USING AN ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION STRATEGY TO COUNTER PREJUDICE AGAINST ARAB AND MUSLIM AMERICANS

BY

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Abstract of the Dissertation

Using an Anti-Racist Education Strategy to Counter Prejudice

Against Arab and Muslim Americans

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Most Americans misunderstand the terms "Arab" and "Muslim," while also casting Arabs and Muslims as threats to national security. These perceived threats have led to the justification of the oppression of Arab and Muslim Americans similar to other minority groups in the United States, as non-Arab and non-Muslim Americans have been inundated with negative stereotypes through the news media, entertainment industry and the educational system. However, unlike with other groups, little research has been performed to analyze strategies on how to address the existence of prejudice against Arabs and Muslims among students with little to no contact with the two groups. The findings of this study suggest the need for more research on the potential ability of an Anti-Racist Education unit to address misconceptions about Arabs and Muslims in the United States and the resulting discrimination against the groups.

The study incorporated a Practitioner Action Research design to examine how students developed their knowledge and attitudes about Arab and Muslim Americans, and the potential influence of a five week Anti-Racist Education unit on changing their knowledge and attitudes. The Anti-Racist Education strategy, which incorporated the contact hypothesis, was based on confronting students with the theory that as non-Arab, non-Muslim Americans, they were in a position of advantage in society and had developed prejudices as a result of growing up in that society. The subjects were 38

white students, 2 black students, and 1 Asian American student in a sophomore level Humanities class at an affluent public high school in New Jersey. Although the unit resulted in patterns of improved knowledge for most students, changes in student attitudes varied significantly among the students. A minority of the students demonstrated a willingness to recognize and admit their own prejudice, evidence of empathy towards Arab and Muslims, and an ability to critically examine their own knowledge when presented with new information, resulting in a progression of improved attitudes. By the end of the unit, most students provided evidence that they were struggling with cognitive dissonance as years of frequent exposure to negative stereotypes were challenged with new information.

Keywords: Anti-Racist Education; Arabs; Muslims; Prejudice; Discrimination; Racism; Contact Hypothesis

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Last but not the least, I would like to thank my family: my wife and children, and all four of my parents. I am truly blessed to have had so much support as I continued my education.

Dedication

To my wife, Leanne, and my twin daughters Samantha and Natalie. Without your support, patience and quiet playing, I could not have completed this endeavor.

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Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Background

As part of a Humanities course I co-taught at a large regional high school in central New Jersey in the fall of 2010, two students squared off in a one-on-one debate over the proposed building of a mosque several blocks away from the site of the former World Trade Center towers. The class discussion of the issue following the debate by well-meaning students turned into an impromptu lesson on Islam, as my co-teacher and I attempted to correct one false statement and misconception after another. It became clear that many of the sophomore students had very little understanding of the religion of Islam or Arab cultures, and what they did "know" reflected attitudes obtained primarily from negative portrayals in movies, television shows, news venues, and video games. Students also misapplied the terms "Arab" and "Muslim," often using one in place of the other. It was evident that the public education system up through their freshmen year of high school had done little to teach about Islam and the Arab cultures, or to address the many misconceptions that existed in the minds of the students about both terms.

After reflecting on the experience, my co-teacher and I decided to develop our final unit of the year around the discrimination against Arabs and Muslims in the United States using Multicultural Education strategies. Our first attempt to develop and teach about the issue, in the spring of 2011, did not go as we had hoped. Our students tended to move to one of two extremes, with some actually condoning violent acts carried out by Muslim extremist groups, while others reacted by downplaying or even denying that Arabs and Muslims faced discrimination. We realized that our strategies and methods of

teaching this sensitive subject were in need of change, and I decided to do further research on a strategy I had been briefly introduced to during a course on racial and ethnic inequality in education.

That strategy, Anti-Racist Education, had developed in the 1980s in Great Britain and Canada in an effort to challenge institutionalized discrimination against blacks. In the spring of 2012, we implemented our first attempt at designing an Anti-Racist Education unit. While our own observations and reflections identified many shortcomings of the unit, we also recognized what appeared to be improvements in student knowledge acquisition and changes in student attitudes. We substantially revised the unit and taught it again in the spring of 2013. We again found areas where we thought we could improve, but continued to get the "feeling" it was having a positive influence based on our combined thirty plus years of experience as teachers. Of course, having "feelings" that a unit is effective at realizing objectives that focus on changing attitudes does not necessarily mean that it is. This study was designed to see if our "feelings" had any merit, and if so, what aspects of the unit seemed to influence students positively?

Introduction. During my fourteen years as a Social Studies teacher specializing in United States History and Political Science in an upper middle class high school in New Jersey (which will be referred to as Highlands High School for purposes of this study), I have observed the impact of the lack of state educational standards and school curriculum guides (State, 2014), along with a dearth of professional development opportunities, dealing with the legal and social discrimination directed against Arab and Muslim Americans. Highlands High School is located in the heart of one of the top

counties in the United States in terms of family income (Van Riper, 2013). The student population is 95.3% non-Arab and non-Muslim, and 92% of students from the class of 2012 went on to pursue a college education ("Report," 2014). Although there were no statistics on the religious affiliation of students, based on personal observations over the previous thirteen years, there existed only a very small population of Muslim Americans at the school. Additionally, the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau reported that only 511 Arabs were living in the entire county ("Demographics," 2013), further substantiating the observations about the lack of a significant Arab American population in the school. The absence of these groups in significant numbers, as well as the minimal and/or erroneous content about the group in the school curriculum, has resulted in a student body unaware of and misinformed about Arab and Muslim Americans.

Growth of Arab and Muslim Population. A 2007 Pew Research Study estimated that there were 2.5 million Muslims in the United States, of which approximately 1.5 million were adults (Sirin & Fine, 2008). The percentage of the total Muslim population under the age of 18 in the United States is estimated to be nearly 40%, considerably higher than the under 18 population of other religious affiliations, and it continues to increase rapidly ("Muslim," 2011). Prior to the events of September 11, 2001, the Muslim American population was among the fastest growing segments of the overall population in the 1990s, increasing by 108% ("Muslim," 2011). This population bulge for young Muslims in the country heightens the need to address the misconceptions and social injustices faced by Muslims, particularly in schools such as Highlands High School, where the homogenous non-Arab and non-Muslim student population has little direct contact with Muslims. If they are not provided with opportunities to meet with and

learn about Arabs and Muslims as students, these adolescents will base their eventual interactions with members of the two groups on false stereotypes and prejudices perpetuated by the social norms they are constantly exposed to in society.

According to the Arab American Institute, the Arab population in the United States is currently estimated to be 1.9 million ("Demographics," 2013). Similar to the Muslim population, most Arab Americans, both native -born and immigrants, live in urban areas within just a few states. New Jersey has the 6th highest number of native-born and immigrant Arabs residing within it, with close to 90,000 ("Demographics," 2013).[1] The total native-born and immigrant Arab population in the United States has shown a dramatic increase over the last few decades, with an estimated 40% increase in the 1990s (de la Cruz & Brittingham, 2003) and another 47% in the first decade of the 21st century ("U.S. Census," 2011).

Americans in general lack an understanding of the terms "Arab" and "Muslim," often using the two interchangeably even though many Arabs are not Muslim and most Muslims are not Arab. To most Americans, when the word Arab is referenced, it conjures up simplistic images of men as "sheiks," marauding tribesmen, or violent terrorists, and women as exoticized subjects (for example, belly dancers or harem girls) or as oppressed individuals (Wingfield & Karaman, 2007). Few realize that the Arab world includes twenty-two countries, is the home to several major world religions, includes a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups, and that it "encompasses a long history of human advancements" (Wingfield & Karaman, 2007, p. 132). When the term

[1] The total population in New Jersey was estimated to be 8,899,339 as of July 31st, 2013 by the New Jersey Department of Labor (*Population*, 2013).

"Muslim American" is used, there is an immediate association with Arabness despite the fact that the majority of Muslims in the United States are African American (Joseph and D'Harlingue, 2008).

The responsibility for counteracting these stereotypes developed through popular culture, and the educational system itself, falls squarely on educators because the influence of these misconceptions needs to be replaced with an accurate understanding of the religion of Islam, and a history of Arabs, that allows students to develop an appreciation for the lives and cultural background of their Arab-American and Muslim-American neighbors. This study assesses whether or not the implementation of an Anti-Racist Education unit highlights themes or patterns that reflect positive changes in student knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims.

Problem Statement

In race and ethnic studies courses, Arabs and Muslims have long been excluded from the curriculum and pedagogy, and when they are briefly mentioned, the group is often treated differently than other minority groups (Cainkar, 2002). Misrepresentations of Arabs and Muslims, proliferated by the media and film industries, reflected in the policies and actions of the U.S. government, and virtually unchallenged in pedagogy, have been "extremely effective in garnering public support for treating Arabs and Muslims as a special group possessing fewer rights than others" (Cainkar, 2008, p. 59). The process of racialization of both Arabs and Muslims in the United States has resulted in the oppression of these groups, allowing for acts of officially sanctioned discrimination and injustice to occur with little opposition from the public. Minimal

effort has been made in educational settings to counter the misconceptions about Arabs and Muslims that are so prevalent in our society, and the use of specific educational strategies to challenge them have not been studied as they pertain to addressing Arab and Muslim prejudice and racism in schools populated heavily by non-Arab and non-Muslim students. The little attention that has been given to the study of Arabs and Muslims often relies on the use of a Multicultural Education strategy, with an emphasis on making students more aware of cultural traditions and religious practices, rather than the discrimination that people from these groups experience in the United States.

Furthermore, limited research has been done in regard to prejudice reduction strategies for non-Arab and non-Muslim students in the United States. Examining the ability of Anti-Racist Education to improve student knowledge and change student attitudes may provide teachers with information that can help them design and implement effective Anti-Racist Education units that address their student population. If more teachers, and perhaps school districts, make Anti-Racist Education part of their pedagogy, it could result in a decline in prejudice and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims in the United States. Hence it is necessary to conduct a study that explores whether or not a strategy such as Anti-Racist Education can improve student knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims in such an environment.

Additionally, critics of contemporary educational strategies to alleviate racism point out that while state-sponsored school curricula ‘educate’ students about racial disparities, they fail to encourage students to examine white domination, to critically engage them with analyses of institutional racism, or to highlight the problems associated with color-blind discourse (Leonardo 2004). This failure to teach students about the

highly complex and entrenched system of contemporary racism "supports the illusion of 'meritocracy,' according to which different outcomes for racially minoritized groups can be 'explained' not by racial discrimination but by their cultural deficiencies" (Bryan, 2012, p. 601), such as a lack of motivation or 'ability' (Forman 2004). I believe that by schools not directly addressing the discrimination and system of advantage for some that exists within our society, we are allowing negative stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and civil and human rights violations to be perpetuated.

The purpose of this research study was to explore specific Anti-Racist Education strategies to identify themes or patterns in student responses, and to assess any potential for successfully bringing about meaningful changes in student knowledge and attitudes about prejudice, discrimination and racism within their society, and about Arabs and Muslims both within the United States and abroad. It has been demonstrated that Anti-Racist Education strategies have been successful in challenging the belief in race-based causes as a factors leading to social issues of poverty, crime and education (Stanley, 1992). This study applied some of those strategies to determine if they could diminish anti-Arab and anti-Muslim stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. It is hoped that this study will provoke other researchers to examine Anti-Racist Education, as well as other prejudice reduction strategies, as possible avenues for decreasing anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice and discrimination among students in the United States.

Research Questions

To understand the potential influence of an Anti-Racist Education strategy on a non-Arab and non-Muslim population, the following research questions guided the exploration of the literature, design of the study, and analysis of the findings:

1. What do students know about Arabs and Muslims before the start of the unit and what knowledge about Arabs and Muslims do they express over the course of the unit?
2. How do students describe their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims before the start of the unit and how do they describe their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims throughout the unit?
3. How do students describe where they get their ideas about Arabs and Muslims and how these ideas have developed at the start of the unit? What do students recognize as factors leading to the development of their knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims during the course of the unit?
4. What knowledge about prejudice, discrimination and racism do students have at the start of the unit and how do students describe changes in their knowledge and attitudes about prejudice, discrimination and racism in their society throughout the unit?

Importance of Study

Due to the increasing population of Arabs and Muslims within the United States, as well as the persistence of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination in the country, this is an important area of study. Students are inundated with negative portrayals of Arabs

and Muslims through Hollywood movies, video games, during their formal education, and perhaps most prominently, in the news media. A recent study found that negative coverage of Islam has reached an all-time high as a result of the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, and their corresponding rise in American news headlines (Schatz, 2014). The continuing trend in the media to reinforce negative stereotypes and prejudices against Arabs and Muslims only serves to further increase the importance of more research about how schools can challenge common stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination among young Americans.

This qualitative practitioner action research is needed to assess the potential ability of an Anti-Racist Education unit to address the misconceptions about Arabs and Muslims in the United States and the resulting discrimination against the groups that permeates throughout the country. Schools provide the most effective setting for educating people about how their attitudes develop and what the reality is in regard to minority stereotypes, rights, and injustices. Yet research has shown that this is not occurring often (Lavelle & Feagin, 2008). It is imperative that research be conducted to ascertain the potential of specific teaching strategies such as Anti-Racist Education to address the misconceptions by most Americans and the resulting injustices that persist within the country.

Within the United States today there is little attention provided on how to use educational strategies to address the discrimination against Arabs and Muslims, as it is often omitted from research studies. Specifically in regard to Anti-Racist Education, no research has been published that analyzes the use of Anti-Racist Education strategies to a target population of non-Arab and non-Muslim students. Thea Abu El-Haj argues that

the collective identities of Arab youth must be clearly and accurately incorporated into the curriculum to counter the feelings of alienation felt by Arab youth (2006). I argue that even in school environments with little or no Arab or Muslim populations, non-Arab and non-Muslim students must also be exposed to a curriculum that accurately and visibly includes the collective identity of Arab and Muslim Americans to counter the misconceptions and the resulting discrimination that permeates throughout society. After all, most of these students will eventually leave their homogenous environment and enter the diverse society that makes up the United States. If they are not equipped with the knowledge to challenge stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims, students may become proponents of the system instead.

Scope of Study

In this study my main purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of Anti-Racist Education to bring about increased student knowledge and improved attitudes about Arabs and Muslims in the United States. Through qualitative research, my intention was to consider all of the students as individuals with their own levels of knowledge and attitudes, and to explore their thoughts and reactions to changes to their knowledge. I used that information to formulate a synthesis of themes and patterns created from the data in its entirety.

The focus of this study was to assess the potential for changes in knowledge and attitudes among students after participation in an Anti-Racist Education strategy within one class in one school. It constitutes what Merriam calls “a bounded system,” in which there is a single entity around which there are boundaries (2009). All of the participants

were students in this specific class of non-Arab and non-Muslim students. Data were collected via class and focus group discussions, researcher observations, student journals, and a summative essay.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of key concepts were utilized and applied within the unit and the study.

1. Prejudice is a negative prejudgment, opinion, or attitude that is based on false or limited information, or based on generalizations (Newcomb, 1965).
2. Stereotype refers to a widely held, oversimplified and often inaccurate image of a particular type of person or idea (*Oxford*, 1998).
3. Discrimination is the treatment of a person based on a group that the person is perceived to belong to rather than on individual merit (Reskin, 2012).
4. Race is a socially constructed concept reflective of economic, political and social forces that categorizes people by perceived differences (Omi and Winant, 1994).
5. Racialization is the "extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group" (Omi and Winant, 1994, p. 14).
6. Racism is a system of advantage enacted individually or institutionally based on the belief that inherent differences in a group determine the characteristics and abilities of members of that group, usually imposing superiority to one's own group (Tatum, 1992).

7. Oppression includes a classification of concepts and conditions that include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence whereby “oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts and feelings” (Young, 2004, p. 40).
8. Knowledge refers to the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject (Oxford, 1998).
9. Attitude denotes a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's words and actions (Oxford, 1998).
10. Cognitive Dissonance is the disagreeable feeling experienced by an individual when they are exposed to new information that conflicts with a pre-existing belief; it is often very difficult to change behavior or opinions that are involved in dissonant relations (Festinger, 1957; “Cognitive,” 2014)

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

I completed the vast majority of the review of literature prior to the development of the unit and implementation of the study. However, during the data analysis phase, as evidence demonstrated inconsistent patterns of substantial changes in student attitudes, I performed additional research in an attempt to ascertain the reasons for the varied results. I incorporated the new information gained from that research in conjunction with previous research in the development of the study's conclusions as well as the recommendations for modifications to the Anti-Racist Education unit.

Defining "Arab" and "Muslim" in the United States

Within the United States there is a common tendency to conflate the categories of "Muslim" and "Arab" within popular culture, despite the fact that not all Arabs are Muslim and not all Muslims are Arab (Naber, 2008). Arabs and Muslims, as members of two diverse groups, one ethnic/linguistic and one religious, share only some aspects of commonality, culture, identity and language (Banks. 2008), but have been lumped together as one and labeled with stereotypic characteristics. The term "Arab" refers specifically to persons from a collective of countries in North Africa and West Asia with diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics (Alsultany, 2012; Naber, 2008). The term "Muslim" denotes persons who practice the religion of Islam (Alsultany, 2012), and despite the commonly held belief that all Muslims are Arabs, the top six countries with the largest Muslim population are not in the Arab region. The Asia-Pacific region of the world alone has nearly 1 billion Muslims, far more than the

Middle East-North Africa region's Muslim population of just under 3.2 million (Desilver, 2014)

Racialization of Arabs and Muslims

In the United States, the criteria as well as the categories for determining who was "white" and who was "non-white" have shifted to reflect the historical and social contexts of each era (Jacobson, 1998; Lopez, 1996). Since the first period of intensive Arab immigration to the U.S. in the early 1900s, the racial categorization of Arabs in the United States has been unsettled (Samhan, 1999; Naber, 2000; Gualtieri, 2001). In 1909, a federal court granted naturalization rights to a Syrian man based on the common perception that Arabs were white. However, five years later, another Syrian immigrant was denied his petition for citizenship by a judge because although he was "white," it was "not that particular free white person to whom the act of Congress had donated the privilege of citizenship" (as cited in Naber, 2008, p. 21). The 1914 case demonstrated that at that time "whiteness" had already evolved beyond putative biological characteristics to one that could also include nation-based attributes. As the official classification of Arabs evolved, the expansion of widely accepted essentialist beliefs about Arabs, both globally and within the United States, resulted in the "perpetuation and reinforcement of stigmatized views...of Arab Americans" (Cainkar, 2008, p. 50), further demonstrating that juridical whiteness alone did not protect a group from prejudice and discrimination. These early and persistent stereotypes were a necessary step in the eventual racialization of Arabs during the latter half of the 20th century, as they provided

the justification for the "othering" that developed in response to perceived threats by Arabs and Muslims to U.S. society and culture.

Similar to the evolution of "Arabness," Muslim identity has shifted over the last several centuries, with a significant change occurring in the post-World War II era. Well before that time, "Orientalism"[2] provided the foundation of the dominant views that Americans had of Muslims, which consisted of a Muslim world "beset by oriental despotism, economic squalor, and intellectual stultification" (Douglas Little as quoted in Naber, 2008, p. 24; see also Said, 1994) that was in direct conflict with the republicanism of the United States. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the perception of Islam as "evil" and Muslims as "others" intensified, and the assumption that all Arabs were Muslims and all Muslims were Arabs became more common (Naber, 2008).

In the United States today, the federal government officially classifies Arabs as members of the white racial category, obscuring the "racialized discourses and practices to which this community is subjected" (Abu El-Haj, 2006, p. 16). Studies have shown that while "most government definitions classify Arab Americans as 'white,' popular U.S. discourses tend to represent 'Arabs' as different from and inferior to whites" (Naber, 2008, p. 1). Louise Cainkar posits that Arabs have actually been subjected to a double burden, being excluded from white privilege despite being classified as white, while also being excluded from being recognized as people of "color" (2008). By officially being recognized by the United States as being white, Arabs are denied the ability to use affirmative action policies to help overcome discrimination (Samhan, 1999).

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[2] Edward Said defined Orientalism as the acceptance in the West of "the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny and so on" (Said, 1994).

In this study, in addition to recognizing Arabs as an ethnic/linguistic group and Muslims as a religious group, both were treated as racialized groups. Racialization is concisely defined by Thomas Holt as a process whereby groups are "made into races" (2000, p. 53), while Howard Winant argues that the term "signifies the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group" (1994, p. 59). Louise Cainkar argues that the social exclusion of Arabs in the U.S. constitutes the process of racialization because Arab inferiority has been presented to the general public "using essentialist constructions of human difference" (2008, p. 48). As the fear of Islam grew throughout the last two decades of the twentieth century to a point where it equaled and perhaps superseded concerns about Arab nationalism, the racialization was extended to include Muslims in the process of "othering" as well (Cainkar, 2008). Moustafa Bayoumi further explains that unlike other religious, ethnic and immigrant groups, Muslims, and by association Arabs, have become problems that society must remedy.

> Arabs and Muslims (who, in the real world, are two overlapping categories, but in the world of American perceptions essentially the same thing) have entered the American imagination with full force, but their entry has been racialized. What this means in the specific inflections of the American vernacular is an association with blackness, for Arabs and Muslims in America are not a part of the immigrant fabric of the nation but a social problem to be dealt with. While Jews and Hindus are today handed ethnicity, Arabs and Muslims are saddled with race. They have become an American dilemma. (Bayoumi, 2011)

Previous phenotypical ascriptions of racial categories have been superseded by arguments that use an essentializing cultural discourse to racialize all kinds of minoritized communities (Winant, 1994). In this case, the image of Muslim and Arab Americans is of non-whites who, by their nature, are morally and culturally inferior to "real"

Americans. Moreover, they are associated with terroristic behavior, perceived to be a product of "their" culture or civilization, rather than the actions of a small number of radicals (Jamal, 2008).

Amaney Jamal uses a definition of racialization for Arabs and Muslims that, like oppressed groups before them, specifically focuses on the process of "othering," whereby the use of an "us" versus "them" mentality as a rationale for the military actions in the Arab world has led to the development of a racial category based on cultural attributes rather than physical characteristics (2008). Nadine Naber explains that the racialization process has also provided justification for actions taken by the government within the country as well.

> Official federal government policies...have constituted particular subjects as potential enemies within the nation--specifically working-class nonresident Muslim immigrant men from Muslim majority countries. In this sense, a set of solid and fixed signifiers have come to demarcate the Muslim Other/enemy within (2008, p. 277).

For this study, I am utilizing all four of these definitions [Holt (2000), Winant (1994), Cainkar (2008) and Jamal (2008)] to argue that Arabs and Muslims have undergone a racialization process as a result of the culturally-based racism towards them that has been prevalent throughout the United States.

Challenges to Racialization Theory. It is important to note that within the field of Arab American studies, there is debate about whether or not Arabs and Muslims have indeed become racialized. Andrew Shryock challenges the categorization of Arabs and Muslims as racial, arguing that the racialization theory "belongs to a larger field of left/progressive ideologies" supported by "scholars and academy-oriented writers who have been deeply influenced by feminist thought or cultural studies" in which the concept

is attached to "marginality, alterity, and cultural critique" (2008, p. 97). He explains that this discourse has gained traction in direct response to the case of Arab American marginality resulting from the events of 9/11. Since most Arab Americans still identify themselves as "white" and the majority of the general population is still unable to distinguish between the characteristics of Arabs and Muslims, he questions the legitimacy of using the "language of race at all" (97). Referencing Omi and Winant's definition of race in *Racial Formations* as "a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies" (1994, as cited in Shryock, 2008, p. 98-99), he contends that the "social conflicts" applied to Arabs and Muslims are ideological rather than physical.

However, in the case of Arabs and Muslims, the racialization is not contingent on differences in physical characteristics, but instead on differences in cultural attributes (Abdulrahim, 2008,). By using a definition of race and racialization that focuses solely on physical characteristics as a method of classification, Shryock dismisses the process of "othering" that is based on perceived religious, cultural or civilizational differences that are "natural and insurmountable" (Naber, 2008, p. 279). Shryock's argument is based on an outdated view of race as a marker of biological essentialism rather than the modern forms of cultural racism. Naber explains that this:

> "Cultural racism" refers to cases in which violence or harassment was justified on the basis that persons who were perceived to be "Arab/Middle Eastern/ Muslim" were rendered as inherently connected to a backward, inferior, and potentially threatening Arab culture, Muslim religion, or Arab Muslim civilization. (2008, p. 280)

"Race," when coded as culture, can be classified as a concept that does not necessitate claims of biological superiority, but rather links perceived differences and inferiority with

spiritual characteristics (Balibar, 1991). Winant further connects it with religion by explaining how racism "extends from the transnational to the national to the experimental and personal, from the global debt burden to racial profiling, from Negrophobia to Islamophobia" (as cited in Rana, 2011, 25), a point which Shryock overlooks when referencing Winant's definition of race. Islamophobia, a term that represents a fear of Muslims, although a recently developed concept, has a long history as a type of racism that evolved in conjunction with European and American Orientalism (Rana, 2011).

Iris Young proposes a framework for understanding oppression as having different aspects, falling into five categories (2004). Arabs and Muslims, through detentions, renditions, and military invasions, have experienced what Young would categorize as cultural imperialism (establishing the culture of the ruling class as the norm), violence (use of random, unprovoked attacks intended to damage, destroy or humiliate a group), and marginalization (relegating a group of people to a lower social standing or outer edge of society) within the United States, particularly after the attacks of 9/11. Regardless of what types of oppression Arabs and Muslims suffer, Young explains that:

> All oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts and feelings. Beyond that, in any more specific sense, it is not possible to define a single set of criteria that describes the conditions of oppression. (2004, p. 40)

Charles Taylor explains that "misrecognition" or "non-recognition" can be damaging to a people, as it is a form of oppression" that imprisons a person "in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (as cited in Abu El-Haj, 2006, p. 15). Although racism in the United States against Arabs and Muslims is more recent and does not

compare in scope and historical legacy to the racism African-Americans and Native Americans have encountered, it does not mean that the oppressive government policies and social practices are necessarily any less harmful to individuals and the groups, and it does not preclude the groups from being racialized.

Discrimination Against Arab and Muslim Americans

As the Arab and Muslim population in the United States increased since the 1980s, the relatively new identity category of *Muslim American* increased in its usage (Sirin & Fine, 2008). As this categorization of identity became more widely applied, Muslims, as well as non-Muslim Arabs including Sikhs and Arab-Christians, continued to experience a process of demonization in the United States. As noted by Susan Akram and Kevin Johnson (2004), even before September 11, 2001, social and legal discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans was created by a combination of:

- widely accepted and perpetuated stereotypes (Said, 1996; Yousef & Keeble, 1999);
- mythmaking within the media and film industries (Abraham,1994; Shaheen, 2001);
- increased racism during national crises (Abraham, 1994; Whidden, 2001; Joseph, 1999);
- and a deliberate campaign to increase public support for U.S. policy in the Middle East (Lilienthal, 1993; Barlow, 1997; Marr, 1984).

Columbia University Professor of Government Mahmood Mamdani described the post-Cold War evolution of Muslim as the new “other” that has led to the concepts of the “good Muslim” and the “bad Muslim.” This delineation between two perceived types of

Muslims has “become the stuff of front-page news stories,” leaving Mamdani to question how it is that a person’s political behavior can be categorized by their religion (2002, p. 767).

> Certainly, we are now told to distinguish between good Muslims and bad Muslims, mind you, not between good and bad persons, nor between criminals and civic citizens, who both happen to be Muslims, but between good Muslims and bad Muslims. We are told that there is a fault line running through Islam, a line that separates moderate Islam, called "genuine Islam,” from extremist political Islam (Mamdani, 2002, p. 767).

Worldwide, the expansion of Islam before the events of September 11, 2001, combined with the rapid increase of the Muslim population in the United States, has made it in the best interest of the U.S. to educate its young citizens about this diverse and dynamic religion (Douglass and Dunn, 2003; Ezzati, 2002), as well as the discrimination Muslims face as a result of the stereotypes applied to their religious beliefs.

Since September 11, 2001, the already existing challenges faced by Arab and Muslim Americans have worsened, as the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a 1,700 percent increase in hate crimes committed against Muslim Americans, as well as those incorrectly identified as Muslim, during the period 2000 to 2001 (Anderson, 2002). Muslim Americans also faced an increase in negative stereotypes from other Americans (Cainkar, 2007; “American-Arab,” 2003) while Muslim immigrants, more than any other immigrant group, were confronted with negative attitudes upon entering and settling in the United States (“Same,” 2010; Saroglou & Galand, 2004). In 2009, a Gallup poll found that 53% of Americans had a “not too favorable” view of Islam (2009), and in 2006, 44% of Americans felt Muslims were too extreme in their beliefs (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). Nearly a quarter of Americans did not want a Muslim as a neighbor

and over half believed Muslim Americans were not loyal to the United States (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). Efforts to counter these negative attitudes have been waged primarily by Arab and Muslim groups throughout the country, often in response to false perceptions sustained by the actions of a small, but highly visible group of radicalized Muslims that do not represent the dominant interpretations of Islam. In addition to these efforts by Arab and Muslim groups, there is a need for, and a responsibility of the education system to assist in this endeavor. This study examines the potential of one possible curricular approach that can be used to help accomplish this goal.

Islamophobia. The perceptions that the general population of the United States has of Arab and Muslim American beliefs, desires and loyalties differ greatly from reality. As a result of the racism displayed in government policies, the products and practices of entertainment industries, the practice of education, and the products of the news media, these perceptions have created a fear of Muslims, and those perceived as Muslim, that is commonly referred to as "Islamophobia." For Muslims, the term Islamophobia has come to represent an amalgamation of religious, ethnic and cultural prejudices, a process of religious racialization that has not been applied to other major religions (Taras, 2013). The 21st century concept of Islamophobia has developed from a fusing of anti-Islamism with racist ideologies of the previous century (Allen, 2010) to present Muslims as the "ultimate cultural others" who are incompatible with democratic and liberal ideals (Amiraux, 2007, p. 147), becoming a justification for racist government policies.

A report published by the Center for American Progress defines Islamophobia as "an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated

by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life" (Wajahat et al., 2011). The existence of this fear, hatred and hostility in the United States has been exploited by "misinformation experts" to create and maintain both prejudice and discrimination among the non-Muslim population as a societal norm. An analysis of social psychological research shows that prejudiced attitudes and behaviors are influenced significantly by social norms (Crandall & Stangor, 2005). Conversely, prejudice, which is a negative judgment, opinion, or attitude, is a necessary element in the existence and proliferation of Islamophobia, that when combined with overt actions, constitutes discrimination that creates a dangerous environment for Muslims (Wajahat et al., 2011). In essence, Islamophobia creates prejudice, which in turn leads to increased Islamophobia and the further racialization of Muslims, and as a result of inaccurate associations, Arabs and Sikhs as well.

Stephen Salaita argues that Islamophobia is often directed at anyone that is "perceived to be Muslim," including Arab Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, and at times, even Hispanics. He suggests that the term "Islamophobia" is often applied in place of the term "anti-Arab racism." Salaita explains that:

> Arab Christians (and other groups who are considered de facto if not de jure Muslims) are usually relegated into an Islamic identity in the discourse of many American racists, who often base their dislike (or fear) of Arabs on the misrepresentation of Islam pervasive in American popular culture (2006, p. 11).

Indecisiveness continues over the exact definition and proper use of Islamophobia in the United States, resulting in its use under the assumption that readers or viewers understand

its meaning and resonance. This assumption inadvertently delegates the task of defining it to the audience rather than the speaker.

The existence and significant influence of Islamophobia and the racism that accompanies it are both dependent upon a general population that is either uninformed or misinformed about the religion of Islam, allowing their beliefs and resulting actions to be manipulated by those in positions of authority or influence. In a 2010 Pew survey, 55% of Americans reported that they knew little or nothing about the Muslim religion, with only 9% reporting that they knew a great deal ("Lugo, et al., 2010"). Racial profiling and preventative law enforcement practices implemented by the government and carried out in "the form of airport profiling, secret arrests, race-based immigration policies, and selective enforcement of immigration laws of general applicability" have legitimized and fostered individual biases against Muslims and Arabs (Aziz, 2011, p. 52).

The desire of the U.S. government to portray to the public a sense of success in the effort to prevent acts of violence has also resulted in increasing fear and distrust of both Arabs and Muslims. After analyzing statistics on detentions and deportations issued by the Justice Department, Dan Eggen reported that in order to "declare victory in its purported 'war on terror,' the government systematically miscategorized detentions and deportations of detainees guilty of minor immigration violations as terrorism cases" (2007, p. A8). To the American public, the exaggerated numbers of Muslims and Arabs apprehended and deported as potential threats to society has only served to rationalize the irrational fear and distrust. This, in turn, allows the government to justify the civil and human rights violations to its citizens, perpetuating the cycle as the general population continues to mischaracterize Arabs and Muslims.

The perceptions that the general population holds about Arab and Muslim American beliefs and attitudes contrast sharply with reality, further demonstrating the significant influence of Islamophobia on society. In 2011, a Gallup study found that those who believed Muslim Americans were disloyal to the United States tended to also believe that they should be feared, distrusted, and treated differently than other Americans ("Islamophobia"). A study of Arabs in and around the Detroit area found that an overwhelming 91% of Arab Muslim immigrants consider themselves to be patriotic Americans ("Preliminary," 2003), while Pew Research determined that most Arab Muslim immigrants (72%) want to assimilate into society rather than be a distinct group ("Muslim Americans," 2011). Interestingly, only 33% of the general public believed that Muslims wished to adopt American customs or ways of life ("Muslim Americans," 2011). The challenges that emanate from this lack of understanding by the general population of the desires of Arab and Muslim Americans and immigrants is compounded by the fact that most Americans have little knowledge about the religion of Islam as well.

Pew Research found that those with medium to low levels of familiarity with Islam were more likely to associate the religion with violence. However, multiple studies have concluded that as levels of familiarity increased, associations between Islam and violence decreased significantly ("Islamophobia," 2010; Lugo et al., 2010). Muslims were also perceived as being "too extreme" in their beliefs by 44% of Americans in 2006 (Esposito, 2007), despite the findings of a Pew Research study which demonstrated that 86% of American Muslims believe suicide bombings were never justified and 81% had an unfavorable view of Al Qaeda ("Muslim Americans," 2011).

This disconnect between how Arabs and Muslims are perceived by other Americans versus what Arab and Muslim Americans actually believe is a crucial factor in the existence and proliferation of racism against Arab and Muslim Americans and the resulting discrimination, as the fear and distrust of Arabs and Muslims by non-Arab and non-Muslim Americans becomes the justification for discriminatory actions and policies (Aziz, 2011). The data led me to surmise that a majority of the students in the class being studied would have the same misconceptions about Arabs and Muslims as the general population. This study explored how an Anti-Racist Education curriculum could help to challenge existing student knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims, thereby reducing the misconceptions and prejudicial beliefs, as well as leading to the realization by students that racist practices exist in their society. The education system provides an opportunity to begin the process of addressing the misconceptions to bring about prejudice reduction and resistance to racist policies and practices.

Racialization as it Applies to Anti-Racist Education Objectives

By applying the theory that Arabs and Muslims have become racialized groups to the development and implementation of an Anti-Racist Education curriculum, this study is designed to assess (1) if themes or patterns emerge about changes in student knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims; (2) if themes or patterns emerge about changes in student knowledge and attitudes regarding prejudice, discrimination and racism in their society; (3) if themes or patterns emerge about how students react to new knowledge about Arabs and Muslims; and (4) if themes or patterns emerge about how students react to new knowledge about prejudice, discrimination and racism in their society.

Specific objectives of the unit call for students to:

- Define and distinguish between the terms Arab, Muslim, prejudice, discrimination, and racism;
- Identify the common misconceptions that exist about Arabs and Muslims, and determine why the misconceptions developed;
- Critically assess government policies and actions that reinforce prejudicial beliefs and the racialization of Arabs and Muslims;
- Recognize the key elements of the religion of Islam and compare them to the common misconceptions that exist in society;
- Identify the contributions of Arabs and Muslims nationally and globally, and recognize examples of Arabs and Muslims challenging and overcoming discrimination;
- Summarize the impacts of prejudice, discrimination and racism on Arabs and Muslims, as well as on society as a whole;
- Examine their own attitudes about Arabs and Muslims, and recognize how they developed those attitudes;
- Identify strategies and actions to challenge prejudicial beliefs and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims at the individual, community and national levels.

Anti-Racist Education

Anti-Racism Education, which can trace its roots back to Britain in the mid-1980s, is defined by George J. Sefa Dei as "an action-oriented strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression" (1996, p. 25). He also provides ten basic but interrelated principles of anti-racism education necessary to accomplish systemic change.

1. Recognition of the social effects of "race," despite the concept's lack of scientific basis;
2. The full social effects of race cannot be understood without a comprehension of the intersections of all forms of social oppression, including how race is mediated with other forms of social differences;
3. Questioning of the white (male) power and privilege and the rationality for dominance in society;
4. Problematizing the marginalization of certain voices in society and, specifically, the delegitimation of the knowledge and experience of subordinated groups in the education system;
5. Every form of education must provide for a holistic understanding and appreciation of the human experience, comprising social, cultural political, ecological and spiritual aspects;
6. An explication of the notion of "identity," and how identity is linked with/to schooling;
7. Acknowledgement of the pedagogic need to confront challenges of diversity and difference in society;

8. Acknowledgement of the traditional role of the education system in producing and reproducing not only racial, but also gender, sexual and class-based inequalities in society;
9. School problems experienced by youth cannot be understood in isolation from the material and ideological circumstances in which the students find themselves; and
10. Questioning of the pathological explanations of the "family" or "home environment" as a source of the "problems" some youth experience in relation to schooling.

These ten principles provide educators with guidelines for advancing educational goals related to teaching differences and challenging racism.

Anti-Racist Education and Multicultural Education. Deciding on the best strategy for addressing issues related to prejudice, discrimination and racism is a challenge facing any educator seeking to help their students develop into more open-minded, just and knowledgeable citizens. The following section compares and contrasts the commonly applied strategy of Multicultural Education with the less often incorporated Anti-Racist Education approach. While the two strategies do overlap in their goals and some of their methods for addressing racism, the anti-racist approach moves beyond the cultural focus of Multicultural Education by directly addressing the political and economic realities of racism in society as well.

Anti-Racist Education advocates view society as a place where dominant values impose themselves on people who are unequal in power or value. Unlike Multicultural Education proponents who strive for race to be culturally defined and depoliticized, Anti-Racist Education recognizes racism as a foundation of the social and political

structure, directly correlated to a system of class and other modes of discrimination that deny human rights (Brandt, 1986; Kailin, 2002).

Multicultural Education is designed to teach students about the similarities and differences, histories, and current experiences of the various ethnic groups that exist in society (Stephan, 1999; Banks, 1997; Grant & Sleeter, 1989). Multicultural Education's emphasis on cultural awareness is often taught by dispensing information to students that serves to celebrate differences (May and Sleeter, 2010) while focusing on reducing individual racism (Kehoe and Mansfield, 1994). Walter Stephan explains how Multicultural Education is designed to do just that.

> The emphasis of multicultural education programs on the history and culture of various ethnic groups, their focus on the social construction of knowledge, and their attempts to empower minority students and increase their achievement should all improve intergroup relations (Banks, 1995). Multicultural education's orientation toward legitimizing all ethnic groups should facilitate the formation of positive ethnic identities, as well as creating respect for and acceptance of group differences (1999, p. 62).

Furthermore, research has found that it may be possible to reduce anxiety about members of minority groups by training members of the group in power in the "subjective culture" of the minority group so they can interact with its members more effectively (Cushner & Landis, 1996; Triandis, 1972). Anti-Racist Education also applies this approach, setting out to provide appreciation of the human experience through understanding the social, cultural and spiritual aspects of members of different groups (Dei, 1996).

However, critics of Multicultural Education argue that the perspective of those in positions of power and privilege dictate what is considered to be "positive ethnic identities" and normal, and that "normalcy" will invariably represent what the group in power perceives as best suited to protect their position of power and sense of safety

(Karumanchery, 2003). In a later work, Karumanchery explains that "the reality that tolerance, as a 'multicultural strategy,' functions through applications of power that are set within very specific hierarchical structures" (Karumanchery, 2005, p.49) is often not recognized or ignored by Multicultural Education advocates. "We see creative attempts made by *multicultural personnel* to create *multicultural programs* to serve *multicultural constituencies,* while they are still contained inside organizational structures and identities designed exclusively for and controlled almost exclusively by the white society (Barndt, 2007, p. 241, original emphasis). With one group in a position of superiority over another, the expectations and values of those in the position of power will most likely become the basis by which acceptance is granted or denied (Karumanchery, 2005). By incorporating an Anti-Racist Education approach, however, the opportunity for students to recognize and then challenge the organizational power structures exist, further demonstrating the need for an anti-racist strategy.

Chris Mullard describes Multicultural Education as microscopic in that it tends to have a limited focus on issues of culture concerned with developing educational practices designed to eliminate ignorance of other cultures, diminish the prejudice and discrimination which is dependent upon that ignorance, and increase understanding and tolerance for members of minority groups (1982). As a result:

> Racial minority students' "differences" are understood to be informed by their constructed cultures from elsewhere rather than any societal, structural or institutional inequities due to race, racism and discrimination. So, in denying that race plays a role in their perceptions and constructions of students, or in claiming color-blindness, educators argue that it is not race or color (not any physical or biological characteristics) but culture that is responsible for the educational performances and outcomes of students. Here culture is understood to be a set of information and observable items and practices that can be identified and communicated, as well as events to be celebrated.(Karumanchery, 2005, p. 42)

Most multicultural approaches, rather than working towards emancipation, actually work towards further containment because they ignore the often vastly different experiences of students from the group in power versus those students from the oppressed group, and fail to recognize "the importance of labor-market processes as a determinant of life opportunities" (Kailin, 2002, p. 52).

Some critics of Multicultural Education believe that the curriculum even serves to protect unjust democratic systems by creating a belief that issues of inequality are being addressed while ignoring the institutionalized impacts of racism and reaffirming white supremacy (Massey, 1991; Vincent, 1992).

> Democratically framed discourses [of racism] attribute racial stratification to cultural problems, the refusal of minorities to fit into Western society and other conventional explanations that seek to pathologize the oppressed. Through these formulations, democratic racism permits people to maintain racist beliefs and behaviours while appearing to hold a positive notion of democratic values. (Dei, 2007, p. 110)

By failing to examine the historical development of racism based on social, political and economic forces, Multicultural Education may actually serve to reinforce notions of superiority, albeit with more empathy or pity for those being oppressed.

Anti-Racist Education on the other hand, aims to deconstruct power and privilege, which is essential for the development of students from the dominant culture as thinking, caring, knowledgeable and ethical citizens (Dei, 1996). Robin Grinter specifically addresses the difference between Multicultural Education and Anti-Racist Education by explaining that:

> One is descriptive, the other analytical; one confirms the established structure, the other questions and seeks to change it; one looks for appreciation of other cultures, the other for criticism of one's own; one appeals primarily to the

> emotions, the other to the intellect; one emphasis the social and cultural aspects of life, the other economic and political. In terms of educational practice, similar distinctions apply: one is indirect, the other direct; one persuades, the other challenges; one is an extension of existing practice, the other, at least on the surface, a challenge to it (1985, p. 8)

British research professor Mike Cole affirmed the need for Anti-Racist Education over Multicultural Education by explaining that while Multicultural Education would be effective in a society in which racism was not as problematic as it is, and in which the teachers were more ethnically diverse and knowledgeable about that diversity, the strategy would fail to address the actual discriminatory conditions in present day America (2009). While there is evidence of success for Multicultural Education teaching strategies such as role playing (Morelli and Spencer, 2000), Anti-Racist Education has a documented history of success in decreasing racism in white students as evidenced by positive changes in student attitudes towards minority groups, a decrease in ethnocentrism, a reduction of authoritarian beliefs, an increase in the recognition that the world is not always just, and clearly identifiable characteristics of student empathy towards discriminated victims (Mansfield and Kehoe, 1994; Morelli and Spencer, 2000; Amanti, 2005; Kernahan and Davis, 2007; Hamako, 2014).

Karumanchery posits that Multicultural Education is not able to address the problematic issues of difference and diversity that students are exposed to in school curricula, but Anti-Racism Education on the other hand, offers an approach that can provide students with the ability to critically think, question and challenge stereotypes and prejudice that they might face in educational literature and curricula. Anti-racist education seeks to identify, challenge and name racism in literature or in curriculum and, through discussions, allow students to explore what racism can do to people (2005). “If

students can identify racism that surrounds them, are aware of racism's dangers, are encouraged to discuss what to do about it, are given the means to tackle the problem, they would learn the real essence of anti-racism" (Karumanchery, 2005, p. 49).

The primary conflict between multiculturalists and anti-racists educators is not in what they hope to accomplish in the classroom, but rather in terms of their vastly different social and political theories representing disparate racial, economic and political experiences (Arora, 2005). Troyna argues that antiracist education, "proceeds along a different trajectory to conventional multicultural education programmes insofar as it explicitly recognizes racism as the crucial determinant of the life chances" of members of oppressed groups (1984, p. 91). Fleras and Elliot (1992) also view Anti-Racist Education as being "situated squarely within the category of multicultural education" (p. 313) but with a specific focus on anti-racism. Sonia Nieto's conception of a multicultural education demonstrates its commonality in goals with Anti-Racist Education when she explains that the latter is simply more explicitly antiracist and activist oriented:

> To be anti-racist means to work affirmatively to combat racism. It means making anti-racism and anti-discrimination an explicit part of the [multicultural] curriculum and teaching young people skills in confronting racism. It also means that students must not be isolated, alienated, or punished for naming it when they see it. If developing productive and critical citizens for a democratic society is one of the important goals of public education, anti-racist behaviors are helping to meet that objective. (2000, p. 210)

Although Anti-Racist Education is designed for all students, this study focuses primarily on the ability to reach a class of mostly white non-Arab and non-Muslim students. The class also includes two black students and one Asian student who also have limited interaction with Arabs and Muslims, providing an opportunity to apply Anti-Racist Education to a more diverse group that includes members of other outgroups.

Research has demonstrated that teaching white students to stand for social justice for blacks can be accomplished by using the classroom to confront the dominant power networks and racist stereotypes that pervade society (Morelli and Spencer, 2000; May and Sleeter, 2010). I believe the Anti-Racist Education approach for a classroom of non-Arab and non-Muslim students provides an opportunity to provoke these adolescents, white, Asian and black, into thinking about and resisting the culturally-based racism that exists within their society today as well.

Criticism of Anti-Racist Education. Although research on Anti-Racist Education has demonstrated positive implications for addressing racism **(**Dei, 1996; Kehoe & Mansfield, 1994; Dei, 2007; Morelli and Spencer, 2000; Kernahan and Davis, 2007; May and Sleeter, 2010**),** there are some studies that call Anti-Racist Education into question. John Kehoe and Earl Mansfield's early research investigation of multiple Anti-Racist Education studies found that several Anti-Racist Education based units actually resulted in increased ethnocentrism and social distance, while showing only minimal reductions in prejudicial beliefs (1994). Their findings were similar in regard to Multicultural Education strategies, leading them to conclude that, "both approaches have had mixed effects and where positive effects do occur, the relationships are weak" (1993, p. 6). However, after careful consideration of the studies analyzed by Kehoe and Mansfield, I believe that their research provides frameworks to enhance Anti-Racist Education and Multicultural Education rather than evidence that they should be avoided altogether.

One of their two primary studies was a 1973 research project by James Black based on the idea that the existence of prejudice results from a "faulty cognitive process"

that leads to an "unhealthy semantic environment (p. 98). Using the Bogardus scale to measure attitudinal changes that occurred as a result of a sequence of Anti-Prejudice lessons, Black found that prejudice increased among students despite evidence that the teaching of semantics was "worthwhile as a method of reducing prejudice" (1973, p. 107). What is noteworthy about the Anti-Racist Education unit is the narrow focus of the five lessons, which included:

1. What is prejudice?
2. Prejudice in the world today
3. How we get our prejudices?
4. What prejudice does to us.
5. What can we do about it? (1998, p. 101)

Rather than focusing on providing a historical analysis of how and why prejudicial beliefs and discriminatory practices and policies became ingrained within society, or how individuals and groups from stereotyped groups were racialized, the study focused on how general semantics influenced the proliferation of prejudice alone. The inability to move beyond prejudice alone prevented the students from understanding power and privilege hierarchies that existed within their own society. Additionally, students were exposed to literary examples about people from stereotyped minority groups that suffered through various degrees of oppression, with no apparent examples of people from the group who were able to challenge and overcome the adversity. This strategy alone may reinforce a "helpless victim" mentality among students, explaining the deepening of prejudicial feelings. Further, students were not provided with opportunities to learn about the group's contributions to society or exposed to their cultural traditions and beliefs, a necessity of Multicultural Education and Anti-Racist Education strategies alike. The limitations of data collection, which included only the results of the Bogardus scale and

field notes by Black, also failed to examine fully what students were thinking and saying before, during and after the unit.

In the other major study analyzed by Kehoe and Mansfield, students examined and discussed cases of discrimination against a group that was commonly portrayed negatively in the news media. Rather than demonstrating feelings of shock, anger, or empathy for the group, students instead posited the idea of stopping immigration by members of the oppressed group as a solution to the problem (Kehoe and Mansfield, 1994). As in the previous study, students were not provided with a historical examination of how and why prejudice and discrimination developed, or an opportunity to learn about the group's culture, beliefs and positive contributions, let alone a critical analysis of the power structure that existed in their society.

More recent research on Anti-Racist Education has questioned the ability of the strategy to address racial inequality without simultaneously examining the intertwining and entangled relationships between sexism and racism" (Rezai-Rashti, 1999, p. 47; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2008), classism and racism (Britzman, 1995, 1998), as well as sexuality and racism (Kumashiro, 2001; Mohanty, 2003). Kevin Kumashiro also argues that even though Anti-Racist Education programs are important and needed, they often are not long-term solutions and do not address more firmly established social causes (2000). Additionally, "since whiteness is normalized through social and institutional practices that occur in daily interaction, in reality whites renouncing their whiteness is a clear form of white privilege" (Pinder, 2012, p. 3).

All of these studies affirm the need for well-developed and carefully implemented units that address the following student objectives, and thus allow for a complete analysis of Anti-Racist Education.

- Discuss past and present racism, stereotyping and discrimination in society (McGregor, 1990);
- Study the economic, structural and historical roots of inequality (Tator and Henry, 1991);
- Find examples of institutional racism in the school and society, and confront them (Thomas, 1984);
- Analyze unequal social and power relations (Thomas, 1984; Schick, 2010);
- Know the realities of racism and the human consequences of racism (Stanley, 1992);
- Change the social realities that racism appears to explain (Stanley, 1992); and
- Become aware of other cultures through the exchange of customs, beliefs and behaviors (Thompson, 1997).

The specific aims of an Anti-Racist Education strategy are often geared towards allowing white students to understand what racism is and recognize the evidence of it in their everyday lives (Van Ausdale and Feagin, 2001), while providing them with the knowledge, skills and willingness to counter it.

To accomplish this, Anti-Racist Education curricula must be designed to ensure that when information about other cultures and ethnic groups is included it is not over-simplified and does not develop stereotypical images of the people being studied. Teachers also need to give special attention to considering how the information

about people is being received and interpreted by students to ensure that current misconceptions are not simply being reinforced (Foster, 1990). The unit being studied here was designed to accomplish these goals by having carefully constructed teaching activities designed to provide students with a thorough understanding of the history, manifestation and implications of racist ideologies, as well as frequent written and verbal reflections to ensure that students were comprehending the material correctly.

Rationale for Implementation of Anti-Racist Education Strategy. The unit was originally conceived with the intent of teaching students about the realities of prejudice, discrimination and racism that exist in their society against Arabs and Muslims, as well as providing them with the tools to recognize and work towards undoing their own prejudices. Anti-Racist Education's focus on questioning the power and privilege system that exist in society, as well as the historical development of racism, make it the strategy most likely to accomplish those goals.

