Walking On Egg Shells: Colorblind Ideology and Race Talk in Teacher Education

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Abstract

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Background/Context: Teacher education students in the U.S., regardless of their personal beliefs, knowledge, and levels of awareness, are racially positioned to participate in an education system and society embedded in colorblind ideology. More research is needed that describes the ways in which colorblind ideology informs how teacher education students understand and talk about race, racism, and education. This study addresses this knowledge gap by focusing on the dispositional and discursive narratives of individual teacher education students and their relationship to larger ideological, institutional, and structural contexts.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine how teacher education students understand and talk about race, racism, and education in the context of colorblind ideology. This study narrows the research lens to focus deeply on the vantage points of teacher education students, their life histories and experiences, and how they think and talk about race, racism, and education, both generally and within their teacher education program.

Research Design: Using critical race theory as a conceptual framework and grounded theory as a methodology, I developed an interview series with six teacher education students.

Findings: Analysis of the interviews revealed five integrated themes about colorblind ideology, and the race talk of teacher education students: (1) racial socialization; (2) feeling and dealing with race talk; (3) abstract liberalism; (4) the pitfalls of good intentions; and (5) institutional challenges.

Conclusions/Recommendations: This study pushes the field to (1) consider a more comprehensive understanding of colorblind ideology; and (2) develop more empirical work on the relationship between colorblind ideology, race talk, and teacher education. The study recommends that teacher education professors and programs should cultivate color-conscious spaces, and provide and encourage ongoing, sustainable professional development opportunities on issues of race and racism for faculty, staff, and students.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS STUDY

CCM: constant comparative method

CRT: critical race theory

CT: cooperating teacher

Ed: education

ELL: English Language Learners/Learning

IEP: Individualized Education Program

PC: politically correct

TEP: Teacher Education Program

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

People who shut their eyes to reality simply invite their own destruction, and anyone who insists on remaining in a state of innocence long after that innocence is dead turns himself into a monster. -James Baldwin (1955)

This study focused on colorblind ideology and the race talk of teacher education students. I was interested in examining how teacher education students' life histories and experiences influence their knowledge and awareness, and how they talk about race, racism, and education. I was specifically interested in the relationship and influence of colorblind ideology on racial knowledge, awareness, and talk.

Using critical race theory as a conceptual framework and grounded theory as a methodology, I developed an interview series with six teacher education students enrolled in a teacher education program at a university located in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Analyzing the data, I developed a set of integrated theoretical propositions about colorblind ideology and the race talk for teacher education students. I hope that the results of this study will help us better understand how teacher education programs might more effectively prepare pre-service teachers to examine their own biases, expand their content and pedagogical knowledge, and teach students from a range of racial groups in an increasingly global and diverse democratic nation-state and world.

This first chapter is structured as follows: (1) The Statement of the Problem, (2) The Purpose of the Study, (3) The Research Questions, (4) The Significance of the Study, (5) Summary of the Conceptual Framework, (6) Summary of the Methodology, (7) Assumptions, Limitations, and Design Controls, (8) Role of the Researcher, (9) Situating Data and Participants in Context, (10) Definitions of Key Terminology, and (11) Summary.

Statement of the Problem

The United States population continues to experience significant increases in its racial diversity, including the racial diversity of school students. By 2050, students of color will make up approximately 56% of the school-age population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). U.S. schoolteachers, however, do not reflect these trends: 82% of U.S. public school teachers are White, and evidence suggests this percentage discrepancy will continue for the foreseeable future (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Engaging in race talk is difficult; for some more than others. Research indicates that despite the increasing racial diversity of students in U.S. public schools, many teachers struggle with how to deal with issues of race and racism in their classrooms and schools (Banks, 2004; Kailin, 1999; Lewis, 2001; Pollock, 2004a; Schofield, 2007). Even if it were possible to set aside the potentially volatile, political, and emotive nature of engaging in conversations about race and racism, race talk is still difficult: the fluid, complex, ever-changing nature of what race and racism are, who fits into what particular category and why, different sets of racial identities and experiences, and the sources and nature of racial inequality all contribute to significant ambivalence and confusion (Fox, 2009; Markus, 2008; Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003; Omi, 2001).

Different life histories and experiences influence knowledge and awareness of race and racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Leonardo, 2009). Race is often discussed and understood in scientific terms even though science has disproven its biological legitimacy, and even though its social consequences and realities remain (AAA, 1999). Racism is often narrowly defined in mainstream education and social discourse, policy, and practice as overt, individual, intentional acts of bias (Alexander, 2012; Anderson, 2007; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Halliday Hardie & Tyson, 2013; Tatum, 1999).

Students in schools continue to learn knowledge and history from a predominantly White, mainstream perspective, in both content and instruction (Banks, 1995; Epstein, 2009; Gay, 2004). People of color and their role in U.S. and human history are often represented inadequately and inaccurately; their voices and contributions remain at the margins of curriculum and instruction, and reality is often distorted and represented in a manner that reflects the interests of nation building rather than truth or social justice (Banks, 1995; Epstein, 2009; Tate, 1997). Whites—including White teachers—are far more likely to accept mainstream understandings of race and racism than people of color (Alexander, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Leonardo, 2009; Simpson, 2008).

Schools and classrooms, as microcosms of society and as primary sites of knowledge construction and production, are key determinants of the ways in which mainstream ideas of race and racism are reproduced and maintained; teachers are the primary authority figures and arbiters of these processes (Apple, 2004; Banks, 1995, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Richardson & Johanningmeir, 2003; Tatum, 1997). Moreover, historical legacies of race-based stratification have limited opportunities for racial equality and interracial interaction, increasing the likelihood that different racial groups live vastly different lives from one another, and decreasing the likelihood of sustained interracial interaction prior to, and outside of, school (Henry & Givens Generett, 2005; Goldsmith, 2010; Pollock, 2008b; Richardson & Johanningmeir, 2003). This demographic imperative—the diverse student population, the homogeneous teaching population, and the demographic divide—indicates that teachers may be ill prepared to face and understand the complex ways in which race and racism shape the schooling experiences of many of their students (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Gay & Howard, 2000; Larke, 1992; Tatum, 1997).

Colorblind ideology complicates matters further. Colorblind ideology is a framework for explaining experience and influencing action on race issues, and is a key concept for understanding the relationship between race, racism, and education (Apple, 2004; Fields, 1982: Martusewicz, 2005). It indicates that the best way to deal with race (and other forms of diversity) is by ignoring, avoiding, or refuting it (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lewis, 2001; Pollock, 2004a; Schofield, 2007).

Ideology may be defined—in a very general sense—as a structured system of ideas, beliefs, and practices, relating an individual to the society that they live in (Eagleton, 1991). The ideology of individuals are influenced by their social position, and in turn influences how they implicitly and explicitly, consciously and unconsciously, cognitively and affectively, interpret and make meaning of information, experiences, and the world (Althusser, 1976; Apple, 2004; Gramsci, 1971; Mannheim, 1936). Ideology is not in and of itself good or evil, and does not necessarily have to reflect or represent dominant mainstream society (e.g., critical race theory may be described as an ideology) (Guess, 1981). However, ideology is used as a mechanism of domination that maintains and legitimizes the needs and interests of power by controlling meaning of information and experiences. Eagleton states:

> A dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it; naturalizing and universalizing such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; denigrating ideas which might challenge it; excluding rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and obscuring social reality in ways convenient to itself. Such 'mystification,' as it is commonly known, frequently takes the form of masking or suppressing social conflicts, from which arises the conception of ideology as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions (pp. 5-6).

In the United States, ideology is crucial to the maintenance and legitimacy of White supremacy and racism in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Feagin, 2014; Miller & Garran, 2017). If individual, institutional, and structural racism are interlocking gears, ideological racism is the fluid or grease that keeps the gears grinding.

More than just one's perspective, colorblind ideology may be thought of as "a set of narratives and understandings that are pervasive throughout the culture and which have broad-scale impact both inside and beyond schooling" (Lewis, 2001, p. 807). Colorblind ideology is an illusory denial of racial dynamics. It suggests that ideological and structural racism do not exist, that failure and success in school and life are matters of individual merit, and that racial identities are not salient markers of the experiences of individuals, communities, and societies (Forman, 2004; Neville et al, 2000; Simpson, 2008). Colorblind ideology is an inability or unwillingness to see or talk about race (Choi, 2008; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Howard, 2006). By ignoring race, however, racism is minimized, "contributing to a collective ignorance and relieves individuals from fighting against the impact of racism" (Ullucci & Battey, 2011, p. 1196).

Colorblind ideology is often operationalized as a defense mechanism to feelings (e.g., guilt, shame) about race and racism (Hanley, 2005; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007). It is also connected to ideologies of meritocracy, individualism, identity, and Whiteness (Brayboy et al, 2010). Haney-Lopez (2006, p. 177) states,

> The perversity of color-blindness is that banishing race-words redoubles the hegemony of race by targeting efforts to combat racism while leaving race and its effects unchallenged and embedded in society, seemingly natural rather than the product of social choices… the reality of racial subordination is obscured and immunized from intervention.

Colorblind ideology obfuscates the structural, institutional, and ideological elements of racism, and in schools, it ignores the role and value of students' and teachers' racial identities, reduces deeply complex phenomena to good guys versus bad guys, and upholds mainstream mores of individuality, neutrality, and meritocracy (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Fox, 2009).

The relationship between segregation patterns, race identity, and colorblind ideology reproduces racial isolation, frames interracial interaction, and limits opportunities for thinking and talking about race in meaningful and productive ways (Alexander, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Brayboy, Castagno, & Maughan, 2010; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2005; Fox, 2009; Tatum, 1997, 2007; Wolsko, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). One way to examine this relationship may be found in Tatum's (1997) titular question, *"Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"* Conventional, mainstream (e.g., colorblind) narratives may respond to this question by assuming the students are simply choosing to "hang out with their own." Such responses are devoid of critical context, failing to account for a multitude of factors that shape individual and group choices, such as tracking, residential segregation, and media imagery. Colorblind ideology prevents teachers from considering or discussing the depth and breadth of race and racism, maintaining and legitimating racially significant, yet unquestioned, school and student norms, roles, and mores (Lewis, 2001; Pollock, 2004a; Schofield, 2007).

Locating oneself in dominant ideologies of race and racism is crucial. Positionality—the social and political landscape that one inhabits and one's lens and perspective for viewing and interpreting the world—is influenced by social identities—including race (Alcoff, 1988; Harro, 2013). These social identities are relational, not fixed, immutable categories. Positionality informs what we know, what we perceive, and how we interact in a given context or milieu; this

includes students in a U.S. teacher education program (Sleeter, 1995, 2016) or White and Black Americans reacting to the shooting of Mike Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, MO (Montanaro, Wellford, & Pathe, 2014). Even if teacher education students do not consciously think about race or themselves as racial beings, their racial socialization experiences will influence how they know, perceive, and interact in their teacher education program (see also Brodkin, 2000, on the distinctions between identity and assignment). Our knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, interpretations, and interactions are to some extent mitigated by our positionality.

Teacher education students in the U.S., regardless of their personal beliefs, knowledge, and levels of awareness, are racially positioned to participate in an education system and society embedded in colorblind ideology (Anderson, 2007; Brayboy, Castagno, & Maughan, 2010; Leonardo, 2009). Although there is a wealth of research on race, racism, and teacher education that includes a focus on colorblind ideology (Achinstein & Barret, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004; Gordon, 2005; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010; Solorzano, 1997), more research is needed that describes the ways teacher education students understand and talk about race, racism, and education. More research is also needed to describe the challenges and possibilities for race talk in teacher education. This study addresses this knowledge gap by focusing on the dispositional and discursive narratives of individual teacher education students and their relationship to larger ideological, institutional, and structural contexts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine how teacher education students understand and talk about race, racism, and education. This study narrows the research lens to focus deeply on the vantage point of teacher education students, their life histories and

experiences, and how they think and talk about race, racism, and education, both generally and within their teacher education program. This does not mean that I have reported the opinions and perspectives of the study participants as fact. However, focusing on the race talk of teacher education students (including their opinions and perspectives) enabled me as a researcher to situate their race talk within larger racial narratives and understandings, including colorblind ideology. To do this I draw on the tenets of critical race theory.

This study was designed using a grounded theory methodology, and thus presents its findings as propositions. While this study focuses on colorblind ideology and the race talk of teacher education students, findings are presented in a way that is accessible, relatable, and potentially useful to a wide education audience (including education researchers, teacher education students, and teacher education programs). The purpose of this study was not to generalize findings to all teacher education students; rather, the purpose was to generate propositions that might be characteristic of multiple settings and constituents. This three-phase, qualitative study was guided by the research questions described in the next section.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. How do the life histories and experiences of teacher education students inform how they think, feel, and talk about race and racism?
2. How do teacher education students talk about race and racism in their teacher education program?
3. What are some of the key challenges for race talk in teacher education?
4. What are some of the key possibilities for race talk in teacher education?

Significance of the Study

This research study may yield benefits for the study participants, for teacher education students, teacher education programs, for schools, and for education research. All educational stakeholders may use the knowledge generated in this study to make better decisions. Teacher education students that participated in this study gained new knowledge and perspective about themselves and about their teaching practices. The participants in this study may better understand some of their own challenges and possibilities of talking about race, and may thus be better prepared to respond to such issues in their future personal and professional lives as educators. They may have also gained new insights and strategies for communicating across racial differences. Teacher education students and programs may find particular insights of this study worthy of further examination and understanding: students and programs may seek to improve classroom climate and structure, curriculum design and instruction, and develop new tools of communication about and across difference.

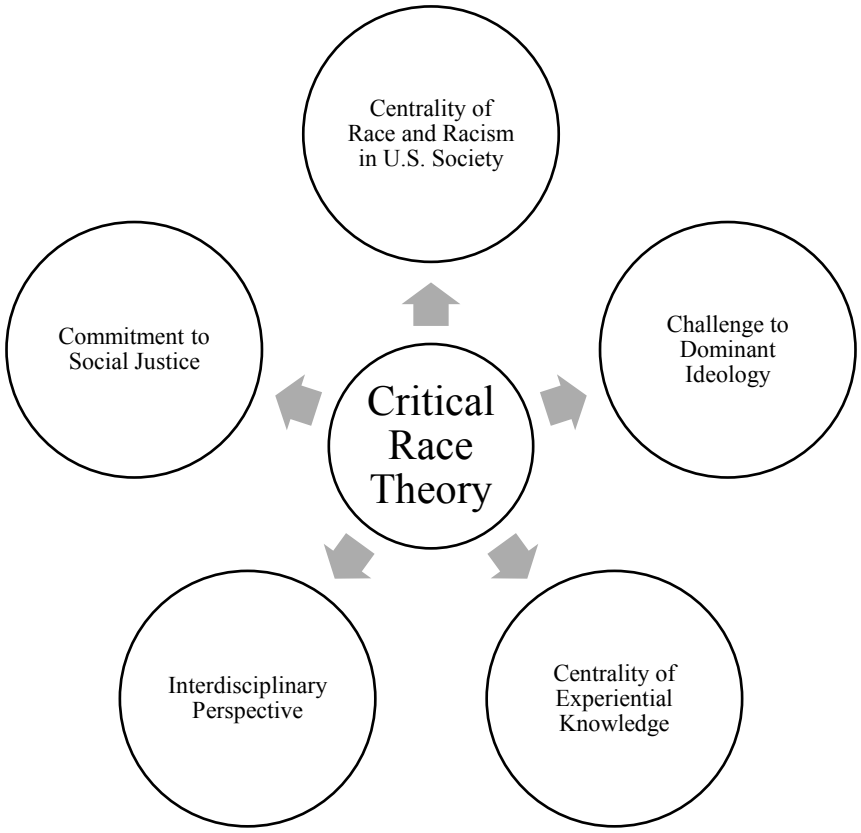
It is imperative that education research strengthens the theoretical and practical connections between the demographic present and forecast of U.S. teachers and students, the history and legacy of race and racism in the U.S. (including in schools), the influence of colorblind ideology, and the role and function of teacher education. If race and racism matter, it is crucial that education research continues to examine how, why, and to what extent. If racial positionality matters, it is necessary that education research strengthens its understanding of how race and racism are understood and discussed from the vantage point of teacher education students. Understanding the challenges and possibilities of race talk in teacher education is crucial to the realities of a 21st century United States and world. If teachers are to prepare students with the requisite knowledge and perspective to participate as democratic citizens in a

global society, it follows that teacher education programs must prepare teachers with the necessary knowledge and perspectives to teach accordingly. Preparing teachers to respond to the challenges of race in their schools and classrooms begins with teachers being able to understand what the challenges are. While this study makes no claims of fully understanding the complexity of those challenges, it does provide theoretical propositions from which related and future research may continue.

Overview of Conceptual Framework: Critical Race Theory

This summary of the conceptual framework contains a brief overview of the central tenets of critical race theory (CRT), and how CRT has been used in educational research. According to Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000), CRT has five key tenets: (1) centrality of race and racism in U.S. society; (2) challenge to dominant ideology (including colorblindness, meritocracy, objectivity, individualism, and Whiteness); (3) the centrality of experiential knowledge (including the voice and representation of those who have been marginalized); (4) an interdisciplinary perspective; and (5) a commitment to social justice. These five tenets are presented as Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Five Key Tenets of Critical Race Theory
(from Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso, 2000)



Critical race theory positions race and racism as pervasive, deeply embedded, and indelible features of U.S. social life, mediated by power, and replete with complex systems of meaning (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; West, 2001). CRT challenges and reveals dominant, mainstream paradigms, particularly those that perpetuate racial inequities such as colorblindness and Whiteness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Leonardo, 2009). Delgado Bernal, and Villalpando (2002) refer to the challenging of dominant narratives as challenging the *apartheid of knowledge*. CRT places value on experiential knowledge, understanding the historical and contemporary privilege held by mainstream academic knowledge. Related to the second tenet of challenging dominant ideology, it recognizes that truth has historically been mediated by the power and perspective of the privileged (Aguirre, 2000; Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT scholars understand that in a highly racialized society such as the U.S., the voices and perspectives of racial minorities are worth listening to and learning from, and that their lives and experiences are valid and worthy of consideration (Dumas, 2016).

CRT has an interdisciplinary focus, encompassing a range of disciplines (e.g., sociology, women's studies, and political science); it offers multiple levels of analysis (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1993; Ladson Billings, 2003; West, 2001). CRT situates the relationship of micro-level interpersonal processes of race talk with larger institutional, structural, and ideological contexts (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Leonardo, 2009; Solorzano, 1998). It also analyzes systematic attempts to prove the rationality of beliefs about racial differences and the validity of policies and practices that are based on those beliefs (Bell, 1980; Howard; 2008; Leonardo, 2005; West, 2001). CRT is embedded in principles of social justice, intended to help

liberate individuals and society (Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995; Sleeter, 2012; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

Emerging from legal studies, CRT scholars have studied how racism operates in schools and in education more broadly (Brown & Jackson, 2013; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Gottesman, 2016; Howard & Navarro, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Leonardo, 2005; 2009; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015; Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999; Sleeter, 2012; Tate, 1997). CRT has been used as an analytical tool for examining racial inequality in schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Sleeter, 2012), curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, school funding, and desegregation (Ladson Billings, 1999, 2003). It has also been used to study microaggressions and campus racial climate (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016; Solorzano, 1998) and student resistance (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2000). Some CRT scholars have focused on teacher education (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Matias, Montoya, & Nishi, 2016; Milner, Pearman, & McGee; 2013; Sleeter, 2012, 2015; Solorzano, 1997; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). CRT education research includes a focus on African Americans (Bell, 1980; Howard, 2008; Lynn, 1999), Latino(a)s (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2002), Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Kim, 1999; Matsuda, 2006; Teranishi, Behringer, Grey, & Parker, 2009), Aboriginal, indigenous, and tribal communities (Brayboy, 2005; Kitchen, Cherubini, Trudeau, & Hodson, 2010), women (Crenshaw, 1993; Wing, 1996), and Whites (Marx & Pennington, 2003; Leonardo, 2009; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 1995).

Overview of Methodology: Grounded Theory

This summary of the methodology contains a brief overview of the study design, participants, data instrumentation, and research procedures. All of these elements are described in greater detail in Chapter 3. The study design consisted of an interview series, in which six teacher education students discussed, shared, and reflected on race, racism, and education, individually and as a group. I initially interviewed participants about their life histories and experiences around race and education (see Appendix C). In a focus group (see Appendix D), the six participants discussed race in their teacher education program. A follow-up interview (see Appendix E) gave participants opportunities to reflect and share meanings and understandings from the focus group. The initial and follow-up interviews each took approximately one-hour; the focus group took approximately two and one-half hours.

The participants in this study are six secondary teacher education students at a college of education at a university located in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. The study took place on the university's campus. All six study participants were women. Five of them identified as White; one identified as Chinese American. All participants were at least 18 years of age and had completed at least a bachelor's degree. All study participants and their identifying information were given pseudonyms.

The study utilized grounded theory, a qualitative, inductive method of research that begins with systematic data collection, coding, conceptualization, categorization, and the development of propositions (Charmaz, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Unlike traditional research methods, grounded theory does not begin with hypotheses, but generates propositions about a central phenomenon that is grounded in the data of respondents and the review of literature, with an emphasis on the views of participants and the aim of making

implicit beliefs explicit (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2009; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory uses the constant comparative method, whereby data is constantly compared with other parts of the data throughout, considering similarities and differences, consistencies and variations of pattern, ultimately building propositions from the emergent codes, concepts, and categories. Categories are honed and refined, constructed and reconstructed, until saturation—where new data does not add new information for proposition building and relationships between categories have been identified—is achieved (Charmaz, 2006, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hallberg, 2006; Parker & Gehrke, 1986).

Data was generated from two sources: interviews and memo-writing that derived from the interviews. In grounded theory, intensive in-depth interviews are often used as a strategy for data collection (Charmaz, 2006; Hallberg, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Yin, 2006). This strategy "permits an in-depth exploration of a particular topic and goes beneath the surface of ordinary conversation" (Hallberg, 2006, p. 143). Interviews help researchers to tailor data gathering to specific areas of interest, and operationalize data triangulation (Wolcott, 2009). Interviews may also solicit more honest responses about important concepts such as racism than questionnaires (Bonilla-Silva & Foreman, 2000).

Grounded theory interviews ask questions that examine and analyze participants' life histories, details of experience, and reflection on the meaning of experiences. Questions are open-ended and build on each other (follow-up and clarification). Interviews were sequenced and semi-structured, providing a framework for consistent and efficient data gathering (Merriam, 2009), while allowing the generation of new questions and lines of inquiry contingent on participant responses (Seidman, 2006; Yin, 2006). For example, I asked participants to share the racial makeup of the schools they attended as children. Depending on how they responded, what

they remembered (or did not), I may have asked them to reflect on how those experiences might have influenced how and to what extent they thought about the role of race and racism in their future teaching.

Questions were generally organized to begin with descriptions (e.g., describe the racial makeup of the schools you attended) and developed to establish relationships to the issue or question (e.g., participant knowledge and awareness of race and racism). Further questions probed for opinions and feelings about the issue (e.g., "Do you think your racial identity influences how you see the world?"), and explored connections to other phenomena (e.g., "What are some of the challenges around race talk in the teacher education program?") (adapted from Seidman, 2006; Yin, 2006).

The second form of data collection is a process of detailed memo-writing (Hallberg, 2006; Parker & Gehrke, 1986). Grounded theory methodology requires the researcher to record details, insights, propositions, and questions as soon as possible following data collection. This method requires the researcher to reflect on the theoretical assumptions (e.g., "I noticed participant 'x' avoided directly answering question 14. Why did the study participant avoid answering the question? Did her avoidance relate in any way to how she thinks and talks about race elsewhere in this study? Will other participants respond similarly or differently than she?").

