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“IT IS A PECULIAR SENSATION, THIS MULTIPLE-CONSCIOUSNESS”: PUTTING THE MULTIRACIAL EXPERIENCE INTO MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Alexis is the product of miscegenation. Her mother is White and her father is Black. Her appearance blends both races so that, at a glance, she might be described as light brown with slim, European facial features. Growing up, Alexis faced many stereotypical situations mixed-race individuals face. She was constantly asked, “What are you?” and told she looked exotic. When others tried to guess her racial makeup, she was called Hispanic, Arabic, or Filipino, rarely ever identified with her correct racial ancestry. Even though Alexis may not be a living person, her experience is one to which many mixed-race individuals can relate.

The year 2000 marked a milestone for the mixed-race population in the United States. This was the first year any person of mixed race was allowed to identify as such on the U.S. Census. As a result, the population of non-Hispanic, multiracial persons jumped from 0 in 1990 to 4,602,146 in 2000 (“Population by race,” 2000). Where did all these people of mixed race come from? The simple answer: they were always here.

Despite persons of mixed-race existing well before 2000, research on this portion of the United States’ population is lacking. This literature review begins to connect mixed-race history and theory to educational theory and practice. The purpose of this connection is to examine the mixed-race experience in multicultural education and why it is underreported in current research. Bridging the gap between multiracial experiences and multicultural education might possibly

make education more inclusive, not just for mixed-race students but for all students, because it will bring to the forefront similarities and differences that students, parents, and teachers should understand.

INTRODUCTION

Race permeates American culture, acting as a “fundamental organizing principle of human affairs” (Spickard, 1992, p. 12). It is most often associated with individual physique, such as skin tone and facial features, as a form of biology. However, Wardle and Cruz-Janzen (2004) distinguish between genotype, “the genetic code each person carries in his or her chromosomes”, and phenotype, “the physical characteristics an individual displays” (p. 28). They acknowledge the general public belief that individuals with the same genotype carry the same phenotype, and, yet, argue this is not fact. Harrison (2010) shares a statement on race from the American Anthropological Association: “Evidence from the analysis of genetics (e.g., DNA) indicates that most physical variation, about 94%, lies within so-called racial groups. Conventional geographic “racial” groups differ from one another only in about 6%” (p. 23). To use another example, this understanding of genetics among races is analogous to comparing granulated sugar, table salt, and corn syrup. While granulated sugar may look like table salt, chemically it has more in common with corn syrup. This analogy begins to break down the argument of race as biology.

Some scholars view race as a social construct (Spickard, 1992; Harrison, 2010). As a social construct, race becomes a way to maintain boundaries (Spickard, 2010), commonly referred to as *the color line*. Wardle and Cruz-Janzen (2004) claim that “maintaining the color line truly translates to maintaining the power line” (p. 97). Power, especially in the United States, feeds the stratification system that creates racial group division, placing Whites at the top. As a

result, oppressed racial groups “fight for numbers” to “fight against the institutional structure designed to perpetuate their dehumanization and oppression,” in addition to fighting against other oppressed racial groups for “limited resources” (p. 98).

Further support viewing race as a social construct is the “flexibility” of race. Views on race have changed throughout history. Race has “been defined and used in different ways by different cultures in different time periods” (Harrison, 2010, p. 21). However, if race is to be seen as a biological occurrence, the understanding of it should follow suit. The fact that the understanding of race varies between groups and over time leads me to define it as a social construct.

Additionally, the concepts of *monoracial* and *mixed race* need to be defined. In our common understanding of race, an individual is identified by a single racial category. These categories include Caucasian, African American, Native American, Asian-Pacific Islander, Arab and Hispanic/Latino. When introducing persons who represent a mix of any of these labels, a distinction must be made between those persons, and individuals who are represented by only one group. Therefore, a monoracial individual has parents who fall into the same socially-constructed racial group, while a mixed-race individual has parents who fall into two or more racial groups.

To begin to understand how race, and specifically mixed-race individuals, fit into educational studies, the changes that mixed-race categorization has gone through must also be examined. Just as Harrison believes, racial categorization is not a stagnant concept, and this rings true for descriptions of mixed-race individuals.

