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Elementary Teachers' Ideologies on the Experience of a Mixed-Race Student

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Research suggests that Black-White biracial students experience marginalization and invisibility in U.S. classrooms (Baxley, 2008; Williams, 2013). The absence of bi/multi-racial as a category on the U.S. Census until 2000 indicates the resistance among government agencies to acknowledge the unique cultural experiences of individuals whose parents do not identify as the same race. This resistance is particularly noteworthy in elementary classrooms where racial identity development is at a crucial stage and healthy identity development is predicated on students' experiences as racialized individuals being either preserved, discounted or disregarded (Erikson, 1963; Udell, 2013; Wardle, 1992). Elementary age students need truthful and thoughtful responses to their experiences regarding race and ethnicity. Unfortunately, many educators are unprepared to effectively respond to students' racial identity issues and they tend to disregard the importance of discussions about race in the classroom; especially at the elementary level (Morrison, 2001). Teachers practice colorblindness, approaching race as an insignificant factor in the lives of students (Michael, 2012) and equivalency treatment as their standard method for dealing with race in the classroom; however, these practices negate the critical thinking and self-reflection that teachers must employ to disrupt the systemic racism and deficit racial practices that persist in many U.S. classrooms.

Using Banks' (1993, 1994) framework on multicultural education, this study explored the significance of elementary level teachers' responses to Black-White biracial student identity development. For the purposes of this study, biracial and

multiracial are used collectively to describe students who do not identify within a singular racial category and to honor the research that recognizes the fluidity of experience for this population of students. Because the racial identities of teachers and students are contested and constructed in schools, power dynamics regarding race and how these forces impact curriculum at explicit and implicit levels cannot be ignored. Meanwhile, the U.S. student population continues to grow in racial diversity and the K-12 teaching force remains predominantly White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Furthermore, the population of Black-White students is expected to continue increasing exponentially (Pew Research Center, 2015), and there is insufficient research that demonstrates why teachers need to care about and attend to bi-racial students. With bi/multi-racial students existing within a nebulous racial categorization that has been historically defined to support an economic agenda, creating a positive self-identity for students in this group can be challenging. This article examined those challenges by exploring the reflections of elementary level teachers' classroom practices and perceptions of the collective elementary educational experience of one bi-racial student in a southeastern U.S. public school.

Grasping the Intangible Black-White Student Experience

Black-White biracial students face a mono-racial identity framework in schools based on historical definitions of race. Social practice and legal precedent in the U.S. during the 19th and 20th centuries established the classification of hypodescent or the one-drop rule designating individuals with one drop of Black blood as Black/Negro (Khanna, 2010; Masuoka, 2008). Conversely, biracial people are uniquely positioned to understand the lived

realities of more than one racial group from a highly personal perspective despite conventions that deny this multifaceted experience (Gordon, 1997). Historically, biracial individuals have been forced to choose, and the choice was made for them based on their physical appearance (Herman, 2004); however, a higher rate of interracial relationships resulting in Black-White biracial children is creating more fluid modes of racial identification (Roth, 2005). Nevertheless, it is critical that educators understand Black-White biracial identity as fluid with healthy racial identity developing based on individual preference and changing over time (Udell, 2013; Wardle, 1992). The social and psychological development levels of elementary students is an ideal phase for a flexible and vibrant exploration of racial identity.

The historical context of biracial identity research is noted as having proliferated in the pseudoscientific eugenics era that intended to elevate the human gene pool by discounting individuals who had been contaminated with Black DNA (Stonequist, 1937; Renn, 2008). Founded upon an economic model that thrived on increasing the numbers of commodified Black people, designating biracial individuals as Black magnified the murky advantage white-skinned slave owners possessed over light/white-skinned slaves. Further elevating the notion of White privilege, research that magnified differences between racial groups expanded the idea of racial superiority/inferiority and supported race as naturalized, categorized, and dichotomized (Reid and Henry, 2000; Roberts, 2003). Harris (2013) noted that degeneracy theory encouraged the belief that bi/multi-racial people are genetically inferior based on the absence of the preferable genetic lineage of pure, undiluted whiteness.