Need to Study Influence of Anti-Racist Education in Relation to Arabs & Muslims. Schools, through their policies, curricula, and lessons, play a fundamental part in the production of race as a social category, providing the process where racial ascriptions are developed and racial meanings and values are assigned (Trainor, 2008). School resources such as textbooks reflect this perspective in their tendency to reinforce common stereotypes and misconceptions about the Middle East while downplaying or glossing over the impact the United States has had in the region (Abu El-Haj, 2006).

A large majority of non-Arab, non-Muslim students live in segregated neighborhoods, attend schools with few to no Arab and Muslim students, and have no

regular, substantial contact with Arabs and Muslims (Lewis, 2004; Trainor, 2008). Most of those students complete high school and college without taking a single course in which different religious beliefs are discussed (Kassam, 2003; Nord, 1995). Even when Islam is discussed, it is almost always in World Religions courses that fail to address the experiences of Muslim Americans in the United States, which serves to only deepen the stereotypes held by other Americans (Cainkar, 2002). In addition, American students and teachers have minimal understanding of the history of the Middle East and the impact of U.S. foreign policy on the region, which is necessary to develop "students' capacities to be politically engaged in the struggle for global justice" (Abu El-Haj, 2006, p. 25). As a society, we can no longer deny and dismiss how our current educational system continues to breed oppression by not providing meaningful opportunities for non-Arab and non-Muslim students to learn the knowledge, perspective, and histories of Arabs and Muslims.

In order to begin the process of addressing these issues dealing with Arab and Muslim stereotypes, state agencies and school boards must re-evaluate their existing curriculum standards and school curricula. Well-developed Anti-Racist Education curricula in which Arabs and Muslims are accurately represented, and are effectively taught to students by properly trained teachers, may serve to decrease the misconceptions that non-Arab, non-Muslim students and teachers currently hold (Abu El-Haj, 2006), and thus lead to a reduction in prejudice. In order to address these misconceptions and build awareness of the injustices faced by Arab and Muslim Americans, Anti-Racist Education curriculum needs to include situations that allow for students to be actively involved in discussion and debate that forces them to question their own knowledge and experiences

(Barnes, 1976). It is key that the non-Arab and non-Muslim students are not simply exposed to their cultural differences (Trainor, 2008) or placed in role playing scenarios that stress those differences without teaching them to move beyond the preoccupation with individual prejudices and discriminatory actions common in Multicultural Education (Lee, 1998). Instead, the focus must be on the Anti-Racist Education strategy of examining how racist ideas and actions by individuals are manifestations of entrenched and institutionally supported societal bigotry. (Dei, 1996; May and Sleeter, 2010) Educating difference can only be taught successfully if it's done in a manner that allows students to acquire the awareness, knowledge and moral courage to work collectively for transformative change. George J. Sefa Dei explains that:

> It is simply not enough for an educator to teach, and for the students to learn, about other cultures and not engage in a project that unravels the power relations embedded in the construction of knowledge. The anti-racism educator must assist students to learn how the dominant culture systematically skews a critical understanding, acknowledgement and appreciation of marginalized groups in the school system." (1996, p. 37).

The need to address the misconceptions about Arab and Muslim Americans falls heavily on the public educational system in the United States. I believe that research into well-developed and effectively implemented teaching units using strategies such as Anti-Racism Education can begin this process. By analyzing past practices and research studies to develop and test new units, teachers can participate in a collaborative effort with academic experts to challenge this blight on our society.

How Attitudes & Beliefs are Developed

Adolescents in the United States who do not have personal interactions with Arab and Muslim peers will likely develop a negative perception of the group through exposure to Hollywood films, television shows, news media, and video games. Whether as an intentional attempt to sway opinion about the group or simply an attempt to entertain, the content of these media products has a significant influence on young people today. As long as these adolescents do not have the opportunity to be exposed to accurate representations of Arabs and Muslims and the discrimination they face in the United States, the influence of the media and entertainment industry will continue (Shaheen, 2001). This research study examined the influence that these diverse methods have had on student perceptions.

One of the critical goals of the unit is to make students aware of how they and others have been influenced by such media exposure, which is a necessity in Anti-Racist Education curricula. The study specifically sought to ascertain how student knowledge and attitudes developed prior to the implementation of the unit, as well as how exposure to other sources of information changed their knowledge and attitudes during the unit. The following section provides a summary of research on the impact of sources that students are commonly exposed to throughout their lives.

Impact of Textbooks. In her book, *A Consumer's Guide to High School History Textbooks*, Diane Ravitch explains that "textbooks have an overweening importance in American schools." (2004, p. 13) She cites a 2001 *National Assessment of Educational Progress* study which found that between 80 and 90 percent of students in grades 4th through 12th read from their textbooks in class daily or weekly (2004), and other research

has estimated that close to 90 percent of student content knowledge comes from the textbooks (Siler, 1990; Harison, 2002). Additionally, according to the Department of Education, the majority of teachers of history for grades 7-12 has neither a major nor minor in their subject area, making them reliant upon the textbook to fill in the gaps of their own knowledge (Ravitch, 2004; Stotsky, 2004). The result is that, for many teachers, the textbook has become the norm in U.S. education and predominant influence on both the course and the curriculum by providing the structure for content and teaching (Issitt, 2004; Ravitch, 2004; Foster, 1999).

The impact that textbooks have on student knowledge and perceptions has been difficult to assess due to variables such as what role the text plays in each individual course, the ability of students to critically assess what they read, and what is actually taught by teachers in their classrooms (Foster, 1999). However, research has shown that the value judgments of the authors and editors are often passed on to the students (Romanowski, 2003). It's been argued that these often highly politicized value judgments ingrained in sanctioned versions of America's past have shaped the thinking of the majority of adult Americans as a result (Romanowski, 2009; Giroux 1988). In other words, the impact of the overuse of value-laden textbooks in social studies instruction on student understanding is significant, and during a time when the United States has experienced increased incidents of hate crimes (Anderson, 2002) and negative stereotypes against Arab and Muslim Americans ("Same," 2010), the need to do more critical analysis of textbooks that dominate in U.S. history instruction is clear.

Prior to the events of 9/11, analysis of U.S. history textbooks provided clear evidence that Islam was virtually nonexistent, or worse, that textbook content on Islam

was based on prejudice and negative stereotypes when it was included. A study of American history and geography textbooks completed in the early 1990s by the Middle East Studies Association and the Middle East Outreach Council concluded that "the presentation of Islam is so problematic that it is perhaps time for educators at the college and university level to send a red alert to their colleagues at the pre-collegiate level. Crude errors and distortions abound" (quoted in Barlow, 1994, p. vii). Marvin Wingfield and Bushra Karaman noted that their research found some textbooks linking Islam to violence and intolerance, completely ignoring any commonalities the religion has with Christianity or Judaism (2007). When one considers that the deficiencies that abound in textbooks are reinforced in popular culture, it cannot be surprising that adolescents maintain those misconceptions into adulthood.

Impact of Hollywood Productions. Both media and film have presented "dangerous and one-dimensional images" of Arabs and Muslims that feed on existing stereotypes in the United States to cater to a willing audience. These depictions result in the continued "racializations" of Arab and Muslims (Akram & Johnson, 2004). In his study of Hollywood produced films, Jack Shaheen (2001) documents hundreds of popular movies that portray Arabs and Muslims negatively, often as violent invaders or ruthless terrorists bent on wanton destruction. Many of these movies are created for a target audience of adolescents, serving to transfer the stereotypes to each successive generation as most non-Arab and non-Muslim students have no exposure to more accurate information to challenge the degrading and distorted images. This has been going on for decades with films such as *Black Sunday* (1977), *The Black Stallion* (1979), and *Rules of*

Engagement (2000) during the oil crisis era, to post-9/11 films such as *Black Hawk Down* (2002) and *The Kingdom* (2007).

Impact of News Media. The news media has grown to be one of the largest industries in the world today, reaching its audience through television, radio, newspapers and web-based resources (Mitchell, 2015). It is nearly impossible to avoid exposure to the news media in the United States, and the result is that the industry has become the foundation for our knowledge and understanding of our society. In the process of establishing the knowledge base of society, it has been shown that the news media influences our beliefs by what they choose to present and how they choose to do so (Marsden & Savigny, 2009; Poole, 2002). Stereotypes that are portrayed in the media become accepted beliefs by many viewers, listeners and readers, including adolescents. When left unchallenged by other learning experiences and in many cases reinforced by learning experiences, these media based misconceptions continue to grow in prominence.

Regarding Arab and Muslim Americans specifically, Edward Said (1997) explains that the U.S. media represents violence as originating from Islam because that is what many non-Muslims consider to be the "basis" of Islam. Media coverage of Islam is a "one-sided activity" that downplays what the U.S. "does" and emphasizes instead what Muslims and Arabs "are" by nature (1997). Gary David and Kenneth Ayouby (2011) argue that Arabs and Muslims face what they term as "tacit prosecution" in the court of public opinion, as representatives of the groups are rarely seen in the news media in the context of positive events. Instead, by being invited to "weigh in" after a violent act, a type of "guilty by association" image for Arabs and Muslims develops in which these

representatives must distance their group from the actions of others, prove that the allegations are false, or simply plead "guilty" to the link between their culture and the violent act (2011). Audiences in the United States are constantly exposed to images of Muslims as militant, undemocratic, violent, fanatical, fundamentalists terrorists and sexists (Dunn, 2001, Abu El-Haj, 2006), while the religion of Islam overall is often significantly distorted both in the news media and entertainment industry (Chu, 2013). The repeated and constant coverage of Muslims as violent terrorists in the media results in the belief that all Muslims are terrorists (Severin & Tankar, 1997).

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the news media did respond to the rash of hate crimes against Arab and Muslim Americans, as well as people who were mistakenly identified as such, by denouncing the actions. While arguing for tolerance "through the condemnation of hate crimes," the media still remained silent "on the federal government's targeting of Arab, South Asian, and Muslim immigrants" (Naber, 2008, p. 2). This tacit reinforcement by the news media of government policies that subjected Arab and Muslim Americans to human rights violations occurred as a result of what the news media chose to present, in this case, acts of violence carried out by individuals are wrong, but those actions that dehumanize a group carried out by the government are justified.

Impact of Video Games. Teens today have grown up in a society where video gaming has become one of the leading forms of entertainment. A 2008 Pew survey found that 97% of teenagers play video games regularly, and over 50% of players under the age of 18 play violent games rated as "Mature" or "Adult Only" (Lenhart, et al., 2008). These video games often incorporate stereotypes about racial, ethnic, gender and

religious characteristics. Stereotypes portrayed in video games have been shown to foster negative and hostile perceptions and attitudes towards the stereotyped group, especially when the group is presented in the role of terrorists (Saleem & Anderson, 2013; Saleem, 2012). Even in terrorism themed games in which the "bad" people are not portrayed as Arab or Muslim, gamers still developed higher anti-Arab perceptions, demonstrating a substantial associative link between Arabs and terrorists that already exists within the United States (Saleem & Anderson, 2013; Saleem, 2012). To many adolescents, simply being an Arab character in a video game has become synonymous with being a terrorist (Dill et al., 2005). Adolescents who have little to no direct interaction with Arab and Muslim people, such as the students in this research study, are thus more prone to accept the stereotypical images displayed in these games. These images must be challenged in schools if society hopes to provide future generations with the ability to live in a diverse and safe society, where civil liberties are protected for everyone. This study aims to examine the potential of an Anti-Racist Education strategy to do just that.

Prejudice Reduction

The overall goal of the Anti-Racist Education unit examined in this study was to reduce prejudice among students, allowing them to become less prone to accept inaccurate knowledge that they are exposed to in their daily lives, or develop negative attitudes about Arabs and Muslims. The following section provides a review of research on various strategies and challenges for prejudice reduction, including research that was completed after the teaching unit was implemented and the data demonstrated that the unit focused much more heavily on addressing cognitive racism and not enough on the emotionally rooted beliefs.

Prejudice reduction refers to a variety of strategies designed to break down destructive stereotypes ("Prejudice," 2014). Prejudice is defined as a negative attitude toward a social group (Newcomb, 1965; Secord & Backman, 1964) in which attitudes are usually rigid, irrational, overgeneralized, and unjust (Allport, 1954; Simpson & Yinger, 1958). Although attitudes were initially defined as including cognitions, affect, and behavioral predispositions (Secord & Backman, 1964), psychologists came to place the greatest emphasis on the evaluative or affective dimension of attitudes (Duckitt, 1992; Olson & Zanna, 1993; Stephan et al., 1999; Hoyt, 2012). In the case of prejudicial attitudes, the focus on evaluation is appropriate because it is the "negative evaluation of outgroups that is the essential feature of prejudice" (Stephan, 1999. p. 24).

Prejudice and Racism Reduction Challenges. Research on how to reduce prejudice and racism has shown that "the correction of misinformation and the provision of accurate information is a necessary but not sufficient component" of the process (Lynch, 1987, p. 28). Educators must understand racist discourse as a "series of 'emotioned' beliefs" that are not necessarily about race in and of itself, as the beliefs of students are ingrained in part through the social norms of their society. They then draw from those beliefs when they are confronted with issues of race, often demonstrating prejudicial and discriminatory characteristics (Trainor, 2008).

Perceptions of social norms regarding the appropriate treatment of an oppressed group are more powerful predictors of behavior than an individual's actual attitude toward that group (Blanchard, et al. 1994; Paluck, 2009). To change intergroup relations therefore, the critical focus is not what one individual personally thinks or feels about members of another group, but rather what he or she perceives other members of his or

her group thinks or feels about members of another group (Dovidio, et al., 2003; Dixon et al., 2012). Hence, the social norms are one of the important psychological challenges that educators must address as part of any effort to reform racist behavior (Latane, 1981) because they characterize the standards of behavior for a group, not just for the individual (Paluck & Shepherd, 2012).

To affect change in student attitudes about racism, educators must also focus on student emotions that are constructed by and in response to the daily institutional and social practices. Guiding white students toward antiracism requires more than rational, evidence-based arguments about injustices or white privilege, or exposure to oppressed groups in classroom texts (Trainor, 2008, p. 26). As Raj Beekie explains:

> Awareness is the first step, but to undo racism we have to unravel that which has been deliberately woven into the fabric of American culture, the fabric we all wear. To accomplish change, it is imperative that a long, deep, inward journey be taken. It would be naive to assume the issue of racism will go away with only awareness (2012).

Racism, he contends, is emotional in nature. It is not based on rational thought or logic. Accordingly, racial awareness programs that are designed to reduce racism using only logical argument will only have limited effect (Beekie, 2012).

Many studies have demonstrated that in order for members of a dominant group to become advocates of anti-racism, they must first understand oppression cognitively and emotionally (Tatum, 1992; Rose, 1996; Srivastava, 2005; Denevi & Pastan, 2006; Trainor, 2008; Beekie, 2012). Lillian Roybal Rose argues that efforts to bring Whites on board to fight racism cannot be accomplished “until racism/White privilege is a felt experience, meaning that Whites connect in their bodies with the pain and feel the sting of discrimination as a cost of racism to them (1996, p. 40).

Beverly Tatum also contends that to effect change in student perceptions of race and racism, teachers must address not just the cognitive, but the emotional responses that inevitably emerge in a classroom addressing race-related issues. Those emotional responses, which include anger, guilt, shame or embarrassment, "can result in student resistance to oppression-related content areas" (1992, p. 2). Srivastava found that the emotional resistance develops in people as an attempt "to maintain an ethical, innocent, and non-racist face" (2005, p. 41). Tatum further explains that this resistance can stem from three sources: (1) the discussion of race is considered a "taboo topic," particularly in racially diverse environments; (2) many students have been socialized to believe that they live in a meritocratic and just society; and (3) students initially deny having any prejudice of their own and fail to acknowledge how racism impacts their own lives even though they recognize its impact on the lives of others (1992).

An additional challenge that many educators face when attempting to apply an Anti-Racist Education strategy is the inability to apply the curriculum across an extended period of time and content areas. Several psychological studies have concluded that short-term learning experiences are most likely to result in short-lived and low-level reductions in prejudice and racism (Katz, 1978; Epstein, 1994; Lynch, 1987; Smith & DeCoster, 2000; Strack & Deutsch, 2004; Devine et al., 2012). According to these theories:

> Implicit and explicit processes are supported by the fundamentally different psychological systems. Although the explicit system can change quickly and is relatively context-independent, the implicit system is highly contextual and only changes in an enduring way after considerable time, effort, and /or intensity of experience. Thus, because one-shot interventions must counteract a large accretion of associative learning, they are unlikely to produce enduring change in the implicit system. Such change is likely only after the application of

considerable goal-directed effort over time." (Devine et al., 2012, p. 1268) Katz concluded that intervention must not only be "long-term," but must also be "integrated in to the continuous process of the school" (1978, 34).

However, while more systematic, long-term and multifaceted approaches to teaching about inequalities are most desirable and effective, in situations where individual teachers are not afforded the time, resources or support to implement anti-racist strategies at that level, teachers acting on their own can successfully bring about what Geneva Gay calls "micro-level changes" that have important consequences on students (2000, p. 202). Additionally, in classrooms where students have become accustomed to an environment in which open-mindedness on controversial topics has been valued and encouraged, such as the one in which this study occurred, students are able to more quickly and effectively transfer the mindset necessary to benefit from an anti-racist curriculum (Stenhouse et al., 1983).

Prejudice and Racism Reduction Strategies. Various strategies developed with the purpose of reducing prejudice and racism among students have been studied extensively, with no clear decision on which ones are most effective. However, research has demonstrated the potential for several methods that are worth further examination, including the need to provide students with the proper classroom environment. Tatum calls for the creation of a safe classroom by establishing clear guidelines for discussions, as well as opportunities for student self-generated knowledge, in order to reduce student resistance and promote student development. This process can begin, she argues, by informing students at the start of a course or unit that feelings of guilt, shame, anger or

embarrassment are an expected part of the learning process when prejudice reduction is the goal, thereby normalizing students' experiences (1992).

One of the primary underlying causes of prejudice is a lack of accurate knowledge about members of other groups, and the majority of educational programs that are developed to reduce prejudice among students are based on this assumption. As noted by Stephan (1999), there has been considerable support for the premise that reducing ignorance about other groups has had some success in reducing prejudice (McGregor, 1993; Stephan & Stephan, 1984). McGregor's meta-analysis of 26 studies found that a majority of the programs based on reducing ignorance resulted in some level of success (1990). More recently, Henry and Hardin (2006) concluded that by correcting misinformation and "increasing proportions of situations that call out positive associations" about "low-status groups," students were able to demonstrate reduced levels of prejudice (867).

Anti-Racist Education advocates "racial awareness training" as a strategy for reducing prejudice. Patricia Bidol, who trained educators in racial awareness in the 1970s, argued that "all whites are racists in the USA" by simply being born into the system that grants benefits to "every white baby." She explains that:

> As whites in a racist society we have only two behaviors to choose from vis-à-vis the issue of racism. We can choose to be racist/racists-those who recognize the benefits accrued through being white and either consciously or subconsciously support institutional and cultural practices that perpetuate racism. Or we can choose to be anti-racist/racists-those who recognize the institutionally and culturally racist benefits even while still receiving them. There really is no place in between (1971, p.8).

Her strategies focus on the cognitive aspect of racism by helping people look inward to examine their own attitudes and understanding of prejudice and discrimination. By

making people confront their own racism and the racist system in which they live, "race awareness" advocates believe subjects will be propelled to action (Bidol, 1971; Katz, 1978).

While Bidol's and Katz's research demonstrates evidence that the call to action was successful for some people, others have expressed concern that this strategy can lead to depression, hopelessness, anger or guilt. In addition to the concern that "race awareness" techniques may result in negative reactions by some as they begin to view themselves as the "victims" of racism, critics have also noted that the strategy only focuses on the individual consciousness while the system that continues to foster and reproduce such a consciousness is left unchallenged (Sivanandan, 1985).

Julie Kailin recognizes the concerns of Sivanandan and others (Sheets, 2000) but argues that to undo prejudice, race awareness is just the first step in Anti-Racist Education for addressing the cognitive aspect of racism (2002). Multicultural approaches all too often implicitly teach or support assumptions about the rights that whites have, usually at the expense of minorities. Kailin argues that by adhering to what she refers to as "whiteness theory," Anti-Racist Education can lay the foundation for changes in student attitudes about racism.

> Because the research focus in fields like education and anthropology has traditionally been on an examination of the 'other,' as the dominant white culture sees it, whiteness theory focuses on making white culture assumptions and privileges visible so that whites do not assume that their own position is neutral or "normal" (2002, p. 61).

An examination of the social construction of whiteness is necessary for Anti-Racist Education to be successful because it "problematizes the identity of those who historically have been writing about, analyzing, and dominating" society (Kailin, p.

62). The challenge of implementing a pedagogy of whiteness that induces whites to "listen, learn, and change" according to Joe Kincheloe, is a delicate procedure because it needs to find a balance between a sober critique of whiteness and the existing "white Power" without demonizing white people (2005). However, if done successfully, allowing students to perceive the suffering of others as if it were their own creates a condition in which it is more difficult to maintain negative prejudices and attitudes towards other groups (McGregor, 1993).

When exposing white students through racial awareness and whiteness theory, the emotional reactions of anger, guilt and depression, as well as a sense of defensiveness, are not to be ignored, but they also should not be perceived as a failure. Those reactions are to be expected by students and, as part of the process of becoming proponents of social change, are often necessary. It is important however, that when confronted with the realization that they benefit from a racist system, white students are given the ability to "find their voice" so as to express their feelings and seek answers to their questions (Dei, 1996). To assist students through this challenging process, Tatum advocates for "an appropriate developmental model that students can use as a framework for understanding their own processes" (1992, p. 18).

Leeno Karumanchery explains that in addition to being able to "express themselves" students must learn to listen, learn, and change. If done properly, Karumanchery contends that when "students come to see themselves through the eyes of racially marginalized peoples, they will find themselves more able to move away from the conservative constructions of the dominant culture, and towards spaces where alternative knowledges and ways of knowing the world can be engaged" (2005, p. 158).

Another key finding in the research on prejudice reduction suggests that the erosion of stereotypes within individuals can occur by removing the perceived social backing of a commonly held false assumption.

> If racial stereotypes persist in large part because people assume that stereotypic beliefs are consensually shared by others, and if they routinely overestimate the negative stereotypes held by others, then the potential for undermining negative stereotypes through the presentation of consensus feedback is promising indeed. It appears that withdrawing the social backing from an idea, in this case a social stereotype, goes a long way toward undermining the power of that idea over an individual thinker. (Stangor, Sechrist & Jost, 2001, p. 494).

Once people begin to realize that those around them no longer accept misguided prejudices, they begin to question their own beliefs as well. By providing non-Arab and non-Muslim students with the opportunity to challenge and dismiss prejudicial ideas with their peers, the likelihood of successful attitudinal changes may increase as students begin to realize that the stereotypes that form the foundation of racism are not as commonly accepted as they believed.

Although originally developed as a strategy to primarily address issues of black versus white, the emphasis of Anti-Racist Education has now developed into addressing cultural racism, where race as the key characteristic has evolved into the more far-reaching meaning of ‘cultural differences’ (Rattansi, 1992; Short and Carrington, 1999). This “new racism” attributes inabilities and perceived inferiorities to individuals’ immutable cultural traits much in the same manner of biologically-based racism, presenting minority racial/ethnic groups as the external cultural “other” that threatens the nation’s identity, unity and security (May, 1999). Avtar Brah describes how the concept of ethnicism develops into cultural racism, which:

> Defines the experience of racialized groups primarily in 'culturalist' terms that is, it Posits 'ethnic difference' as the primary modality around which social life is constituted and experienced…. This means that a group identified as culturally different is assumed to be internally homogeneous…. ethnicist discourses seek to impose stereotypic notions of common cultural need upon heterogeneous groups with diverse social aspirations and interests" (quoted in May, 1999, p. 12).

I argue that Arabs and Muslims are imagined through this lens of cultural racism both in the United States and throughout the world.

Although there is considerable research that delves into the racial awareness, attitudes and self-identification of students (Milner, 1983; Phinney & Rotheram, 1987), studies of how intergroup attitudes can be modified are still relatively few in comparison (Banks, 1997). Among those recently emerging studies however, Rebecca Bigler found that role modeling (a process of modeling proactive responses to bias, prejudice and discrimination), counter-stereotyping (presenting members of minority groups in ways that go counter to existing stereotypes as a strategy to reduce prejudice), curricular transformation (the process of studying emerging scholarship on diversity issues in education and incorporating the findings into curricular changes), and multicultural lesson planning, often led only to short term and non-significant changes (1999). Her study concluded that continued research was required to discover what conditions were common among strategies that result in more significant and long lasting results. It is hoped that this study will add to this discourse and provide evidence about the potential for Anti-Racist Education strategies that have been effective in reducing racism against blacks to achieve comparable results when addressing racism against Arabs and Muslims. These include the incorporation of Arab and Muslim guest speakers, narratives about young Arab and Muslim Americans, discussions about institutionalized racism that

challenge students' attitudes, and a series of student reflection activities designed to examine student empathy.

In another study, it was found that providing subjects with accurate knowledge about a stereotyped group prior to an expected interaction with members of that group decreases anxiety and makes the subjects more open to attitudinal changes about the stereotyped group (Aydogan and Gonsalkorale, 2015). The Anti-Racist Education unit was designed to first provide students with accurate information about the religion of Islam through the book, *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook*, as well as class discussions, and then to provide them with an opportunity to interact with Ms. Ahmad and later, Mr. Bayoumi.

Other studies concluded that programs which included role playing activities were effective (Stephan and Stephan, 1984). Additionally, strategies that provide students with the tools to respond informally to discriminatory comments and jokes that occur in their everyday interactions have proven to have value in reducing prejudice and racism (Stephan, 1999). Devine et al. (2012) came to similar conclusions, arguing that students must be aware of when they are likely to exhibit biased responses themselves and, more importantly, how they "can replace those biased responses with responses more consistent with their goals" (1268; see also Johnson, et al., 2013).

Contact Hypothesis. Research has demonstrated that prejudice-reduction strategies that take an intergroup approach, which rests on the idea that the perceptions and behaviors of people tend to favor their own group over other groups, have demonstrated varying levels of success. One such strategy developed via the intergroup approach, the contact hypothesis, relies on direct contact with members of the stereotyped

group under controlled circumstances (Allport, 1954). As noted by Zorwick et al. (2009), research on the effectiveness of the contact hypothesis has examined this prejudice-reduction strategy as it was applied to many different groups, including the prejudice of: Whites toward Blacks in the United States (Henry & Hardin, 2006; Brown et al., 2003), Hispanics towards Whites and Blacks in the United States (Carlson et al., 2003), Whites in the United States toward minority-language groups (Wright & Bougie, 2007), Americans toward foreigners in the United States (Stohl, 1985), non-disabled children toward the disabled (Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Cameron et al., 2007), and college students toward the elderly (Tam et al., 2006). While some of those studies concluded that there were concerns with the strategy, most found that the incorporation of intergroup contact in controlled circumstances did result in varying levels of prejudice reduction by students.

Intergroup contact has the potential to expose students to the nature of social categories and the consequences of categorization (Stephan, 1999). A natural part of social information processing, which is the theory of how people establish relationships with the rest of society, the mere act of categorizing people into ingroup and outgroup members can result in prejudice and discrimination (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). People commonly categorize others in terms of easily identifiable attributes that are readily available in social interaction scenarios, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, disabilities, and social class (Stangor et al., 1992). Students often rely on these categories because they facilitate interaction with members of the outgroup by "providing expectancies concerning the values, norms, and behavior of others (Stephan, 1999. p. 82). By making these distinctions between groups, the idea that the outgroup is more

uniform than the ingroup is reinforced among students, leading to an exaggeration of the differences between the two groups (Linville, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). By applying the contact hypothesis strategy, educators can help students see outgroup members as individuals (Stephan, 1999). Additionally, if direct contact in a controlled setting cannot be arranged, studies have found that success can still be achieved by providing ingroup members with information about multiple outgroup members who behave in diverse ways across a variety of situations (Crocker et al., 1983; Johnston & Hewstone, 1992; Rothbart & John, 1985). The unit under examination for this study, in addition to providing students with direct contact with Arab and Muslim Americans, also provided opportunities for students to learn about Arab and Muslim Americans through readings and documentaries.

A recent 2014 study concluded that the controlled circumstances include classrooms, and that "promising prejudice reduction efforts by schools seem to be those that use pupils' own concrete practices of resistance and intercultural exchange to build inclusive...communities" (Andreouli et al., 2014). Pettigrew and Tropp's (2008) meta-analysis found that controlled contact decreased prejudice in 481 of 515 (94%) studies reviewed. Dixon et al., concluded that this effect was primarily explained by "decreases in intergroup anxiety and increases in intergroup empathy, as well as improvements in participants' knowledge about members of other groups" (2012, p. 420).

A 2015 study examined the effectiveness of an assignment for an introductory psychology course developed around intergroup contact for high school students. The assignment examined racist attitudes toward Muslims, African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. The students interviewed members from the racial groups and wrote

autobiographical memoirs of their lives. Additionally, students completed attitude surveys during the first and last weeks of a 15-week semester as well as one year later. The researchers found that the class showed "significant reductions in prejudice toward racial groups across the semester and improvements remained 1 year later," and they demonstrated acknowledgement of white privilege in the process (Nordstrom).

There are, however, some who question the ability of the contact hypothesis to noticeably decrease prejudice in intolerant or prejudice-prone individuals. They argue that intergroup contact benefits among people generally may conceal the failure of the same interventions among more intolerant people. (Dixon et al., 2010). Gordon Hodson's examination of contemporary evidence led him to a different conclusion. He found that the contact hypothesis is still among the most effective strategies for prejudice reduction overall, and that intergroup contact has proven to be the most successful tool when working with intolerant and cognitively rigid persons by reducing perceived threats and anxiety, and increasing empathy, trust, and out-group closeness (2011). Other studies have also reported that intolerant people with little or poor contact expressed heightened prejudice, but similarly intolerant people experiencing contact or friendships expressed significantly less bias (Hodson et al., 2013; Dhont & Van Hiel, 2009; Hodson, 2008; Hodson et al., 2009; Pettigrew, 2008).

Further concerns about intergroup interactions with intolerant people have focused on overtly orchestrated contact situations that are perceived as attempts to coerce changes in values and beliefs. These direct manipulations can fall flat (Altemeyer, 1998) or even backfire (Avery & Others, 1992; Esses et al., 2001) when applied to people with higher levels of intolerance. The ability of intergroup contact to succeed rest in its ability

to reduce anxiety, tension, perceived threats, and social distance between groups (Hodson & Hewstone, 2013). Educators overtly manipulating contact between groups must be cognizant of these processes to avoid inadvertently exacerbating intergroup conflict and hostility .

Student Characteristics That Increase Likelihood of Success in Prejudice Reduction. The motivation to break the prejudice mindset by exerting efforts to eliminate them exist once students become aware of and acknowledge their biases, and when they become concerned about the consequences of their biases on others (Devine et al, 2012; Devine & Monteith, 1993; Plant & Devine, 2009). Evidence also suggest that if students believe they have acted with bias, and they have values that are opposed to prejudice, they are "motivated to inhibit the expression of implicit bias by seeking out information and putting effort into tasks they believe would help them break the prejudice habit" (Amodio et al, 2007; Monteith, 1993).

Additionally, research has found that specific characteristics of individuals can increase the likelihood that they will exhibit positive, long-term changes in attitudes and actively exert efforts to eliminate their own prejudice. The demographic characteristics that lend one to be more likely to exhibit positive change include being young, better educated and a member of a higher social class (Williams, 1964). Personality traits include having higher self-esteem, competence in task-relevant skills, and interestingly, authoritarianism tendencies, which denotes a person that responds well to strong, direct leadership and guidance (Blanchard & Cook, 1976; Cohen & Roper, 1972; Stephan & Rosenfield, 1978; Weigel & Howes, 1985; Stephan, 1999). These factors, although out of the control of teachers, do suggest that strategies to reduce prejudice and racism are

likely to demonstrate more success with some student populations that others (Stephan, 1999), and provide theories as to why students in the same class may display vastly different attitudinal changes.

Measuring Racism and Prejudice. A variety of methods have been used to measure racial prejudice, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Roy (2006) provides the following overviews of the strengths and weaknesses of the most common methods:

1. Paper-and-Pencil: the most common method, but easily influenced by an individual's need for social desirability;
2. Qualitative Interviews: provide a more in-depth look at the reasoning behind racial attitudes, but can also be influenced by the need for social desirability and are time sensitive;
3. Reaction Times: usually used after "priming" subjects, can provide more objective data but may not be sensitive enough to measure racial prejudice on an individual level;
4. Rating Scales: a variety of scales have been developed to measure the degree to which a subject's views are racially prejudiced compared with the views of other people from similar backgrounds; the scales seem to allow people who are more subtle in their racism to intentionally hide their attitudes in a desire to be socially desirable in their responses.[3]

[3] Some examples of common rating scales include: Modern Racism Scale; Pro-Black and Anti-Black Scales; Diversity and Discrimination Scales; Subtle and Blatant Prejudice Scales

One primary concern with self-report measurements of prejudice has been that subjects can vary their responses by recognizing the purpose of the content for the items on the scale and make a decision whether to provide a response that is accurately reflective of their attitudes, or one that represents a deliberately managed response to present themselves in a favorable light (Crosby et al., 1980). People being interviewed are also often tentative when making racially based statements and may be motivated to control their prejudiced responses because they are voicing their statements to a researcher who they feel may be judging their views (Roy, 2006; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004; Dunton & Fazio, 1997). This suggests that self-report measures of prejudice are inherently limited and that validity may be compromised (Sniderman & Tetlock, 1986).

Although the quantitative tradition of attitude research has been criticized for underestimating the centrality of contradiction and attitudinal variation in social life (Roy, 2006), Durrheim & Dixon argue that if researchers really want to know how people think about race and racism, they need to discuss their views with them. By doing so, qualifying statements that denote contradictions between stated attitudes and further explanations about their views can be obtained. Survey formats of data collection, if used without discussions, interviews or focus groups, will not provide those types of statements (2004).

Erik Bleich concluded that to measure Islamophobia specifically, “the best noncausal indicators are direct survey, focus-group, or interview data (2011, p. 1589). He further explained that “the ideal measures involve carefully tailored questions or experiments through which respondents accurately reveal the extent of their

indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims" (1589). The current study incorporates all three of these approaches for data collection.

Summary of Literature Review

As the issues facing Arabs and Muslims go unexamined in a majority of race and ethnicity research, most non-Arab and non-Muslim Americans still believe that the two terms are synonymous. Lessons learned about the cultural creation of racial stereotypes dealing with blacks have been ignored or forgotten as new stereotypes dominate perceptions of Arabs and Muslims today, despite evidence that a majority of Arab and Muslim Americans want nothing more than to be patriotic and accepted members of this society. As these racial stereotypes are reinforced in textbooks, popular films and television shows, the news media, and video games, little is done within the educational system to challenge student misconceptions. Within the United States, Arabs and Muslims have become prime targets of prejudice and discrimination as the existence and influence of Islamophobia continues to grow. The U.S. government has effectively utilized their racialization to justify anti-Arab and anti-Muslims agendas both domestic and abroad.

The deep-seated racism against Arabs and Muslims today has demonstrated the ineffectiveness of multicultural education in contributing to long-term and significant changes in prejudice and discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans. On the other hand, Anti-Racist Education strategies reliant on prejudice reduction strategies such as the contact hypothesis have been shown to have the potential to bring about meaningful improvements in teaching white students not only why black stereotypes

developed, but also how those stereotypes lead to oppression and injustices for blacks, and advantages for themselves. We are now in need of more research to assess the potential of Anti-Racist Education strategies to improve non-Arab and non-Muslim students' perceptions of Arab and Muslim Americans.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Rationale for Research Method

Qualitative research is effective at allowing researchers to understand and explain participant meaning (Morrow, 2007). Such research methods incorporate a complex, holistic perspective by analyzing written and spoken words, human interactions, and non-verbal communications in a natural setting (Creswell, 2000). For this study, a qualitative methodology using practitioner action research was appropriate in permitting the researcher to examine the influence of an Anti-Racist Education teaching unit on a group of students in their natural classroom environment.

Qualitative Research Method. Specifically, Morrow, Rakhsha & Castaneda argue that qualitative research in general has been shown to provide an excellent strategy for conducting research concerning multicultural issues because an essential part of the research is based on context, while allowing the researcher to comprehend the meanings made by the participants and their experiences (2001, p. 582).

Qualitative Practitioner Action Research. This study specifically utilized a qualitative practitioner action research design. Action research studies involve practitioners investigating and evaluating their own work with the purpose of giving them the capacity to change their practice (McNiff and Whitehead, 2000; Winter & Munn-Giddings, 2001; Taylor et al., 2006). This design strategy has been described as a "powerful tool for change and improvement at a local level" (Cohen et al., 2007, p 297) that provides an opportunity to challenge a taken-for-granted situation (Denscombe, 2003). As Gerald Pine explained, this process allows a researcher to become a

questioner of educational practices and curriculum rather than just a deliverer (2009). Practitioner action research provides the opportunity for critical and constructive self-reflection (Winter & Munn-Giddings, 2001) based on a cycle of planning, action, observation, reflection and re-planning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). The importance of action research in the classroom rests on its ability to bring about curriculum and instructional methodology changes that are developed using research-based evidence.

Research has shown that "classrooms that become laboratories are better classrooms" (McBee, 2004, p.157) because research is often not applied effectively if it is perceived by teachers as a decree that is imposed on educators by researchers who may be viewed as being unaware of the realities of teaching (Johnson, 2005; O'Connor et al, 2013). Traditionally, the role of research in education for teachers has been "that of a consumer of someone else's research results" or as "the object" of what is being researched, rather than that of an active leader in the research design and data collection process (Johnson & Button, 2000, p. 108). However, action research challenges that idea and provides teachers with the opportunity to take ownership of their teaching by recognizing a classroom or instructional issue, designing and executing a study, tracking and reflecting on data and results, and instituting effective change. The action research progression is an interactive rather than a passive process, as teacher-researchers are the active constructors of knowledge (Abdul-Haqq, 1995; Miller & Pine, 1990; Williamson, 1992).

Selected research studies demonstrate that action research can be a catalyst for change in teaching, specifically in pedagogy, teacher thought patterns and teacher confidence, leading to professional growth and improvement (Johnson & Button, 2000;

Ross et al, 1999; Sax & Fisher, 2001). The action research process therefore, allows teachers to not only gain insights about students and colleagues, but also about themselves as they seek ways to continually improve their own practice (Ferrance, 2000).

The use of an action research strategy for this study also allowed for more of a holistic approach to analyzing how students identified their own misconceptions and the injustices that exist within their own society rather than a single method for collecting and analyzing data. Although I began with a clearly defined teaching unit and plan for my research, action research provided the flexibility for me to change or adapt my methodology based on formative assessments, personal observations and student inquiries. Additionally, it allowed for the use of a variety of data collection tools throughout the project. These diverse methods, which are common to qualitative research, include keeping a daily research journal, documenting data collection and analysis, participant observation recordings, focus groups, and written and verbal statements, both prompted and unprompted.

This study in particular was designed to provide me with an opportunity to assess the influence of Anti-Racist Education strategies rather than Multicultural Education strategies on how my students understood and responded to issues of prejudice and discrimination in their society. The study employed the practitioner action research strategy to examine how students developed their knowledge and attitudes about Arab and Muslim Americans and the potential effects that an Anti-Racist Education unit on Arab and Muslim Americans in post-9/11 America may have had on changing those attitudes. Rather than describing an existing set of circumstances, this study attempted to

work towards change in my own teaching practices to better serve the needs of my students. By collecting varied forms of evidence throughout the unit, I hoped the study would allow me to recognize any patterns of change in attitudes and how students seemed to react to those changes. Additionally, I will implement the results of this study as a tool to initiate discussion on the potential influence of Anti-Racist Education on an often marginalized or altogether ignored minority group in Anti-Racist Education research. If successful, this knowledge could then be used to further refine the unit for future use as well as provide evidence to support calls for the incorporation of teaching methodologies that go beyond celebrating or tolerating difference and instead bring about recognition of social injustices in society and the need to challenge them.

Winter and Munn-Giddings argue that the emphasis on the term "practitioner" identifies the researcher at the center of the research at the expense of other critical stakeholders such as the students (2001). In this study however, the label is appropriate in that I am examining a unit designed and implemented by me based on research into Anti-Racist Education strategies. Practitioner Action Research provided me with the capacity to change my own teaching (Lacey, 2011) based on my own observations and analysis of how educational theories can be put into practice for my particular student population of middle to upper class non-Arab and non-Muslim students with little exposure to Arabs and Muslims. I was able to reflect on and refine the unit while simultaneously assessing through student feedback which Anti-Racist Education techniques appeared to be most effective. This information will be shared with other teaching professionals with the intent of generating discussion of how the education

system can best address issues of social injustice against Arabs and Muslims in our society.

The research design and methods for this proposal were derived partially from the results of a preliminary study conducted during the spring semester of 2013 in order to field test the unit and a variety of data collection techniques. Specifically, the use of focus groups provided evidence of student self-awareness about how their misconceptions developed as well as some patterns of change in student knowledge and attitudes about Arab and Muslim Americans. The results of that study demonstrated the overall feasibility of the design with modifications, the feasibility of other qualitative data collection methods, and the identification of specific points for improving the Anti-Racist Education unit plan.

Sample

The regional high school in which the study took place, which has a student population of just over 3,100 pupils, is located in central New Jersey. According to the narrative from the school report card from the New Jersey Department of Education, Highlands High School is a comprehensive, 4-year, public high school, in a regional school district that serves several municipalities in central New Jersey. The average class size was 21.0, the student to faculty ratio was 13 to 1, and the student to computer ratio was 1.6 to 1 (NJDOE, 2014).

The district is comprised of five local municipalities ranging from suburban to rural, and is located within 90 minutes of two major metropolitan areas. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, the county in which the school is located is the 4th wealthiest in the nation (American, 2015).

For the purposes of this study, the student sample was limited to the students enrolled in the specific course in which the teaching unit was being employed. The entire class consisted of 43 sophomores aged 15 to 16 enrolled in an interdisciplinary full year Humanities course that met for 80 minutes each school day. The class was comprised of 19 females, 24 males, including one transgender student who identified as male. Forty of the students were white, two were black, one was Asian, and none were Arab or Muslim in ethnicity or religious affiliation, although one had Arab-Muslim grandparents on his father's side.

All students were invited to participate in the study with both their own consent and the consent of their parents. One student chose not to participate and one student that did choose to participate was removed from the study as a result of a medical issue that resulted in her missing over 80% of the class days in which the unit was taught. As a result, 41 of the 43 students took part. Each participating student chose or was assigned a pseudonym and completed a pre-unit survey at the start of the study. The student that chose not to participate in the study completed all of the same lessons and activities as the participants, but no data from that student was collected or analyzed as part of the project. The student that did not participate due to the medical condition completed an abbreviated unit due to time constraints and home instruction limitations, and no data was collected from that individual.

After analyzing the data collected for the study, several students were selected for detailed analysis in comparison with the rest of the class for selected research questions in Chapter 4. The students selected were chosen to provide examples of subjects with diverse backgrounds or reactions to various Anti-Racist Education teaching

strategies. Background information is provided for each student the first time they are included for this analysis. Analysis of these specific students is located at the end of each section and segregated from the overall analysis through the use of inset boxes.

Data Collection

A variety of data collection tools were employed throughout the unit including pre- and post-unit surveys, individual student reflection journals, audio-recorded group and class discussions, audio recorded focus groups, student discussions with guest speakers, formative and summative student assessments, and unprompted statements, both written and verbal. Additionally, as the researcher, I maintained a daily research journal following each class period and after reviewing audio files.

Multiple data collection tools were used to analyze the evidence for patterns or themes that demonstrated potential change in student knowledge or attitudes about Arab and Muslim Americans, and what specific Anti-Racist Education teaching techniques students considered to have the most meaningful positive influence on changing knowledge or attitudes [See Table 3.1].

Table 3.1: Data Collection Types

Data Type	Methods of Collecting	Purpose
Pre- and Post-Student Survey	Analysis of Documents	• data on student knowledge and attitudes at the start and end of unit
Collected Student Writings (Student Reflection Forums; Formative and	Analysis of Documents	• baseline data on student knowledge and attitudes in greater detail than pre-unit

Summative Assessments;)		survey; • data on how students describe their attitudes; • confirmation of data collected from student verbal statements during unit activities and focus groups.
Focus Groups (Audiotaped & Researcher Notes)	Focus Group Reflections & Meetings	• provide range and variation of potential changes in knowledge and attitudes; • analysis of student interactions; • expand upon student reflections.
Discussions (Class and Group)	Field Notes; Analysis of Documents (transcripts)	• data on how students describe their attitudes; • data on student knowledge.
Researcher Journal	Field Notes	• analysis of unprompted assessments; • consideration of researcher bias during data analysis; • modification of unit plan.

Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys. Prior to the start of the unit, students completed a pre-unit survey and a word association activity for the terms “Muslim” and “Arab” to serve as pre-assessments and establish a baseline of student knowledge and attitudes [See Appendix B]. At the conclusion of the unit, students completed a post-unit survey. The pre-unit survey and lists were also utilized to determine the predominant stereotypes that existed, allowing for modification of the unit as necessary. For students participating in focus groups, their pre-unit survey and lists were also used to generate questions specifically about their knowledge of, and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims throughout the process. The pre- and post-unit surveys and word association lists were prepared and

utilized solely for the purpose of the study and students were made aware that these activities in no way impacted their unit or course grade.

Collected Student Writings. Student writings consisted of student reflective journals as well as formative and summative assessments.

Student Reflection Journals. Throughout the unit, students maintained individual student reflection journals in which they responded to a variety of teacher created prompts as well as peer comments [See Appendix A]. These non-graded student reflection journal entries, in conjunction with the pre- and post-unit surveys, unprompted written and verbal assessments, classroom discussions, and student comments made during focus group sessions were used to determine if patterns of change in student attitudes were present, and to verify that statements made by students in one form or situation were confirmed by statements made by the same students in another form or situation. Statements made by a student that could not be corroborated by additional evidence from that student, or contradict other statements or actions by the student, were not considered as evidence of a pattern of change in student knowledge or attitudes. However, the potential for non-linear changes among student attitudes required that contradictory statements or actions not be dismissed automatically, as those circumstances were used as evidence of a potential internal struggle taking place as the student was exposed to information or ideas contrary to their original beliefs. Student responses were also used to generate additional questions for future reflective prompts, interviews and focus group sessions, and class discussions designed to explore possible patterns or themes that may have been emerging.

To determine the specific factors that contributed to pre-existing student attitudes, student reflections were completed following the pre-unit survey, creation of the pre-assessment word association activity, and the initial focus group sessions. At the conclusion of the unit, after students became more aware of the influence of media, television shows and movies, and video games, students were again asked to identify possible sources of their pre-unit attitudes about Arab and Muslim Americans on the post-unit survey. However, the data collected from that question was not considered due to a design flaw that led to vagueness in the wording of the question that confused some students.

Formative and Summative Assessments. Throughout the unit, students were required to complete several open-ended and multiple choice formative assessments that were designed to provide students with feedback on their progress towards completing the learning objectives, as well as provide the teachers with opportunities to adjust the unit to address issues with student misunderstandings, student inquiries, or current events [See Appendix D]. The multiple choice assessments were administered after specific readings to determine whether or not students acquired the intended knowledge. The open-ended formative assessments also provided data to assess possible student change in knowledge and beliefs, and to confirm or refute other sources of data derived from student statements. At the end of the unit, the summative assessment writing allowed students to demonstrate their level of attainment of the unit objectives. This assessment was also used to confirm any themes or patterns in student growth in the areas of knowledge and attitudes. The written formative and summative assessments were required of all students, including those that did not participate in the study.

Focus Group. The focus group format of data collection was employed to allow for the examination of potential changes in knowledge and attitudes over time from a sample population of the class made up of nine students. Using data from the pre-unit survey, the nine focus group participants were chosen who best reflected diverse levels of knowledge and a variety of student attitudes. Focus groups provide for more in-depth insights through the interactions of the group members, and allow for the use of participants' attitudes, personal opinions and feelings (Kreuger, 1994), all of which were essential to addressing the research questions. The group met midway through the unit, and at the conclusion of the unit. Focus Group Guides (Appendix C) were used to guide each session but were not followed strictly to allow the conversations to address evolving issues. Complete transcripts were produced for both focus group sessions.

Class and Group Discussions. All students, regardless of whether or not they participated in the study itself, took part in frequent discussions, both as a class and within small groups. These discussions provided opportunities to collect data on how participating students described their feelings and beliefs, as well as to assess student knowledge acquisition.

During full class discussions, audio recordings were utilized to carefully analyze the conversations taking place between students. My responsibilities as a teacher-facilitator superseded my role as a researcher, making it difficult to take effective field notes during the actual class activities. By recording these discussions, it allowed me to expand on my field notes at the end of the school day, as well as create transcripts of relevant evidence.

During the unit, guest speakers were utilized on two occasions, one in person and one via Skype. These sessions were video recorded to allow for careful analysis of the conversations that took place. The personal observations were used to note any signs of discomfort, anger, enlightenment or compassion that students displayed through body language, which was useful in corroborating or refuting written or verbal statements made by students.

Researcher Observations. I employed the researcher journal to record personal observations, feelings, possible emerging themes, and moments of surprise that arose during the teaching of the unit. The use of critical self-reflection allowed me to consider the ethics of the power/authority relationship that I had with my students, and present to readers the "baggage" that I had as a practitioner researcher (Ortlipp, 2008) By talking about my "presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research process" (Mruck & Breur, 2003, p.3) I can enable others to critically examine my research process, data analysis and conclusions. This conscious acknowledgement of my own values allows my research to be:

> . ...presented in ways that make it clear how the researcher's own experiences, values, and positions of privilege in various hierarchies have influenced their research interests, the way they choose to do their research, and the ways they choose to represent their research findings (Harrison, et al., 2001, p. 325).

The use of the research journal had the added benefit of providing me with the opportunities to modify the research design by making me more aware of the "muddle, confusion, mistakes, obstacles, and errors" (Boden et al., 2005, p. 70) that are common in research.

Data Organization

Chronological Files. Initially, all transcripts of class discussions, group discussions, student reflection forums and focus group sessions were incorporated with all written data collected from the students and field notes that were produced using chronological files. The open-ended responses from the pre-unit survey and initial student reflection forums came first since they occurred prior to the start of the unit. They were followed by transcripts, student reflective journal entries and researcher field notes from the first day of the unit. That was followed by the data collected on the second day, and third day, and so forth. Anytime a focus group session occurred, the transcripts produced were included between the class days in which they occurred and designated with an "F" to signify that the statement was made during a focus group session. This chronologically driven organizational method allowed the data to reflect patterns of change over time by the class in its entirety through multiple data collection techniques that could be cross referenced to ensure accurate findings.

Cast-of-Characters Files. In addition to the chronological files for organizing data, cast-of-characters files were created in which all oral and written data from each subject of the study was maintained separately. The primary purpose of this organizational method was to allow for careful cross-referencing of data produced by each individual. Based on previous experience with teaching this unit, as well as a preliminary study done during the previous school year, students often make comments that provide evidence of a positive change in attitude that they contradict at a later time. For example, student A, who early in the unit states that the Koran instructs Muslims to kill infidels, comments a few days later that "Islam is a peaceful religion," demonstrating that his misconception about Islam may have changed. However, later in

the unit, the same student remarked that perhaps, in order to ensure the safety of everyone, it was acceptable to use profiling against Muslims in airports. Clearly, his remarks about the peaceful nature of Islam were still in conflict with his internalized prejudices or he was simply saying what he believed was most desirable to my co-teacher and I. By incorporating the cast-of-characters files, these types of issues were made more readily apparent and could be effectively analyzed to assess the reason for the discrepancy.

Data Analysis

Prior to the analysis of data, I transcribed all focus group sessions, class discussions, student produced documents, journal entries, and field notes. The process of transcribing the data myself allowed me to become well acquainted with the data (Reissman, 1993). Google documents were created for the class discussions, focus groups, student produced documents, and reflective journal entries. All files were password protected and only I had access to them. The "meaning of analysis context strategy" was used as the unit of analysis for coding, meaning that the data was not to be coded line by line, but instead for meaning.