Memo-writing happened constantly throughout data collection. Memo-writing sessions took place immediately following data collection sessions, after transcribing data, as well as between and within phases of data collection. In general, memo-writing should strive towards thick description (Geertz, 1973; Merriam, 2009), providing enough contextual information for the researcher to determine the existence and extent of his or her findings.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Design Controls

This study was structured to ensure validity, reliability, privacy, and confidentiality. This included the triangulation of data, creation of a rigorous and consistent data collection protocol, thick description of data, scaffolding interview questions to insure depth and breadth of response, and transparency of researcher bias and position if and when it manifested. Analysis across multiple data points is an essential step in qualitative research; triangulation is an important factor in determining the validity and reliability of qualitative evidence (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Examination, coding, interpretation, and theory construction was enacted via the processes described in the above methodology. Correlating and generating theoretical propositions was achieved via multiple points of interaction and observation (interviews), and means of data collection (memo-writing, transcription). As common themes and scenarios emerged in the data, opportunities were built into follow-up questions to ascertain meanings and to gain additional perspectives. The coding process was further structured to enhance internal validity by acting as a check and balance against my biases (Holton, 2007).

A key assumption in this study is that race and racism matter in education and society (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The purpose of this study was not to establish that race and racism exist. Rather, it was to examine the ways in which the race and racism operate in a particular context. In this case then, the theoretical framework (critical race theory) aligned well with the methodology (grounded theory) (see Malagon, Huber, & Velez, 2009).

Gender and other social identity dynamics were also considered in my data collection and analysis. Being aware of the relative differences in power and status afforded by a social identity category such as gender or race was crucial to understanding how these differences may influence the study's operationalization and analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Reinharz & Chase, 2001).

Because all six subject participants were women, and I am a man, it was imperative that I was conscious of gender dynamics during all phases of data collection. With five White participants and one participant of color, race dynamics were also at play. The study topic in and of itself had the potential to help understand these dynamics. In order to ensure a milieu within which subject participants would be more honest, forthcoming, and engaging in their responses, I employed a strategy of explicitly naming these power and status dynamics throughout selection of subjects, data collection, and all other subject participant interactions (Riley, Schouten, & Cahill, 2003; Seidman, 2006).

I took care not to lead, badger, or speak for participants during the study. Rather, I practiced active listening, a dialogical approach that focuses on the cognitive and affective, overt and under-the-surface aspects of communicative response (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003). The purpose of this study was examination, rather than intervention. However, the subject participants sometimes found the interview experiences to be opportunities for self-reflection, meaning-making, and personal and professional growth.

It is nearly impossible to control or determine how a respondent is feeling/doing at a particular moment, and how that can influence social interactions. In this study, subjects may have "coached" themselves for "proper" or ambiguous responses (Pollock, 2004a), or—potentially—hesitated to engage at all. Another challenge was the degree to which the data can only be analyzed and interpreted in light of other data. Culling generalizable "truths" from one set of data was contingent on what I found elsewhere (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Schofield, 1990; Schriewer, 1989; Stenhouse, 1979).

This study was also limited insofar as the subjects (and their number) may not necessarily represent or apply to the larger teacher education student population. No male students

participated in this study, and only one person of color participated. I made a conscious effort not to interpret the views of the participant of color as representative of all Asian Americans, or all people of color.

This study focused on race talk in teacher education from the perspectives of teacher education students. There were no direct observations of classrooms, analysis of syllabi or other course materials, and no interviews with professors, staff, or other stakeholders. Different teacher education programs have their own cultures and structures. While I hoped to understand the race talk of teacher education students in one particular setting, different teacher education programs—and their students—may describe their own unique challenges and possibilities.

Although the purpose of this study was examination rather than intervention, some subject participants found participating in the study interview as an opportunity for self-reflection, meaning-making, and personal and professional growth. Emma, my first interview participant, was the first to share about the "Coffee Talk" incident, wherein a weekly coffee club meant for students of color in the teacher education program was called into question by White students in the program. Discussing this incident during Interviews Two and Three revealed that Emma had opportunities to think deeply and more critically about this incident.

This study adhered to Human Subjects standards of ethics, including the privacy and confidentiality of participant information. Participants' were given pseudonyms. All other potentially identifying information was given pseudonyms as well, including names of friends, family, colleagues, and course titles. I created two coded lists: the first list links participant names with a corresponding letter designation (e.g., "A"); the second list links the letter designation with a corresponding pseudonym (e.g., "A" is "Mark"). During the interviews, the participants were referred to by this letter (e.g., "I am now interviewing Participant 'A'"). During

the Focus Group, participants were assigned a placard with their corresponding alphabetical letter. These placards served to identify subject participants for purposes of transcription (also, participants occasionally referred to one another by their designated letter during the Focus Group, which proved invaluable during transcription). All interview transcripts were initially coded with the letter designation. Letter designations were replaced with pseudonyms prior to analysis. I kept both coded lists in separate locked files. I kept these lists until the dissertation was submitted, at which time I destroyed the list that identifies participants' real names. Electronic copies of all data (memos and transcriptions) were kept on my personal laptop computer, password-protected, and backed up to a password-protected, external hard drive every evening at 11 PM until the dissertation was completed and defended. Hard copies of all transcripts were kept in my home file cabinet, locked when not in use, and separate from one another as appropriate (e.g., the two participants identity coding lists).

Audio-files and transcriptions were renamed accordingly (e.g., "A1" became "Emma 1"). Identifying statements at the beginning of each interview (e.g., "Interview A1") were also deleted from audio-recordings after transcriptions were completed. If the results or other data from this study are published or presented, I will not use participants' names. If I decide that I would like to use a segment from the recordings in my dissertation presentation and/or conference presentations, I will first obtain the subject participant's permission.

To further adhere to principles of privacy and confidentiality, I edited transcripts for persons, places, courses, or any other potential identifiers. Before coding the third round of data, I created pseudonyms for the study participants and any other named individuals or places that would potentially compromise privacy or confidentiality. Names were omitted altogether where feasible and if they did not serve a purpose for the research (e.g., the names of towns where the

subjects grew up or the high schools in which they are currently student teaching), and pseudonyms or general names were created when omission was not feasible (e.g., the actual name of the foundations course was changed to "the foundations course"). The names of major cities were not changed, except for the name of the city in which this study took place.

As the researcher, I was aware of the potentially sensitive nature of the research topic, and attempted to take every precaution to cultivate a milieu of courtesy, respect, and safety for the subject participants. Prior to every interview, I reminded participants of these conversation parameters especially during the Focus Group (see the beginning of Appendices C, D, and E).

Role of the Researcher

In a constructivist grounded theory study, there is an explicit recognition that the researcher's positionality affects the entire research process, including the selection of the topic and question, data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Charmaz, 2006, 2007). Being clear about one's positionality is honest, authentic, and methodologically akin to Harding's (1993) notion of strong objectivity. According to Harding, strong objectivity exists when the researcher acknowledges their biases, and that how he or she interprets knowledge may be influenced by his or her identities, perspectives, and experiences. Harding states that strong objectivity will lead to more honest and truthful research. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that the researcher's knowledge, experiences, and perspectives should not be dismissed when trying to be objective, nor is it possible. They state that the knowledge and perspectives of researchers are potentially useful sources of data generation. Merriam (2009) states the need for researchers to use critical self-reflection regarding their "assumptions, worldviews, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation" (p. 229). As I generated categories,

concepts, and codes from the data, I was critically self-reflexive in understanding how my positionality influenced how I analyzed, interpreted, and made claims about the data.

This study was conducted by one researcher. I am a White, heterosexual, secular Jewish male. My wife and son are mixed-race. I grew up mostly in Amityville, New York, and lived in a neighborhood that was predominantly White and Christian. I attended public schools that were predominantly Black and Latino. Nearly all of the other children in my neighborhood attended private Christian schools. My parents were fairly liberal and progressive in their thinking and how they raised me, including instilling love and respect for other racial, ethnic, and religious groups. I was positioned to have access to people, places, and ideas that countered mainstream narratives about marginalized communities, and could identify with marginalization to an extent by growing up Jewish in a predominantly Christian community. In this context, I gained an awareness of race and racism that are not acquired by most White people (Kivel, 2002; Leonardo, 2009).

These socialization experiences and relationships, coupled with academic knowledge (including studying sociology and multicultural education) have informed who I am, how I see the world, and how I make meaning of it. This includes what and how I do research (Harding, 1993; Harro, 2000; Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I was not "free and clear" of my own perspectives and own biases. Who I am and where I am from filtered how I observed study participants and interpreted my findings. I made a conscious effort to be continually aware of my perspectives and biases and how they informed me (Denzin, 1997). If I were to really understand how racism is operated with colorblindness, I had to suspend my judgment of my study participants, no matter how much I may have disagreed with them.

Situating Data and Participants in Context

When data collection for this study was conducted in 2013, Barack Obama had recently been elected to a second term as U.S. President. Obama's candidacy, election, and re-election as the first African-American President coincided with a variation of colorblind ideology in the form of *post-racialism* (Cobb, 2011; Joseph, 2011). This post-racial turn indicated for many that race no longer mattered and that U.S. society had finally rid itself of racism (Joseph, 2011; Smith & Brown, 2014). In essence, postracialism meant that the U.S. had now moved beyond race, and could now ignore enduring systemic racial injustices, while reframing the constant race-based discrediting and vitriol directed at Obama as anything but racist.

When this dissertation was completed in 2017, Donald Trump had recently been elected to his first term as U.S. President. Brooks, Ebert, and Flockhart (2017) argued that the presence of colorblind ideology helps to explain the rise and election of President Donald Trump (see also Huber, 2016). Moreover, they found that the flexibility of colorblindness has enabled racially conservative and extremist organizations to adopt colorblind frameworks. By co-opting equality language and deemphasizing racism's *specific* social, cultural, political, and historical contexts, both Trump and these organizations were able to contend that Whites were the real victims of racial oppression. Narratives of "reverse racism" and "White victimhood" coupled with statements such as "diversity equals White genocide" (Dentice & Bugg, 2016) allow Whites to perceive themselves as *the* oppressed racial minority. The operationalization of colorblindness by Trump and these organizations, Brooks and her colleagues argue, helped to stoke White fears of racial minorities, increased White support of racially unjust social policies, and increased hate crimes against racial minorities.

Burke (2017) argues that colorblind ideology persists as a dominant framework and mode of discourse in the U.S. by White people across the political spectrum, from conservative Tea Party organizers to liberal Democrats and progressives. Despite differing political orientations and goals, study participants shared a common approach to how they discussed issues of race and public policy (e.g., welfare, policing, and immigration). This approach included speaking in race-neutral ways about racial issues, emphasizing "treating everyone the same regardless of race", and the importance of being viewed as "good people." Tea Party organizers lauded principles of individualism and meritocracy to reject racial equity efforts, while positioning themselves as "real Americans" (Burke, 2017). Progressives espoused rhetoric of tolerance and diversity while supporting neighborhood gentrification efforts due to concerns of "safety and blight" (Burke, 2017).

Colorblind ideology informs how recent racial social justice movements—notably Black Lives Matter—have been interpreted and discussed (Carney, 2016; Jones, 2016; Tawa, Ma, & Katsumoto, 2016). In the context of colorblind ideology, Black Lives Matter is framed as racist merely for signifying race in its title, rebutted with calls for "All Lives Matter". The racial equity specific goals and purpose of Black Lives Matter are refuted, diluted, or ignored in the name of "we all bleed red" (Jones, 2016).

It is important to situate this study within these larger threshold moments in recent U.S. history for two reasons. First, these moments, alone and in combination, reveal the flexible yet persistent nature of colorblind ideology. Second, the participants in this study are speaking in 2013, not 2017; much has changed (and much has not) with respect to colorblind ideology and race talk during this period of time. Readers of this study should keep in mind the historical, political, and social context in which it took place.

Definitions of Key Terminology

Code: Names, labels, or titles given to patterns and themes found in the data which allows the researcher to develop an understanding of the relationships between data and theoretical propositions (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Holton, 2007; Lempert, 2007; Star, 2007).

Coding: The core analytic process in grounded theory methodology through which data is transformed into theoretical propositions (Holton, 2007). Through coding, the researcher defines and assigns meaning to data; data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theoretical propositions. Coding occurs at three subsequent levels: open coding, selective coding, and axial coding (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Open coding is the initial analytic process to help organize and make sense of the data. Open coding is accomplished in several ways. Line-by-line analysis involves close examination of words and phrases, generating and developing categories, concepts, and properties, and comparing them along dimensions. Open coding also includes analyzing by sentences, paragraphs, and documents. Doing so enables the researcher to generate and develop detailed central questions and ideas about the data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Focused or selective coding is the analytic process of integrating and refining the emerging concepts, categories, properties, and dimensions into coherent, complex theoretical propositions (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Focused coding reconstructs the data after the researcher has fractured it through open coding (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Kelle, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Urquhart, 2007).

Axial coding is the analytic process of relating categories to their subcategories and connecting categories to properties and dimensions. Axial coding treats a category as an axis

around which the researcher delineates relationships and specifies the dimensions of the category. Axial coding operates at a more theoretical and integrative level than open and focused coding—there is less emphasis on exploring the data and more on describing the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Theoretical coding, which takes place during the writing up of theoretical propositions, formalizes the relationships between conceptual families into an overarching theoretical framework (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Colorblind Ideology: A framework for explaining experience and influencing action on race issues, that promotes and encourages an illusory denial of racial dynamics. More than just one's perspective, colorblind ideology may be thought of as "a set of narratives and understandings that are pervasive throughout the culture and which have broad-scale impact both inside and beyond schooling" (Lewis, 2001, p. 807). This framework is often associated with abstract equality rhetoric at the expense of equality in practice (equity) (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Forman, 2004; Lewis, 2001).

Concepts, Categories, Properties, and Dimensions: The basic elements of grounded theory. Concepts are basic units of analysis and the building blocks of propositions. They emerge as labels from the researcher's interpretation of data. Concepts are abstract representations of phenomena that the researcher determines are significant to the data. Categories are concepts that stand for central ideas in the data. Grouping concepts into categories is important because it enables the analyst to reduce the number of units with which she or he is working. Properties are the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category, the delineation of which defines and gives it meaning. Dimensions are the location of a property along a continuum or range—the range along which general properties of a category varies, giving specification to a category and

variation to the propositions (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Holton, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Constant Comparative Method (CCM): A method of analysis from which grounded theory emerges—CCM generates successively more abstract concepts and theories through inductive processes of comparing data with data, data with category, category with category, and category to concept. Comparisons constitute each stage of analytic development (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Dick, 2007). CCM is used to tease out similarities and differences and thereby refine concepts (Wiener, 2007). CCM protects against the tendency to over interpret data and the construction of false data connections (Dey, 2007).

Constructivism: A social scientific perspective that explains how realities are made. Constructivism assumes that research is informed by the perspectives and positionalities of the researcher. People—including researchers—interpret the realities in which they participate based on who they are, where they are from, and how they perceive the world. Constructivist inquiry starts with the experience and asks how members construct it. Constructivist researchers enter and gain multiple views of what and where they are researching, and locate it in its web of connections and constraints. Constructivists acknowledge that their interpretations of the phenomenon they study are a construction (Charmaz, 2006, 2007).

Critical Race Theory: A theoretical framework that describes racism as a pervasive, deeply embedded, and indelible feature of social life, mediated by power and replete with complex systems of meaning (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Grounded Theory: A method of research that begins with data collection rather than a hypothesis, and is inductive rather than deductive. It uses a process of constant comparison to

build and rebuild concepts, categories, and theoretical propositions grounded in data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Ideology: Ideology may be defined—in a very general sense—as a structured system of ideas, beliefs, and practices, relating an individual to the society that they live in (Eagleton, 1991). The ideology of individuals are influenced by their social position, and in turn influences how they implicitly and explicitly, consciously and unconsciously, cognitively and affectively, interpret and make meaning of information, experiences, and the world (Althusser, 1976; Apple, 2004; Gramsci, 1971; Mannheim, 1936). Ideology is not in and of itself good or evil, and does not necessarily have to reflect or represent dominant mainstream society (Guess, 1981).

In the context of race in the United States, ideology is a mechanism of domination (i.e., hegemony) that maintains and legitimizes the needs and interests of power by controlling meaning of information and experiences (Apple, 2004; Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Eagleton states:

> A dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it; naturalizing and universalizing such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; denigrating ideas which might challenge it; excluding rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and obscuring social reality in ways convenient to itself. Such 'mystification,' as it is commonly known, frequently takes the form of masking or suppressing social conflicts, from which arises the conception of ideology as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions pp. 5-6).

Ideology is crucial to the maintenance and legitimacy of racism in the United States (see colorblind ideology). If individual, institutional, and structural racism are interlocking gears, ideological racism is the fluid or grease that keeps the gears grinding.

Induction: A type of reasoning that extrapolates patterns from the data of individual cases and phenomena, forming a conceptual category (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Memos and Memo-writing: The pivotal intermediate step in grounded theory between data collection and the writing of findings. Memo-writing is a space for the researcher to analyze ideas about codes and emerging categories (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Memos are both a methodological practice and an exploration of processes in the social worlds of the research site—conceptualizing the data in narrative form (Richardson, 1998, p. 349).

Positionality/Dispositions: The social and political landscape that an individual inhabits. An individual's lens and perspective for viewing and interpreting the world is influenced by his or her social identities. Social identities—including race, gender, class, and sexuality—are markers of relational positions, not essential qualities (Alcoff, 1988). Positionality influences an individual's knowledge and perspective in a given context or milieu, such as students in a teacher education program.

Propositions: Theoretical constructs grounded in and from data. They describe generalized relationships between a category and its concepts and between discrete categories (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 1998).

Race: A socially constructed, contested idea that uses physical features (skin color, facial features) as highly visible markers of organizational, behavioral, and cultural differences (American Anthropological Association, 1998). There is no biological basis for race: there is more biological variation within racial groups than between them (Marks, 1995; Smedley, 2007).

Race is not an inherent or essential property (Marks, 1995; Smedley, 2007). Rather, race may be understood as a social transaction, a dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that: (1) sorts people into ethnic groups according to perceived physical (e.g., skin color, eye shape, hair texture) and behavioral human characteristics (e.g., morality, intellect, temperament); (2) associates differential value, power, and privilege with these characteristics and establishes a social status ranking among the different groups; and (3) emerges (a) when groups are perceived to pose a threat (political, economic, or cultural) to each other's world view or way of life; and/or (b) to justify the denigration and exploitation (past, current, or future) of, and prejudice toward, other groups (Markus, 2008; Omi & Winant, 1994).

The construction of race is influenced by history, circumstance, and the needs and interests of those in power; the dynamics of superiority and inferiority is key to the process of creating and defining racial groups (Omi, 2001). Different institutions, mechanisms, and social forces (e.g., science, religion, law, and politics) have shaped and determined what we mean by race and who fits into a particular race category (Alexander, 2012). Different groups have been racialized throughout history (Brodkin, 2000; Modood, 2009; Takaki, 2008).

Race Talk: Verbal communication on issues of race and racism. May be explicit or implicit, direct or indirect (Lewis, 2001).

Racism: A system of advantage based on race (Wellman, 1993). The system of beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, doctrines, policies, programs and practices of discrimination, segregation, persecution, and mistreatment based on race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Mediated by power and hegemony, racism is pervasive and deeply embedded in U.S. society. Racism does not require intent, malice, or the conscious efforts of individuals. Instances of individual racism are

best understood when situated within the larger cycle of institutional, structural, and ideological realities that create and maintain racial inequity.

Reflexivity: An explicit self-consciousness about the researcher's social, political, and value positions influencing the design, execution, elaboration, interpretation, and integration of the propositions (Griffiths, 1998; Greenbank, 2003).

Theoretical Sampling: Sampling on the basis of emerging concepts, with the aim being to explore the dimensional range or varied conditions along which the properties of concepts vary (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The process of data collection for generating theoretical propositions whereby the researcher jointly collects, codes, and analyzes data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them. The main principle of theoretical sampling is that the emerging categories and the researcher's increasing understanding of the developing theoretical propositions direct the sampling (Morse, 2007).

Theoretical Saturation: The point at which gathering more data about a theoretical category reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights about the emerging grounded theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006). The point in category development at which no new properties, dimensions, or relationships emerge during analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Theoretical Sensitivity: The researcher's ability to use theoretical terms when developing categories to help examine and understand relevant data (Kelle, 2007). Write Strauss and Corbin (1998), "The more sensitive a researcher is to the theoretical relevance of certain concepts, the more likely he or she is to recognize indicators of those concepts in the data" (pp. 205-206).

White Privilege: An unearned set of social and material power (benefits, rights, and immunities, sense of entitlement) that White people have and people of color do not (Kendall, 2012;

Leonardo, 2004; Lipsitz, 1998; McIntosh, 1989; Mills, 1997; Wildman & Davis, 2000). Such power is "conferred systematically" (McIntosh, 1989, p. 3). White privilege enables White people to define and benefit from societal norms, such as what is being taught in schools and how it is being taught (Leonardo, 2009).

White privilege is not a reflection of an individual's morality or intentions. Having White privilege does not make an individual a bad person, and expressing White privilege often occurs without conscious or malicious intent (Kendall, 2012). White privilege renders racism invisible to many White people. Those that hold privilege often do not see it or know they possess it (Kendall, 2012; Lipsitz, 1998; McIntosh, 1989). White privilege insulates—even encourages—White people from having to think about themselves as racial beings, how racism affects them, or how racism affects people of color (Kendall, 2012; Lipsitz, 1998; Mills, 1997). White privilege allows Whites to avoid, evade, dismiss, and deny the centrality of racism in social life (Kendall, 2012; Kivel, 2002; Leonardo, 2002; Lipsitz, 1998; Mills, 1997; Wildman & Davis, 2000). White people who do become aware of their privilege and the centrality of racism often grapple with guilt and shame and may feel overwhelmed, frustrated, and confused about what should be their role in eliminating racism (Thompson & Carter, 1997).

Summary

This chapter begins with the statement of the problem, which includes the realities of race, racism, and education in the United States. It details the purpose of the study, which is to better understand race talk from the perspectives of teacher education students. This chapter also delineates the study's research questions, including the challenges and possibilities of race talk in teacher education. This chapter details the significance of the study, including potential benefits for individuals and society. It provides a summary of the conceptual framework (critical race

theory), including its role and history in education research. This chapter also provides a summary of the methodology (grounded theory), including an introduction to how it was used in this study and a summary of assumptions, limitations, and design controls. This chapter provides a summary of the role of the researcher, and situates the data and study participants in recent social, political, cultural, and historical context. This chapter concludes with definitions of key terms used in this study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the related research literature. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 reports the study's findings. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of this study, delineates contributions to the field, and describes implications for research and practice.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The United States population continues to experience significant increases in its racial diversity, including the racial diversity of school students. By 2050, students of color will make up approximately 56% of the school-age population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). U.S. schoolteachers, however, do not reflect these trends: 82% of U.S. public school teachers are White, and evidence suggests this will continue for the foreseeable future (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Schools and classrooms, as microcosms of society and as primary sites of knowledge construction and production, are key determinants of the ways in which race and racism are reproduced and maintained; teachers are the primary authority figures and arbiters of these processes (Banks, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Milner, Pearman, & McGee, 2013; Richardson & Johanningmeir, 2003; Sleeter, 2012, 2016; Tatum, 1997). Moreover, historical legacies of race-based stratification have limited opportunities for racial equality and interracial interaction, increasing the likelihood that different racial groups live vastly different lives from one another, and decreasing the likelihood of sustained interracial interaction prior to, and outside of, school (Bonilla-Silva, Gilliam, Valentino, & Beckmann, 2002; Goar, & Embrick, 2006; Harris & Hodge, 2016; Goldsmith, 2010; Pollock, 2008b; Richardson & Johanningmeir, 2003). This demographic imperative (the diverse student population, the homogeneous teaching population, and the demographic divide) indicates that teachers may be ill prepared to face and understand the complex ways in which race and racism shape the schooling experiences of many of their students (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Feistritzer, 2011; Gay & Howard, 2000; Larke, 1992; Sleeter, 2012, 2016; Tatum, 1997).