The hypodescent classification, or one-drop rule, perpetuated the stigma that

blackness continues to carry as most Black-White biracial individuals and Whites who procreate with Blacks realize they automatically forfeit the social, political, economic and cultural privilege afforded to those who unequivocally belong to the White race (Hollinger, 2003). U.S. Census policies subtly reinforced *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) by codifying the perception of separate but equal via national identification data. While legal rulings such as *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) and *Loving v Virginia* (1967) attempted to reverse negative perspectives regarding racial integration on public and personal levels, cultural practice typically supersedes legal precedent. The populace is governed by their emotional customs rather than their intellectual access.

Likewise, racial identity models evolved contemporarily with national legislature and policy. Racial identity models focusing on type and stage emerged with type models relying on an individual's fixed categorical identification as the primary indicator for one's behavior and stage models using a less rigid approach that acknowledges an individual's developmental progression including identification with multiple categories over time (Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001; Helms, 1997; Udell, 2013). Root (1998) described a theoretical model for racial identity that accounts for an individual's affiliation with a socially assigned racial group as protection against racist attacks and oppressive perspectives. This model is appropriate for understanding the racial identity of bi/multiracial individuals whose lived experiences include contextual intersections of their public and private lives. Biracial individuals magnify the natural distinctiveness found among all categorized people, and the unique junctures of their existence destroy the homogenization process that is often

overplayed in socially constructed groups (Bracey, Bamaca, & Umana-Taylor, 2004).

Elementary teachers' interactions with bi/multiracial students are impactful during the early years of young students' experiences in schools. Elementary aged students are often ill prepared to proficiently negotiate the divergent cultures of home and school. Constructive student-teacher relationships are foundational to the positive development of students' school identities which may conflict with how they identify at home (Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002; Rockquemore & Lazsloffy, 2005). Critical to racial identity development are the lack of skills among practicing educators to effectively connect with bi/multiracial students. While the literature on the experiences of bi/multiracial students in elementary schools is limited, Holcomb-McCoy (2001) found that elementary school counselors self-reported a high level of competence regarding multicultural awareness and knowledge of terminology, but regarded themselves as incompetent in their understanding of and their ability to manage issues related to racial identity. The lightly explored scholarship of bi/multiracial students at the elementary level has demonstrated that White privilege was extended to biracial elementary students with White mothers with these children rated more favorably by their White teachers than biracial students with non-White mothers (Davis, 2016).

Further examination of teachers' perceptions of elementary children's problem behaviors noted a relationship between the racial identification of parents as an indication of students' externalizing behaviors. Teachers rated Black-White biracial children's externalizing behaviors development during the period of kindergarten and fifth grade as progressively lower than students who identified monoracially (Csizmadia & Ispa, 2014).

Racial invalidation theory may explain why bi/multiracial children exhibit less externally notable behaviors. Denial or reduction of the importance of a bi/multiracial experience is shown to create anxiety and low self-esteem among other negative outcomes. Because race is socially assigned according to genetically recognizable physical characteristics such as hair texture, skin color, and body type, bi/multiracial students defy generalization and are therefore invalidated (Chen & Hamilton, 2012). Racial invalidation is especially harmful to Black bi/multiracial students who may be denied acceptance into their physically apparent in-group as well as rejected from their other racial group by birth due to an inability to physically pass as White. Invalidation by refusal to accept a White bi/multiracial person's lineage is equally harmful (Franco, Katz & O'Brien, 2016; Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Sriken, Vargas, Wideman & Kolawole, 2011).