The analysis followed the Braun and Clarke (2006) step-by-step guidelines for qualitative research which utilizes the word guidelines to highlight the flexibility of the qualitative analytic method. These guidelines consist of (a) familiarizing yourself with the collected data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) rereading each transcript to immerse in the data, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the

report. This data analysis process was utilized to ascertain whether or not any patterns or themes emerged regarding changes in student knowledge or attitudes.

The data collected during the research was analyzed using a phenomenological based interpretative approach, which is designed to "find out how people make sense of their experiences and the meanings they attach to them" (Cassidy, et al, 2010, p. 1). Interpretative phenomenological analysis requires "detailed examination of the participant's lifeworld" and attempts to explore personal experiences to understand "an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event" (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 1). This approach best allowed for the discovery of the practical understandings of subject words and actions as they pertained to analyzing changes in student attitudes over time. The non-linear changes that were likely to occur as students experienced confusion, frustration or even anger as they were exposed to information that not only challenged their beliefs but also made them aware of the advantages they have over Arab and Muslim Americans, as well as other minority groups, required a sorting or coding scheme that established clear corroboration for interpreting data.

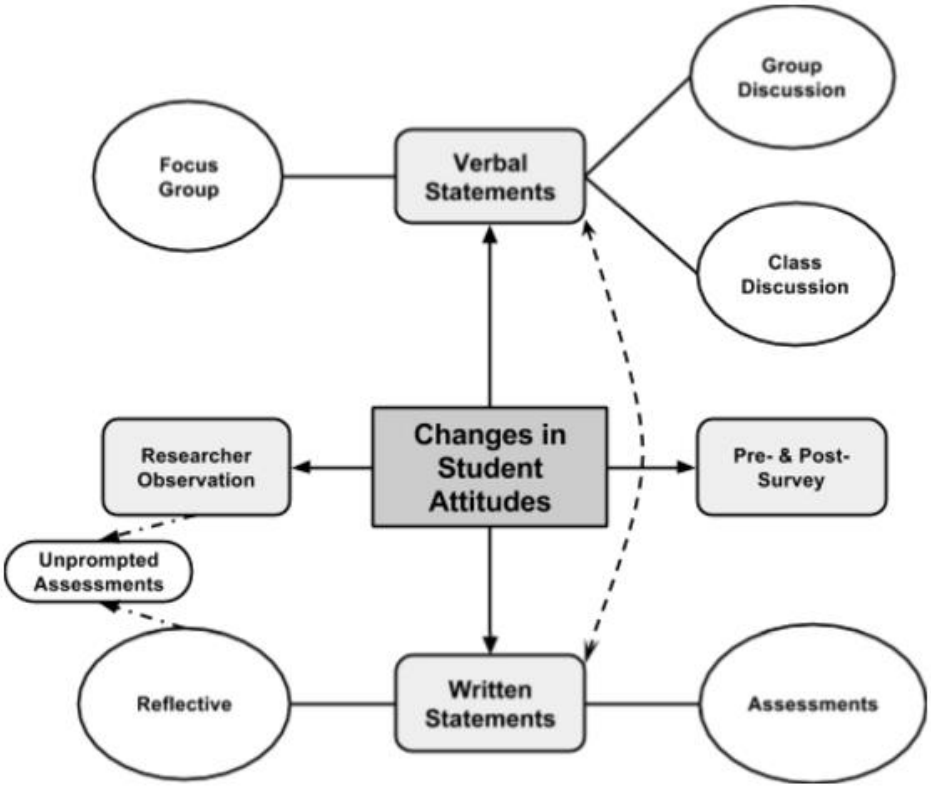
Validation Strategies

Qualitative research is often criticized by social and behavioral scientists on the validity of studies that use this methodology (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). As a result, qualitative researchers rely on various validation strategies to ensure that their studies are credible and rigorous (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Credibility for this study was achieved using the validation strategies of triangulation, researcher reflexivity, and thick rich description. The overall design of the study allowed me to develop a critical

distance from my own classroom practices by relying on the triangulation of data to ensure constructive analysis.

As shown in Figure 2, the study ensured credibility of the findings by triangulating data generated from (a) verbal statements (which included class discussions and focus group sessions), (b) written student work (which included reflective writings and unit assessments), (c) the pre- and post- surveys, and (d) researcher observation. Additionally, unprompted statements that students made during formal activities or non-instructional time were utilized to further ensure credibility. Continuous and diverse data collection that adjusted to the situations that presented themselves in the classroom throughout the study were to the point of what Merriam calls "saturation," which provided ample data to confirm or disprove findings (2009). Additionally, the narrative of the findings relied on thick description to allow readers to access the conclusions for themselves.

Figure 3.1: Triangulation of Data



Limitations

Miles Bryant, author of *The Portable Dissertation Advisor* (20040, defined limitations as "those restrictions created by your methodology." This study has the following limitations:

1. This study included a small sample of participants from one class in one selected New Jersey high school. The class and school were chosen to allow for the use of practitioner action research in a course where the content of the unit was relevant to the curriculum. The information gained from this study may not generalize to other students or other courses (i.e., findings might be unique to the relatively few students included in the research study).

2. The sensitive nature of the information and responses obtained from the participants may have had an effect on their responses since they were not anonymous to the researcher and co-teacher, as well as to other students during class and focus group discussions. Participants may have been unwilling to respond truthfully to questions related to their personal prejudices and knowledge. Students may have provided socially desirable answers for fear of negative reactions from teachers or peers.

3. Portions of the data collected from students were being assessed as part of their unit and course grades. Even though students were instructed that their assessments were not impacted by their attitudes on the concepts, students may have developed responses that they considered more likely to receive the highest grade possible rather than providing their true feelings.

4. Issues related to validity and reliability are limitations commonly associated with any phenomenological study. The experiences created in the natural setting of a classroom are "extremely difficult to replicate" (Wiersma, 2000, p.211).

5. The use of surveys to gauge the respondents' knowledge and attitudes inherently limits answers to particular categories, thereby limiting the range of responses. Respondents are limited to the text developed by the researcher in regard to how and where to respond to prompts.

Ethical Considerations

All of the student participants were treated in accordance to the ethical guidelines of the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Although there were no identifiable risks for participating in this study, several considerations were in place when dealing with the students. First, students may have felt uncomfortable expressing their views openly in front of their peers if they believed their ideas were in the minority. Second, when interacting with Arab or Muslim guests, students may have been hesitant to comment or ask questions due to uncertainty with correct terminology. Third, given that this study deals with students in my class there was the potential that they may have felt pressure to respond to all questions during focus group sessions. All these considerations were heeded during the research design stage and every precaution was taken to ensure that all students felt safe, comfortable, and free to withdraw from the study if they felt the need to do so. Those precautions included the following statement prior to the start of each activity that was solely for the purpose of data collection, reminding students that their participation was voluntary and could be ceased at any point.

> *Before we begin, please remember that your participation in this activity is completely voluntary and the information you provide is for the purpose of the research study only. You will not be penalized in any way if you choose not to participate. If you prefer not to participate at this time, please feel free to excuse yourself.*

No student voluntarily withdrew from the study once it began. However, one student was removed as a subject at my discretion due to frequent and prolonged absences resulting from medical issues.

Course Summary Prior to Implementation of Anti-Racist Education Unit

"Arab and Muslim Americans in Post-9/11 America" was the culminating unit in a full year Humanities course with a focus on struggles for equality in 20th century U.S. history. The first unit explored the impacts of Imperialism and Anglo-Saxonism on aboriginal groups under direct or indirect control of the United States, as well as the debate between supporters of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois over the most effective strategy for improving the economic, political and social conditions of African Americans. Students relied heavily on speeches, editorials and nonfiction books such as *The Souls of Black Folk* and *Up From Slavery* to gain an understanding of how U.S. policies shaped, and were shaped by common stereotypes.

The second unit incorporated a variety of essays, poems, stories and paintings to examine the cultural and social changes that resulted from the Harlem Renaissance. Particular attention was paid to the backlash by many white Americans to growing black pride following World War I and black propaganda that challenged common racial stereotypes. Activities designed to introduce students to common black stereotypes that were dominant during the time period were incorporated throughout this unit, along with opportunities to look for evidence of the stereotypes in contemporary society.

The unit on the Great Depression and New Deal investigated racism in the U.S. justice system through the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as well as legal events surrounding the Scottsboro Boys cases. As students read the novel, they analyzed various legal documents and summaries related to the decades long legal proceedings that followed the false accusations of rape against nine African American young men, known as the Scottsboro boys.

The focus shifted to the federally mandated incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II during the next unit. Students read interviews, letters and diaries from Japanese-Americans, as well as the novel, *When the Emperor was Divine*, to become aware of the impacts that discrimination had on oppressed groups as well as the individuals within the groups during times of war. They also analyzed government documents justifying the internment of Japanese-Americans and the Supreme Court case of *Korematsu v. United States* (1944) as an example of how the U.S. government has based policy decisions on prejudice that existed within society.

The longest unit of the course, the Cold War, analyzed how Americans reacted to perceived threats from people with differing political, social and economic beliefs than the majority of society. From looking at McCarthyism using the play, *The Crucibl*e, through reading beat poetry and listening to counter-culture music of the Beatniks and Hippies, students learned that the conformity associated with the 1950s led to a backlash in the 1960s against those that failed to conform. Additionally, students were provided with an opportunity to learn about the plight of Latino Americans, as well as Spanish-speaking people from other regions of the world. The unit, which spanned American history from 1943 through 1991, also examined the strategies used by African American and Native American groups to bring about civil rights improvements during the time period, as well as the current struggles still facing the minority groups despite perceptions of equality by many Americans.

For each of the previous units, more traditional teaching strategies, such as Multicultural Education, were employed to address the issues of prejudice, discrimination and racism. Although students were frequently asked to look for evidence of prejudice

and discrimination in modern society, at no time were they presented with the idea that they were a part of, and in most cases, beneficiaries of a racist society. Groups were examined as "others" that were victims of past injustices which were no longer significantly impacting the contemporary United States. The final unit was designed using an Anti-Racist Education strategy to directly challenge those ideas and ascertain whether or not the entire course should be taught using an Ant-Racist Education curriculum. Anti-Racist Education is anchored in the idea that society is based on dominant values imposed on people with less power and that education needs to directly confront that inequality, especially among members of the dominant group.

Summary of Anti-Racist Education Unit

The following summary provides an explanation of the objectives for each activity during the unit, as well as how the activities were designed to reach the overall unit Anti-Racist Education objectives. The summary does not include an analysis of the effectiveness of the activities or unit, nor is it intended to be a detailed explanation of each lesson plan.

Unit Goals. The primary goals of the unit included (A) defining and distinguishing between the terms "Arab," "Muslim," "prejudice," "discrimination," and "racism;" (B) recognizing what the common misconceptions about Arabs and Muslims are and how they developed; (C) assessing government policies and actions that reinforce prejudice; (D) developing an understanding of the religion of Islam; (E) recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of Arabs and Muslims nationally and globally; (F) identifying the impacts of prejudice, discrimination and racism on Arabs and Muslims

and on society as a whole; (G) examining how their own attitudes about Arabs and Muslims developed; and (H) developing ideas to challenge prejudicial beliefs and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims.

Introductory Presentation and Discussion. Following the pre-unit survey designed to assess student knowledge and attitudes prior to the Anti-Racist Education unit, a class discussion and presentation on the key terms of stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, and racism took place. The presentation's primary objectives were to challenge students with a definition of racism that, for most non-Arab and non-Muslim students, classified them as beneficiaries of a racist society, as well as to review the reasons for the creation of stereotypes and the resulting prejudice and discrimination that followed. Later in the unit, as the focus shifted to Arab and Muslim Americans specifically, students were asked to recognize similarities between rationales for developing and maintaining stereotypes and prejudice against African Americans and the rationales for the development and dominance of stereotypes and prejudice against Arab and Muslim Americans.

Overview of 9/11. At the time of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the students in this study were approximately three years old. To give them a sense of how Americans experienced the tragedy in real time, the students watched a chronological collection of news coverage from that day, starting a few minutes before the first plane struck the North Tower. The activity also served as an introduction to several readings reflecting the reactions of non-Arab and non-Muslim Americans after the attacks of 9/11/2001. Those readings will be described later in this section.

The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook. Written by three American Muslims specifically for teenage Muslim Americans, the book was published with the intent of helping young Muslims living in the United States cope with challenges that they faced as a result of their religious beliefs. The book contained a history and overview of Islam, as well as suggestions about how to practice religious and cultural customs in a society where they are often misunderstood and looked upon with suspicion. The authors also provided suggestions about how Muslim teenagers could interact in a Christian dominated society while teaching their non-Muslim peers about their own Muslim beliefs. Although the use of the book was similar to more traditional methods of teaching about different cultures and discrimination, it did provide a unique characteristic that incorporated Anti-Racist Education strategies. By allowing students to read a text written by, and more importantly, for Muslim Americans, the activity taught the students about their own misconceptions about Islam and the discrimination faced by Muslims, while simultaneously showing them how Muslims were standing up to the oppression they faced on a daily basis. For Anti-Racist Education, it is important that students in the dominant group do not simply view the oppressed group as helpless victims, but instead as people defending their civil and human rights.

To allow the entire class to be exposed to all of the issues addressed in the book, students were divided into small groups, with each group assigned a specific chapter. After reading and discussing the chapter, the group prepared a short presentation to share with their classmates. In addition to providing their peers with an overview of the chapter topic, students developed three questions about the topic that non-Muslim teenagers may ask if they encountered a relevant situation in real life. The group also had

to write and perform a short skit that demonstrated a situation in which non-Muslim teenagers reacted to something they saw or heard related to the topic, and then were taught about Islamic beliefs and culture. Each group then had to listen to and prepare written responses to questions posed by their classmates after their presentation.

Interaction with Arab and Muslim Americans. One of the most important aspects of an Anti-Racist Education unit is the need to expose students to members of the oppressed group. The unit was designed to provide three opportunities for this to occur, including a Muslim Palestinian-American who grew up in Palestine before moving to the United States, a Muslim-American young adult who lived in the United States as a high school student after the events of September 11, 2001, and the Muslim-American author Moustafa Bayoumi, who wrote the focal reading of the unit, *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?*. Unfortunately, the scheduled visit by the Muslim-American young adult did not occur due to an unavoidable last minute cancellation by the guest speaker.

The first guest presenter to the class, Salam Ahmad, was a first year teacher at Highlands High School and had done her student teaching there the previous year. None of the students in the class had met her prior to the presentation. She grew up in Kufr Rai', which is about 23 kilometers west of Jenin, a Palestinian city in the northern West Bank. She left Kufr Rai' after high school in 1984 to attend college in Amman, Jordan. Ms. Ahmad moved to the United States in December of 1990 and began working as a Delegation Advisor to The Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations in 1991. In 2006 she started a career in education as an aide at a high school in central New Jersey and continued in that position until she became a certified Social Studies teacher in the spring of 2013.

The presentation by Ms. Ahmad was scheduled to take place following student presentations based on the *American Muslim Teenager's Handbook* with the intention of reinforcing or correcting information about the religion of Islam taught during the presentations. She was also asked to provide stories about her own experiences living in the United States after September 11, 2001, to provide a more personal account of the impact of prejudice and discrimination. The stories also provided points of comparison to narratives about Arab and Muslim Americans included in *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?*, which would be the next activity in the unit.

Moustafa Bayoumi's book, *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?*, included seven individual narratives about young Arab-Americans growing up in the United States in the years following 9/11. A popular book among many college level classes, and in some cases required reading for all incoming freshman students, for this unit the work was intended to show students how prejudice and discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans impacted individuals similar to their own ages, as well as how those individuals reacted to their unjust treatment. Stories ranged from the detention of an entire family for several months on baseless fears, to a Muslim high school student who spent two years fighting for her right to be a student government leader when her school denied her the opportunity because her religious beliefs prevented her from carrying out one of the requirements of the position.

Once the students finished reading, presenting on, and discussing *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?*, Moustafa Bayoumi skyped with the class, providing students with an opportunity to ask questions and to learn about Mr. Bayoumi's own experiences as an Arab Muslim American, as well as to inquire about the current situation of the subjects of

his book. Students prepared questions in advance based on their reading and class discussions, but were also encouraged to develop questions in response to comments made by Mr. Bayoumi.

Readings on Prejudice Against Arabs and Muslims in U.S. Society. Throughout the unit, students read several articles and excerpts of books in addition to *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook* and *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?* All of these additional readings were written by non-Arab and non-Muslim Americans and reflected some of the prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory actions taken towards Arab and Muslim Americans, particularly after the events of September 11th, 2001.

Overview of Prejudice Against Arab and Muslim Americans. This short reading was provided to students after they completed the pre-unit survey, the class discussion on prejudice, discrimination and racism, and their first two journal entries. I created the reading based on research to provide students with information on the following:

- Definitions of the terms "Arab" and "Muslim;"
- Polling information about non-Arab and non-Muslim American attitudes of Arabs and Muslims;
- Statistics on Arab and Muslim populations in the U.S., including a brief history of Arab immigration;
- Discussion of the concept of Islamophobia; and
- Theories on how people develop attitudes about groups.

After the reading, students participated in a class discussion and were asked to reference material from the reading throughout the remainder of the unit when appropriate.

Media. Two articles that appeared in newspapers or periodicals were presented to the students to allow them to analyze the role the media played in how non-Arab and non-Muslim Americans developed their attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims. The readings were completed after the students viewed the collection of videos representing news coverage of the attacks of 9/11 in real time. Both readings appeared in print within a few weeks of the attacks.

Media March to Madness. Published by the organization Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting on September 17, 2001, the article provided a timely critique of how the media presented the 9/11 story in the days following the tragedy. Arguing that the focus of many journalists was on retribution at any cost, it included numerous examples of mainstream media outlets calling for violent retaliation against a variety of countries and groups (all of which were Arab or Muslim), regardless of their proven involvement in the attacks.

Therapeutic Patriotism and Beyond. Written by Pat Aufderheide, *Therapeutic Patriotism and Beyond* argued that by September 14th, 2001, many networks "assumed a therapeutic role as grief counselor for the nation's inner child, nurturing insecure viewers who had been stripped of their adult self-assurance by the shock of the attacks." Providing a different perspective than *Media March to Madness,* Aufderheide believed that taking on the role of therapist by the media was erroneous because instead of informing the public about facts, it instead served the needs of the government by preparing the American people to support the eventual response to the attacks, which would eventually include the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the incarceration and deportation of many Arab immigrants.

Government. Students were asked to read two book excerpts as sources for analyzing the role the government played in shaping attitudes about Arabs and Muslims after 9/11. One book was published by the U.S. government and was the product of a special commission, while the other was written as a critique of how the government was manipulated by the news media.

The 9/11 Commission Report. Written by a panel appointed by the U.S. government to investigate how and why the attacks occurred, as well as to offer possible policies to take in response, this book was widely read, reported on and cited by those speaking or writing about the events of 9/11. Used in conjunction with *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?*, students only read the "Executive Summary," which provided an overview of all of the major arguments presented in the book.

Our Enemies Among Us. A chapter from the book, *Civil Rights In Peril: The Targeting of Arabs and Muslims*, which examined the role the U.S. government played in furthering racial stereotypes against Arabs and Muslims, demonstrated to students how the media and the government worked closely together in the aftermath of 9/11. This challenging reading, which was assigned towards the end of the unit, told the story of a business owned by a Muslim American that was targeted as a supporter of terrorist organizations first by the media and eventually by the F.B.I. An investigation later found that the accusations were baseless, but not before the media coverage of an F.B.I. investigation did irreparable financial damage that eventually forced the business to close.

Addressing Anti-Arab & Anti-Muslim Prejudice. Throughout the unit, students were asked to consider how individuals and society could challenge prejudice

and discrimination. In addition to the readings noted earlier, an audio interview by National Public Radio (NPR), *"The Devil In Me" - Sam Slevin's Story*, was shared with the students. The use of this interview was not planned as part of the original unit, but when it was heard by my co-teacher on his way to work, he suggested we consider using it. After listening to it myself, I agreed and we shared it with the students. We then had them respond to it in their reflective journal. The interview is of an American soldier who returned from Iraq with strong prejudice against Muslims and Iraqis. Recognizing that his attitudes were wrong, he set out to undo his own prejudice by befriending Muslims. The story is summarized in more detail in Chapter 4.

The unit concluded with students completing a post-unit survey that matched the pre-unit survey, and taking a final summative assessment for the unit and course. The assessment asked students to use their knowledge of prejudice, discrimination and racism to compare and contrast the conditions faced by Arab and Muslim Americans in post-9/11 America with at least two other oppressed groups in the country throughout the 20th century.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter organizes and presents data as it applies to each of the four research questions. The evidence provided for each question represents the knowledge and attitudes of the student subjects as it applies to the question. Due to the voluminous amount of data collected, it was often necessary to share data from one or two students to represent groups of their peers.

Research Question One

What do students know about Arabs and Muslims before the start of the unit and what knowledge about Arabs and Muslims do they express over the course of the unit?

Among the primary purposes of the study was to ascertain what students knew about Arabs and Muslims prior to the unit and what new, or corrected knowledge they gained as the unit was carried out. An additional purpose of the research was to determine which ARE strategies elicited patterns of knowledge acquisition among the students. The first section looks at the pre-unit survey [See Appendix B], word association activity, early reflective journal entries [See Appendix A], and transcripts from class and focus group discussions to develop an understanding of what students knew or thought they knew at the start of the unit. Then, by analyzing the student reflective journals and transcripts from class and focus group discussions from later in the unit, a picture of student knowledge acquisition, as well as student reactions to new knowledge, is presented in the second section.

Knowledge Prior to Unit. The first requirement of the study was to obtain an understanding of what students knew, or thought they knew, about what it meant to be an Arab or a Muslim. This objective was accomplished through a series of activities, including a pre-unit survey, a word association activity, the first reflective journal response, and class discussions. The first discussion's stated purposes in the unit plan included (a) allowing the teachers to identify the misconceptions that existed within the class to ensure they would all be addressed during the unit, (b) allowing the students to recognize that the misconceptions they had were common among their peers, and (c) beginning the process of correcting some of the misconceptions through peer or teacher intervention. Analysis of the data from these activities demonstrated that the students tended to reflect the same level of understanding of Arabs and Muslims as that of the general population of the United States, as most either confessed a lack of knowledge or displayed significant misunderstandings about both groups (Naber, 2008).

Association Between Arabs and Muslims. At the start of the unit, the students were asked to complete the word association activity in which they first recorded any terms or concepts that came to mind when they thought of the word "Arab." They then did the same thing for the term "Muslim" [See Appendix E for all student responses]. Thirty-six of the forty-one students either associated Arabs with concepts related to Muslims, or associated Muslims with concepts related to Arabs. Under "Arab," the most common references to Muslim other than Muslim itself included "Islam," "Allah," "Taliban" and "Muhammad." When responding to the term "Muslim," references associated with Arab were most often "Arab," "Arabian" and "Middle East." Interestingly, of the five students that did not directly connect the two terms

together while completing the chart, two of them commented about their initial instinct to do so. In her first entry for the student reflective journal, which was completed immediately after she did the word association activity, Mackenzie wrote that she had initially typed "Muslim" under Arab because she thought they were the same thing, but when she found out the next term she had to respond to was Muslim, she concluded that the point of the activity was to "point out that the two were different," so she deleted "Muslim." Edward shared that he was going to write Muslim as a characteristic of Arab but wasn't sure if they were the same thing so he decided not to use it. In total, only Rachel, Gloria, and Kevin did not imply a commonality between the two terms in their word association activity or initial student reflection.

The group conversations and full class discussion that immediately followed the initial discussion for the terms "Arab" and "Muslim" further reinforced the misunderstanding of the terms by the large majority of the class. Like most Americans, the students not only thought the two terms were linked (Naber, 2008), they also used the terms interchangeably, believing all Arabs were Muslim and all Muslims were Arab.

When asked to explain the difference between the two terms Hunter admitted that "to be completely honest, nobody in our group knew the difference between the two." Mackenzie also explained that her group wasn't sure of the differences and connected their confusion to the media. "We talked about the Boston bombings and 9/11 and how the news just sort of puts them all together and we had no idea what the differences were between the groups." Hayden's group came to the same impasse because Muslims "...may be included in the definition of Arabs. The two groups are

used...they are sort of just thrown together. None of us had ever considered that they may not actually be the same thing."

During that class discussion, participating students displayed a willingness to admit a lack of knowledge, and in some cases, inaccurate knowledge. Based on the increasing number of hands that went up to share as the discussion continued, they seemed to become more willing to admit a lack of knowledge as it became clear that their peers had the same misunderstandings. Additionally, as demonstrated in the following conversation, the number of questions they had about what it meant to be Arab indicated that they became receptive to learning about what the terms actually meant.

Megan: So an Arab person, they aren't Muslim?

T: Not necessarily. Many Arabs are also Muslim. But being [interrupted by Ian].

Ian: Arab refers to a place, like saying someone is Middle Eastern? Is a Middle Eastern person an Arab person?

T: Again, not necessarily. For one, it really depends on how you define the Middle East. The Middle East, I think, contains most of the Arab nations but not all of them. But not everyone agrees on what the Middle East...not everyone agrees it should even be used because it's based on, the term is based on a European perspective.

Ken: Does being an Arab mean you are from a certain place, like the Middle East, or whatever? Is that all it takes or can someone, can people from that region not be Arab?

T: It's not just geography. It's really based on a language and culture too. I would define an Arab as a person that has ties to the Arabic language more than anything else. But I'll tell you, I'm not really sure. I think of it as a language thing, but I've heard others with different definitions.

Ken: So you can live in an Arab country and not be an Arab?

T: Sure. Why not? If they have no ties to the Arabic culture, say they, or really their ancestors, moved to the country when it was under British control, or French, or whatever, I don't consider them Arab.

Gloria: And Muslims don't have to be Arab too. Most of them, the Muslims, don't live in the Middle East.

T: Right. And most Muslims don't have ties to the Middle East, or really what we refer to as Arab countries.

The conversation continued for several more minutes, with students clarifying what it meant to be an Arab by using examples such as an Israeli citizen that considered himself a Palestinian, a person from Afghanistan, and an American citizen born in the United States that didn't speak Arabic but had parents that were born in an Arabic country. The class was particularly interested in hearing one of their classmates, Michael, tell them that even though he had grandparents on his father's side that spoke Arabic and his father could speak Arabic, he didn't consider himself to be Arab. Although nobody questioned Michael about why he didn't consider himself to be an Arab when he said it, eight students specifically mentioned his comment in their reflective journals. Most of the eight comments were questioning if Michael was "an Arab even though he doesn't think

of himself as one," but during Student Reflective Journal Three, Sean actually wondered if Michael chose not to identify as an Arab because of how Arabs are "seen by most Americans since 9/11" or because he "was raised as a Christian." Notable in his comment was that at that early stage of the unit, Sean was still connecting the term "Arab" with being a Muslim, or at least with not being a Christian.

During the first focus group meeting, which took place two weeks after the word association activity, the conversation among the small group of students returned to the lack of understanding that the students had about the terms "Arab" and "Muslim" at the start of the unit. Rachel explained that "I didn't really know what Arabs meant. Like I knew Muslims, their religion was Islam, but I didn't know Arabs were from a geographic place. I thought it had something to do with being Muslim, like maybe another way of referring to them."

Chad immediately followed up Rachel's comment and demonstrated the common tendency to group Arabs and Muslims together even when one knows the actual meaning of the words.

> The thing that's different for me is that I know the difference and I knew the difference and yet I still actively in my mind automatically grouped them together, which is weird because I knew that an Arab is a person from the region and Muslim is a person who follows the religion Islam. Yet in my mind I still am grouping them together as Arab Muslim.

Evidence of this also existed in Chad's word association activity, where he had "Muslim" listed first under the term "Arab." He expanded on that idea in his first reflective journal response where he stated that he believed that "Arabs are associated with the Muslim religion. I think that they have long beards and from what I can remember they use prayer mats and face west towards an important temple, monument." He then clarified his

assertion during the focus group, perhaps reflecting a change in thought as a result of the early activities of the unit, that he knew that Arabs and Muslims are not necessarily one and the same. "In my mind Muslims and Arabs look identical because many Arabs are Muslim."

There were a few students however, that were able to identify differences between the two terms during the discussion even though they linked them together in the word association activity. When Edward said he associated the term Arab with Middle East but wasn't "sure if that's exactly how it works," Gloria explained that she related an Arab "to someone...who could practice Islam...but they could also practice Christianity or Judaism." Edward replied that for him, he generally associates:

> Arabic countries as almost being controlled by Islamic sort of people. I associate them with, I think they generally, if you, you would be oppressed if you weren't of the Arabic culture and the Islamic religion, and you lived in the Middle East. But some people that aren't Muslim do live there.

Two weeks later during the focus group, Gloria again demonstrated that she understood the difference in the two terms from the outset. "In my first journal I said that not all [Arabs] are Muslim and some of them can be Jewish or Christian, especially if they do live in Israel and Jerusalem. That's a holy city for the three monotheistic religions and it's just Judaism, Christianity and Islam all together." Gloria was also one of the few students to avoid any links between the terms "Arab" and "Muslim" during her word association activity.

When examined in conjunction with the transcript of the first class conversation, the students' first student reflective journal entries confirmed that at the start of the unit, most recognized the terms but few could accurately distinguish between those of "Arab"

and "Muslim." Nick's written response represented many of his peers. "I always thought that Arab was someone from the Middle East that practices Islam. That was the difference between them and Muslims."

In many cases, the two terms were literally used in place of each other, such as in Megan's first journal entry. "Religiously, I believe Muslims see one God. Compared to Muslims, Americans can range from different religions, when *Arabs* focus on one religion." Similarly, Sarah viewed the key characteristic of Arab as "being very involved in religion and taking it very serious when their religion is not followed." Then, when describing Muslims, she wrote, "Arabs are very one sided with what they believe in and resort to violence when certain things are not done the way they think is morally right."

During this introductory phase of the unit there was a discernable pattern among students of attempting to correct the inaccurate definitions of "Arab" and "Muslim," that most possessed. Comments and questions made by students during the discussions and in reflective journal entries showed no evidence that any students were resisting the new definitions and in fact most seemed eager to understand what they meant and how to properly apply them. As the unit progressed, that pattern continued, although many still struggled with consistently applying the terms correctly.

Physical & Cultural Characteristics. During Student Reflective Journal One, students were specifically asked to describe the physical and cultural characteristics of Arabs to determine what, if any, stereotypes the students possessed about their physical appearance. Nearly all responses referenced Arabs wearing something on their heads, although the terms and descriptions varied greatly. Sean, for example, wrote that they wore "turbans to keep sand out of their hair," but Carlton described Arabs as "people that

wrap towels around their head." Rachel explained that Arab women "sometimes wear a hijab, or something like that when they go out of the house."

Although not as common as referencing turbans or hijabs, nearly half of the students also described an Arab as wearing a "robe," "dress," or "cloak." Several made mention of sandals, including Evan, who explained that they wore them "when taking care of their sheep." One student, Marie, thought that they wore "vests over their shirts and puffy pants." After also listing a few of the same common stereotypes about Arab dress such as turbans and robes, Megan provided an explanation of why she thought they dressed the way they did.

> They always dress to blend in with everyone else around them. Americans dress to stand out from the crowd usually. But Arabs believe that it's wrong to bring attention to yourself like that so they dress in plain colors and cover nearly all of their body.

Megan's explanation was very similar to a comment she wrote during the same journal entry about Muslim women not being able to "wear clothes that are bright and colorful because it would make men look at them." She again reinforced that idea in the class conversation that followed that journal entry.

Not surprisingly, since most students thought that the terms "Arab" and "Muslim" meant the same thing, many used the same physical characteristic descriptions of clothing when describing a Muslim. While the terms "turban" and "robe" came up about as frequently for Muslims as they did for Arab, there was a noticeable increase in the number of students that specially referenced the hijab, indicating that perhaps some did think the two terms referred to different groups. While four included hijab in their description of Arabs, eleven students referenced it when describing a Muslim, including

the same four that used it to describe an Arab. Twelve of the students also wrote that Muslim women had to be completely covered, and half of those specified that they had to be covered when in public.

Notably, not one student described Arabs or Muslims as wearing clothes such as suits and ties, t-shirts, jeans, blouses or other items seen in the hallways of a typical public high school in the United States. Sandra, who had a friend that was Muslim, did note that "if you took away the head covering" from her Muslim friend, one "would never know that she was Muslim," implying that she dressed like everyone else. However, Kevin, who had several Muslim co-workers, used the same stereotypes as his classmates to describe them as wearing "robes" and "hijabs," even though he later stated during the class discussion that his Muslim co-workers were just like everybody else he worked with.

Overall, the physical descriptions of Arabs and Muslims in regard to clothing at the start of the unit reinforced the idea that most students viewed the two terms as referring to the same people, and that nearly all students pictured Arabs and Muslims as wearing clothing typified in movies, television shows and media coverage of the Middle East. Common stereotypes were also applied to biological characteristics by the students as well.

Many students described Arabs as being dark-skinned and having beards, such as William, who wrote that "they have really long, dirty beards," and they are "really tan from all their time in the desert." Clara did note that they look "pretty much like a white person except that they're darker-skinned, not as dark as African Americans, but a little darker than white people."

The descriptions for Muslims were very similar, and in the case of some students, identical to Arabs, further demonstrating that there was a tendency to think that the two terms meant the same thing. There was only one student, Kevin, who acknowledged that Muslims could be black, although he didn't specify if he was referring to black Muslims in the United States or black Muslims in Africa. When asked to describe the key characteristics of Muslims, Joseph wrote that he "would describe a Muslim person as someone who has dark hair and a light brown skin color." He used the same exact wording to describe the physical characteristics of an Arab, signifying that in his mind, they were either one in the same, or he viewed Arabs as a subcategory of Muslims.

Muslim descriptions included several references to being conservative or traditional, as well as a few statements about the oppression of women. As noted earlier, Edward remarked one "would be oppressed if you weren't of the Arabic culture and the Islamic religion," and Sarah believed that Muslims "resort to violence" if they thought people were not following the tenets of Islam. Those ideas were also brought up in the class discussion that followed the journal entry.

Megan: Compared to Americans they are more conservative I guess?

T: Are you talking conservative in their political ideologies or...

Megan: No. Like looks...how they dress. I feel like, with Americans, they can wear what they want and one person can stand out and it's fine. But like, Arabs, they kinda dress the same almost and try to blend in with each other.

Andrea They also, for girls, marry younger.

Chad And girls are like controlled by men, right? They can only be seen without being completely covered by their family. They have to be covered completely.

Gloria: I think you are referring to Muslim women having to be covered.

Chad I guess. I guess I am still thinking of Arabs and Muslims as the same.

Sean; Do Arab girls have to be covered too? I know they can't do a lot of things like drive. But is that Arabs and Muslims?

Gloria: I think it's just Muslims that have to cover, and even not all Muslims agree with that.

Although the discussion was short and only included a couple of students, the sentiments shared matched the perceptions of a large majority of students as reflected in their first journal entries. Reggie had written in his entry that Muslim girls "can't go to school in some countries," and Makayla commented that "the women have to be with men, like chaperones, to go out." Overall, early in the unit, nearly half of the students expressed to some degree that Muslims were oppressive to non-believers, or thought Muslim women were oppressed by men.

Knowledge During Unit. During the unit, a variety of activities were incorporated with a primary or secondary learning objective of improving student knowledge about the key characteristics of Arabs and Muslims, as well as to address common misconceptions about the two groups. These activities ranged from primary and secondary source readings to personal interactions with Arab and Muslim Americans.

One of the first lessons specifically designed to increase student knowledge about the religion of Islam and the experiences of Muslim American adolescents in the United

States was centered on the book, *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook*. This lesson provided students with a foundational understanding of the basic tenets of the religion of Islam while simultaneously introducing them to some of the challenges faced by Muslim teenagers in America. Although the book was written by several Muslim Americans, this lesson still relied solely on non-Muslim students to teach their peers about Islam through a series of group presentations.

The student presentations each consisted of a brief summary of their group's assigned chapter and a role play simulation created by the students in which they acted as non-Muslim high school students encountering Muslim students experiencing some form of discrimination from their peers. After each performance, the group listened to questions generated during their presentation by the rest of the class and then provided written responses the next day. The questions asked by the students covered all six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy while demonstrating critical thinking skills by the students (Bloom, 1956). The following examples include the responses prepared and shared by the students based on their reading of their assigned chapter in *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook.*

Q: Doesn't the Islamic religion demean women?

A: No, Islam is a very enlightened religion when compared to others. Women have the right to own and inherit property, vote, and seek employment. In four Muslim countries (Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, and Bangladesh), women have even been leaders of the country. Women are just as likely to earn less than men in a non-Muslim country as they are in a Muslim country. Gender-discrimination really has

very little to do with religion.

Q: Don't Muslims worship a different God than Christians and Jews?

A: Many think that Muslims worship a different God than Christians and Jews, but really, they just use different names. Muslims, Christians and Jews worship the God of Jesus and Abraham. Commonly, Muslims call Him "Allah."

Q: How important is charity in the Islamic religion?

A: Charity is very important in the Islamic religion. The Quran emphasizes doing good deeds. Charity is one of the 5 pillars of faith. It is important for Muslims to use their good intentions and go out to do charitable deeds. The religion puts a large importance on doing charitable deeds on a daily basis. When a Muslim donates to the less fortunate around him he is able to appreciate what God has given him.

Q: Is there a Muslim culture?

A: While Muslims do have certain beliefs and traditions that they follow, their taste in food and clothing can vary heavily on where they live. It could be American, French, or even Japanese depending on what region they are from. You cannot judge a person based on the food they eat or the language that they speak.

Q: What do Muslims eat and wear?

A: They can eat anything, as long as it is Halal (which is the Islamic equivalent of "Kosher" from Judaism). Some prefer noodles, and others prefer rice, according to what region they came from. They can eat other ethnic foods as well, like pizza

or Chinese food. Muslims also can wear anything. Christians don't wear Christian clothing. A Muslim can wear anything they choose as long as they practice modest beliefs.

Q: Why are Muslims associated with terrorism?

A: Muslims have been falsely associated with terrorism, especially since 9/11. Islam neither allows or encourages terrorism, extremism, radicalism, or fanaticism, yet they are still viewed upon by many with suspicion. The truth of the matter is that many people are not educated about Islam, leading to false accusations about many Muslim-Americans.

Q: Is it mandatory to go on the Hajj? What happens if you can't go?

A: It is highly recommended to go on the trip, but it is quite expensive, so if you can't, you won't be looked down upon.

Q: How does one become Muslim?

A: For one to become Muslim they must do four things: (1) They must accept Islam as their religion; (2) They must not worship anything or anyone except God; (3) They must believe that the Holy Quran is the literal word of God, revealed by Him; and (4) They must believe that the Day of Judgment (the Day of Resurrection) is true and will come, as God promised in the Quran.

The questions above posed by the students indicated a lack of knowledge about Islam, but more importantly, a curiosity to better understand it. Many of the questions created by the students were asked to directly address knowledge that they had thought they had

about Islam, but were starting to doubt as a result of the student presentations. However, only a handful of students referenced this activity in their student reflective journal entries as a source of new knowledge or new attitudes. Even though the book was written by Muslim-Americans, the students received the new information from their classmates rather than a Muslim-American, which was likely one of the reasons students did not specifically credit it as an activity that changed their thinking.

One of the most important theories of an Anti-Racist Education strategy, the contact hypothesis, argues that it is necessary to expose students to members of the stereotyped group to effectively correct misconceptions and change attitudes (Foster, 1990). For that reason, the lesson incorporating *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook* was followed by a presentation by a Palestinian-American guest lecturer, Salam Ahmad.

One of the primary goals of Ms. Ahmad's visit to the class was to provide students with an opportunity to reinforce knowledge introduced during the previous activities and to learn additional information about Islam from someone who practices the faith. A second goal was to introduce students to some of the everyday challenges faced by Arab and Muslim Americans in the United States, as well as how individuals such as Ms. Ahmad have dealt with them.

The final series of lessons designed specifically to improve student knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims was centered on reading *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?* The individual chapter readings were reinforced by group activities and class discussions before the culminating activity of a Skype session with the author, Moustafa Bayoumi. The book's focus on seven Arab individuals provided students with

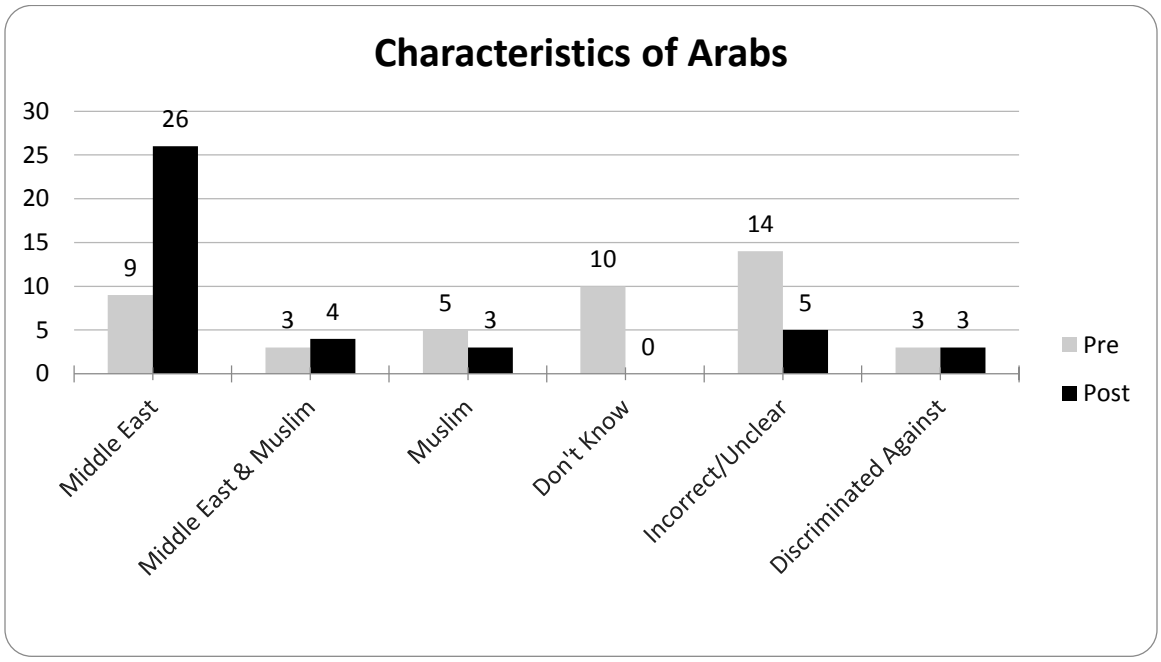
additional opportunities to improve their understanding of the characteristics of Arabs and Muslims while focusing heavily on the types of discrimination they faced. By providing anecdotes that demonstrated successful efforts by individuals to overcome discrimination along with examples of how oppression had limited members of the groups, the lesson addressed ARE's need to avoid reinforcing the "helpless victim" mentality and to show how members of the groups have positively contributed to society and stood up for themselves.

Characteristics of an Arab. A comparison of the pre- and post-unit surveys' open-ended question on the characteristics of an Arab show a marked improvement in the number of students that recognized the term "Arab" as referring to someone from the Middle East, North Africa, or the Arabian Peninsula that spoke Arabic [See Figure 4,1]. Additionally, even though several students still linked "Arab" with the Middle East and being Muslim, all four who did so pointed out that being Arab did not necessarily mean one had to be Muslim, just that most Arabs were Muslim. Hunter explained that "Arab is a term used to describe a person from the Middle East. This person is usually Muslim but that is not always the case." James had a very similar description, describing an Arab as someone "from the Middle East" and "most likely Islamic." According to Jack, being Arab "meant that you are Middle Eastern and probably Muslim, but possibly Christian or Jewish." Diana expanded on those definitions by explaining that Arabs were "from the Middle East and spoke the language [Arabic], and may practice the Islamic religion, but may not."

There were several students during either the pre- or post-unit survey that made no reference to a geographic region such as the Middle East, to speaking Arabic, or to the

religion of Islam, but did note that Arabs faced discrimination. The prompt for the survey "What do you know or think you know about what it means to be an Arab?" did not specifically ask for a definition, and the linking of the term to discrimination was itself accurate. While this design error diminishes the usefulness of the data from this

Figure 4.1: Student Perceptions of the term "Arab" on Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

question, the information gathered was still helpful when used in conjunction with additional evidence. Other data contained in reflective journal entries and class discussions had to be examined in order to determine if these students understood the definition of "Arab" by the end of the unit.

For two of those students, Audrey and Brad, the connection between the term 'Arab' and a geographical location did not appear in any of their reflective journal entries or transcripts until late in the unit. However, both clearly demonstrated at least some

understanding of the term "Arab" by referring to people "from the Middle East," or from the "region around Saudi Arabia" during their end of the unit essay assessment. Although Figure 4.1 on the pre- and post-unit survey responses did not represent those two students as improving their knowledge about the term 'Arab,' they clearly did end the unit with a better understanding of it.

Zeke, on the other hand, never clearly demonstrated whether or not he understood that the term "Arab" specifically referred to a person with linguistic roots in the Arabian Peninsula region. But he did show evidence of knowledge about how Arabs are perceived and some of the struggles members of the group may face. In his first reflective journal entry, Zeke noted that "stereotypical Arabs" are often seen "with a robe, scraggly beard, and the keffiyeh." The term keffiyeh, which refers to a Palestinian black and white checkered scarf that has come to represent Palestinian nationalism, was not discussed in class or brought up in any readings prior to this entry. Zeke's personal knowledge of the garment, as well as his correct spelling, provides evidence of some previous knowledge about issues facing Arabs in Palestine and helped to explain why his entries on the pre- and post-unit surveys' focused on the hardships faced by Arab Americans. His pre-unit reply to the question about what he thinks it meant to be Arab was, "racism if you live in the U.S; endless amounts of taunts." The post-unit survey reply followed the same theme. "I know that it is hard, and that they deal with discrimination every day."

In total, only seven students described an Arab as being Muslim or provided no evidence of any understanding of the term in their post-survey. Of those seven, Alexandra B. and Jamie continued to apply the terms interchangeably throughout the unit

and although Jack applied the terms correctly, he did not apply them often enough to provide enough evidence that he understood the difference. Hunter, Sarah and Diana all demonstrated that they recognized the distinctions between Arabs and Muslims, with Diana going as far as to argue that the "media has to take responsibility for teaching those differences." Sarah's statement in Student Reflective Journal Five personified the changes that many students demonstrated during the unit.

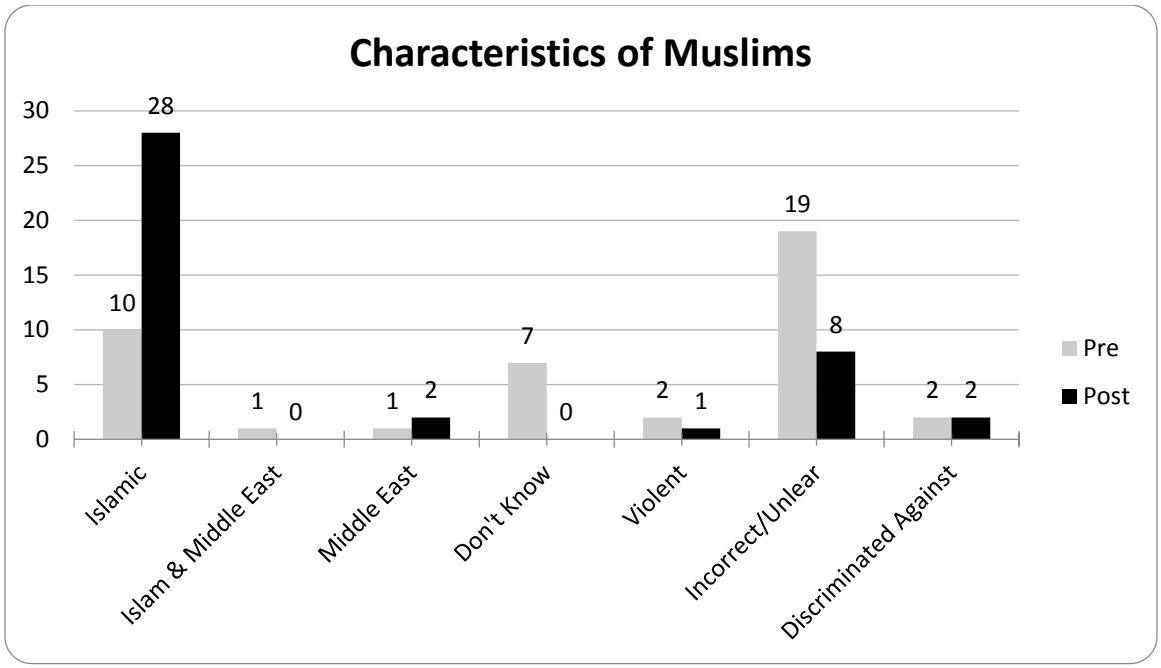
> I used to view those people all in the same category and somewhat stereotyped them into things I believed to be true. Now I have the correct information and I know an Arab is not necessarily a Muslim and Muslims can be from anywhere. I view them a lot more differently than I did before.

In regard to the physical characteristic of Arabs, students were not expressly asked to describe Arabs after the first journal entry. As a result, there is little evidence available to determine whether or not students reduced or eliminated the stereotypes they held about the physical appearance of Arabs after the initial discussion. However, based on the above analysis, they did demonstrate a pattern of questioning their previous knowledge of the topic.

Characteristics of a Muslim. As shown in Figure 4.2, responses to the post-survey open-ended question about the characteristics of Muslims demonstrate that nearly 70% of students were able to accurately describe a Muslim as a person that practiced the religion of Islam without making any reference to the term Arab, compared to less than 25% at the start of the unit. Two others linked "Muslim" with discrimination without clearly connecting the term to Islam. Similar to the prompt for "Arab," this prompt, "What do you know or think you know about what it means to be a Muslim?" also did

not specifically ask students to define the term, so analysis of additional data was necessary to ascertain if those two students were able to accurately define "Muslim."

Figure 4.2: Student Understanding of the term Muslim on Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

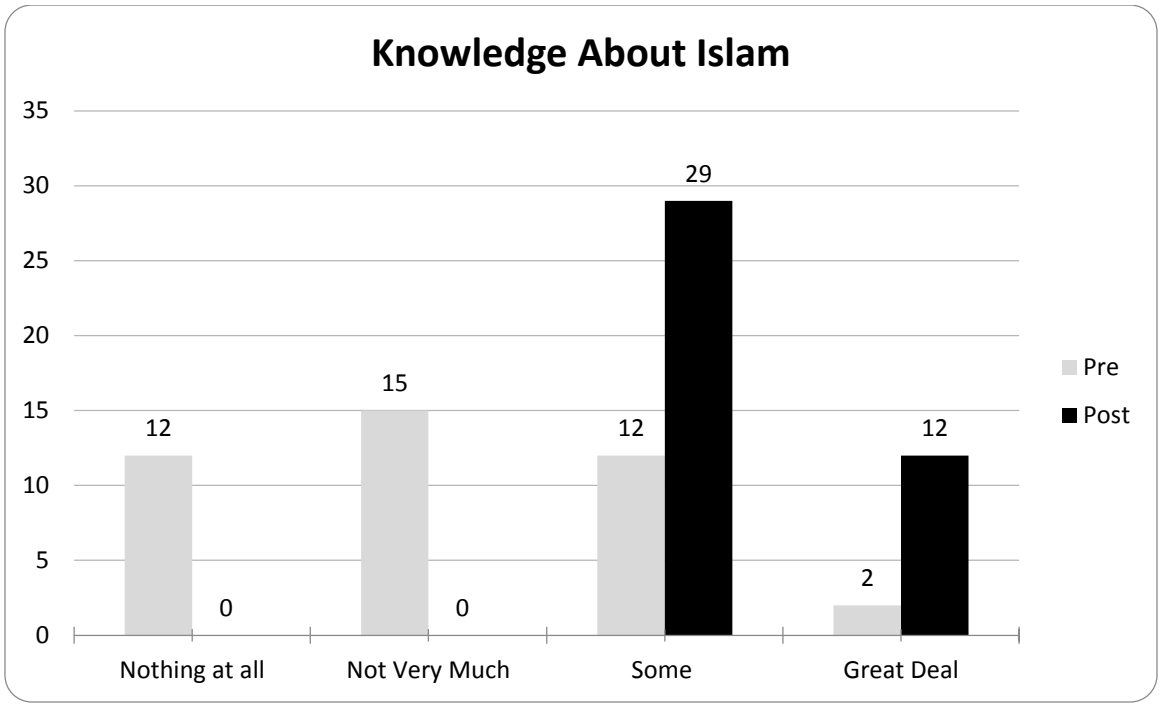
The first of those two students, Marie, primarily focused on the discrimination experienced by Muslims throughout her reflective journal entries. Although she never clearly demonstrated that she understood the difference between the terms "Arab" and "Muslim," she also avoided using the terms synonymously. The other student, Mark, provided more direct evidence of having developed an accurate understanding of the two terms. Early in the unit, during Student Reflective Journal One, he inaccurately associated "Arab" with Islam by stating that, "many Americans, and others think that Arabs are filthy for not believing in Christianity, or Judaism, their religion is just like

ours." He failed to recognize that being Arab did not necessitate that one follow the religion of Islam. However, during the class discussion that followed that reflective journal entry, Mark expressed surprise to hear that many Arabs were Christian and Jewish. Additionally, when responding to his readings from *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem*? several weeks later, Mark noted that even though one of the subjects was Christian, he was often assumed to be Muslim by most other Americans.