The colorblind ideology complicates matters further, suggesting to teachers that the best way to deal with race (and other forms of diversity) is by ignoring, avoiding, or refuting it (Aragón, Dovidio, & Graham, 2016; Lewis, 2001; Pollock, 2004a; Schofield, 2007). Research indicates that despite the increasing racial diversity of students in U.S. public schools, many teachers struggle with how to deal with issues of race and racism in their classrooms and schools (Banks, 2004; Lewis, 2001; Pollock, 2004a; Schofield, 2007). The relationship between segregation patterns, race identity, and colorblind ideology reproduces racial isolation, frames interracial interaction, and limits opportunities for race discourse (Alexander, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Brayboy, Castagno, & Maughan, 2010; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2005; Fox, 2009; Wolsko, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). Thus, it is all the more crucial for education researchers to examine and better understand the challenges and possibilities of race talk for teachers.

Colorblind Ideology and How We Learn Race and Racism

In order to adequately examine how race talk is influenced by ideology, I support my study with research on how we are socialized to understand, interpret, and deal with issues of race and racism. Findings indicate that racial socialization occurs at a very early age—children as young as three months have knowledge of race and use racial concepts in their interactions (Aboud, 2009; Park, 2011; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Children experience the mainstream, stereotypical categorizations of racial groups and learn that an individual's race and skin color preference effect how he or she views and interprets the world. As children attempt to interpret and make sense of their worlds, they receive many messages that difference and hierarchy exist and are racially codified. Yet, a colorblind perspective encourages an illusory denial of these racial dynamics; that ideological and structural racism do not exist, that race does not matter, and

that we should not see, think, or talk about race issues (Forman, 2004; Frankenburg, 1993; Williams, 1997).

Some research indicates that categorization into race-based groups is the catalyst of biased behavior (Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Tajfel and Turner conclude that to reduce intergroup prejudice, teachers should ignore race and focus on students as individuals (see also Cose, 1997; Khatri & Hughes, 2005). Studies on teacher preference for adopting a colorblind perspective find that many teachers may state that children are unaware of racial differences; hence, teachers may be reluctant to teach children about racial differences as it might destroy their racial innocence (Banks, 1993; Park, 2011; Tarca, 2005; Tatum, 1999; Troyna, 1991).

However, a majority of research finds that the colorblind perspective is inconsistent with how we actually develop racial views. Research has consistently established, for more than 90 years, that racial socialization tends to occur at a very young age, that children are aware of racial differences and have internalized dominant norms regarding the social status of different racial groups (Aboud, 2009; Bigler & Hughes, 2009; Clark & Clark, 1918; Goodman, 1946; Lasker, 1929; Levy & Killen, 2008; Park, 2011; Trager & Radke-Yarrow, 1952; Troyna, 1991; Williams & Morland, 1976). Identifying race as a meaningful category does not in itself produce racial bias (Bigler & Hughes, 2009; Wolsko et al, 2000). In fact, research indicates that individuals who endorse a multicultural and/or color-conscious perspective have more accurate knowledge about other racial groups and interact with other racial groups more positively (Timeo, Farroni, & Maass, 2017; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000; Valli, 1995). Emphasizing race can increase positivity towards other races, particularly if this emphasis is situated within a framework that examines, explains, and values differences, even if these differences are negative (Paris, 2012; Timeo, Farroni, & Maass, 2017). For example,

understanding the socio-historical conditions behind the racial achievement gap may dispel myths of superior/inferior intelligence or cultural deficiency (Alland, 2002; Howard, 2010).

While most of the research related to race and education has historically focused on children's racial perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, since the 1980s there has been an increasing focus on teachers' racial perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Brayboy, Castagno, & Maughan, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Kailin, 1999; Lewis, 2001, 2003; Pollock, 2004a, 2004b, 2008b; Schofield, 2007; Sleeter, 1992, 2016). This indicates that a relationship exists between teachers' racial identities, awareness, and understandings, and how they deal with race issues in classrooms and schools. These "dealing" practices include responding to conflict, administering discipline, discussing macro issues such as Education as a Second Language or the achievement gap, and the implementation of multicultural or anti-racist curriculum (Brayboy, Castagno, & Maughan, 2010).

Colorblind Ideology and How We Talk About Race

Research assessing the cognitive aspects of colorblind racial attitudes measures the degree to which individuals are aware and/or acknowledge racial privilege, institutional racism, and blatant racial discrimination (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee & Browne, 2000). This research finds that endorsement of colorblindness does not necessarily indicate White superiority or negative attitudes toward racial minorities, but does imply unawareness of the extent and nature of racism, and inaccurate or distorted views of racial minorities and race relations. This research indicates that endorsement of colorblindness correlates positively with greater levels of racial prejudice (and, subsequently, gender prejudice) and the belief that society is just and fair (see also Valli, 1995; Wolsko et al, 2000).

Whites are far more likely to endorse the colorblind perspective than people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Sbrena & Moras, 2006; Simpson, 2008; Tarca, 2005; Trainor, 2005). However, both Whites and people of color may endorse colorblindness for protective factors to cope with the realities of racism (Fox, 2009; Mabokela & Madsen, 2003; Thompson & Carter, 1997). For Whites, colorblindness may help them to rationalize and preserve race-based privileges. For people of color, colorblindness may help them to rationalize and cope with race-based oppression (Thompson & Carter, 1997).

Hogan and Mallott (2005) found that diversity, multicultural, and anti-racist training influenced improvements in both self-reported and observed colorblind racial attitudes, particularly as it relates to cognition (e.g., awareness/denial that racism remains a problem). However, affective and motivational aspects of colorblindness proved more difficult to improve. One challenge for Hogan and Mallott was that Whites resented being labeled racist or had difficulty accepting gains——real or perceived—of racial minorities. Resentment may be coupled with a defensive antagonism (e.g., guilt, shame, anger), such as being against programs that promote racial equity (e.g., affirmative action higher education scholarships). Hogan and Mallott surmise that while denial is the product of ignorance and misunderstanding, antagonism and resentment are affective/motivational reactions to a potential loss of power. One implication is that teachers need to integrate content and pedagogy that targets the affective/motivational components of antagonism and resentment.

Colorblind Ideology and How We Talk About Race in Education

Colorblindness is embedded in U.S. education. Education policy research on colorblind perspective finds “race neutral” education laws have been effective in sustaining White dominance and legitimating racial minority subordination through student tracking, ability

grouping, and assessment policies (Carr, 1997; Kailin, 1999; Knoester & Au, 2017; Williams & Land, 2006). Higher education affirmative action policies are often framed as unnecessary, counterproductive, and racist (Anderson, 2007; Brown et al, 2003; Moreno, 1995; Spencer, 2008). Moreover, public K-12 schools are becoming increasingly resegregated (Doyle, 2005; Goetz & Breneman, 1988; Goldsmith, 2010; Synnott, 1998).

However, race's salience is consistently avoided, denied, or challenged. Race is often treated as taboo and race-inferring language is often systemically avoided or deleted (Lane & Williams, 2008; Lewis, 2001, 2003; Pollock, 2004a; Schofield, 2007). Many teachers claim and act upon assumptions of not seeing color and treating all students the same without regard to race, while the nature of classroom curriculum and pedagogy suggest that schools reinforce, or cultivate, racism. Students are often well aware of the taboo, often proliferated, ironically, by teachers' efforts to stigmatize race talk, signifying that race is present even by its omission. Even in cases of explicit racial discrimination, race is often avoided from consideration. The "race is taboo" phenomenon is especially present in racially mixed schools (even more so when the teachers are predominantly White) (Pollock, 2004a; Schofield, 2007). Principals and other school administrators may also be hesitant to discuss race issues, opting instead for colorblind race talk (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003).

Existing—yet unexamined—racial inequalities and a discourse of silence collectively perpetuate deficit assumptions of racial minorities (Cross, 1991; Del Valle, 1998; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). School mission statements and positive language discourse (e.g., "treat everyone the same") often fail to account for disparate attitudes and treatment (Discipline Disparities Research-to-Practice Collaborative Report, 2014; Frank, 2007; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987). Colorblindness' push towards assimilation, treating all students equally, often

renders mute the identities, worldviews, and experiences of students of color (Brunsma, 2006; Gordon, 2005).

In practice, the different life experiences and perspectives of students of color are often viewed as a deficit rather than as different (Del Valle, 1998; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). Students often experience curriculum and instruction that reinforce mainstream White norms and values (Cochran-Smith, 1995). Colorblindness enables teachers to avoid race and culture in their teaching, opting for universal, one-size-fits-all approaches (Schofield, 2007). Students of color often receive less demanding curriculum and instruction (even without formal tracking) and are disproportionately punished (even when controlling for rate of offense) (Brayboy et al, 2010). Colorblind approaches enable teachers and students to think and act in racist ways without considering the racist implications or their motivations (Essed, 1997; Bigler & Hughes, 2009; McIntyre, 1997; Nieto, 1996; Wolsko et al, 2000).

Race is constantly minimized in colorblind approaches, even as students continue to racially group themselves in the cafeteria and on the playground, or as students are racially grouped within and between classrooms (Lewis, 2001, 2003; Schofield, 2007). In order to avoid admitting such actions are racially significant, they are often explained away as matters of personal choice and like-mindedness. Moreover, recognizing and respecting group rights are often deemed less necessary and problems particular to racial groups are often deemed cultural flaws. Many White students who resist knowledge and awareness of race believe that people of color are to blame for racial disparities and that discussing race issues is the problem, not them (Cooney & Akintunde, 1999; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007). Yet, when students of color resist assimilation—by acting up or dropping out—it is often perceived that *they* are the problem,

while model-minorities are perceived as exemplars of the idea that anyone can succeed in school if they work hard (Abelmann, 2009; Kim, 2004; Nel, 1992).

Teachers are more likely to endorse colorblindness than students (Pollock, 2004a). White teachers are less likely to discuss race or interrupt racism with teacher-student conflict than with student-student conflict; even less so when other Whites are involved (Kailin, 1999; Pollock, 2004a). Teachers are also more likely to consider racial inequalities such as punishment disparities or the achievement gap in an abstract or academic manner. When presented with the possibility that such disparities existed in *their* schools, teachers are far less likely to admit or discuss these issues. In the latter case, such disparities are often explained as the result of individual or cultural limitations (Houts Pica & Feagin, 2007). In both cases, the extent to which teachers were personally implicated influenced if, how, and to what extent they responded to racial issues.

Aragón, Dovidio, and Graham (2016) found that college and university faculty that adopted colorblind ideology had far less inclusive teaching practices than peers who adopted more multicultural and critical ideologies. Professors that avoided or diluted conversations on race (i.e., reducing structural and systemic analyses to identity politics) decreased knowledge and awareness for all students and led to increased marginalization of students of color.

Gordon (2005) and Valli (1995) found similar conclusions in their research on colorblindness in teacher education. Colorblindness may help teachers overcome apprehension and discomfort and may help teachers see students as individuals. However, colorblindness prevents self-examination of racial attitudes and behaviors and hinders the development of effective multicultural curriculum and instruction. Colorblindness ignores information about groups and focuses on the individual, while a color-conscious perspective leads to a significant

reliance on both race and information about individuals. Color-consciousness sometimes facilitates preexisting stereotypes and prejudices, yet is an essential precondition to develop effective multicultural curriculum and instruction.

Bonilla-Silva's (2006) research found four central frames of colorblindness: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization. Abstract liberalism involves equality rhetoric to justify, dilute, or ignore racial inequality (e.g., "There is no racism in this school" or "I treat all of my students as individuals"). Naturalization frames patterns of racial difference as natural occurrences or matters of choice (e.g., Walking through school cafeterias, hallways, and classrooms, one might observe students sitting primarily with members of their own racial group; see also Tatum, 1997). Cultural racism frames racial educational disparities as the result of (racially based) cultural inferiorities (e.g., "Latino students do not care about learning English"). Minimization suggests that racism ended with the Civil Rights Movement, that formal mechanisms to end racism are no longer necessary, and that such mechanisms are, in fact, racist (e.g., arguments against affirmative action in higher education; see Anderson, 2007).

Bonilla-Silva (2006) concludes that colorblind ideology:

> Forms an impregnable yet elastic ideological wall that barricades Whites off from America's racial reality. An impregnable wall because it provides them a safe, color-blind way to state racial views without appearing to be irrational or rabidly racist. And an elastic wall——and hence a stronger one—because this ideology does not rely on absolutes, admits a variety of ways of using its frames, and allows Whites to employ a variety of emotional tones for stating their views. (p. 211)

Other important findings from Bonilla-Silva's research include: (a) that a contradiction exists between the claims of Whites that they are color-blind and their near exclusive White pattern of

social interaction; (b) that colorblind ideology allows Whites to ignore their White privilege while blaming people of color for racial disparities; and (c) that Blacks (and other people of color) are far less likely to ascribe to colorblind racism.

Colorblind Ideology, Race Talk, and Teacher Education

Teacher education programs—attempting to prepare future teachers to deal with issues of race and racism in their schools and classrooms—are a key site to examine the challenges and possibilities of race talk. One crucial challenge is that colorblind ideology has permeated the discursive fabric of U.S. education, codifying race as taboo, as silence where and when race is salient (Forman, 2004; Lewis, 2001; Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000; Mabokela & Madsen, 2003; Martusewicz, 2005; Pollock, 2004b; Schofield, 2007; Simpson, 2008; Spencer, 2008; Tatum, 1999; Williams & Land, 2006). Despite an increase in pre-service teacher education attending to issues of race—vis-à-vis diversity, multicultural education, and related courses and programs—teacher educators still struggle with how to help their students critically examine race and racism; specifically pre-service teachers' racial identities, awareness, and understanding (Bollin & Finkel, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 1996, 2004; Epstein, 2009; Finney & Orr, 1995; Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010; Wasonga & Piveral, 2004).

Many pre-service teachers are unaware and/or misunderstand the nature and depth of race and racism, and enter schools without the skills, knowledge, or perspective to effectively engage in race discourse (Atwater, 2008; Cochran-Smith, 1995, 2000, 2004). Research on multicultural teacher education programs indicates that students with less awareness and understanding of race are more likely to resist critical examination of race in their teaching practices (Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Lesko & Bloom, 1998). Many of these teachers may not understand or recognize, and may be resistant or dismissive of, issues of—and their own complicity and participation in—

White privilege and institutional racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Cochran-Smith, 1996; Cooney & Akintunde, 1998; Gordon, 2005; Henry & Givens Generett, 2005; Leonardo, 2009; Reason & Evans, 2007; Sbrena & Moras, 2006). In many multicultural and anti-racist teacher education programs, preservice teachers may be reluctant or unsure how to discuss race and racism, as they may be actively and consciously confronting racial issues for the first time (McNeal, 2005; Pollock, Deckman, Mira, & Shalaby, 2010; Wilder, 1999).

Race is difficult to examine, understand, and talk about for many reasons (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Katz; 2003; Tatum, 1992). Thinking about race and racism can evoke a wide range of emotions, including anger, frustration, resentment, guilt, and sadness (Bonilla-Silva & Foreman, 2000; Chase, 2010; Gay, 2003; Trainor, 2005). Race is often a taboo subject, something we are often told not to think, feel, or talk about (Schofield, 2007; Pollock, 2004a, 2004b). But even if teachers could somehow work through all of these thoughts and feelings, even if they could find the strength and courage to talk about race, the complexity and nuance of race still renders many teachers feeling (and being) inadequate to think, feel, and act on race matters (Fox, 2009; Pollock, 2008a). One of the outcomes of colorblind ideological discourse is that definitions, concepts, and perspectives become diluted, diminished, and simplified. A history of such discourse has fostered an ambiguity around race-related concepts (e.g., diversity, multiculturalism, racism), resulting in these concepts having multiple meanings, many of which are inadequate and inaccurate, making potential conversations around race all the more daunting (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Leonardo, 2009; Pollock et al, 2010).

Many teachers struggle with race not only because they do not understand or are unaware. Rather, examining, confronting, and challenging race is often difficult and painful work (Chase, 2010; Fox, 2009; Pollock, 2001, 2004b, 2008a; 2008b; Tatum, 1997). Teachers are

forced to consider very conflicting paradigms and their own inadvertent complicity. Yet, this research also clearly finds that this struggle and all its concomitant tensions is the very space within which teachers must dwell.

Teachers' racial beliefs and behaviors have profound implications for the lives of their students and the educational enterprise as a whole (Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Kailin, 1999; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003; Sleeter, 1992). Kailin (1999) studied White teachers' perception of racism in their schools. Kailin wanted to help the teachers begin to see how they thought about and acted upon racism, in part simply by putting the issue "on the table" (p. 729). Kailin examined 222 open-ended questionnaires that asked teachers to give examples of racism in their schools. Responses were coded to reveal what teachers saw as the source of racial problems: Whites, Blacks, or institutional/cultural factors. Kailin found that: (a) White privilege limited and distorted White teachers' degree of understanding and knowledge of racism; (b) most White teachers saw Blacks as the source of racial problems; and (c) White teachers rarely challenged or refuted racist remarks or behaviors of their White colleagues, even though one in four teachers reported witnessing such actions. As a result of institutional racism and White privilege, White teachers were less able to see themselves racially, and understand racism structurally and institutionally, even as it pertained to school. Moreover, seeing students of color as a racialized "Other" produced a relative lack of empathy and blaming the victim ethos. Finally, when acknowledging more obvious, overt racist attitudes and behaviors, the teachers did not intervene and remained silent.

Pollock et al. (2010) developed a teacher education course in which critically examining race was a central objective. She found that her students struggled with three core tensions around the question "What can I do?" These tensions were: (a) what can I *do*? (questioning

whether abstract ideas or theories about racial inequality and difference concretely apply to the classroom setting); (b) what *can* I do? (questioning, in general, the power of individual teachers to dismantle structural racism in the everyday lives of their classrooms and schools); and (c) what can *I* do? (questioning if they, specifically, are personally and professionally ready to engage issues of race and racism in their classroom practices). Pollock and her colleagues (2010) found that exploring these tensions openly, honestly, and explicitly was necessary to help teachers both reflect and attempt to proactively change how they deal with race issues in their personal and professional lives.

Bollin and Finkel (1995) describe how curriculum integration of race, class, and gender issues in professional education courses can be implemented and evaluated using Helms' (1990) model of White identity formation. Central to Helms' model is the indication that White persons with more fully developed racial identities are more likely to be successful in mixed-race settings. The various strategies described were developed over a three-year span in a University School of Education. Reactions of students to the inclusion of diversity material were monitored through structured interviews with a small, random sample of students, questionnaires, reaction papers, and student logs. Based on the data gathered, students having direct, sustained contact with people of color——often but not limited to field experiences related to the course—were found to have more fully developed racial identities, as well as understanding of and empathy about racial issues than students who did not have direct and sustained contact with students of color. Tutoring children of color was one type of field placement that resulted in the growth in the students' sense of racial identity. An acceptance of White responsibility for racism and a personal commitment to work for change was not seen in any of the students' responses. It may

be unrealistic to expect that students would reach this level of identity development without significant experiences outside of the university program.

Based on their study, Bollin and Finkel (1995) suggest to employ teaching strategies that reflect their student's racial identities and concomitant levels of racial understanding, and match these students to particular communities accordingly. Teacher education programs may need to structure program goals to accommodate the complexity of the process of changing deeply held student beliefs. In practice, for example, Bollin and Finkel found that students benefit from the instructor's role-modeling of a positive racial identity. Bollin and Finkel state that readings about diversity accompanied by discussion in an open, accepting atmosphere, coupled with appropriate field experiences—can accelerate growth but need to be further accompanied by opportunities for personal reflection. The researchers state that curriculum integration across several courses is more effective for preparing preservice teachers for diversity than dealing with the issues in a separate course.

Lawrence and Bunche (1996) examined the influence of a one-semester multicultural education course on helping White teacher education students develop a White anti-racist identity. They analyzed interview data and course writings from five course participants using Helms' (1990) model of White racial development, focusing specifically on students' attitudes and behaviors. The researchers found that the course did help the White students begin to understand and develop their racial identities, but that one, stand-alone multicultural education course was insufficient in sustaining and progressing this development. This study further indicates the importance of helping White students understand racism institutionally and systemically. Write Lawrence and Bunche:

> Even though three of the five students…recognized the need to learn more about communities of color and take individual actions to challenge racist and other types of discriminatory remarks, few…mentioned challenging more institutionalized forms of oppression or joining in alliances with people of color to challenge racist policies and practices. (p. 541)

Positive White anti-racist identity development did facilitate a new and increased awareness of racism and its influence on the lives of the students and the lives of people of color. Some of the students were able to acknowledge and work through feelings of guilt, blame, and shame, and go beyond behaviors of avoidance or denial. For the students, awareness of racism—in particular their own White privilege—was often daunting and overwhelming. They remarked that the lack of peer support (real or perceived) often lead them to feel increasingly isolated and alone when attempting to discuss racism with their White peers. The lack of peer support and anti-racist White role-models (see also Tatum, 1992), coupled with the limited scope of one course, hindered efforts to encourage and deepen the students' understanding of racism. For White students to develop positive racial identities and sustain an anti-racist stance, they require "on-going support [e.g., by teacher educators, by administrators, by peers] to meet the daily challenges that will certainly arise" (Lawrence & Bunche, 1996, p. 541). Further developing positive anti-racist identities in White teacher education students requires concerted, sustainable efforts by the teacher education program in which they are enrolled.

Kailin (1994) found that her approach to anti-racist staff development for teachers was especially effective because it included an analysis of power and helped teachers to examine and understand racism's structural, material, and institutional effects. Moreover, she indicated that

one-shot workshops not only give less time for teachers to examine racism, but they are often perceived as time-wasters or chores, rather than tool-building, learning opportunities.

Sleeter (2016) found that teacher education programs are complicit in the maintenance of racial interest convergence. She notes a pattern of teacher education programs preparing mostly White teachers to teach students of color, but found that the majority of the teachers in her study were not being adequately prepared to understand the depth and breadth of systemic racism and the influence it has on schools and the students therein. Sleeter also questions the gap between teacher education programs' expressed and achieved commitments to multicultural education and social justice. She states that, in practice, many teacher education programs offer multicultural education content and pedagogy that is diluted or surface-level, with little to no critical examination of concepts such as bias and privilege, or opportunities for practical application (e.g., developing culturally responsive teaching lessons).

Cochran-Smith (1995, 2000, 2004) states that teacher education programs must be altered to more adequately reflect teaching for social justice, where race is front and center, rather than at the periphery. She also asserts that race and racism must be made an explicit, genuine component of teacher education pedagogy, and includes curriculum that facilitates personal and professional growth. Existing teacher education programs often "decontextualize teaching and learning and often result in either bolstering the very stereotypes they are intended to dispel or alienating parents and others who regard them as racist activities in and of themselves" (Cochran-Smith, 1995, p. 494).

Pollock and her colleagues (2010) found that exploring tensions openly, honestly, and explicitly was necessary in order for them to potentially change how they deal with racial issues. One teacher in her study shared the importance of acknowledging that all participants are

"starting in different places" in their "development about race" and that she might need "to do some personal development" before she could pinpoint "what I can do" (Pollock et al, 2010, p. 220).

Elsewhere, Pollock (2008a) argues in favor of more precision in race talk in schools. She delineates three ways in which this precision can and should occur. First, teachers can pursue more precise talk about student needs. Teachers need to avoid the pitfalls of aggregated (e.g., "urban" or "at-risk") and hyperaggregated (e.g., "I teach all students") language and instead critically analyze whether student needs are being met. Second, educators can pursue more precise talk about the causes of racial disparities. Teachers need to avoid the quick and overly simplistic generalizations and stereotypes behind racial inequality and instead critically analyze the various social actors, institutions, and processes involved. Third, teachers can pursue more precise talk about how the everyday educator acts that actually assist students of color and those that actually harm them. This involves in no small terms forging "deeper connections with actual community members" (p. 110).