Racial socialization continuously occurs in schools (Michael, 2012), even as early as elementary level. For many students of Color, their recognition of the opportunities and limitations presented by racial categorization is earlier than many racial identity models suggest (Baggerly & Parker, 2005). Many elementary educators may perceive elementary age students as incapable of operating at advanced stages as defined by racial identity models. Research suggests that teachers typically exhibit two primary responses to children regarding race. These responses include critical multicultural education or colorblind ideologies (Choi, 2008). Teachers who use critical multicultural ideologies acknowledge race as significant to the educational experience of students and integrate these concepts into myriad aspects of curriculum and instruction in the classroom. Teachers who employ colorblind ideologies undervalue the impact of race in

their students' lives, avoid discussions of race and ethnicity, and fail to integrate racially relevant pedagogies in their classrooms.

Methods: Validating the Experiences of an Invalidated Student

This qualitative case study was conducted in an elementary school that is part of a large suburban southeastern US school district with a median household income of \$45,000. There are 39 schools and centers that serve 28,000 students in the district. Students qualifying for free or reduced lunch make up 46% of the districts population. The racial composition of the districts' students is: 59% African American; 29% White; 3% Asian American; 6% Latinx/Hispanic American; and 3% Other or Multiracial.

For the purpose of this study, racial identity was defined as an individual's connection to a collective cultural experience based on a common set of racially distinguishable markers. Biracial was defined as an individual having one parent who identified as Black and one parent who identified as White.

The study used narrative inquiry (Cresswell, 2013) to explore the impact of elementary teachers' curriculum and instructional practices on the identity development of one Black-White biracial female student within one school setting. Individually conducted, audio recorded interviews with three elementary teachers who taught one Black-White biracial student over the course of three elementary school academic years were the primary data set. Interviews with one district administrator for diversity and equity was included along with curriculum artifacts such as lesson plans, textbooks and visual aids as secondary elements to the data set.

The participants were selected from the school district's demographic database.

Three students were invited to participate and one agreed to complete the study. In keeping with a case study design, teachers were chosen after the Black/White biracial elementary student was selected. The participant student's teachers from grades K-3 were invited to be interviewed and share curriculum materials. Confidentiality was promised to participants; therefore, all names used in this study are pseudonyms.

Ms. Case is a White female special education teacher who taught Bailey in first and second grades. She has been in education for 23 years. She holds Master of Education and was educated at large, traditionally White research institution. Ms. Brown is a White female with 12 years of experience in education. She was Bailey's primary first grade teacher, and she holds a Master of Education in Elementary Education from a large, traditionally White research institution. Ms. Davis is a White female who taught Bailey for second grade. She has been a teacher for 30 years and holds a Master of Education degree from an undetermined institution. Ms. Davis was selected because she taught the participant student, however she declined to be interviewed or to share curriculum documents. Ms. Page, a White female, is a 21-year veteran in education who taught Bailey for third grade. She holds a Master of Education degree from a small, private liberal arts women's college. Dr. Gaines, the district administrator, holds a Juris Doctor degree from an exclusive traditionally White university and has over 30 years of experience in diversity and inclusion with large organizations. She provided data relevant to establishing the tone and culture of the school district and how those expectations impacted individual schools.

The interview questions were developed according to evolutionary theories (Reid & Henry, 2000; Renn, 2008; Roberts, 2003; Stonequist, 1937), racial identity theories

and models (Gordon, 1997; Herman, 2004; Hollinger, 2003; Khanna, 2010; Masuoka, 2008), and state and federal court decisions relevant to bi/multiracial student identity development. The student participant's teachers were asked a set of primary questions for narrative data collection and follow up questions were asked in subsequent interviews based on the initial data set.

Table 1
Teacher/Administrator Interview Protocol

Multicultural Scale Levels 1-2 Items

1. Do you think a student's racial identity is important to know? How do you gain knowledge of a student's racial identity?
2. What do you think is the best way for teachers to gain knowledge and understanding of a student's racial identity?
3. Is racial identity important to discuss with elementary level students?

