deal with the topic of diversity or difference when it comes to race and culture, and although Steven tends to focus on surface level physical characteristics, he attempts to challenge the discourse of silence around issues of race by continuing to advocate for the engagement of his students in these types of critical conversations.

Most of the disruptions to whiteness were at the individual level and might have gone unnoticed had I not been interviewing educators for this project. Steven spoke specifically about a conversation in one of his graduate education classes that was held with teachers at Fulton Elementary School.

[The conversation] was actually about the teacher who is Pakistani. She spoke up and she said, "I hear what you're saying, but growing up being the only person who looked like me and being the only person who dressed like me and the only person who was a Muslim did make me stand out. There was nothing in my education that validated that." ...I was kind of like, "Huh." It made me think about our interviews and our discussions and whatnot. I brought this up, the fact that you've been spending time with my class and we've been having interviews and it's really interesting that just through our conversations, it – I feel like our conversations last longer than they do because I'm continuing them in my head on my way home. It's hard to – you'll say something and it'll either sound very eloquent or it'll spark an issue and I'll be like, huh, have I thought about that enough. It's very easy driving home in your car by yourself to be honest with yourself and have I done enough of that. There are some situations where, frankly, I have not done enough. (Steven, personal communication, April 23, 2009)

The way Steven articulated his own metacognitive processes and acknowledged his own failings as a white educator committed to addressing issues of social justice and inequality is indicative of personal moves white educators can begin to make if they are challenged to do so in their settings. Steven is very committed to disrupting this discourse of silence around issues of race and he understands that, “as educators, we can provide experiences in our classrooms that are potentially transformative, but to do so, we must admit the potential for loss that our students recognize and resist as we challenge them to engage the silences” (Mazzei, 2008, pp. 1134-1135).

Unfortunately, there is not much institutional support at Fulton for teachers like Steven, who is willing to engage in critical talk about race, and Michael, who is committed to education of students and the inclusion of their parents and families in that process. Overall, this discourse of silence was not challenged at this school. Individuals like Steven and Michael expressed moments of personal concern and awareness of injustice, but the dominant practices endorsed and encouraged in their school context were those that supported whiteness and perpetuated the power of white privilege.

Sustaining a Discourse of Hypervisibility/Invisibility

As the discourse of silence described above complicated the process of seeing how whiteness operated in this predominantly white school, another discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility functioned to shape the work, words, and actions of these two teachers at Fulton. By conflating the concepts of culture and race, Michael and Steven actively highlighted culture, which served to make people of color hypervisible, and avoided talk about race, which served to render invisible not only their own whiteness, but the raced identities and experiences of people of color as well. While many of

Michael and Steven's images, practices, and conversations were intended to resist the dominant powers of whiteness, they ultimately ended up sustaining the existing discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility that empowered white teachers to create classrooms and school environments that continued to privilege whites and marginalize people of color.

Michael sustains a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility. The discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility was ever present at Fulton Elementary School, working to sustain white privilege while it also sought to "[prevent] any challenge to its authority" (Allsup, 1995, p. 273). By maintaining the invisibility of race through a conflating of race and culture, Michael sustained this discourse in the following ways: a) through his uncertainty and limited awareness of his white identity, b) through a labeling of the Other, and c) through the use of multicultural educational practices in his classroom.

Sustaining hypervisibility/invisibility through an uncertain white identity. In this predominantly white school, not articulating a white identity leads individuals to use cultural labels in lieu of assigning race and this allows whiteness to operate in a way that uses culture as a colorblind, celebratory vehicle for white privilege. "These varying conceptions of 'culture'...help to illuminate the way that students of color become marked and made visible, while white students and whiteness is unmarked, invisible, and normative within the predominantly white...setting." (Braun, 2011, pp. 116-117)

Talks with Michael about how he understood his own racial identity helped to begin to illuminate the ways this discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility functioned to normalize whiteness in this setting. Initially, Michael was asked to describe himself and his identity and he chose not to focus on race, but rather on his culture as he described his ethnic identity in detail by saying,

I am Irish and mostly German. Irish and Italian with the rest of western what-used-to-be in-NATO-before-the-Warsaw-Pact-Act-broke-up. But I don't really identify with any of that – I identify with my American experience and I see how, while I have pasta more often, maybe more than some of my friends who are Italian...I make my own sauce, but I don't like to identify with Italy and I have no desire to. I am interested in my genealogy. I have actually researched back a little bit. [My wife's] dad has actually gone back to like 1000 A.D at this point. He's been at it for long time and he has actually traced him and his wife's family as having crossed paths twice in history. They are relatives at some point, so that was kind of neat. I have got back to like pretty much all of my great grandparents. And then we start going to other countries, so I am kind of like, "Oh – done with the research – can't do anymore." So, you know let's flesh out what's still around here. (Michael, personal communication, April 23, 2009)

Choosing to make his historical cultural associations hypervisible, Michael uses a technique of conflating culture and race as a as a tool to obscure his white race and his associations with whiteness and instead focuses on his Eurocentric cultural roots. "This idea of white teachers lacking the initiative or ability to identify themselves as white is...rooted in the trend for white individuals to focus on ethnicity rather than race when conversations of race come to the forefront" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; Martin et al., 1999).

Michael, as well as other white teachers at Fulton, preferred to use the labels Caucasian, American, or even Western European ethnic group labels when identifying themselves rather than using the term "white" (shown in Appendix B). "Such beliefs [draw] heavily, as Robert Berkhofer has argued in *The White Man's Indian*, from a long European and American tradition of confusing race, culture and nationality." (White, 1986, pp. 400-401) While cultural background plays an important role in identity development, white teachers tend to make invisible the issue of race as they list their ethnic background as coming from predominantly white geographic locations. When asked to define his own racial identity, Michael promptly responded,

Well, I fill in the bubble that I am a Caucasian, but I look at it, and I definitely have mostly German, Irish and Italian roots, and then the rest of what used to be NATO before we started letting the Warsaw pact. I am kind of a mutt from the rest of it all, but one question that I have kind of asked myself – I have never taken the time to study it and learn – when does one culture get to start calling itself that? When did the Italians start calling themselves Italians and not Romans? When the Germanic, you have Germanic tribes, why didn't they switch to calling themselves Romans for a long time or why didn't the Romans switch to being called Germans when they were conquered by the Germanic tribe? So like really...I eat pasta, I know why there is a St. Patrick's day...but I am going to take some stereotypes out of the woodwork...there is nothing that makes those cultures necessary [to me], my culture is a lot more American. And I just kind of wonder, when does American become the equivalent of Italian, German, Asian excuse me Chinese, Japanese? Because really my experience is an American experience, which is diverse, but I don't tie back to the old country really. We have been here a while and so that is one of those questions I ask myself – when do I just say I am an American? I have got these backgrounds that are nice to know about and draw on a tree. (Michael, personal communication, March 19, 2009)

Another challenge in trying to understand how a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility operated in this setting was a lack of understanding or acknowledgement of whiteness or the existence of white privilege. In the course of our conversation, Michael seemed to also make his whiteness less visible (or invisible) by choosing to deny any benefits from the existence of white privilege.

KH: Do you feel privileged as a white teacher here?

Michael: No, I don't feel privileged period – you know – as a white teacher.

KH: Outside or inside [of the school]?