In Chase's (2010) study, "the Activists" use forms of social justice discourse in order to be heard. First, they stress and practice dialogue, how to speak and how to listen. Second, the Activists acknowledge and make explicit, their use of anger *and* the history of anger as a stereotypical way of framing Black people (e.g., the stereotype of the "angry Black person"). Here, as Chase notes, the Activists, "embrace the idea that dialogue about racism can be emotionally volatile" (p. 142). Dialogic engagement, via speaking, listening, and asking questions, and doing so in an honest, explicit, albeit often painful manner, is a proven possibility for facilitating encounters across race and other social identity domains (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003).

Challenges of Race Talk

Markus and Moya (2010) argue that, "the ideas and practices that systematically divide students based on race and ethnicity are so woven into everyday practices that they are difficult to see" (p. 67). As a result, teachers and other social actors in positions of privilege and power may "do inequality while claiming equality" (p. 53). Teachers' expectations, assessments, and tracking of students, as well as discussions of issues such as the achievement gap, occur in racially significant and discriminatory ways, all under the auspices of colorblind fairness and equality.

In the same edited volume as the chapter by Markus and Moya (2010), Darling-Hammond (2010) writes, "what does not usually enter the conversation are the sources of inequality that actually exist in our schools" (p. 300). Moreover, Darling-Harmond adds, attempts to discuss the sources of inequality are a proven measure to stop such conversation from continuing. Efforts to discuss issues such as how racial stereotypes inform teacher bias (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001); the prevalence of White-centered policies, practices, and norms (Leonardo, 2009); or racially inequities in the design of schools (Harris & Hodge, 2016) are often met by with resistance, apathy, disdain, or reprimand, by students and administration (Cottom; 2013; Matias, Montoya, & Nishi, 2016).

Chesler, Lewis, and Crowfoot (2005) examined the state of race relations in higher education. The authors illuminated myriad complex challenges and possibilities for race talk, particularly within the context of teaching in diverse classrooms. Several crucial challenges stem from the pain and struggle around fear—of being called racist; of being the only faculty of color; of being judged as not scholarly because one is a person of color. Other challenges are curricular and pedagogical in nature, such as how to respond to "teachable moments" (pp. 133, 236) and

"how to address diverse [learning] styles without overstating, essentializing, or overgeneralizing them (and without denying or trivializing them)" (p. 131). A final set of challenges derived from teachers having different ideas about what race issues were relevant to consider, if at all:

> Some feel its relevance mostly with regard to course content, while others feel its relevance in every aspect of the teaching enterprise. In conversations about what classrooms skills, strategies, or tactics are important for successfully teaching in a diverse environment, a few faculty stated that "no special skills were necessary". (Chesler, Lewis, & Crowfoot, 2005, p. 132)

Pollock (2004b) found that limited race discourse and traditional either/or binaries add to the uncertainty and unease in thinking about and discussing race issues. She situates this challenges via six paradoxes or dilemmas: (a) We don't belong to simple race groups, but we do; (b) Race doesn't matter, but it does; (c) The deraced words we use when discussing plans for racial equality can actually keep us from discussing ways to make opportunities racially equal; (d) The more complex inequality seems to get, the more simplistic inequality seems to be; (e) The questions we ask most about race are the very questions we most suppress; and (f) Although talking in racial terms can make race matter, not talking in racial terms can also make race matter.

Chase's (2010) study of one university's struggles to address race issues illuminates several key challenges of race talk. Chase found a milieu in which race talk was avoided, ignored, diluted, or challenged by professors, administrators, and students. Yet, even students of color and White allies (whom she collectively referred to as "the Activists") who wished to engage race issues seriously often found themselves uncertain about how to proceed or unsure of their own ability to do so (see also Ayvazian, 1995).

Students attempting to engage in race issues on campus faced several particular challenges (Chase, 2010). If and when race talk was broached in classrooms, people of color were often expected to speak on behalf of their entire racial group. Even when professors opted to address race issues, the students of color in these classrooms were expected to be "race representatives", omniscient regarding issues, feelings, and perspectives about their entire racial group (Chase, p. 103). Chase notes that this "pressure… is a common refrain in research on students of color in predominantly White classrooms" (p. 103; see also Chesler, Lewis, & Crowfoot, 2005). Regardless of teacher intent, students of color are rendered archetypical and marginalized, and may choose to opt out of race talk to avoid this dilemma. Related outcomes are the feeling that White professors "rely on students of color to educate their White peers" (p. 158) and that White students are reaffirmed in asserting that race issues are not their problem.

Students of color often felt that they were the only ones who noticed or cared about race and racism on campus, and their university provided no meaningful cultural or institutional support for their needs and interests (Chase, 2010, p. 111). One student of color, responding to how White students in a classroom fishbowl exercise avoided race talk, noted, "They don't want to look wrong" (p. 104). White students with a socially just orientation on the campus found a university unresponsive and unwilling to address race issues. Faculty of color and White faculty allies acknowledged a fear of backlash from their colleagues; race and diversity issues tended to be responded to with defensiveness.

Conservative students and faculty drew on discursive resources both from national conservative *and* social justice education movements (Chase, 2010). Appropriating social justice terms for conservative ends is a common strategy used to reframe conservative interests as benevolent (e.g., challenging the need for equity with principles of equality) (see also Binder,

2002). Race issues were framed as oppositional, as suiting the needs and interests of racial minorities only, rather than as encompassing the entire body politic (p. 162).

Another challenge found in Chase's (2010) study deals with a particular aspect of race talk and the discourse around it, namely: *anger* (p. 270). Students of color, particularly Black students are saddled with the stereotype of the "angry Black person". Thus, any effort (and need) to speak passionately, including the use of anger, is precluded. Logic, will little or no emotion, is reaffirmed as the only true and valued means of communication. Yet, anger must be taken seriously in communication, particularly in diversity dialogues (Lyman, 2004).

Possibilities of Race Talk

Other scholars who described challenges of race talk in schools also presented possibilities. Markus and Moya (2010) argue that we need to change the conversations about race, specifically challenging prevalent misconceptions of race as biology and race as culture. In the same edited volume as the Markus and Moya chapter, Darling-Hammond (2010) argues that school curriculum should be reformed in ways that are "powerful and meaningful, that empowers [students] to use their knowledge for themselves, their families, and their community" (p. 312). Moya (2010) suggests that literature can help students examine the meaning and importance of racial identity, including the power in and value of outsider identities.

Markus and Moya (2010) also provide "six suggestions for doing difference differently" (p. 83). These are: (a) Recognize that people are not just autonomous individuals; (b) Study history to understand the emergence and development, as well as the contemporary significance, of race and racism; (c) Learn the science to understand how the sociohistorical concept of race and the biogeographical concept of ancestry groups differ; (d) Be aware that in a world organized according to race and ethnicity, the race or ethnicities with which people are

associated will always matter for their life experiences and perspectives; (e) Change the usual way of explaining racial and ethnic inequalities by recognizing the role that power and the unequal distribution of resources have played in their creation and maintenance; and (f) Help reform the ideas and practices—both as they are part of individuals, and as they have become institutionalized in the structures of society—that lead to unequal outcomes associated with race (p. 84).

Chesler, Lewis, and Crowfoot (2005) found some encouraging possibilities for race talk. The authors cite research on the positive impact of intergroup dialogue on a range of talk challenges, including prejudice reduction, race awareness, and interracial alliance building (see also, Nagda, 2006). Chesler, Lewis, and Crowfoot also found possibility for the recognition of race with those teachers who resisted or failed to see the relevance of diversifying their practices:

> Even those who did not see any need to modify their teaching strategies… generally recognized that racial dynamics were part of the classroom... For many faculty, awareness of the relevance of race…for the teaching and learning experience emerged over time. Sometimes faculty learned to be more aware of the possibilities that diversity provided by watching or listening to their students. (Chesler, Lewis, & Crowfoot, 2005, pp. 132-133)

Summary of Research

The research on colorblind ideology with respect to race talk and teacher education demonstrates how colorblind ideology influences how students, teachers, and other educational actors understand, are aware of consequences, and respond to race and racism issues in their classrooms and schools. Colorblindness influences teachers' attitudes and behaviors, including their curricular and instructional decisions, how they respond to racial conflict, and their

discourse about racial inequality (e.g., suspension rates or the achievement gap). Teachers may claim "not seeing color" and treating all students "the same", while their curriculum and pedagogy reinforce racism. Many teachers fail to see the need or relevance for implementing race or multiculturalism into their teaching; those that do often fail to move beyond surface-level, contributions discourse. Hence, mainstream curriculum and instruction remain the norm.

This research review indicates that the teacher's race is a determining factor in how they deal with race; more specifically, whether the teacher is White or a person of color. While in many cases all teachers, regardless of race, endorse colorblind race talk strategies, White teachers are far more likely to engage in such strategies than their colleagues of color (Gordon, 2005; Pollock, 2004a; Sleeter, 2016). This trend holds true in teacher education courses as well, where White students are also more likely to resist critical examination of race in their teaching practices than students of color. This research review indicates that this is largely the result of teachers of color being more likely to have personally experienced race issues than their White peers.

As this study aimed to examine race talk situated within the educational enterprise writ large, the interviews focused on education policy issues insofar as they are relevant to examining how teacher education students think and talk about race and education. The colorblind perspective shapes conversations and outcomes around policy issues such as affirmative action, school integration, tracking, testing, course content, and student discipline. Outcomes of the colorblind perspective include the reproduction of traditional, racially codified power arrangements, the devaluing and denigrating of the racial identities and experiences of students of color, and the denial of the existence, severity, and extent of racism by White educators and students.

The literature finds that being conscious of race and racism, of seeing and understanding the world racially, does not correlate to having racial prejudice, holding racial stereotypes, or exhibiting racial discrimination. The literature does finds that the colorblind ideology, of not seeing and understanding the world racially, may lead to inadequate and inaccurate knowledge about racial groups and what racism is; this in turn may cultivate and reinforce racial prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination.

Research indicates that several key features of curriculum and instruction are most effective in disrupting the colorblind perspective. These include classrooms that are interactive, dialogical spaces in which students are encouraged to examine and discuss race issues beyond individual prejudice and psychology, and the incorporation and examination of structure, ideology, and power (Ayvazian, 1995; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Nagda, 2006). Moreover, curriculum and instruction should be centrally embedded within and throughout the classroom and school (Reason & Evans, 2007; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). One-shot multicultural courses or workshops are far less effective than long-term professional development programs on multicultural education, diversity, cultural proficiency, as they give less time for teachers to examine racism, and are often perceived as time-wasters or chores, rather than tool-building and learning opportunities.

Curriculum and instruction that helps students examine racism on multiple domains of discourse (cognitive, affective, and motivational) increases students' race knowledge and awareness *and* the likelihood of them taking anti-racist action (Trainor, 2005). Thus, the research collectively recommends integrating course and program content that focuses on the social context and historical structuring of Whiteness (including the privileges of adhering to colorblindness); encouraging White educators and students to examine how race shapes their

own lives, not just the lives of people of color; providing interpersonal and institutional supports for students struggling with anxiety and isolation around race issues; matching preservice teachers with actors and institutions that provide opportunities to challenge their assumptions (Achinstein & Barret, 2004; Haymes, 1995; Henze, Lucas, & Scott, 1998; Kailin, 1994; Sleeter, 1992; 1995).

Emerging Challenges and Possibilities for Race Talk in Teacher Education

One challenge evidenced in the above scholarship is the notion of *alliances* within existing power dynamics. Central to race talk is navigating different tasks for White people and people of color (Nagda, 2006). Rendering explicit the history of how traditional power dynamics get reproduced even within racial justice movements requires that we seriously examine how dominant group members can become allies to subordinated group members *and* how subordinated group members can attain agency and become empowered. For example, how do Whites "use our privileges not just for our own benefit but to contribute them to the collective struggle for a more equitable and just society?" (Ambrosio, 2003, p. 39). How can all teachers and other educators cultivate teaching strategies in the context of asymmetrical power dynamics rather than dismiss, ignore, or avoid them? Moreover, how can teacher education facilitate the convergence of the personal with the professional in ways that are meaningful for race talk in their classrooms, for their students, and in schools?

CHAPTER 3

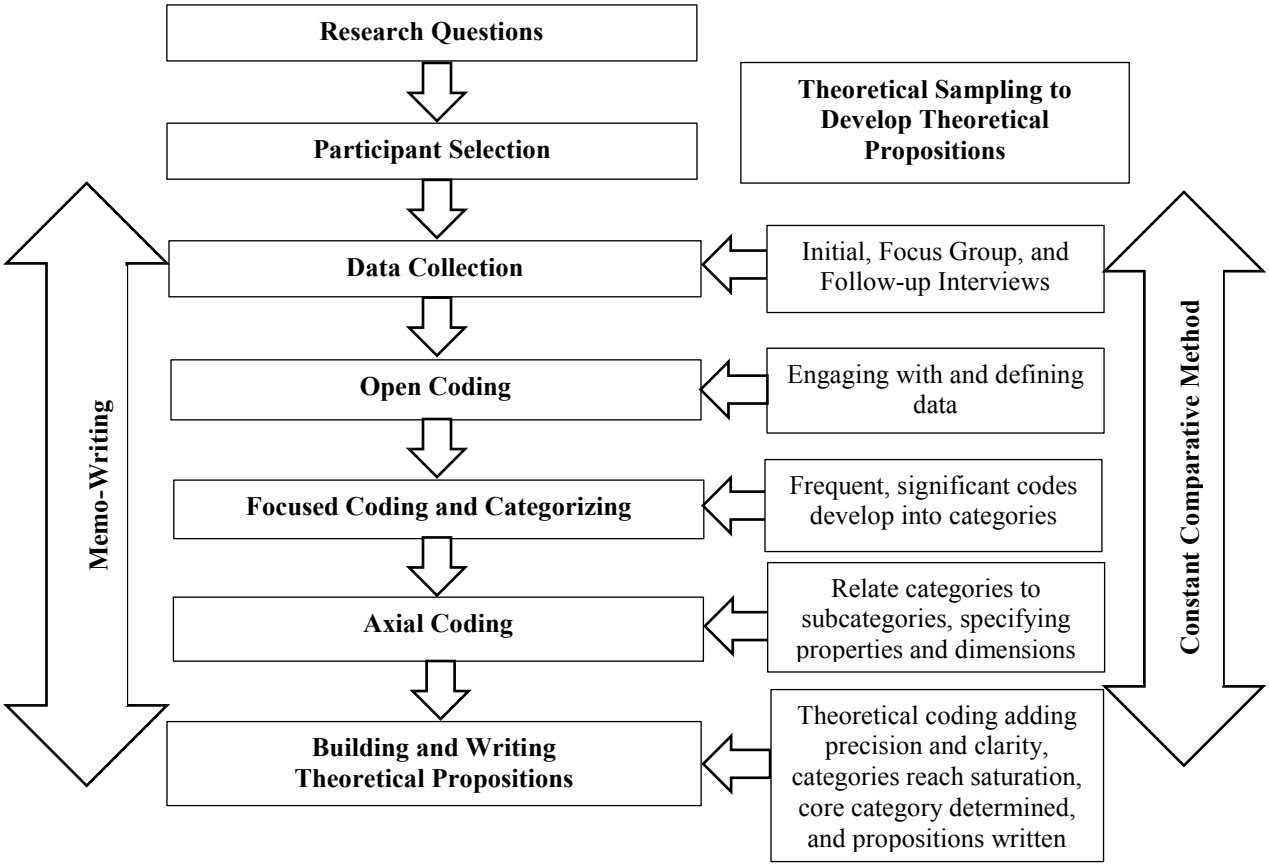
METHODOLOGY: GROUNDED THEORY

This chapter begins with an overview of grounded theory methodology and how it is used in this study. It also states participant selection and characteristics, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures and strategies.

Overview of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is an inductive research method that begins with a topic, area of study, and/or central question(s) rather than a hypothesis (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Creswell, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theoretical propositions emerge and develop from—are grounded in—the collection and analysis of data. Data is systematically extracted and coded, grouped into concepts (working abstract representations of phenomena that the researcher determines is significant to the data), categories (central, core concepts determined by the researcher's analysis and interpretation), and, ultimately, abstract theoretical propositions (indicate generalized conceptual claims and relationships of the data). Research questions are formulated, participants are selected, and data is collected and systematically coded, conceptualized, categorized, and built into theoretical propositions. This process of grounded theory as it is used in this study is presented as Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 The Process of Grounded Theory in this Study
(adapted with permission from Charmaz, 2014)



Theoretical Propositions

This study follows the approach of recent grounded theory scholarship (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Walten, 1989). It uses the term "theoretical propositions" rather than "hypotheses" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to frame and describe its findings. Just as grounded theory develops conceptual relationships and not measured relationships, propositions involve conceptual relationships whereas hypotheses require measured relationships (Charmaz, 2014; Kerlinger, 1966; Merriam, 2009).

Grounded theory is particularly useful for studying processes, actions, and interactions between individuals, institutions, structures, and ideologies (Arnove, 1999; Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Hildenbrand, 2007). According to Charmaz (2006), "the potential strength of grounded theory lies in its analytic power to *theorize* how meanings, actions, and social structures are constructed" (p. 151, emphasis in original). Given this claim, grounded theory merits serious attention as a method to understand the complexities and intricacies of race talk in teacher education.

Constant Comparative Method

Developing theoretical propositions is accomplished by using the constant comparative method, in which the researcher constantly moves back and forth among the data—memos, codes, concepts, and categories are constantly compared with one another—looking for similarities and differences, consistencies and variations of patterns. Theoretical sensitivity is developed through the process of theorizing about the data as it emerges—possibilities are seen, connections are established, and new questions are generated (Charmaz, 2006). Data collection and analysis is a rigorous yet iterative process. As the data becomes more refined, concepts and categories develop properties (defining attributes of categories and concepts) and dimensions

(boundaries and spectrum along which they operate). Central is the drive towards representing a wide and deep spectrum of possibility, thereby more accurately accounting for emerging patterns as they occur (Charmaz, 2006; 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Theoretical Saturation

A logic game of sorts develops: categories emerge from comparison of patterns, theoretical sense-making emerges from the integration of categories (via examination and analysis of the relationship between them), and theory is honed and refined, built, and rebuilt until theoretical *saturation* (data collection time and result produce an outcome where new data do not add new information for theory building and relationships between categories have been identified) is achieved (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hallberg, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Parker & Gehrke, 1986).

Saturation should not occur until the later stages of data collection. An open sampling approach to data collection should be the norm until categories and their properties can adequately and accurately be constructed, revisited, and reconstructed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse, 2007). While in grounded theory there may never be the "perfect" moment to assume one's data warrants determination of theory, researchers should nonetheless strive to optimally consider a wide and deep array of categorical possibilities before shifting from open sampling to theoretical sampling (more focused sampling on the basis of emerging concepts, with the aim being to explore the dimensional range or varied conditions along which the properties of concepts vary (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Coding

Coding is the process of defining and labeling what is happening in the data (Charmaz, 2007; 2014). Codes are not preconceived, but emerge from the researcher's study of and

interactions with the data. Coding occurs in several stages. The first stage, open coding (also known as initial coding), is the often line-by-line engagement of the data text, forming connections between data collection and analysis (emergent theory to attempt to understand the data). Open coding is followed by focused coding (also known as selective coding), in which the researcher determines which codes are the most recurring and significant and then tests these codes against the data. This process aids in developing the analytic strength of emerging concepts and categories. Axial coding further develops, collates, and links concepts into families. Theoretical coding, which takes place during the writing up of theoretical propositions, formalizes the relationships between conceptual families into an overarching theoretical framework (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Memo-Writing

Memo-writing is the process of analyzing ideas revealed in the data (Charmaz, 2014; Hallberg, 2006; Parker & Gehrke, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory methodology requires the researcher to record details, insights, propositions, and questions as soon as possible following data collection. This method includes theoretical assumptions and reflections (e.g., "I noticed participant 'x' avoided directly answering question 14. Why did the participant avoid answering the question? Does their avoidance relate in any way to how she thinks and talks about race elsewhere in this study? Will other participants respond similarly or differently?"). Memo-writing sessions took place immediately following data collection sessions, after transcribing data, as well as between and within phases of data collection. In short, memo-writing happened continually throughout data collection. In general, memo-writing should strive towards thick description (Geertz, 1973; Merriam, 2009), providing the researcher enough contextual information to determine the existence and extent of categories and their properties.

Participant Selection and Characteristics

The participants in this study were six secondary teacher education students at a college of education in the Pacific Northwest. The study took place on the university campus where the college is located. All six study participants were women. Five of the six study participants identified as White; one subject identified as Chinese American. All participants were at least 18 years of age. An overview of study participants is presented as Table 3.1. An introduction to the racial demographics of participants' experiences is presented as Table 3.2.

Table 3.1. Overview of Study Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Race & Ethnicity	Age in Phase I	Teaching Subject Area(s)
Anna	F	White & Jewish	25	English Language Arts, Special Education
Elizabeth	F	White	44	Science (specifically Biology)
Emma	F	White	24	English, Spanish, ELL, Social Studies
Jean	F	White	32	Science (specifically Biology)
Katherine	F	White	23	English Language Arts, Theater
Rachel	F	Asian & Chinese American	27	Science (specifically Chemistry)

Table 3.2 Participants' Formative (K-12) and Undergraduate Racial Demographics

Pseudonym	K-12 Neighborhood(s) & Community	K-12 Schools	K-12 Friends	K-12 Teachers	Undergraduate School(s)	Undergraduate Friends	Undergraduate Teachers
Anna	Racially Diverse then Mostly White	Racially Diverse then Mostly White	Racially Diverse	Mostly White; One Asian Amer. teacher	Racially Diverse	Racially Diverse	Racially Diverse
Elizabeth	Mostly White	White; brief period in GA with 50% Black population	Completely White	Mostly White; One Af. Amer. teacher	Mostly White	Mostly White	Mostly White; Some Racial Minorities
Emma	Mostly White	Mostly White	Mostly White	White	Racially Diverse	Mostly White	Mostly White; Some Racial Minorities
Jean	Racially Diverse	Mostly White	Racially Diverse	Mostly White; Some Racial Minorities	Racially Diverse	Racially Diverse	Mostly White; Some Racial Minorities
Katherine	Mostly White	Mostly White	Completely White	Completely White	Racially Diverse then Mostly White	Mostly White	Racially Diverse
Rachel	Mostly Racial Minorities then Mostly White	Mostly Racial Minorities then Mostly White	Completely Racial Minorities then Racially Diverse	Mostly White	Racially Diverse	Racially Diverse	Mostly White

Subject recruitment and enrollment was completed between November 30, 2012 and January 5, 2013. Purposive sampling was used to select participants (Patton, 1990). I concluded that teacher education students were the most appropriate participant group. I considered colleges of education in my general geographic proximity for ease of contact, recruitment, and subsequent data collection. Participants were recruited using a combination of personal and professional contacts in a college of education. I advertised and sought assistance in contacting and recruiting participants. A combination of emails, class visits, and posted signs were used to announce the study (see Appendix B). Three teacher education professors at the selected site agreed to help recruit potential study participants. I made several presentations in the university's college of education classrooms, attempting to "sell" the study by saying participants would not be judged and that all perspectives would be welcomed. I left sign-up sheets in those classrooms, and retrieved them from the professors later.

I followed-up with emails to respondents who initially indicated an interest in participating. The emails included a copy of the consent form to help generate questions that the potential participants may have had about the study and/or their role in it. In the interests of completing the study in a timely manner, I selected the first six study participants who expressed a willingness to participate (and responded to the follow-up email). Consent forms were signed (and copies were given) when participants met for Interview 1.