Multicultural Scale Level 3 Items

4. Studies have proven that historically there has been little to no Black/White biracial role models/representation within curricula and instruction and that teachers do not know how to address the unique needs of Black/White biracial students. Why do you think this is the case?
5. How do you ensure inclusion of Black/White biracial representation within your classroom? Do you feel that you create a safe space for racial dialogue?
6. Do you think representation and inclusion of Black/White biracial students within curricula and instruction has changed/shifted (since you first began teaching)?
7. Does your school/district support your methods/pedagogical approach to racial inclusion?

Multicultural Scale Levels 4-5 Items

8. Has Bailey ever asked questions or made comments about her racial identity?
 9. Have you noticed any incidences with Bailey and other children (i.e. teasing)? If yes, did you feel it was racially motivated? How did you handle this situation?
 10. Do you believe a district, school, and classroom that is racially diverse actively practices diversity and inclusion?
 11. What are the best ways to train teachers/educators about self-awareness to counter racial bias?
 12. Have you participated in training which reflects the district's goal of seeing diversity and inclusion as a state of mind instead of an event?
-

Classroom artifacts including instructional techniques described by teacher participants along with lesson plans, classroom texts, and district goals and objectives were collected for document analysis. Emergent theory was developed from the constant-comparative method which was used for coding the narrative and artifact data. Trustworthiness and credibility were achieved through triangulation of data sources, member checks on narrative transcripts and peer debriefing on the entire data set (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014).

Comparing the teachers' ideological statements against existing theoretical articulations from the literature served to organize the data. Teachers' practical applications exhibited in their use of curriculum was further analyzed against the five multicultural dimensions which further assisted in understanding the impact of their

specific interactions with one Black-White mixed race student in a series of elementary classrooms (Banks, 1993, 1994). The multicultural dimensions used for analysis include: 1) content integration, 2) knowledge construction, 3) equity pedagogy, 4) prejudice reduction, and 5) empowering school culture and social structure.

Low Scale Multicultural Integration: Exploring the Data

The student represented in the study is nine years old. To ensure anonymity, she is referred to as Bailey. Bailey is in third grade during the 2016-17 school year. She was retained one year and repeated first grade due to developmental delays. Bailey has improved academically; however, she is not functioning at grade level in math and reading. While her participation in special services is an important factor, for the purposes of this study, her interventions will not be a primary focus. Bailey is a Black/White biracial child with her father being Black and mother being White. She has one sibling, a half-sister who is 19 years old.

Ms. Case has taught elementary, middle and high school levels during her 23-year teaching career. Her initial advice regarding Bailey was to forget about focusing on her for the study because of her manifold issues. Ms. Case's role as special education teacher biased her belief that any problems Bailey might face were primarily centered on her developmental delays and not her racial identity development. During the two interviews in which Ms. Case participated, she minimized the role of race in the schooling experience of children. She did concede that gender may influence the way students experience race when she suggested that biracial girls do not adjust in class as easily as biracial boys. According to her observations, biracial boys appear to be proud of their mixed race heritage and have

no trouble discussing this aspect of their racial identity. She noted that girls appear to down play their race and resist discussions on the topic.

A colorblind philosophy best describes Ms. Case's attitude toward student racial identity. She indicated that:

I would never ask them, because of course I don't care, you know, it doesn't matter to me, but sometimes I learn it just in talking to the parents -- a lot of times parents will share, or other teachers might share information.

Her declaration that she does not care about student's racial identity essentially contradicts her statement that knowing a child's family background is significant to the classroom dynamic and the ability for a teacher to utilize effective instructional strategies. When asked if she believed it is important to understand where a child comes from she indicated, "The family background is important."

Her stance on specific instructional techniques and curriculum influences on her pedagogical practice demonstrated limited engagement with the upper range of multicultural dimensions. She stated that:

I use picture books that show all races and cultures. There are broader representations in social skills curriculum such as book studies. These help all kids relate and empathize. They may not be specifically identified as Black/White biracial, but there are people of different colors -- particularly in picture books.