Notably, by the end of the unit, none of the students linked Muslims with both Islam and the Middle East and none commented that they "did not know." While one student, Jamie, did reference violence with Muslims in the post-unit survey, it was to note that there was an inaccurate perception that Muslims were "automatically thought to be terrorists." Two students, James and Mark, did inaccurately describe Muslims as primarily being from the Middle East without indicating that they knew Muslims practiced Islam. James stated that Muslims were "peaceful people, mostly from the Middle East," and Mark described them as being from "Southeast Asian and other parts near that."

Knowledge about Islam. When asked to describe their own level of knowledge about Islam, 66% of students considered themselves having little or no knowledge at the start of the unit, and only 34% labeled themselves as having some or a great deal of knowledge. By the end of the unit, 100% of students believed they had at least some knowledge of Islam, with 12 describing themselves as having a great deal of knowledge [See Figure 4.3].

Figure 4.3: Student Self-Assessed Knowledge of Islam on Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

During the final focus group discussion, the students reinforced their perceived improvements in their understanding of Islam, as demonstrated in the following conversation.

Katherine: I would say I have a much better understanding of Islam now. I know I don't know everything, but I know more. Things I knew before weren't necessarily wrong, but I really didn't know much.

Hayden: I knew that Muslims had to, are supposed to pray five times each day, but I never really understood why. I guess I thought it was kind of weird before, but now that I know why they do that, it seems, well, I guess normal. It's no big deal.

Sean: That, and I always thought Muhammad was like Jesus to Christians. I was shocked to find out that Muhammad is only a prophet, the last one I guess, but a prophet, not their God, or the son of God.

Chad And they don't pray to Muhammad. I thought they prayed to him like we do to Jesus. But they don't. I thought that they did.

Sean: And Muslims believe a lot of the same things as Christians, and Jewish people. I was like, "What," when I heard that they believe Jesus was a prophet and they believe in Abraham too. They believe a lot of the same things we do.

Gloria: They believe in the same God too. They just believe Muhammad was the last prophet and that he received messages from God and wrote...well not wrote, but those messages eventually became the Quran.

Teacher: Did you know that before the unit Gloria?

Gloria: Yeah.

Teacher: So your knowledge of Islam didn't change as a result of the unit?

Gloria: Well it did change. I learned stuff I didn't know before. But I knew a lot of it already. I did learn more about the Hajj, which was really cool. I knew Muslims were supposed to try and go on a trip to Mecca, but I didn't know why. I didn't really know what Mecca was. Learning all about that was really interesting.

Rachel: That was really interesting. I knew there was some sort of trip for Muslims, but I didn't know what it was. I have to admit, I used to think it was some way of showing, of becoming an extremist. Like going on that

trip was something Muslims did to sort of become an extremists.

Megan: I think I kind of thought the same thing in a way, I guess. I think I used to think that it was a way for Muslims to almost swear allegiance to Al Qaeda or something. I don't know. I really don't know what I thought exactly, but I don't think that anymore. I think the Hajj is really awesome. I wish Christians had something like that.

Rachel's comment also hints at a possible change in student knowledge about the existence of oppression within the religion of Islam. Earlier conversations and journal entries had demonstrated that many of the students viewed Islamic countries as oppressive towards non-Muslims. Additionally, there was a general theme of believing gender inequality was a part of Islamic beliefs. By the end of the unit however, a majority of students had made at least one written or verbal comment that demonstrated a pattern of starting to challenge that belief, with a few students focusing on the issue more extensively.

During the summative essay [See Appendix F], Megan noted that she had "believed Muslim women were completely under the control of their husbands or fathers, but that's just not true. Ms. Ahmad was an independent mother of three who wore what she wanted and did what she wanted." Later in the essay, she also noted that "Muslim women choose to cover up their bodies and how much of their bodies to cover....they are not required by their religion to only show their eyes." During the final focus group session, Katherine commented that one of the things that she found most surprising was that Muslim women have been "presidents of countries."

In the end, although there existed enough evidence to suggest a pattern of change in knowledge in regard to oppression, there simply is not enough data to state unequivocally that lasting change to student knowledge about the stereotype of Islam as an oppressive religion occurred. While a few students wrote directly about the issue in some detail towards the end of the unit, most did not.

Physical Characteristics. The activity from the unit that was cited most by students when talking or writing about changes in their knowledge about physical appearances was Ms. Ahmad's visit. During her visit to the classroom, Ms. Ahmad wore a hijab and abayah with an elaborate pattern that included a wide variety of colors. When asked about her clothing, she explained that she did not wear that type of clothing frequently and that when she was teaching, shopping, or out with friends, she usually wore the same types of clothes that many of the students were wearing that day. The abayah, she explained, was what she wore when she went to the Mosque. While students did not show much reaction to her comments in class after she said them, many did reference how she was dressed and how she normally dressed during their reflective journal responses immediately following her visit.

Alec, like many of his classmates, demonstrated surprise when he learned that she wore "something that colorful to the Mosque," admitting that he thought "they [women] had to be dressed in all black and completely covered." Megan, who had previously stated both in writing and verbally about the need for Muslim women to dress conservatively, wrote about how "beautiful her clothes were," wishing she had clothes like that for herself.

There was a noticeable lack of interest by students in the clothing worn by Moustafa Bayoumi, even though he appeared during the Skype session wearing a typical collared shirt that any male teacher in the school would wear. The lack of attention on his dress may have been due to the focus on his book during the discussion, or because his clothes did not stand out in anyway, even though they did not match the student descriptions at the start of the unit. Additionally, at no other point during the unit was his attire brought up by students, even though a few continued to reflect back on Ms. Ahmad's attire up through and including on the final summative assessment. Overall, evidence of change in regard to the stereotypes about Arab and Muslim men wearing clothing such as turbans, robes and sandals was sparse. While students did acknowledge that they understood Muslims in the United States often wore the same style of clothes that the students themselves wore, very few referenced that issue after the first few days of the unit.

Throughout Chapter 4, evidence pertaining to specific research questions from selected students has been analyzed in detail and set off from the main text using inset boxes. Students were selected for in-depth analysis to provide diverse perspectives or reactions to various ARE teaching strategies.

Mackenzie

Mackenzie was a Christian, white female with no previous personal interactions with Arab or Muslim Americans. She was a highly motivated student with an A average, and she was an active participant in class discussions. She had demonstrated in previous units a willingness to be open about her shortcomings, an ability to critically analyze her own

attitudes, and a sincere empathy for others that were oppressed. She missed a considerable amount of class time on several occasions during the school year for medical reasons, but was able to finish the last two months of the year uninterrupted. Mackenzie had quite a few friends in the class, and was always respectful and on task. Her school work always displayed evidence of considerable effort and she demonstrated an ability to be open, honest and self-reflective.

Mackenzie was also a member of the focus group and her student reflective journal entries always provided insightful comments and displayed evidence of serious effort. Her remarks throughout the unit seemed to demonstrate that she was willing to provide honest responses representing what she actually thought rather than what she believed I was looking for. For example, Mackenzie was one of only four students to openly admit linking Islam with violence on her pre-unit survey and to state openly that she had a negative view of Muslims. Additionally, she provided an abundance of oral and written statements that allowed for frequent opportunities to triangulate her data.

Knowledge of Arabs and Muslims

At the start of the unit, Mackenzie demonstrated and admitted that she was unsure of what the terms “Arab” and “Muslim” meant. On her pre-unit survey, she described “Arab” as a “form of Islamic religion in which they believe in a God.” Her description of a Muslim was almost identical except that it omitted the word Islamic. “It’s a form of religion in which they believe in a God.” She also shared that she knew “nothing at all” about Islam itself. She reinforced her lack of knowledge at the start of the first student reflective journal entry when she admitted her ignorance openly.

> I really don't know the difference between Arab and Muslim. I generally relate the two together, with head turbans, darker skin color, who are Islamic. I think Arabs believe in Muhammad Ali, that he is their God...The Arab culture seems to be persuaded by and have such a strong belief in their religion, as 9-11 happened and several suicide missions have been completed.

Her word association activity responses provided more evidence of her confusion and lack of knowledge. Under the term "Arab," she included "Muslim." However, she did not include "Arab" as a term under "Muslim." Overall, it was clear that Mackenzie considered the terms "Arab" and "Muslim" to be interchangeable when the unit started, but had figured out that there must be a difference between the two since she was being asked to describe each separately.

As the unit progressed, Mackenzie quickly began to recognize the differences between the two terms and she began to apply them correctly in her written and verbal statements. During the first focus group discussion, Mackenzie stated that she associated "Arab with the Arabian peninsula and Muslims with a religion and culture." Soon after, while taking notes as she watched *Reel Bad Arabs,* she further demonstrated her improved understanding of the two terms by stating that "Christians and Muslims live in the Arab region. Why can't they live in peace?" She continuously applied the two terms correctly in nearly every written and verbal statement after the first day.

On her post-unit survey, Mackenzie provided a partially correct definition of "Arab," as a person "from the Middle Eastern area; it is a geographical description of a person," and an accurate description of a Muslim as someone who believes "in the religion of Islam, which prays 5 times a day." Both definitions demonstrate improved knowledge about the two terms and a clear understanding that they did not mean the same thing. When asked how she would

describe her knowledge about the religion of Islam on the pre-unit survey, she described it as "Nothing at all." By the time she was asked to do so on the post-unit survey, she described it as "A great deal." The evidence collected throughout the unit suggests that her self-evaluation was honest and accurate.

Summary. As students were introduced to new definitions of the terms "Arab" and "Muslim," most displayed curiosity about the concepts and seemed eager to correct their own misunderstandings. Overall, even though there was still some confusion about what it meant to be "Arab," students showed improved knowledge about the term, identifying it independently of religious affiliation and instead on geographic and linguistic characteristics. Their understanding of the religion of Islam also increased substantially, as nearly all could accurately describe the basic tenets of Islam by the end of the unit compared to the beginning. In addition, all students became aware that "Arab" and "Muslim" were not synonymous and many also demonstrated the ability to use the two terms correctly during discussions and written responses. However, there were some students that still applied the terms inaccurately even though they could define them correctly. In regard to clothing, more evidence exists to demonstrate a pattern of improving knowledge about Muslim women than about Arab or Muslim men, likely a result of the in-person meeting with Ms. Ahmad.

There was a common theme present throughout the discussions and student reflection journal entries about the positive influence of the incorporation of Arab and Muslim guest speakers. Students frequently referenced Ms. Ahmad and Mr. Bayoumi as sources of their knowledge acquisition, demonstrating the potential benefits of the contact

hypothesis in effectively teaching students from the dominant group new information about a minority group.

Research Question Two

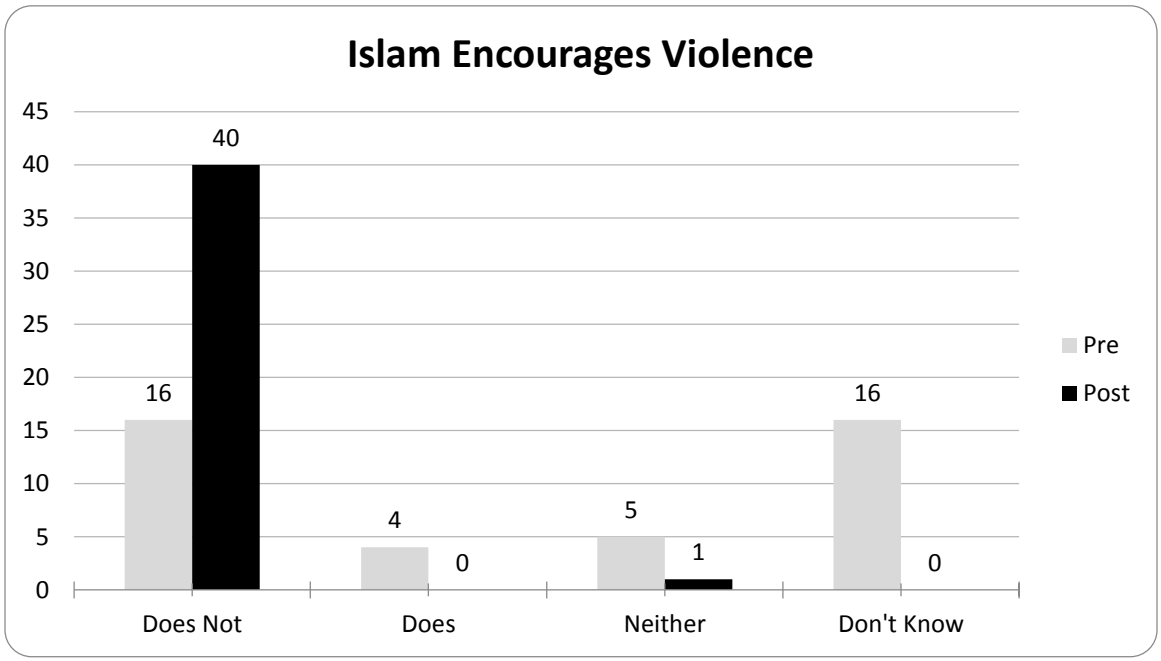
How do students describe their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims before the start of the unit and how do they describe their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims throughout the unit?

In order to determine if student attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims were representative of society and whether or not there were patterns of possible changes in their attitudes as a result of the Anti-Racist Education unit, the pre-unit survey, transcripts and student reflective journals were examined to determine their attitudes towards the two groups at the start of the unit. Although research has claimed that negative attitudes, or prejudices, have generally decreased throughout the 20th century in the United States (Madon, et al, 2000), other researchers have questioned if prejudice has actually declined as much as has been suggested (Devine, 1989; LePore and Brown 1997; Wittenbrink et al., 1997). Other researchers have found that people have a strong tendency to hide personal characteristics, such as prejudice towards others, that might be socially undesirable (Jones and Sigall, 1971). In an effort to account for this issue, triangulation of the data was used during this study to diminish the impact of student statements, both verbal and written, that did not accurately reflect their attitudes.

Attitudes Prior to Unit. *Islam and Violence.* During the pre- and post-unit surveys, students were asked to select the statement that came closest to their own attitudes about Islam encouraging violence. As demonstrated in Figure 4.4, preliminary analysis of the responses on the pre-unit survey, initial class discussions, and the first

student reflective journal entry showed that the beliefs of the students at the start of the study appeared to contradict the beliefs of Americans as a whole, who tended to believe Muslims were to be feared, distrusted, and treated differently than other Americans ("Islamophobia"). Only four students, Sarah, Nick, Brad and Mackenzie, admitted a belief that the Islamic religion was more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers. Conversely, sixteen students selected the option that the

Figure 4.4: Does Islam Encourage Violence



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

Islamic religion did not encourage violence. Of the remaining twenty-one students, sixteen did not know and five chose neither. However, of those sixteen students that said that violence was not encouraged by the Islamic religion on the pre-unit survey, twelve then associated Islam with concepts related to violence during the word association activity [See Table 4.1].

Among the six words listed under "Muslim" by Reggie, the terms "Al Qaeda," "Osama Bin Laden" and "Terrorists" appeared. Alexandra S. included "dangerous" and "bombings" in her list, and Joseph referenced "terrorists," "suicide bomber," and "9/11." In total, the word terrorist(s) appeared on the list of six of the sixteen students

Table 4.1: Terms Associated w/Violence in Word Association Activity & Student Survey Responses with "The Islamic religion does not encourage violence more than others"

Student	Word Association Terms Related to Violence
Reggie	Al Qaida; Osama Bin Laden; terrorists
Andrea	dangerous; bombings
Joseph	Terrorists; Suicide Bomber
Jack	extremist
Chad	Jihad; Osama Bin Laden
Richard	Terrorists
Mark	Terrorists
Jamie	Al Qaeda; 9/11
Hayden	extremist; intolerance
Michael	al Qaeda; terrorists
Gloria	Terrorist
Dan	9/11; hijackers

Source: Pre-Unit Survey

that claimed not to associate Islam with violence on the pre-unit survey. Association of the violent terms such as "terrorists" with Islam did not necessarily negate a student's perception of Islam as nonviolent, as students may have been expressing awareness of the general perception in the United States that Islam is associated with terrorism, 9/11 and

Al Qaeda, while simultaneously displaying their personal view that the association is incorrect. To determine the reasons for the apparent discrepancy, which also may be a result of the students simply not wanting to admit that they were prejudiced, transcripts of class and focus group discussions, as well as student reflective journals of these students were considered.

Of the 12 students that included terms related to violence during their word association activity despite claiming that they believed Islam did not encourage violence in the pre-unit survey, ten provided evidence of an association between Islam and violence in their reflective journals as well. The remaining two, Gloria and Dan, both reinforced their survey response that Islam did not encourage violence from the very beginning of the unit.

The pre-unit survey and word association activity by Alexandra B. both supported the idea that she did not view the religion of Islam as one that promoted violence among its believers, but her reflective journal responses contradicted that view. Alexandra B., a student that tended to do minimum work throughout the course and was satisfied receiving C's, rarely spoke in class discussions and did not volunteer to participate in the focus group, but her reflective journal did provide meaningful insights into what she may have thought about Islam. In her response to Student Reflective Journal Four, which was written after peer presentations on *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook*, Alexandra wrote that it "was nice to hear that Muslims aren't associated with terrorism even though most Americans think they are, it was really surprising." In her next entry, Student Reflective Journal Five, following the in-person presentation by Palestinian-American Salam Ahmad, Alexandra B. wrote:

> I have changed my views on Muslims and Arabs a little bit. I haven't really judged them before because when 9/11 did happen I was really young and didn't know what was going on...I also learned that Muslims aren't really violent people in their religion which was something new and surprising that I learned which mainly changed my view.

In her final reflection, Student Reflective Journal Ten, Alexandra B. again reinforced that her perceptions at the start of the unit included an association between Islam and violence despite her pre-unit survey response to the contrary. "I definitely have changed my views towards Muslims and Arabs, from this unit I have learned that they are not violent." In sum, Alexandra B., in response to three journal entries, acknowledged that during the unit she had learned Muslims were not violent, despite her selection of the statement that the religion of Islam did not promote violence among its believers at the start of the unit. She was not the only student to demonstrate this contradiction, or a possible change in her ability or willingness to admit to her own negative perceptions of Islam.

A high achieving student that routinely scored among the best in the class on assessments, Sandra also claimed to have no association between Islam and violence on the pre-unit survey but made written statements to the contrary. Initially, her word association responses not only avoided contradicting her pre-unit survey response, but actually reinforced it by including the term "peaceful." Sandra's friendship with a Muslim girl, one of the few students in the class to have a personal relationship with a Muslim, seemed to be the source of her perception of Islam as peaceful. However, Sandra displayed evidence throughout her reflections that the view of her friend as a peaceful representation of Islam did not fully represent her views of Islam overall. In Student Reflective Journal Four, she commented that, "I have never believed that all Muslims are terrorists, but I will admit that I had different reactions when I would see a

Muslim rather than another person. After learning about their culture and lifestyles, I know now that they are just like us but with different values and beliefs." Her statement reflects the existence of uneasiness about Muslims and a contradiction with her claim that they are "just like us" even though she believes they have "different values and beliefs." A few days later, in Student Reflective Journal Five, she continued to hint at the existence of a fear or uneasiness she had about Muslims and Arabs going into the unit.

> Now, I know that the Muslim religion is just like the other two major religions in the world. It is not as violent as it's made out to be but instead has a peaceful base. It does have extremist groups, which perform violent acts in the name of God. I never believed that all Arabs were terrorists, but I will admit that I had shaky perceptions of them. Now that I know about their culture, I have no reason to look at them differently from everyone else.

While Sandra demonstrated more open-minded attitudes about and empathy for Arabs and Muslims than most of her peers, the existence of fear, based on an association between Islam and violence, clearly existed for her when the unit began and continued throughout it despite her claim to the contrary on the pre-unit survey.

For the remaining 21 students that either selected that they did not know or "neither" on the pre-unit survey question about a link between Islam and violence, all included terms that could be associated with violence when responding to the term "Islam" [See Table 4.2]. Sixteen of them included the word "terrorism" or "terrorist," although Katherine did specify that they were "sometimes assumed to be terrorists," and James seemed to be questioning the association by also including "possible terrorist" as well as "terrorist."

An analysis of the student reflective journal entries and the transcripts from early discussions for these twenty-one students found that the comments they made were

strikingly similar to those made by students who claimed that they did not believe there was a connection between Islam and violence. Many of the students made written or verbal statements connecting Islam to specific violent events such as 9/11 or the Boston Marathon bombing, usually explaining or questioning why Muslims had to carry out

Table 4.2: Terms Associated w/Violence in Word Association Activity & Student Survey Responses with "I don't know" or "Neither."

Student	I/N	Word Association Terms Related to Violence
Edward	N	Extremist; Jihad; 9/11
Clara	N	bombing; terrorists; suicide bombers
William	N	religion wars; theft; 9/11; Boston bombing; terrorist attacks
Megan	N	Artillery; 9/11
Rachel	N	terrorism; dangerous
Peter	I	terrorism; 9/11
Marie	I	9/11; jihad
Diana	I	terrorism
Susan	I	terrorism; kill infidels
Zeke	I	Osama Bin Laden; 9/11;
Sean	I	terrorist; kidnappers; Hates America
Ruby	I	fighting; blood; bombs; terrorism; 9/11; tragedy; death
Evan	I	terrorist; Al'Queda [Original Spelling]
Hunter	I	9/11; terrorism
Leah	I	some terrorists; bombs
Katherine	I	Sometimes assumed to be terrorists; Al Qaeda
Carlton	I	WTC [World Trade Center]; terrorism

Alec	I	terrorists; 9/11
Ken	I	terrorism; 9/11; Afghanistan War
James	I	Terrorist; 9/11; Possible Terrorist
Audrey	I	bombings; hijacking planes; 9/11

Source: Pre-Unit Survey

those types of actions. For example, in Student Reflective Journal One, Edward, who had selected "Neither," shared his understanding of the rationale behind the attacks by stating that "when an Islamic man dies, if he fulfills his jihad in life or something, like killing infidels, he is rewarded with good stuff in heaven." His understanding of Islam then, did associate violence with the religion, as he believed Muslims were "rewarded" for "killing infidels."

Despite claiming he too did not associate Islam with encouraging violence among its followers, Caleb's first reflective journal entry showed evidence that he in fact did see Muslims as more likely to commit acts of violence in the name of their religious beliefs.

> The culture of Muslim and mine are a rocky subject, considering the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and all the oil drillings we have in their country that they do not approve of. The people of the Muslim religion always wanted to be heard on their beliefs and they always did it by attacks and riots for attention. The religion is either fighting for the control over a country's government or more powers. It's just something they believe they have to do for their religion. I think they wouldn't have to attack people if everyone just converted and became Muslim, but that isn't going to happen.

Later in his journal, during Student Reflective Journal Four, Caleb further demonstrated that he came into the unit with the belief that Islam did encourage violence when reacting to the visit by Ms. Ahmad and the activity based on the *American Muslim Teenager's Handbook*. He explained that his association of Islam with terrorism "has been proven

wrong" and he "now sees that the religion of Islam does not permit their [terrorists] actions."

Additional evidence of student attitudes that associated Islam with violence was also found in transcripts of class discussions. During a brief discussion that arose as news footage from 9/11 was being introduced, several students implied that the attacks that took place were a result of Islamic teachings.

T: Before we watch actual news footage from 9/11, what can you tell me about why the attacks happened?

Hayden: [After nearly 20 seconds of silence] Some people hate us?

T: Why would people hate us?

Chad: They don't like how we live, our freedoms and stuff.

Joseph: We're also not Muslim? At least most of us aren't.

T: Why do you think that's a reason to hate us?

Joseph: I don't know. I think, I've heard that they believe we either have to be Muslim or we have to die.

T: So Muslims want to kill Christians, Jews, Atheist?

Chad: Not all of them. Most don't, I don't think. But some obviously do. I mean really, some of them believe that they are supposed to kill us.

Gloria: Is that really because of their religion though? There are a lot of Muslims that don't think they are supposed to kill us. Like, I think there are a lot, quite a few African American Muslims in the United States. I don't know of any of them that killed people in the name of Islam.

Evan: But doesn't their book, the Quran, say that infidels need to convert or die?

Gloria: I don't think it says that. I really don't know what it says because I never read it. But I know the Bible has stuff in it about stoning people, killing them, but nobody says Christians are supposed to kill non-Christians.

Sean: Christians used to kill Muslims, a long time ago. That Spanish Extermination thing.

T: Are you referring to the Spanish Inquisition?

Sean: Yeah. Muslim people were forced out of Spain or killed. But Christians don't still do that. That's recognized, people know that was wrong. But Islam is way behind Christianity so they are basically going through a kind of Spanish...

T: Inquisition.

Sean: Inquisition today.

Megan: I don't think we can compare the two since that was carried out by most Christians and today, things like 9/11, they are only done by a very small group of people that most all other Muslims disagree with.

During that short conversation, four students directly linked Islam with violence (Joseph, Chad, Evan and Sean), and one other implied a connection (Hayden). None of those five students had identified Islam with violence on the pre-unit survey. Perhaps just as importantly, Sean and Megan also demonstrated the abilities to recognize and debate similarities and differences between historical examples of violence and events of today. Although assessing whether or not an Anti-Racist Education curriculum encouraged

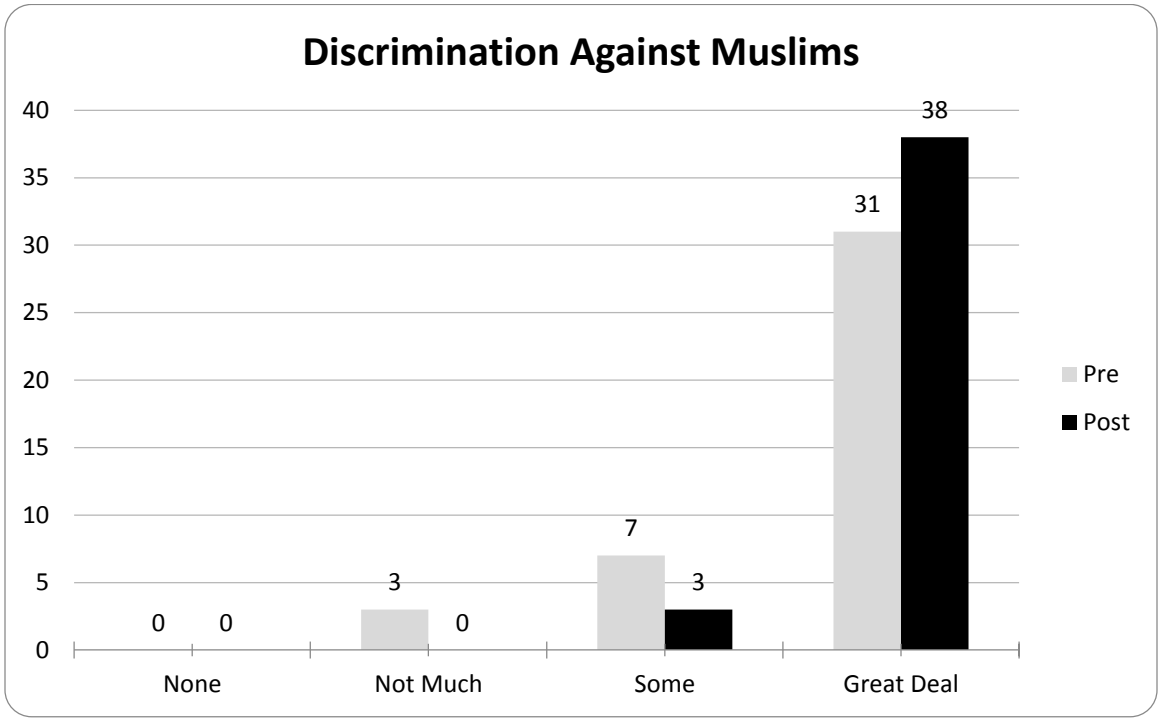
critical thinking was not part of the design of this study, this high level skill was manifested frequently throughout the unit.

Based on a thorough analysis of the word association activity, student reflective journal entries and the transcripts of class discussions, the actual number of students that believed Islam was associated with or more likely to encourage violence than other religions at the start of the unit appears to be thirty four. Only two stated that they did not believe there was a link between Islam and violence, and then supported that belief throughout the unit. The remaining five students all selected "I don't know" but provided no clear evidence throughout the remainder of the unit that did or did not link Islam to violence.

There was a clear theme that existed throughout most student's journal entries as well as class discussions connecting Islam to violence. The aspect that separated the students was whether or not they were willing or able to recognize that the association between Islam and violence existed in their thinking. For most, it did not.

Discrimination Against Arabs and Muslims. As part of their pre-unit survey, students were also asked how much discrimination they believed occurred against Muslims as well as against Arabs. As shown in Figure 4.5, prior to the start of the unit, a clear majority of students already perceived the amount of discrimination against Muslims in the United States as a legitimate issue, with 31 selecting "A great deal."

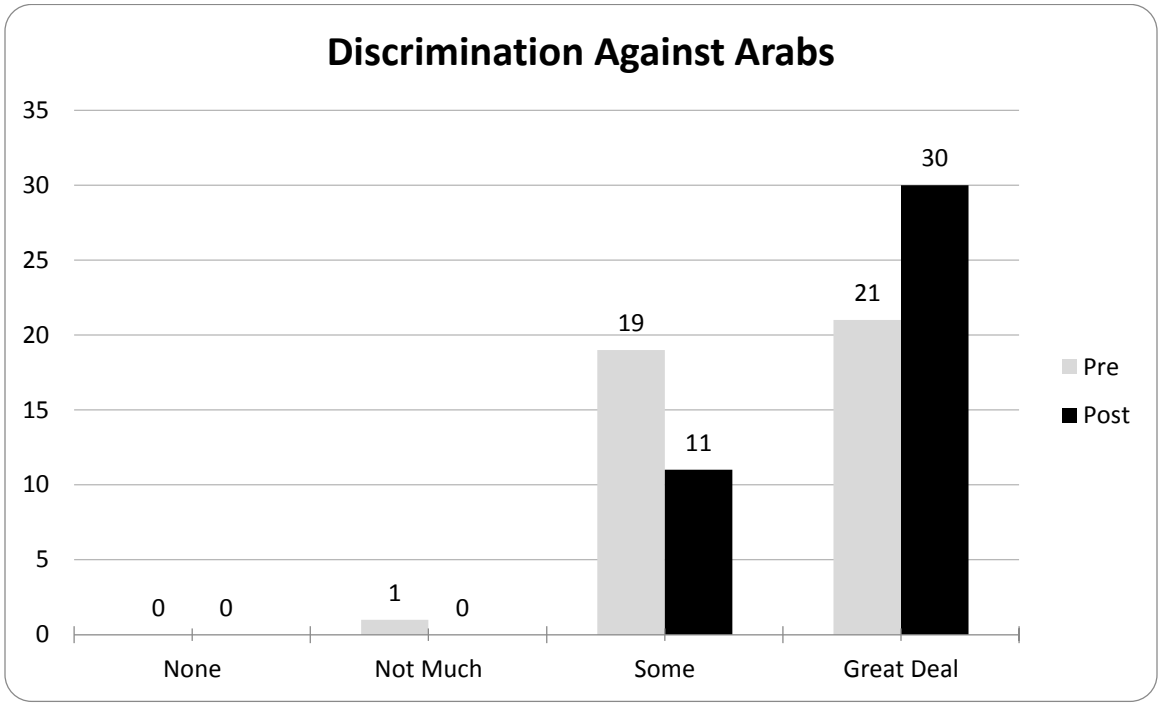
Figure 4.5: Perceptions of Discrimination Against Muslims Among the Student



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

However, despite the overwhelming number of students that linked the two groups as the same during their word association activity and early entries from the reflective journals, only 21 of the students selected "A great deal" to describe their perception of how much discrimination exist in the U.S. against Arabs [See Figure 4.6]. It is possible that delineation of the two terms in the pre-unit survey made students aware that that the two were indeed different, causing some students to question whether discrimination existed against Arabs to the same extent as it did against Muslims.

Figure 4.6: Perceptions of Discrimination Against Arabs Among the Student

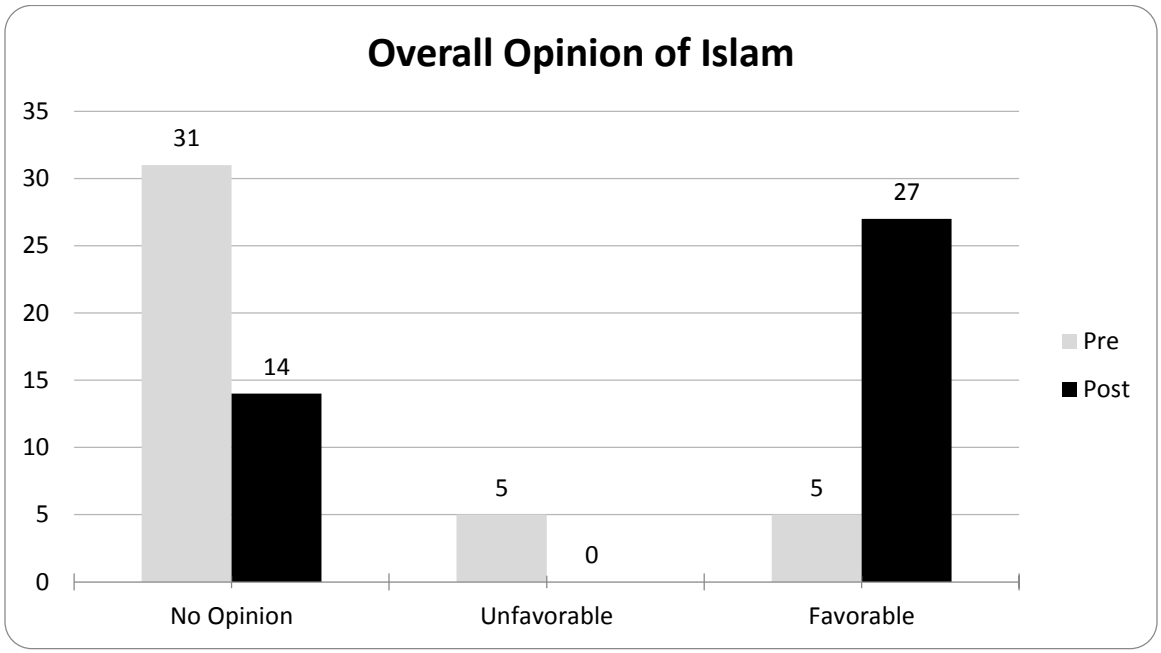


Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

Additionally students were asked if they had a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Islam or no opinion at all. Thirty-one of the 41 students selected no opinion and only five selected favorable [See Figure 4.7]. The other five confessed that they had an unfavorable opinion of Islam. When class discussion and focus group transcripts were analyzed along with student reflective journals, the findings were similar to the question about whether or not students felt the religion of Islam was more likely than other religions to promote violence. Even though over 75% of the students said they had no opinion on the pre-unit survey, a majority of them expressed the belief that there was a link between Islam and violence. Assuming that students perceived the encouragement of violence as an unfavorable characteristic, the student responses for this question

showed that many students were unsure or unwilling to admit that they had a negative attitude towards Islam at the start of the unit.

Figure 4.7: Students Overall Opinion of Islam



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

Jamie

Jamie was a quiet, respectful young woman and was one of two African-American students in the class. She seldom spoke unless specifically called upon and work she submitted tended to meet the minimum requirements. Although she agreed to participate in the study, Jamie was also one of only three students that asked not to be considered for participation in the focus group.

Jamie did not provide a great deal of data that could be used to ascertain if a possible change of attitudes about Arabs and Muslims occurred during the course of the unit, but what

she did provide was noteworthy, as is demonstrated a possible relationship between a student's low level of engagement and a pattern of little change in knowledge and attitude as a result of the unit. Of the five questions on the pre- and post-unit surveys that related to attitudes, she gave identical answers to four of them. At the start and end of the unit she stated that she believed "some" discrimination occurred against Arabs in the United States and she shared that she had "No opinion" of Islam. She also selected the option that the "Islamic religion does not encourage violence more than others," and that government policies do not reflect prejudicial beliefs in the U.S. very much on both surveys. The only question where she changed her response from the pre- to the post-unit survey was on how much discrimination she believed occurred against Muslims in the United States. She initially selected "A great deal" but changed that to "Some" by the end of the unit, seemingly indicating that the unit caused her to believe discrimination against Muslims was not as severe as she originally thought. By analyzing her written statements, responses to two of those five questions provided evidence that was contradictory to what she seemed to believe.

First, although Jamie stated at the start of the unit that she did not associate Islam with violence, her response to Student Reflective Journal Four appeared to contradict that selection. The prompt for the journal came immediately following the student presentations on *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook.*

> It was interesting to learn as much as I did about the culture of Muslims…The misconception about all Muslims being terrorists was also addressed, clarified to be incorrect, that the Muslim religion in no way encourages acts of violence or extremism, which had been practiced by the Muslims who committed the acts of 9/11.

Her statement denotes that she had a misconception about Muslims that linked them to being

terrorists, despite her claim to the contrary on the pre-unit survey.

The second statement that appears to be inaccurate is the change from the start to the end of the unit in her response to the question about the amount of discrimination that occurs against Muslims in the United States. Initially, she claimed that she believed a great deal occurred. At the end of the unit, she changed that to some, making her the only student in the study to see less discrimination against Muslims as a result of the unit. However, while reflecting after seeing Mr. Bayoumi's presentation, she portrayed a sense of shock at the magnitude of the discriminatory actions taken against Muslims. She began by referencing "the large number of arrests, deportations, and racial profiling against Arabs and Muslims," noting that they "were not at all justified and shocking to me." She then admitted that she was unaware of these incidents by explaining that she "had no idea this stuff could happen here." Later in the entry, she explained that "basically all Muslims, or any person that looked as though they could be of a Muslim background, were immediately labeled as terrorists and in turn, hurt in many different ways all over the country." Her statement not only indicates that she learned of more discrimination against Arabs and Muslims during the unit, but also that she was shocked by the revelations. Her reaction does not seem to indicate that by the end of the unit she believed less discrimination occurred against Muslims than at the start of the unit.

Summary of Attitudes at Start of Unit. Overall at the outset of the unit, the evidence suggested that a majority of students tended to believe, to some extent, that the religion of Islam was linked to violence. Additionally, nearly all of the students also felt that discrimination against Muslims existed in the United States. While nearly all students believed that discrimination existed against Arabs, fewer felt that a great deal of

discrimination existed against Arabs than did against Muslims. Despite claiming to have no opinion about Islam overall, a majority of students also made written or verbal comments that demonstrated some unfavorable views of Islam as a whole.

Attitudes During Unit

Examination of transcripts from class and focus group discussions, student reflective journals, the post-unit survey, and the end of the unit summative assessment essays were used to determine to what extent, if any, the evidence suggested patterns of change in student attitudes about Arabs and Muslims.

Islam and Violence. An analysis of the post-unit survey by itself indicated that the largest potential pattern of change took place in the question that asked students if they believed the religion of Islam encourages violence. Forty of the forty-one students selected that it does not, representing an increase from the pre-unit survey of twenty-four students not identifying violence with Islam. However, in order to determine if the survey responses were accurate representations of student attitudes or represented an attempt by students to hide their prejudice, it was necessary to examine their written and verbal statements throughout the latter portions of the unit.

Some of the most telling evidence supporting positive changes in student attitudes about the link between Islam and violence was found in the unit summative assessment, which also served as the final exam for the course. Assessments such as the post-unit survey, while beneficial to provide data for triangulation, also can be intentionally or unintentionally manipulated by students to provide responses that they believe portray

themselves as unbiased. Open-ended assessments, on the other hand, require students to define and apply concepts, and allow them to demonstrate deeper learning.

This essay asked students to compare and contrast the Arab and Muslim experiences to two other oppressed groups covered in class, which included African Americans, Japanese Americans, various indigenous peoples under U.S. control prior to World War I, Latinos, and counter culture groups of the 1960s and 1970s.

Hayden's response offered a common theme of his classmates by referencing how "many people still believe, to some level, that black men are prone to violence because of the brute stereotype that still persists." He compared the Scottsboro Boys, who were "just assumed to be guilty of raping the two white girls because it's what many whites expected them to do," to how many people think about Muslims. "We are basically taught to suspect that any Muslim is a potential terrorist. I suspect that I thought that too, but now I know that it's not true. Very few Muslims are terrorists, just like very few African Americans are violent."

Megan, a compassionate student that sometimes struggled with school work and one of the students that initially made comments that linked Islam with violence, wrote that many Americans "do not understand that the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center were Extremists. All religions have Extremist groups." She noted that for people to "better understand the complexity of this problem [terrorism], they need to be educated about the Muslim religion and Arab culture so they understand that they are not more violent than anyone else." After initially denying or not recognizing that she was prejudiced early in the unit, Megan continued this pattern of actively seeking out ways to make her and others less prejudiced as the unit progressed.

A student that made multiple references that linked Islam with violence early in the unit, Joseph connected the treatment of Arab and Muslim Americans to how Japanese-Americans were treated after Pearl Harbor.

> This is not very different from what we are doing to the Arab and Muslim population right now as we label them as a problem and view them as a dangerous group of people for the actions of a few extremist organizations. It is not fair to look at them as problems for all of American society due to their religion or culture and nothing more. They are people just like us. Once 9/11 occurred, discrimination against Muslim and Arab Americans skyrocketed and many people blamed them for the event. They were looked at as untrustworthy, dangerous, and unpatriotic. People began to fear them. Once the initial fear of 9/11 and terrorists died down people never stopped the discrimination and prejudice thoughts about Muslims and Arabs though because they were never taught the truth.

Chris went on to offer some hope for Muslim and Arab Americans though, acknowledging that Japanese-Americans are no longer considered unpatriotic or a threat to attack America.

Katherine was not as optimistic as Joseph when she wrote that "even with the events of 9/11 happening over ten years ago, discrimination against Muslims is still very common today. It will be a very long time until the discrimination stops." She then explained that "the way we fix this discrimination is to educate our citizens about what exactly it means to be a Muslim. Muslims do not hate Americans. They do not condone violence. If people would realize this, the 'problem' we have would be eliminated." It should be noted that earlier in the unit Katherine had linked Islam with violence in journal entries, but after the visit with Ms. Ahmad, she expressed that she was upset by how Ms. Ahmad had been treated by her neighbor after 9/11 and wanted to make sure she didn't treat other people like that herself.

Rachel, another student who had shared concerns about her own prejudices as the unit progressed, described Muslims as terrorists and dangerous in the pre-unit survey, but then provided some of the clearest evidence of the potential influence of the unit in general, and her direct exposure to Muslim Americans specifically.

> Before this unit, I didn't really understand what Arab and Muslim meant and I couldn't help but characterize them as terrorists because of my misunderstanding. Although I don't think that I made discriminatory actions against Arabs and Muslims, it definitely came to my mind whenever I thought about them. After this class I definitely understand more about the beliefs of Muslims and although some extremist beliefs stem from the foundation of Islamic faith, most other Muslims are like Ms. Ahmad and Mr. Bayoumi and are very accepting of other religions and believe in doing good things. In the future I will definitely make sure to not group all Muslims as terrorists and remember that not all of them believe that killing Americans is something God wants them to do, it's just the extremist groups we need to watch out for.

Rachel's statement though, also provided evidence that although she stated that she knew not all Muslims want to kill in the name of her religion, she did still associate violence with Islam by linking extremists to the foundations of the Islamic faith. The evidence suggested that Rachel was struggling to eliminate her own prejudice by overcoming the cognitive dissonance she was experiencing as a result of being exposed to information that challenged her preconceived notions about Muslims. Conversations from class and focus group discussions indicated that her struggle was representative of a pattern among many of her classmates as well.

During a full class discussion that took place after students completed their reading of *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?* and the presentation by its author, Moustafa Bayoumi, students clearly struggled to internalize and accept their stated views that Islam did not encourage violence.

Dan: I still don't understand why Rasha's family was let out of prison all of a sudden. I mean, I don't think they should have been there at all. They were put there basically, I think, because they were Muslim and because they were Muslim they were suspected of being terrorists. But why did they let them out. We never got an answer to that question.

T: I don't have an answer for you. I really don't know why and Mr. Bayoumi didn't really seem to have an explanation. Perhaps they, the government, simply didn't have any evidence linking them to terrorists so they let them go. But what about the fact that they were arrested in the first place. Now that we've read the rest of the book and talked to Mr. Bayoumi, let's talk about that. What do you guys think? Was it acceptable in any way to do it, to be cautious?

Reggie: I don't know if I would say it was acceptable, because they didn't do anything other than being Muslim. They obviously weren't terrorists, like most Muslims. But I kind of understand why it was done. I mean, Muslims had just killed 3,000 people and we didn't want to have other people killed.

Mark: Yeah, it wasn't right, but if the government had reason to expect that her family was terrorist, then to be safe, to protect people, I see why it might have been done.

Megan: But that's the problem. You guys are saying that being a Muslim isn't a reason to be arrested because that doesn't make them terrorists, but then you are saying it makes sense to arrest them to be safe because they are

Muslim. The government obviously didn't have any reason to think they were terrorists or they wouldn't have let them out. I think it was wrong, period. There really is no way to justify it, in my mind anyway.

At this point conversations between pairs or small groups of students broke out in response to the last few comments. As Megan pointed out, some of the students were arguing that even though they didn't believe being Muslim meant one was a threat, they were still unwilling to label the detaining of Rasha's family as completely unjustified. The class was quickly refocused with the following prompt by me:

> There seems to be some disagreement over whether or not it was acceptable, or at least understandable that Rasha's family was detained. Who else thinks it was okay that it happened, or it was understandable considering what was going on at the time.

According to my notes, at least 13 hands went up and Andrea was asked to explain why she felt that way.

Andrea I don't know. I guess, I think it's like after Pearl Harbor. Japanese people attacked us and we were concerned that other Japanese people in the country would help Japan so we put them in camps to make sure they didn't. I think it was wrong, but if I was alive then, maybe I would have thought it was the right thing to do, to keep the country safe.

Sandra: But it was wrong and those people put in camps, a lot of them were even Americans. They were Japanese-Americans. Like with Rasha. She lived here with her family for a long time. She was just as American as you and me. The difference was, she was a Muslim first and because of that, was

considered to be a threat. Just like a Japanese-American was Japanese first.

Andrea I don't think it was right, then or now. I just, I am just trying to see it from the point of view of someone there, at that time.

Sandra: But do you think being Muslim makes you more likely to be a terrorist than other people?

Andrea No, I don't think that. I think...

Sandra: If you think that, why would you justify them being arrested for no reason?

Andrea didn't respond to Sandra's question and the class was quiet for a couple of seconds. Students seemed hesitant to speak and most avoided eye contact with me.

T: Okay. This is obviously a difficult question to deal with. Does anyone else want to help Andrea or add to Sandra's point?

Chris C: I kinda agree with Andrea, but I see Sandra's point too. I don't think Muslims are bad people or anything, but it was Muslims that attacked us and the government is supposed to protect us.

Jack: If we were attacked again, and it was by Muslims in the country that we could have put in prison, we would be mad that the government didn't arrest them.

Gloria: So should we arrest all Muslims? Is being Muslim a crime?

Jack; No, no. Not all Muslims. But if we have reason to think they are a threat

it's better safe than sorry.

Gloria: Why was Rasha's family a threat. They weren't. They were arrested for being Muslim. I don't think being Muslim is a reason to arrest someone.

The difficulty by some students to conclude that the detaining of Rasha's family was wrong and unjustifiable appears to stem from their inability to fully accept the idea that Islam does not encourage or lead to violence. Students such as Mark and Andrea stated that they did not believe being Muslim made one more likely to commit acts of violence, but clearly still linked the two in their minds. It appeared that they wanted to believe that the link didn't exist, but years of exposure to the idea that Islam is a violent religion had not been undone in a few short weeks. But, their comments and questions did indicate that they, and other students, were critically assessing previously held beliefs and attempting to change their views of Arabs and Muslims.

Discrimination Against Muslims. An analysis of the pre- and post-unit survey question asking students about how much discrimination against Muslims existed in the United States in their view showed a strong pattern of changing attitudes. Additionally, unlike the issue of linking Islam to violence, the survey results were well supported by written and verbal comments throughout the unit.

Perceptions of discrimination against Muslims in the United States showed dramatic change by the end of the unit, as 27 of 41 students selected "Nothing at All" or "Not Very Much" during the pre-unit survey. On the post-unit survey, no students selected "Nothing at All" or "Not Very Much," with 3 students selecting "Some" and 38 selecting "A Great Deal." For discrimination against Arabs, the numbers were not quite

as dramatic, but telling just the same with 11 students selecting "Some" and 30 selecting "A Great Deal." All of the students also acknowledged the existence of discrimination against Muslims and Arabs in their final reflective journal entries or summative essay, though it should be noted that they were specifically asked to compare and contrast how different groups experienced and dealt with discrimination in the United States during the summative essay.

One of the more reserved but insightful students, Ken, argued in his summative essay that "modern day Arabs and Muslims may not experience the cruel slavery blacks faced or the institutionalized racism they still deal with today, but they are still discriminated in terrible and life-changing ways." He later concluded his essay by noting that "oppression in America occurs across the nation every day." Arabs and Muslims were "treated as the newest problem, similar to the Japanese during WWII or blacks throughout American history continuing into today." All three of the groups had been "heavily oppressed in America, whether it is the slavery and discrimination against blacks, the internment of the Japanese, or the daily struggles as an Arab or Muslim living in America today."

Other students noted in their summative essays that "discrimination against Arabs and Muslims is widespread in the United States" and that "these people [Muslim and Arab Americans] deal with all sorts of unfair treatment on a daily basis." One student even went as far as to say that he thought "discrimination against minority groups like blacks, Arabs, and Muslims is probably the biggest problem facing our country today."

The final journal entry asked students to reflect on acts of discrimination against Arabs and Muslims that they learned about and to present their ideas about how

individuals could challenge prejudice and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims at the individual, community and national levels. In the process of answering these questions, every student accurately provided examples of discrimination, although some described the incidents in much more detail.

Katherine referenced the incident from *How Does it Feel To Be a Problem?* in which the story was told of a pregnant Arab woman on a bus in New York City being accused by other passengers of carrying a bomb. She explained that if you "witness someone being discriminated against like that you need to have the courage to stand up for her and tell the other people why what they are doing is wrong."