The Participants

Anna

Anna is a 25-year-old White female. She is getting an endorsement to teach high school language arts and special education. She has taught journalism, algebra, and a college preparation elective for students who will be the first in their families to go to college. Anna would like to work with 10th through 12th grade students.

Anna grew up in a racially diverse mid-size city in the Midwest, lived in a racially diverse neighborhood, and attended a racially diverse school. She had a racially diverse group of friends. Her family moved to the Pacific Northwest and lived in a neighborhood and school that she describes as very upper-middle class and very White. Most of her friends were White upper-middle-class females, although her two best friends were biracial. The elementary and high school she attended was racially similar to her neighborhood. She can only recall one teacher who was not White. As a college undergraduate, Anna had a lot more friends and teachers of color.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a 44-year-old White female. She is getting an endorsement in science and wants to teach biology. At the time of this study, Elizabeth was teaching ninth graders and "loved it," and she wants to teach high school. She recalled that while in college, she thought about becoming either a teacher or a researcher. She volunteered in the lab, which lead to a 20-year career in scientific research. During that time:

> People would say, "You'd make a great teacher." I was good at explaining things, I guess, so it was kind of always in the back of my head… 20 years [later], I went in and observed a high school [classroom] and I just fell in love with it and then decided that's

what I wanted to do. I really enjoyed being around the kids and I really enjoyed explaining my subject to them. That was part of what made me decide to be a teacher.

Elizabeth was raised in a military family and moved around the U.S. quite a bit, living and attending schools primarily on military bases. She describes the overall aggregate of the communities in which she lived as approximately 80% White, 10% Asian, and 10% Black. Elizabeth lived for several years in the Deep South, where the neighborhoods and schools were heavily segregated by race (Blacks and Whites). All of her friends when she was growing up were White, as were all of her teachers except for one Black elementary school teacher. As an undergraduate, Elizabeth had one Asian male friend and several teachers of color.

Emma

Emma is a 24-year-old White female. She is almost finished with her English endorsement and hopes to get endorsed for English Language Learners (ELL). She has a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a passion for foreign languages. She hopes to earn a second language endorsement in the near future, and to eventually teach high school English and Spanish. Emma would also like to get her social studies endorsement, which would give her job flexibility, especially considering that the school district closest to her home (and where she would eventually like to teach) does not have a humanities program. She would not be able to get a job there with only a language arts endorsement. Her dream is to teach at the high school where she lives, but she could work anywhere from sixth through 12th grade and be satisfied.

Emma was raised in a small town. She describes both her town and school system as 99% White. All of her friends and teachers were White. As an undergraduate, Emma attended community college before transferring to a large university. In both institutions, she describes her friends as mostly White. However, she also had several Asian friends. It was difficult for her

to recall the racial makeup of her undergraduate instructors, although she thinks they included both Whites and individuals of color.

Jean

Jean is a 32-year-old White female. She is getting an endorsement in general science and biology, but is currently teaching chemistry. She is also considering a chemistry endorsement. She is teaching high school but "loves middle-schoolers." Jean expresses a strong interest in teaching middle-school students, particularly to help them "in that transition period." She did some tutoring the summer prior to entering the teacher education program.

Jean grew up in a racially diverse neighborhood (White, Black, and Hispanic) but attended a charter school where most of the students and teachers were White. The majority of her friends, however, were individuals of color. As she got older, she attended schools with larger populations of students and teachers who were racial minorities. Jean describes the student population of her undergraduate institution as predominantly White, but says her circle of friends were mostly people of color. Jean describes the teacher population at her undergraduate institution as a mix of White teachers and teachers of color.

Katherine

Katherine is a 23-year-old White female. She is getting an endorsement in English language arts and theater. She has an undergraduate degree in drama. Prior to the teacher education program, Katherine was an assistant teacher at the community college she attended. She recalls her assistant teaching experience as, "really fun. It was in drama, so it was kind of right up my alley. It was super fun." Katherine would like to teach high school, but would be okay teaching middle school.

Katherine grew up in a rural town and school community that she describes as 95% White and 5% Hispanic. After a brief period of homeschooling, Katherine attended schools with few racial minority students or teachers (she recalls one teacher of color in the school that she did not have as a teacher). Other than one Chicana friend in middle school, all of Katherine's friends were White. As an undergraduate, she attended schools that were predominantly White. Her undergraduate program had more teachers of color than students of color. Most of her friends there were White.

Rachel

Rachel is a 27-year-old Chinese American female. Prior to entering the teacher education program, Rachel taught for a year in China, worked in the AmeriCorps' technology program, and worked at a non-profit Head Start program as its literacy advocate. With Head Start, Rachel worked to build family literacy programs for mostly immigrant families, many of whom did not speak or read English well. She helped these families build their literacy skills and a sense of community. She did teacher trainings and implemented a few reading programs and continues to do so as she finishes her year in the teacher education program. At the time of this study, Rachel was teaching high school chemistry. She is considering making middle-school science her preferred subject to teach.

Rachel was born in a community that was mostly Asian and Black, which had very few White people. At the age of four, her family moved to a predominantly White community and school which she describes, as "classic suburbia." Almost all of her friends and teachers were White. She moved again in sixth grade. Still in a predominantly White community and school system, her closest friends were the other Asian students ("There were like five or six of us"). Most of Rachel's teachers were White. As an undergraduate, Rachel attended a university that

was more racially diverse, as was the makeup of her friends, although most of her instructors were White.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study consisted of three interviews: (1) Initial Interviews, (2) Focus Group Interview, and (3) Follow-up Interviews. The three interviews took place over one month, spaced out over a week to 10 days. Exact dates and times were finalized once participants had been selected. In accordance with the tenets of grounded theory, the three phases of data collection in this study developed and evolved in response to data generated from previous phases: Data generated from Initial Interviews informed and generated the questions for the Focus Group Interview, which in turn informed and generated the questions for the Follow-up Interviews.

In grounded theory, intensive in-depth interviews are often used as a sound strategy for data collection (Charmaz, 2006, 2014; Hallberg, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Yin, 2006). This strategy "permits an in-depth exploration of a particular topic and goes beneath the surface of ordinary conversation" (Hallberg, 2006, p. 143). Interviews help researchers to tailor data gathering to specific areas of interest, and operationalize data triangulation (Wolcott, 2009). Interviews may also provide more honest responses about important concepts such as racism than questionnaires (Bonilla-Silva & Foreman, 2000).

Grounded theory interviewing examines and analyzes participants' life histories, details of experience, and reflection on the meaning of these experiences (Charmaz, 2006, 2007, 2014; Morse, 2007; Mruck & Gunter Mey, 2007; for similar work, see Schuman, 1982; Seidman, 2006). Questions are open-ended and build on each other (follow-up and clarification). Interviews were sequenced yet semi-structured and provided a framework for consistent and

efficient data gathering (Merriam, 2009), while still allowing for the generation of new questions and lines of inquiry contingent on participant responses (Seidman, 2006; Yin, 2006). For example, in my study I asked participants to share the racial makeup of the schools they attended as children. Dependent on how they responded, what they remember (or did not), I sometimes asked them to reflect on how those experiences might have influenced how and to what extent they thought about the role of race and racism in their future teaching practices.

Questions were generally organized to begin with descriptions (e.g., describe the racial makeup of the schools you attended) and developed to establish relationships to the issue or question (e.g., participant knowledge and awareness of race and racism). Further questions probed for opinions and feelings about the issue (e.g., "Do you think your racial identity influences how you see the world?") and explored connections to other phenomena (e.g., "What are some of the challenges around race talk in the teacher education program?") (adapted from Seidman, 2006; and Yin, 2006).

Initial and Follow-up Interviews averaged approximately one hour. The Focus Group Interview ran slightly more than two hours. Initial and Follow-up Interviews were done individually. The Focus Group Interview consisted of all six participants. All interviews were completed in person. Initial Interviews consisted of several open-ended questions about race and education, such as sharing your own schooling experiences (see Appendix C). The Focus Group Interview consisted of talking about race in teacher education (see Appendix D). Follow-up Interviews were opportunities for the study participants to build and reflect on Initial Interviews and the Focus Group Interview, as well as respond to new lines of questioning generated from their analysis (see Appendix E).

Data collection was completed between January 9, 2013 and March 8, 2013. All three phases of data collection were audio-recorded. I began scheduling the first set of interviews as soon as I had positive responses from participants. Subject participants individually emailed me with their availability to meet for the first interviews. Once a mutually agreed upon time was reached, the interviews took place in a private office on the university campus that I previously arranged. Data for Initial Interviews were collected between January 9 through 18, 2013.

Once Initial Interviews were completed and the first round of data was coded, I sent all the participants a Doodle poll to schedule a time for the Focus Group Interview. Once a time was identified, I scheduled a larger private room on the university campus. Data for the Focus Group Interview was collected on February 6, 2013. Once the Focus Group Interview was completed (and data analyzed), I emailed participants individually to meet for their second interviews, using the same protocol and office space as with the first interviews. Data for the Follow-up Interviews were collected between March 2 through 8, 2013.

Initial Interviews

Initial Interviews consisted of a set of open-ended, probing questions to elicit the study participants' life histories, experiences, knowledge, and awareness of race and racism as they pertain to education (see Appendix C). For example, I asked subjects to reflect on the racial diversity of the schools they attended. Initial Interview questions were adapted from scholarship that utilized interview questions on life histories and experiences (Seidman, 2006), and on issues related to race, racism, and education (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Neville et al, 2000).

Focus Group Interview

All six participants met together for the Focus Group Interview (see Appendix D). The purpose was to ask questions which continued and solicited deeper responses from the

participants than the Initial Interviews. Participants were prompted to discuss the challenges of race talk in the teacher education program, including issues, tensions, and situations (including in student teaching school sites). Initially, I had planned for the participants to respond to a hypothetical challenge regarding race and education—they were to be asked to construct a unit on teaching about race and racism. They were to describe three to four major themes or concepts (*What* are you teaching?), provide a rationale for teaching each theme (*Why* are these important to teach?), provide an example of a teaching activity, strategy, or approach for each theme (*How* exactly would you teach them?). Here, the participants would have been asked to consider all aspects of the challenge, asked to consider alternative perspectives to the challenge (including that of the students in their scenario as well as their fellow study participants), determine potential strategies with dealing with the challenges, determine the implications/constraints (e.g., "backlash") of their strategy, and how they might respond in kind. The participants would then have reflected on both the content of their unit planning and the process of their engagement as a group. Here, the Focus Group Interview would have considered potential challenges to implementing the unit (e.g., student demographics, resistant parents, lack of knowledge to teach the topic), and considered possibilities of teaching the unit in light of the challenges.

The original Focus Group Interview prompt was modified in response to data generated from Initial Interviews to more accurately and adequately reflect the purpose of the study. First, although subject participants were in secondary education, they did not all teach the same subject area, making the possibility of collectively creating a curriculum unit difficult. Second, data generated from Initial Interviews included several experiences within the teacher education program that I thought best to address within the Focus Group. For example, during the Initial Interviews, several participants discussed an incident surrounding a coffee club for teacher

education students of color. I revisited this incident with participants during the Focus Group Interview (the coffee club incident is discussed in Chapter 4). Third, and perhaps most important, data from Initial Interviews revealed that all subject-participants, regardless of their individual racialized lenses, were dealing with colorblind ideology in education even if they themselves consciously tried to work against it (in many cases that was one of the central challenges). If this research were attempting to better understand some of the challenges and possibilities of race talk in teacher education, then it was necessary for me to adapt the Focus Group Interview format and questions accordingly.

Prior to the beginning of the Focus Group Interview, I wrote the letters A, B, C, D, E, and F on pieces of paper. After the participants all sat down, I gave them each the piece of paper that was designated by their code as given in the first interview. Then, at the beginning of the focus group recording, I ask each participant to state her alpha code designation (I later deleted this from the audio-recording and transcription to protect their identities). The papers remained during the focus group, giving participants opportunities to refer to one another by letter rather than by their real names. This way, I was able to help distinguish voices when I went back to transcribe the focus group while still protecting their individual and collective privacy. By this time I had gotten familiar enough with the participants that it was possible to distinguish their voices on an audio-recording.

Follow-up Interviews

The Follow-up Interviews (see Appendix E) provided opportunities for the participants to make meaning of their experiences in the Initial Interviews and Focus Group Interview, particularly as it pertained to their future teaching related to issues of race. The purpose of the Follow-up Interviews was to generate greater theoretical understanding of data (and subsequent

generated theory) from the Initial Interviews and the Focus Group Interview. For example, the data generated a category "dealing with race talk". Follow-up Interviews asked participants more probing questions in this category, such as challenges and possibilities of teaching a lesson, or analyzing instructional materials for stereotypes. Consequently, the Follow-up Interview questions, while sketched out to some degree, could not be finalized until codes, concepts, and categories were generated from Initial Interviews and the Focus Group Interview. For Follow-up Interviews, I used the same process of memo-writing and transcribing interviews individually and then collectively. Next, I used the same process of comparing and contrasting data generated from Follow-up Interviews with previously generated and analyzed data. Consistent themes and patterns emerged to strengthen hypothetical categories and their properties, generating the study's theoretical propositions.

Data Analysis

After completion of the three data phases, this study's data sources include 13 semi-structured, in-depth interviews (totaling more than 15 hours of audio and more than 700 transcribed pages) and researcher memos (totaling approximately 300 pages). In accordance with the tenets of grounded theory, in order to strengthen connections (and, more importantly, generate potential categories, properties, and questions) between what occurs at each session and each phase of data collection, it was important to transcribe and analyze each element of the data as soon as possible. While more in-depth analysis is provided in Chapter 4 of this study, I will briefly discuss the process here.

Each interview was audio recorded. Each audio recording was transcribed within 24 hours of data collection. I listened to each session on my laptop with headphones to block out any outside noise or distraction. After each transcript was initially typed, I listened to the audio-

recording a second time, but now with the typed transcript in front of me to ensure reliability and validity. The second listening proved more slow-going and time-consuming than the first listening, but was invaluable in checking for errors and clarifications.

Coding and memo-writing continued throughout all phases of the study (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Charmaz, 2006, 2007, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Corresponding transcripts and memos were then compared, generating codes, concepts, and categories from and between each individual session and phase. Data generated from each Initial Interview were then compared, generating categories and properties from which to construct hypotheses for the Focus Group Interview. The same process of generating and corroborating data used for Initial Interviews was subsequently applied to the Focus Group Interview. Next, findings from the Initial Interviews and the Focus Group Interview were compared and contrasted, serving the process of generating theoretical propositions. Meaning-making questions were in turn generated for Follow-up Interviews. Analytic memos for each participant were triangulated with emergent codes and categories that were present across the data (including access to agents of racial understanding throughout their life courses, as well as individual responses to common shared experiences like the "Coffee Talk" scenario).

The constant comparative method (CCM) was used throughout data analysis to (1) compare data and generate categories; (2) integrate categories; (3) delimit the emerging theory; and, ultimately, (4) write the theoretical propositions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Parker & Gehrke, 1986). Applying the CCM, data points were revisited. Emergent categories and properties were reshaped. Theoretical propositions were developed. Categories and properties that fit within the dimensions of the theoretical propositions were further examined and integrated. Categories and

properties that did not fit within the dimensions of the delimited theory were excluded from further analysis. Two examples of how the CCM was applied to this study are presented here.

CCM Example One: Walking on Egg Shells

Data comparison generated several initial categories. One such initial category was "feelings about race talk". Throughout data collection, participants shared or exhibited a range of emotions to describe *how they felt* when race talk occurred in their teacher education program. These feelings included *anger*, *anxiety*, *confusion*, *discomfort*, *fear*, *frustration*, *guilt*, *irritation*, *nervousness*, *regret*, *safety*, *shame*, *tension*, and *uncertainty*. Transcript and memo review established that *uncertainty*, *discomfort*, and *fear* were by far the most cited or observed of these feelings. A second initial category, "dealing with race talk," accounted for how participants shared or exhibited *how they responded* to race talk, throughout their life span and, more specifically, in their teacher education program. The data generated *avoidance* and *shutting down* as the most frequent ways in which the participants responded to race talk.

Revisiting the data during category integration, I found that these two initial categories (Feelings about Race Talk and Dealing with Race Talk) were inextricably linked together. The primary ways in which participants described their feelings about race talk (*uncertainty*, *discomfort*, and *fear*) were often immediately followed by describing how they dealt with race talk (*avoidance* and *shutting down*). Katherine, for example, discussed how being uncertain whether or not she, as a White woman, should talk about race, often led to her avoiding race talk when it happened. Three of the six participants, without prompting, used the phrase, "walking on egg shells" to describe how their feelings about race talk informed how they dealt with race talk. Thus, a new category emerged: "Walking on Egg Shells: Feeling and Dealing with Race Talk",

with more refined and connected properties (*uncertainty*, *discomfort*, *fear*, *avoidance*, and *shutting down*).

As other categories emerged, so too, did central theoretical propositions about colorblind ideology, race talk, and teacher education. The category of Walking on Egg Shells: Feeling and Dealing with Race Talk, aided in the development of the emerging theory and other categories. For example, in tandem, the categories of Feeling and Dealing with Race Talk and Racial Socialization indicated how colorblind ideology shaped participants' (and their peers') knowledge of race and racism, and how they should engage with race talk in their teacher education program.

CCM Example Two: The Paradox of Race

Another initial category went through several iterations before being set aside. Several participants shared what I initially coded as "the Paradox of Race". This category included (1) participants' struggles with being conscious of their students' racial backgrounds while also considering them as individuals; (2) where they—as teachers—should focus when it came to racial identity development (on themselves, their peers, their students); (3) how to involve students of color in classroom discussion without asking these students to speak on behalf of their particular racial group or all students of color; and (4) how to leverage the knowledge and experiences of students of color without positioning them as "experts" or monolithic representatives of an entire racial group.

While potentially theoretically promising, there was not enough data from this study to warrant further consideration as a category. Data was limited and data connections were threadbare. Assumptions about the data and descriptions of the category were grounded far less

in the actual data and far more in my own conjecture. Although this category may prove significant in another study, it did not meet the criteria for further consideration in this one.

Summary

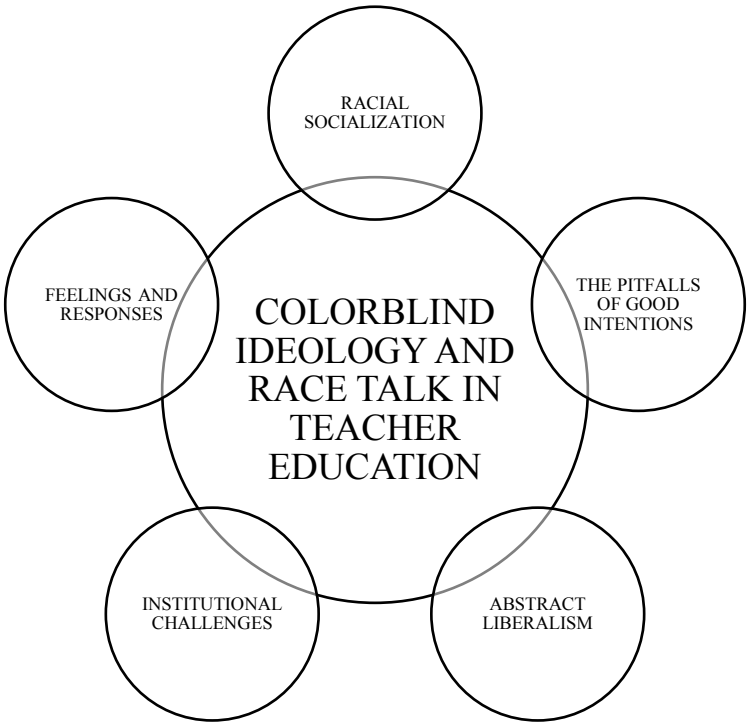
This chapter begins with an overview of grounded theory methodology and how it is used in this study, including a detailed description of the philosophy and the concepts. This chapter then provides a detailed description of participant selection and characteristics. It also describes how the data was collected with the Initial, Focus Group, and Follow-Up Interviews. This chapter concludes with a description of data analysis procedures and strategies, including the processes of coding and memo-writing, a brief discussion of emergent categories, and examples of how the constant comparative method was used to generate the study's findings. Chapter 4 reports the study's findings in full detail and maps out the theoretical propositions drawn from the data.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the major findings of the study. The data seem to indicate that colorblind ideology was present and influential throughout the lifespan of the study participants. It informed and shaped how they thought, felt, and discussed race and racism. I present my findings as five major themes or domains: (1) Racial Socialization; (2) Feelings and Responses; (3) The Pitfalls of Good Intentions; (4) Abstract Liberalism; and (5) Institutional Challenges. These themes are presented as Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1. Themes of Colorblind Ideology and Race Talk in Teacher Education



Theme One: Racial Socialization

Theme One is the influence of colorblind ideology on the racial socialization of study participants. For all participants in this study, colorblind ideology limited their opportunities to engage adequate and accurate information about different racial groups, what racism is, and why it exists. These limited opportunities included examination of their own racial identities, awareness of the depth and breadth of racism, and experiences that might provide stereotype countering information. Racial segregation patterns limited the participants' interracial interaction; thus a relationship emerged between one's racial socialization and their lens for thinking, feeling, and talking about race and racism.

Defining Race and Racism

Participants had markedly different definitions of race and racism. Many of these definitions were inadequate and inaccurate. When asked to define race, all participants provided different responses. For Jean, race is a "combination between skin color and culture and family origin. Not easy to define." For Elizabeth, race is a "social thing." For Emma, race is "skin color or country of origin." For Katherine, race is "Whew. Technically… nationality. Can't define it in one sentence. I don't use race much because it's not very specific, and in a way, incorrect. I use ethnicity more… I avoid race because it has a connotation of negativity and oppression, whereas, ethnicity is a word that more appreciates and celebrates backgrounds… I never really thought about this until now." These definitions of race, all different from one another, all inaccurate and inadequate to varying degrees, highlight several challenges: confusion regarding the parameters of race and related social identity concepts (e.g., ethnicity or nationality).the emotional difficulty of race talk, and feeling the need to "get it right").

When asked to define racism, all participants provided different responses. Most, however, defined racism at the individual or interpersonal level, failing to account for the institutional and structural aspects of racism. For Katherine, racism is "any preconceived judgment or treatment of someone based on, actually, based on appearance. It's not even based on race or ethnicity. It's based on appearance." For Emma, racism is "prejudice in the extreme or negative." She reveals that she has had limited real world interaction with different races, and that most of her knowledge about racism is academic (and from the teacher education program).

Anna initially struggles to define racism, but begins to say what it is not, using ethnicity as an example. She concludes that racism is "discrimination against somebody because of some actual visible difference." Rachel admits that she is still working out her definition of racism and that she does not necessarily know how to define the concept. In all cases, participants provided narrow, limited definitions of race and racism.

The variance, adequacy, and accuracy of responses may be understood in the context of colorblind ideology. Failing to account for the institutional and structural aspects of racism, while determining that racism consists primarily of individual, overt acts, reveals to how the language and nature of race talk has been reduced to simplified, equality rhetoric.

Different Spaces and Places

Study participants discussed the racial segregation of their schools and communities. Elizabeth said:

> Officially, our school was integrated, but it was like we lived completely different lives. Outside of school I did not see… you did not socialize with Black people and outside of school Black people did not socialize with White people.

Anna described two different experiences. Growing up in Denver, Colorado, she lived in a racially diverse neighborhood, including "Hispanic families, African-American families, and a few Asian families." When her family moved to the Pacific Northwest, it was to a predominantly White neighborhood. Anne shared how moving to a more White space felt disconcerting to her, although she did not have the language or understanding at the time to examine why.