History of Mixed-Race Categorization

Mixed-race individuals have been around for much longer than current U.S. Census reports would have us believe. As a feature of slavery, “white men were able to sexually victimize enslaved and defenseless black women,” resulting in mixed-race offspring, at the time referred to as *mulatto* (Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1986, p. 13). However, these mulattoes did not have the freedom to “check all that apply.” The biggest cause for this lack of freedom was the *one-drop rule*, a rule that dictated anyone with a single drop of Black blood be categorized solely as Black (Gullickson, 2004).

Despite the one-drop rule, mulattoes held certain privileges, due to their White ancestry, that non-mixed Black slaves at the time did not. The biggest privilege mulattoes were often granted was being released from slavery. In the lower southern region of the United States, in states such as Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, mulattoes accounted for 76% of the free colored population, but only 9% of the slave population (Gullickson, 2010). The population of mulattoes who were enslaved still received privileges such as “release from field work, better housing, education (formal or informal), [and] clothing” (Okazawa-Rey et al., 1986, p. 13). Gullickson (2010) theorizes that the distinction of mulatto privileges was set to maintain the power structure, as set by Whites at the time. These power structures placed whiteness at the highest value and blackness at the lowest. Therefore, mulattoes were placed somewhere in the middle, as better than Blacks, but not quite equal with Whites.

This preference of mulattoes over non-mixed Black slaves by Whites, resulting in “the ability to purchase light-skinned ‘fancy slaves’ with long hair and European features, was a marker of wealth” (Kerr, 2005, p. 276). In addition, a belief that “darker skin meant better labor” and “light-skinned blacks were better suited for intelligent tasks” (p. 273) prevailed. This skin-

tone distinction drove a deeper wedge between more privileged, lighter-skinned slaves (mulattoes) and their darker-skinned peers.

After the emancipation in 1865 and the rise of Jim Crow segregation, “well educated aristocrats, with noticeable amounts of white blood, withdrew further and further away from the darker classes, distinguishing themselves (free people of color) from others (*freed* people of color)” (Kerr, 2005, p. 277). However, this distinction was still complicated by the one-drop rule. The rule existed because of an “abstract concept [in which] whiteness is believed to represent civility, intelligence, and beauty, and, in contrast, Blackness...is seen as representing primitiveness, ignorance, and ugliness” (Hunter, 2002, p. 187). This concept sentenced to mixed-race persons “a marginal existence” (Okazawa-Rey et al., 1986, p. 13). No matter how much White ancestry mulattoes had, their Black ancestry kept them “below” Whites, while at the same time their White ancestry kept them “above” Blacks. The one-drop rule thus established “greater solidarity” among mulattoes and Blacks (Gullickson, 2010, p. 195). However, when mulattoes returned to the Black community, they returned as socially elite.

As the Jim Crow era continued, light-skinned Blacks, formerly referred to as “mulattoes,” took on elite roles, first, because of inherited privileges from their White family, but also from the same systems that kept Blacks’ status below that of Whites. The notion of the “fancy slave” had finally set into the Black community, and preference for light-skinned Blacks rose. To hold on to this preference, light-skinned Blacks established tests to stay separate from dark-skinned Blacks. The most infamous of these is the “brown paper bag test.” Kerr (2005) describes the color of a brown paper bag as the “center [of] blackness on a continuum from black to white” (p. 272). In this test, a paper grocery-store bag was compared to a person’s face. If that person was lighter than the bag, s/he was admitted into an institution, but if s/he was darker than the bag,

s/he was not admitted (Kerr, 2005; Kerr, 2006/2007). Institutions such as churches, social organizations, professional organizations, fraternities, sororities, even universities—Howard University is rumored to have required photographs with applications to weed out dark-skinned applicants—used this test (Kerr 2006/2007).