Nick wrote about a clip that the class watched from the television show, "What Would You Do?" in which an actor playing the role of a store owner refused to serve an young Arab woman, who was also played by an actor. Nick recalled how angry he was initially because of "the blatant discrimination taking place by the owner and the other customers who didn't do anything to help her." He explained that when other people were later shown coming to the defense of the young woman, he "almost felt like crying" because he hoped he would be able to do that. He continued by expressing hope that he would "be able to speak up when I see stuff like that happening because just standing up for people being treated like that is an important thing to do to challenge discrimination."

Overall Opinions of Islam. By the end of the unit 27 students replied that they had a favorable opinion of Islam and the remaining 14 said they had no opinion. None of the students indicated that they had an unfavorable opinion of Islam on the post-unit survey. Of the five students that initially had an unfavorable opinion of Islam, three selected favorable on the post-unit survey. However, comments made during the focus

group session seemed to indicate that at least one student, Carlton, may have retained negative views of Islam throughout the unit. During a focus group conversation about *How Does it Feel To Be a Problem?*, several students brought up comments made by Carlton on two occasions, one during a group discussion in which no teacher was present and one made as students were leaving the classroom on the day after the Skype session with Moustafa Bayoumi.

Rachel: I think Rasha's story was the best one, at least the one that really hit home. Hearing about how her and her family were put in prison for no reason, for doing nothing, that was horrible. I was glad when she got out and told that guy from prison off in the restaurant. How could anyone blame her for that? I didn't really think about Muslims much before this, but I kinda respect them for what they've been going through. How could anyone who learns about this not?

Hayden: Yeah, right (sarcastically). Not everyone.

T: What do you mean? How did the book make you feel about Muslims?

Hayden: No, no, not me. I completely agree with Rachel. I think anyone that knows what happened, how people were treated for no other reason than their religious beliefs should empathize with them. But in my group, when we were talking about the book, one of the people in my group made a comment about how the book was just propaganda to make Muslims look better.

Nick: Carlton. I was in your group. It was Carlton.

Hayden: I wasn't going to say his name. I didn't think...

T: Don't worry about it. Everyone has a pseudonym, remember.

Hayden: Well yeah, it was Carlton.

Megan: I heard Carlton make a comment too, not in your group, I wasn't in your group. The day we talked to the author, I think it was that day, as we were leaving the room. He said something like, "What would you expect him to write about, Muslims that want to kill all non-Muslims? What about all those Muslims that want to kill us?" I told him he was an idiot and walked away.

Reading Carlton's reflective journal responses and concluding essay provided no evidence that Carlton had strong negative views of Islam, but his comments made to classmates left reason to doubt his selection of "No Opinion" on the favorability question.

While no other evidence could be found to show others were intentionally attempting to hide their negative attitudes towards Islam during the unit, it does not mean it did not occur and there was evidence that some students were at least struggling to overcome their previous beliefs. Much like with the issue of linking Islam to violence, although students often claimed that they had positive views on the post-unit survey, many of them still provided statements that challenged that claim. For example, Hunter declared that he had a favorable view of Islam at the end of the unit, but during his summative essay he was still concerned that, "some Muslims want to convert us or kill us." Richard also selected "Favorable" on the post-unit survey but explained in his final

journal entry that "it will be difficult to get rid of discrimination against Muslims as long as Muslim terrorist groups continue to threaten us."

During the last full class discussion of the unit, which was the day before the students completed the post-unit survey, there was a brief conversation between a few students that also provided evidence that some students were still unsure of Muslims, or even still held negative views. Notably, all of the students that took part in the conversation except Sean claimed that they had favorable views of Islam the next day on the survey. Sean selected "No Opinion."

Sarah: I know that Muslims in America are just like us except for their religious beliefs, but not all of them are good people. Most are, but some think they should do stuff, it's their religious duty to go after non-Muslims. I know I shouldn't think of all Muslims like those few, but I still do some.

Sean: I know what you mean. My head tells me that Muslims are fine and I know that's right. But I still find myself, I assume when I hear about things like that plane that's still missing, I wonder if it was some radical Islamic group or something. I know I shouldn't think that, and I catch myself doing it, but it's still the first thing I think of.

Reggie; I do that too Sean. I wish I didn't, but I do.

T: Do you have negative feelings about Muslims when you see them in public?

Reggie: I haven't seen any in public in a while, at least not since we learned about This stuff.

Sean: Me neither, but I hope I don't. But I really don't know what I'm going to think. I know what I should think. I think I'll catch myself if I do though.

Based on other written comments, Sean, Reggie and Sarah seemed to represent a pattern among most students in which they were dealing with cognitive dissonance, and while they were showing evidence of changing their attitudes, it was clear that the process was far from over at the end of the unit.

Mackenzie

As a result of her willingness to be open and honest about her fears and negative views of Muslims, Mackenzie offered a tremendous amount of data for use in addressing Research Question Two. For Mackenzie, her responses between the pre- and post-unit surveys on questions relevant to this research question changed 4 out of 5 times. The only question that did not have a different answer was in response to the prompt about how much discrimination she believed occurred against Muslims in the United States. She began and ended the unit thinking a great deal occurred. For the other four questions, her written and verbal statements provided evidence that the changes reflected in the surveys were accurate representations of her views.

Throughout her reflective journal responses, focus group statements and her summative essay, Mackenzie remarked how she became more aware of discrimination against both Arabs and Muslims, as well as how it made her feel. During the first focus group session, she shared that when she "learned about all the discrimination," she felt shame about being "part of this society." Later, in Student Reflective Journal Six, she again admitted to not knowing about

what had been occurring. "I didn't know there was so much racist and other things against these groups before watching this movie [*Reel Bad Arabs*]. It's both terrifying and surprising." Mackenzie explained that because of "our adamant stereotyping viewpoints, we do not feel compassion towards our actions of the supposed terrorists." During her final summative essay, Mackenzie begins to connect the "racist and discriminatory actions against Arabs and Muslims" to "the ignorance and uninformed beliefs of whites and their history of blaming an entire group for extremist actions."

Mackenzie also demonstrated that her initial feelings that linked the religion of Islam to violence had diminished as well. On numerous occasions throughout the unit, she commented about how blaming an entire culture or religion for the violent actions of a few was wrong, and on two occasions, even apologized for feeling that way initially. During the first focus group discussion, she explained the influence her new knowledge about Islam had on her attitude towards Muslims.

> Well now that I understand them more [Muslims], when I see them more in a store, I don't just assume 'Oh, terrorist,' like you see in the news all the time. I just think, 'Oh, they're Muslim, that's cool.' I don't think, I know I didn't used to think that. I think I was a little nervous before.

The dramatic change described by Mackenzie, allowing her to feel more comfortable around Arabs and Muslims she encounters, was supported by statements made by her throughout the unit.

Mackenzie primarily placed blame for her unsubstantiated negative attitudes towards Muslims on the media and the government. On multiple occasions, she commented on the role the government played in discriminating against Arabs and Muslims as she learned about it

from various readings and conversations. While watching *Reel Bad Arabs*, she commented that she "didn't even realize how much the government and films intertwined," and during her final essay noted that "after the attacks in 2001, the government quietly started to detain Arabs." These comments provided evidence that her post-survey response stating that government policies reflected prejudicial beliefs "A great deal" was indeed a true representation of how she felt by the end of the unit.

Overall, Mackenzie began the unit with serious apprehensions about Arabs and Muslims overall, with specific concerns about their links to violence and terrorism. By the end of the unit, the evidence showed that she had become empathetic regarding Arab and Muslim Americans and had overcome her initial concerns, leading to a more positive image of Arabs and Muslims. The lack of conflicting statements in her journal response and essays, as well as during discussions, indicated that the changes she experienced were sincere. However, Mackenzie's notable transformation in her attitude seemed to go against the general pattern for her classmates, most of whom demonstrated superficial changes at best.

Summary. Although contradictory evidence existed between the pre-unit survey and open-ended student responses for some students, by triangulating the data, it was clear that an overwhelming majority of students still linked the religion of Islam with violence to some degree. Additionally, prior to the unit, most students recognized that discrimination existed against Muslims in the United States and to a slightly lesser extent, against Arabs as well. As the unit progressed, students tended to develop more favorable opinions of Islam overall, but many still harbored concerns that became evident in their

written and verbal statements. The ability of the unit to undo entrenched prejudices appeared to only show evidence of notable change for a minority of the students.

Research Question Three

How do students describe where they get their ideas about Arabs and Muslims, and how these ideas have developed at the start of the unit? What do students recognize as factors leading to the development of their knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims during the course of the unit?

As part of the process of evaluating the influence of an Anti-Racist Education strategy on changing student knowledge and attitudes, it was necessary to identify what sources students credited with shaping their knowledge and attitudes at the start of the unit and what sources they came to recognize as factors as the unit progressed. Additionally, data was examined to provide an analysis of how students reacted to learning about the potential by those sources on their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims.

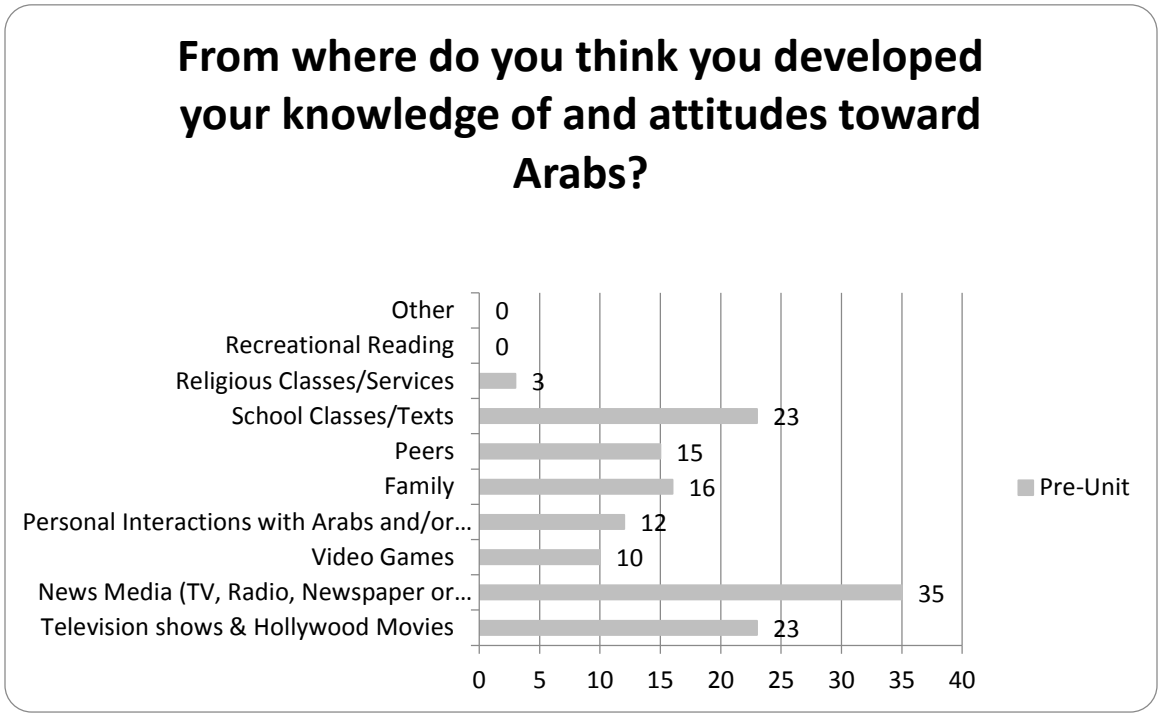
Recognition of Factors Prior to Unit. One of the objectives of the unit was to help students recognize how they developed their stereotypes and prejudices so that they could understand why their existing knowledge and attitudes were often inaccurate. As part of the pre-unit survey, students were asked to select from a list of possible sources that they thought influenced their beliefs. Later in the unit, as they were exposed to more accurate sources of information about Arabs and Muslims as well as critical examinations of common sources, they were asked to evaluate the options they initially chose along with their responses to the first student reflective journal prompt that asked them to

describe Arabs and Muslims. During the unit, they were also asked to respond in their student reflective journal to the documentary, *Reel Bad Arabs*, which exposed many of the inaccurate images the students may have seen in popular films. In doing so, students were expected to recognize how inaccurate or biased information from less reliable sources had influenced the development of their stereotypes and prejudices.

On the pre- and then the post-unit surveys, students were asked where they believed they developed their knowledge and attitudes towards Arabs in one question and towards Muslims in a separate question. The sources listed as options were identical for both Arabs and Muslims [See Appendix B]. Students had the ability to select as many of the choices as they believed applied, and were also able to add in sources not listed by selecting "other." Two students selected "Other" on the pre-unit survey question addressing Muslims, with the terms "9/11" and "Osama Bin Laden" added. Neither student elaborated on those added responses during their reflective journal entries.

Recognition of Factors Prior to Unit. As shown in Figures 7, initially students identified "News media" (35), "Television shows and Hollywood movies" (23), and "School classes/Texts" (23) as the dominant sources of knowledge and attitudes about both Arabs and Muslims, with all of the other options identified by less than a majority of students. Notably, ten students identified "Video games" as a source of knowledge and attitudes, only two less than the number of students that selected "Personal Interactions" with Arabs and/or Muslims" [See Figures 4.8 & 4.9].

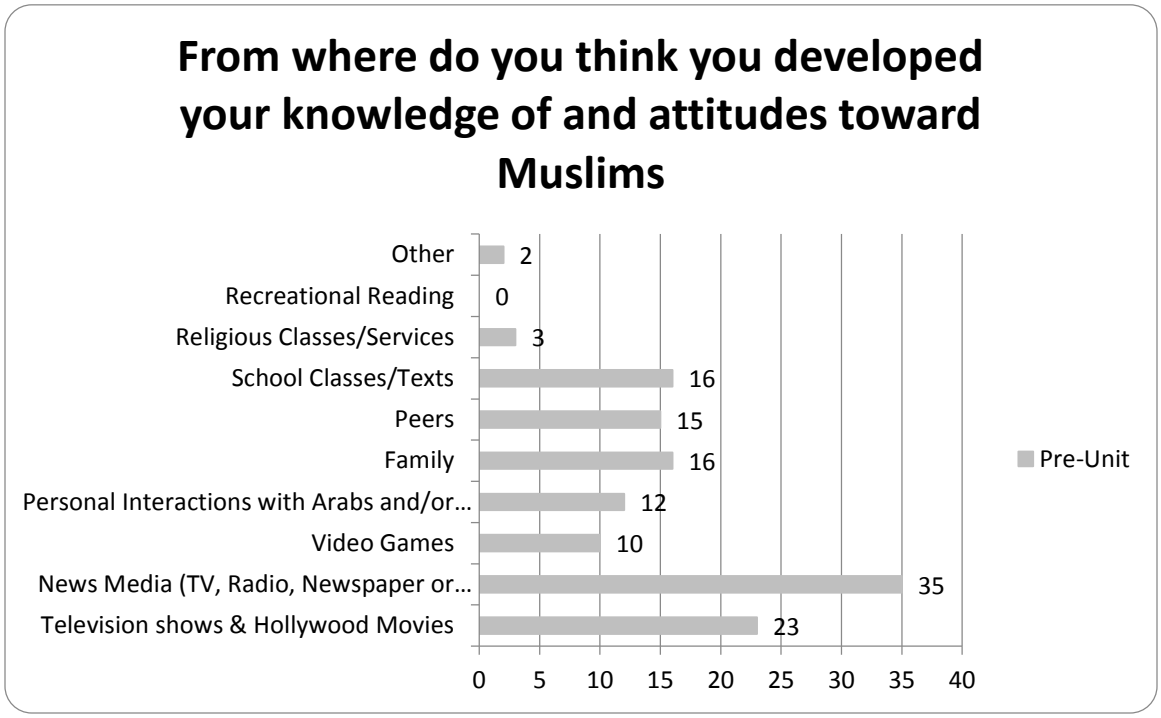
Figure 4.8: Knowledge and Attitude Sources Toward Arabs



Source: Pre-Unit Surveys

There were some contradictions between the pre-unit survey responses and student comments made during focus group and class discussions. For example, although Kevin did not select personal interaction with Arabs or Muslims as a factor on the pre-unit survey, during a class discussion he spoke about working with Muslims at his job. He thought that his Muslim co-workers seemed "like everybody else," and he would not have known they were Muslim if not for their "observance of Ramadan last year."

Figure 4.9: Knowledge and Attitude Sources Toward Muslims



Source: Pre-Unit Surveys

On the other hand, several students who did identify personal interactions as a source of knowledge on the pre-unit survey seemed to define interaction based on brief encounters at convenience stores or gas stations. Caleb explained that he "saw Muslims a lot when I visited my grandmother because they worked at the store next door." He continued by pointing out that "they are the only Muslims I know, but I never had any problems with them but, like I did have a hard time understanding some of them." William's type of interaction, which involved no meaningful exchange with Arabs or Muslims and assumed that the people were indeed Arabs or Muslims, was similar to at least three other students that had identified personal interaction with Arabs or Muslims.

Two students that identified personal interactions with Arabs or Muslims provided clear evidence that they had more meaningful relationships than most of the

other students. On multiple occasions, Sandra wrote or spoke about having a Muslim friend and meeting with her friend's parents. "She's just like all my other friends really, except that she does wear a hijab. Other than that, she does the same stuff, likes the same stuff we all do." However, it is interesting to note that when she spoke about her interactions with her friend's parents, she seemed less comfortable.

> Her parents are a little difficult to talk to because of their accents...Her grandmother doesn't even speak English, I think. I never heard her speak English. She usually just smiles at me and leaves the room. I don't know where she goes, but I did see her kneeling on the floor once, praying, I assume she was praying. I didn't want to ask. Her parents were always nice to me, but didn't really talk to me much. They just kinda left us alone when I was there.

The other student, Clara, wrote about doing volunteer work with her mother that involved interactions with a family of Muslims that also volunteered. Because their two sons were a lot younger than she, she was often asked to keep an eye on them while there. She too remarked that they seemed just regular kids and that the two boys even had hand held video game consoles "like everyone else their age."

Three students identified "Religious Classes/Services" as a source of information on the pre-unit survey for Muslims. Of those three, both Sandra and Clara displayed more accurate knowledge and fewer negative attitudes than most of their classmates at the start of the unit, although neither ever elaborated on what knowledge they learned about Muslims or Arabs through religious classes or service. The third, William, who also had the personal interaction at the store near his grandmother's house, specified that his youth pastor had spoken about Islam and the importance of "not believing the negative stuff you hear about them." However, William's survey and reflection

responses demonstrated that he shared many of the same prejudices about Muslims at the start of the unit that most of his classmates tended to possess.

Only ten students selected video games as a source of knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims at the start of the unit. Interestingly, although video games were not specifically addressed by the unit, their influence was brought up by students during the class discussion that followed the first student reflective journal. Several students commented on the frequency of Arabs or Muslims as the "bad guys" in games they had played, but at that early stage of the unit, all agreed that the games were just for fun and hadn't influenced their views of Arabs or Muslims. The influence of video games would be discussed again later in the unit in connection with the influence of movies and television shows.

In regard to peer influence, only 15 students initially identified their peers as a source of knowledge or attitudes, and very few commented about the influence of peers during discussions or in their reflective journals. Of those that did comment about peers, Ruby, Megan and Diana all shared similar sentiments about hearing misinformation from friends, but neither Megan nor Diana had selected peers as a source in the pre-unit study. Only Sandra, Clara, Gloria and Kevin, all of whom selected peers as a source, expressed any indication that they had learned accurate knowledge from their peers, but Gloria clarified that even though some of her friends had reliable information, others "often had no idea what they were talking about."

Michael

Michael presented a unique opportunity to examine a student who considered himself to be non-Arab and non-Muslim despite familial connections to both groups. He repeatedly referred to Arabs as "they" even though his father was Arab and his grandparents on his father's side were practicing Muslims from Jordan. Also notable is that he too listed terms associated with violence under both "Arab" and Muslim" in the word association activity despite his personal contact with Arab Muslims and his claim during Student Reflective Journal Four that he "didn't really have any misconceptions of the religion" since he "knew all this information beforehand."

During a class discussion midway through the unit Michael explained to the class that his father had Muslim parents originally from Jordan and although he was Christian, they occasionally visited each other. "My family on my father's side is Muslim and I know a lot about all of this." When asked by another student what he thought about Muslims, Michael replied that "I don't react crazily to Muslims or Arabs in person. I accept them for who they are not their religion or their ethnicity." His comments seemed to indicate that his personal interactions influenced his attitude and knowledge about Muslims but he did not select personal interactions as a knowledge source on the pre-unit survey, and in fact only selected "Family."

Recognition of Factors During Unit. Throughout the unit, some activities included the objective of allowing students to recognize how various sources have influenced the development of their stereotypes and prejudices. Additionally, the unit design incorporated strategies to start the process of correcting inaccurate knowledge and

changing student attitudes, such as opportunities to meet with Arab and Muslim Americans.

Students were specifically asked to reflect about Ms. Ahmad's presentation and although most of their comments focused on changes in knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims, a few students did comment about how meeting her in person was influential in teaching them more accurate information and changing their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims. Alec noted that "meeting her for a little more than an hour taught me more about Muslims than I learned in my whole life." Reggie shared similar sentiments and added that he thought "everyone in our school should meet her or someone like her because she was nothing like I expected." Reggie's reaction was shared by other students as evidenced by the following exchange during the final focus group discussion.

Hayden: There was a lot I didn't know about Islam. I thought I knew a lot, but most of it was wrong, or at least not, you know, complete.

Sean: Me too. Reading the one book, the teenager one I think, that was about being a Muslim teenager in America, it sort of challenged what I thought about Islamic people but I think hearing the lady, what was her name...

Gloria: Ms. Ahmad.

Sean: Yeah, Ms. Ahmad. Hearing her sort of made it real, like it made sense. Does that make sense?

Megan: No, it does. I know what you mean. When she talked about how she dresses like, more like we do, usually, she doesn't wear what she wore for

us, that's when I first got it. Muslims are like other religions, like Christians. People practice the religion in their own way. There is no one way to be a Muslim. They have some common beliefs of course, but not everyone goes about practicing them the same way.

Sean: That too, but I think I meant just reading about the religion in a book wasn't the same as hearing someone talking about how they practice it. I don't know. It just made more sense to hear a Muslim person talking about what Islam is. Like if Mr. DeTample was the one telling us what it was like to be a Muslim it wouldn't be the same. It wouldn't mean as much to me. No offense Mr. D.

Mackenzie: I agree with that. For some reason, I think I believe it more when I hear a person, a Muslim person, talk about it instead of just reading it. But like Megan said too, I was surprised that there was so much, like flexibility, for Muslims. Like when she talked about her own kids not doing the same things she does, not fasting for example. She sort of laughed about it, but I think she was also a little frustrated maybe, but also understood that they were going to do things their own way. She talked about how her own mother won't even touch a man, like shake hands or anything, but she said she thought it was okay to hug a male friend. It reminded me of my family. My mom goes to church all the time but has to fight with me and my sisters to go, and really, she seems to have given up. It doesn't mean I'm not a Christian still, I just don't feel I need to go to church all the time to prove it, or be a good little Christian. I guess it's the same for

Islam. We are led to think they are all the same, all like, extremists, terrorists, whatever the right word is.

Nick: That's exactly what I was thinking when she talked about her own kids. I was like, yeah, my parents and me have this ongoing battle about Church. But unlike you (referencing Mackenzie), I lose most of the time. But, hearing Ms. Ahmad talk about it made me realize that Islam is not what I thought it was.

Gloria: Yeah, yes. And Mr. Bayoumi too. If we didn't already know he was a Muslim I never would have known from talking with him until he mentioned how he practices his faith. I didn't think Muslims were what they are portrayed to be, but I also thought they had to do certain things that made them Muslim. Neither Mr. Bayoumi or Ms. Ahmad fully fit into what I pictured as Muslim.

This short conversation between the students emphasized one of the core strategies of the unit, allowing the students to have direct interaction with a Muslim to allow them to gain a more accurate understanding of the religion and how people practice it. By doing so, they were able to begin questioning some of their misunderstandings of the religion, specifically the fallacy that Muslim extremists represent how others practice the religion. Many students would later show evidence of using that new understanding of Islam to challenge some of the stereotypes they came to recognize in films and television shows, as there was a substantial increase in the number of students that recognized the influence of television shows and Hollywood movies during the unit.

Examination of the student reflective journals revealed that the majority of students believed that the knowledge they learned from films and television shows was predominantly negative or biased. For Student Reflective Journal Six [See Appendix A], students were asked to respond to the documentary, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, directed by Sut Jhally and based on the book by Jack Shaheen. Student responses to the first prompt displayed evidence of recognition of the influence popular media has had on the development of stereotypes and prejudices against Arabs and Muslims in the United States and in many cases, surprise and anger at that realization. Audrey represented the reaction of many of her classmates when she commented on lyrics from the theme song from Disney's *Aladdin*.

> *Oh, I come from a land, from a faraway place where the caravan camels roam; where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face, it's barbaric but, hey, it's home (Clements, 1992).*

"Aladdin was one of my favorite movies as a kid. I watched it all the time and I never really thought about what the song was saying about Arabs. I had no idea." However, even though she now recognized the negative connotations associated with the theme song, Audrey's next comment provided evidence that she still did not associate the development of her attitudes about Arabs with the movie.

> I don't think the words had any impact on me. I didn't pay attention to the words or the way Arabs were shown, I never paid attention to them. If I didn't hear them or see them, I don't think they could have made me think one way or another. I always thought of Aladdin as a good guy.

When Kevin pointed out that Aladdin was a thief at the start of the movie, Audrey replied that "he just stole what he needed to eat, to survive. He was a good guy, really." Her inability or unwillingness to recognize the influence these messages could have on

children like her is clear, and may represent an attempt to convince herself and others that she is not racist, but other students were able to make the connections between movies and attitudes.

Megan too was surprised to hear the lyrics she had been exposed to in *Aladdin* as a young child, but unlike Audrey, she thought about how the film may have influenced her attitudes towards Arabs.

> I saw the movie at least a few times, but I don't recall hearing those words or thinking that Arabs were bad. But just like the children's books about Jewish people that were used in Germany under the Nazis, I think they had to have some sort of impact on me, at a subconscious level. I don't think I had much, you know, exposure, to Arabs as a kid so I would think the little I did had to impact what I thought about them, I guess.

Megan's first reflective journal response seemed to support her statement, as she described Arabs as "untrustworthy," and "not wanting to be noticed." On her pre-unit survey she admitted to knowing very little about Arabs and wrote only that they followed "a certain religion." However, she also failed to identify Hollywood movies as a source of her limited knowledge about Arabs at that early stage of the unit, but during the above conversation she seemed to be indicating that she had come to recognize the potential influence of that source.

Following Megan's comment, Kevin referenced an earlier unit from the course in which students were taught how stereotypes about African Americans were common in books, music and eventually movies and cartoons. "Those stereotypes were accepted by nearly everyone because they were everywhere. Kids grew up seeing them, hearing them, so it was only natural that they would automatically believe them. I think it has to

be the same with Arabs." His comment resulted in the following discussion where students continued to make connections to earlier units.

Rachel: It's the same with the stuff about Jewish people, the way the Nazis used stories to teach the kids to be anti-Semitic. I remember the one about the mushrooms.

T: *The Poisonous Mushroom*. The one we looked at during the Holocaust unit, when we looked at propaganda.

Rachel: Right. The message in the story, it was comparing Jewish people to poisonous mushrooms and then kids would think Jewish people were bad.

Carlton: Yeah, but is that the same thing? Wasn't that story written specifically to make kids hate Jews? *Aladdin* wasn't made to make people hate Arabs. It was made, I think it was made to make money by entertaining us.

Evan: That's true. I don't think *Aladdin* is anything like what the Nazis did.

T: Does that matter? Does the purpose of the story, if it's to entertain and make money, does that mean the message isn't still there?

Carlton: I think it matters. Like, none of us even remember the song and none of us, I don't think, looked at Aladdin as a bad guy because he was a thief.

Kevin: It might not be as bad, but I think it still may impact kids. It might make them, us, think of Arabs as thieves or shady people.

Megan: It's hard to say for sure how a movie like that impacts us. I don't know. I mean I'd like to think it doesn't, that we "know" it's just a movie, but maybe it does.

The conversation demonstrated that all of those students recognized that negative portrayals based on stereotypes existed in movies such as *Aladdin*, but many did not believe that they themselves had been influenced by the negative messages. Additionally, there was disagreement among the students about whether or not a movie's purpose was relevant to whether or not it had an influence on how audiences viewed the ethnicity or religion of the characters, and if so, to what extent. Regardless of the lack of agreement, the discussion on *Aladdin* demonstrated that the students were using evidence to rationally consider how the entertainment media incorporates and proliferates common stereotypes in a society, as well as making connections across oppressed groups. The next film considered by the class, unlike *Aladdin*, contained an intended anti-Muslim and anti-Arab message.

The discussion on *Rules of Engagement*, which was written by former Secretary of the Navy, James Webb (Earp, 2006), resulted in more agreement among the students. Set in the country of Yemen, the film depicted violent demonstrations at the U.S. embassy that call for Marines to be sent in to evacuate the American employees. In the process of carrying out the evacuation, the Marines opened fire on a crowd of Yemeni, including many women and children. Initially, the film leads the viewer to believe that the actions by the Marines are an atrocity carried out against peaceful protesters. However, as the lead character carried out his investigation, more and more evidence came to light that started to cause one to question their initial assumption. Eventually, the film told viewers that "to kill Americans and their allies both civil and military is duty of every Muslim who is able" (Rudin, 2000). At the end, the incident involving the shooting was shown again, but that time as it really happened. The innocent women and children in the crowd

had fired at the Marines first, along with the adult males present. As author and narrator Jack Shaheen asked and answered, "Why does this matter? Because in the end, the massacre of even women and children has been justified and applauded. It's a slaughter, yes, but it's a righteous slaughter."

Hayden was the first student to bring *Rules of Engagement* up during the class discussion following the documentary.

> I saw that movie and I remember feeling good, like happy at the end when they showed the Marines right, in the right, and shooting all those people who were trying to kill them…I didn't feel bad for the people being killed. Thinking about it now, I'm kinda disappointed in myself for not recognizing the horrible stereotypes I let myself believe.

Hayden went on to point out that although he wasn't sure seeing *Aladdin* as a child influenced his views much because he didn't remember even hearing the discriminatory lines, he understood how films like *Rules of Engagement* helped reinforce stereotypes and made it "easier for Americans to support our use of military force in the Middle East."

Hayden's comments were followed by an outbreak of several impromptu group discussions by students throughout the classroom. After initially starting to refocus the students into the full class discussion, my co-teacher and I decided to instead allow them to talk in groups about the film for a few minutes. While circulating around the room, I recorded comments made by students to their classmates. Some of them included:

- "I can't believe I never heard anybody talk about this before."
- "Is it okay for a government leader to write a story like this, that's completely made up and makes a whole group of people look bad?"

- "Why do they make movies like this? This is like that movie we saw last year, about the KKK being heroes and all." When asked to clarify the movie by me, the student identified *Birth of a Nation* as the film referenced. "
- "I'm mad about this movie now. I'm even madder that I bought into the crap."

After a few minutes, we brought the students back into a full class discussion and asked for summaries from their group discussions and general reactions to the film.

Megan spoke specifically on behalf of her group but her comments were representative of comments made by every group.

> We all watch movies like this, and like *True Lies* or *24*, the television show, but none of us really thought about how they are impacting us, how we think about things, or people. We almost always see Islamic people, I mean Muslims, and Arabs too, depicted as terrorists or bad people. We were talking about how some of the things we wrote down to describe Arabs and Muslims a few weeks ago were things that kind of described characters in these movies. Since most of us don't really know any Arab people, or Muslim people, it makes sense that we would base what we think about them on what we see in movies.

At that point, Megan was interrupted by Sean, who was in her group.

> Yeah, yeah, but even though we all agree with what Megan said, we didn't agree, well, we weren't sure about whether these movies meant to do that or not. I think they're made for entertainment really, not to make us hate Muslims. It's not like there's a conspiracy by Hollywood to make us hate Muslims. It's just right now, in the world, they are our enemies. Not all of them, but our enemies happen to be Muslim right now. Maybe in a few years, it will be some other group and movies will use them as the bad guys.

After several minutes of groups sharing thoughts similar to Megan's comments, Mackenzie returned the conversation to Sean's argument by asking if some of the movies are meant to "cause us to think a certain way." She pointed out those films like *Rules of Engagement* are "made with the help of the government. If the government didn't agree

with the message, why would they help make it?" That question led to the following discussion among students.

Edward: They wouldn't. They don't want us to like the people we are at war with. That would be silly.

James: We wouldn't support the war if we didn't think the people we were fighting were bad. Didn't the government do the same thing during World War II, making those war movies? Didn't the government help make those movies?

Alec: And those news clips that they showed at the movies, those too. They used that stuff to try and sell war bonds and stuff, like getting people to volunteer too.

Megan: Don't forget those cartoons too. Remember we watched those clips from Disney, with Donald Duck and the Nazis? They were made to make Americans hate the Germans, and the Japanese too.

Andrea: It was Bugs Bunny with the Japanese.

Hayden: Were those cartoons made by the government? Did they pay for them, or ask them to be made?

T: I don't know what role the government played in making them. Perhaps, but I really don't know.

Evan; They probably did. Didn't they censor movies a lot more back then? If they didn't pay for them or at least support them, they at least allowed them.

Megan: Yeah. I would think they did play some sort of role in making them, to try and keep up support for the war.

T: Is *Rules of Engagement* the same thing? Is the government trying to persuade Americans that Arabs and Muslims are bad people that we can't trust so we support the war?

Gloria: I think so. We obviously have a history of doing that.

Kevin: It makes sense when you think about it. I know the movies are meant to make money, otherwise they wouldn't get made by professional movie people. But if there is a movie being planned that the government thinks helps them get more support for a war, I think it makes sense for them to help.

Hayden: In this case, this movie, it was written by a guy from the government. What was he again?

William: He was in the Defense Department, I think.

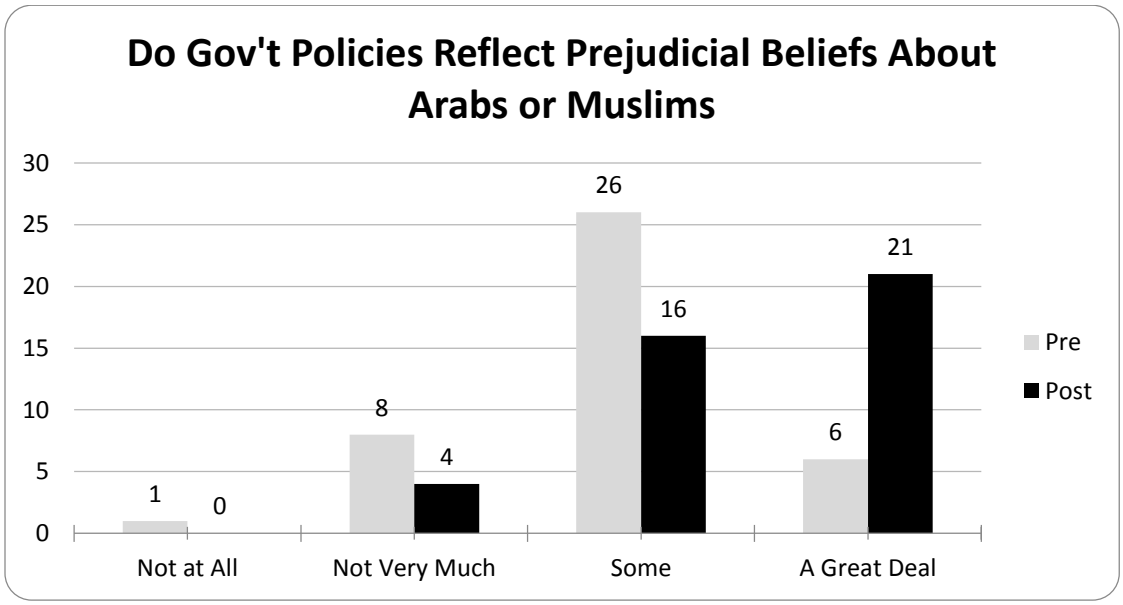
Hayden: Right. He probably got ordered to write the movie [laughing].

Interestingly, as shown in Figure 4.10, the role of the United States government in shaping people's' opinions was an area in which student opinions changed somewhat dramatically. The role of the government was only addressed briefly as part of the documentary, *Reel Bad Arabs*, but the number of students that believed the government policies reflected prejudicial beliefs against Arabs or Muslims "a great deal" raised from 6 to 21. On the post-unit survey, 16 of the remaining 20 students thought that government policies sometimes reflected prejudicial beliefs. The documentary and

discussion on the role of the government resulted in students re-examining, or in some cases, examining for the first time, the relationship between Hollywood film-makers and the U.S. government as it pertains to the "War on Terror."

During the student reflective journal entry written after the class discussion and in response to the documentary, 34 students made comments that denoted recognition or questioning of how films and television shows have or have likely influenced how they viewed Arabs and Muslims. Four of the remaining six made no comments that clearly acknowledged the influence of films but also never specifically addressed the issue. Of the other two, Sandra explained that although she could see how films would have affected people's views of Arabs and Muslims, her friendship with a Muslim girl had taught her "not to believe what I saw in movies." After criticizing film makers for "playing on bad stereotypes to make money," Gloria explained that she believed it was still the responsibility of the viewers to "question what they see…to know that every

Figure 4.10: Government Policies Reflection of Prejudicial Beliefs



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

person should be judged as an individual, not based on some stupid stereotype."

Although the class discussion and journal entries following the viewing of *Reel Bad Arabs* did not result in a consensus regarding whether or not Hollywood films influenced the development of attitudes about Arabs and Muslims, the data did make it clear that students were critically thinking about the possible influence. Several students, such as Megan, even wrote in their journals that they would never be able to watch movies or television shows with Arabs or Muslims in the same manner.

> I had never really paid attention to any hidden messages in movies before, but now I feel like I won't be able to not look for them. And not just with Muslim characters. There are stereotypes in these movies about all sorts of groups, like gay and lesbian, Mexican, Asian, and whoever else. I really need to be careful with what I watch, or at least see that what they show is often wrong so I don't let it affect me in anyway.

The idea of putting the responsibility on the viewer was also brought up by several students in regard to the influence of video games that portrayed Arabs and/or Muslims as the enemy. The suggestion that video games may influence how students develop knowledge and attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims was only formally included as an option on the pre-unit survey. It was not brought up in discussions by the teachers and there were no readings or documentaries dealing with the issue. However, several students referenced the influence of video games in their summative essay at the end of the unit. For example, Nick noted how children were exposed to negative images of Muslims.

> Even children experience this world of evil Muslims in videogames where they are instructed to shoot Muslim terrorists for points. For example, Call of Duty rewards players for killing large amounts of terrorists by letting them order a nuclear bomb to be blown up on their countries.

Additionally, while discussing the influence of Hollywood films during class, Chad questioned whether video games were "just as bad as the movies." This led to a short, but revealing conversation about video games.

William: They're just games. If you think the games are supposed to be real, you shouldn't be playing them. I don't think it's okay to go around running people over just because I do it in a game.

Chad And I don't think it's okay to kill people because I play "Call of Duty" or "Assassin's Creed."

Zeke: Yeah, yeah, but...I think you can separate the game from real life. I play video games pretty much every day, most of them violent. I am not violent at all.

Megan: I think you guys are missing the point. Nobody is saying playing those games make you violent, at least not in this class, not right now. It would be a good Crossfire topic though. But, I think the question is how playing the games makes us feel about the bad guys in them. If they are usually Arabs, or any other group really, does it make us imagine that real people are like that? I play videogames too, apparently not as much as Zeke, but I play them sometimes. And now, thinking about it, maybe it does make me think certain things about certain groups of people.

Chad Then you shouldn't be playing those games if you can't separate them from real life.

Megan: I'm not saying I can't separate them from real life, I can. I'm saying

maybe, on more of a subconscious level, I don't know, maybe it makes me see certain people one way.

Mackenzie: Especially if you don't have any other contact with people from that group!

Chad Maybe, I guess. But if you are going to let the games impact you like that maybe you shouldn't be playing them.

Edward How would you know it's impacting you like that? I didn't really think of how movies made me think about people but now that we've seen it, talked about it, I think movies have impacted me. Why not games too?

Although students again disagreed on whether or not the negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in the video games had any influence on their own attitudes about Arabs and Muslims, they were demonstrating a willingness to consider the possibility. Even Chad, who seemed set against the idea that the video games influenced him during the discussion, reflected in Student Response Journal Ten that, "movie makers and video game makers could make more of an effort to not use stereotypical characters that might cause people to think bad about other groups."

This dialogue also presents another example of students engaged in critical thinking skills, as they debated the influence movies and video games on the development of their attitudes about violence. While some students such as Chad and Zeke continued to struggle with recognizing the potential impact, MacKenzie and Edward both demonstrated an ability to self-reflect as well as a willingness to engage in an impromptu debate on the issue with classmates. Notably, both MacKenzie and

Edward were high achieving students that tended to display leadership characteristics among their classmates.

Mackenzie

Mackenzie identified multiple sources for the development of her knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims at the start of the unit, including "Television shows and Hollywood Movies," "News Media," "Video Games," "Peers," and "School Classes/Texts." She focused specifically on the influence of the news media on her views during her first reflective journal entry, admitting that, "unfortunately, I only think of Muslims, and Arabs for that matter, when they're in the news for the Boston Bombings or 9-11." As part of her summative essay, Mackenzie placed responsibility on the media, as well as educators, to teach what discrimination is so that Americans can "stand up for those who are being discriminated against, to question the government's actions, to change their opinions on these races." In Student Reflective Journal Two, she also provided insight into how she viewed the influence of schools, noting that, "when we learn about other religions and Muslims in school, it's typically for respect of 9-11, not really to understand other people's beliefs."

As the unit progressed, Mackenzie came to recognize the influence that personal interaction with a Muslim could have on her knowledge and attitudes.

> Listening and seeing Ms. Ahmad present her culture and religious beliefs, I understand better than watching any news program. The news channels disorient how women dress to be an oppressive action by their male partners, yet it is simply the woman's choice. Some believe in complete coverage of the body, while others just cover their hair with a scarf. The news staff make the woman's conservative clothing into a power role, yet it is simply part of the culture: to cover yourself up.

Mackenzie specially pointed out that it was the conversation the class had with Ms. Ahmad that allowed her to see the problems with the inaccurate images created by the news media by providing her with new, more accurate knowledge.

Summary. Overall, nearly all students showed more awareness of how at least some sources influenced their knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims. There was near unanimous recognition of how Hollywood movies, television shows and the news media could shape people's knowledge, often inaccurately, as well as their attitudes. However, not all students were sure that they themselves were influenced. Perhaps most importantly, the unit engaged students in critical conversations about the media and students demonstrated high levels of critical learning in regard to how a variety of potential sources may have influenced their attitudes about and knowledge of Arabs and Muslims. Additionally, students seriously considered the potential role of the government in creating entertainment media in collaboration with Hollywood that portrayed Arabs and Muslims negatively, with near unanimous agreement that there was a connection to some extent.

Research Question Four

What knowledge about prejudice, discrimination and racism do students have at the start of the unit and how do students describe changes in their knowledge and attitudes about prejudice, discrimination and racism in their society throughout the unit?

The primary goal of an Anti-Racist Education strategy is to deconstruct power and privilege systems that exist in a society, particularly for students who are members of the dominant group. One of the key strategies for accomplishing this goal is to teach

students to understand what racism actually is and recognize evidence of it in their everyday lives (Van Ausdale and Feagin, 2001). In turn, they then need to develop the skills and willingness to counter it. In order to determine if the unit was successful in working towards these goals, the study sought to analyze how students defined racism and discrimination at the start of the unit and how those definitions changed during the unit. Additionally, student attitudes about racism and discrimination, and specifically about whether or not they believe discrimination can be eliminated and racism can be undone, were examined. The following section is an analysis of transcripts of class and focus group discussions, student reflective journals, and the portions of the unit assessment that address the issues of racism and discrimination in general, as well as how they apply to Arabs and Muslims.

Knowledge of Racism and Discrimination. The first part of this section analyzes how students defined and applied the key ARE terms of "prejudice," "discrimination" and "racism" at the start of the unit and as the unit progressed. Anti-Racist Education requires that students be exposed to, and learn, accurate definitions of these terms to challenge the more common definitions that have been "constructed" by those in power to maintain control. The first section is followed by a summary of how students reacted to learning about issues of discrimination and racism from the perspective of a member of the group in a position of power, where appropriate. The last part of the section looks at student attitudes towards the strategies for, and possibility of reducing prejudice, discrimination and racism in their society.

Definition of Terms. On the first day of the unit, immediately following the pre-unit survey, a class discussion took place in which students were asked to define and

discuss key terms, before being provided with the ARE definitions. By analyzing their initial understanding of the terms and, perhaps more importantly, their reactions to the correct definitions, it was possible to start looking at how they viewed the impact of discrimination in their society.

Prejudice. The first term that the class was asked to define was "prejudice," and based on the pre-unit survey and comments of the students that volunteered during the discussion, there was a limited understanding of the term, as students tended to have only partial definitions. During the class discussion Sean began by defining it as "bias towards or against a specific group of people," and Nick immediately added that it was to "have an opinion on something or some people before you met them or made your own personal opinion." Richard clarified Nick's statement by succinctly stating that is was "basically prejudgments." At that point of the conversation, the students had addressed two aspects of an accurate definition of prejudice: (a) prejudgment, opinion or attitude towards someone, and (b) based on false or limited information.

I then asked the class if the opinion or prejudgment could be positive. Richard responded by suggesting it could be positive, sharing the example that "all girls are organized." Several students shook their heads or motioned in agreement with Richard's example and nobody offered a rebuttal. It was at that time that I shared the following definition on the screen.

> A negative judgment, opinion or attitude that is based on false or limited information, or based on generalizations.

Richard asked why it had to be negative to be prejudice and I replied by asking if there was a term that could be used to describe a prejudgment, opinion or attitude based on

false or limited information that could be positive or negative? None of the students had an answer at that time and I asked them to think about it as we discussed prejudice in more detail.

The discussion then turned towards asking if a person needed to act on their prejudgment, opinion or attitude for prejudice to exist and Gloria said no. She explained that "even though you are not making it clear that you are not a fan of a certain race, or sex, or religion, or sexuality, you're still, people are still thinking it, even if you're not expressing it to everyone."

However, Andrea immediately challenged Gloria's comment by arguing that prejudice doesn't exist if you don't "share" it. Edward built off of Andrea's response and explained that he thought it was:

> a reactionary thing...like a pre-prejudice. If you're catching yourself immediately, it's not the same thing like if you have this thought that's not based on actual facts and you continue to think this way, have this mentality. You immediately catch yourself and know it's wrong so it's not prejudice."

After several other students expressed doubt that prejudice existed unless a person did something to show what they believed, other students began challenging the idea that you can have those feelings and never express them or act on them.

Eric V: I think, sure it might exist in your mind, but I think it would be impossible to never express it in any way based on a choice you make or an opinion you express. But if you were to never do that, I mean, it's sort of like if a tree falls in the forest. I don't think it's really an important question. But I'm saying it's very likely you're going to express it at some point.

Megan: At the moment when you do think of it without noticing that it's prejudice,

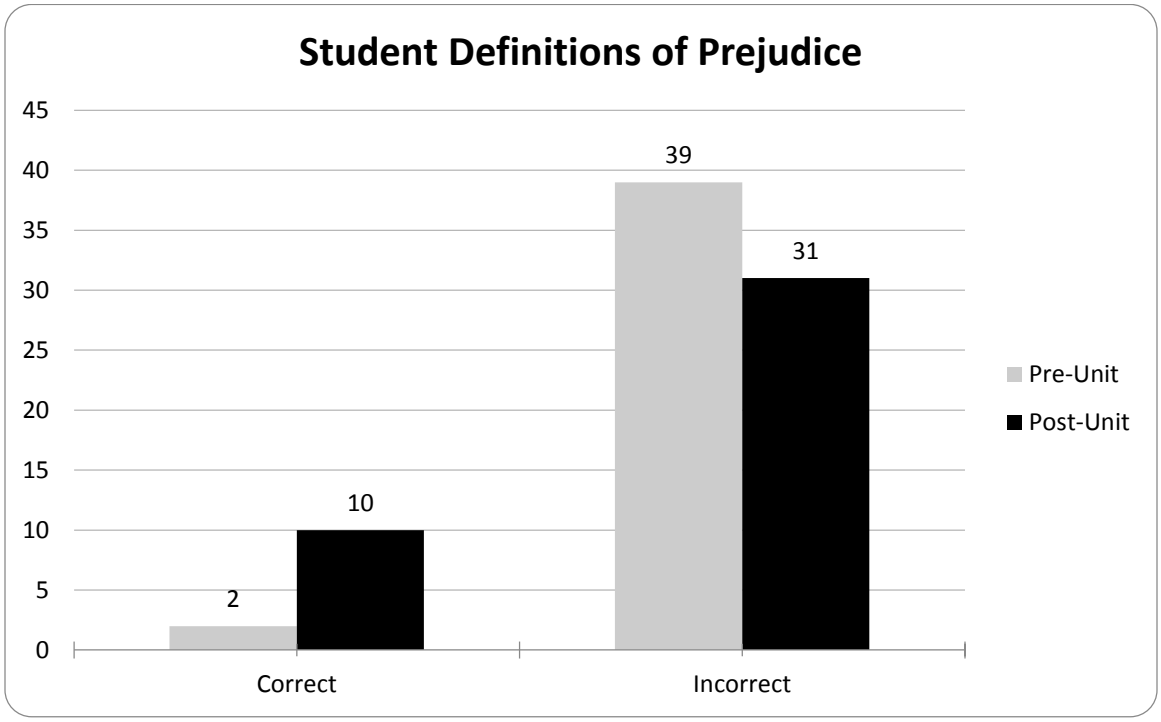
then it is prejudice. But once you notice that it's wrong, it's not prejudice because you've kind of like sweep that thought away. If you can't get rid of it though, can't like sweep it away, then the idea will probably impact how you act, or treat others from that group.

Diana: I agree. If you think something, you have to believe it to some degree, you can't just think it just because someone else says it. It will make you act in certain ways, or at least say things.

By the end of the conversation it was clear that very few students were working with an appropriate definition of prejudice before the unit began [See Figure 4.11], and most still struggled to accept or understand the correct definition once it was provided. In order to determine if students did comprehend what prejudice actually meant, it was necessary to carefully examine their use of the term throughout the unit and the definitions they provided on the post-unit survey, as well as the summative essay.

Of the 39 incorrect definitions of prejudice on the pre-unit survey, the most common error was the idea that one had to act on a thought for it to be prejudice, which was expressed by 19 students. Examples include "discriminating against a group of

Figure 4.11: Correct/Incorrect Student Definitions of Prejudice



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

people," "discriminating a certain race, religion, gender, or side," "basically you target a certain group because of a weakness, from my understanding," and "treating someone who differs from you differently." Fourteen students understood that prejudice could just be a thought rather than an action, but most of them failed to note that the thought must be negative. These students tended to base their definitions on the idea that it meant "judging someone on how they may appear without getting to know them first." The other six incorrect definitions varied considerably and included few or no aspects of the definition in their responses.

Comparison of the number of correct definitions on the post-unit survey indicated that there was little improvement by the students overall. Only ten students provided a completely accurate definition of the term, such as Sandra's explanation that it meant

"having negative feelings towards a particular person, race, or group based on a lack of knowledge or false knowledge." However, the incorrect definitions that were provided on the post-unit survey were "more correct" than the previous errors for most of the students. For example, 24 students that were categorized as incorrect on the post-unit survey included the idea that it was a judgment, opinion or attitude that did not require an overt action, but simply failed to specify it was negative. Additionally, none of those students implied that it could be positive and most applied it in their student reflective journal responses to denote negative feelings. Six of the other incorrect responses included the idea that it was negative, but still implied that a person had to act on their thoughts for it to be prejudice. The final incorrect definition simply stated that it meant "having different opinions on some group." In the end, 34 of the 41 students demonstrated a more accurate understanding of the term prejudice by the end of the unit, even though most still struggled with providing a correct definition.