Michael: Outside or inside – I don't really feel privileged. You know, there are times when you don't feel privileged because there is never an exception made for you on college entry exams or things like that. You are kind of like, "Dude, if my name was different you would take me in." Or you know, there are times you do think about that. ...But no, I've never really felt privileged or not privileged generally speaking. (personal communication, May 29, 2009)

“The resistance to naming white privilege...[is] the result of whiteness being presumed the norm” (Babb, 1998, p. 15) and while some teachers grudgingly acknowledged and rolled their eyes at the mention of such a power structure that privileges whites over other races solely on the basis of race, Michael was also quick to state that he was not the beneficiary of such a system. How can white privilege be addressed in predominantly white school environments when even the most proactive of teachers, such as Michael, refuse to see themselves as privileged because of their race?

Sustaining hypervisibility/invisibility through a labeling of the Other. While the official racial labeling of students and families of color is a topic that is often discussed by white educators, very little negotiation in the discourse surrounds the labeling of a white person as being white. This is a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility at work. The culture labeling of people of color is a hypervisible act, while the identification of a white race or white privilege are ignored and made invisible in conversations about difference.

For example, Michael also used the “Asian is a person, Oriental is a rug” memory aid to help neutralize the crisis of trying to identify the races of people around him.

Michael: I find that people are afraid to offend, they just don't want to offend anybody but they are also a little tired being told what they can and can't say. I find that to be true, most places not just for Fulton Elementary and I find PC tends to be almost like a police, policing force so what can and can't say, you can and can't do. ...Is it Asian, is it Oriental, Asian's a person, Oriental's a rug...oh my gosh...now what do you say?

KH: And when I hear it, it's usually coupled with a sigh of frustration but the frustration that they are expressing seems to me to be around the negotiation of labels or names. And teachers often are now telling me, “Oh well I don't want to...I'm just really... I'm just it's really being PC.” And it seems like...

Michael: ...Giving up?

KH: Kind of. And I'm wondering if you hear it from teachers – other than white teachers or white people?

Michael: I don't hear it too much period. Because I really don't pay much attention to whom I am hearing it from. I deal with it when we get to Native Americans or Indians. Fortunately, I generally don't have any [Native Americans] in my class so there is probably a good chance I'm not going to offend anybody but I interchange them both. Native Americans? Yeah, they are Native Americans. The Indians? Well, that's what Columbus called them at the time so they are both and the books call them both and we are going to go with what we go with, you know.

KH: And you talk to the kids about that [inconsistency]?

Michael: Yeah and you know I will even say [that Columbus] thought he was in India for a while there – actually for quite a while there – I still don't know if he ever really realized where he was. But this is the name he gave them, it's the name we generally use, but people also called them Native Americans. And we are going to call them both because the books call them both. So, I would use African American and blacks somewhat interchangeably. The times when I will be specific will be the times when I am trying to differentiate between a Caribbean person of Caribbean descent versus African descent. And then I will try to be more careful about it. (personal communication, May 6, 2009)

The kind of minimizing discursive practice brought culture to the forefront of the conversation and was just another powerful way whiteness was enacted in this setting. Even though this labeling negotiation in predominantly white settings need not be articulated for whiteness to exist, an enhanced level of critical thinking must be exercised for white teachers to practice participating in a discourse that is open and honest and reflective in nature.

Sustaining hypervisibility/invisibility through multicultural education. While Fulton Elementary School's view of multicultural education is closer to the ideal than most, the educators at Fulton Elementary School for the most part still supported a

segregated curricular approach that reinforces a discourse of hypervisibility for culture and one of invisibility for race. As Michael was asked to think about how multicultural education was being enacted through cultural appreciation months in his classroom and in the other classrooms at Fulton, he confessed,

Michael: Yeah – we don’t do Asian American history month, which exists. I don’t know which month it is, but I think it’s like September something, it’s one of them - one of the 12. I can narrow it down to 10 actually.

KH: So, that seems to me like something that, if the teachers are aware of these diverse races and cultures [in the school] they would do more...?

Michael: If you have a holiday you get studied. If Martin Luther King didn’t have a holiday, he wouldn’t get studied in this room, in this building I don’t think, but he has got a holiday so we can study it.

KH: So, between months and holidays that almost covers...

Michael: You get the people. (personal communication, March 24, 2009)

As part of his participation in this discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility, Michael also saw the students as not noticing race because they were just noticing a difference of color. Michael explained,

I find at this level [of elementary school] students don’t tie it to a bigger culture thing. They’ll notice, “Hey – I eat different food at my friend’s house.” But they just say, “Well – that’s my friend.” They think about it much more as, “This is my friend and this is what my friend does.” (Michael, personal communication, April 23, 2009)

These kinds of moves made by white teachers attempt to focus on an ideology of colorblindness that fixates on culture and difference; this maneuver works to take the potential conflict or uncomfortability out of what are seen as difficult situations and conversations around race and maintains the polite nature of multicultural education in predominantly white settings. Critical inquiry into these powerful habits of whiteness is a

process that requires lifelong study and analysis, and if multicultural education and its stated goals and purposes are to ever truly disrupt these marginalizing dominant discourses, individuals, educators, and society at large must take full responsibility for the total education of students as effective citizens in a global community.

Steven sustains a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility. Conflating the concepts of culture and race as a tool to support a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility is a habit of whiteness. By encouraging a focus on culture while maintaining the invisibility of race, Steven also sustained this discourse in the following ways: a) through his uncertainty and limited awareness of his white identity, b) through a labeling of the Other, and c) through multicultural education practices in his classroom.

Sustaining hypervisibility/invisibility through uncertain white identities.

Fundamental to an understanding of how a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility is sustained is an illustration of just how difficult it was for the white teachers in this study to articulate their white identities. Steven never felt the need to negotiate or question his racial identity; he is a Caucasian and clearly identified himself as such. When asked, Steven struggled with his racial identity. He stated, “[*Laughing and joking*] That’s a very awkward question. I am a forty year old, white male, [*long pause*] middle class. That’s it.” (Steven, personal communication, March 20, 2009) Although he did not seem to see his racial identity as anything other than a straightforward label used to describe himself, Steven still struggles to communicate this understanding.

Steven: Anytime you are going to describe yourself, it’s difficult. I think it is much easier to be critical and describing of others than it is of yourself.

KH: How would you define your own racial identity?

Steven: I am...Caucasian.

KH: What was that look for?

Steven: *[Laughing]* Because look at me, I'm as pale as they come. Some would say translucent I am so pale. *[Laughing]* No, I'm Northern European Caucasian. (personal communication, March 27, 2009)

By specifically choosing to use the terms white and Northern European Caucasian interchangeably, Steven began to conflate his white racial identity with culture.

Previously when he was asked to reflect on whether or not he worked from a white perspective in his classroom with students, Steven replied,

It is part of who I am...and to answer your question, I don't think I teach from a white perspective as much as others [do]. I think I am far more integrated because I do think of culture. I like, I like having a diverse class because cultures and languages and travel has always been something that's been of interest to me even as a young child. So that to me is – it opens my teaching up. I think more. (personal communication, April 3, 2009)

Both teachers expressed their initial uncertainty at the idea that their white identities might indicate that they were working within a sphere of white privilege, but overall, Steven specifically felt that he resisted succumbing to a powerful discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility.

KH: How do you see that identity fitting in with your identity as a teacher?