Similar to the brown paper bag test, the “vein test” was also used. To pass this test, a person’s skin color had to be light enough so her/his veins were visible on her/his arms and legs (Kerr 2006/2007). From this test, the phenomenon of “blue-vein societies” and “blue-vein parties” grew. Daniel (1992) describes these as “collective resistance” from the Black community toward the use of the one-drop rule as categorization (p. 92). Whether blue-vein societies are seen as such or not, they represent the manifestation of what scholars refer to as *skin tone (or color) stratification* (Gullickson, 2010). In instances of skin tone stratification, persons of a similar race are separated by skin tone and placed into a hierarchy. In most cases, the lighter skin tones are placed at the top of the hierarchy, due to their closeness *to* whiteness, and darker skin tones are placed at the bottom, due to their distance *from* whiteness. This stratification system existed during slavery, however, by the twentieth century it had finally become common in the Black community. As a result, a form of intra-racism called *colorism* arose in the Black community. Colorism is a prejudice in which, again, persons of a similar race differentiate themselves by phenotype, mainly skin tone, and greater value is placed on a specific tone.

The Civil Rights Movement, beginning in 1954 with U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* court case, marked the official end of the Jim Crow era in the U.S. As a more pro-Black sentiment surfaced with the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement arose in 1966 and darker skin became more valued in the Black community. Light-

skinned Blacks did not automatically hold elite positions, as they had previously. Outside the Black community, however, lighter-skinned Blacks still enjoyed many privileges.

Mixed-Race Theory

Just as the value of mixed race ancestry has changed throughout American history, theories to explain mixed races have also changed. In an attempt to examine the lives of mixed-race individuals, two main theories dominated twentieth century social discourse. The first of these is the *hybrid degeneracy theory*. This theory states that

people of multiracial heritage are genetically inferior to both (or all) of their parent races. Multiracial people are described as having no strength in the physical, mental, emotional, or moral senses, leading to early deaths and the inability to reproduce, and thus ultimately to group (and even human) extinction (Nakashima, 1992, p. 165).

History and genetics have easily disproved this theory, which is why it is not respected today.

However, when the theory was widely accepted, it fueled many laws against miscegenation.

The second theory, still in use today, is the *marginal-man theory*. This theory suggests that “the marginal man is poised outside of the two races to which he belongs, never fully accepted by either but instead, a stranger in both worlds,” and as a result, mixed-race individuals are constantly faced with negative experiences, such as “rejection, isolation, and stigma from both dominant and minority groups” (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008, p. 36). Gullickson (2004) argues that the marginal-man theory relies “on an extremely static and monolithic understanding of culture” where each racial group possesses “a culture” (p. 15). Consider what that means by trying to answer the question “What does it mean to be Black? White? Hispanic? Asian? Native American?” There is no single, clear-cut way to define an entire race by a unique culture, yet mixed-race individuals are thought to be on the outside of these large, discrete cultures, unable to participate in multiple identities.

Currently, research has moved away from trying to describe mixed-race individuals as members of a group and tries instead to explain their development of a racial identity. To begin to understand the development of racial identity, a distinction must be made between racial ancestry, racial identification, and racial identity. Herman distinguishes between these terms with the following:

racial ancestry, the geno-phenotypical racial group(s) which make up a target's family tree; *racial identification*, the group or groups a target uses to identify himself/herself racially or ethnically; and *racial identity*, the set of roles and behaviors a target uses to exhibit his/her connection with a particular culture (2010, p. 59, italics in original).

Take our fictional character Alexis, for example: her racial ancestry consists of English, German, Scottish, African American, and Dutch roots; her racial identification is tied to the White, Black, and biracial races, and her racial identity – for the most part – coincides with the mixed-race community.

Rockquemore and Brunsma (2008) describe racial identities as being “socially constructed in a racist society” (p. 11). While it is rare to find this sentiment so directly stated, other scholars define racial identity development in ways that mirror it. Herman (2010) writes that “symbolic interaction theory argues that we come to see ourselves the way others see us” (p. 159). In addition, Tettegah (1996) claims that “racial identity development theory advances the notion that perceptions and beliefs about oneself and others are influenced by the particular racial group(s) to which persons belong” (p. 152). Simply stated, this means that perceptions of oneself and others are driven by understandings from, and of, particular racial groups. These understandings are generated from a mixture of one's personal environment and individual experiences. In some cases, this mixture leads to the formation of stereotypes.