Ms. Case's narrative suggested that she does not perceive biracial students to have a unique set of instructional needs that rest in the domain of equity pedagogy or prejudice reduction which might be couched in an empowering school culture that works

toward social justice. There was no recognition in Ms. Case's narrative for curriculum and instruction that specifically represented Black/White biracial students.

Echoing a colorblind viewpoint, Bailey's first grade teacher, Ms. Brown, responded in similar ways to Ms. Case regarding her perceptions of Bailey's racial identity. Considering her younger age and time at which she was educated as a pre-service teacher, it was expected that Ms. Brown might operate from a more critical orientation. Contrarily, her response to the question of whether or not a child's racial identity was important included the following statement:

I see all children the same. I like to know their background, their interests, but discussing their racial identity is not important, particularly for elementary children.

There is pervasive belief that elementary age students are not aware of their racial identity. This buttresses the behaviors of educators at the elementary level like Ms. Case and Ms. Brown who function as if they are exempt from considering this cultural aspect of students' lived experiences. Furthermore, they spend little time assembling the pedagogical resources needed to effectively teach any students of Color, and particularly not a bi/mixed racial student whose identity is at a heightened stage of dual development.

Ms. Brown indicated that she touched on issues of race by using picture books that represented multicultural children, but she continued in her narrative to minimize the significance of race for children in her classroom. She suggested that diversity courses in teacher education programs did little to support equity pedagogies, prejudice reduction or to actually change the pervasive White normalized culture of schools. She demonstrated complete disregard for Bailey's biracial status and when confronted

with allegations from Bailey’s mother that other children in Ms. Brown’s class were teasing Bailey because of her racial identity, Ms. Brown dismissed the mother and claimed in her interview that the teasing, “was just kids being kids”.

Ms. Davis, Bailey’s second grade teacher declined participation in the study, therefore a teacher perspective on this particular year of Bailey’s education is not represented in this data set. Bailey’s third grade teacher, Ms. Page, offered a unique view of what the classroom experience should look like for Bailey. Her previous experience as the diversity coach for several years at Bailey’s school appeared to have an impact on her instructional choices that reflect the district’s mission and goals. Ms. Page suggested that:

The most effective technique to ensure inclusion of all students is to build a classroom community of students who respect and care about one another. This can be done by ensuring that bulletin boards, displays, instructional materials, and other visuals in the classroom reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds represented by students.

She included daily activities and visual imagery that highlighted students’ cultural lives and she demonstrated a commitment in her narrative to reduce racial bias and increase self-awareness among her students. Ms. Page noted, “It is important to have open conversations/dialogue about race with teachers, especially new teachers; we need strategies to help teachers,” and she indicated an appreciation of the school district’s initiatives to support diversity training for teachers through required professional development. She supports the district’s message that diversity, inclusion and equity are fundamental aspects of quality teaching and learning. While the district training was currently focused on

improving academic outcomes for low socioeconomic students, she noted that there has been no attention concentrated on the educational experiences of bi/mixed race students.

Multicultural education is a basic concept designed to create educational environments where students’ lived cultural experiences are valued and incorporated into the daily teaching and learning activities of the classroom. Ideally, multicultural education should assist students with maintaining a healthy self-concept while building the capacity to appreciate the contributions of their peers and understand the skills needed to participate fully in a democratic society. For a bi/mixed race child, a multicultural education model is a minimally acceptable framework for effective design of curriculum and instruction. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 outline the multicultural dimension scale and the level of the participant teachers’ multicultural instructional strategies. The scale spans from level one which is the lowest or introductory stage of integration to level five which is the highest or advanced stage of integration.