Steven: *[Long pause]* I don't know. A better response – I don't really think [about] my racial identity. Knowing the premise of your research...I guess I could say, well – being white and being raised upper middle class has led me down a path where I've acquired certain social skills or social graces or lack thereof *[Laughter]* or social aspirations like maybe subliminally I bring to the table. But I don't think of myself as being white or Caucasian when in this classroom. At least consciously. (personal communication, March 27, 2009)

In perpetrating this maneuver – first by focusing on his white racial identity and then flipping to confound it with a cultural identity based on socio-economic class – Steven unintentionally participates in a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility.

Sustaining hypervisibility/invisibility through a labeling of the Other.

Consistently, Steven also expressed a frustration at the lack of intellectual and meaningful talk in the school around the negotiation of labeling individuals and their races and cultures. “Indeed, when one cannot identify another’s race, a microsociological ‘crisis of interpretation’ results...and to complain about such a situation may be understandable, but it does not advance understanding.” (Omi & Winant, 1993, p. 5) On several occasions in a well-intentioned attempt to make them visible, teachers and administrators struggled to find a way to refer to Asian students and families. Steven admitted that,

In all honesty, I think everybody has become so sensitive to being PC that they don’t know how to refer to people anymore. I catch myself every once in a while – is it African American or is it black? Is it Asian or is it Oriental? Right. You know that oriental is a rug, not a person. There is no ill intent, but all you need is that to be a hot topic for one person and it sort of closes the door a little bit. I think people need to learn to be a little less sensitive and realize that – to not take it personally. (Steven, personal communication, April 28, 2009)

These kinds of discursive negotiations usually happen underground and without obvious comment from the white teachers in the building, but this kind of discourse still acts to render whiteness invisible while relegating the students and families of color to a position as hypervisible in the school environment.

Sustaining hypervisibility/invisibility through multicultural education.

Operating through attempts to replace race with culture, a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility encouraged teachers to focus on celebrations, multicultural

lessons, and culture fairs as means to positively highlight cultural differences and yet erase racialized identities at the same time. Steven sustained a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility when he sometimes failed to see differences between his own white American experience and the American experiences of his students of color. The white images being presenting are made synonymous with an American cultural identity. Steven talked about the ways in which he was transforming his thinking about how white Americans were identified in the history curriculum.

KH: So when you're talking about students, I hear you talking a lot about bringing in different cultures and different diverse groups. But do you ever specifically refer to...let's say George Washington...do you refer to him as a white American or do you just refer to him as American?

Steven: Just Americans. ...When you're talking on a historical note, it sounds horrible but I think oftentimes it's assumed that it's white...which really shouldn't be assumed. But I guess I have been guilty of that. I think we're much more explicit, specifically when we're talking about African Americans. (personal communication, April 3, 2009)

This kind of critical awareness of the power of whiteness is an essential trait that sets Steven apart from other individuals who were interviewed for this study; he was willing to make race visible and think deeply and reflectively about his students, his classroom, his teaching, and even his own personal misconceptions. These are important metacognitive processes for educators to embrace if the images of whiteness are to be uncovered and explored.

Another way white teachers enact their whiteness is by using multicultural education as a tool to render whiteness invisible and culture hypervisible through the use of pre-identified cultural months in the school and national calendar. In recent years, the term multicultural education, as stated previously, has come to mean a variety of things

and at Fulton, the classrooms are all stocked with many different kinds of fairy tale books – stories from Africa and Asia, stories about empowered princesses and thoughtless princes, stories about people and folklore about animals (Observation, March 24 & March 30, 2009). Steven’s classroom was no different.

Further, we have started a study of folktales, three types in all which include the Porquoi, the Trickster and the Magical. So far, the kids have enjoyed these and we discuss the lessons or morals being portrayed in the story. I will be introducing research reports as we come back to a more in depth study of non-fiction texts. (Steven, Classroom Newsletter, 090323, p. 1)

However, this kind of cultural hypervisibility was evident in the fact that in none of the readings did either teacher specifically mention when the main characters were white. Only the differences from the white norm were pointed out to the students, as if to say that one is a black Cinderella story and the other Disney version is a non-raced norm.

I shared my reflections on the ways a hypervisibility of people of color was occurring in the teachers’ classrooms with Parent 1.

KH: I sometimes talk to teachers about reading books and they’ll say, “Well, I read a book and there was a black character in it” or “I read a book and there was a Native American character in it.” And I point out that it’s good that you’re bringing in literature that is multicultural with different characters, but how many times do you read the book and identify the white characters as white?

Parent 1: That’s right.

KH: And they’d say, “Why would I do that?” Well, because...

Parent 1: Because you see, a teacher would say they do that only because the teacher is not of another culture. It’s like the white culture is the primary culture of – who said, you know, not to offend you – but who said white was right? You know what I mean. White is supposed to be the normal thing. Oh, so when I have a book, “Hey – look guys – there’s a black kid here!” N-n-n-n-no...we’re not reading a black book... [It should be], “Hey – look guys – there’s a white kid in here.” (personal communication, June 18, 2009)

She confirmed that, even in her own experiences as a parent, she struggled to communicate with her daughter's teachers about her concerns around this discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility realized through attempts at multicultural education. This kind of discourse was problematic because it reified whiteness by reinforcing white students' perceptions of their un-raced identities and gave power to a larger discourse of cultural hypervisibility and racial invisibility.

Steven was the only participant who, by the end of this project, expressed a true change in his perspective with regards to his understanding of whiteness and its unidentified power in this setting. He recalled,

We were at a restaurant the other night and I actually caught myself – we're leaving and there was this black family with an adorable kid. And the kid was cooing and waving in his high chair and I stopped and I actually made a point of saying, "Your little boy is adorable." And a friend of mine jokingly said, "Did you say that 'cause they're black?" And knowing of this – I was like "Hmm?" But I do, I know this about myself, I make a point of making eye contact with people of different cultures but I think I do more so with Blacks. I will stop or I will smile. I remember telling somebody they had a beautiful family, they had three beautiful kids, all so well behaved and well mannered. I don't know if I would do that and I think you know, the more exposure people have with different races, kids, well you know that was a nice white man. Is that – it comes from a good place but I wonder, "Am I perpetuating [it]?" You know what I'm saying? (Steven, personal communication, April 3, 2009)

Steven began to recognize what this research found to be true – both a discourse of silence around issues of race and a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility that functioned to maintain the invisibility of race and a hypervisibility of culture operated to sustain whiteness at in both teachers' practices at Fulton. By focusing on culture and avoiding talk about race, all the while professing to challenge and inadvertently sustaining a silence around critical race talk, these two white teachers found safe ways to talk about "difference" that would sustain their white privilege without having to acknowledge their

own powerful white identities. The next chapter will discuss the implications of these findings on the development of theory, the implementation of practice, and the need for future research endeavors in this area of study.