Emma described her high school population as "easily 99% White. All the teachers I had were White. All the friends I have are White." Emma had a nearly exclusive historical interaction with Whites only, including schools, friends, neighbors, and authority figures. Katherine describes her town as "95% White, with a small but increasing Latino population." Two key formative experiences for Katherine indicate a shift in her racial awareness, especially in contrast to Emma's: volunteering on a Native American reservation and a close Latina elementary school friend. These two experiences, according to Katherine, helped her to counter the racist stereotypes she often heard at home. Like Emma, Katherine had a nearly exclusive historical interaction with Whites only, yet she also had access to identity, awareness, and stereotype countering information. Emma's and Katherine's different racial socialization experiences indicate the importance of stereotype countering information on racial awareness.

Messages about Race and Racism from Home and School Experiences

Most of the participants struggled to determine when they first learned about race and racism. All said that conversations on race and racism—at home and at school—were usually very surface-level and superficial. Jean, a White person with people of color in her extended family, added that the lack of exposure to racial minorities *and* the lack of exposure to race talk contributed to how she learned to think, feel, and discuss race matters. She described family

members encouraging silence whenever she tried to talk about race, even when she was explicitly responding to a racist or bigoted comment made by a family member.

Anna, Elizabeth, and Emma shared that they did not discuss anything related to race or racism until elementary school. Even then, they added, it was a simple, sanitary approach to the civil rights movement where everyone came together, held hands, and the world became racially harmonious. All participants determined, in retrospect, that they were taught that the Civil Rights Movement "fixed" racism, and that "we all lived in peace."

Elizabeth shared several racist incidents from her schooling experiences:

> White and Black kids did not interact or if they did it was always negative… We rode a bus [to school] that was mostly White, and when we went to pick up the few, there was five or six Black kids that rode the bus, people would start yelling, 'clear a bench for [racial epithet]' and that's pretty explicit. As for classes… they did track them by race… the top classes were all White students.

Lessons in school were reinforced at home. Elizabeth had witnessed several explicitly racist incidents (on the school bus), and noticed more subtle forms of racism (school tracking). Elizabeth said that, "If we came home and tried to talk about race, if we said, 'Wow, we learned that once Blacks and Whites… were different and now they are the same,' my parents would be like, 'that's right… Blacks and Whites are equal.'" Messages like this, over time, encouraged Elizabeth to adopt a colorblind approach to making sense of and discuss racial issues.

Emma talked about learning in school about Martin Luther King's childhood story about not being able to play with a White friend, and how school and home reinforced racism as a matter of the past:

> [We learned that racism] happened in the '60s… which is like forever ago. That's not how things are anymore. We had Martin Luther King Day, and Black History Month, and we read books that were from authors of all different races, but it was just kind of like, "Well, this is the curriculum." There was never any emphasis on complexity.

Emma added that school and home cultivated a "utopian blind," where the message delivered was that "things used to be horrible but now they're so much better." For Emma, racism was taught as something that happened in the past rather than something that happens now, stripping away structure and context, while reducing racism to individual, explicit, intended acts.

Rachel grew up as a racial minority in predominantly White spaces. In contrast to the other study participants, Rachel could directly speak to experiences with her family members being the targets of racism (e.g., friends asking "why her house always smelled like Chinese food"; her uncle being called a racial epithet).

Rachel was more relatively race conscious. However, she still received messages from school and home that colorblindness was panacea to racism; that, if we truly desired racial harmony and equity, then "not seeing color" was ultimately how we should interact with one another in the world. Her family members would explain instances of racial discrimination as mere ignorance, determining that no ill intent was meant. Rachel described this response even as she also shared how her uncle developed a great deal of anger and resentment towards Whites because of his experiences with racial discrimination.

Jean discussed how colorblind ideology was central to how her teachers talked to her about race, and how problematic colorblind ideology is for race talk in schools today:

> They would say things like, "Oh, well, I don't know, and I don't describe people by their race." Like so that whole color blind thing, right? And thinking like that makes me very

> progressive, but me knowing what I know [now] about color blindness, that's not the right perspective, but it's with the kids, and it's with the teachers. It's there, and I don't know that it's an easy thing to address. Because what do you say in that moment? I just… I don't know.

In reflecting on how she learned about race and racism, Anna described colorblind ideology as a "horrible form of indoctrination". She argued that it creates a false narrative about what racism is and what it does, and limits the possibilities of engaging racism for justice.

Theme Two: Walking on Egg Shells: Feeling and Dealing with Race Talk

Theme Two is feeling and dealing with race talk. Participants described race talk in their teacher education program as fraught with uncertainty, discomfort, and fear. Participants discussed how the complexities of race talk can lead to discomfort. This discomfort may contribute to people not necessarily understanding what you mean when you say certain words or think about them in complex ways (e.g., Does race talk perpetuate stereotypes or "hold up the mirror?").

Participants discussed how race and racism can be difficult to discuss because of cognitive and affective complexities. These complexities often lead to misunderstandings. The nuance and complexity of terms, how they are intended and how they are heard and interpreted can lead to avoidance and shutting down in response to race talk. Three of the six study participants used the phrase, "walking on egg shells," to describe these kinds of interactions. The participants described avoidance and shutting down as two common responses to the discomfort that result from talking about race.

Walking on Egg Shells: Uncertainty, Discomfort, and Fear

Anna and Katherine discussed how their peers are reluctant to discuss race and racism for fear of saying the wrong thing, offending anyone, or being perceived as racist. Anna stated that some of her peers avoid race talk so they will not be perceived as "bad people." She stated that, "I feel like the eggshell walking… the more that I'm in this program the more that people around me get, like, very careful, the more I just want to be like, "It's stupid. Let's talk." Katherine added that while race talk is difficult, it is necessary:

> Race talk is scary, especially scary as a White person because we're part of the dominant culture… [but] it's a conversation that needs to happen… Sometimes it's like walking on egg shells a little bit. You've got to get it just right. It's hard.

Emma stated that her experiences with race talk in the program were new to her. She described feeling uncomfortable with the topics even when she wanted to engage:

> I've conscientiously caught myself being very cautious in my phrasing, withholding a lot of the thoughts that I'm thinking even in response to something that's being said in response to me… Very kind of walking on egg shells because I have seen responses, reactions, or body language even that has said that I'm in a dangerous place.

Of the six participants in this study, Emma was by far the most unfamiliar with, uncomfortable with, and resistant to race talk. She described the way race has been discussed in the teacher education program as a "very forced and uncomfortable topic." Emma admits her relative ignorance with race and racism, but finds fault with multiple aspects of the teacher education program—including professors, peers, and curriculum—for not understanding her particular needs and concerns:

> I wanted to know more about [race] but felt like I should be guilty or shameful wanting to know more about it… There's just something about the way it was approached to me that made me feel like I was in the wrong. And because of that start-off, through this program, I feel like I've become a lot more cautious about how I say things, and in front of whom, and about what, and just very "egg-shelled" "tip-toey" like, "Oh, my God what if someone repeats what I said that way." I feel like it's highly explosive… and because of that I think I'm very hesitant to enter in the conversations because I'm so overly concerned about being politically correct and kind of walking on eggshells and I didn't even realize there was so many people I could offend. That would mean that I'm offending them without meaning to because I didn't even know that I could. I think that it makes it tricky especially if I'm talking to a person of color where it's like I'm just trying to ask the question but I sound completely racist. Totally unintentionally. I think that's my biggest inhibition is I'm aware of my ignorance. I don't want other people to be aware of it because if they're aware of it then it looks like judgment.

Emma felt limited and frustrated by her own ignorance about race and racism, uncomfortable with how race talk made her feel (including about herself), and fearful that what she said or how she said it could and would be misinterpreted to her detriment and to others. On the one hand, she was aware of her ignorance on race matters, expressed a need to improve her content and pedagogical knowledge, and was genuinely concerned with not wanting to cause harm to others. On the other hand, her desires not to be misunderstood or judged inhibited her from fully and authentically engaging in race talk.

Katherine shared how she worked through some of her initial discomfort in race talk with her own students:

> The first big lesson of my unit was on the "N-word" because they're reading "Fences" and I have classes of seniors, so it's cool because we can have really great discussions... I've never taught that before so I was terrified. I was very uncomfortable, and my students were just like, "Oh, whatever. Yeah, we know; we've talked about this; we've read other books with this in it." They were just totally chill the whole time… they had this attitude of like, "We got this." Toward the end of the lesson I purposely said, instead of the "N" word I just said it, because we just talked about how this is a social context, this is an academic setting, and during the reading of this book, we can say this word and it has a different connotation than if you were to say it in a different context. When I said it, they kind of got a little bit uncomfortable, and I was like, "Good! Finally!" They were just so, "We're fine! We're fine!" Then I say it, and they're like, "Oh … We're going to be saying that word?" They finally got uncomfortable which I think is good. I think they should feel a little bit uncomfortable.

By confronting her discomfort with race talk, Katherine was able to facilitate more meaningful and authentic learning opportunities with her students. The students felt comfortable with the use of the "N-Word," in everyday use, and on a surface level. Katherine, however, was able to push their comfort levels by incorporating social context and connotation, and by actually saying the word. Katherine reflects that the lesson succeeded, in large part, because she cultivated an authentic space for discussion.

Avoidance

Avoidance was a common strategy to respond to race talk in the teacher education program. Participants stated that several of their peers—predominantly White students—often found ways to avoid race talk. Avoidance occurred even when good intentions were present (e.g.,

not wanting to cause harm to others or a desire for inclusivity). Elizabeth noted that confronting the discomfort of racial stereotypes (e.g., "all Asians are great at math" or "Blacks are lazy") is often the cause of avoidance. Katherine avoids the word race, replacing it with ethnicity: "I feel like the word, race, has now become, it has a connotation of negativity and oppression, whereas ethnicity is a word that more appreciates and celebrates backgrounds." Jean noted that many of her peers struggled with identifying proper terminology or speaking without having lived experiences, leading to avoiding race talk altogether.

Emma added that her perceptions about responses, reactions, or body language led her to avoid sharing her perspectives on race and racism:

> not because I don't think that I have valid questions or valid insight, maybe not insight but observation, but more so because I think that the way that might be perceived [as a White person] would be very strongly negative and have a lot of backlash to it.

Emma elaborated that many people would not be privy to this kind of information or way of thinking because they never had to. Some of the discomfort, even for those who have begun to understand that race and racism are deep and complex, is in explaining it to others, particularly when the individuals with whom you are interacting have not directly experienced racism themselves. There is a feeling of responsibility mixed with uncertainty and discomfort about how to proceed. The combination of complexity, uncertainty, discomfort, and racial identity often leads to avoiding race talk altogether.

Anna also believes that it is easier to avoid race talk with her fellow teachers than with her students. She stated that it is very important for teachers to talk about race with each other:

> I think that teachers need to talk about it with each other, too, because there's this issue of positioning, and you always occupy a certain position in the classroom, and I think it's

> really easy to be in kind of a bubble and not think about you as a teacher from any other perspective. It's only through engaging in actual authentic dialogue with your peers that you can kind of really have to look critically at your practice and fundamentally look at your beliefs and how they may or may not be playing out in the classroom.

Several study participants shared an incident in the program with a panel talk comprising mostly parents of color in the local school district. As the parents shared the needs of their children, they expressed concerns about racial bias, Eurocentric curriculum, and the challenges of White teachers teaching students of color. Many of the White students reportedly avoided the expressed concerns, instead complaining about being attacked for being White.

Rachel stated that the teacher education program is "very good at… even complicit in" avoiding race talk. According to Rachel, and supported by several of her peers, the teacher education program was excellent at offering general principles but limited in providing clear, concrete strategies or cultivating a space where discomfort was allowed:

> Sometimes, with certain things, it's like, what do you mean by that? How do I do that? Show me what that means, and I don't feel like they… there is not a lot of great examples of how that's actually done. Especially in different subject areas. I've been trying to in chemistry. It's just like, "How do I do this?" Then a lot of the approach is trying to get that White privilege out in the open, without actually getting it out in the open, like they are still trying to side-step some stuff, and it doesn't actually really get discussed… Professors will say, "Oh, we want to call people out when they say things like this, but I don't want them to feel uncomfortable, and I don't want them to get defensive and shut down and then they are not open to it."

Rachel stated that the teacher education professors were often reluctant to engage in more than surface level race talk. She added that the combination of surface level discourse and professors' reluctance became frustrating to the point where she, too, began avoiding race talk in the program.

Shutting Down

The response of shutting down is related to avoidance. Anna discusses shutting down in response to the cultural incompetence of her peers:

> I had to come up with another teacher candidate [in my program] at my school on a regular basis. It's… cultural incompetence is how I would put it. Just like saying things about students, especially students of color from a perspective of a middle-class White male with no thought to why things might be a certain way. Saying things like, "Oh my gosh, Students X, Y, and Z are just so lazy." They're all Hispanic students. Stuff like that, my blood boils. I feel so angry and hostile. I basically just like shut down and that's all I can do. Things like… "I understand these parents don't really seem to care about their kids that much." I mean it's at the point where I just like, "I can't talk to this person ever."

Emma described shutting down when race talk happened in class out of fear of reprisal or judgment because of her Whiteness: "I feel like any conversation that talks about race, if I say something it'll be racist because I have no background, because I have no authority, and because I'm White."

Participants also discussed how the racial demographics of the Teacher Education Program aided in folks shutting down. Given that there were relatively few people of color in the program, they were often asked by their peers to speak on behalf of their specific racial identity;

or on behalf of people of color in general. For both Rachel, a person of color, and Anna, a self-described White ally, this produced discomfort not with race talk per se, but in how race talk was implemented (i.e., asking people of color to speak for all people of color, and, in general, be the "experts" on race matters). Rachel and Anna describe feeling very uncomfortable as a result, and needing to shut down and no longer participate in classroom discussions.

Theme Three: Coffee Talk: Race and Abstract Liberalism

Theme Three is abstract liberalism. A central frame of colorblind ideology, abstract liberalism (Bonilla Silva, 2006) involves using equality or morality rhetoric to justify, dilute, or ignore racial inequality. It relies on equality rhetoric devoid of context (e.g., "All Lives Matter"; "I don't see color"; "I treat my students as individuals"). Abstract liberalism involves using principles and ideas associated with liberalism—such as fairness—in an abstract matter to explain racial matters.

A Thursday evening coffee club—specifically for students of color in the teacher education program—became a major source of conflict and misunderstanding. Intended as a safe, authentic space for teacher education students of color, it was interpreted by several White teacher education students as being exclusionary, divisive, and "reverse racism". Perspectives on the coffee club were independently raised by nearly every participant in the study during all three interview phases.

Emma shared how she initially heard about the coffee club from her Latina friend. Emma recalls being very upset about it:

> That's racist. White people aren't invited. That's reverse racism in the traditional use of the phrase…There somehow had been an email list that exclusively invited people of

color… I feel that's a disservice to both sides to have that being an exclusive club… Don't tell the White people that we've got our secret club.

Jean, a self-described White ally, shared overhearing a conversation where another White person found out about the coffee club and asked a table full of people of color that were going to the meeting, "Why? Why do you need something different?" Jean stated that there was not a lot of personal reflection by the questioner, including why the question was asked in the first place. She adds that the question resulted in some genuine tension and discomfort.

Rachel, one of the people of color at the table, adds her perspective:

> I was talking to one of my friends, who is also Chinese, and I go, "Are you going to the coffee thing?" My other friend he's half-Black, half-Mexican and I was like, "Are you guys going?" They were like, "Yes, yes, we're going to go." There's another girl who is very White. She grew up in a very middle-class White family and neighborhood and she turns to me and she's like, "What is that you are going to?" I was like, "Oh great," because we've had other encounters with her that weren't so good. I said, "It's a minority coffee thing, we just get together and talk." She's like, "Why do *you guys* get that?" I was like, "Um." I really just didn't know how to answer it. I was like, "Well, it's just something for us to have since we talk about race a lot in this program, but it's always from the White perspective and we kind of need another avenue to talk about things. We just need something different." She's like, "What do you *mean* you need something different?" I was just like, "Oh, I don't know how to deal with this." Sometimes I just feel like it's not my job to teach others about race. I think I just walked away and left my other friend to continue answering.

Several phenomena are worth considering here. Conflict and misunderstanding about the coffee club resulted, in part, from different perspectives on how we think about race and what we know about racism. For many of the White students, there is an emphasis on abstract equality, treating everyone the same, and not considering the larger social, historical, cultural, and political contexts within which race is embedded. Students of color needed a venue like the coffee club in part because of the experiences with the perspectives of their White peers.

Moreover, Rachel's frustrations with not knowing "how to deal with this" is an example of the constant taxation placed on people of color to be the experts about race and racism, including sharing their experiences with Whites. This taxation often includes White people denying said experiences, leading to people of color avoiding the conversations and confrontations. Rachel added:

> I'm one of the more vocal people of color, but it always feels like me and my friend—who is the one Black male in the program—are the ones who always have to speak up. There's times where something happens and we're taken aback and we'll look at each other across the room. We'll do that like you take it. No you take it. No you take it. Then it comes to a point though when also where people put up a wall if it's just the same people doing it over and over again. It turns into, "Oh it's just them playing the race card. It's not really an issue." You try to point out to someone what they just said or did was racist and then they'll be, "oh, you're just being sensitive", because, you know, you are a [racial] minority.

During the focus group interviews, participants revisited their thoughts and experiences about the coffee club. Of the six participants in this study, Emma was the only one to initially

have issues with the coffee club. During a portion of the second interview, the other study participants helped Emma to process her thoughts and feelings.

> I realized how defensive I was about that. I was trying to analyze it, and I still haven't come up with a really good justification for my reaction, but I think part of it might have been jealousy, because I so desperately wanted to know how to discuss this issue and all of the experts are discussing the issue, who have personal experience and have inside information and have lived it. I've only ever seen my own race's life, and I've only ever grown up around a White community, and everything that I've discussed about this has been through a textbook, usually by a dead author, or a very old author, and it felt incredibly removed. It was never real and authentic, and I'm going, "I mean I want to hear this discussion, I want to be a part of this conversation and know how to talk about it, even if I don't get to say anything. I was very curious, and… I don't necessarily know how to analyze it. I'm not hung up on it or pissed off about it, but it was something that was kind of a moment for me, of, "That was a strong reaction. Why?" How come I can't still figure out why it was such a strong reaction?
>
> I do recognize that part of it was the way it was introduced to me sounded like it was meant to be secretive, and I'm fairly certain that was not the case. The way it was introduced made it feel like a very exclusive club. I'm extremely aware that that was not at all the intention for it, and that was not at all the purpose. That it has absolutely nothing to do with that, and I was totally feelings-hurt, little child about the situation, but I'm hung up on how my reaction was so strong and why I can't figure that out, I think. Why just people of color? This is like the biggest issue that I want to talk about. Why do you all get to go and have your little talk about it? Can I just listen?

Abstract and Experience

All participants to varying degrees believed that their racial backgrounds influence how they have experienced the world and found value in understanding how their racial identities matter. For Jean:

> My race is part of how people see me and treat me, and those are my experiences, so that's how I develop my view of the world. I think it's easier sometimes to see how race affects how other people see the world. It's really hard to think about how it affects how I see the world.

Anna reflects on how, even as she has come into some degree of consciousness about what racism is and what it does, she and others who have never directly experienced racism "can be part of the problem," particularly when thinking and talking about it in abstract terms:

> I didn't even grow up thinking about racism being an issue until I got to high school and a really wanted to take it on and fight the man, fight the institutions that were keeping people down. That's when I started to abstractly conceptualize race but I still didn't think of it in terms of my own experiences at all. That didn't happen until probably college that it became less of an abstraction and more of a "look at how this happens". I think that if you just do the abstract and never make the connections, then it's too easy to just avoid things that are uncomfortable. If we just think about these big abstract concepts and we never have to relate to them, they never become issues that impact us. They just become these big ambiguous things. At the same time, if you only think about your personal experience and you never think about the bigger picture, it's too easy to disregard everything that's happening on a wider scale. You have to, I think, walk the line between the two.

Rachel connects racial socialization experiences to the dynamics of interracial interaction on race talk in the teacher education program:

> White people in the program are talking about racism for the first time whereas people of color… we live it every day. There's not one moment that I don't live with the experience of someone who looks different from everyone else. I think that my experiences are very different and I think they're very different from someone who is Black, someone who is Latino. We all have different experiences, but *live* those every day.

Here, Jean, Anna, and Rachel reveal one of the paradoxes of race talk under colorblind ideology: the line between the abstract and the experiential. Abstract approaches influence limited understanding—and thus limited conversations—about race and racism. Staying in the abstract (read: intellectual) allows individuals to avoid personal connections and feelings such as discomfort around race talk, while, perhaps ironically, allowing individuals to engage race and racism on an individual—not institutional or structural—level (certainly with respect to the ways in which race and racism are experienced by others). In the context of colorblind ideology, both Anna, a self-identified White ally, and Rachel, a person of color with race and racism as part of her lived experience, must contend with race discourse that avoids, individualizes, and limits the value of experiential knowledge.

Theme Four: The Pitfalls of Good Intentions

Theme Four is the Pitfalls of Good Intentions, wherein good, perhaps even anti-racist intentions still can and do reproduce racist outcomes. In several instances, both the study participants and the teacher education program that they discussed reified racism while "coming from a good place." Well-meaning participant efforts to explain or make sense of racial

inequalities often perpetuated racial and cultural stereotypes. Well-intended programmatic efforts to educate White teacher education students and give voice to teacher education students of color further placed White teacher education student needs and interests at the center, while further marginalizing and ostracizing teacher education students of color.

Asking students of color to speak on behalf of their race or of all students of color is one way that the Pitfalls of Good Intentions manifested in the teacher education program. Several participants shared an incident that occurred during their adolescent development class. During a classroom conversation, one of their fellow students said, "We've been hearing a lot from White people. I'd like to hear from anyone of African and Asian descent." Anna and Elizabeth recalled the entire room going silent in response.

Anna and Rachel noted that their peer's statement, although well-intended, effectively tokenized the people of color in the room, perpetuated the expectations that people of color are race and racism experts (and should serve as Whites' teachers thereof), and reinforced racial power dynamics. Rachel stated how she and her fellow teacher education students of color are "tired of being framed as the experts."

Regarding how racial power dynamics were being reproduced in their teacher education classroom, Jean asked, "What does it mean, as a White person, to say, 'People of color, there's the floor. It was mine to give. Now you may have it.'"" In the context of colorblind ideology, the aforementioned White student who asked to hear from the students of color less likely to be aware of how he was reproducing such racial power dynamics, and yet they were reproduced. Moreover, the majority of the class failed to respond to or constructively intervene "in the moment" either because they have been conditioned to avoid race talk, or, in the case of many people of color, simply tired of talking about it with White people on such an introductory and

surface level. For the participants in this study who experienced this particular incident, there was recognition that the ways in which race talk occurred in their teacher education program was a "real issue."

One of the specific ways in which colorblind ideology operates even when teachers have a strong racialized lens is when they are discussing racial issues. In discussing some of the challenges for race and education, Elizabeth unintentionally perpetuates racial stereotypes. Elizabeth states that one challenge is that "certain cultures don't value education." Elizabeth frames her response as coming from a "good place" and wanting to "help" those in need.

Although well-intended, Elizabeth exhibits a form of cultural racism, framing the onus on particular racial minority group rather than the larger social structures and forces that perpetuate racial inequality. The stereotype that certain cultures do not value education is deeply rooted in ideas of who and what groups are and are not structurally acculturated or assimilated. Further, it indicates a "savior mentality" rather than understanding one's own positionality in a racialized system. Without this context, Elizabeth perpetuates racial stereotypes while attempting to work for racial equality.

The pitfalls of good intentions were manifested by the small number of teacher education students of color in the program and teacher education professors' efforts toward equity. This challenge arose with respect to curriculum, to instruction, and to student teaching placement. A significant portion of several course readings directly addressed White privilege. While efforts to engage all students to understand the role and function of White privilege in schools and society might in and of itself be viewed as a move towards equity, by placing the emphasis on the learning of the White teacher education students, the few teacher education students of color often felt as though the readings failed to consider their own needs and interests, even with

respect to engaging in race and racism. Much of the race and racism literature used barely mentioned teachers of color, except for an occasional paragraph. Consequently, the efforts to address White privilege reinforced it.