Table 2.1
Teachers’ use of lesson plans, classroom texts, and district goals and objectives

| Multicultural Dimensions Scale | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Dimension | Level 1: Content | Level 2: Knowledge Construction | Level 3: Equity |
| Levels 1-3 | Integration | | Pedagogy |
| Definition | Integrating minorities into the curriculum; diverse representation | Understanding, investigating, and determining implicit cultural assumptions and frames of reference. | Changing instructional methods to enable kids from all racial groups to achieve. |
| Examples | Use picture books about African Americans and Asian Americans; create bulletin boards depicting famous women scientists. | Interrogate the embedded values and assumptions in terms like “the westward movement” from various cultural perspectives. | Employ a wide range of strategies and techniques such as cooperative groups, simulations, role-playing, and discovery. |
| Participants’ Instructional Data | All teacher participants achieved success at this level. | Only one teacher participant achieved success at this level. Ms. Page urged students to consider diverse perspectives in State history by asking, “How do you think Native Americans felt when Columbus came to America?” The other teacher participants indicated that elementary students were not ready for this depth of analysis and therefore did not operate at this level. | No teacher participant achieved success at this level. While they indicated in their narratives a desire to help all students learn, they failed to demonstrate any specific strategies used in the classroom that were specifically designed to ensure all students were engaged in lessons that promoted inclusivity. |
| Participants’ Evidence Data | Picture books included: <i>Climbing Lincoln’s Steps: The African American Journey</i> <i>My Language Your Language</i> <i>Nasrene’s Secret</i> <i>School: A True Story from Afghanistan</i> <i>Rosa Parks</i> | State Standard: 3rd grade – State History Native (Indigenous) American History – Columbus’ Role as colonizer | Classroom Activities: “Sharing Circle” and “Role Playing” daily were used in Ms. Page’s classroom; however she could not articulate how these activities were specifically applicable to diverse students. |

Table 2.2
Teachers' use of lesson plans, classroom texts, and district goals and objectives

| Multicultural Dimensions Scale | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Dimension | Level 4: | Level 5: |
| Levels 4-5 | Prejudice Reduction | Empowering School Culture |
| Definition | Using methods to help students develop more positive racial attitudes. | Designing total school culture to create systemic equity |
| Examples | Address discriminatory behavior; channel healthy conflict toward resolutions; model empathy for difference. | Gauge personnel choices; revise policies that do not foster diverse representation and equitable outcomes. |
| Participants' Instructional Data | Ms. Page uses a technique she refers to as "Commonalities and Differences" to help students value diversity. Students discuss one (1) thing they all have in common and two (2) things that make them different or unique. This technique is an example of teaching empathy for difference. Ms. Brown and Ms. Case suggested that using picture books help kids develop more positive racial attitudes; however, they did not describe how they assessed the success of this instructional strategy to address the goal of prejudice reduction. | While the district's mission statement overtly states a commitment to diversity and inclusion; adjusting school cultures is an agenda item not yet realized. Nevertheless, the addition of a diversity, equity and inclusion officer at the district level is unique for P-12 school districts. |
| Participants' Evidence Data | Classroom Artifacts: Bulletin boards, displays, instructional materials and other visuals in the classroom to reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds represented by all students was cited as documentation used to reduce prejudice. The documents in isolation of pedagogical skills place these documents at Level One. | School Personnel and Policies: Racial representation of teachers in the district: 67% White teachers; 77% students of Color All of the participant students' teachers were White, middle-class women. The district administrator interviewed was Black, middle-class. |

Ambiguity in Mixed-Race Student Education: Concluding Thoughts

The limited literature focusing on racial identity at the elementary level coupled with the belief that young children have not begun to process the significance of racial identity supports the notion that scholarly scrutiny of this cultural aspect of schooling is unnecessary. The data from this study reiterates the need to continue exploring elementary teachers' views on the broad challenges of serving students from families that are ethnically diverse in myriad ways. Unfortunately, this study shows that teachers in a highly diverse school district are inadequately prepared to effectively utilize equity pedagogies and have inadequate techniques for responding to the racial identity needs of a bi/mixed race child. Convergent with one teacher's belief that diversity training was ineffective, the data suggest that the only teacher who approached effectiveness on the multicultural dimension scale was the former diversity coach.