Chapter 6: Discussion

First, Whites must overcome the omnipresent effects of transparency and of naturalization of race in order to recognize the many racial aspects of their identity, paying particular attention to the daily acts that draw upon and in turn confirm their Whiteness. Second, they must recognize and accept the personal and social consequences of breaking out of a White identity. Third, they must embark on a daily process of choosing against Whiteness. (Lopez, 1996, p. 193, as cited in Jungkunz, 2011, p. 19)

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the discourses of whiteness operated in a predominantly white elementary school setting and how it was sustained or disrupted through the experiences, strategies, beliefs, and understandings of white teachers' work. This qualitative research study used ethnographic data collection techniques to focus on whiteness and examined how it operated through the discourses of two white K-2 teachers nested within a larger school context. Using whiteness theory and a critical lens to analyze interviews, observations, and artifacts, interpretative analysis was used to investigate the data within its multiple and varied contexts. An analysis of the data was presented to address the following two research questions:

1. How do overarching discourses of whiteness operate in this predominantly white elementary school?
2. How do these white teachers resist/disrupt/challenge or perpetuate/contribute to/sustain the discourses of whiteness through their images, practices, and talk?

By organizing the analysis into two main categories – school context and teacher context – I focused on a discourse of silence and a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility and how these discourses of whiteness functioned to help sustain a powerful system of privilege and marginalization at Fulton Elementary School. This final section explores

the theoretical and practical implications of these results, outlines the limitations of this exploratory study, and reflects on opportunities for future research.

Theoretical Implications

Multicultural education has long been mischaracterized as the umbrella under which all other diversity education approaches are placed. Too often, it has also been used as a way for white educators to avoid talking about issues of race and culture. Without an expectation for critical analysis of diversity education, “whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow ‘them’ to be like ‘us’” (McIntosh, 1990, para. 6). This research study shed light on the following key implications for the development of theoretical perspectives related to whiteness: a) a problematic presentation of multicultural education, b) a disconnect when translating theory on multicultural education into practice, and c) using multicultural education to sustain the discourses of whiteness.

Problematic Presentation of Multicultural Education

Assimilationist ideals in education were supposedly dismissed before the end of WWI but the ways multicultural education is used in our current systems of schooling are reminiscent of these white supremacist tendencies. Multicultural education has been presented to the larger teaching community in ways that have been particularly problematic, especially to practitioners who are not privy to the convoluted and confusing theoretical negotiations that occur within academia. So,

the old white supremacy has been challenged, wounded, and changed. A new, countervailing framework has emerged, after centuries of lonely and isolated gestation in many varied settings, and has gained considerable ground... Yet white supremacy, though perhaps weakened, remains. It may even have gained some

new strength, paradoxically enough, from the very racial reforms that it was forced to initiate. At a minimum, tremendous tensions have emerged between the “new racial order” and the old one, whose white supremacy was taken for granted (Winant, 2001, p. 100).

Plans for reform have taken various forms – multicultural education, teaching for social justice, culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy, anti-racist education – they are essentially just different terms used to express the same concept in slightly different ways. Presented as a pedagogy first and a theory second, multicultural education has become widely used by educators who have mistakenly assumed that they can pick and choose elements and stages of this multicultural teaching model to enact in their classrooms. Multicultural education has been in a variety of discontinuous stage theory formats (J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007; Nieto, 2008; Sleeter & Grant, 1994); unfortunately, they are often misinterpreted by white individuals as presenting multiple options for practice rather than as theoretical and/or hierarchical models of increasingly more sophisticated and effective educational approaches.

For example, Nieto (2006) illustrates the levels of support for multicultural education in schools using the graphic represented in Figure 23. Notice that the middle three levels of tolerance, acceptance, and respect are the words that white teachers typically use when they are working with topics of race and culture in the classroom. White educators at Fulton Elementary School expressed satisfaction at the levels of tolerance and acceptance. Steven and Michael had intentions of embracing respect and Administrator 1 articulated a desire to meet the challenges of affirmation, solidarity, and critique. But even Administrator 1 was unable to fully articulate what this would look like in practice or how the school could get white teachers working at this enhanced level.

Monocultural	Tolerance	Acceptance	Respect	Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique
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Figure 23. Nieto's Levels of Multicultural Education Support in Schools (Nieto, 2006).

Do we even know that affirmation, solidarity, and critique would work in the field?

Could white teachers in predominately white settings be able to truly embrace this level and use it to benefit the understandings and experiences of their students? Not only do the white teachers in the field not reach the height of affirmation, solidarity, and critique, they have few working practical models at the elementary school level from which to draw as examples of this level. The multi-modeled, theory driven presentation of multicultural education has led to a plethora of misunderstandings in their field, particularly when it is enacted by white teachers in predominantly white schools.

Disconnect Translating Theory into Practice

The research community and the practitioner community are far apart in their understandings of diversity education and the issues that surround teaching for social justice in our schools. For example, with so many theoretical models for teaching diversity, why is only one term, multicultural education (J. A. Banks, 2003; J. A. Banks & Ambroso, 2007; J. A. Banks & Banks, 2010; Sleeter & Grant, 1994), used in practice? While administrators at predominately white schools like Fulton may possess basic understandings of the dimensions of J. A. Banks' (2010) hierarchy of multicultural education (see Figure 2), the white teachers in the schools do not. Fulton Elementary School's Administrator 1 seemed very knowledgeable about issues of diversity and yet he consistently referred to the school's success as being measured by an achievement of a Level 5 of "cultural integration." While Banks refers to these as dimensions of

multicultural education and does include a fifth level, this model does not refer to any kind of integration; rather it refers to the dynamic creation of an empowering of school culture where students from diverse groups can thrive (J. A. Banks & Banks, 2010).

When it comes to the problem of teaching about difference differently, contradictions abound. The very language we borrow to pin down identities, to situate an experience, to recognize an event, and to render intelligible the meanings of others is, as Zoe Wicomb suggests, both a linguistic right and a site of ideological struggle. (Britzman, Santiago-Válles, Jiménez-Múñoz, & Lamash, 1993, p. 188)

As a way to address this struggle, references to cultural integration, critical multicultural education, or culturally responsive/relevant teaching are not sufficient modifications if white classroom teachers are to truly understand and embrace the impact that teaching for social justice can have in their classrooms. Even the attempted social studies curriculum modifications made by Michael did very little to change the confusing environment around multicultural, social justice, and diversity education in the field. Not surprisingly, these kinds of misguided attempts prove unsuccessful, not in the least because the students in these predominantly white schools have no connections to the random cultures often featured in the curriculum. International Night, Black History Month, and Chinese New Year celebrations work in similar ways and these kinds of attempts only serve to further marginalize non-white students in predominantly white schools. The subtleties of difference between multicultural education and critical multicultural education or culturally responsive and culturally relevant pedagogy are lost on white teachers in the field.

Using Multicultural Education to Sustain the Discourses of Whiteness

As stated in Chapter 1, multicultural education is envisioned as a dynamic, transformative, and critical approach to address the diversity of identities and lived

experiences of people and groups. Unfortunately, what this research found was that the iterations of multicultural education being implemented in predominantly white elementary school typically serve to achieve the opposite. Through the discourses of whiteness (silence and hypervisibility/invisibility), teachers at Fulton enacted multicultural education in limited ways that served to successfully sustain white privilege and support an ideology of colorblindness. In this way,

either by virtue of their position, their numbers, or their access to that particular code of power of calling upon research to validate one's position, the white educators had the authority to establish what was to be considered "truth" regardless of the opinions of the people of color, and the latter were well aware of that fact (Delpit, 1995, p. 26).

The creation of this kind of multicultural "truth" sustained whiteness and reinforced for the white teachers and administrators the assumed validity of their limited white points of view.