A related challenge resulted from how teacher education students were placed during small group work. Study participants recalled several instances where teacher education professors intentionally placed students of color in separate groups while doing in-class small group work; the intent being to give these students of color voice in their respective groups. One outcome of this was that it effectively marginalized those students within those groups, and prohibited collaboration and their voices as a collective—at least in the short term while group work was happening.

Jean discussed how the teacher education program's student teaching placements perpetuated racial inequities even though the placements were intended to be racially equitable. The program ensured that teacher education students of color were first placed in inner-city schools before the rest of the cohort. According to Jean, the intent was to increase the likelihood of role models for students of color. However, in doing so, it controlled and limited the options for the teacher education students of color. One issue, according to Jean, is that the program was trying to show the world, "look how diverse we are" (when perception matters more than reality). Jean raised the issue of whether the teacher education program was exploiting its teachers of color.

Emma and Katherine both struggled with not wanting to perpetuate racial stereotypes as they attempted to be culturally responsive teachers. Both raise the challenge of how the teacher education program might utilize the knowledge and perspectives of teacher education students of color without tokenizing them. Emma discussed watching some of her teacher education

professors struggle with empowering her colleagues of color. Emma noted how professors at times wanted to include these students' voices and perspectives, and so deliberately called on them. However, these kinds of teaching practices can essentialize students of color, particularly when discussing issues of race and racism, forcing them to speak for their group or all people of color. Katherine added that this dilemma "stresses her out" to the point of burnout.

Theme Five: Up Against Legacy: Institutional Challenges

Theme Five is institutional challenges. The data I collected indicate that colorblind ideology operated beyond the individual ethos or consciousness of study participants. These participants still had to contend with colorblind ideology even when they personally had a strong, critical lens for understanding race and racism (see also Croll, 2016). Several participants had some degree of racial awareness, and a desire to learn more. However, they still had to contend with existing structures, practices, and people that reified colorblind ideology. Even as they made efforts to engage in race talk in their program, the study participants still had to navigate systems and individuals within the program that hindered productive race talk. The study participants discussed program demographics, curriculum and pedagogy, and student teaching experiences.

The study participants shared how many of their peers were ill-prepared to and uncomfortable with discussing race and racism (even as they themselves had or shared similar dispositions). The study participants also described how many of their professors were ill-prepared to and uncomfortable with discussing race and racism. Rachel described ignorance by several of her peers in the program. She detailed experiencing or witnessing several instances of microaggressions. These microaggressions included being asked "if her Asian eyes were naturally that color", and a Black peer in the program being repetitively asked about how she

manages her curly hair. Rachel described her conflicted feelings about how to respond, if at all:

> We try to be understanding that they don't know. We bite our tongue and we try to explain and answer their questions, but afterwards we ask ourselves… "Are we doing a disservice to their future students by not calling these things out?" Is it our job to say, "Hey, you probably shouldn't ask your students these questions in the future?" You probably shouldn't ask them, "Are your eyes naturally that color?" We have that conflict. Is it our job to tell them those things, but if we don't tell them those things are we harming someone in the future? We go through debates with that and we haven't come up with a good answer. It's just that none of us know what to do in those moments.

Program faculty were sometimes unsure how to facilitate conversations, including if they should have students of color take the lead. Several study participants shared their frustrations with this. As students, they are also expected to be "experts". Anna described it as "Please, person of color. Tell us how to talk about race in class."

All study participants shared that several of the multicultural teacher education courses—particularly a foundations course—had been helpful in developing stronger racialized lenses and cultural responsive teaching philosophies. However, they also described that the need to educate Whites about how race and racism often perpetuated Whiteness. Elizabeth stated: "It is a program for White people who learn about race. There's a major problem with the way the program is set up." Rachel added:

> We had a 30-page reading about White people in classrooms. It is necessary, sure, but what about the teacher education students of color? We get maybe one paragraph. People of color also need certain kinds of training, because as a teacher they have a lot of things to deal with, too… It's like this whole program is for White people.

Elizabeth and Rachel raised questions about who a teacher education program should cater to, how programs are implemented, and at whose expense.

The presence of colorblind ideology in schools led to several institutional challenges for students in their student teaching experiences. Study participants shared student teaching experiences that included witnessing full-time K-12 school faculty and staff disproportionately disciplining Black and Brown students, make racist jokes or comments, while making claims of "I treat all of my kids the same." They discussed not feeling strong enough support by school principals or other teachers to intervene, feeling afraid of backlash by administration or the Parent-Teacher Association, and worrying that speaking out might result in getting fired or not getting hired after they completed their program. The study participants described feeling powerless to change the system, overwhelmed by witnessing vast inequality of resources and treatment, and disheartened by perceived apathy to racial concerns.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the major findings of the study. I presented my findings as five major themes or domains: (1) Racial Socialization; (2) Feelings and Responses; (3) The Pitfalls of Good Intentions; (4) Abstract Liberalism; and (5) Institutional Challenges. The statements made by the study participants seem to suggest that colorblind ideology informed how they thought, felt, and discussed race and racism throughout their lifespan, including in their teacher education program. In the next chapter, I discuss the findings of this study, contributions of this study to the field, and implications of this study for research and practice.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This final chapter begins with a summary of this study, followed by a discussion of the findings. Contributions to the field are then presented, followed by recommendations for scholarly research and professional practice. Implications for my own future work are then presented, followed by this chapter's conclusion.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand some of the challenges and possibilities of race talk in teacher education from the perspectives of teacher education students. I was interested in examining how teacher education students' life histories and experiences influence their knowledge and awareness and how they talk about race, racism, and education. I was specifically interested in the relationship and influence of colorblind ideology on racial knowledge, awareness, and talk.

I used critical race theory for this study's conceptual framework. The study's inspiration, implementation, and analysis are underpinned with tenets of critical race theory, including: (1) racism is endemic in U.S. society; (2) dominant ideologies such as colorblindness should be challenged; (3) valuing experiential knowledge, especially when it amplifies and validates the voices and perspectives of and for racial minorities; (4) an interdisciplinary focus; and (5) a commitment to social justice (Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso, 2000; Sleeter, 2012).

I used grounded theory for this study's methodology. Grounded theory is a qualitative inductive method of research that begins with systematic data collection, coding, conceptualization, categorization, and the development of propositions or themes (Charmaz,

2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Prior to implementing the study, I established a number of assumptions, limitations, and design controls; these are discussed in Chapter One.

Data were generated from an interview series, comprised of initial, focus group, and follow-up interviews. In these interviews, study participants discussed their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with race, racism, and education as it pertained to their life histories and in their teacher education program. Data were categorized into five major propositions or themes: (1) Racial Socialization; (2) Feeling and Dealing with Race Talk; (3) Abstract Liberalism; (4) The Pitfalls of Good Intentions; and (5) Institutional Challenges. These five themes were conceptualized as aspects of colorblind ideology. In the following section, I discuss these findings in greater detail.

Discussion of Findings

The data indicates that colorblind ideology informed how race talk occurred in the teacher education program. Statements made by the study participants seem to suggest that colorblind ideology influenced how they thought, felt, and behaved across multiple contexts, including within their teacher education classes and student teaching experiences.

Racial Socialization

The data seems to indicate that colorblind ideology informed the racial socialization experiences of study participants. For all participants in this study, colorblind ideology limited their opportunities to engage adequate and accurate information about different racial groups, about what racism is, and why it exists. Racial segregation patterns limited the participants' interracial interactions for more of their lifespan prior to entering the teacher education program. A relationship emerged between the participants' racial socialization experiences and their lens

for thinking, feeling, and talking about race and racism (Kendall, 2012; Gilliam, Valentino, & Beckmann, 2002; Trainor, 2005).

If we have been socialized to not think, feel, or talk about race, then we have been socialized to adhere to colorblind ideology. If we have been informed that racism is limited to individual, overt, explicit, and intentional acts of discrimination, and is not institutional, systemic, and ideological, then we have been socialized to adhere to colorblind ideology. If colorblind ideology informs us not to consider racial contexts, structures, or experiences, and if we do not have to contend with how race and racism matter (i.e., if we are White), we are more likely to embrace and adhere to colorblind ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Kendall, 2012; Lesko and Bloom, 1998; Lewis, 2001; Matias, Montoya, & Nishi, 2016; Schofield, 2007; Sleeter, 2016).

Harro's (2013) *cycle of socialization* is useful to help understand how colorblind ideology may influence racial socialization. Harro finds that our worldviews and behaviors—including how we think, feel, and act with respect to race and racism—are shaped and reinforced by a multitude of factors. These factors include individuals we know, love, and trust, and institutional and cultural institutions such as education, religion, and media.

Our specific sets of social identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality) influence how we are socially located and how we experience social life, including racial discrimination and oppression (Apollon, 2011a, 2011b; Bigler & Hughes, 2009; Harro, 2013; see also Cross, 1991; Cross et al., 2017; Helms, 1990; Seaton, Quintana, Verkuyten, & Gee, 2017; Shih & Sanchez, 2009; Sleeter, 1992; Tatum, 1992; Thompson & Carter, 1997). In a system of racial oppression, our racial identities position how we experience and thus examine and understand race and racism. While we are all susceptible to mainstream, dominant narratives about race and racism

(including how to talk or not talk about them), if we do not personally experience racial discrimination or oppression, we are less likely to consider or understand what racism is or how it operates (Apollon, 2011b; Bigler & Hughes, 2009; Bollin & Finkel, 1995; DiAngelo, 2012; Forman, 2004; Haymes, 1995; Lipsitz, 1998). If we do not have to consciously and constantly navigate a world wherein our racial identities are not adequately and accurately represented in media, or the fears that an encounter with a police officer may result in being killed by the police due to their unconscious racial bias, we are far less likely to consider the depth and breadth of racism as a system or its impact on the lives of people of color (Alexander, 2012; Brunsma, 2006; Feagin, 2014; Katz, 2003; Kendall, 2012; Kivel, 2002; Marks & Pennington, 2003).

Racial segregation further shapes how we think, feel, and talk about race and racism. Bonilla-Silva, Goar, and Embrick (2006) refer to the residential and social hypersegregation of Whites from people of color as furthering a socialization process called *White habitus*. White habitus geographically and psychologically limits Whites' opportunities to foster deep and sustainable relationships with racial minorities. This process further informs Whites' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about racial minorities.

Given the above research on racial socialization, racial identity, and racial segregation, it follows that White teacher education students may be more likely to have been socialized to embrace colorblind ideology than teacher education students of color. Teacher education students of color, while also susceptible to dominant narratives of how race talk should occur, may more likely to be conscious of race and racism, and understand how racism operates in subtle, systemic ways (Atwater, 2008; Choi, 2008; Cochran-Smith, 1995, 2004; Cooney & Akintunde, 1999; Gordon, 2005; Wasonga & Piveral, 2004; Ullucci & Battey, 2011).

Feeling and Dealing with Race Talk

A second important finding from this study is how colorblind ideology appeared to influence how the teacher education students responded to race talk. Participants described race talk in their teacher education program as fraught with uncertainty, discomfort, and fear. Three of the six participants used the phrase, "walking on egg shells" to describe these kinds of interactions. The participants described avoidance and shutting down as two common responses to the discomfort that result from talking about race.

Even if we could isolate the emotional and political volatility that comes with race talk, strategies like avoidance and shutting down may occur. The participants in this study described a teacher education program where many of their peers did not know what to say or how to say it when discussing race, and instances where their teacher education professors did not know what to say or how to say it. When race talk did occur, different levels of knowledge, awareness, understanding and experience often led teacher education students and professors to say the wrong thing or to say it the wrong way, leading to further tension and conflict.

Tochluk (2010) finds that colorblind rhetoric is a common approach used by White people to avoid race talk. This avoidance often results in denying and dismissing the experiences of people of color, including the ways in which race and racism matter to their lives. More than that, Tochluk contends, colorblindness allows White people to avoid how they are impacted by race and racism, including their complicity in systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

If teacher education students have been socialized to avoid or ignore race talk in their life experiences, including their experiences in school (Lewis, 2001, 2003; Schofield, 2007), then we should not be surprised when responses to race talk like avoidance and shutting down take place. If White teacher education students have been socialized to think of racism only as explicit,

intentional, individual acts of discrimination (Kendall, 2012), then we should not be surprised when they get defensive when confronted with their White privilege. If teacher education students of color have been socialized to navigate systems of racial power, privilege, and oppression, then we should not be surprised when they are frustrated or shut down when racism is discussed in a limited, diluted way (Sleeter, Neal, & Kumashiro, 2014).

Race and Abstract Liberalism

A third important finding from this study is the extent to which the study participants had to navigate abstract liberalism—a central frame of colorblind ideology—in their teacher education program. To reiterate, abstract liberalism involves using equality or morality rhetoric to justify, dilute, or ignore racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Abstract liberalism involves using principles and ideas associated with liberalism—such as fairness—in an abstract way to explain racial issues.

Eisner's (2002) concepts of *hidden curriculum* and *null curriculum* may offer some insights into the limitations of abstract liberalism. Eisner refers to hidden curriculum as the implicit messages or norms conveyed about school—everything from how furniture is situated in a classroom, to which students teachers tend to call on, to which students tend to be disciplined, to how much energy and attention are given to certain subjects. School participants often receive information about "the way that things are or are supposed be" without explicitly being taught what those things are.

The null curriculum refers to what is not taught in schools (Eisner, 2002). This includes (1) intellectual processes such as not valuing non-standard English and oral communication as acceptable or academic ways to convey information; and (2) subject content such as not asking

students to examine their racial identities (Tatum, 1992), the historical impact of racial IQ testing (see Alland, 2002) or the rise of mass incarceration (see Alexander, 2012).

If schools encourage students to value abstract principles of fairness and equality, while at the same time not accurately or adequately teach students about race and racism, students are likely to understand race issues in a simplified, decontextualized, ahistorical manner. If these messages are being received over the lifespan of a student, than they may certainly inform how they perceive and respond to race talk in other spaces, including in teacher education.

The coffee talk scenario presented in the findings indicates the extent to which abstract liberalism cultivated misunderstanding, tension, and conflict. Emma initially adopted an abstract liberal stance when criticizing the need for the coffee club, including that it was "unfair" and a "double-standard" for "them [the teacher education students of color]" to have their own coffee club. The necessity of the coffee club for students of color conflicted with the lifelong messages received by several of the White students.

The Pitfalls of Good Intentions

This study contributes to our understanding of how good intentions still may lead to negative outcomes. If Whites are less experienced in talking about race than people of color, then it follows that they are more likely to make mistakes, or stumble and fall when they try to do so, even when they have good intentions.

In this study, study participants shared several instances in their teacher education program where well-meaning efforts to explain or make sense of racial inequalities perpetuated racial inequality. Well-intended programmatic efforts to educate White teacher education students and give voice to teacher education students of color placed White teacher education student needs and interests at the center, while marginalizing and ostracizing teacher education

students of color. Good intentions—including in teacher education—to address issues of racial diversity, equity, and inclusion often still perpetuate racist outcomes. In this study, racist outcomes despite good intentions included the centering of the learning and emotional needs of White teacher education students at the expense of teacher education students of color (Matias, Montoya, & Nishi, 2016; Milner & Laughter, 2015; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2016).

Institutional Challenges

An important finding from this study is related to institutional challenges. Study participants had to contend with colorblind ideology even when they themselves did not adhere to colorblind ideology. Participants discussed having to deal with peers in the program with ignorant or short-sighted views on race. They worried about pushback from school administrators and parents from the schools in which they were doing their student teaching; and feared being fired or missing career advancement for speaking up on behalf of students of color.

Teacher education programs should ensure that their students—future classroom teachers—have rights and voice as professionals, and as agents and advocates for racial justice. Teacher education programs and the schools in which teacher education students do their student teaching should have stronger collaborative relationships, with an emphasis on multicultural education best practices. Where possible, this should be infused into already existing partnerships. This may aid in cultural and institutional supports on behalf of the communities within which the teacher education students will do their student teaching.

Teacher education programs and schools of education should develop relationships with their local school communities in ways that strengthen pipelines, but also work to ensure that reforms such as culturally responsive teaching, content integration, and prejudice reduction, are being worked on and supported. Teacher education programs have a responsibility to ensure that

they are placing their students into situations where what they are being taught has opportunities for implementation and success. Local schools have a responsibility to ensure that student teachers feel empowered, including when they need to hold the school and its constituents (teachers, administrators, parents) accountable regarding issues of race (Henry, Jr. & Dixson, 2016; Knoester & Au, 2017).

Contributions to the Field

This study makes two major contributions to our understanding of colorblind ideology and its influence on race talk in teacher education. This study pushes the literature in the field to (1) consider more comprehensive understanding of colorblind ideology; and (2) connect colorblind ideology, race talk, and teacher education.

A More Comprehensive Understanding of Colorblind Ideology

If it is true, as the title of Bonilla-Silva's (2006) seminal work suggests, that there can be *Racism without Racists*, then scholarship on colorblind ideology should consider a more complex understanding of how it shapes our perspectives, experiences, and actions. If it is true, as Lewis (2001) states, that colorblind ideology is more than just an individual perspective, but "pervasive throughout the culture" (p. 807), then colorblind ideology research should consider how systems, institutions, and social positioning influence perspectives, decisions, and outcomes.

Participants in this study shared how colorblind ideology shaped their racial socialization experiences, including their school experiences. Participants had been taught—throughout their lifespan—that narratives of fairness, messages of "not seeing color", and practices of avoiding racial conflict (see Schofield, 2007) informed their own dispositions to race talk in teacher education, the dispositions of their peers in the program, the curricular and pedagogical choices of their professors, and in how they could and could discuss race in their roles as student

teachers. As described in this study, participants were influenced by and had to navigate colorblind ideology in their teacher education program even when they themselves were conscious of race, desired to have meaningful, authentic conversations, and when they sought to disrupt the racist attitudes and behaviors of their peers and of other teachers in the schools in which they were working.

The findings in this study illuminate the need for a more comprehensive understanding of colorblind ideology. Emma was admittedly colorblind prior to taking part in this study. She revealed how her racial socialization experiences cultivated a "utopian blind," in which people deal with racism by avoiding it (by "not seeing color"), and in which racism was something that happened in the past, not something that happens now. These experiences and messages informed how Emma navigated race talk in the teacher education program, including her reactions to learning about the coffee club for the students of color ("it's not fair"; "reverse racism"). Anna, on the other hand, shared how although she had some level of racial consciousness, she still had to contend with how colorblind ideology shaped the attitudes and behaviors of her peers and professors in the teacher education program, and people in the school in which she was student teaching. Emma and Anna's stories indicate that scholarship on colorblind ideology—even when analyzing individual attitudes and behaviors (see Hogan & Mallott, 2005; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000), should account for more complex factors, including socialization processes, structures, and institutions.

Connecting Colorblind Ideology, Race Talk, and Teacher Education

There is a wealth of research on colorblind ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Brown et al., 2003; Carr, 1997; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2005; Forman, 2004), in education specifically (Anderson, 2007; Aragón, Dovidio, & Graham, 2016; Atwater, 2008; Henry & Givens Generett,

2005; Frank, 2007: Lewis, 2001; Spencer, 2008; Timeo, Farroni, & Maass, 2017), and in teacher education even more specifically (Cochran-Smith, 1995, 2000, Cooney & Akintunde, 1999; Gordon, 2005; Valli, 1995). There is also a wealth of research on race talk in the field of education (Pollock, 2004a, 2008a; Tatum, 1992, 2007; Tochluk, 2010; Trainor, 2005; van den Berg, Wetherell, & Houtkoop-Steenstra, 2003). There is, however, far less research on the specific ways in which race talk occurs in teacher education (Pimentel, 2010; Segall & Garrett, 2013) and even less on how colorblind ideology informs and influences race talk within teacher education (Choi, 2008; Ullucci & Battey 2011).

Participants in this study described how colorblind ideology shaped how they learned about race and racism in their formative home and schooling experiences, and how they were supposed to talk (or not) about race *as* teachers. Jean described how her teachers avoided conversations on race, and stated that they "don't see color." Katherine shared how a middle school lesson on slavery was the only topic taught in school that even remotely taught about racism. Elizabeth and Rachel both described how family members, teachers, and other authority figures discouraged them from having conversations about race, with messages such as "it's important to see the person, not the color", "they probably did not mean anything by it", and "just treat everyone how you would like to be treated". These and similar narratives shaped how study participants came to understood how they were *supposed* to talk about race when they continued their professional paths as future teachers in the teacher education program.

As teacher education students, the participants in this study had to navigate these and similar messages about race talk, even when they themselves were more race-conscious. They encountered peers, professors, and colleagues who were also socialized with colorblind ideological attitudes and behaviors about how to discuss race matters. These include statements

from peers such as “bringing up race was a form of racism”, teacher education professors avoiding race talk that would “make some of the other students uncomfortable”, and fears of being considered a bad or stupid person for saying the wrong thing or not being an “expert” on race matters. These findings thus contribute to a small but necessary body of research that help explain the ways that colorblind ideology may influence the race talk of teacher education students.

Implications for Scholarly Research and Professional Practice

In addition to contributions to the field, findings in this study suggest several possible avenues for future research and contemporary practice.

Implications for Scholarly Research

Examining race and racism in teacher education programs. Aspiring teachers need to develop insights and skills to successfully teach diverse student populations (Milner, 2010). These insights and skills needs to include a complex and comprehensive understanding of race and racism. More research is required on teacher education programs that have been effective in creating spaces to critically examine race and racism; specifically, research on effective strategies for disrupting and countering colorblind ideology. This study revealed how colorblind ideology shapes how we think, feel, and act with respect to race and racism on multiple levels. Future research should describe effective strategies that help teachers with racial identity development, racial prejudice reduction, countering racial stereotypes and bias, *and* understanding racism as a system.

When Emma had opportunities to reflect on her positionality and perspectives, she more readily engaged her fear and discomfort with race talk, and more critically received information that challenged her worldviews. More research on the use and effectiveness of helping future

teachers understand their positionality and perspectives is crucial; a meta-analysis on the use and effectiveness of cultural autobiographies in teacher education programs is one potential avenue of research (Florio-Ruane, 2001; Johnson, 2002).

More research is needed on the use and effectiveness of strategies to incorporate unconscious bias training and training teachers to understand racism as a system and to provide future teachers opportunities to examine their positionality. Research is needed to better understand strategies and practices related to collectively teaching unconscious bias education and education about racism as a system. In tandem, unconscious bias education and education about racism as a system may help future teachers understand their own positionality and what that means for them as a teacher (and their students). One promising approach may be the implementation of intergroup dialogue within teacher education programs, as it emphasizes individual and structural understanding of racism, while also focusing on communicative processes (see Murray-Everett, 2016).

Teacher education professors of color. More research is needed on the influence of colorblind ideology on teacher education professors of color (Sleeter, Neal, & Kumashiro, 2014); specifically for those who work in multicultural education, diversity, or related fields (see Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta, & Frey, 2009). More research is also needed on how teacher education programs train, encounter, and respond to race and racism in predominantly White versus historically racial minority serving institutions of higher education. Research should consider the short- and long-term implications for teacher of color, White teachers, and students in those spaces.