Whether or not students could actually define the term when asked to do so did not prove that they did or did not understand the term though. To truly evaluate how well they understood what prejudice meant, it was necessary to examine how they applied the term during written and verbal comments made throughout the unit. The term "prejudice" was applied quite often by all of the students, providing an abundance of data. As a result, several examples that represent nearly all students are provided.

Hunter demonstrated how some students were still unable to apply the term "prejudice" correctly. During Student Reflective Journal Eight, Hunter was commenting on Omar, one of the subjects from Bayoumi's *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?*. He wrote about Omar's difficulty in obtaining a job due to his previous work with the Al

Jazeera network. Hunter explained that because of prejudice, although Omar "was extremely qualified for all the jobs" he was unemployed solely based upon his religion. According to Hunter, Omar was "one of many that are suffering emotionally from prejudice but not giving up on the fight for a job." He then compared Omar's reaction to "prejudice" to that of Akram, another subject of Bayoumi's work, by arguing that "Akram reacted in a very different way than Omar. The prejudice did not affect him emotionally as much as it did with Omar." During his comparison of Akram and Omar, Hunter's application of the term prejudice incorrectly refers to actions taken against them, not negative opinions or attitudes. Notably, in his definition of prejudice in the post-unit survey, Hunter stated that prejudice was "an opinion or thought that a person had about others based on partial or no information." Like some of his classmates, he was able to provide a partial definition of prejudice, but continued to misuse it in dialogue. Many of his peers however, did show evidence of starting the process of learning to apply the term appropriately.

While reacting to the presentation by Ms. Ahmad during Student Reflective Journal Five, Kevin demonstrated that he had improved his understanding of the term, but was still struggling to apply it correctly at all times. He continued to imply that prejudice was an action as well as a thought, as he did in Student Reflective Journal Five.

> What surprised me about the presentation is that stories of the prejudice and hate that Ms. Ahmad went through when she and her family moved here. I think I knew that people had the prejudice thoughts, but never thought that people would show that to the person they feel that way to.

In the first sentence, Kevin was clearly trying to explain that Ms. Ahmad experienced discrimination, not prejudice. While that discrimination was the result of prejudicial

thoughts by others, Ms. Ahmad did not "go through" prejudice. However, in the next sentence Kevin applied the term appropriately, tying prejudice back to thoughts that one has. And later in the reflection, he took that a step further by explaining that what "encourages prejudice in society is stereotypes." In his final reflective journal entry Kevin attempted to explain how authors could play a role in challenging prejudice by spreading "influence and knowledge about these prejudicial beliefs on a larger scale" through their written works that "are able to teach others how they really think and why." In the end, although he had improved in his understanding of what prejudice was. he still applied in inconsistently.

While fewer in number, there were students who always used the term "prejudice" accurately during the unit after the correct definition was provided. One of those students, Leah, began the unit by defining prejudice as an action, but was able to quickly accept and incorporate the correct definition for the remainder of the unit. During Student Reflective Journal Ten, she addressed the role of the media, teachers and parents in helping to undo prejudice.

> Media is the main place that people get these prejudicial thoughts from, and if the media changed to positive images instead, then people's opinions would change too. Teachers and parents sometimes teach their kids these bad ideas too and if they continue to pass that prejudice down and teach the next generation these things then they won't change...I had no idea that there was so much prejudice, and let alone that even though I don't think I ever acted on them, I was very prejudiced towards Muslims.

Although Leah's final definition in the post-unit survey was not considered correct because it did not specify that thoughts, opinions or attitudes had to be negative, her use of the term in Student Reflective Journal Ten demonstrated that she understood that prejudicial thoughts are negative beliefs. And previously, in Student Reflective Journal

Nine, she provided evidence that she understood the difference between prejudice and discrimination while reacting to the story of Sam Slaven. She explained that the story "shows people examples of how to change their prejudicial thoughts and discriminatory actions."

Stereotype. During the discussion of prejudice, several students questioned why the definition required that the thoughts, opinions or attitudes had to be negative. When prompted to think of a term that was similar to prejudice but allowed for positive ideas, none of the students were able to come up with the term "stereotype" so it was decided that a definition should be shared with the class after discussing "prejudice." They were provided with the following:

> A widely held, over-simplified and often inaccurate image of a particular type of person or idea.

After being asked what the difference was between a "stereotype" and "prejudice," several students noted that a stereotype did not have to be negative. When pressed further for another difference, Kevin pointed out that a stereotype had to be "widely held." This lead to Sean stating that "stereotypes are based on some level of truth. That's why everyone believes them." Andrea then shared that she thought a stereotype existed:

> because a group of people more often have it, have something in common. A stereotype exist because, for example there are blondes that are dumb. There's a reason that a stereotype exist because there's a large group of them that are. But it's not scientifically proven. I'm sorry. It's not because of one single person. I think a stereotype exist because there's an abundance of them.

Rachel, who is brunette, responded to Andrea's statement by first clarifying that she did not believe blondes were any more likely to be dumb than anyone else, but then by arguing that:

> not all stereotypes are always true but they are there for a reason. Not that I'm saying that everyone, that a stereotype is always true about them, but there's also, there are a lot of people that prove the stereotype about them. They're developed because of their actions. There's always exceptions to it. It's not like it's always followed specifically. People look at stereotypes and say they're wrong, but they're also right in a lot of cases.

Gloria and Hunter both offered additional comments agreeing with the idea that stereotypes were usually based on some level of truth before several students challenged the idea.

The first to argue that stereotypes were not based on truth was Hayden, who provided an explanation of why, in his opinion, people use stereotypes.

> It's more of a generalization. I feel like it's almost laziness because people use, often times we feel that stereotypes are so widely portrayed because a lot of times we only see a small amount of the group being stereotyped. Like in the media, we often times, in the media only see those people that are conformed perfectly to what the stereotypes are because that's who we see get covered. Like the stereotype that black people are good at basketball. Most white people, at least here where we live, don't see many black people in real life. It's sad, but that's the truth. But the black people we do see, we see them on ESPN playing basketball so when we hear the stereotype that black people are good at basketball, it's like, "Oh yeah, that makes sense.." So I feel like the stereotypes are laziness in that I'm just going to affiliate all of these people to what stereotype fits. It doesn't mean the stereotype is true at all. It's just easier to believe it's true than trying to learn about each individual.

Hayden's statement was followed by several seconds of silence by the class before Megan spoke up to agree with him and add on to his argument.

Megan linked the development and sustainability of stereotypes to historical events. She argued that for black people, the fact that they were slaves led whites to view

them as inferior and to look for individuals that fit that inferior description. Over time, the stereotypes became widely held and "still persist to some degree long after slavery ended." She then explained that "for Muslims, since 9/11, they are seen more as terrorists because the people that did it were Muslim and did it, in their mind, for their religion." The media "seems to really only talk about Muslims when it has something to do with terrorism so naturally people believe the stereotype. That doesn't make the stereotype true though." Megan went on to admit that up until this conversation, she too was stereotyping Muslims and was hoping this class would help her stop doing it.

Discrimination. Similar to their initial definitions of prejudice, most students were unable to define the term "discrimination" accurately at the start of the unit. As represented in Figure 4.12 on the pre-unit survey, most of the students actually defined discrimination as either a negative opinion of a group (prejudice), or simply treating others badly (without specifying that the treatment was a result of the group a person belonged to). However, unlike with prejudice, once students discussed the term in class, most quickly adapted their definitions and usually applied it correctly during the remainder of the unit.

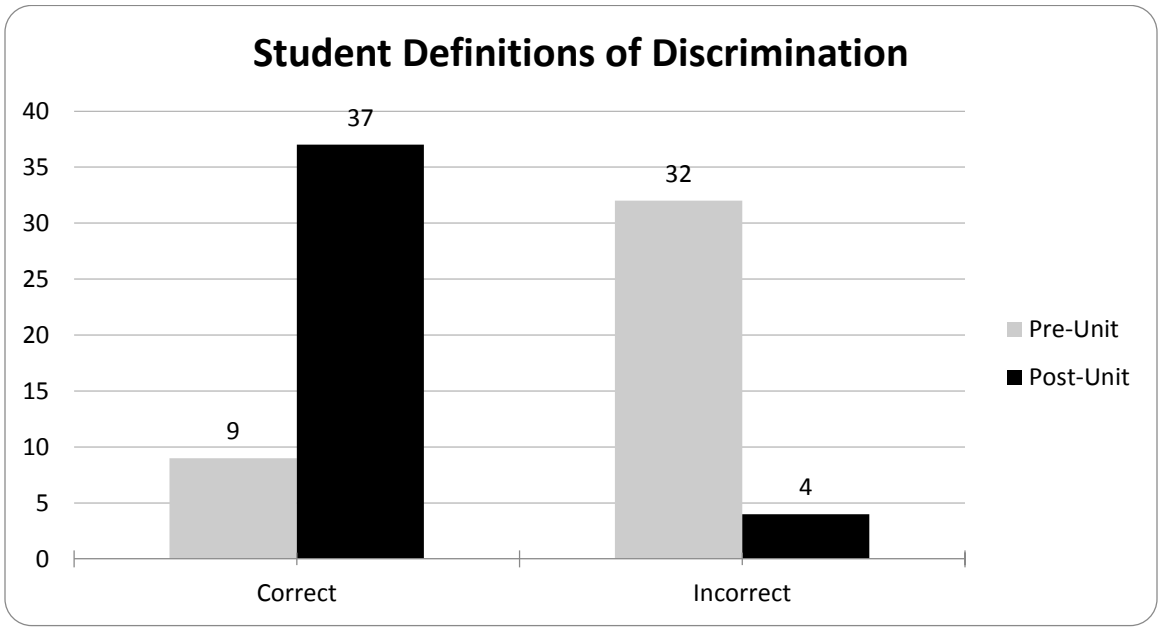
The definition of discrimination provided to the class was:

> The treatment of a person based on a group that the person is perceived to belong to rather than on individual merit.

After discussing what stereotypes were, the class was asked to explain the difference between "prejudice" and "discrimination." Ken promptly raised his hand and said that "the biggest difference was the treatment of a person." He went on to explain that prejudice, "could exist in your mind about a group but you aren't expressing it. But

with discrimination you are expressing it." It should be noted that although the explanation provided by Ken during the class discussion was accurate, his written definition on the pre-unit survey failed to be accurate because it did not specify that the treatment was based on the group to which a person belonged.

Figure 4.12: Correct/Incorrect Student Definitions of Discrimination



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

Gloria seconded Ken's explanation, stating that she believed prejudice was "more of the idea" and discrimination was "more of the action." She then went on to note historical examples of discriminatory policies carried out by governments.

> There was a lot of discrimination during World War II. The Nazis discriminated against the Jews. The Americans discriminated against the Japanese. And you don't really think about it that way because people did have prejudicial ideas about those two groups of people, but it was the government officials that decided to act on the beliefs. They made it acceptable to discriminate.

Several other students then offered other historical examples of discrimination in history, including Diana's reference to the "unjust treatment in Alabama of the Scottsboro Boys," and Sean's mention of black soldiers returning from World War I.

Student application of the term "discrimination" in student reflective journals and essays during the remainder of the unit were almost always accurate and appropriate. Joseph's application of discrimination in his writing represented a typical case for most students. In all, after defining it as "when you have a negative belief of someone, it doesn't matter if you act on it or not," he applied the term "discrimination" or a derivative of it 19 times in his student reflective journal entries and his final essay assignment. Soon after the initial class discussion he speculated that the authors of *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook* wrote the book as a result of feeling "so angry that Muslims have experienced so much discrimination that they needed a book about how to deal with it." In his reaction to *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?,* during Student Reflective Journal Seven, he commented that he believed Bayoumi wrote his book to "share the terrors of discrimination that many Muslim and Arab Americans have to face after 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan." And in his final essay, he explained that discrimination was "treating a person bad because they belong to a certain group." He then defined it as "actions performed based off of the prejudice thoughts one develops about a specific race, gender or person" in his post-unit survey. By looking at his application of the term throughout the unit as well as his definition at the end, Joseph like most of his classmates, had demonstrated an acceptable understanding of the term "discrimination."

While most students were able to accurately define discrimination and apply it correctly in the majority of cases after it was discussed in class, there were four students that tended to use the term appropriately but still failed to provide a precise definition on the post-unit survey. One such student was Mark, who applied the term eight times throughout the unit. In all eight applications, Mark provided evidence that he knew what it meant, such as in Student Reflective Journal Five, when he referred to the discrimination Ms. Ahmad experienced when her neighbor "tore out all of her rose bushes and placed an American flag in her yard." Mark further demonstrated that he understood what discrimination meant when he accurately explained the difference between prejudice and discrimination during his summative essay

> Most people are prejudicial towards Muslims. They make many assumptions about them without having any past information to back it up. It even goes farther than that. Some people act on their prejudicial beliefs making them discriminatory with their racist words and actions against Muslims and Arabs.

However, despite multiple examples of him using the term accurately, he still failed to offer a complete definition in his post-unit survey, defining discrimination as "doing or saying something bad about certain other people." While "certain" may be referring to people from other groups, his definition does not make that clear. In his case, the triangulation of the data actually seemed to disprove the survey response that indicated he did not know what the term meant.

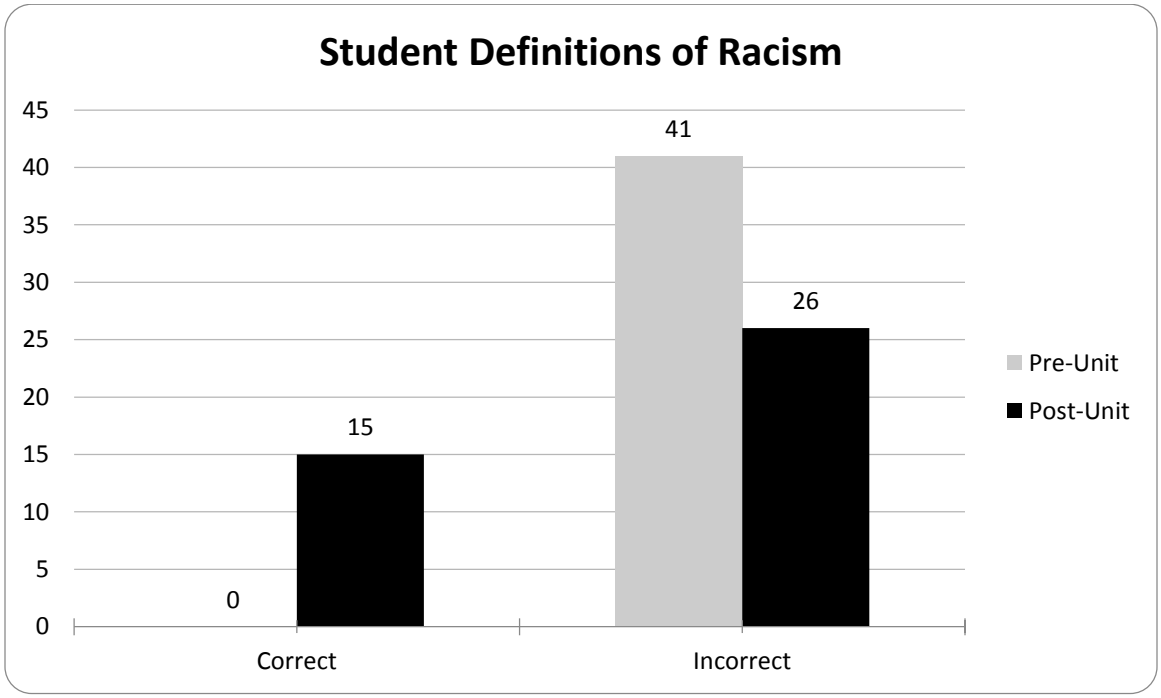
Racism. The term that caused the most obvious reaction by students when they were provided with a complete definition was "racism." Initially, on the pre-unit survey, not a single student defined it correctly [See Figure 4.13], most often because they failed to specify in some way that it is an institutionally enacted system of advantage to a group

in power. However, the majority of students did include a reference to a group of people being viewed as inferior and treated differently as a result of perceived differences.

The class was provided with the following ARE appropriate definition of racism after the discussion of prejudice, stereotype and discrimination.

> An institutionally enacted system of advantage to a group in power based on the belief that inherent differences in groups determine the characteristics and abilities of members of each group.

Figure 4.13: Correct/Incorrect Student Definitions of Racism



Source: Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

Students were then asked to pick out what they believed were the keywords of the definition, which led to a series of questions and reactions by students. The conversation that followed provided an opportunity to analyze student reactions to the ARE strategy of

confronting a class made up primarily of students that do not experience discrimination themselves, or are not routinely exposed to others being discriminated against, with the realities of the society in which they live.

Zeke: Advantage

T: That's a key word. Why do you think that's a key word?

Zeke: Because it shows a power over other groups.

Megan: And people from the group in power have advantages over everyone else.

T: Good. What else?

Rachel: Differences. Because it shows that some characteristic are perceived to be dissimilar.

Marie: Belief...because you have to have the mindset to think that you're superior to another group of people.

T: We've got advantage, differences, belief...what else?

William: Institutionalized. It's something that is ingrained and created by society.

Eric W: The definition of race, does that only apply with skin color? Can it imply to gender?

T: Well, some would argue that it has been applied to a religion, an assumption we'll be using for this unit, so it doesn't just have to be skin color.

Diana: Going off of the important concepts, I think characteristics and abilities are important. Like you said before, the perceived characteristics and abilities of that person are based off of the color of their skin or what they

believe, and that is not something they should be based off of.

T: Okay. Good. Anything else?

Gloria: Did we say groups yet. The group in power and in control, and the group that is not in power.

T: Good. In order for racism to exist there has to be a group with the power that has an institutionally enacted system where they are exerting power over another group. So based on that definition, can reverse racism exist?

At this point of the conversation, several students had successfully broken down the definition of racism for the entire class. My question about whether or not reverse racism could exist under the definition of racism presented to the class was meant to provoke more emotional responses. However, none of the students expressed any concern about the fallacy of the concept of reverse racism and in fact seemed to find logic in the revelation.

Eric W: I don't think it can because it has to be the group in power, with the advantage, for it to be racism. It doesn't work the other way. It's not a see-saw. Whenever reverse racism is implied it is never the group in power.

Ken: Sort of like Eric said, it can't really exist because if it was reverse racism, according to the definition of racism, then the group being racist would have to have the power, which would make it just racism.

Gloria: Yeah, I'm basically agreeing with the majority. I don't think reverse racism can exist. You can be racist towards anyone and no matter what

ethnicity or gender you are, you have to be the group in power to be racist.

T: You're saying you can be racist towards anyone but then it's not racism if you are not in the group in power. So would you want to change that word racist in that statement? Instead of saying you can be racist towards anyone is there another word we can use. And even though you are saying you can't have reverse racism it doesn't mean you can't have a person from a minority group that has perceptions, negative perceptions, and treats members of another group based on them, right?

Brad: You can be prejudicial towards anybody.

T: Or discriminatory? Remember prejudicial is the thought and the next step is the action, or discrimination.

At this point of the conversation a statement was made by the student that chose not to participate in the study. Gloria's statement below was in response to that statement.

Gloria: Right, the person has to be in the group in power for it to be racism, so anybody can be discriminatory, but not everyone can be racist.

After Gloria's comment the conversation shifted away from discussing why reverse racism could not exist and instead focused on the idea of one group having power over others through an institutionalized system. Students seemed to accept the idea that whites were in a position of power in the United States. In fact, one of them came to the conclusion that based on that, all white people could be considered racist.

Chris G: What kind of power are we talking about?

T: If you use the U.S as an example, its multi-faceted. We're talking about politically, socially, economically, like education for example. Consider who tends to get the jobs, who gets the political positions, what's taught in schools...all that stuff is determined by the group in power.

Hayden: If it's an institutionally enacted system, then why do we group individuals as racist? If it's an institution, technically, if we are in a group that is in power, like most of us, then technically we are all racist.

Chris G: But what about black people that discriminate against white people? How do we categorize black people?

T: They can't be racist under this definition of racism.

Students throughout the classroom began talking to neighbors in reaction to my response to Chris's question. Comments picked up on the audio recording included: "Why can't black people be in there?" and "Why can't black people be racist?" It was evident that multiple students seemed confused or upset that black people could not be racist in the United States. Other students expressed frustration with those classmates for not understanding the previous conversation about racism stemming from the group in power only. For example, in one group Caleb put his face into his hands while in another group Hayden laughed and threw his arms into the air in frustration. After a minute, the class discussion resumed.

Megan: So pretty much for a white person if they are discriminating against someone they are a racist? I'm just asking because I know that if other races that weren't white, if they were discriminating they can't be racist, but is that for white people, or do they become racist?

T: No, they are being discriminatory, but they are not racist because they are not from the group in power.

Sean: I may have missed something. But let's say, on the social ladder, just for example, Japanese are second place and third place is whoever, if the Japanese person discriminates over the third place people are they racist?

T: No. Japanese people do not have the power in society. This is a white controlled society still. You may be second in line, but you do not have control.

Zeke: So in the U.S. I can discriminate against anyone I want but since I am not in the group in power, I am not a racist?

There again was a lot of chatter in response to Zeke's comment. The students that were directly observed by me affirmed that they understood the definition of racism by commenting that Zeke could "still discriminate against other people, which is just as bad, but would not be considered racist under this definition."

T: I just heard these guys make a good point. Just because you are not, and cannot be classified as racist in the United States doesn't mean you can or should be discriminatory. In a way, using what Hayden said about all

white people being racist, discrimination is worse because you are taking an action against someone by choice whereby being racist because you are a white person, in the group in power, cannot be controlled by you. You may not think another group is inferior in any way, but because you are born white, you have advantages over that group. If you do nothing to try and undo the racist system, some would classify you as a racist.

Jack: What would happen in the case of two social groups that were equal?

T: I can't think of an example where that happens.

Dan: What if it was a black person in power discriminating against a white person?

T: That's not racism in our society. It's discrimination. Real quick, before you leave. Great discussion today. I encourage all of you to talk about these definitions and theories with family members or friends and see how they react. I'll be asking you to write about it tomorrow.

At that point, the bell rang ending the class and quite a few students continued the discussion in small groups as they slowly packed up their belongings and made their way out of the room. I was then approached by James, a student that rarely spoke out in class. He asked me why he hadn't "learned this stuff before." I told him that I didn't really have an exact answer for him, but that what's important was that he was exposed to these different ideas now. Yeah, I guess so," he replied. "This was really interesting today."

While the class discussion and my brief conversation with James after class was encouraging because it resulted in critical dialogue among the students, a careful analysis of the responses to student reflective journal entries was necessary to see if the discussion by a few of the students represented the majority of the class. Those who responded to my questions and comments from peers during the class discussion seemed to quickly comprehend and accept the definition of racism, but most students did not share what they were thinking themselves.

Unlike with the term "prejudice," the application of the term "racism" or "racist" throughout the student reflective journals and summative essays demonstrated a marked improvement. The term was applied in one form or another frequently during responses to student reflective journal prompts (over 400 times). The frequency of its use allowed for thorough analysis of how appropriately it was applied, thereby providing evidence of patterns of improved student comprehension.

During several student reflective journal entries, Kevin applied racism in a variety of contexts, all of which were applicable. For example, in Student Reflective Journal Two, he noted that "if that person that is doing the discrimination is in the most powerful position in society (socially, economically) then the discrimination becomes racism." Then in Student Reflective Journal Seven, when asked why he thought Moustafa Bayoumi wrote his book, Kevin explained that "as conflicts overseas increased, the prejudice in the US increased as well. Seeing the increase of racism towards Arabs and Muslims in America, Mr. Bayoumi wrote his book *How Does it Feel to Be a Problem?*" Kevin had started the unit with a more thorough definition of racism than most of his classmates, so his proper application of the term shows only modest

improvement. Other students, such as Rachel, had a much more limited understanding of racism when the unit started. Yet she, and many of her classmates who also struggled with the term at the start, also defined and applied the term correctly throughout the unit.

Rachel's initial definition of racism, which was "judging people based on how they look, on their race," lacked several key elements of the concept. However, while responding to Student Reflective Journal Ten, Rachel noted that "discrimination against African Americans began early in American history as a racist system was made to keep them in a position of slavery." She had earlier remarked during journal response two that learning the new definition of racism made her "more aware of why racism exist and how it has helped those at the top." Both applications indicated that Rachel, who had demonstrated throughout the school year to have the ability to critically examine her own beliefs and knowledge, understood and accurately applied racism based on the definition presented in class.

There were, of course, a few students that were inconsistent in their application of "racism" during student reflective journal entries. Jack, for example, referred to the "racist society in which many minorities are forced to deal with discrimination on a daily basis" during Student Reflective Journal Five, correctly applying the term. But later, in journal entry ten, he reverted back to race as a biological difference and erroneously applied the term to describe how teachers could help challenge racism.

> Teachers have the ability to change what students think, and this is true about prejudice and discrimination. By teaching their students that different races of people are equal, teachers can help whites, blacks, Asians, Arabs and Muslims learn to accept each other for who they are.

Emily followed a similar pattern, defining racism accurately in Student Reflective Journal Two and applying it correctly in response seven, before mistakenly applying racism to refer to people of different skin color or ethnicity during her summative essay.

As part of the summative essay, students were asked to define racism while applying it to previous areas of study from the course in addition to the "Arab and Muslim Americans In Post-9/11 America" unit. Student examples of successfully defining and applying racism during the summative essay include the following:

> Kevin: Atticus treated everyone the same and even defended an African American during a trial against a white even when he knew he would lose the case because of the racism that existed in the United States, and particularly in Alabama.

> Katherine: Eventually, policies were adopted to eliminate Jim Crow laws in the south. Racists, especially the KKK, were punished for their behaviors. It took an extremely long time, but eventually, the racism against blacks in this country was partly diminished. By no means was it completely eliminated. There is still a system in place struggling to rid itself of racism that has existed for hundreds of years.

> Ruby: Yet as time progressed they [blacks] fought for their rights as humans and entered society as the underdog. Although their society was dominated by racism, they did not go away. Even though the whites were the ones in power and they discriminated against blacks often, blacks have continued to struggle for equality by changing things like the justice system and civil rights.

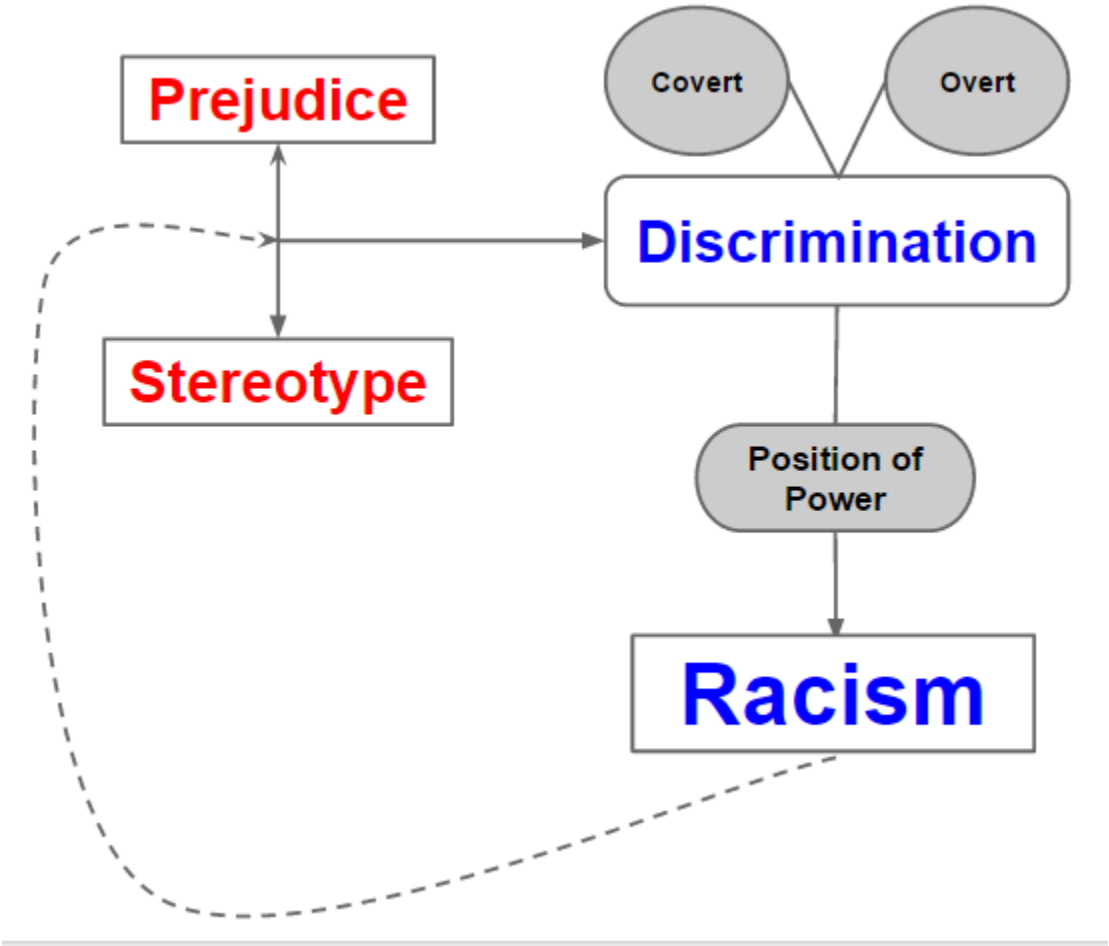
Edward: As defined by sociologists who study how we behave around and treat minorities, racism is the act of a society discriminating against a group (be it by gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) through social, economic, and political oppression by a group in power. ..in our terms, racism is the act of white politicians making laws that segregate whites and blacks regarding public property. And it's the act of public protest against the construction of a mosque near ground zero. Racism happens everywhere in society, forever. Aunt Jemima was born out of racism. She was essentially conceived out of a the black stereotype known as The Mammy, which portrays the African American servant as obedient, and very happy to be in their position (receiving little pay for their labor). Yes, you'll find racism where you never thought to look, it's in media, taught in our schools, taught by our parents, and even in our legislation. One well known place to find racism against Arabs and Muslims is in airports. Their "random" searches are often conducted on every Arab or Muslim who walks through airport security. This is known as racial profiling and it is justified in many people's eyes because people sincerely believe it is more likely that an Arab or Muslim will be carrying a weapon in a terrorist attempt than anyone else. The government carried out even more racist policies around 9/11 when they arrested Arabs and Muslims and held them without any charges or evidence. Racism is all around us.

When comparing student responses on that essay to their definitions provided on the post-unit survey, there was a discrepancy. On the survey, 26 students provided

definitions that were not considered correct [See Figure 4.13]. It should be noted however, that nearly all of those incorrect definitions were only missing one element of the definition and all but one referenced a system of advantage for a dominant group. Then, on their responses to the summative essay, 37 students provided accurate definitions while the other 4 simply did not provide enough information to demonstrate clearly that they understood the term. While there is no way to know for sure why so many more students defined racism correctly on the essay (which was completed on the same day as the post-unit survey), the fact that the essay was being assessed as part of the final exam grade likely motivated students to be more precise. Another possible factor was that the need to apply the definition to historical examples during the essay required students to put more thought into it. Regardless of the reason for the discrepancy, by the end of the unit there was substantial evidence that students had a more thorough comprehension of the term "racism."

Cycle of Discrimination. At the end of our discussion of the terms "prejudice," "stereotypes," "discrimination" and "racism," students in the class asked if we could develop a visual to make sense of the relationship between the concepts. Using the whiteboard (and then later producing it in a document), the chart represented by Figure 4.14 was developed and referenced by the class throughout the remainder of the unit.

Figure 4.14: From Stereotypes to Racism



The chart began with how the students viewed the relationship between the development of stereotypes and prejudice. The existence of stereotypes led to negative prejudgments or opinions about groups of people, and the existence of prejudice in turn would make it easier for people to accept stereotypes without question. Once someone acted on their prejudice, they would be practicing discrimination. Some of the students thought it was necessary to distinguish between acts of discrimination that people did openly, such as joining the KKK or using racist terminology, and those that were more subtle, such as not hiring minorities or moving to a neighborhood that is

homogeneous. If that discrimination is carried out by the group in power within a society, specifically white people in the United States, it would be labeled racism. The institutional system of racism then would create a society where stereotypes and prejudices are taught and reinforced in all elements of society, completing the cycle and maintaining the racist system.

A careful analysis of whether or not students could accurately define and apply the key terms and understood the cycle of racism was necessary in order to complete the next section dealing with attitudes about race and discrimination.

Attitudes About Racism and Discrimination. One of the specific strategies of ARE is to confront students from the group in power, in this case non-Arab and non-Muslim white students, and teach them about the dominant power networks and racist stereotypes that exist throughout society (Morelli and Spencer, 2000; May and Sleeter, 2010). This is done to increase recognition by the students that the world is not always as just as they believe and that many groups have had to struggle to overcome discrimination (Morelli and Spencer, 2000; Kernahan and Davis, 2007). This section examines evidence from the student reflective journals to evaluate how students reacted to that new knowledge.

On the day following the class discussion on prejudice, discrimination and racism, students were instructed to complete the second student reflective journal entry. The prompt specifically asked students to share what they were “feeling and thinking” during the discussion. Of the 41 participating students, 40 provided clear answers to that question, with Jamie being the only exception. Student Reflective Journal Two was

designed to elicit reactions from students, but Jamie, one of the two black students in class, avoided the question altogether. Her entire response to the prompt consisted of "I didn't talk about it with anyone" and a few lines describing Arabs and Muslims that seemed to be more appropriate for Student Reflective Journal One.

Somewhat to my surprise, only four students shared that they felt discomfort during the discussion and none stated that they felt anger. Previous studies of ARE have shown that when confronted with the knowledge of the racist society in which they live, students reported "feeling betrayed that they have been misinformed [or uninformed entirely] up until now about their nation's racist history" (O'Brien, 2007, p. 70). Three of the four that did express some level of discomfort were students that did not participate at all in the class discussion and one of them, Makayla, explained that she was "feeling guilty because I think I kind of saw signs of this racism around here but I didn't realize it or want to admit it until yesterday." Emily, on the other hand, did not directly write that she was uncomfortable but clearly felt some level of anxiety. She wrote that:

> When one of our classmates mentioned something about Asian people it didn't really bug me a lot even though I'm Asian. Except I would have to disagree because she mentioned their skin color being tan, but I thought people thought their skin color was yellow, thinking as a racist person. I felt like maybe people were looking at me when that was being talked about.

The other two students, both white females, expressed a sense of guilt for simply being white, a response not uncommon with Anti-Racist Education.

The large majority of students described their feelings in their journals as either one of curiosity or eagerness to learn more. Sean stated that he "actually felt rather comfortable" because his peers were talking about the issues "with clear and level heads, and open minds." He shared that he was "still a little curious about the true definition of

the words race and racism, as they go against pretty much everything pop culture" had taught him up to that point. Edward shared similar sentiments about being curious, stating that he was "very excited by learning about these things" and "looking forward to learning more."

One student, Brad, stated that he too was curious and shared about an experience he had with peers not in this class, but at lunch immediately following the class discussion.

> I was curious, though, about how some of the definitions that we went over were not what I was expecting. I was talking to my lunch group about the definitions, and we went over it again and again as I tried to explain the actual definitions of discrimination and racism to one of the more stubborn white people at my lunch table.

Brad, who is one of the two black students in the class, used his curiosity as a motivation to reach out to his peers for their reactions to the definitions provided in class. Later in the unit, during Student Reflective Journal Ten, Brad referenced that lunchtime discussion again, noting that one of the challenges of undoing discrimination and racism is actually teaching people what the words mean before the common misconceptions "become set in the minds of young people."

A few of the students, such as Gloria, used Student Reflective Journal Two to not only react to learning about the terms, but also to express curiosity about how the terms would be applied to our study of Arab and Muslim Americans. She "thought that discussing the key concepts...was very interesting," and that it was "really cool to learn the correct definitions of words that are commonly used every day." She then shared that the discussion had made her "curious to learn more about discrimination against all ethnicities and racial groups like Muslims, not just between blacks and Caucasians."

Gloria's curiosity appeared to be a theme among students throughout the unit, as many displayed open-mindedness and evaluative skills through their verbal and written comments and questions. Although their reactions and understandings varied considerably for terms such as prejudice, nearly all demonstrated that they were reevaluating how they used the terms and how the concepts were evident in society.

Can Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism be Eliminated? Towards the end of the unit, students were asked to share how they thought a society could go about undoing or at least diminishing prejudice, discrimination and racism. Student Reflective Journals Nine and Ten, as well as the summative essay and a class discussion, all solicited student responses on this issue. After analyzing the available evidence, three patterns of student attitudes about reducing or eliminating prejudice and discrimination emerged:

(a) three students believed that having prejudicial thoughts and discriminating against others that are different, albeit wrong, is an instinctive trait that cannot really be stopped or even severely reduced;

(b) 26 students indicated that although they did not believe prejudice and discrimination could ever be completely eliminated, steps could be taken to significantly reduce their existence and/or impact on a society; and

(c) 12 students expressed hope that at some point, prejudice and discrimination could become virtually nonexistent.

Those that stated that the existence of prejudice and discrimination were inevitable all based their arguments on the idea that there were too many people to allow for the elimination or significant reduction of the negative opinions and actions. During the final class discussion, Megan represented that idea when she stated that because

"there are billions of people on this planet" not every person can "eliminate prejudice or discrimination against another person or group." She finished by explaining that she just thought it was "impossible for every single person on the planet to be like, 'Alright, everyone is equal.'" It should be noted, however, that during her summative essay Megan did write that she believed she had become less prejudice against Arabs and Muslims herself.

A large majority of the class indicated that they did believe society could reduce the amount of prejudice and discrimination that existed, or even eliminate it altogether. Many of them expressed those beliefs in Student Reflective Journal Nine, which asked them to react to the NPR interview with Iraq War veteran Sam Slaven.

In the story, Sam Slaven returned from the war in Iraq with a deep hatred for Iraqis and Muslims in general. He found himself having strong negative feelings about them whenever he encountered someone who he believed may be Muslim, and he came to recognize that it wasn't normal to feel the way he did. He decided to learn more about Islam and Iraqi people, resulting in him joining a Muslim student group at his local college. In the end he opened up about his negative feelings to the leader of the group and eventually became friends with him. By the end of the story, Sam had become an active advocate for complete acceptance of Muslims in the United States. There were three aspects of Sam's story that the students tended to credit with bringing about his dramatic change in how he perceived and treated Iraqis and Muslims in general.

Nearly all of the students focused some effort on the fact that Sam came to the realization that his feelings were not normal and that he had a problem. Sarah explained that Sam "figured out that his feelings were wrong and bad for him." She went on to note

that "even though his counselor thought it was a bad idea for him to join the group of Muslim students, he recognized that he himself had to do something." Reggie also pointed out that "most people don't even know that they are being prejudiced...but Sam did, which made it possible for him to fix it." This need for a person to recognize their own prejudice and discriminatory actions before they can change them appeared throughout the student responses, making it evident that students agreed with Katherine's point that the "stereotypical/prejudicial beliefs Sam had were undone because he had the will to undo them."

Another factor that students zeroed in on during their written reactions to Sam's story was the need to educate oneself about the group since prejudice is based on limited or inaccurate knowledge. Ruby represented the arguments of numerous other students when she noted that "as Sam became more knowledgeable about the religion of Islam and the Iraqi culture, he began seeing that the stereotypes that existed were not accurate." Sean explained that once Sam learned about Muslims and was able to "see them as people and not enemies," he was able to challenge his own misconceptions.

The third factor noted by students in reaction to Sam's transformation was his willingness to go against the advice of his therapist and join the Muslim student group at his college. Joining the group was mentioned by all but four of the students in their journal responses, and more importantly, quite a few of them compared the changes Sam experienced as a result of joining the group to some of the changes they experienced as a result of meeting with Salam Ahmad. The "contact hypothesis" is one of the primary strategies for prejudice reduction in Anti-Racist Education, and recognition of its influence by the students is noteworthy.

Edward, who continued to display a desire to reduce his own prejudice throughout the unit, provided a representative explanation of why many students felt that the personal contact with Muslims was key not only to Sam's prejudice reduction, but to their own as well.

> Sam faced his prejudices head on by seeking out an opportunity to interact with Muslims rather than avoiding them. When he first attended a meeting, he was very nervous and uncomfortable, and he noticed how uncomfortable some of the Muslim students were with him being there too. Yet as he continued to show up to the meetings, he eventually began to talk and the Muslim students became more comfortable with him being there. Once he became friends with the student that ran the group, Sam was able to open up about his experiences in Iraq and how he had come to view Iraqis as a result. By talking openly about it with the Muslim student, Sam was able to beat his prejudice. I think that joining the student group and getting to know Muslims personally was the key to his change, just like I think hearing Ms. Ahmad speak to the class was a key to making me think about Muslims differently too.

Other students shared Edward's sentiments, stressing the importance of Sam's one-on-one contact with Muslim students and comparing it to meeting Ms. Ahmad. Quite a few also referenced the Skype session with Mr. Bayoumi.

In the end, most students did come to believe that prejudice and discrimination could be reduced or eliminated. As Hunter stated, "it may take a lot of time and effort, but eventually we can have a society where these people [Arabs and Muslims] aren't oppressed and where they can walk through an airport like anyone else.

On the issue of racism as an institutionalized system that provides advantages to the group in power, none of the students stated that they believed its continued existence was inevitable and 33 students made statements that could be interpreted as evidence that they believed it could actually be eliminated entirely. Student Reflective Journal Ten specifically asked students if they felt racism could someday be non-existent in society

and many, such as Joseph, expressed a belief that "it will take a long time, but if we learn what racism is and why it exist, and how to stop it, maybe it will go away eventually." Michael also stated that it would take a long time but added that. "even though it will take a really long time to undo it, and I won't be around to see it, I think it's worth the effort." Perhaps Megan expressed it best when she said that racism, "may not be eliminated anytime soon, but at least things will keep getting better for people as we continue to try and end it."

Nearly all of the students that stated that they believed racism could be eliminated someday shared Ruby's view that to undo an institutionalized system like the one that still exist today, it would "take a lot of effort by leaders, teachers, the media and all citizens." She concluded that, "learning about this stuff in school is important in the process, and it has changed me. But, not many people ever learn this stuff and are constantly exposed to stereotypes and discrimination everywhere, so something has to change."

Mackenzie

Mackenzie provided an abundance of evidence from which to draw conclusions about her understanding of the key terms of "prejudice," "discrimination," and "racism," as well as her reaction to learning the new meanings and her insights on the ability to overcome them. Mackenzie applied the terms 17, 39 and 64 times respectively, far above the class average and second only to one student for total application of the three key terms. Samples that represent her use of the terms have been incorporated in this section, but every application

of the terms by Mackenzie can be found in Appendix G.

For the term "prejudice," Mackenzie's initial definition of "hating on someone due to their race," was limited to race as the only factor, and it was unclear if she was using "hating" as a thought or action. However, by the end of the unit she provided an almost textbook definition of prejudice as "the negative thoughts against a specific race, gender, or person often due to stereotypes." More importantly, once she was introduced to the definition in class, she applied it correctly throughout the remainder of the unit. For example, while reacting to the new definitions during Student Reflective Journal Two, she stated that she "felt uncomfortable and wrong with how" she had "prejudice thoughts." A few days later, in Student Reflective Journal Four, she continued that theme by expressing hope that she would "have less prejudice thoughts" as a result of understanding Islam better. In her reaction to Sam Slaven's story and in her summative essay, she repeatedly referred to prejudicial "thoughts" or "beliefs," providing further evidence that her understanding of what the term meant and how to apply it appropriately improved during the unit.

On the pre-unit survey Mackenzie defined "discrimination" as "bullying someone due to their race, sexual orientation, gender, or skin color." Her definition at the start of the unit was generally correct, although her use of the word "bullying" could be considered limiting in what were considered actions. By the end of the unit, she again provided a very precise and accurate definition: "Actions performed based off of the prejudice thoughts one develops about a specific race, gender or person." Not surprisingly, she also applied the term correctly from the start of the unit. Often, her use of the word "discriminate" was immediately followed by the word "against" to describe actions taken against an Arab or Muslim, or another

minority. It was clear based on her definitions and application of the term that Mackenzie had a workable definition of "discrimination" from the start and simply refined it as a result of the unit. However, there was more noticeable improvement of her understanding and application of the final key word: racism.

Her initial definition was brief and represented what many of her classmates thought at the start of the unit. She defined racism as "viewing other races inferior to one's own race." She omitted several key aspects of the Anti-Racist Education definition and struggled to move away from her original definition as she applied it throughout the unit. Mackenzie did provide a much more accurate definition for the post-unit survey, stating that racism was "actions performed by a group in power based off of the prejudice thoughts one develops about a specific race, gender or person." On several occasions during the unit though, she reverted to applying racism to describe a feeling of one person feeling superior to people from other groups. However, she did often apply "racism" appropriately, explaining how a system of advantage existed for a group in a position of power. For example, during her summative essay she referenced the historical example of the Scottsboro Boys by noting that although the "evidence in favor of their innocence was also highlighted," the "white's racist system overruled any factual evidence for the boys." The evidence indicated that she did have an improved understanding of "racism" by the end of the unit, but was still in the process of training herself to only use the term where it applied based off of the new definition.

As Mackenzie learned the new definitions of "prejudice," "discrimination," and "racism," and improved her ability to correctly apply all three, she also demonstrated strong reactions to the new knowledge about how much injustice existed in her society. During

Student Reflective Journal Two, she described the class discussion from the previous day as "mind-blowing" and said that the unit, at that early stage, had made her "really think." She then expressed remorse at having blamed all Muslims and Arabs for the attacks on 9/11 and at the Boston Marathon, explaining that it wasn't right to "blame one whole religion/culture for the actions of one small group." She was also eager to discuss the new ideas with peers and family, referencing conversations she had with other students in school during lunch and at home with her mother. Perhaps most importantly, Mackenzie repeatedly expressed a desire to use her new knowledge to challenge her own prejudice.

Not surprisingly, Mackenzie also demonstrated a strong conviction that prejudice, discrimination and racism can all be severely reduced in our society. She cited changes that took place within herself as evidence that the education system, entertainment and news media, and political leaders have the means to bring about a reduction in all three. Her final entry in her reflective journal summed up perfectly what an open-minded, eager to learn student can gain from an Anti-Racist Education strategy.

> I think I have a better understanding of race in general, racist beliefs, how to become anti-Racist and the Muslim religion altogether. I really appreciated this topic, because now I feel as though I have changed my reaction when seeing a woman with a hijab or an Arab family (no matter how many times I say that wrong). Originally, I had tried to avoid eye contact and not be awkward, but now I look them in the eyes (a tactic I learned from Rasha's story), and attempt to notice them. Whenever I even see an African-American I think of the stereotypes and tell myself I know nothing about them as a person. There are stories of people who move across the street when an African-American is approaching, but I am proud to say I walk right next to them and smile. Because of these changes, I feel proud to feel the inner-changes. I wish I could be classified as an anti-racist. In the future, I hope to educate others (I already have been transferring the lesson to my family) and really become a true anti-racist.

Summary. Overall, the class demonstrated various levels of improvement in their ability to define and apply the key terms of "prejudice," "discrimination" and "racism." By the end of the unit, most students still were not able to provide a completely accurate definition of prejudice, but most were able to apply the term appropriately during discussions and writing activities. The term discrimination, on the other hand, seemed to cause less confusion to the students, as most defined and applied it correctly by the end of the unit. The final term, "racism," was defined accurately by most students during their summative assessment and the term was usually applied correctly throughout journal responses and essays despite the initial misunderstanding of the term by all of students at the start of the unit.

The reaction by students to learning about the racism that existed within their society displayed much less anger or confusion than expected and instead led to reflection and curiosity. Most students readily accepted the new knowledge and many expressed a desire to learn more about the system and what they could do to change it. Additionally, although a few students doubted the potential for reducing or ending prejudice and discrimination, most did believe a society could reduce the two through an individual's willingness to recognize their existence, education about their existence, and contact with members of the group subjected to the negative thoughts and actions.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents a brief review of the study's purpose and questions, followed by a summary and discussion of the conclusions and implications of the findings relative to the literature reviewed and the theoretical frameworks that guided the study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future practice and research, as well as reflections on the unit and study from my perspective as a teacher.

The purpose of this study was to explore Anti-Racist Education strategies and in the process (1) identify themes or patterns in student responses and (2) assess any potential for successfully bringing about meaningful changes in student knowledge and attitudes about prejudice, discrimination and racism within U.S. society, with particular attention focused on Arabs and Muslims both within the United States and abroad. Examination of the incorporation of Anti-Racist Education strategies in a classroom setting can provide educators with information that can be applied to the development of similar units, or even entire courses and school-wide curricula that are designed to reduce prejudice and discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans while simultaneously teaching students about the realities of racism against other minorities within their society.

The sample for this qualitative practitioner action research consisted of 41 of 43 sophomore students, none of whom were Arab or Muslim, enrolled in a Humanities course in a large suburban high school in central New Jersey. Data collected included pre- and post-unit surveys, transcripts from class and focus group discussions, student

reflective journals, researcher observation notes, and a summative essay administered at the end of the unit. The research was conducted during the final five weeks of the school year in May and June of 2014.

Research Questions

The following four questions guided this study.

1. What do students know about Arabs and Muslims before the start of the unit and what knowledge about Arabs and Muslims do they express over the course of the unit?
2. How do students describe their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims before the start of the unit and how do they describe their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims throughout the unit?
3. How do students describe where they get their ideas about Arabs and Muslims and how these ideas have developed at the start of the unit? What do students recognize as factors leading to the development of their knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims during the course of the unit?
4. What knowledge about prejudice, discrimination and racism do students have at the start of the unit and how do students describe changes in their knowledge and attitudes about prejudice, discrimination and racism in their society throughout the unit?

Conclusions and Discussion of the Findings

There exist within the United States today a great deal of prejudice and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims (Anderson, 2002; Mamdani, 2002;

"American-Arab," 2003; Saroglou & Galand, 2004; Akram & Johnson, 2004; Salaita, 2006; Esposito & Mogahed, 2007; "Same," 2010; Lugo et al., 2010; Wajahat et al., 2011; Aziz, 2011; "Islamophobia," 2011), and a majority of Americans are unable or unwilling to distinguish between the two terms (Naber, 2008). Efforts to diminish or end this prejudice and discrimination must include the news media, the government, the entertainment industries (films, television shows and videogames), and religious institutions (Shaheen, 2001; Lilienthal, 1993; Barlow, 1997; Naber, 2008). However, the public education system, with the implementation of an Anti-Racist Education strategy, may have the largest capacity to destroy stereotypes, diminish prejudice and bring about an end to discrimination against Arabs and Muslims in the United States (Stanley, 1992; Douglass and Dunn, 2003; Ezzati, 2002; Leonardo 2004).

The effectiveness of Anti-Racist Education strategies has been studied over the past three decades, primarily in regard to prejudice and discrimination against blacks in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, but for other groups as well (Stohl, 1985; Henry & Hardin, 2006; Brown et al., 2003; Carlson et al., 2003; Tam et al., 2006; Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Cameron et al., 2007; Wright & Bougie, 2007). Overall, those studies have found that strategies associated with Anti-Racist Education, when implemented to address both cognitive and emotional aspects of racism, have resulted in patterns of change in student knowledge and attitudes about members of other groups (McGregor, 1993; Mansfield and Kehoe, 1994; Rose, 1996; Dei, 1996; Stephan, 1999; Sheets, 2000; Morelli and Spencer, 2000; Srivastava, 2005; Kernahan and Davis, 2007; May and Sleeter, 2010). Similar patterns of change in student knowledge and attitudes were evident during this study, although for some students the process of prejudice

reduction against Arabs and Muslims appeared to only be in the early stages by the end of the unit.