By not acknowledging their white identities and not engaging in critical talk about race, by perpetuating a colorblind ideology and ignoring the realities of people of color – the predominantly white school sustained a discourse of silence. When Michael and Steven reconfigured their classroom curriculums to be more justice oriented, when they initiated and sustained relationships and conversations with students and parents – they attempted to challenge this discourse of silence. However, despite their different approaches to addressing a discourse of silence, both the school and the teachers worked in ways that sustained a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility by conflating the concepts of culture and race in problematic and troubling ways.

Race is understood to be a socially constructed concept that is, more often than not, assigned by those positioned as more advanced in the racial hierarchy, while culture

is typically self-selected and is based on group identification through common factors, such as language, geographic location, and historical experiences (see Chapter 1, Definitions). Throughout history, a tension between culture and race has played itself out in social, economic, and political arenas so it no surprise that the white teachers and administrators at Fulton fell into a historically white habit of conflating culture and race in ways that sustained a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility. By making culture and the events, holidays, foods, and traditions of culture hypervisible, white educators could make their own white race and the race of others invisible. Since explicit talk about race was limited to numerous vocalized concerns about being politically correct, the staff at Fulton Elementary School's belief that they had acknowledged race by making superficial aspects of culture hypervisible allowed these white educators to render racial oppression and the unearned, yet powerful position of privilege associated with a system of whiteness, invisible. The resulting focus on the discourse of culture in multicultural education allows people like those teachers and administrators at Fulton to view issues like racial identity and racism in simplistic ways. The vernacular definition of culture dominates the discourse and allows for a lack of critical attention to issues of race and power.

Advocates for students, teachers, and schools are looking for solutions that will enable them to more globally approach discourses that surround identity and experience as multi-faceted (e.g., race, culture, gender) in order to begin to critically analyze the societal and institutional systems that perpetuate injustice and racism in our educational settings.

“...Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., for example, advocated judging people not by the color of their skin, but by their internal character. Misguided and devious

advocates have co-opted it, taken it out of context and failed to understand a basic assumption made by King; such an approach has meaning only if we operate on a level playing field where equal access and opportunity exists for all groups. This condition does not currently exist in our society.” (Sue, 2003, para. 2)

But what predominantly white schools and white teachers are practicing is a form of multicultural education that cannot hope to secure equal access and opportunity for all. Theoretical perspectives on multicultural education need to be clarified and simplified if researchers expect educators to successfully enact high quality models in the field. In reality, “much remains to be done before the promise and potential of multicultural education are fully realized. While its theoretical conceptualization is progressing nicely, school practice and establishing the effects of multicultural education are not nearly as advanced” (Gay, 1994, p. 29). In particular, white teachers in predominantly white settings have difficulties understanding the complexity of the multitude of approaches, and in this confusion, they revert to using a misinterpreted version of multicultural education as a way to obscure whiteness.

Implications for Practice

Issues of race and difference are far too often excluded from conversations between teachers, parents, students and administrators in predominantly white districts like Norris Township. There is an urgent need for teachers in these settings to engage in the kinds of work advocated for by the theoretical research and engage in difficult dialogues around topics such as power, race, marginalization, social justice, and discrimination. However, “no critique by itself has ever sustained transformation over time on...[any] level, so I identify the following implications for this research in practice with schools and educators: a) working towards a recognition of whiteness, b) developing

understandings of people of color, and c) insisting on critical race talk as part of multicultural education.

Working Towards a Recognition of Whiteness

At Fulton Elementary School, a discourse of silence and a discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility worked in ways to sustain whiteness and it is fundamental to understand the complexity of defining this white system of power. Given its more often relational stance to other marginalized races and cultures, defining whiteness is complicated in the problematic labeling of that which has never before been specifically or consciously considered present in more than a mere label for racial categorization.

Because whites tend not to see themselves in racial terms and not to recognize the existence of the advantages that whites enjoy in American society, this promotes a worldview that emphasizes *individualistic* expressions for social and economic achievement...Whites also exhibit a general inability to perceive the persistence of discrimination and the effects of more subtle forms of institutional discrimination. (Doane, 2003, p. 14)

Overall, white teachers and administrators at Fulton could not articulate an understanding of whiteness, their own white racial identities, the ways they have benefited from being white or the ways their whiteness has served to marginalize people of color and they thereby had absolved themselves of a participation in a system that privileges whites over other races.

As addressed in Chapter 3, even as I continue to call it a predominantly white school, this setting has become increasing diverse; however the sustained reactions of the teachers and administrators has been to reify or not really address whiteness. Fulton Elementary School is an institution that has increasingly become a school of color and yet no one has significantly changed their practices and there have been no collective dialogs to address this. While it is still a predominantly white setting (Orfield & Lee, 2005) with

over 60% of its students racially identifying as white, there is a 35% Asian population and the faculty have not reflected the demographic shift in their collective discourse or classroom practices. Understanding and acknowledging the existence of whiteness is central to the idea that research on white educators in predominantly white settings is necessary if this veil of unmarked power and privilege is to be challenged by individuals who strive to teach towards multicultural ends.

Developing Understanding of the Realities of People of Color

Looking at how the discourses of silence and hypervisibility/invisibility operate to sustain a larger discourse of whiteness at Fulton, it is clear that the power of whiteness in these predominantly white settings too often goes unnoticed, unlabeled and unexamined. The discourse of silence needs to be challenged in order for the lived realities of people of color are to be acknowledged and understood. The discourse of hypervisibility/invisibility needs to be disrupted so that habits of whiteness (e.g., conflation of culture and race) can be unpacked and positioned as tools used by whites to sustain white privilege. From a practical perspective, teachers don't learn about the experiences of students and families of color and are therefore unprepared to seek out ways to include opportunities where those community members can have their realities heard.

White educators have little frame of reference to understand, particularly, the Asian experience in the U.S. as a raced experience and the model minority myth discussed in Chapter 3 feeds into that stilted quest for understanding. As whites come to understand what it means to have a racialized experience in the United States, they will understand that the racialized experience of Asian Americans is quite different from that

of other races. Dominated by an overstated (mis)understanding of the black experience in the U.S., white individuals seem unable to see what they do not comprehend. We live in a society where Asian populations are growing, comprising 61% of the world's total population in 2010 (ESCAP, 2011), and there is very little understanding of them except through exoticized images about parading dragons and wearing kimonos (Wu, 2002).

From the work done with faculty at Fulton, a school with increasing percentages of Asian students and families, it is clear that what we need to do from a PreK-12 schooling perspective is to help people understand that,

there is an overall need for white teachers in these predominantly white settings to acknowledge that, “[i]f race is not real or objective, but constructed, racism and prejudice should be capable of deconstruction...Powerfully written stories and narratives may begin a process of adjustment in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity.” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 43).

In particular, we as an educational community must also make a commitment to giving voice to the realities of teachers of color in teacher education and open up lines of communication around white pre-service and in-service teachers making intentional moves to understand and privilege these lived experiences in their classrooms.