The especially sparse research on bi/mixed raced students' experiences in elementary classrooms essentially explains the teacher participants' limited exposure to

ideas that run counter to their uninformed philosophies. The data demonstrated that elementary teachers' active engagement with students regarding issues of diversity, equity and inclusion were primarily at the first level of the multicultural dimension scale. This suggests that attention is needed to expose teachers to effective training that promotes self-reflection, transformation and professional action. Teachers must face their inherent biases for district initiatives to be operationalized in the classroom. Unfortunately, none of the participant teachers exhibited self-reflection or an awareness of the role they played as potential agents of change for students of Color and or bi/mixed race students who have a hyper-racialized schooling experience. Moving White teachers into a state of racial awareness at all dimensions of the scale is critical as they are the majority of the US teaching force (Choi, 2008). Tatum's (2007) contributions toward utilizing race identity models at P-12 levels merits expansion, especially at the elementary level. Data from this study suggests that teachers largely ignored the racial implications of their instructional choices and significantly reduced the complex racial identity development occurring in Bailey's educational experience. Teachers who dismiss race disadvantage their students from building a skill set that might enable them to not only function well in society, but to challenge structures that prohibit inclusion and equity for future generations (Michael, 2012).

This study creates new questions about the methods that pre-service teacher education programs and professional development initiatives use to address the scarcity of teachers who understand and dynamically incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion into their practices. Reform efforts may include exposing pre-service and in-service educators to more critical

literature that enables them to challenge their undisturbed ideas about bi/multiracial students. More importantly, teachers who regularly write in personal journals about their racial perceptions in the context of broad ranging ideas of curriculum find the space to critique their own deep-seated biases. It is vital that we create spaces where teachers can safely acknowledge the shortcomings of their professional preparation without judgement. We must also assist teachers to forge bonds with a diverse cadre of individuals who can facilitate their expansion of knowledge and capability to teach for equity and excellence (Jeffries, 2006). This is especially relevant to the education of bi/multiracial students where very few studies address their unique racial identity development and even fewer focus on the early childhood and elementary stages. Critical concerns surrounding social justice and political power are at stake as the number of bi/multiracial individuals is projected to increase; therefore, prevailing classroom perspectives need to reflect the racial identity needs of bi/multiracial students. Educators must acknowledge the socially constructed systems of power and privilege that are replicated and reified in classrooms and schools when dominant cultures are not challenged. The daily practice of confronting the changing landscape of education and resisting inertia is foundational to the teaching and learning profession. As teachers reflect on their personal perspectives and adjust their professional practices, students will become the beneficiaries of schools that embrace new constructions of race and expanded agendas seeking social justice.

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Appendix A

Table 1
Teacher/Administrator Interview Protocol

Multicultural Scale Levels 1-2 Items

1. Do you think a student's racial identity is important to know? How do you gain knowledge of a student's racial identity?
2. What do you think is the best way for teachers to gain knowledge and understanding of a student's racial identity?
3. Is racial identity important to discuss with elementary level students?

Multicultural Scale Level 3 Items

4. Studies have proven that historically there has been little to no Black/White biracial role models/representation within curricula and instruction and that teachers do not know how to address the unique needs of Black/White biracial students. Why do you think this is the case?
5. How do you ensure inclusion of Black/White biracial representation within your classroom? Do you feel that you create a safe space for racial dialogue?
6. Do you think representation and inclusion of Black/White biracial students within curricula and instruction has changed/shifted (since you first began teaching)?
7. Does your school/district support your methods/pedagogical approach to racial inclusion?