To overcome the dichotomous categorization of racial identities and understand multiracial identity formation, scholars have argued that mixed race individuals do not follow a

linear path in their identity development, but instead take on a more fluid development (Root, as paraphrased by Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Jacobs, as paraphrased by Herman, 2004). One model maps out multiracial identity formation in the following steps:

(a) a precolor constancy stage where children experiment with different racial identities and understandings of color; (b) a racial ambivalence stage where children have a fuller understand of color and the social meanings attached to skin colors; and (c) a biracial identity stage where children understand that racial group membership is correlated with skin color but determined by parentage, social norms, and personal choice (Jacobs, as paraphrased by Herman, 2004, p. 732).

Thinking of Alexis, again imagine her racial identity formation in these steps: In her earlier years – roughly the time she begins school – she will compare herself to her classmates, based on phenotype. She will, without knowing it, pick up on what appears to be a behavioral difference among her classmates of different races. She will experiment with different behavior traits to determine what feels most comfortable to her. Further on in life—perhaps around early adolescence—Alexis recognizes the social difference between races, and is well versed in the operation of both inter- and intra-racism. This is very likely the stage where Alexis will feel anger about her racial identity. Finally, toward the end of adolescence, Alexis comes to terms with her race, noting that skin color is not the sole determinant of one's racial categorization. At this time, she can choose to identify in a number of ways. While this is a simple example on a timeline that, for many, is unrealistic, it is an attempt to explain mixed-race racial identity development.

While Jacobs' model uses steps to describe this development, it should not be assumed that all mixed-race individuals come to the same conclusions about their racial identity.

Rockquemore and Brunsma (2008) dispel this notion by defining four different racial identities mixed-race individuals can assume. These include the *singular identity*, the *border identity*, the

protean identity, and the *transcendent identity*. The *singular identity* is one in which the mixed-race individual identifies with only one race, usually because the individual “appears” to be a certain race to others and accepts this identity for her/himself. The *border identity* occurs when the individual identifies as mixed race, accepting and blending both (or all) races to which s/he belongs. The border identity comes in two forms, *validated* and *invalidated*. A validated border identity is one in which others, outside the individual’s circle of family, friends, and peers, accept her/him as mixed race, while, with an invalidated border identity, that courtesy is not granted.

In a *protean identity*, the individual accepts all her/his races, including that of mixed race, but shifts identity depending on the environment s/he is in. Protean identity differs from border identity in that individuals with border identities blend races; the protean identifier believes her/his races “are not culturally integrated” (p. 46-47). Finally, the *transcendent identity* is one in which an individual opts out of categorization. This is the identity most closely related to the marginal-man theory.

In an ideal world, the above models of multi-racial identity formation would be widely known, and others would accept mixed-race individuals’ decisions about their racial identity outside their inner circle. However, this is not the case in the actual world. Perceptions and expectations of mixed-race individuals are generally closer to the one-drop rule and marginal-man theory. One important expectation of mixed-race individuals is that they choose to identify with a single race, and they are pushed to pick the minority, or lower-status identification (Baxley, 2008; Nakashima, 1992). This expectation can be connected to the one-drop rule that forced part-Black, mixed-race individuals to identify solely as Black during the periods of slavery and Jim Crow. As evident from Rockquemore and Brunson’s racial identities, it is not

uncommon that some mixed-race individuals decide to self-identify as only one race. A study of biracial students found some reasoning behind this decision. This decision can come about because:

(a) [the biracial students] felt it was the “right” thing to do, given the history of oppression of the non-White races; (b) they found it simpler than claiming to be biracial; and (c) they have contact only with their non-White parent (Quintana as cited by Herman, 2004, p. 744).

While such reasoning might explain why mixed-race people choose to identify as one race, they should not be forced into single, and usually socially disenfranchised, racial categories. Instead, educational theory and practice should attempt to bring *all* mixed-race experiences into the classroom.

Mixed-Race Students in the Classroom

The paucity of research on mixed-race students reflects the history of mixed-race categorization. In most cases, “checking monoracial boxes for multiracial children...has become a very tangible symbol of the multiracial individuals’ lack of inclusion in American society” (Ayers Chiong, 1998, p. 2). The one-drop rule in mixed-race categorization leads to misrepresenting the mixed-race population in schools, which, in turn, has reduced research on mixed-race students. However, since mixed-race students are a quickly growing population, this gap between their categorization and educational studies needs to be closed. What can be pieced together from these two fields of research is a common practice of racial categorization as a biological concept related to physical features, and the continuing existence of a one-drop rule.