Practices must allow for the possibility of each person speaking from any one of his or her many identities and from other listening to the plurality of voices a person can articulate. Multicultural knowledge will not emerge when we listen to only part of what the Cultural Others have to say. (Montecinos, 1995, p. 300)

This lack of “seeing” people filters into education and too often negatively affects how white teachers view their students and their students’ families. Since performing the act of teaching is traditionally a powerful stance, white teachers may not only fail to personally consider their own cultural perspective, but also neglect to recognize their unique and potentially conflicting perceptions of themselves as teachers. But, teachers need help learning about how white power operates differently in settings with different

communities of color; critical approaches to teaching for social justice do not look the same in every setting. Not just focusing on pedagogical tips and tricks, dynamic professional development is needed that focuses on everything from beliefs about race to the discourses of silence and power if whiteness is to be unpacked in these predominantly white schools and communities. If white teachers are expected to themselves be critical of their own identities and decode their own powerful discourse structures, these changes will need administrative support to take root. The discourses of whiteness are ever present in these predominantly white settings and no amount of isolated, theoretical research can change the power of that strong narrative in practice.

Insisting on Critical Race Talk as Part of Multicultural Education

To develop these habits of mind, predominantly white schools need to begin initiating and sustaining these difficult conversations about whiteness, race, culture, and power in honest, truthful and open-minded ways. Instead of engaging in critical conversations in more casual ways with supportive peers, schools can embrace social justice initiatives by selecting books, technology, and supplies for classrooms to utilize in their studies. Providing curricula, materials, and socio-emotional resources to teachers as they engage in these critical conversations is another way for schools to provide “sophisticated help and support to pull them through the social, political, and psychological dilemmas they will face....Those attempting to rethink their identity and to address the cultural and institutional racism they encounter always need strong support groups” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998, p. 23).

To promote additional engagement, administrators could introduce current articles and research to teachers and use professional development time during faculty meetings

and in-service training days to reflect, discuss, and problematize their localized systems of schooling. With support, these kinds of structured critical conversations with teachers could be another way to approach active engagement in practice. Potentially, working with teaching professionals as they read more primary source documents and seminal pieces of literature could challenge and ultimately begin to change their existing white worldview. By having teachers themselves look at the theory and research on whiteness, multicultural education, and social justice, it makes real the possibility that “if we can change and develop what is in the heads of white people, they in turn will create significant changes in institutions” (Sleeter, 1993, p. 158).

Just by participating in this project and being asked to consider his own whiteness, Steven was able to go out and engage in multiple conversations that led him to expand his thinking about power, truth and race (Observation, April 3, 2009) and Michael was able to rearticulate and reinvigorate his commitment to providing students with a space for critical thinking and parents with a connection to their child’s experience in school. But overall, the administrators at Fulton Elementary School did not expect the teachers, parents, and community to participate in reflecting on or actively engaging in topics that questioned issues of race, power, privilege, and marginalization. As a result, the power of whiteness pervaded and created an educational setting that silenced and othered students and families of color. Setting high expectations for white teachers’ abilities to discuss critical issues is an integral part of this reform process because when we expect individuals to “perform well [it] becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy” (Gamson & Chickering, 1987, p. 5).

Although it would be a mistake to “equate education with formal school instruction” (Gibson, 1984, p. 109), schools still have a greater responsibility and obligation to students and families. The nature of schooling in our society has continued to change throughout the 20th and into the 21st century and educators “must recognize that formal schooling is but one part of education and, thus, but one avenue to the acquisition of multicultural competencies” (p. 109). Assimilationist ideals are still present as schools like Fulton practice multiculturalism in ways that advocate for a cultural education program that self-selects agreeable holidays and historical figures to celebrate (see Figures 9 and 11). Yet the classroom need not be the only nexus of transmission for multicultural education, rather “given that individuals can and normally do develop competencies in multiple cultures, the question for educators is how best to create learning environments that promote rather than inhibit the acquisition of multicultural competencies” (p. 114) so that students can continue their engagement in critical talk outside school as well.

Successful and authentic implementation of any of the multicultural education hierarchies discussed previously would first require researchers and theorists to construct a workable model and definition for practitioner use. Whether we call it critical multiculturalism (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995b), or social justice education (Hackman, 2005), white educators and administrators need to engage in critical work that challenges the discourses that sustain a system of whiteness. The process of translating some of these findings into actual practice is inevitably a lengthy one. White teachers such as Michael and Steven, who have not yet unpacked their own white identities and cultural positionalities, are not in a

position to enact a critical multicultural education as they have no experience in truly teaching for social justice. Professional development workshops, in-service days, book discussion groups and faculty meetings must to be devoted to initiating discussions around issues of whiteness, race, power, and privilege. Unfortunately, as evidenced by the two teachers' attempts to engage in transformative classroom practices without active institutional support, if the school administration is not willing to commit to an engagement in these more large scale initiatives then the white teachers themselves will most likely not take steps on their own. "Creating a new society requires vision, passion, and commitment. Scholarship that engages reason, the imagination, and the heart and empowers the community can help that process" (Aal, 2001, p. 308). If white teachers and administrators in schools like Fulton Elementary are not expected to challenge the status quo that they so clearly benefit from, how can we expect the students and families to learn these critical thinking and analytic skills when it comes to enacting change in their own lives?

Significance and Limitations

This study is important because it seeks to uncover how the images, practices, and talk of teachers operate in relation to discourses of silence and hypervisibility/invisibility which contribute to the perpetuation of whiteness and the power of white supremacy. However, this research is exploratory and is not meant to be generalizable to other teachers and classrooms in other schools and districts. This information is intended to help researchers, educators, and administrators better understand the need to address issues of race, whiteness, diversity, multicultural education, and social justice as they challenge the discourses of whiteness in predominantly white school settings. When we

consider the continuing trend of whiteness for teachers in the U.S. (Boser, 2011; KewalRamani et al., 2007; National Center for Education Information, 2005) and the continued isolation of white students in predominantly white school environments (Orfield & Lee, 2005), there is use for this kind of research as teachers committed to engaging issues of social justice in white settings transform their teaching and learning practices.

As this study looked at the ways discourses of whiteness operated in a predominantly white school, I came to the conclusion that white individuals have a discursive power to dictate not only their own experience, but far too often, the experiences of others who are not white. One limitation of this study was that it was conducted by a white researcher in a predominantly white school with white teachers. Although these factors were also a strength of this project – my white identity gave me access to conversations and commentaries about whiteness for which I might not otherwise have been considered an insider – overall, they provide a very singular, white perspective. I typically found that as soon as I got close enough to write about the experiences of the participants and their school, it was as if I became unaware of my own white privilege. I found myself mired in the same cloudy, murky, insidious whiteness that I am trying to unpack and could not articulate the seminal findings I intended to convey. The privilege of being white made it difficult for me to understand the educational system I was trying to analyze and explore. Feeling obligated to be as objective as possible, I found it impossible.

Being an insider because of one's own race does not mute or erase other social locations which serve to deny access, create misunderstanding, or bias interviews with those from the same racial background. Nor does perceiving or defining

oneself as an outsider allow one to claim that one's research is value free.
(Gallagher, 2004, p. 205)

To feign impartiality would do a disservice to this research; it would mean that I did not, would not, or could not fully engage in this critical, qualitative project. Therefore, it would benefit similar future projects if additional researchers of different races and cultural backgrounds were to collect, code, and analyze the data from this predominantly white setting and provide their analytical perspectives as well.