Research Question One. *What do students know about Arabs and Muslims before the start of the unit and what knowledge about Arabs and Muslims do they express over the course of the unit?*

Similar to survey results from Pew Research that concluded that most Americans could not define the terms "Arab" or "Muslim" or distinguish between the two concepts ("Lugo et al.," 2010), a majority of the students admitted at the start of the unit to having little knowledge about what it meant to be Arab or Muslim. The two terms were initially used interchangeably by nearly all of the students, and most believed that all Arabs were Muslims and vice versa. Additionally, there was a strong tendency for students to refer to common physical and cultural stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims prevalent in the entertainment industry during the word association activity, first student reflective journal entry, and early class discussions. The impact of television shows, movies and video games on the development and propagation of stereotypes held by the students upholds previous research on the influence of the entertainment media on public knowledge about Arabs, Muslims, and other minority groups in the United States (Abraham, 1994; Shaheen, 2001; Saleem, 2012; Saleem & Anderson, 2013). It also illustrates one of the challenges facing educators attempting to reduce prejudice and discrimination among their students, as the social norms portrayed in the entertainment industry serve as the basis of an individual's knowledge and the correction of that knowledge is a necessary part of the process or prejudice reduction (Lynch, 1987; Trainor, 2008).

By the end of the unit, most of the students tended to show improved knowledge acquisition about the difference between the terms “Arab” and “Muslim,” defining “Arab” without reference to religious affiliation and instead focusing on geographic and/or linguistic characteristics. Although some students still struggled to provide an accurate definition of the terms when prompted on the post-unit survey, the definitions they did provide were more accurate than at the start of the unit and most of the students were able to apply the terms correctly in a majority of cases during their written and verbal comments. However, a sizable minority still had difficulty consistently applying the terms appropriately even though a few of them actually could define them correctly. For those students, it was evident that although they had improved their knowledge, they needed more time and practice to fully acquire an understanding of the terms, further demonstrating the difficulty in undoing emotionally reinforced student knowledge obtained through other sources throughout their lives (Trainor, 2008).

Consistent with studies demonstrating that direct contact and interaction with members of a stereotyped group by members of other groups can lead to increased knowledge about the stereotyped group (Allport, 1954; Crocker et al., 1983; Rothbart & John, 1985; Johnston & Hewstone, 1992; Nesdale & Todd, 1998; Stephan, 1999; Tropp, 2006; Kernahan and Davis, 2007; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Andreouli et al., 2014; Zafar & Ross, 2015; Nordstrom, 2015), analysis of the evidence from this study demonstrated a pattern of knowledge acquisition about Arabs and Muslims as a result of the Anti-Racist Education strategy based on the contact hypothesis. Examination of data collected from student reflective journals and class discussions indicated that contact with actual Arab and Muslim Americans during the unit made nearly all of the students more receptive to

new knowledge about the religion of Islam which they had previously only read about or heard from classmate presentations and teacher instruction. Reflective journals also provided evidence that for nearly all students there was an immediate, although incremental change in knowledge following each of the two activities involving interaction with Arab and Muslim Americans. Additionally, throughout the unit, students specifically commented both verbally and in writing on their ability to comprehend the cultural and religious characteristics of Arabs and Muslims as a result of meeting with a Palestinian-American and video-conferencing with an Arab-American, both of whom were Muslim.

Notably, exposure to new information through secondary readings, peer presentations and teacher instruction provided students with the first steps towards enhanced knowledge acquisition while fostering high level questioning and critical discussions among many of the students as they struggled with cognitive dissonance (Gorski, 2009). That desire to obtain internal consistency (Festinger, 1957) seems to have made students more receptive to, and even eager for, the opportunity to meet with actual Arabs and Muslims to clarify and confirm what they read or discussed earlier in the unit. It appears, therefore, that to obtain the desired results of exposing students to members of an oppressed group, it may be beneficial to first prepare the students ahead of time by allowing them to struggle with new information that conflicts with their previously held beliefs, and then allow for the in-person contact.

Previous studies of Anti-Racist Education have found that in areas where racism is prevalent and where both the teachers and students lack ethnic diversity, students have demonstrated more of a willingness to accept new knowledge that conflicts with previous

beliefs when directly confronted with the power and privilege-based system in which they live (McGregor, 1993; Dei, 1996; Kernahan and Davis, 2007; Cole, 2009). Evidence from this study suggest that by incorporating the contact hypothesis as well as the Anti-Racist Education strategies based on providing students with the knowledge that they were born into, and influenced by a power and privilege-based racist system, use of such strategies not only helped to compensate for the lack of diversity in the classroom, but also allowed the two non-Arab, non-Muslim teachers to assist in facilitating meaningful changes in student knowledge. Neither teacher were members of a group that was the subject of prejudice and discrimination, and in fact both were members of the dominant white male Christian group, allowing them to serve as a form of "confirmation" of the new information acquired as a result of the direct contact with Ms. Ahmad and Mr. Bayoumi. Both teachers openly admitted their own continuing struggles to undo their emotional connection to socially enforced prejudices throughout their lives.

Although many of the students still had some difficulty consistently applying the actual terms "Arab" and "Muslim" by the end of the unit, their end-of-unit assessments, class discussions, and final journal entries demonstrated that their overall knowledge of the religion of Islam and the concept of "Arab" had improved. Some students provided evidence of at least starting to challenge their knowledge about the physical appearance of Arabs and Muslims, as well as their belief that Islam was oppressive towards non-believers and Muslim women. However, not enough data was collected from participants later in the unit to reach any definitive conclusions on the depth of their improved understanding of Arab and Muslim culture and physical appearance. The improvements

that did occur came about primarily as a result of employing a combination of Anti-Racist Education strategies that allowed students to question their own knowledge by introducing them to new ideas in a safe environment conducive to open discussion and questioning (Tatum, 1992), followed by direct interaction with members of the oppressed groups. However, the level of success in improving student knowledge about Arabs and Muslims using Anti-Racist Education strategies proved to be more evident than with changes in recognition of how their attitudes developed based on various sources, and even more so than with potential meaningful changes in student attitudes about Arabs and Muslims, as is shown in the discussion of research questions two and three.

Research Question Two. *How do students describe their feelings about Arabs and Muslims before the start of the unit and how do they describe their feelings and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims throughout the unit?*

Initially, students displayed attitudes commonly associated with Islamophobia, such as a link between the religion and violence, although most were unwilling to openly admit that they associated Islam with violence. Only four students overtly confessed to believing that Islam encouraged violence when specifically asked on the pre-unit survey. However, nearly every student associated violent terms with Arabs and Muslims during the word association activity in addition to making written and verbal statements during class discussions and reflective journal entries that demonstrated negative views of both groups.

At the start of the unit, nearly all of the students claimed to recognize that discrimination against Arabs and Muslims existed within the United States to varying

degrees. The majority also stated in their pre-unit survey that they did not have negative views of the religion, although most selected that they had no opinion at all, positive or negative. However, similar to the link between Islam and violence, nearly every student did provide evidence of negative views about Arabs and Muslims in the word association activity, during early class discussions, and in their first few reflective journal entries.

There were only three students who had actual personal interactions with Arabs and Muslims prior to the unit, providing only limited evidence as to the influence of personal interactions on attitudes. However, based on that evidence, it appeared that legitimate interactions with Arabs and Muslims only marginally lessened negative feelings or associations with violence. It did not eliminate or substantially lessen them. Even the one student who had Arab-Muslim relatives associated violence with the two groups despite overall positive views of Arabs and Muslims. More research is needed to determine whether personal interactions with members of an oppressed group by members of the group in power in a non-classroom setting can effectively challenge commonly held and widely proliferated stereotypes within a society.

Similar to earlier studies that found improved attitudes about members of a minority group as more accurate information was obtained (Stephan & Stephan, 1984; Lynch, 1987; MacGregor, 1993; Stephan, 1999; Henry & Hardin, 2006), as the students in this study became more informed about the religion of Islam or became aware of the misinformation that they had received from unreliable or biased sources, the data showed that nearly all began the process of developing more positive attitudes about Muslims. These shifts in student attitudes towards Islam as a result of more accurate knowledge about the religion matched the findings of public opinion surveys completed

by Pew Research "(Islamophobia," 2010; "Public," 2010), as well as previous research on Anti-Racist Education which found that increased knowledge about other minority groups has led to decreased negative stereotypes and prejudice against that group (Stephan & Stephan, 1984; Thomas, 1984; Lynch, 1987; McGregor, 1993; Leah, 1995 Stephan, 1999; Henry & Hardin, 2006). However, although most students seemed to be in the process of changing their attitudes about Arabs and Muslims, there was evidence to suggest that the changes had not become deeply-held beliefs, including contradictory statements made in student reflective journals and the summative assessment.

While it appeared that most students wanted to believe that Islam did not encourage violence and that Arabs and Muslims overall were not a threat, many struggled to overcome previous, well-entrenched prejudices. Other studies have had similar findings, noting that the perceived changes were often short-lived because of the continuing social pressures that exist outside of the classroom (Kumashiro, 2000). When specifically asked towards the end of the unit if they associated Islam with violence or had negative views of Arabs and Muslims, none stated that they did. However, the comments of most students during class discussions and written activities right up until the end of the unit often contradicted that sentiment. However, those same discussions and written statements that contradicted their claims of improved attitudes provided numerous examples showing that students were engaged in the process of starting to challenge their previously held beliefs through the frequency and level of critical thinking and questioning among the students, which demonstrates the difficulty of undoing the emotional foundations of racism (Tatum, 1992; Rose, 1996, Srivastava, 2005, Devine et al., 2006; Trainor, 2008).

An additional factor that likely influenced the effectiveness of the unit to bring about long-term meaningful changes in attitudes was the limited amount of time that students were engaged in the Anti-Racist unit. Although some students were able to exhibit evidence of patterns of substantial positive change during the unit, most of them seemed to still be in the process of accepting their own inherent prejudices and that they did not live in a society that was always just and meritocratic (Tatum, 1997). For those students, the relatively short length of the unit led to only low-level reductions in prejudice (Epstein, 1994; Lynch, 1987; Smith & DeCoster, 2000; Strack & Deutsch, 2004).

Furthermore, for at least one student, direct evidence suggested that the contact with the two Arab Americans and the unit overall did not decrease his prejudice against them, and may have resulted in more resolve in his previously held beliefs and attitudes. Similar to the findings of Dixon et al., more intolerant people may be hardened in their negative views by the contact (2010), especially if they view the activity as overtly staged (Avery et al., 1992; Altemeyer, 1998; Esses et al., 2001). While other studies concluded that intolerant people with some exposure are still more likely to have decreased prejudice than those with contact (Hodson, 2008; Pettigrew, 2008; Hodson et al., 2009; Dhont & Van Hiel, 2009; Hodson et al., 2013), those results could not be definitively affirmed during the present study.

Students did, however, display a pattern of meaningful attitudinal change concerning the recognition of the impact that prejudice and discrimination has had on Arabs and Muslims, a shift that was evident in the records of substantive discussions and written analysis among the class. Students were able to cite specific examples of actions

taken against Arab and Muslim individuals, as well as the two groups as a whole, by both citizens and the U.S. government. Several class discussions among students debated the role of the government in fostering ant-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice through avenues such as FBI statistics and the entertainment media. Additionally, several full class conversations and numerous reflective journal entries touched on the similarities and differences in regard to prejudice and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims compared to other minority groups in the United States.

Despite their recognition of the impact of prejudice and discrimination by the government, some students still justified actions taken against Arabs and Muslims based on their ethnicity or religion as necessary for the safety and security of other Americans, even comparing it to the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. For those students, the persistence of a perception of Arabs and Muslims as more likely to commit acts of violence appeared to trump their belief, or their desire to believe that discrimination against members of the two groups is wrong.

Evidence from reflective journals, class and focus group discussions, and the summative essays showed that students demonstrated the most noticeable and meaningful patterns of change in prejudice reduction and overall attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims as a result of the face-to-face contact with Ms. Ahmad. Many of the students specifically commented on their reaction to learning about how Ms. Ahmad experienced discrimination after the events of September 11, 2001, and how she and her family overcame those challenges to live their lives. Previous Anti-Racist Education research has found that when taught about members of an oppressed group who overcame discrimination and became engaged members of a society, students tend to decrease

prejudice more so than when the oppressed group is presented simply as victims (McGregor, 1993; Dei, 1996; Thompson, 1997).

Another theme that emerged from an examination of the evidence was that by providing the class with the opportunity to learn new information concerning prejudice and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims in the United States, the students were able to make connections to other oppressed groups studied during the course. By making those comparisons, many students were able to recognize common factors that led to prejudice and discrimination against specific groups, such as a desire to economically, politically or socially control a group of people, or a reaction to fear that is heightened by a lack of information. These recognitions gave rise to statements by some students of feelings of empathy towards Arabs and Muslims, one of the characteristics recognized in other studies as being common among people that are more likely to demonstrate decreased prejudices against members of minority groups (Devine & Montieth, 1993; Plant & Devine, 2009).

Regardless of how many, and to what extent some student attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims improved, considerable data indicated that the Anti-Racist Education strategies provided opportunities for many students to question why they had negative perceptions of Muslims and Arabs, including an association with violence. The students also demonstrated an ability to engage in critical discussions with peers about their own beliefs, and provided written responses revealing a high level of self-reflection.

Although evidence showed that nearly all students had developed some level of improved attitudes by the end of the unit, the depth of change in those attitudes varied greatly among them. Only about one-third of the students consistently made both written

and verbal statements during the unit that showed a liner progression of improving attitudes without any evidence of reverting back to previous beliefs. The following characteristics, which have been identified in other studies as individual attributes that increase the likelihood of prejudice reduction, were evident among those particular students.

- a willingness to recognize and admit to their own prejudice against Arabs and Muslims at some point during the unit (Devine et al., 2012; Devine & Monteith, 1993; Plant & Devine, 2009);
- an ability to seek out and critically analyze new and pre-existing information, and apply the new information to challenge pre-existing beliefs (Amodio et al., 2007; Monteith, 1993); and
- a high level of empathy along with a desire to improve conditions for an oppressed group (Devine & Montieth, 1993; Plant & Devine, 2009).

The remaining students, despite some evidence of improved attitudes, often seemed to lack the ability to modify their pre-existing beliefs beyond more than a superficial level, denoting possible struggles to refrain from drawing on previous beliefs when confronted with issues of race (Trainor, 2008).

It is important to also note that evidence existed that at least one student verbally expressed to multiple classmates that he believed the information he was exposed to during the unit was inaccurate. Even though he made written and verbal statements to the contrary during class discussions, reflective journal entries and the summative assessment, it is likely comments he stated with peers in a setting that he believed would not be shared with a teacher more accurately represented his attitudes. The contradictions

are likely evidence that the student chose to deliberately manage his responses to present himself in a more favorable light (Crosby, et al., 1980; Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Roy, 2006; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004). Although no evidence could be found to show that other students did the same thing, the possibility clearly exist that others also provided responses during surveys and reflective journals that were intended to avoid portraying themselves as prejudiced, This issue must be considered when evaluating the conclusions of the study.

Research Question Three. *How do students describe where they get their ideas about Arabs and Muslims and how these ideas have developed at the start of the unit? What do students recognize as factors leading to the development of their knowledge and attitudes about Arabs and Muslims during the course of the unit?*

Similar to the findings of Crandall and Stanger, prejudiced attitudes and behaviors among the students in this study were influenced significantly by social norms (2005). Those norms are often transferred to adolescents through the movies and television shows they watch, the video games they play, or the schools they attend. The students participating in this study overwhelmingly identified the news media, television shows and movies, and video games as the basis of their limited "knowledge" and negative attitudes about Arabs and Muslims prior to the unit. Initially, most did not recognize that the portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in those venues were predominantly negative (Akram & Johnson, 2004; Shaheen, 2001; Said, 1997; David & Ayouby, 2011; Chu, 2013; Saleem & Anderson, 2013; Saleem, 2012) or that their exposure to those sources had shaped their attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims (Marsden & Savigny,

2009; Poole, 2002; Severin & Tankar, 1997; Dill et al., 2005). In order for students to begin the process of undoing their own prejudices against Arabs and Muslims, they needed to understand the influence that their culture has had on their knowledge and attitudes, as well as be provided with accurate representations of Arabs and Muslims (Shaheen, 2001).

Students who see themselves as independent individuals tend to be defensive when confronted with the idea that they participate in a racist system until they learn that they are "an integral part of a larger construct not necessarily of their own making" (Okun, 2010, p. 94; see also Blanchard & Cook, 1976; Cohen & Roper, 1972; Stephan & Rosenfield, 1978; Stephan, 1999). As students in this study became more aware of how the culture they grew up in fostered the development of their own prejudices, many recognized that sources they were exposed to over their childhoods had indeed resulted in most of them having negative perceptions of Arabs and Muslims (Shaheen, 2001; Akram & Johnson, 2004), as well as recognition and acceptance of the idea that certain members of a society experience advantages over others. Similar to other findings in Anti-Racist Education research, many students displayed a pattern of recognizing that their beliefs were a product of their society (Okun, 2010; Davis et al., 2000), and more importantly, although they were conditioned to think and act one way, they had the ability to think for themselves and demonstrate free will.

Based on student written and verbal statements, the recognition that they had been exposed to inaccurate information that had shaped their views stemmed most closely from the activities involving direct contact with Arab and Muslim Americans, or unit learning materials written by Arab and Muslim Americans. When students directly

addressed the issue of how their own knowledge and attitudes changed during the unit, they most often referenced their interaction with Ms. Ahmad and Mr. Bayoumi, their reading of *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook*, and their viewing of the documentary *Reel Bad Arabs*. Several students specifically made comments asserting that when they learned new information about Islam or about Arab culture from a non-Muslim or non-Arab sources, they were less likely to accept it if it went counter to previous beliefs, similar to the findings of Aydogan & Gonsalkorale (2015). Unlike the activity involving student presentations on *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook*, the two guest lecturer activities were referenced by students throughout the remainder of the unit and credited by many as providing them with new knowledge, although at least one expressed doubt about their trustworthiness to peers when class was not in session. However, the new knowledge they often used as examples was initially provided to them during the early class discussions and student presentations on the *Handbook*. Those two methods, which are commonly employed in prejudice reduction programs, including Multicultural Education (Cushner & Landis, 1996; Stephan, 1999), worked well as introductions to new information about Islam, and seemed to confirm that interaction with members of an oppressed group decreased anxiety and made the subjects more open to attitudinal changes about the stereotyped group (Aydogan and Gonsalkorale, 2015).

Although this study confirmed findings of previous research on Anti-Racist Education strategies about the importance of direct contact and interaction with members of the minority groups by the students in bringing about meaningful change in student knowledge and attitudes (Andreouli et al., 2014; Nordstrom, 2015; Hodson, 2011), there

were a few students who did not provide verifiable evidence that they recognized the influence of various sources on their knowledge and attitudes of Arabs and Muslims. Of those students, two simply never directly addressed the issue, even when specifically prompted to do so. Both had a history of being less engaged in class discussions and providing minimal written responses on assignments. More importantly, the third student had actually written in his reflective journal that he did recognize the negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims and the influence those portrayals had on his own attitudes, but also made comments to classmates outside of class that seemed to contradict those statements. This leaves open the question of how much of what some students wrote in their journals or said in the presence of their teachers can be taken as completely true representations of their beliefs concerning the influence of sources on their perceptions of Arabs and Muslims (Crosby, et al., 1980; Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Roy, 2006; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004).

Research Question Four. *What knowledge about prejudice, discrimination and racism do students have at the start of the unit and how do students describe changes in their knowledge and attitudes about prejudice, discrimination and racism in their society throughout the unit?*

Tema Okun found that an Anti-Racist Education curriculum that invites and respects feelings can be transformative by allowing students to develop a greater understanding of how their feelings can enhance self-awareness (2010). During this study there was a pattern of students demonstrating this self-awareness, as they learned that although they were the products of the society in which they lived, they had the

capacity to speak out, and eventually act out against those characteristics of society that they found unjust. A few students expressed anger not at hearing that they were in a privileged race, but at the existence of the racist society in which they lived and the fact that they were never made aware of it in the past (Tatum, 1992). However, despite the apparent changes in many of the students, several still had difficulty coming to terms with their new knowledge as they struggled with the emotional roots of racism.

At the outset of the unit, nearly all students were unable to properly define or use the terms "prejudice," "discrimination" and "racism," and the definitions they did provide varied greatly among the class. Once the students were given the opportunity to discuss the actual definitions, a majority still struggled to define "prejudice" correctly even though their ability to apply the term appropriately increased in frequency over the course of the unit. Nearly all of the students were able to define and apply "discrimination" correctly soon after learning the definition, and even though some still failed to include all aspects of the definition of "racism" by the unit's end, there was a marked improvement in their understanding of the concept as evidenced by their proper application of the term to historical examples as well as the conditions faced by Arabs and Muslims.

Very few students admitted to or displayed feelings of discomfort when they learned about their privileged status in society, a theme that countered previous findings about the influence of Anti-Racist Education (Tatum, 1992; Srivastava, 2005; O'Brien, 2007). Little data was available to draw any real conclusions about why most students displayed such little resistance to this new understanding of racism, but several factors may have played a role.

- Most of the students participating in the study had been together for at least two years as part of a specialized program of study in the school. As a result, they appeared to be comfortable with each other.
- Both of the course instructors were with the students for nearly an entire school year prior to the start of the unit, providing a mutual level of trust and comfort between teachers and students.
- The entire course was based on a theme of examining discrimination in U.S. history and literature, which may have already begun the process of teaching them about the institutionalized nature of racism.
- Throughout the course, the students participated in one-on-one debates, often on highly controversial topics that were typically avoided in other classrooms. Students had become accustomed to sharing their opinions on those types of issues in an environment of openness and respect (Stenhouse et al., 1983).
- Some of the students may have simply chosen not to admit feelings of discomfort or guilt for a variety of reasons, including uneasiness or misunderstanding, or a fear of being judged as prejudiced by their classmates or teachers (Crosby et al., 1980; Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004; Roy, 2006).

However, a few students in this study did provide written and verbal evidence of understanding new concepts related to racism while their actions and statements were still evidently controlled by feelings of defensiveness caused by learning about their privileged status, or by anxiety resulting from a dramatic change in their understanding of the society in which they lived. As Okun explains, for those students it appeared that,

"feelings trump intellect" (2010, pg. 119), further demonstrating the challenge of addressing the emotional basis of prejudice of individuals (Tatum, 1992; Trainor, 2008)

While a few students believed by the end of the unit that the elimination of prejudice and discrimination in society was impossible, most came to the conclusion that individuals could challenge their own prejudiced attitudes after reading or hearing examples of how other people were able to recognize and counter their prejudicial feelings. Some students even recognized and identified the influence of instructional strategies employed during the unit for reducing prejudices and stereotypes based on their own experiences. Beverly Tatum's research which showed that students found it "very helpful to read about and hear from individuals who have been effective change agents" (Tatum, 1992, p.21) was confirmed by students in this study, as many referenced stories about other people confronting racism during the unit; this was sometimes stated clearly by students (i.e., "To get rid of stereotypes, people need to...") and other times was inferred based on their comments (i.e "By joining the Muslim Student Association and talking with Muslims, Slevin started to realize that his prejudice was unfounded.").

The most common strategy identified by students was educating people about the existence of a privileged class based on prejudice and discrimination. Others also referenced the effectiveness of meeting members of an oppressed group rather than simply learning about their plight from readings or non-members of the group. Several even advocated that people needed to be specifically instructed how to challenge their own prejudices so that they could reduce or even eliminate them.

Although a focus of the study at the outset was not to analyze the ability of an Anti-Racist Education strategy to foster higher level critical thinking skills among the

students, ample data was collected that demonstrated several noteworthy themes as students responded to being confronted with their privileged status in society.

(1) Students frequently engaged in high level peer-to-peer discussions or debates about how their own attitudes may have been influenced by social norms and exposure to negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims, as well as other minorities, in movies, television shows and video games.

(2) Students were able to identify and explain similarities and differences of the causes and impacts of prejudice, discrimination and racism between various oppressed groups in U.S. and world history.

While the teaching of the Anti-Racist Education unit may have only started the process of educating most of the students about the realities of racism in their society, several did openly express a sincere desire to become "anti-racist" advocates and recognized the challenges of doing so. Perhaps with expanded use of Anti-Racist Education strategies for an entire course, or even throughout the curricula within the entire school, more students would not only express a similar desire, but also have more knowledge and tools at their disposal effects such changes.

Summary of Conclusions

This study demonstrates that implementation of an Anti-Racist Education unit, as part of a Humanities course focused on discrimination, can bring about patterns of meaningful change in student knowledge and attitudes concerning prejudice, discrimination and racism against Arabs and Muslims within U.S. society. It is also apparent that many students need more time to fully digest and accept ideas that clash

with what their culture has taught them. Despite the fact that many students in this study made considerable strides in moving towards being anti-racist advocates, too many simply seemed to construct knowledge without achieving deep understanding, and struggled to deal with cognitive dissonance.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research Design. Although this study allowed me to analyze the application of an Anti-Racist Education unit that I developed for the purpose of improving my instruction, the fact that I was both the teacher and researcher raises questions regarding how I interpreted the data collected. Additionally, student discussions during the focus group sessions may have been perceived by the students as an extension of the teaching unit rather than an opportunity to speak freely about what they were thinking. To alleviate these issues, it would be beneficial to have additional research completed by a researcher unaffiliated with the school, teachers and students.

The incorporation of an Anti-Racist Education strategy for a single unit of study within a course limited the ability to fully track any pattern of change over an extended period of time. While the current study provided evidence that patterns of change were taking place to varying degrees in student knowledge and attitudes as a result of the strategy, further studies are needed that examine an entire course, or even entire school curricula developed using Anti-Racist Education. The additional time required for such research investigations would allow students more opportunities to go through the challenging process of undoing culturally infused beliefs, and provide researchers with the ability to evaluate changes over an extended period of time rather than five weeks.

In addition to developing research studies of full course or school-wide curricula using Anti-Racist Education, future research should also be longitudinal. The data collected for this research was limited to student responses in a five-week span, ending on the final day of the unit. Because of the time limitations of this study, I was not able to analyze the extent to which patterns of change in attitudes persisted over time, or to examine any changes in behaviors by the participants after the class was completed. A study tracking participants throughout their entire high school career and beyond would provide an opportunity to identify whether or not patterns of change evident during the unit persisted as students continued to be exposed to the cultural norms that led to prejudice and discrimination in the first place.

Knowledge and Attitude Changes. An examination of the data collected immediately following activities in which new information was provided to students using more traditional methods such as direct instruction, peer-to-peer learning and readings of secondary sources, compared to data collected after activities in which students met with Arab and Muslim Americans, seemed to indicate that giving students the opportunity to begin questioning their own knowledge and beliefs prior to having the personal interaction with members of an oppressed group increased the ability of the students to challenge their previous beliefs. No studies were found that examined whether or not the specific order of activities incorporated by an Anti-Racist Education strategy influenced the effectiveness of the strategy. If Anti-Racist Education is to be incorporated into more classrooms, research on this issue would be helpful in ensuring that it is done as effectively as possible.

It appeared that there may have been a correlation between a student's prior academic history and their willingness or ability to experience meaningful positive changes in their attitude about Arabs and Muslims. Although there were a few exceptions, the students that demonstrated the most substantial patterns of reduced prejudice tended to be those that had high grades for the course (B+ and above), and had a history of completing assignments completely and by their due dates. The permission granted by students and parents to collect data for this study was insufficient to fully investigate this possible connection. Future studies of Anti-Racist Education should examine whether or not a student's prior academic record influences the effectiveness of the teaching strategy.

There was evidence to suggest that the type and frequency of personal interactions with Arabs and Muslims in a non-classroom setting may reduce, but not eliminate prejudice. However, the unit and study design failed to focus on diverse personal interactions enough. Further study on this issue could provide meaningful data for developing more effective Anti-Racist Education strategies that take into account a broader range of student backgrounds in a classroom.

Reflections as a Teacher

This study examined a unit that my teaching partner and I were using for the third consecutive year, albeit with substantial changes in design and implementation each time. While our experience as teachers and our practice of reflecting on and discussing everything we did in our classroom told us that the unit was having a positive influence, we were never sure about the extent of that influence, or how consistently the lessons

were being received by all of the students. By completing this study, I have come to recognize that although the design and length of the unit did not appear to generate meaningful changes in attitudes for many students, it did encourage nearly all of our students to critically examine how their own knowledge and attitudes about minority groups developed and what those beliefs actually were. Most students also demonstrated improved knowledge about Arabs and Muslims, as well as how people could work towards eliminating their own prejudice. As a teacher, those results alone made it a successful endeavor.

What I Learned as a Teacher. My entire teaching career has taken place in the years after the events of September 11, 2001, and during that time, I have often heard otherwise intelligent, compassionate and respectful students make statements to their peers or me about Arabs and Muslims that were based on hatred, fear and ignorance. In many cases, those statements were made after students learned about the existence and impact of prejudice and discrimination against other minority groups throughout United States history. The students often expressed disbelief and anger at how people could oppress others so callously and indiscriminately, often without any personal interaction with members of the minority group. Although the students were able to explain the social, political and economic factors that led to the oppression of those groups, they failed to recognize that those same factors still existed for some of those groups, and were similar to the causes of Arab and Muslim discrimination that they took part in today. By teaching this Anti-Racist Education unit and completing this study, I can better understand why my otherwise open-minded and kind students were repeating the

mistakes of the past, and more importantly, what I can do to more effectively help them overcome the prejudice that infects us all.

Teaching About Racism. Following the advice of Beverly Tatum (1992), I began the unit by explaining to students how I came to recognize many of the prejudices that I had myself, and that I recognized and accepted that I have had advantages over others in society because of the color of my skin, my gender, my religious beliefs, and my sexual orientation. I also told them that I continued to struggle to control prejudice and that I would do so for the rest of my life. I finished my talk with the students by telling them that over the next five weeks they might find themselves feeling angry, frustrated, confused or even guilty, but that those feelings were normal, and in some ways expected, as part of an Anti-racist Education strategy. This is a strategy that I never would have attempted prior to researching Anti-Racist Education, and I am convinced that this one short speech established an environment that allowed many of our students to reflect on society and their place in it in an entirely new way. Although I am unable to teach this unit anymore as a result of the Humanities program being terminated, I continue to use that same speech in my government courses when I introduce our short unit on race and gender in politics. It continues to instigate high level questions and conversations each and every time.

Despite evidence of important and substantial improvement by some students in knowledge and attitudes towards Arab and Muslim Americans, and racism in general, this study made it clear that teaching students to be anti-racist is a daunting task that cannot be done during one 5-week unit, and likely not during one course. Providing most students with the necessary knowledge, support and tools to overcome what Trainor calls

"emotioned beliefs" that are ingrained in them (2008) to become anti-racist advocates likely requires a school-wide curriculum, or at the least a multi-year program.

However, in a school or district that is unable or unwilling to adopt school-wide anti-racist curriculum, there are benefits for individual or teams of teachers to incorporate the strategy. By introducing students to the idea that certain individuals have advantages based on the group they belong to, providing students with opportunities to emotionally react to the reality of their unjust society, and allowing students to discuss how they can begin the process of becoming anti-racist, teachers can foster "micro-level changes" that can have important consequences on students (Gay, 2000). While there is a legitimate danger that some students may react to an anti-racist curriculum by becoming more resolved in their prejudice, I believe the possible benefits far outweigh the risks. In this study, definitive evidence could only be found of one student that resisted the Anti-Racist Education unit, while a sizable group of students provided evidence of positive changes in attitudes.

If I Could Do It All Again. Throughout the process of conducting this full-scale practitioner action research project on an Anti-Racist Education unit I developed, I learned many valuable lessons that, if given the opportunity to teach for a similar course again, I would incorporate.

- The Anti-Racist Education strategies would be gradually incorporated throughout the entire school year to allow students more time and support for challenging their entrenched prejudice. I would not institute the curriculum at the start of the year, perhaps easing them in with a more traditional Multicultural Education approach, as I believe it was

beneficial to build a relationship based on trust and respect with the students prior to starting racial awareness activities.

- Student reflective journals provided a great deal of valuable data by allowing students to share in writing things they may have been hesitant to say in class, and by providing qualifying statements that could be used to support or refute claims by students. However, rather than using the journals strictly to collect information from students, I believe that they can be used to enhance student learning and to assist them in overcoming emotionally-based challenges by allowing them to be used for private two-way contact between teacher and student.
- One of the areas in which I was most disappointed was the inability of the unit to dispel the myth for most students that Islam promotes violence. Although evidence exists to show that a few students appear to have taken the idea to heart, many others were clearly struggling to overcome their previous attitudes and beliefs. Undoing this "emotioned belief" that has been and continues to be ingrained within students through the social norms of society may be a challenge that cannot be accomplished for most students during a short unit of study. Students were able to meet with each guest only once during this unit, but very recent research has demonstrated that by allowing students to develop more substantial and personal contact with members of minority groups, students showed reductions in prejudice for at least one year after completion of the course (Nordstrom, 2015). Additionally, other studies

> have found that intolerant people have expressed significantly less bias when friendships begin to form with members of the oppressed group (Hodson et al., 2013; Dhont & Van Hiel, 2009; Hodson, 2008; Hodson et al., 2009; Pettigrew, 2008). If given the opportunity, I would include college-aged Arab and Muslim students as presenters, and increase the frequency of personal interactions between my students and Muslim Americans, including the ability to correspond with guests electronically to ask questions after their initial visit.

Final Thoughts

Teaching students about their position of authority in a power and privileged-based society has what Becky Thompson refers to as an "intuitive quality" in that the "work is so often a matter of faith" (quoted on page 97 in Okun, 2010). The teacher tries to keep doing the work without really knowing if they, as a member of the same society as the students, have successfully overcome their own social conditioning, and if they can really trust themselves to teach students about racism in a culture that would prefer that they failed. This study was designed with that challenge in mind. As a teacher who often questions how much I have truly overcome the prejudices that developed in me as a result of growing up in a racist society, I do not often have the opportunity to study the impact of teaching such complicated and controversial issues to my students. I know that going through this process has allowed me to grow as a teacher, and more importantly, as a person. I now hope that my efforts can also be used to help other teachers take that leap of faith.

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Appendix A

Student Reflective Journal Prompts

For each assigned student reflection, respond in your googledoc for the unit. Refer to the rubric to see how you will be graded. If you are absent for a post, you need to make it up as soon as possible.

SRJ1 May 13th

How would you describe the physical appearance and cultural beliefs of a person described as Arab?

- How would you describe what an Arab looks like?
- What do you think Arabs believe?
- What do you believe are the major differences and similarities between Arab culture and your own?

What do you consider to be the key characteristics of the religion of Islam?

- How would you describe what a Muslim looks like?
- What do you think Muslims believe?
- What do you believe are the major differences and similarities between Muslim beliefs and your own?

SRJ2 May 15th

As we discussed the meaning of key concepts for the unit such as prejudice, stereotype, discrimination and racism, what were you feeling and thinking? Did any parts of the discussion make you uncomfortable, angry or curious? If so, why do you think you felt that way? Did you discuss the ideas presented with any peers or family members? If so, how did they react?

SRJ3 May 19th

As you watch the live coverage of the events of September 11th, 2001, record any thoughts and feelings that you have. Try to imagine yourself experiencing these broadcasts live, unaware of what we know today. For this prompt, you may write in bullet points or free write.

SRJ4 May 22nd

Now that you have seen presentations about Islam based on the book *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook*, what did you learn? Were any misconceptions corrected? Was there anything surprising? Do you think this new information will impact how you react (both in thought and action) when you see Muslims in person or on television/internet?

SRJ5 May 28th

After hearing the presentation by Ms. Ahmad, how have your attitudes about Arabs and Muslims changed? Are there any stereotypes that you had prior to the presentation that you no longer believe (feel free to refer back to SRJ1 and your Arab/Islam Word Association chart)? If so, how have they changed? What did you find most surprising

during her presentation? What emotions did you feel (curiosity, anger, empathy, frustration, confusion, etc...). Did you share any information from the presentation with peers or family? If so, how did they react?

SRJ6 May 29th

As we view the video clips, record any thoughts or emotional reactions you have to what you are seeing. At the end of each section, use the information you recorded to answer each question.

- Try to specifically focus on films referenced that you have seen yourself. Were you aware of negative portrayal of Arabs when you watched it?
- Jack Shaheen argues that Hollywood films closely follow government policies. What evidence does he present to support this idea?
- How has media (including news, entertainment and educational/religious) feed into Islamophobia?

What does Shaheen believe needs to occur to diminish Arab stereotypes? What evidence does he present to show that the stereotypes will change?

SRJ7 June 2

Based on your reading of the Preface and Rasha, please respond to ALL of the following prompts.

- Why do you think Bayoumi wrote this book? How does he connect the experiences of Arabs and Muslims in the United States today to that of other oppressed groups, particularly African Americans?
- Provide a summary of what happens to Rasha and her family during this chapter.
- Were you aware of the detainment of Arab and Muslim Americans and legal immigrants after 9/11? If yes, how did you rationalize the actions by the government? If not, what were your reactions to learning about it while reading this chapter?

Do you think the policies of mass arrests, deportation, and racial profiling against Arabs and Muslims after 9/11 were justified? Why or why not?

SRJ8 June 6th

Based on your reading of your two assigned chapters, please respond to ALL of the following prompts.

- Describe in detail how the two people you read about were treated differently based on their ethnic and/or religious identities?
- How did the two people react to discriminatory treatment, including overt actions and implied actions, both emotionally (what did they feel and think) and physically (what did they do)? This can include acts of rebelling, attempts to fit in, moving, etc...
- How do you think being treated differently based on their ethnic and/or religious background impacts people's sense of identity and belonging? Use your two people as examples, but feel free to go beyond these two stories.

SRJ9 June 12th

After listening to the audio broadcast of the story of Sam Slaven, reflect on all of the following points.

- What events led Slaven to develop or reinforce his stereotypes and prejudicial beliefs about Muslims and Arabs (Iraqis)?
- How did his negative feelings and beliefs impact Slaven's mental and physical state, as well as his actions, when he returned to the United States? (Use information for this question from throughout the story.)
- How are the feelings and statements of the Muslim students at Parkland similar to what the subjects of *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?* felt and experienced?
- Using the definition of racism presented to the class, what allows Slaven to transform from an actively racist individual to an anti-racist individual so quickly? How does he take an active and conscious role in this process? What are the key elements that allow this to happen?
- How can this story be used to demonstrate an educational strategy of undoing stereotypes, prejudicial beliefs and racism in society?

SRJ10 June 16th (Final Reflection)
Reflect on the video clip, "Unlearning Prejudice," and the unit in its entirety as you respond to the following prompts.

- How can individuals challenge prejudice and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims at the individual, community and national levels? Consider the role of:
    - Authors;
    - Media;
    - Teachers;
    - Citizens;
    - Political Leaders;
- How have your understandings of race, prejudice, discrimination and our society changed as a result of this unit. How have these changes influenced what you think and how you act, and how do you think they may influence how you think and act in the future? Do you think racism can eventually be eliminated from a society?

Appendix B
Pre- and Post-Unit Surveys

Please complete this survey based on the knowledge and opinions you have as of today. Avoid doing research or discussing it with anyone else until after you have completed it. Note: Questions with a "Pew" are based on Pew Research prompts.

Your username will be recorded when you submit this form.

* Required
1. How would you define prejudice? *
Please define it as best as you can without looking it up.

2. How would you define discrimination? *
Please define it as best as you can without looking it up.

3. How would you define racism? *
Please define it as best as you can without looking it up.

4. What do you know or think you know about what it means to be an Arab? *
Please respond as best as you can without looking it up.

5. What do you know or think you know about what it means to be a Muslim?
Please respond as best as you can without looking it up.

6. In the United States today, how much discrimination do you think occurs against Arabs? * “Pew”
Mark only one oval.
- A great deal
- Some
- Not very much
- None

7. In the United States today, how much discrimination do you think occurs against Muslims? *
Pew
Mark only one oval.
- A great deal
- Some
- Not very much
- None

8. How would you describe your knowledge about the religion of Islam? *
Pew
Mark only one oval.

- A great deal
- Some
- Not very much
- Nothing at all

9. How would you describe your overall opinion of Islam? *
Pew
Mark only one oval.
- Favorable
- Unfavorable
- No opinion

10. Select which statement comes closer to your own views even if neither one is exactly right. *
Pew
Mark only one oval.
- The Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers.
- The Islamic religion does not encourage violence more than others.
- Neither
- I don't know

11. In your opinion, how much do government policies reflect prejudicial beliefs in the United
States? *
Mark only one oval.
- A great deal
- Some
- Not very much
- Not at all

12. From where do you think you developed your knowledge of and attitudes towards Arabs? *
Check all that apply.
- Television shows & Hollywood Movies
- News Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper or Internet)
- Video Games
- Personal Interactions with Arabs and/or Muslims
- Family
- Peers
- School Classes/Texts
- Religious Classes/Services
- Recreational Reading
- Other:

13. From where do you think you developed your knowledge of and attitudes towards Muslims? *
Check all that apply.

- Television shows & Hollywood Movies
- News Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper or Internet)
- Video Games
- Personal Interactions with Arabs and/or Muslims
- Family
- Peers
- School Classes/Texts
- Religious Classes/Services
- Recreational Reading
- Other:

Appendix C
Focus Group Guides

Session 1

Research Project: Using an Anti-racist Education Strategy to Counter Arab and Muslim American Prejudice

Investigator: Darrell DeTample

Purpose: Study

The purpose of the study is to test the effectiveness of the unit "Perceptions of Arab and Islamic Americans in Post 9/11 America" at correcting misconceptions of students with little to no direct exposure to the ethnic and religious groups. The study will also begin to examine the factors that have influenced the development of student perceptions prior to their participation in the unit.

Focus Group #1

The purpose of this session is to determine the pre-existing perceptions that students have of Arab and Islamic Americans, as well as the experiences that they believe have led to those perceptions.

Housekeeping Checklist

___ Introduce investigator to group
___ Explain the purpose of the study
___ Explain what the information will be used for
___ Explain the purpose of the audio taping and the confidentiality of the session
___ How the focus group will work: rules of engagement; one person speaking at a time; signaling that you want to speak; speak clearly
___ Remind students that all discussions during the focus group are confidential. Students are forbidden from sharing the comments, opinions, or questions of the other participants outside of the focus group.
___ Inform as to when the session will end.

Discussion Questions

What do you consider to be the key characteristics of the religion of Islam?

What terms did you include in your lists?
How would you describe what a Muslim looks like?
What do you think Muslims believe?
What do you believe are the major differences between Muslim beliefs and your own?

How would you describe the physical appearance and cultural beliefs of a person described as Arab?

What terms did you include in your lists?
How would you describe what an Arab looks like?
What do you think Arabs believe?
What do you believe are the major differences between Arab culture and your own?

Describe the types of interactions that you have had with Arab and Islamic Americans.

Do you have any friends, relatives, classmates or group associations with anyone that is Arab or Islamic? Describe what you think and do during these interactions?
Do you shop/do business with Arab or Islamic Americans? Describe what you think and do during these interactions?

Where do you think you've learned what you know about Arab and Islamic Americans?

Why did you include the terms in your lists that you did?
What television news, news article in newspapers, news journals or on the Internet do you use?
How have your ideas about Arab and Islamic Americans been influenced by popular culture such as movies, television shows and video games.
How well have you been educated about Arab and Islamic Americans during your 10+ years of school?

Can you describe any lessons that either dealt directly with Arabs and Islam, or where they were brought up during a lesson on another subject?

What types of readings have been assigned in school where the topics of Arab and Muslims were covered?
Can you describe any experiences in school where you thought the topics of Arabs and Muslims were either intentionally avoided or only glossed over quickly?
Are there any questions about Arab and Islamic Americans that you would like to see answered during the teaching of the upcoming unit.

End of Discussion Checklist:

___ Thank students for participation;
___ Remind students of consent and confidentiality issues;
___ Provide students with email address for sending additional comments or feedback;
___ Provide students with approximate date of next session.

Session 2

Research Project: Using an Anti-racist Education Strategy to Counter Arab and Muslim American Prejudice

Investigator: Darrell DeTample

Purpose: Study

The purpose of the study is to test the effectiveness of the unit "Perceptions of Arab and Islamic Americans in Post 9/11 America" at correcting misconceptions of students with little to no direct exposure to the ethnic and religious groups. The study will also begin to examine the factors that have influenced the development of student perceptions prior to their participation in the unit.

Focus Group #2

The purpose of this session is to determine how perceptions which students have of Arab and Islamic Americans have changed as a result of the entire unit, as well as to learn what questions they have about Arab and Islamic Americans as a result of what they've learned.

Housekeeping Checklist

___ Remind the subjects of the purpose of the study
___ Explain the purpose of this session
___ Remind subjects of what the information will be used for
___ Remind the subjects of the purpose of the audio taping and the confidentiality of the session
___ Remind the subjects how the focus group will work: rules of engagement; one person speaking at a time; signaling that you want to speak; speak clearly
___ Remind students that all discussions during the focus group are confidential. Students are forbidden from sharing the comments, opinions, or questions of the other participants outside of the focus group.
___ Inform as to when the session will end

Discussion Questions

What do you consider to be the key characteristics of the religion of Islam?

How would you describe what a Muslim looks like?

What do you think Muslims believe?

What do you believe are the major differences between Muslim beliefs and your own?

Are there any terms from your original lists that you would remove? If so, why?

Are there any new terms that you would add to your original lists? If so, why?

How would you describe the physical appearance and cultural beliefs of a person described as Arab?

How would you describe what an Arab looks like?

What do you think Arabs believe?

What do you believe are the major differences between Arab culture and your own?

Are there any terms from your original lists that you would remove? If so, why?

Are there any new terms that you would add to your original lists? If so, why?

After reading excerpts from *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook* and meeting/Skyping with Muslim American, what information did you find surprising?

Did certain statements or actions by Arab and Islamic Americans cause you to question previous beliefs?

Did you find yourself reacting to circumstances faced by Arab and Islamic Americans with anger…surprise…satisfaction…disbelief?

Based on your selected readings from *The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook* and meeting/Skyping with Muslim American, how have your perceptions of Arab and Islamic Americans changed?

Overall, how effective do you feel this unit was in increasing your understanding of Arab and Islamic Americans?

Are there any questions about Arab and Islamic Americans that you would like to see answered during the remainder of the upcoming unit.

End of Discussion Checklist:

___ Thank students for participation in the study;

___ Remind students of consent and confidentiality issues;

___ Provide students with email address for sending additional comments or feedback;

___ Provide students with email address for requesting a copy of the written report based on these focus group sessions.

Appendix D
Formative Assessments

Reading Quiz: "Prejudice Against Arab and Muslim Americans"

1. An exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life is the definition of:

A. Jihadism
B. Anti-Arabism
C. Islamophobia
D. Anti-Muslimism
E. Religionism

2. Persons from a collective of countries in North Africa and West Asia with diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics is the definition of:

A. Middle Eastern
B. Palestinian
C. Muslim
D. Arab

3. According to the reading, the desire of the U.S. government to portray to the public a sense of success in the effort to prevent acts of violence has resulted in:

A. rationalization of fear and distrust of Arabs and Muslims by other Americans.
B. improved security and success in preventing terrorist attacks in the U.S.
C. growth in the number of radical Islamist groups within the United States.

4. According to the reading, all of the following statements are true EXCEPT:

A. When it is included U.S. history textbooks, Islam is virtually nonexistent, or worse, based on prejudice and negative stereotypes.
B. Despite the findings that stereotypes portrayed in video games have been shown to foster negative and hostile perceptions and attitudes towards the stereotyped group, perceptions of Arabs and Muslims have not been significantly influenced in the games.
C. Hollywood films have presented "dangerous and one-dimensional images" of Arabs and Muslims that feed on existing stereotypes in the United States to cater to a willing audience, resulting in the continued "racializations" of Arab and Muslims.
D. Audiences in the United States are constantly exposed to images of Muslims as

fundamentalists, militant, undemocratic, violent, fanatical, terrorists and sexists, while the religion of Islam overall is often significantly distorted in the news media.

Reading Quiz: *American Muslim Teenager's Handbook* Chapter 1

1. What is the essential message of the Quran?

A. To dedicate one's life to the spread of Islam through conversion of non-believers, or their elimination if they will not convert.
B. To believe and worship in one God and to do as many good deeds as possible in order to be reunited with God in the afterlife.
C. To believe and worship one God and to devote your life to converting non-believers so that they may have salvation in the afterlife.

2. Who is considered to be the patriarch of Judaism, Christianity and Islam?

A. Ishmael
B. Abraham
C. Moses
D. Jesus

3. According to the reading, all of the following are accurate descriptions of Muhammad EXCEPT:

A. He recited the Quran based on revelations he received.
B. He is the last chosen messenger of God.
C. He was a powerful political leader before receiving revelations.

4. What is the literal meaning of the word "Islam?"

A. Submission; peace
B. Adherence; devotion
C. Praise; worship
D. Faith

5. The Five Articles of Faith in Islam include all of the following EXCEPT:

A. Belief in His (God's) Prophets
B. Belief in the importance of converting non-believers
C. Belief in God
D. Belief in His (God's) books (Scrolls, Torah, Psalms, Gospel and Quran)

Reading Quiz: *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem?* (Preface & Rasha)

1. Where is Rasha when the attacks of 9/11 occur?

A. In her science class at school.
B. In bed.
C. On the subway on the way to school.

2. From what country did Rasha's family emigrate from?

A. Syria
B. Iraq
C. Saudi Arabia

3. Based on your reading of the Preface and Rasha, please respond to ALL of the following prompts.

- Provide a summary of what happens to Rasha and her family during this chapter.
- Were you aware of the detainment of Arab and Muslim Americans and legal immigrants after 9/11? If yes, how did you rationalize the actions by the government? If not, what were your reactions to learning about it while reading this chapter?
- Do you think the policies of mass arrests, deportation, and racial profiling against Arabs and Muslims after 9/11 were justified? Why or why not?

Reading Quiz: *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem?* Assigned Chapters

1. Provide **TWO** bullet point outlines of each story you were assigned to read. You should be able to cover the entire story with 8 to 10 points. You need to demonstrate that you read and comprehended the entire chapter for each story to get full credit.

Reading Quiz: *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem?* "Yasmin"

1. What issue forced Yasmin to resign from her school leadership position?

A. Her extended absence when she completed the Hajj
B. Her inability to attend school dances
C. Her insistence on wearing her hijab in her school ID photo
D. Her inability to participate in the prayer before each meeting

2. What student government position was Yasmin elected to as a freshman?

A. Treasurer

B. Vice-President
C. Secretary
D. Historian

3. Where was Yasmin when she witnessed two people suspicious of a Muslim woman carrying a baby under a blanket?

A. Walking to school
B. On a bus to Taco Bell
C. In a department store
D. On a train to Manhattan

4. Throughout the story, there are multiple statements made to Yasmin or her father by school officials (COSA, Principal, Vice-Principal) that reflect prejudicial beliefs about Muslims. Choose one statement (no need to quote, just paraphrase) and explain how it made Yasmin and/or her father feel.

Reading Quiz: "Media March to Madness" and "Therapeutic Patriotism and Beyond"

1. Refer to the statement from your assigned article. Provide at least 3 pieces of evidence that the author uses to support the statement in the story.

Therapeutic Patriotism and Beyond
"The disaster story from the front lines of apocalypse had become, by Day Three, a therapeutic one."

Media March to War
"In the wake of the devastating attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, many media pundits focused on one theme: retaliation."