Herman (2010) conducted a study in which observers were shown pictures of individuals of varying races, including individuals of mixed race, and asked to determine their racial grouping. In the study, Herman hypothesized three processes used by observers to make these

decisions: *determinant hypothesis*, *contact hypothesis*, and *own-race hypothesis*. *Determinant hypothesis* has “observers [relying] on certain physical features to distinguish between races,” (p. 60), which is not always an accurate method (remember the comparison of granulated sugar, salt, and corn syrup). *Contact hypothesis* “argues [that] it is characteristics of the observer, such as the amount of contact an observer has had with people of another racial group, which determines the observer’s accuracy” (op. 60). Finally, *own-race hypothesis* suggests that “all humans separate individuals into own-group members and out-group members based on physical or personality characteristics” (p. 60). The own-group hypothesis relies heavily on stereotypes and racial stratification. However, “*multiracial* targets confuse the own-group/out-group dichotomy” (p. 61, italics in original). Herman notes that congruence, an “agreement between the target and the observer on the race(s) of the target,” is “complex” for mixed-race individuals, which can also be observed in the school setting.

The determinant, contact, and own-race processes of racial categorization enter school settings when schools are required to report their students’ racial groupings. Ayers Chiong (1998) describes how schools allow mixed-race students to identify as “multiracial” or “other,” but state tallies do not recognize such distinctions. Instead, students are coded with one of the five recognized monoracial categories—American Indian, Black, Asian, Hispanic, and White—in a process called “eyeballing,” where teachers, secretaries, or administrators use their own judgment to racially categorize a student. Considering the one-drop rule, eyeballing usually results in mixed-race students being identified as their minority, or lowest-status race. When examined along with research on teacher expectations based on race, eyeballing and the one-drop rule in the classroom are detrimental to the academic achievement of mixed-race students.

Eyeballing exists in classrooms because of a “cultural mismatch” between students and teachers (Tettegah, 1996). However, eyeballing is not all this cultural “mismatch” leads to. One of the most harmful results of cultural mismatch is negative teacher expectations and perceptions of students, especially when the teacher is White and the students represent a racial minority. Teachers will misinterpret cultural differences between races and form negative expectations and perceptions about students from their personal misinterpretations. In a 1998-1999 ethnographic study, Diamond, Randolph, and Spillane (2004) interviewed teachers and administrators from various schools with different student racial populations. In one school, eight teachers were interviewed. Of those eight, six emphasized “student deficits” in their interviews. They described the students as “disrespectful,” “lack[ing] discipline,” and being “too social” (p. 83-84). The cultural mismatch between these teachers and administrators and the students resulted in the teachers and administrators having negative perceptions of students. Even though the perceived deficits were non-intellectual, this aversion to the students’ behavior transfers to the cognitive expectations of their teachers.

Diamond et al. found something even more unsettling. In the same school, of the two educators who had positive perceptions of the students, one teacher compared students at the school to students at his last place of employment, a juvenile detention center. He referred to the students at his current school as “pretty good kids” (p. 84). However, when the reference point is “young criminal offenders,” (p. 84) a positive perception of the students is moot.

Examining this further indicates that teachers bring their personal biases to the classroom. Teachers’ expectations of their students differ by race. These differing expectations become “self-fulfilling prophecies” (Ferguson, 2003, p. 469), and in areas of educational inequality, racial minority students are reported as performing more poorly than their White peers. This

discrimination in the classroom is associated with “decreased academic motivations” (Sirota & Bailey, 2009, p. 256). As a result, negative teacher expectations can be a determining factor in the achievement gap. Since mixed-race students are often categorized by their lowest-status race, we can conclude they are included among the students about whom teachers hold negative perceptions and expectations (Ayers Chiong, 1998).