Another limitation of this study is that, while it began as the study in the classrooms of two teachers, early on I realized that these teachers were situated in the broader Fulton Elementary School context. In response to this, I was able to interview administrators and seek out other school staff while also gathering large amounts of observational data, documents, artifacts, and field notes. But for various reasons (time constraints of the academic year, standardized testing schedules, end-of-the-year mandatory assessments for students and teachers, swine flu outbreak, etc.), I was only able to interview outside of school and observe the classrooms of a limited number of participants. As a result, almost all of my informants were white (with the exception of two parents and two teachers of color who were each interviewed once each) so for those reasons, this study does not include a robust description of the experiences of people of color in this setting. Future studies should include more significant numbers of participants of color who hold a variety of different positions in the school district. Including more parents, teachers of color, and district level administrators' perspectives would shed additional light on the work that needs to be done in these predominantly white educational settings.

Reflections for Future Research

“...I will argue that it is terribly inadequate to address racism in education predominantly by trying to educate white teachers.” (Sleeter, 1993, p. 157)

Situated in the gap between whiteness studies and multicultural education in schools, the exploratory nature of this study in a predominantly white setting is what sets it apart from the current research being done in schools with white teachers. Research that investigates practice at the higher levels of multicultural education, such as Banks’ “empowering school culture” (J. A. Banks & Banks, 2010), Nieto’s “affirmation, solidarity, and critique” (Nieto, 1994), and Sleeter and Grant’s “education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist” (Sleeter & Grant, 1994), is nonexistent within the white community. More research needs to investigate how teachers enact multicultural education in their classrooms and look at the ways they attempt to achieve the upper levels of critical multicultural practice with their students.

Continued research also needs to explore robust accounts of the experiences, especially from Asian Americans, of what it is like to be in the racial minority in a predominantly white school. The research has not yet shown a complete picture of how sustaining the discourses of whiteness in predominantly white settings affects the schooling experiences for Asian students and families. To examine the power of these discourses, Asian Critical Theory (AsianCrit) could be “particularly useful for the critique of deficit thinking – the framing of racial inequities as a result of individual deficiencies – by providing alternative pedagogies and methodologies through which scholars and students can ‘unlearn’ stereotypical thinking about race” (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002, as cited in Teranishi, Behringer, Grey, & Parker, 2009, p. 58). The model minority identity of Asians requires additional examination in school settings

where there is a dominance of White, Black, and Latino racial discourse. More studies need to focus on trying to fully articulate the “counter-story” of Asian students in predominantly white school settings so that “the stories of those on society’s margins” (Liu, 2009, p. 3) can be made visible.

While no significant effort at transformation can go without consequence, the loss white teachers may feel when they are pushed to reconsider (or consider for the first time) their participation in a system of whiteness is one that can help them develop a deeper understanding of the power and privilege associated with discourses of whiteness that dominate and marginalize people of color in our society.

An awareness of loss might mean that we recognize the loss and the fear inhabiting the silence and develop pedagogical strategies that communicate to our students that we do not discount the fear or the loss, but that we also refuse the silence on their part as a strategy of avoidance. (Mazzei, 2008, pp. 1134-1135)

There is so much power in these predominantly white settings where white teachers are not asked to investigate their white racial identity, are not expected to disclose the reasons for making culture more visible than race, and are not questioned when their whiteness acts in ways that privilege them based on their race. Future action research could be deeply embedded in school and classroom communities and facilitate the kinds of critical conversations that I began with Michael and Steven, while beginning to document the impact that critical work on whiteness has on the teachers’ attitudes and practices, the students’ experiences with schooling, the parents’ and families’ interactions with school and teachers, and the educational institution’s initiatives to help faculty prepare for and commit to important work for social justice.

Conclusion

If a human being dreams a great dream, dares to love somebody; if a human being dares to be Martin King, or Mahatma Gandhi, or Mother Theresa, or Malcolm X; if a human being dares to be bigger than the condition into which she or he was born – it means so can you. And so you can try to stretch, stretch, stretch yourself so you can internalize, “Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto. I am a human being, nothing human can be alien to me.” That’s one thing I’m learning.
– Maya Angelou (Berlinger, 2011)

When I heard it read aloud, the above quote spoke to me in ways that celebrated the qualities of greatness possessed by all human beings while it also put on display the negative acts in which humanity has engaged; it asks us all to take responsibility for the totality of participating in that human experience. For a white individual, the words above only ring true in the most positive sense. They see themselves as part of this lineage of greatness where the entitlement that envelopes their everyday experiences is justified by the heroic, selfless acts of others. Whites see themselves portrayed in predominantly positive ways in our literature, in our history texts, and in our mainstream media productions; negative white images seem to be set aside from the larger group and classified as individual, which cannot then readily be attributed to others of the same race.

“So what happens when we do not notice, or are taught not to notice, or pretend not to notice?” (Mazzei, 2008, p. 1126) This kind of blindness allows white people to ignore the fact that people of color have a very different experience. The human experience for people of color is not always focused on all of the positivity that whites are able to enjoy; rather, people of color are positioned so that they have to strive to embody the qualities of a great human individual and need to work hard, sustain good moral character, and set themselves apart from the rest of their racial or cultural group in

order to achieve this status of being “human.” People of color are not automatically entered into this larger, positive, white human experience and as such are seen as being akin to the more nefarious side of our human nature. White educators need to understand that typically they and their students do not have to strive to be great; the powerful discourses of whiteness enforce the idea that they have merely to access the great potential within every white individual. Students of color are conversely given messages that they must stretch to make a better life for themselves and they are told in obvious and subtle ways that they are not entitled to this white legacy of awesome human privilege. The experiences of students and families of color are therefore rendered silent and invisible to white educators because it is the teachers’ own participation in the discourses of whiteness gives them permission to ignore the lived realities of these othered community members.

This study is important because it sought to uncover how the discourses of white teachers operated to sustain and/or disrupt whiteness and the power of white supremacy. Research focusing on white teachers in predominantly white elementary schools is still limited. Overall, not much is known about how they as a group interact with race and how their discourses serve their predominantly white student populations. Even less is known about how white teachers work in their settings to serve the status quo of racism and white supremacy. In doing this research, I found that critical analysis of one’s own teaching practice is essential if true professional growth is to be achieved in any classroom because

racial oppression is not just what happens to raced people, it is the how and why people emerge as raced. It is precisely because racial oppression is so persistent and painful that it becomes imperative to ask how power and discourse operate to produce raced bodies (Wilchins, 2004).

Considering the unexamined power of the discourses of whiteness at work in these settings, more research needs to be done to investigate the ways in which these settings function to sustain, disrupt and/or transform the status quo in the schools and communities who benefit from racial and cultural privilege. Only then can we determine how whiteness functions in these elementary schools where race is not commonly considered a factor, where difference may be noticed but not embraced, and where changes to the existing power structures are rarely if ever considered because the deafening silence of white privilege consistently suffocates a more thoughtful examination that could ultimately lead to a meaningful and total educational transformation.

Appendix A

Teacher Pre-Selection Demographic Information Sheet

Name:		Sex: __Female __Male				
E-mail:	Current Grade Level / Subject Area Taught:	Years of teaching experience:				
Contact Phone:						
Please list other teaching experiences (with grade levels and years taught):						
Race/ Ethnicity:	_____ African American/Black _____ Asian American/Pacific Islander _____ Native American/American Indian _____ White/Caucasian _____ Latina/Latino/Hispanic _____ Biracial/Multiracial _____ Other: _____					
Please list the languages you speak fluently:						
On a scale from 1 (not interested) to 5 (very interested), please place an 'X' above the appropriate number that indicates your willingness to participate in this study.						
		1	2	3	4	5
		Not interested ←————→ Very interested				
If you are interested in participating, please use the space below to write why you would like to participate in this study.						