Appendix E
Word Association Activity Results - All Students

Student	Words Associated with "Arab"	Words Associated with "Muslim"
Edward	Islamic; Religion; Christianity; Extremism; Middle East; Oil; Arab Spring	Islamic; Religion; Christianity; Extremist; Jihad; 9/11; 75 Virgins in heaven (woo); Oppression; Revolution
Clara	culture; different language; far away; desert; struggle; racism; unknown	bombing; terrorists; suicide bombers; religion; unknown; far away; Arabian; different culture; discrimination
William	religion wars; theft; Middle East; Power struggles; Saudi Arabia; Different language; poverty; desert	9/11; Boston bombing; terrorist attacks; 1/4 of Jerusalem; worship a meteor; pray while on knees; Boston bombing; Muhammed; Middle East
Megan	Religious; Lives in the past; Proper; Not resourceful; Desert; Skinny; Livestock	Religious; Lives in past; Middle East; Arabian; Artillery; 9/11; Black clothing; Conservative; Music throughout city; Goats; Beards
Rachel	different; stereotypes against them; they look guilty	terrorism; dangerous; stereotypical; Ground zero mosque; religious
Peter	Turban; Muslim; desert	terrorism; 9/11
Marie	ethnicity; islamic religion; there is discrimination towards them; some people are afraid of them; racism towards them; some people might think of 9/11; people are suspicious of them for terrorism; people associate them with violence	ethnicity; religion; associated with violence; there is discrimination and fear towards them; associated with terrorism; 9/11; jihad; people are racist towards them; the only thoughts that go through some people's heads about muslims are in relation to terrorism
Diana	Middle East; Religion; Head Scarves?; Arabic Language	Middle East; Religious; Strict clothing; terrorism; Arranged marriages; Bad government; Searched in airports more frequently than any other person because of terrorist attacks
Susan	religious; head wraps; dark hair and brown eyes; can speak different languages?	head wraps; religious; arabian; different language?; dark hair and eyes; arranged marriages; always have hair covered

Zeke	Middle East; Muslim; Osama Bin Laden; 9/11; Beard; Things that they wear on their heads; Racism	Religion; Allah; Arab; 9/11; Beard; Racism
Sean	slavery; Muslim; Muhaed	terrorist; kidnappers; Hates America; Anti-women's rights; Anti-Christian
Ruby	fighting; blood; bombs; terrorism; 9/11; tragedy; death; muslim; Iran; Iraq; troops;	religion; headscarf; conservative; men; anger
Evan	Terrorist; Middle East; Al'Queda	Turbans; pray a lot
Hunter	Muslim; Indian; Turban; 9/11; Hindu; Islam; Dot Head	Arab; Indian; Taliban; Indian [repeated]; Turban; Islam; 9/11; Gas Station; terrorism
Leah	Middle East; muslim	some terrorists; religion; bombs
Katherine	Middle East; Muslim; Islam; Sometimes assumed to be terrorists	Assumed to be terrorists; Al Qaeda; Middle East
Carlton	Head dresses; Middle East; Africa	WTC [World Trade Center]; terrorism; Middle East; Conflict of religion; Darker Skin; Head dresses
Alec	Proper; Ala; Desert; Blankets; Religious	Religion; terrorists; 9/11; Division; Desert; Indian
Ken	Middle East; Turban; Islam; Desert; Camels	Muhammed; terrorism; 9/11; Middle East; Afghanistan War; Poor countries; Dark skin
James	Iraq; Middle East; Terrorist; Desert; 9/11	Arab; Middle East; Religion; Allah; Mohammed; Possible Terrorist; After life with 75 virgins
Audrey	Muslim; Middle East; 9/11;	bombings; hijacking planes; 9/11
Reggie	Muslim; Middle East; Islam	Al Qaida; Osama Bin Laden; terrorists; Islam; Middle East; Arab
Andrea	arabian peninsula; hats; tan; middle eastern; bombing; dangerous; iraq; military; young	middle eastern; hats; tan; arab; iraq, baghdad; young wives; dangerous; buddah; worship god allah;

	wives; conservative apparel; domestic abuse; many children; long mustaches; hair hidden on girls; race; saddam hussein	conservative clothing on females; stay at home mothers; many children; religion?
Joseph	Islamic; Middle East; Muslim; Terrorists; Suicide Bomber; 9/11; Iran, Iraq, and other Middle Eastern Countries	Arab; Islamic; Middle East; Terrorist
Jack	Allah; Islamic; Muslim; Turban; Middle East	Mosque; Allah; Islamic; Arab; Turban; Muhammad; Koran; extremist; Middle Eastern
Chad	Muslim; Osama Bin Laden; Desert; Long Beards; Middle East; Cloth	Jihad; Prayer Mats
Richard	Middle Eastern; Towel Head; Terrorist; Muslim	Muslim; Peace; Towel Head; Terrorists; Arab; Middle Eastern
Mark	Muslim; Terrorist; Riding Camels; Small Villages	9/11; most people living in a country ending in -stan; Long, white garments
Jamie	foreign; people	Al Qaeda; 9/11; religion; Middle East
Hayden	muslim; middle eastern; desert nations; Iran; Afghanistan; Iraq; the Gulf War; oil; theocracy	extremist; intolerance; strict religion; middle east; Islam; sexism; Allah
Michael	middle eastern; airport security; Iraq and Afghan war; oil; arabian peninsula; terrorist; al Qaeda; corrupt; the taliban	al Qaeda; terrorists; Islamic; middle eastern; nowruz; ramadan; grandparents; mosques; mecca
Gloria	Middle East; Terrorist; Oil; falafel; Race; Ethnicity; Saddam Hussein; Desert	Mohammad; Religion; Monotheistic; Women; Ramadan; God; Jesus; Abraham; Israelites; Hebrews; Christians
Dan	Muslim; Middle Eastern; 9/11; Discriminated Against; Birkha	Birkha; covering hair and skin; egypt?; 9/11; hijackers
Andrea	A country; Violence; Islam; I don’t know	Type of religion; Women need to cover their faces; I don’t know

Kevin	Middle Eastern; Family Oriented; Dry desert; Hard Working; Hard Life; Traditional	Some of my friends from work; Peaceful; religious (like and other practicing person); Thoughtful; Like other religions, not restricted by race
Nick	Bomber; Suicide Bomber; Terrorist; Facial Clothing Coverage; Middle East; Iraq; Islam; "Ay-Rab" (pronunciation; Allah	Middle Eastern; Poor; Islam; Facial/Head clothing; Desert; Clay Houses
Sarah	Middle East; Religion; Strict government	Very violent; Strict views; Barely a government; Very religious; Middle East
Makayla	Middle Eastern; Arabian Queen; Worldly; Thieves; Dancers; Discrimination; Culture	Middle East; Turkish; Foreign; Not respected; Friends (I have a Muslim friend); Nice people; Religion
Brad	Middle East; Oil; Defensive	Middle East; Religious; Mecca
Sandra	Middle-Eastern; Muslim; dark-skinned; terrorists stereotype; from the desert	peaceful; monotheistic; originated in Middle-East and Asia; usually Arab; wear turbans or hijabs (covering)
Mackenzie	Israeli; Israel; Terrorist; 9/11; Muslim; Head turban; Terror; Twin Towers; Afghanistan/Iraq; Taliban	Afghanistan; Iraq; Head turban; Religion; Taliban; 9/11; Twin towers; Terror; Government/rebellion

Source: Pre-Unit Survey

Appendix F
Unit Summative Essay Assignment

Final Exam Essay 2014

In the preface to his book *How Does It Feel to be a Problem?*, Moustafa Bayoumi quoted from W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*: "Being a problem is a strange experience." Bayoumi then goes on to state that "Arabs and Muslim Americans are the new problem of American society, but there have of course been others" (2).

WRITING TASK: How does it feel to be a problem? Compare and contrast the Arab and Muslim experiences to two other oppressed groups we have covered in class.

Use both historical and literary resources.

Literature
- Harlem Renaissance Poetry and essays
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *When the Emperor was Divine*
- *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?*

History
- *Scottsboro Boys: An American Tragedy* Video
- *Stories of Scottsboro*
- African American Stereotypes PPT
- *The American Muslim Teenagers Handbook*
- *9/11 Commission Report*
- *Overview of Prejudice Against Arab and Muslim Americans*
- Wikipedia readings & Class Notes

Be sure to address the following:
- Define racism, prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping;
- What does it mean to be a "problem" for American society?
- Compare and contrast the experiences your chosen groups went through during the time they were considered (or still are considered) a "problem" (including actions by individuals and by the government);
- Discuss what, if anything, the country did to try and solve "the problem";
- Incorporate specific evidence from both history and literature;

Organize your material in the following way:
- an introduction (with lead that addresses the question "what does it mean to be a problem?" and a thesis that states your writing purpose),
- 3-4 body paragraphs each focusing on different groups or similarities and differences between their experiences
- a conclusion that restates your thesis and looks to the future

History
Use a minimum of 3 specific historical references

Literature
Incorporate at least three specific examples or quotes from three different literary sources.

Make interdisciplinary connection, but don't try to cover everything. Focus on similarities and some differences. Explain the connections you are drawing between groups fully. Offer possible ways that we might better treat Arab or Muslim Americans based on the struggles of the other groups you cover.

Appendix G
Sample of Cast-of-Characters File

The following pages include all of the data collected for the Cast-of-Character file for Mackenzie. It is provided to serve as an example of the type of data collected and one method of analysis. Mackenzie was chosen as the example because of the frequency in which data collected from her was applied in the study. No changes have been made to correct spelling, sentence structure, or knowledge errors.

Pre- Post Survey Responses

How would you define prejudice?	Hating on someone due to their race	The negative thoughts against a specific race, gender, or person often due to stereotypes.
How would you define discrimination?	Bullying someone due to their race, sexual orientation, gender, or skin color	Actions performed by a group in power based off of the prejudice thoughts one develops about a specific race, gender or person.
How would you define racism?	Viewing other races inferior to one's own race	Racism is the discriminatory system from a majority group against a lesser group.
What do you know or think you know about what it means to be an Arab?	It is a form of Islamic religion in which they believe in a God	To be from the Middle Eastern area; it is a geographical description of a person
In the United States today, how much discrimination do you think occurs against Arabs?	Some	A great deal
From where do you think you developed your knowledge of and attitudes towards Arabs?	Television shows & Hollywood Movies, News Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper or Internet), Video Games, Peers, School Classes/Texts	Television shows & Hollywood Movies, News Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper or Internet), Video Games, Family, Peers, School Classes/Texts,
What do you know or think you know about	It form of religion in which they believe in a God	To believe in the religion of Islam, which prays 5 times a

what it means to be a Muslim?		day.
In the United States today, how much discrimination do you think occurs against Muslims?	A great deal	A great deal
How would you describe your knowledge about the religion of Islam?	Nothing at all	A great deal
How would you describe your overall opinion of Islam?	No opinion	Favorable
Select which statement comes closer to your own views even if neither one is exactly right.	The Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers.	The Islamic religion does not encourage violence more than others.
From where do you think you developed your knowledge of and attitudes towards Muslims?	Television shows & Hollywood Movies, News Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper or Internet), Video Games, Personal Interactions with Arabs and/or Muslims, Peers, School Classes/Texts	Television shows & Hollywood Movies, News Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper or Internet), Video Games, Family, Peers, School Classes/Texts, Recreational Reading
In your opinion, how much do government policies reflect prejudicial beliefs in the United States?	Some	A great deal

May 13

Word Association

Arab	Muslim
Muslim	Middle East
Israeli	Afghanistan

Israel	Iraq
Terrorist	Head turban
9-11	Religion
Head turban	Taliban
Terror	9-11
Twin towers	Twin towers
Afghanistan/Iraq	Terror
Taliban	Government/rebellion

Statements from Class & Focus Group Discussions
("F" after the date denotes Focus Group statements)

Our group...we weren't sure. We talked about the Boston bombings and 9/11 and how the news just sort of puts them all together and we had no idea the differences were between the groups.	5/13
like racist stereotyping.	5/13
No. It could be race or anything.	5/13
Well I think prejudice is kinda applying the stereotype with previous information from the media or from just going out...just applying the stereotype to form a more prejudiced opinion about someone.	5/13
This is based on a group so that's kind of a stereotype in the discrimination causes the prejudice and discrimination.	5/13
You act on what you think...you act on it.	5/14
How do textbooks provide the Islamic views if they don't really touch on it at all?	5/19
I associate Arab with the Arabian peninsula and Muslims with a religion and culture.	5/28 F
Well now that I understand them more [Muslims}, when I see them more in a store, I don't just assume 'oh, terrorist,' like you see in the news all the time. I just think, 'oh, they're Muslim, that's cool.' I don't think, I know I didn't used to think that. I think I was a little nervous before.	5/28 F
But at least we have a conscious. Other people are like, nope, ignore them completely. At last we try not to do them wrong.	5/28 F
I think they can change, but...	5/28 F

But do you think that'll pass though, that we'll eventually accept them and somebody else will become the bad guys?	5/28 F
I put the same list, I had the same thing. I didn't know the difference. I was just like, well, I might, a head scarf for both of them, and terrorist for both of them. And now I know one is a geographical location.	5/28 F
I think the news kind of gave us that perspective. All we saw was the burqa and they said oh wow, oppressive society, that's what the men make the women wear. Then when Ms. Ahmad presented, she explained that that was their religious belief, their culture, their choice and that made me realize oh wow, they're not being told they have to wear that, they just decide that want to wear it. Kind of like with us, we decide what we want to wear and in our culture it's sometimes like we're almost naked.	5/28 F
It's like what are you hiding?	5/28 F
When I learned about all the discrimination I felt kind of ashamed that I was part of this society that would do something like that to another person. I didn't realize that it was all, it was seen as just whites who were doing all of this. I didn't want to be involved in this but yet I am.	5/28 F
I think what Mia was saying is that our generation is more accepting and understanding of Muslims. But, sort of like the gay problem, more people of older, are not as accepting as we are now.	6/2
I thought the school was kinda generalizing the Islamic religion in that the father was oppressing his daughters and making them wear the thing...and you can't that when in reality she was like, 'this is my religion, this is my beliefs too.'	6/11
After How Does it Feel to Be a Problem? was published, do you think society has changed to be more accepting of young Arabs in America? [Question for Moustafa Bayoumi]	6/11
I was surprised in Omar's chapter how cool they all were. They were like, "Oh yeah, were being discriminated against. That's okay." I'm not, I thought it was weird. If I was discriminated against I would stand up for myself or my culture or something. But they just kind of accepted it and were like, "Okay, well it's our time to be discriminated against so we'll just have to deal with it."	6/16 F
But they were so nonchalant about it.	6/16 F
When I was talking to my partner about the Yasmin chapter, he said he would have called 911 about the woman with the bomb thing. (Referring to calling 911 to say the people accusing the Muslim woman were the ones with the bomb). I hate to say it, but I wouldn't have been able to stand up for her. I would sit there. I wouldn't be able to say,'that's wrong.' I don't know if that's just shy or just being protected, being a racist white, but I wouldn't be able to get up and defend her.	6/16 F

I don't know. I kind of think because we were more focused on the culture, not the extremist groups, which we do see as bad, but the majority of the culture, we want to view them as good, not as 'wow, we blame them for the terrorist attacks." So I think we drew that line, we stereotyped them as all good.	6/16 F
Are you justifying what he Westboro Church is doing? Because they stand outside of military funerals and they riot against their deaths. Is that equal to what...	6/16 F
Well I think, let's just start with an individual thing, generational. So if we teach our children and their children to be accepting and tolerant to everyone, and not to be prejudicial, then they'll teach it. But I don't think it can happen to society as one. It will have to be a generational movement. And I feel like there is always going to be another group that is going to be targeted because of a war or some happening, but you just have to step back and look at it carefully.	6/16 F
The unit really helped. I didn't know anything about Muslims or Arabs. But because of this unit, I love talking about racism and how I'm racist, and learning how I will always be this but I want to challenge myself.	6/16 F
I was surprised at the end when Yousef and Sam were friends and people [Muslims] were telling Yousef 'why are you friends with him?'	6/19
I think he had to put himself out there. He had to go out there and meet these people and have a conversation on a human level instead of just thinking about them as they walked by.	6/19

Student Reflective Journal Entries

SRJ1:

I really don't know the difference between Arab and Muslim. I generally relate the two together, with head turbans, darker skin color, who are Islamic. I think Arabs believe in Muhammad Ali, that he is their God. The differences and similarities of Arab culture and my own American one are probably due to our environment. The Arab culture seems to be persuaded and have such a strong belief in their religion, as 9-11 happened and several suicide missions have been completed. I'm sure there are more similarities than I realize because Arabs always seem to be a threat to American society.

A Muslim, similar to an Arab wears a head turban and believe in the religion, Islam. That might be the where Muhammad Ali is their God, but I don't know what they

believe in. What is the difference between an Arab and a Muslim? The similarities and differences of their cultural beliefs and mine also have me think of the 9-11 attacks and suicide missions. I think of the Taliban, not really how we are both people. Is there really a difference between Muslim people and Americans? Unfortunately, I only think of Muslims (and Arabs for that matter) when they're in the news for the Boston Bombings or 9-11. I think of al Qaeda and how they are made to seem against American culture.

SRJ2:

Discussing race, racism, prejudice, and stereotypes was more mind-blowing than making me feel uncomfortable. When we learn about other religions and Muslims in school, it's typically for respect of 9-11, not really to understand other people's beliefs. This unit made me really think: figuring out how each term related to another, affected people's minds and behavior, and how the whole cycle works. After wrapping your mind about how I was born into racism, and that it all exists due to stereotyping people, I felt almost ashamed for just blaming Muslims and Arabs for 9-11 and the Boston Bombings. It is not right to blame one whole religion/culture for the actions of one small group. Nor is it right to not understand or learn how the white Americans have played a part in this. At first, I felt uncomfortable and wrong with how I've thought prejudice thoughts all due to stereotypes, but Mr. DeTample even admitted to being a 'racist' and now he's proudly an anti-racist. At lunch, following discussing the cycle, Colin and I tried to explain to our lunch group how we are all racist. A huge fight broke out, as our friend found a different definition and believed reverse racism could exist, as there was no group with the advantage in the definition. As we moved past it, I went home and explained how cool

this unit was to my Mom. She was impacted as much as I think my class was, but I think she got the point. I hope we continue to learn mind-blowing thoughts about how our society to blame for all of these actions and how it is more of a Mutual Destruction: our actions provoke the 'terrorists' to attack, and neither of us take any actions to make up for our actions or thoughts. I really appreciate this unit, and hope we get to analyze and discuss the 9-11 attacks and the Boston Bombings.

SRJ3:
- it was such a nice day…wow
- so much fire and smoke
- the second tower just went down
- my heart just stopped, like all of the newscasters just stopping talking
- different languages and parts of the world reporting of the collapsing towers
- you can see the fire and explosion after the plane went through the second tower
- I wonder how people watching felt
- 110-story floors collapsing
- people had to pick their death: jump, burn, explode, run
- we always seem to forget about the Pentagon attack, it's more about the Twin Towers
- did anyone survive from the high floors?
- how would the emergency people gotten people out, had the second tower not been hit?
- did anyone predict the collapsing of both towers?
- how many people lived to tell the story?
- how did everyone hear about it?
- I can see how a terrorist attack can happen today, and how awful it would be
- While watching them, I'm surprised no one thought of terrorist attack first, they all said how tragic it was, etc but no one predicted the truth
- 'terrible day of developments'
- a long time between each attack, I always thought it was more
- maybe the plane that went to the Pentagon was supposed to go to the Whitehouse
- all the newscasters and staff suddenly gasp and everyone shuts up
- summary for the whole day
- smart move for the entire country to move all flights to Canada, it's kind of nice to know our country has a plan
- 'oh my God'
- 'oh my God' x2
- 'you've just seen it get worse'
- quotes from the news anchors watching the towers collapse

SRJ4:

After listening and watching the presentations, I learned about the five ways Muslims pray a day. Early morning, at noon, around 3pm, at dinner, and an hour after dinner are the times they pray. Friday's are Christian's Sunday's, the day where they celebrate their religion. I always thought of Muslims as wearing the headdress and covering up, but I also learned Muslims can cover up if they choose, it is not a requirement. I found it very surprising they cannot dance with the opposite gender. They are allowed to date, but it is monitored by parents and friends. The marriage contract Ahmad explained was very interesting, more like a prenup, as the women lists three things she wants if the marriage ends in divorce. I like and appreciate how the religion wants to keep the marriage together, but they do recognize when it is appropriate to end the marriage. Now, when I see and hear about Muslims in person and on TV, I understand how they dress is their decision. They also might be shocked with who I am around, a group of boys or dating without a parent. Because of the presentations on Islam, I am more understanding how Muslims act, dress, and may see me as breaking their rules (being very different and odd). I hope I will have less prejudice thoughts because I understand their religion better now.

SRJ5:

Listening and seeing Ms. Ahmad present her culture and religious beliefs, I understand better than watching any news program. The news channels disorient how women dress to be an oppressive action by their male partners, yet it is simply the woman's choice. Some believe in complete coverage of the body, while others just cover their hair with a scarf. The news staff make the woman's conservative clothing into a

power role, yet it is simply part of the culture: to cover yourself up. Going back to SRJ1, I have head turban written down under both Arab and Muslim, yet my thoughts behind writing it were incorrect. After seeing what I thought about their cultural beliefs and the truth is, I'm embarrassed. I was ashamed of the actions by us Americas, we did not even try to understand their culture, we just named them terrorists. Ms. Ahmad was so eloquent when talking about her culture norms, talking how she sees what girls wear to school and is shocked, or when a girl bends down for a water fountain and a group of boys make comments. The cultural beliefs of Muslims are really effective: they protect the woman, from the male's inappropriate comments. I wish more people could hear Ms. Ahmad's thoughts and what being Muslim really is about, which would possibly change the world's view of Muslim and Arabs.

SRJ6:

As we view the video clips, record any thoughts or emotional reactions you have to what you are seeing. At the end of each section, use the information you recorded to answer each question.

- Try to specifically focus on films referenced that you have seen yourself. Were you aware of negative portrayal of Arabs when you watched it?
    - I have seen some of the movies referenced in the film, such as Back to the Future and Indiana Jones. The Arabic characters in the beginning of Back to the Future have no place to be there, as in the movie, there is no reason for Arabs to be involved. I had no idea it was there, I didn't second guess why the first antagonist we see is an Arab. In Indiana Jones, the quick

views of women just hanging in the back, draped in their black burkas are another iconic message from Hollywood movies. Featuring these Arab characters plays no part in the movie, and it's surprising they are allowed considering all of the 'racist' talk these days. When watching these movies, however, I gave no second look to seeing the Arabs, as that is what I grew up thinking of their culture.

- Jack Shaheen argues that Hollywood films closely follow government policies. What evidence does he present to support this idea?
    - Jack Shaheen, the director of the film believes Hollywood and Washington "share the same DNA". Whatever is happening politically is represented cinema-ly. Shaheen's evidence includes the oil blockage in the 1970s and all the movies which include Arabs holding grudges over the event. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict which was also happening during the time was reflected in several movies, where Palestinians were seen as worse than Arabs. Because the U.S. openly sides with the Israelis, Palestinians were then seen being terrorists, and the Israelis seen as victims of the Palestinians' actions. The political happenings are reflected in movies due to which race we blame at the time, and who is our friends (politically).
- How has media(including news, entertainment and educational/religious) feed into Islamophobia?
    - News media feeds the fear and lack of knowledge of Islam (Islamophobia) by grouping both Arab and Muslims together. We think of 9-11 and other

terrorists attacks when hearing these words, instead of thinking of a religion or region of countries. We think of these attacks on U.S. soil and think all of their religion hates on America. Why don't we think of the KKK as all of America? Because of stereotypes and how the majority of our country was born into racism views. The media displays Arabians as our enemy, instead of another region with a different culture. Because of our adamant stereotyping viewpoints, we do not feel compassion towards our actions of the supposed 'terrorists'.

- What does Shaheen believe needs to occur to diminish Arab stereotypes? What evidence does he present to show that the stereotypes will change?
    - Shaheen believes a younger generation has to step in and see what others have done in the film industry and change their actions. He believes younger people will be able to move the country forward, just as we did with black stereotypes, and jewish discrimination. Shaheen ended his movie with clips of movies that do display Arabs as positive, and helpful to the country. Using these movies, he is telling the U.S. to be more open minded and stop seeing all the events in movies as 'okay', question and speak up about the discrimination shown in the Hollywood film industry.

<u>Notes during video</u>
- 'hateful Arab stereotypes'
- project the Arab as a villain
- Arab image inherited from Europeans
- Arabland:
    - desert
    - an oasis
    - palace with torture chamber
    - dark music

- Disney even used stereotypes to display ‘we will cut off your ear if we do not like your face’
- we grow up just watching them being portrayed as barbaric, ruthless, dangerous and incomponent, a heavy weakness for blondes
- kind of insulting how all the Arabs are portrayed to love the blonde, blue-eyed women
- hollywood injects scenes of Arabs, movies having nothing to do with the Middle East
- Arab women viewed as sex objects
- endless movies with Arabic characters that have nothing to do with the movie itself
- “Washington and Hollywood spring from the same DNA”
- Oil blockage in 1970s
- Palestinian-Israeli conflict
- Revolutions all put strain on these relations
- Network put emphasis on the fear of Arabs taking over the U.S., and the cinema recreated it
- “buying up america” (Arabs are, that is)
- Films reflected the U.S.’s actions with political topics going on at the time
- Palestinian people reflected as terrorists in movies
- U.S. supports Israel in the conflict
- Israelis depicted as victims of the Palestinian people’s actions
- makes me feel ashamed to be a part and like these movies
- I didn’t even realize how much the government and films intertwined
- movies depict the Palestinian conflict as Palestinian women are seen as terrorists, with a mission on injuring Americans
- Death before Dishonor shows suicide bombers, torturing, killing, murdering in cold blood all being Palestinian, killing Americans
- I didn’t know there was so much racist and other things against these groups before watching this movie, it’s both terrifying and surprising
- I watch these movies all the time and it’s sad I didn’t notice how bad they all were
- “Arabs are not like us, they deserve to die”
- Islamophobia
- 9-11 19 Arab-Muslims responsible for the collapsing of the Twin Towers
- I feel just confused why we judge bombings and attacks as Middle Eastern
- first thought is Middle East bombings
- we only care about Arab culture and religion, but not American religion for attacks on America
- I have to agree with the director, we do not feel for the Arabs which we torture, we do not feel compassion
- is it because of news?
- 9-11?
- inherited into racism
- stereotypes which will take generations to disappear
- Christians and Muslims live in the Arab region, why can’t they live in peace in the U.S.
- The comedy Arabs and Muslims use is making fun of themselves, and I wonder if that is okay, they can make fun of themselves but whites cannot mock as it is seen as ‘racism’

- Some movies include positive views of the Muslims, but I don't think it should be seen as a shock, it should be typical
- revenge and sacrifice definitions?
- The director believes in the future
- stereotype will change
- younger generation will make attempts to correct it
- will take time
- it did with blacks, jews, etc
- don't remain silent, take a stand against dehumanize arabians

SRJ7:

After reading the Preface and Rasha of *How does it Feel to be a Problem?*, I think Bayoumi wrote the book to get across the point of how Arabs and Muslims are discriminated against from most other cultures and races. His book brings in several stories and examples of how people have been discriminated against. I think he wanted to get out the message that lots of people, good and bad, have misjudgements and do not know enough about cultures and religions and it is causing the world to become more and more racist. In the Preface, Bayoumi connects the actions and discrimination of Arabs and Muslims to previously oppressed groups, like African-Americans to link the seriousness and reality of America today. Although we do not see as much of it today, African-Americans were slaves, and once became freed and equals to white were still being tormented in all ways. The country has moved on from the unfortunate actions to African-Americans but the new oppressed group is the Arabians. American citizens are born into this power of the majority, giving them the action of racism. He also connects the Arab/Muslim arresting after 9-11 to the Japanese internment camps after Pearl Harbor, suggesting the country will always have an enemy to protect their country from.

In Rasha's chapter, she moved to the U.S. when she was a young five years old, only to get deported back to Syria. She hated the schooling and knew America was where

she belonged so as soon as her family had the opportunity to move back to America, they took it. Now, as a high schooler, Rasha met best friends, graduated, and got accepted to college. One February morning, after 9-11, she was awoken up FBI agents who shackled her brother and arrested her whole family. Although her family had done nothing wrong, their religion and culture had been attacked. Once taken to headquarters, her family was split up. Rasha, her older sister and mother were sent to a New Jersey prison, where she learned several of her inmates were also convicted for being immigrants. While there, she became depressed, but had to keep her mother sane and healthy. Rasha became closer to her older sister, but the quality and being in jail was not right. Weeks later, once her and her family's names were called, they were shipped back to a jail in New York where her older brother and father were being held. The quality of living her was better, but there was a jerk security counselor who refused Rasha's mom phone privileges. After making her mom cry, Rasha knew being in jail was unjust and was determined to get out. After two months, her family's lawyer freed them. As all her family met up, they drove home where their house was left completely still. A week after being freed, Rasha was out to dinner with her buddies, celebrating. She noticed a man, whom she recognized. She approached him, knowing it was the security counselor who made her mother cry. Rasha bravely confronted him, called him names, and proudly walked off. Her friends all congratulated her, and she was victorious after her three months unrightly in prison.

I was not aware after the 9-11 attacks Arabs and Muslims were detained for having their culture and religion. While reading Rasha's story, I felt her pain and sorrow. She had loved this country, giving her freedom and a great education and yet America repaid her by imprisoning her with no reasoning. I was insulted my country would do

such things, as we are free with all our liberties and justices. Immigrants coming to my country want to live the American dream and I do not understand why we imprison families. That said, I do have the other side being an American where 9-11 changed my life. I can understand imprisoning people with terrorist connections, with valid evidence of a future in terroristic attacks. Yet it is not right to lock families up for months with no hard evidence.

The deportations, mass arrests, and racial profiling against Arabs after 9-11 were justified because America had just been attacked by terrorists. Any country would react in the same manner. Looking back on it, although the U.S. was wrong in arresting people, it was justified at the time. In years, Congress will probably apologize, but I still feel my country reacted in the way to protect it. As horrible as those actions were, at the time, they were justified.

SRJ8:

- Describe in detail how the two people you read about were treated differently based on their ethnic and/or religious identities?
    - The two stories I read, about Sami and Omar, were both Arabs. Sami looked more Latino, whereas Omar looked Spanish making their ethnicity more of a secret than their looks. These two men were treated differently, after their staffers learned of their ethnic backgrounds as people did start calling them names. Sami, who was born in America joined the military right before the Iraq war, making him fight against his own people. Once a lot of his company knew of his background, terrorist names were given,

leaving Sami conflicted. Omar, on the other hand, worked for a news agency which gives off a terrorist-vibe to many Americans. As he searched for a job, he learned including his experience with the agency caused uneasiness around the office. Both of the stories encountered racist comments, but only after their true ethnic backgrounds were revealed.

- How did the two people react to discriminatory treatment, including overt actions and implied actions, both emotionally (what did they feel and think) and physically (what did they do)? This can include acts of rebelling, attempts to fit in, moving, etc…
    - When in the military, Sami had a long battle in his head. Once his company moved into the Iraq border, and he saw not all Iraqians were murderous, he was conflicted with who to side with. He was born and raised American, and even admitted to despising his own heritage after the 9-11 attacks. Yet, at the same time, he was humane to his enemies, seeing their living situations, and understanding them personally. Because of the battle in his head (of who to show support with), he was constantly doubting himself. He was afraid of being called out for respecting the 'terrorists'; Sami did not know who was right, leaving him conflicted. Although he had all these thoughts and feelings, no one ever questioned his motives. He emotionally was conflicted, but never acted on his pretenses. Sami did not act on his emotional thoughts, but knew he had a job to do as a soldier. Omar, who was searching for a job, also had a debate in his head. He was unsure of his lack of job offers was due to his

right out of college young age, or his previous experiences which are associated with ‘terrorist’. Because of his need for a job, Omar eventually took the news agency off of his resume. He was conflicted of who to stay true to: his experience and love for the news agency or his need for a job. As he was fighting this debate emotionally, physically he acted upon it. He called up on job offers, he did take the news agency off of his resume. Omar did the only possible steps for getting a job, but he never asked if it was because of his ethnic background. Both men had to fight a war in their minds, of which side are they on, because of their hyphenated American description.

- How do you think being treated differently based on their ethnic and/or religious background impacts people’s sense of identity and belonging? Use your two people as examples, but feel free to go beyond these two stories.
    - Being treated differently based on ethnic background impacts anyone’s identity as they are unsure of which side to belong to. Whether it is the two men’s stories, or a case in my high school, people are treated differently. When people are left out, compared to the average American, or discriminated against, not only does it affect their mental standing, but makes them question where they belong. Sami and Omar are examples of how their surrounding Americans treat them differently, and it creates a war in their minds. Sami was unsure of who to belong to: his country or his ethnic background. Had people treated him equally, this internal conflict would not create a lost feeling. Omar was at all odds trying to find

a job, and even restored to taking off his most proud accomplishment: an internship with a news agency seen as a terrorist group by Americans. His internal conflict of staying true to his political and media beliefs versus subjecting himself to the norms of America left him in the state between having job or not. Anyone who is seen as different is left lost, unsure of their background, their future, and how to fit in. In *HDIFTBAP*?, the author brings the problems for Arab and Muslim Americans, such as the temptations to join the law enforcement. In Omar's chapter, he is searching for a job and the tempting job offers by the FBI or police leave several Arabs with jobs where they are translating overseas. This unfairness takes advantage of young Arabs who are in need of a job. All Americans have treated others differently, but never focus on the repercussions of their actions. The two stories about the men having an internal conflict are very real for all who are seen as 'different'.

Sami
- Joined the military after one semester in college as he felt he did not fit in
- Was feeling lost, so he joined the military, unaware of how it would change him
- He boarded the bus for boot camp the night before 9-11, finding out about the bombings on his bus ride
- Once in Iraq, he discovered how the military lied to his company about how all the Iraqis were not murderous, just hungry
- He gave food, water, and clothing to the Iraqis, but had an ongoing internal conflict over if it was right or not: he did not want to be called out for respecting the enemy
- Nearing the end of his first tour, his company stayed in a gated community, having shifts of when to work
- It was here Sami did a lot of thinking about the war: was it worth it, what were they really fighting for
- Sami started to get depressed after realizing he did not belong in Iraq
- While here, his Arabic improved greatly
- After Sami's first tour, he went home, reuniting with his family. After he got off the plane, he received a lot of special treatment, but it did not continue

- Sami used a lot of his money on fancy, expensive items, almost overcompensating for his time in the war
- His second tour in Iraq left Sami wanting to go home even more
- Here his Arabic improved, he came to understand and respect his cultural background
- He stayed in another upscaled place, but continued to question the war
- On his arrival home, Sami and his bunkmate for the past three years got into a stupid fight over ranking, leaving Sami friendless
- This makes Sami question all of his actions leading up to this point
- After being officially discharged from the military, Sami and his girlfriend, Ana drive home to NYC
- Although their plan was to make a trip out of it, and explore the cities across the country, as Sami drove, he passed all the stops, rushing to get home
- Once he came back to NYC, he and his girlfriend ended the chapter talking about officially being home
- In the beginning of the chapter, it is revealed Sami goes to college after returning home to officially start his career

Omar
- Omar's chapter opens with his need for a job: he wants to propose to his crush and start a life together
- While growing up, Omar mainly stayed in NYC, but did move to Chile for a couple years, making him fluent in Spanish
- Once moving back to NYC, Omar attended high school. Here, he finally fit in in the Arab Group, discovering how important his roots were to him
- In college, he met the love of his life and looked for an internship
- He started working for the news agency seen as a terrorist group (by Americans), as he believed in objective news reporting
- His four months spent here gave him awesome experience, great insight to the business, and found his mentor
- During the internship, he and his mentor went around the city, getting interviews. One time, while at Omar's college, his mentor asked to find him college voices. Omar went straight to the Arab club, and felt like a celebrity introducing and being in the heart of the business
- After the internship, Omar is now stuck searching for a job.
- He included the internship on his resume, but after a family friend hired him, she suggested he remove it as it will not lead to anything good
- He eventually followed her advice, but still the calls and responses from the jobs are not getting him any leads
- The author and Omar went to several cafes, meeting up with Omar's cousins, where the firing of Arabs is extremely common, and the hiring is extremely rare. With these odds, Omar continues to search for a job.
- Omar even looks into law enforcement, but is too good of a man to use his Spanish and Arabic language for a career translating in Afghanistan
- The chapter ends with Omar's on going search for a job which seems hopeless

SRJ9:

After listening to the audio broadcast of the story of Sam Slavin, reflect on all of the following points.

- What events led Slavin to develop or reinforce his stereotypes and prejudicial beliefs about Muslims and Arabs (Iraqis)?
    - Sam Slavin was a soldier in the Iraq War, fighting against the Muslim and Arabs who betrayed his company multiple times. After one specific invasion, Slavin's company lost two men, leaving the Americans hating the Muslims. Because of the mistrust of the Iraqis, the killing of his own men, and the hatred which formed from these actions, Slavin's opinion on Muslims and Arabs was much more negative than he had before. After that invasion, Slavin and his team could never befriend an Iraqi again. During his time in Iraq, Slavin's view of Iraqis turned negative quickly.
- How did his negative feelings and beliefs impact Slavin's mental and physical state, as well as his actions, when he returned to the United States? (Use information for this question from throughout the story.)
    - Once Slavin returned to the U.S., he was on recruitment in Florida. Everyday he passed a mosque, where he had the instinct to kill every person who walked in. The weather, the mosque and the Muslims in Florida left Sam with PTSD from the Iraq War. His thoughts when seeing someone walk into the mosque (write down their license plate, and hunt them down later) were influenced from his experience overseas. Because of this inner conflict between wanting to kill all Muslims and trying to

convince himself he was not in war anymore, Sam developed PTS, with mental state reaching rock bottom. He says of the worst experience, when recruiting, he heard a soldier (who had not been to Iraq) talk of the war "not being that bad". Hearing this, Sam broke down in tears, which prompted his retirement from the military. After his mental state had reached the bottom, he had to leave Florida and went home. At home, he said he could not walk by a Muslim or Arab or someone with dark skin and beard and not think of choking them out. Although he never acted on his prejudice thoughts, he still was an overt racist.

- How are the feelings and statements of the Muslim students at Parkland similar to what the subjects of *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem* felt and experienced?
    - As explained in the Preface of *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?*, Bayoumi describes talking with a group of Arab guys who were just getting over a lost friend. The male who had joined their group, although was the interviewee's best friend, turned out to be a spy put in by the NYPD to check out this group of Arabs. Because of the spies placed into groups of Arabs, the feelings and reactions to Sam joining the MSA were similar to the guy described in the Preface. After 9-11, the government had reacted by finding out what these groups were thinking. As several Arabs and Muslims were unrighteously arrested or detained, others were discriminated against by every other group, and other groups were monitored by spies. When Sam, a white male joined the MSA, the students were easily nervous. As described in the interview, "I remember

the very first day when he came. It was very shocking for us," that's Manal an MSA member from Morocco. Sam wasn't the only one in the room having a hard time that day. Manal, and her sister Lamii told me they were uncomfortable too. Only for them, the reason was Sam. 'We were really saying what was he doing there? Is he like a spy or keeping a record of the information that we were saying? And he was asking a lot of questions at the beginning, like where are you from? And you know, How do you spell your name? And things like that and it just made you a little skeptical.'" These two girls reflect the feelings portrayed by Bayoumi, particularly in the preface.

- Using the theory of racism which argues people are either overtly racist, racist, or anti-racist, what allows Slavin to transform from an overtly racist individual to an anti-racist individual so quickly? How does he take an active and conscious role in this process? What are the keys elements that allow this to happen?
    - After getting a therapist, Sam's mental attitude toward Muslims still had not improved. In order to change himself, at Parkland College he joined the Muslim Student Association. For him to sit in a room with all Arabs, where he was outnumbered and did not have a weapon created an anxiety attack. When going into the MSA, Sam was an overtly racist guy. In order to change, he decided to join the MSA. In a matter of months, he befriended the Muslims. He ran MSA events. He changed the face of the club. He even represented the Muslim ASsociation several times. The change in mindset occurred so quickly because of Sam's want and

desperation of change. It was all his idea, not recommended by therapy, so he had the ability to change. By submerging himself in the Muslims Association, he finally understood and asked questions and came to learn about the religion he had once so profoundly hated. Sam's want and need to change accelerated the process of going from an Overt-Racist to Anti-Racist.

- How can this story be used to demonstrate an educational strategy of undoing stereotypes, prejudicial beliefs and racism in society?
    - Sam's story of changing from being racist and easily discriminating against Arabs and Muslims can easily be used to reverse stereotypes, prejudicial beliefs and racism in society today. Because Sam was in the Iraq world and had these because Sam was overtly racist towards Iraqis for their actions while he was deployed, when he came back to America, he needed to change. His commitment and persistence in changing left him being an Anti-Racist. His story should be taught all around, as it is a true way of reversing one's stereotypes and other discriminatory actions. Maybe Sam's method of putting himself all into the culture he hated on is the best way to rid this country of its racism. The full fledged devotion to learning and understanding the culture left Sam with new insight upon racism in today's society. His story is a lesson all Americans should take to heart and action upon.

SRJ10:

Reflect on the video clip, “Unlearning Prejudice,” and the unit in its entirety as you respond to the following prompts.

- How can individuals challenge prejudice and discrimination against Arabs and Muslims at the individual, community and national levels? Consider the role of:
    - Authors;
        - Authors take a role changing how society views people, but I personally do not think they can end prejudice and discrimination. Although Bayoumi (How Does it Feel to be a Problem?), wrote a book which helped me understand the Arab/Muslim culture immensely more, I do not think his book can completely end racism. It would be very cool if more authors took advantage of this topic to teach their readers something, but I do not think authors can dispose of racism in our society. The most an author can change is one individual, but sometimes it is a great start. I feel after reading Bayoumi and the Hafiz siblings’ books about Muslim customs, I learned and accept the religion a lot more than I had before.
    - Media;
        - News programs, tv shows, movies, video games all affect individuals beliefs. Because so many of these individuals watch these brainwashing programs, media affects countries. Movies that have Arabs as the enemy, or tv shows without any multiracial people influence how children, adults, and the country views

Arabs. Without this representation, the media has the power to control who the country sees as the enemy. Because it takes generations for this media to change, it is up to the individuals watching to challenge racist views. For example, if I am watching a movie with an Arabian as the villain, I can take a stand and turn off the movie. Or even take it a step further, and complain to the network or movie production team. These little actions can start a chain of individuals trying to change and become anti-racist.

- Teachers;
    - It is up to teachers to read what their textbooks mention about Islam or Arabs, and challenge it themselves. Teachers need to teach their classes to have an open-mind, urge them to become anti-racist, and to question media beliefs. Teachers are the heart of our country, they teach the upcoming generations. With that theory, it is their job to teach the country anti-racism. Teachers need to be educated in how to teach without discrimination being inflected or prejudice beliefs. With this change in society, not only will each individual be affected, generations as wholes will become more tolerable.
- Citizens;
    - As much as I think it is important for citizens to speak out about their beliefs, I rarely think they impact as many people as teachers or media professionals do. I believe citizens have the right to speak

their mind, but it rarely changes society as a whole. Although they do not change the minds of a nation, I do think these citizens are important, as they teach other civilians to form/speak their own opinions.

- Political Leaders;
    - These are just as important as teachers and media professionals. Political leaders, as much as I want to disagree with it, do lead our country. Their policies, actions, and thoughts are reflected onto the country and only citizens mentioned above say anything against these doings. Most of the country follows what political leaders say, as they are our leaders. They reacted to the 9-11 attacks which is now reflected into the society of the US. Because of their regulations on immigration, airplanes, and the detainment of Arabs/Muslims, the country believed those actions were justified and courageous. These actions, however awful, were considering a reaction to the attacks, and only questioned recently. Because the political leaders are the go-to-guys of our country, their responses direct the nation's attitude toward race, gender, or anything else.

- How have your understandings of race, prejudice, discrimination and our society changed as a result of this unit. How have these changes impacted what you think and how you act, and how do you think they may impact how how think and act in the future?

- After learning and accepting how I am a racist, I think I have a better understanding of race in general, racist beliefs, how to become anti-Racist and the Muslim religion altogether. I really appreciated this topic, because now I feel as though I have changed my reaction when seeing a woman with a hijab or an Arab family (no matter how many times I say that wrong). Originally, I had tried to avoid eye contact and not be awkward, but now I look them in the eyes (a tactic I learned from Rasha's story), and attempt to notice them. Whenever I even see an African-American I think of the stereotypes and tell myself I know nothing about them as a person. There are stories of people who move across the street when an African-American is approaching, but I am proud to say I walk right next to them and smile. Because of these changes, I feel proud to feel the inner-changes. I wish I could be classified as an anti-racist. In the future, I hope to educate others (I already have been transferring the lesson to my family) and really become a true anti-racist.

Summative Essay (Final Exam for Course)

Growing up white in America has always been the dream. From time period to time period, whites are always seen as the majority, the better race. From the beginning whites were superior, and to this day, although there has been an effort to change white's point of view, the caucasian race is dream race. From enslaving African-Americans to detaining Arabs and Muslims present day, our society may have changed who is lesser, but there is always a race which is targeted by the majority. Whites, in America, are the

majority group and actively represent racism. The white society as a whole is racist as they are the group in power. The lesser groups throughout history: African-Americans, Japanese, Germans, Russians, Arabs/Muslims, may have a hatred for whites, but it is not considered racism because they are not the majority group in power. The feelings these races have towards whites are based off of stereotypes. These groups hear of one white discriminating and presenting racism to them, creating the stereotype of all whites hate the specific race. The race as a whole then forms prejudice beliefs against the whites. The beliefs are the thoughts of racism, the thoughts of judgement all humans have. Only few people actually discriminate against others, as discriminating is to act upon prejudice thoughts. The lesser races may be discriminatory towards whites, but never racist. The racist term is reserved for whites, as they are in power. These four words relate to how history has treated and acted towards other races. Currently, the targeted group is Arab and Muslim people. Since their extremists' actions on 9-11, the U.S. has viewed the entire race as terrorists and with racial negativity. Moustafa Bayoumi's novel, "How Does it Feel to be a Problem?" is written for both whites and Arabs to understand the culture and how the targeted group is discriminated against. In his book, Bayoumi questions what it means to be a problem. In the U.S., racist and discriminatory actions against Arabs and Muslims stem from the ignorance and uninformed beliefs of whites and their history of blaming an entire group for extremist actions.

As soon as whites 'discovered' America, the equality among skin color was anything but level: whites were in charge. African-Americans, who were brought over from Africa were enslaved to help whites. These humans were never seen as humans, more as animals or beasts. As the centuries passed, little rights were gained by the

African-Americans. After slavery was outlawed by President Lincoln, the north welcomed blacks with open arms. The south, on the other hand, was stuck in their traditions. As more years passed, the early 1900s left a lasting impression among whites. In the 1930s, a group of Alabama boys were illegally riding train to find work. When the train was stopped and two white girls appeared, to stay out of trouble, they insisted the nine boys raped them. Although all the evidence pointed in the innocence of the Scottsboro Boys, the Alabama court and jury ruled guilty. The years spent in prison and lack of righteous doings were protested in the north, as that half of the country had moved past treating African-Americans as less. Instead, the men were sent to death. The discrimination and racist actions of the white Alabama court ruined these boy's lives. Although there was evidence describing them as innocent, the boys were sentenced to death because of the south's racial views. In the video, Scottsboro Boys: An American Tragedy, the courtroom scenes depict how unwelcomed and guilty the boys were viewed. The evidence in favor of their innocence was also highlighted, yet the white's racist system overruled any factual evidence for the boys. Years after the unjustified actions, Alabama state apologized, but the discriminatory and stereotyped happenings changed the men's lives. During the 1930s, although the north was very accepting to blacks, in the south, African-Americans were seen as a problem. They were viewed as dirt, animals, or worse. The original stereotypes included brutes, describing how racist whites were. In Harper Lee's, To Kill a Mockingbird, the Scottsboro Boys' situation was represented in a sleepy southern town. A white southern took on the man's case but innocence was never given. The novel, although represents the 1930s happenings, showed how there were some good people without racist or prejudice beliefs. In either example, the African-

Americans were viewed as a problem. They were seen as needing to get rid of, or just move on from. Although the country had eventually moved on from targeting African-Americans, the stereotypes still remain today.

As World War II began, and the Great Depression came to an end, a different group was targeted. Although the first group to be judged differently were German-Americans, the Japanese-Americans suffered the most throughout the second world war. After Hitler took over in Europe, and started taking country after country, Japan saw the opportunity and wished to become a Pacific Supremacy. With the goal in mind, the country started to invade China and other neighboring countries. In December 1941, Japan attacked the U.S., China, and other islands at once. The bombings on Hawaii's Pearl Harbor shocked the American citizens, and created a push for fighting against Japan. Although President Roosevelt focused on the European War, it did not stop the American public from viewing Japanese-Americans differently. After the attack on their homeland, citizens gave Japanese-Americans the eye, or asked "China or Jap?," trying to stay away from the new terrorist group. Eventually, the government took action and feared an in-country attack. To prevent war breaking out in their country, the government sent out a notice. In the novel, When the Emperor was Divine, a Japanese family sees the notice and is suddenly shuffled around the states of California, Nevada, and Utah, until being placed into an internment camp. These camps around the country placed Japanese-Americans until the military had weakened Japan. The fear and paranoia of Japanese citizens went so far in the U.S., the government placed them in barbed-wire camps. In When the Emperor Was Divine, the family switches points of view to describe the trip and happenings while being detained. The internment camps were the U.S.'s

government's unrighteous actions to 'control' the Japanese. These actions, although eventually apologized for, left the country targeting a new race. The U.S. had ignored the African-American 'problem' and pinned the Japanese-Americans as the new problem. With the whole country against a race, individuals and the society as a whole were the problem. The Japanese internments during WWII, although seen as right during the time period placed Americans into concentration camps without valid reasoning.

Once the twenty-first century came rolling in, the U.S. had moved on from targeting African-Americans or Japanese-Americans. At the time, the country was getting over the Cold War where Russians were blamed for the country's problems and discriminated against. As the country was moving on, the Muslim extremist group, al Qaeda, attacked the U.S.. On 9-11, Arabs flew commercial airplanes into both World Trade Centers. After the country discovered who attacked their homeland, overnight the targeted group became Arabs and Muslims, as described in the 9-11 Commission Report. Right after the attacks in 2001, the government quietly started to detain Arabs. As described in Bayoumi's novel "How Does it Feel to be a Problem?", one girl's family was arrested in the middle of the night. The girl, Rasha, and her mother and her sister were placed in a jail in New Jersey, as her family had been split up. Her three months spent in jail without any reason left her more religiously dependent and felt freer once she was sent home. The American government's actions were not right, and did not supply any evidence as to why Rasha and her family were detained. Other stories included in Bayoumi's "How Does it Feel to be Problem?" included an Iraqi soldier fighting alongside the U.S., against his people (Sami), a girl who's high school would not accommodate her religious events (Yasmi) and a boy who could not find a job due to his

previous work with a media outlook viewed as terrorist newschannel (Omar). These stories and others reflected how it is for Arabs to grow up in a discriminatory America. These examples felt alone, struggled in accepting the happenings, and grew closer to their religion in effect of the discrimination. Although the times have changed since whites targeted African-Americans and Japanese-Americans, discrimination still exists. These races all experienced similar happenings, but on a different scale. African-Americans were forcefully enslaved for hundreds of years, whereas Japanese-Americans were placed into internment camps for a couple of years during WWII, and Arabs/Muslims are still being viewed as terrorists in America. Although each story of racial views are different, whites still have developed negative racial thoughts of these groups.

As long as America has been around, discrimination and racial views have existed. Although in the beginning, the lesser race was African-Americans, the country's targeted country changed with governmental policies and worldwide happenings, making whites discriminate against Japanese-Americans, German-Americans, Russian-Americans, all the way up to present day's discrimination against Arabs and Muslims. Whites in America have a history of treating lesser races with discriminatory actions, from blacks, to Japanese, to Arabs, whites have always been the dominating group which views other races negativity. During these different periods of discrimination, the country as a whole did more discriminating than trying to challenge society's viewpoints. Although years after the U.S. discriminated against specific groups, they did apologize, but during the targeted group's turn, not many people stood up for these citizens. As the future progresses, it is the teachers and the media's main job to teach what discrimination is. Teaching the true meanings behind each of those words (racist, discrimination,

prejudice, stereotype) will lessen racism each generation thereafter. In the future, it is American citizens jobs to stand up for those who are being discriminated against, to question the government's actions, to change their opinions on these races. The story of Sam Slevin, an American soldier who served two tours in Iraq, should be used to inspire others to change their prejudiced views of races. Slevin was a soldier who despised Iraqis for their actions against the U.S., so once he came home, he emerged himself into his college's Muslim Student Association. Sam's responsibility for learning more about the race, the culture, and becoming less racist is a story all generations should hear. More success stories should be taught, and American citizens need to learn how to change their opinions. In order for the U.S. to become a less racist country, citizens need to learn how to change, about the other race's culture, and what/why whites are racist.