Multicultural Scale Levels 4-5 Items

8. Has Bailey ever asked questions or made comments about her racial identity?
 9. Have you noticed any incidences with Bailey and other children (i.e. teasing)? If yes, did you feel it was racially motivated? How did you handle this situation?
 10. Do you believe a district, school, and classroom that is racially diverse actively practices diversity and inclusion?
 11. What are the best ways to train teachers/educators about self-awareness to counter racial bias?
 12. Have you participated in training which reflects the district's goal of seeing diversity and inclusion as a state of mind instead of an event?
-

Appendix B

Table 2.1

Teachers' use of lesson plans, classroom texts, and district goals and objectives

| Multicultural Dimensions Scale | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Dimension | Level 1: | Level 2: | Level 3: |
| Levels 1-3 | Content Integration | Knowledge Construction | Equity Pedagogy |
| Definition | Integrating minorities into the curriculum; diverse representation | Understanding, investigating, and determining implicit cultural assumptions and frames of reference. | Changing instructional methods to enable kids from all racial groups to achieve. |
| Examples | Use picture books about African Americans and Asian Americans; create bulletin boards depicting famous women scientists. | Interrogate the embedded values and assumptions in terms like "the westward movement" from various cultural perspectives. | Employ a wide range of strategies and techniques such as cooperative groups, simulations, role-playing, and discovery. |
| Participants' Instructional Data | All teacher participants achieved success at this level. | Only one teacher participant achieved success at this level. Ms. Page urged students to consider diverse perspectives in State history by asking, "How do you think Native Americans felt when Columbus came to America?" The other teacher participants indicated that elementary students were not ready for this depth of analysis and therefore did not operate at this level. | No teacher participant achieved success at this level. While they indicated in their narratives a desire to help all students learn, they failed to demonstrate any specific strategies used in the classroom that were specifically designed to ensure all students were engaged in lessons that promoted inclusivity. |
| Participants' Evidence Data | Picture books included: <i>Climbing Lincoln's</i> <i>Steps: The African American Journey</i> <i>My Language Your Language</i> <i>Nasrene's Secret</i> <i>School: A True Story from Afghanistan</i> <i>Rosa Parks</i> | State Standard: 3rd grade – State History Native (Indigenous) American History – Columbus' Role as colonizer | Classroom Activities: "Sharing Circle" and "Role Playing" daily were used in Ms. Page's classroom; however she could not articulate how these activities were specifically applicable to diverse students. |

Appendix C

Table 2.2

Teachers' use of lesson plans, classroom texts, and district goals and objectives

| Multicultural Dimensions Scale | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dimension | Level 4: | Level 5: |
| Levels 4-5 | Prejudice Reduction | Empowering School Culture |
| Definition | Using methods to help students develop more positive racial attitudes. | Designing total school culture to create systemic equity |
| Examples | Address discriminatory behavior; channel healthy conflict toward resolutions; model empathy for difference. | Gauge personnel choices; revise policies that do not foster diverse representation and equitable outcomes. |
| Participants' Instructional Data | Ms. Page uses a technique she refers to as "Commonalities and Differences" to help students value diversity. Students discuss one (1) thing they all have in common and two (2) things that make them different or unique. This technique is an example of teaching empathy for difference. Ms. Brown and Ms. Case suggested that using picture books help kids develop more positive racial attitudes; however, they did not describe how they assessed the success of this instructional strategy to address the goal of prejudice reduction. | While the district's mission statement overtly states a commitment to diversity and inclusion; adjusting school cultures is an agenda item not yet realized. Nevertheless, the addition of a diversity, equity and inclusion officer at the district level is unique for P-12 school districts. |
| Participants' Evidence Data | <p>Classroom</p> <p>Artifacts:</p> <p>Bulletin boards, displays, instructional materials and other visuals in the classroom to reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds represented by all students was cited as documentation used to reduce prejudice. The documents in isolation of pedagogical skills places these documents at Level One.</p> | <p>School Personnel and Policies:</p> <p>Racial representation of teachers in the district: 67% White teachers; 77% students of Color</p> <p>All of the participant students' teachers were White, middle-class women.</p> <p>The district administrator interviewed was Black, middle-class.</p> |