Appendix B

Participant Selection Table

Name (#)	Sex	Grade Level Taught	Years of Experience Teaching	Race/ Ethnicity	Language(s) Spoken	Interest Level (1-5)
01	M	1	13	White	English	5
02	M	1	10	Caucasian	English	5
03	F	1	3	White	English	5
04	F	2	3	Pakistani	English,	5
05	F	1	9	Caucasian	English	5
06	F	1	13	Caucasian	English	5
07	F	RR	8	Caucasian	English	5
08	F	K	4	Caucasian	English	4
09	F	2	3	Chinese	English	4
10	M	1	2	Caucasian	English	3
11	F	K	12	White	English	2.5
12	F	1	2	Caucasian	English	2
13	F	12	--	Caucasian	English	2
14	F	2	--	Asian American	--	2
15	F	1	12	Caucasian	English	1
16	F	2	7	White	English	1
17	M	2	13	Human/ White	English	1
18	F	K	6	White	English	1
19	F	K	9	White	English	1
20	F	K	6	Caucasian	English	1
21	F	K	7.5	White	English	1
22	F	1	9	White	English	1
23	F	1	6	Caucasian	ASL	1
24	F	1	6	Caucasian	n/a	1
25	F	K	--	--	--	1
26	F	K	29+	--	--	1
27	F	2	--	Caucasian	English	1
28	F	1	38+	White	English	1
29	F	RR	19	White/ Swiss	--	1
30	F	K	12	White	None	N/A

Appendix C

Research Timeline

Week A	March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Screening • Screening Interviews • Participant Selection & Interview/Observation Scheduling • Data and Artifact Collection
Week B	April 2008	
Week C	May 2008	
Week 1	March 16 – 20, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Participant Interviews • Interviews with Administrators • Classroom Observations
Week 2	March 23 - 27, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Observations
Week 3	March 30 - April 3, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Observations
Week 4	April 6 - April 10, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Interviews
Week 5	April 20 – April 24, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Observations
Week 6	April 27 – May 1, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Interviews • Classroom Observations
Week 7	May 4 – May 8, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Observations
Week 8	May 11 – May 15, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Interviews • Classroom Observations
Week 9	May 18 – May 22, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Observations
Week 10	May 25 – May 29, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Observations
Week 11	June 1 – June 5, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Participant Interviews • Classroom Observations
Week 12	June 8 – June 12, 2009 June 15 – 18, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Interviews with Administrators • Final Data and Artifact Collection

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Individuals

- How do you define your role as a teacher?
- How would you define your racial identity? Where do you see it fitting with your identity as a teacher? In this setting? As you enact multicultural education?
- What kinds of classes or activities have you participated in that touched on or were about issues of whiteness?
- What do you do as an educator with regards to race and multicultural issues? How would you describe your commitment to the practices and ideas of multicultural education?
- What are some examples of how you use multicultural education in your teaching/in your classroom? How do you generate these ideas?
- Can you describe some of your experiences with race and multicultural education in the classroom and school? How do you see your racial identity playing a part in these experiences?
- What structures work to support or restrict your teaching for social justice?
- Do you see your own identity as playing a part in how or what you teach in your classroom?
- How do you see your teaching strategies working with the population of students in your classroom?
- Are there benefits/challenges to enacting socially just/multicultural education in your setting?
- How would you describe your race? Does it influence your teaching/position as a teacher? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to be white in this educational community? Is this different than being white outside of the school environment?
- What does it mean to be colorblind or to teach in a colorblind way? Are you colorblind?
- Can you describe any of your teaching practices that deal with issues of social justice or race?

Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview and Observation Topics

Interviews

- Teachers' educational history as it relates to race and social justice
- Professional development opportunities and administrative supports
- Teaching pedagogy
 - Philosophy of instruction
 - Colorblind ideology
- Curricular pieces
 - Heroes and Holidays
 - "International Night"
 - Black History Month
- Culture of school and community as it relates to issues of race and social justice

Observations

- Patterns of how teachers interact with students/families of difference
- How images of race are presented in the classroom and school
- Discourse – what is included/omitted from conversations and discussions; what does this mean?
- How do teachers describe their own racial identity and its importance in the classroom/school?

Appendix F

Teacher Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Kimberly Heuschkel, who is a teaching and graduate assistant in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to investigate elementary school teachers' cultural identities and their work with multicultural education.

Approximately three teachers will be participating in this study. This study will involve the researcher conducting approximately 3-4 interviews and 4-6 observations per teacher (with one possible focus group) and 1-2 interviews with a school administrator. The interview(s) will be audio taped for the purpose of maintaining accurate records. These tapes will only be used by personnel involved in this study. There are no foreseeable risks or benefits associated with your participation in this research study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the study without any penalty to you. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

This research is confidential, which means that the research records will include some information about you, such as your first name and job description. I will keep this information confidential by limiting individuals' access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. All data will be kept for approximately one year after the completion of the study. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. Your name will not be identified in any reports of the findings from this study. You may request a copy of the report describing the study's findings.

The principal investigator for this study is:

Kimberly Heuschkel, Rutgers Graduate School of Education
10 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Tel: 732-932-7496 ext. 8xxx, Email: kimh@xxx.xxxxxxx.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers Univ. Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104, Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject Name Print _____

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix G

Audio-tape Addendum to Consent Form

You have already agreed to participate in a research study entitled: Enacting Multicultural Education: Whiteness at Work conducted by Kimberly Heuschkel. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape sound as part of that research study. The recording(s) will be used for analysis by the researcher and will be stored in a locked file cabinet with a code to subjects' identities to be kept for approximately one year after the completion of the study and destroyed upon final publication of study results.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Subject (Print) _____

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix H

Administrative Support Form

(To be copied onto school letterhead)

Date _____

To whom it may concern,

This letter will confirm that Kimberly Heuschkel has permission to conduct a research study at Fulton Elementary School located in Spokesbury Township, New Jersey.

The focus of the study will be the examination of teachers' cultural identities and their work with multicultural education.

This will be conducted by interviewing and observing teachers in their classrooms and during various related school activities.

I support this study.

Sincerely,

Signature

Printed Name

Administrative Title/Position

Appendix I

Observation/Field Notes Recording Template

Classroom _____ Date _____

Hour	Minute	Description of Activity	Reflective Notes

Appendix J

Contact Summary Sheet

<u>CONTACT NAME:</u>	<u>TYPE OF CONTACT/DATA:</u>
<u>DATE:</u>	<u>TIME:</u>
<u>OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL DAY:</u>	<u>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SETTING:</u>
<u>BRIEF DESCRIPTION:</u>	
<u>MAIN THEMES OR ISSUES THAT STRUCK ME IN THIS CONTACT:</u>	
<u>ANYTHING THAT STANDS OUT/QUESTIONS RAISED/REFLECTIONS:</u>	
<u>CONCERNS:</u>	
<u>MATERIALS ATTACHED:</u>	
<u>FILE NAME:</u>	<u>TAPE INFORMATION:</u>

Appendix K
Data Collection Record

<u>DATE COLLECTED</u>	<u>TYPE OF DATA</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATA FINAL</u>

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