Recent political and social shifts. More research is needed on the influence of recent political and social shifts (Black Lives Matter, President Trump) on how colorblind ideology

operates within teacher education programs. An alarming rise in hate incidents since the rise of President Trump (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016) may help future teachers become more aware of overt and explicit instances of racism (e.g., hate speech or violence). However, these incidents may encourage teachers to examine or consider more subtle, symbolic, and systemic forms of racism (e.g., classroom microaggressions; racially inequitable school funding and access to quality teachers). Political and social shifts may give future teachers pause in terms of thinking about their own biases and stereotypes about racial minorities. Political and social shifts may aid future teachers in examining the systemic roots and practices of racism in education, or the more visceral forms of racial discrimination may mask or decenter more enduring institutional concerns. Teacher education programs should consider the ramifications of the current political and social landscape on their programs, their professors, their students, and the schools and communities that they serve (Carter Andrews, Richmond, & Stroupe, 2017).

Implications for Professional Practice

Teacher education professors. Effective education courses that disrupt colorblind ideology help students to examine racism beyond individual prejudice and psychology (Tarca, 2005), incorporate themes of structure, ideology, and power (Cooney & Akintunde, 1999; Sleeter, 2016), relate theory to experience (Lucas, 2005), and the cognitive, affective, and political domains (Trainor, 2005). Teacher education professors should foster interactive, dialogical spaces to discuss race and racism that can interrupt colorblind ideology, increase race knowledge and awareness, and encourage anti-racist action (Ayvazian, 1995; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Nagda, 2006). Teacher education professors should integrate content that focuses on the social context and historical structuring of Whiteness—including the privileges of adhering to colorblindness (Achinstein & Barret, 2004; Henze, Lucas, & Scott, 1998; Kailin,

1994). Teacher educators should encourage their White students to examine how race shapes their own lives, not just the lives of people of color (Haymes, 1995; Sleeter, 1995, 2016). Teacher education professors should cultivate multicultural curricular and pedagogical strategies that are inclusive of all teacher education students, and don't exclude teacher education students of color in efforts to teach White teacher education students about power, privilege, and oppression.

Teacher education programs. Teacher education programs should incorporate multicultural curriculum and pedagogy beyond social studies, history, and humanities; and include mathematics and natural sciences (Aguirre & Zavala, 2013; Jackson & Weidman, 2004; Joseph, Haynes, & Cobb, 2015; Martin, 2009; Moses, 2001; Nasir & Cobb, 2007). Teacher education programs should provide interpersonal and institutional supports for students struggling with anxiety and isolation around race issues (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Reason & Evans, 2007). Teacher education programs should match preservice teachers with actors and institutions that provide opportunities to challenge their assumptions (Ambe, 2006; Bollin & Finkel, 1995; Lucas, 2005).

Countering and disrupting colorblind ideology require professional development opportunities for teacher education faculty to be trained to teach anti-bias and understanding racism as a system (Adams & Bell, 2016; Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2009); and how to cultivate classroom spaces where they can teach their students more effectively. If teacher education programs are serious about their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, they must do more than provide optional opportunities for professional development; deans, chairs, and tenured faculty should be encouraged to take part in this work. Doing so will indicate an institutional commitment to racial literacy (DiAngelo, 2012; Guinier, 2004; Rogers & Mosley,

2008; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006). In addition to infusing racial literacy across the teacher education curriculum, teacher education programs should develop learning communities on culturally responsive teaching.

Summary of Implications

This section discusses implications for scholarly research and professional practice. Research implications include considerations of examining race and racism in teacher education programs, the influence on teacher education professors of color and in teacher education programs in predominantly White institutions, and recent political and social shifts. Practice implications include considerations for teacher education professors and teacher education programs. In the next section, I discuss implications of this study for my own research and practice.

Implications for My Own Work

This study has implications for my own work as an educational researcher and practitioner. As a result of this study, I am more knowledgeable and aware of the depth and breadth of colorblind ideology, and recognize just how important it is for current and future teachers to develop and value more race-conscious dispositions.

This study has also deepened my understanding of and value in my own positionality in a system of racism—including how my being White (and other social identity privileges) informs my research and practice. I am increasingly aware of the pitfalls of my own good intentions, recognize the need to listen more to the needs and interests of those most marginalized in a system of racist oppression, and work to amplify those voices as appropriate.

This study informs my future research in several ways: Future iterations of this study will include direct observation of teacher education classrooms and student teaching classrooms and

schools, teacher education professor interviews, teacher education program culture and structure, and analysis of syllabi, textbooks, and other relevant reading material. I will continue to explore the ways in which colorblind ideology racial socialization informs teacher beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in classrooms and schools. I will examine strategies that successfully help teachers to understand racism on multiple levels (individual, institutional, ideological, and systemic), and why those multiple levels are important to understand for their teaching practices—this includes understanding how their racial identities may influence how they may be perceived by their students and communities.

In my current role as Associate Director of Multicultural Education and Research at Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis, a primary responsibility is the development and implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings, and programs for students, faculty, and staff. I plan and develop workshops on understanding social identities, unpacking bias and stereotypes, and critically examining power, privilege, and oppression. The findings of this study have informed my curricular and pedagogical choices.

For example, I use several activities that help participants critically examine their own racial socialization experiences. These include naming and discussing stereotypes that they know to exist (even if they do not believe them to be true) and mapping a timeline that helps them address when and how they learned about race and racism throughout their lifespan. I encourage participants to examine the narratives they have been told about how to think, feel, and talk about race and racism, and explicitly name expected resistance to discussing these narratives.

During a workshop on privilege for teacher education students, one participant proclaimed that she "did not see color" and, as a White person, talking about race made her feel like she was being attacked. A few years ago, my response might have been to silence this

person. As a result of this study, I was able to assess several dynamics at play, including how abstract liberalism informed this participant's decontextualized understanding of what racism is and the ramifications for other participants in the room (including people of color) depending on how I responded. I responded by asking her if she required her eyeglasses for reading. She replied that she was "blind without them." I then asked her if I could borrow them for a moment. I proceeded to make the font on the PowerPoint slide I was using as small as possible, and asked her to read it. She could not. I then asked another student, who was seated closer to the screen, to read the slide. This student was able to read the slide. I then asked the class the following questions: "So, context matters? So, how you are positioned matters? Should we account for context and position or not? What would be fair? What would be just?"

I then proceeded to help the class understand that part of their resistance to seeing color might have something to do with how they were taught about how to think about race, and then asked them to consider what it might mean to see color, to engage with race (and racism). I then asked them all to consider the implications of "seeing or not seeing color" for their future students. I ended this portion of the workshop by sharing and discussing information gained from this study on how seeing color is not the problem per se, but rather when stereotypical inferences and assumptions about an entire group of people are made based on those perceptions. This is just one example of many of how my own learning during my graduate education and in the completion and analysis of this study continues to inform my practice.

Conclusion

This study is deeply tied to my own journey as a scholar and practitioner. The questions that guided this study grounded in my lifelong struggle to make sense of and fight for a more racially just society. I reflect on my time as a high school student, writing in the margins of my weekly planner about how race should not matter; that we should all be colorblind. I reflect on my undergraduate study of sociology, disrupting my individualistic narratives in favor of systems thinking. I reflect on my graduate study of multicultural education, developing a respect for and understanding of multicultural curriculum and pedagogy, and the importance of acknowledging my own positionality as a White, middle-class, cisgender, male.

For this study, my initial guiding research questions included: (1) How do the life histories and experiences of teacher education students inform how they think, feel, and talk about race and racism?; (2) How do teacher education students talk about race and racism in their teacher education program?; (3) What are some of the key challenges for race talk in teacher education?; and (4) What are some of the key possibilities for race talk in teacher education? This study suggests that colorblind ideology informed how study participants thought, felt, and talked about race and racism in their teacher education program. This study delineated several key challenges of colorblind ideology and race talk in the teacher education program, presented as five major themes.

This study also suggests several key possibilities for colorblind ideology and race talk in teacher education. All six study participants were willing to critically examine their racial socialization experiences, their racial identities, as well as their thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors regarding racial issues. Participants were able to name and discuss several key challenges of race talk in their teacher education program, whether it pertained to their peers, their professors, or

themselves. Participants were able to articulate several programmatic and pedagogical efforts to increase cultural proficiency and awareness, even when naming the limitations of such efforts.

Teacher education programs need to cultivate color-conscious spaces, where teacher education students engage their racial identities and dispositions, navigate the emotional and cognitive terrain of race talk, and interrogate racism in education and society. Teacher education programs need to teach about race and racism from an individual, institutional, systemic, and ideological perspective. Teacher education programs need to increase the recruitment and retention of students and professors of color. Teacher education programs need to strengthen relationships with local Pre-K-12 schools. Teacher education programs need to prepare teachers to work in increasingly diverse classrooms. Teacher education programs need to provide and encourage ongoing, sustainable professional development opportunities on issues of race and racism for faculty and staff. Teacher education programs need to provide cultural and institutional supports to their White students, their students of color, and teacher education professors.

Naming some of the challenges of colorblind ideology and race talk in teacher education does not guarantee these challenges will be met. Racism in the United States is complex and severe, and will not be easily overcome or undone. That said, teacher education programs have a responsibility to develop teachers committed to fight for racial justice. This commitment must include confronting the legacy of colorblind ideology.

Walker, your footsteps

are the road, and nothing more.

Walker, there is no road,

the road is made by walking.

Walking you make the road,

and turning to look behind

you see the path you never

again will step upon.

Walker, there is no road,

only foam trails on the sea.

-Antonio Machado

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Appendix A: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON CONSENT FORM

Colorblind Ideology and Race Talk in Teacher Education

HS#43934
Dennis L. Rudnick, Principal Investigator, Doctoral Candidate, College of Education.
phone: (206) 450-0166; email: denrud@uw.edu

Investigator's statement:

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether or not to participate in the study. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what I will ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study. This process is called "informed consent." I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE

This study will explore how teacher education students talk about race in education. In an Interview-Focus Group-Interview series, you will be able to share your thoughts, opinions, feelings, and ideas, including your experiences in the teacher education program. I hope that the results of this study will help us better understand the challenges and possibilities of race talk in teacher education, so that teacher education programs may more effectively prepare pre-service teachers to teach students from a range of racial groups. The study information may be used in conference presentations and published articles.

PROCEDURES

If you choose to be in this study, I would like you to participate in an Interview-Focus Group-Interview series. This study will comprise approximately 6 participants. The 2 interviews and 1 Focus Group will take place over one month, spaced out over a week to 10 days. Exact dates and times will be finalized once participants have been selected.

The interviews will be approximately 1 hour, and the Focus Group will be approximately 2 hours. The interviews will be done individually, and the Focus Group will comprise all participants. The first interview will comprise several open-ended questions about race and education (such as sharing your own schooling experiences). The Focus Group will comprise talking about race in education. The second interview will be an opportunity to reflect on the Focus Group experience.

The interviews will be audio-recorded, and the Focus Group will be audio-video recorded. I will personally transcribe the interviews and the Focus Group; no one else will have access to the recordings or raw transcripts. I will destroy all recordings within a week's time of completing the study.

Some of the questions asked in this study may be considered extremely sensitive, personal, and/or political. Examples of these questions include asking whether or not talking about racism makes you uncomfortable, and describing a personal experience in which you experienced racism or were racist toward someone. The purpose of such questions is not to judge you, and you may choose to opt out of responding to any question you do not wish to answer. Further, the researcher will attempt to cultivate an atmosphere of safety, privacy, and confidentiality throughout the study.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Risks for participation in this study may involve experiencing tension, stress, or uncomfortable emotions while discussing and reflecting on personal or socialization experiences regarding race or racism. Some people may feel social discomfort when talking about race, and may reveal information that may seem prejudicial or biased.

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I have addressed concerns for your privacy in the other information section below. Some people feel self-conscious while being recorded and/or by sharing personal information that they know will be read. Due to the small number of subjects participating, it is also possible that someone could recognize you from a response. All provisions will be made to ensure your privacy and confidentiality. You are free to discuss or ask questions about any risks, stress, or discomfort with the principal investigator, who will make time to meet with you at your convenience.

BENEFITS

You may benefit from this study by participating in the interviews and Focus Group, by addressing the particular challenges and possibilities you may face as a teacher, by developing pedagogical and content strategies for engaging in racial issues in classrooms and schools. To this end, at the end of the study, you will be offered a packet of helpful teaching resources. Participants from all racial groups and perspectives on teaching are encouraged to participate.

OTHER INFORMATION

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Whether you choose to be in this study or not will have no effect on your University of Washington academic standing. If you request to review the transcripts of your interview and/or focus-group participation, I will share them with you. If you request your participation in segments be edited, I will edit your participation.

Information about you is private and confidential. Your name will not be used in the analysis. When I transcribe the recordings, I will code the transcripts. I will keep a master list of codes and identities. I will keep the link between your name and the study information until June 2013, and then I will destroy the link. If the results or other data from this study are published or presented, I will not use your name. If I decide that I would like to revisit this research for future and/or related study, I will obtain your permission first, and will not do so without your permission.

If you have any questions about this research study, please contact the researcher at the telephone number or e-mail listed above. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the University of Washington's Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098.

Signature of investigator Printed Name Date

Subject's statement:
This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later on about the research I can ask the investigator. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the University of Washington's Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098. I give my permission for the researcher to record my participation as described above in this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Subject information:
Name:
phone: email:

Signature of subject Printed Name Date

Copies to: Investigator's file Subject

Appendix B: Study Announcement

Colorblind Ideology and Race Talk in Teacher Education
Principal Investigator: Dennis L. Rudnick

A researcher in the University of Washington, College of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction is conducting research on how pre-service teachers talk about race. The principal investigator is Dennis L. Rudnick, an EDC&I Doctoral Candidate.

The study will be an Interview-Focus Group-Interview series with approximately 6 participants. The 2 interviews and 1 Focus Group will take place in 3 consecutive weeks. The interviews will be approximately 1 hour, and the Focus Group will be approximately 2 hours. The interviews will be done individually, and the Focus Group will comprise all participants. Exact dates and times will be finalized once participants have been selected.

This research will help us better understand the challenges and possibilities of race talk for teacher education students, so that teacher education programs may more effectively prepare pre-service teachers to teach students from a range of racial groups. You may benefit from this study by participating in the interviews and Focus Group, by addressing the particular challenges and possibilities you may face as a teacher, by developing pedagogical and content strategies for engaging in racial issues in classrooms and schools. To this end, at the end of the study, you will be offered a packet of helpful teaching resources. Participants from all racial groups and perspectives on teaching are encouraged to participate.
Please contact the researcher directly if you would like to participate, or if you would like further information. Participating in this study is purely voluntary. Contacting the researcher does not in any way obligate you to participate.

Contact information:
Dennis L. Rudnick, Ph.C.
denrud@uw.edu
206.450.0166

Appendix C: Interview 1: Initial Interview

The main purpose of this interview is to better understand some of the challenges and possibilities of race talk in teacher education. To this end, I will ask you a series of open-ended questions about your history, experiences, thoughts, and perspectives on issues of education, race, and racism. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Please know that multiple coding measures will be implemented to protect the privacy of your identity and the confidentiality of your responses. You are not required to answer any questions you do not wish to. If you would rather not answer a question, please say "pass". If you need to stop or take a break, simply stay "stop". If you do not understand the question or would like clarification, please say, "clarify".

(Probing questions and examples are italicized)

Part 1: Background and Life History

1. Consider your formative years: the neighborhoods you grew up in, the schools you attended, and the friends you kept. Can you briefly describe the setting (*ex: urban, rural, suburb, small town*)?
2. Can you briefly describe the kinds of people that lived in your neighborhood (*class, race, and other factors that you think are important to note here*)?
    a. *How did you feel about the kind of people that lived in your neighborhood?*
    b. *Probe for responses to identify explicit racial makeup: ex: How many Black people lived in your section of the neighborhood?*
3. Who were your 3 best friends growing up?
    a. *Did you know them from school, the neighborhood, both, other?*
    b. *What was their racial makeup?*
    c. *Begin to probe for racial knowledge and awareness: Why do you think that is?*
4. How would you describe the neighborhood that you live in right now (*class and racial makeup*)?
5. Briefly describe the kind of K-12 schools you attended (*ex: public/private/charter, urban/rural, large/small*).
6. Briefly describe the racial makeup of the schools you attended (*Respond to general answers such as "diverse" with concrete probing: "How many White students were in the same classes as you?"*).
    a. *Students in the K-12 schools you attended?*
    b. *Teachers and other administrators in the K-12 schools you attended?*
    c. *Your closest friends in the K-12 schools you attended?*
    d. *Students in the undergraduate schools you attended?*
    e. *Teachers and other administrators in the undergraduate schools you attended?*
    f. *Your closest friends in the undergraduate schools you attended?*
    g. *Students in your current teacher education program?*
    h. *Faculty in your current teacher education program?*
    i. *Your closest friends in your current teacher education program?*

Part 2: Identity and Experiences

1. What do you think led you to become a teacher?
2. What subject do/did/will you teach?
3. What grade do/did/will you teach?
4. How long have you taught?
5. How do you self-identify? (Or, who are you?).
    a. *What is your racial background? If you do not identify as such, that is okay.*
    b. *What is your age?*
    c. *What is your gender?*
    d. *Are there any other self-identifying characteristics that you feel are important to note about yourself (ex: religion, class status, immigrant status)?*
6. Have you had any kind of personal experiences with those who are racially different from you?
    a. *Did you feel a sense of comfort or discomfort with these experiences?*
    b. *Do you think you learned anything from these experiences?*
7. How did you first learn about racism and discrimination?
    a. *How old were you?*
    b. *Who were the teachers or agents of the experience?*
    c. *Who were the victims or targets?*
    d. *Did anyone help you to understand or cope with this these experiences?*
8. Describe a personal experience in which you experienced racism or were racist toward someone.
    a. *If you cannot think of a personal experience, think of one you observed.*
9. What were some consequences of these initial racial experiences?
    a. *Short term?*
    b. *Long term?*

Part 3: Perspectives on Race and Racism

1. How do you define race?
2. How do you define racism?
3. Where does racism come from?
4. Do you think your racial background influences how you see the world?
    a. *Why or why not?*
5. Do you think racism still exists in the U.S., or is it more of a problem of the past?
    a. *Why or why not?*
6. Do you see any racist stereotypes in the media today?
    a. *What examples come to mind to support your opinion?*
    b. *Have you seen changes in how people of different races are portrayed?*
7. Do you think racism is a challenge for U.S. schools?
    a. *Explain.*

Appendix D: Interview 2: Focus Group Interview

Please know that the same measures and principles laid out in the consent form to protect your privacy and confidentiality apply here. This includes a verbal agreement, here and now, among all participants that anything said and/or shared in this room stays in this room. Do we all agree?

For purposes of transcription, I will begin by asking each participant to say their assigned letter out loud, to later identify who is speaking.

Part 1: Race Talk Introduction

1. What are some initial thoughts and feelings about talking about race and racism with your peers? *Elaborate.*
2. Do you think it is important for teachers and other educators to talk about racism? *Explain.*
3. What race and racism issues are important for teachers to think about? *Explain.*
4. Do you think it is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial minorities? *Explain.*
5. What are your concerns about teaching students in the future who may be racially different from you (*e.g., are you anxious, fearful, confident, or indifferent?*)?

Part 2: Race Talk in Teacher Education Programs

1. How does race get talked about in your teacher education program?
2. Do you think it is appropriate to discuss issues of race and racism in teacher education programs? *Why or why not?*
3. Do you think it is appropriate to discuss issues of race and racism with your students? *Why or why not?*
4. During your student teaching, have you ever been involved with a situation in your school site involving racial tension?
    a. *How so? Please describe.*
    b. *How did you handle it?*
    c. *How did others handle it (students, peers, administrators, parents)?*
5. In your teacher education program, have there been any issues, tensions, or situations involving race and racism?
    a. *How so? Please describe.*
    b. *How did you handle it?*
    c. *How did others handle it (peers, teacher, TA)?*
6. In your teacher education program, have any conversations about race and/or racism been challenging or difficult?
    a. *How so? Please describe.*
    b. *How did you handle it?*
    c. *How did others handle it (peers, teacher, TA)?*

Part 3: Process

1. To revisit, what were some initial thoughts and feelings about talking about race and racism with your peers?
2. Did talking about race and racism make you uncomfortable? *Why or why not?*
3. Were you concerned about being "politically correct" or saying the "right thing"?
4. Do you think talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension? *Explain.*
5. What about this experience was uncomfortable?
6. What about this experience was challenging?
7. What worked? What did not?
8. What might you have said or done differently? *Why?*
9. Did your racial identity influence your interaction with others? *Why? How?*
10. Did you feel you were "heard"?
11. Why can talking about race and racism be so challenging?
12. What are some thoughts and feelings about this experience that you have right now?

Appendix E: Interview 3: Follow-Up Interview

The purpose of this interview is to reflect on your experiences in this study so far. To this end, I will ask you a series of open-ended questions about your history, experiences, thoughts, and perspectives on issues of education, race, and racism. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Please remember that multiple coding measures will be implemented to protect the privacy of your identity and the confidentiality of your responses. You are not required to answer any questions you do not wish to. If you would rather not answer a question, please say "pass". If you need to stop or take a break, simply stay "stop". If you do not understand the question or would like clarification, please say, "clarify".

(Probing questions and examples are italicized)

Part 1: Race Talk in Teacher Education

1. How are issues of race and racism addressed in your teacher education program?
   a. *Curriculum-wise?*
   b. *Pedagogically?*
2. What role, if any, has the Teacher Education Program played in helping you understand issues of race and racism as they pertain to classrooms and schools?
   a. *Can you give specific examples?*
3. What particular courses focus more specifically on race and racism issues?
4. What role, if any, has the Teacher Education Program helped you develop the skills to talk about issues of race and racism as they apply to your teaching practices?
   a. *Can you give specific examples?*
5. What role, if any, has the Teacher Education Program helped you develop the skills to teach in racially diverse classrooms?
   a. *Can you give specific examples?*
6. Other than in your current teacher education program, have you taken courses that addressed issues of race and racism?
   a. *Why or why not?*
   b. *Approximately how many courses?*
   c. *How would you characterize the effectiveness of these courses?*
7. What other training, resources, or guidance have you received to help you learn about issues of race and racism in education?

Part 2: Race Talk in Teaching

1. What kinds of racial knowledge and experience would you bring to your classroom?
2. Would you introduce concepts of race and racism into your teaching?
   a. *Why or why not?*
   b. *How would you do so?*
   c. *What would be a potential challenge to doing so?*

3. What race and racism concepts are important for you, as a teacher, to teach your future students? *Explain.*
4. What kinds of knowledge do you believe would be helpful for you (in the areas of race) before you enter your own classroom?
5. What advice would you offer other teachers with respect to issues of race and racism in education?
6. What are some "best practices" in multicultural, ant-racist, or culturally responsive teaching that you hope to incorporate into your teaching?
7. What can teachers do to end racism?
   a. *Do you have any personal examples of actions you have taken?*
   b. *What is one thing you could do?*

Part 3: Challenges of Race Talk in Teacher Education

1. Reflect on your participation in this study so far, including the first interview and the focus group. What has this study revealed to *you* about *your* challenges with race talk?
2. What particular issues and concepts are difficult to discuss?
   a. Why are they difficult? (ex: lack of knowledge, fear, painful)
3. What structures and forces inhibit your ability to talk about race in teacher education?
   a. Explain.
4. Explain any challenges or limitations that influence your ability to talk about race in your teacher education program.
   a. How do you respond to said challenges?
5. Explain any challenges or limitations that influence your ability to talk about race with your future students.
   a. How do you respond to said challenges?
   b. How does your own race matter in how you talk about race with your students?
6. Explain any challenges or limitations that influence your ability to talk about race with your peers.
   a. How do you respond to said challenges?
   b. How does your own race matter in how you talk about race with your peers?

Part 4: Possibilities of Race Talk in Teacher Education

1. What are the possibilities of race talk in teacher education?
2. How might race talk in teacher education be improved?
   a. What would that look like?
3. What is needed for *you* to talk about race in teacher education?
   a. Why are these factors important to you?
4. What can teacher education programs do to better facilitate race talk in teacher education?
5. What can teacher education students do to better facilitate race talk in teacher education?