Herman (2009) offered three theories that attempt to explain the achievement gap between monoracial White and minority students: *status attainment theory*, *expectation status theory*, and *oppositional culture theory*. Herman found this necessary because she felt those theories did little to position multiracial students in classrooms. In a 1988-1990 study, she surveyed 5,117 students in two states. Of these students, 781 were designated as bi- or multiracial. She used this sample to compare academic achievement between monoracial and multiracial students and also to examine specific racial mixtures (i.e. Black-White, Black-Hispanic, White-Asian, White-Native American, and so on). Herman found that “...having Black or Hispanic ancestry *and* self-identifying as Black or Hispanic are associated with decreased grades relative to not holding or self-designating these racial statuses” (p. 29, italics in original). For these students, racial categorization has largely happened without their input and placed them at the bottom of the racial hierarchy, along with other social identities, such as those associated with socioeconomic status, which this paper does not discuss. The negative perceptions and expectations teachers and administrators hold for these races come full circle in the poor academic performance of such students.

Additionally, Herman (2009) found that “living in a whiter neighborhood and being in a whiter academic track are both associated with higher grades” (p. 36). This can be explained by using Fryer’s (2006) exploration of the phenomenon scholars and minority students deem as

“acting white.” Acting white is “a set of social interactions in which minority adolescents who get good grades in school enjoy less social popularity than white students who do well academically” (p. 53). Some behaviors Fryer associates with “acting white” include “speaking Standard English and enrolling in an Advanced Placement or honors classes” (p. 54). For minority students, who often feel education will not offer them the same outcomes as their White peers, excelling academically is not socially acceptable. Minority students who do excel academically are perceived as publicly denouncing their race and aligning themselves with Whites. In neighborhoods where the minority population is low, White students find “acting White” the norm. Therefore, for the multiracial students who live in these White neighborhoods, excelling academically is celebrated (Herman 2009).

Multiracial students are commonly identified as multiracial being members of only one race, usually that of the lower-status group. On the rare occasions they do benefit from majority or higher-level status, they are usually still viewed as monoracial. While some multiracial individuals may take on a singular identity, as indicated by Rockquemore and Brunσμα’s (2008) studies, this is not the case for all multiracial students. The question now becomes: What do we do with the multiracial experience in the classroom?

What this Means for Education

Research has shown us that multiracial students face unique problems in the classroom, miscategorization of their race(s), and problems faced by other minority students such as low teacher expectations and marginal academic achievement. What does this mean for education? Since our education system reflects the shifting categorization of multiracial students, changing the entire system would be cumbersome. However, what can be done is to continue research on

multiracial students beyond the issues of how they are perceived in the classroom and where they fall in the achievement gap. We must try to gain a complete understanding of their educational experiences. Additionally, and in some respects most importantly, we must find ways to recognize the multiracial experience in the multicultural curriculum.

James Banks' *Five Dimensions of Multicultural Education* offers measures that can be taken to expose students and teachers to varying experiences based on the social categorizations of race, gender, social class, religion, and sexual orientation. These measures include the knowledge construction process, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture and social structure (Wardle and Cruz-Janzen, 2004). In the practice of these dimensions, monoracial identity is preferred to a multiracial experience. This is especially present with part-Black multiracial students. Many Black figures that students learn about are, in fact, multiracial. Labeling these celebrated persons as Black further enforces the one-drop rule categorization of multiracial students.

Additionally, Wardle and Cruz-Janzen (2004) note that "the most popular approach of multicultural education in U.S. schools today is to study isolated and mutually exclusive groups during specific time periods" (p. 21). They identify celebrations such as Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, and Native American Heritage Month as examples. These "celebrations" result in "each group compet[ing] for the most time and attention in the school's calendar" (p. 21), creating clear boundaries between monoracial groups, and in which multiracial identities do not fit. As a result, "multiethnic and multiracial persons are not considered legitimate members of any traditional racial or ethnic group," (p. 21), and their experiences are left out of the curriculum.

What can be done to combat the problems that arise in current multicultural education practice is, first, to combine the group-specific curricula. Even from this, monoracial students would benefit from the understanding and connections with other groups. Second, to validate the multiracial experience, multicultural education curricula need to acknowledge the multiracial experience. Multiracial experiences and accomplishments can be discussed in the classroom, and, judging by the miscategorization of some historical figures, it would not be difficult to identify and include them in the existing multicultural curricular materials.

Another approach to restructuring education places responsibility on teacher preparation programs. Tettegah (1996) notes that "...teachers' racial identity and attitudes in turn affect their behavior toward students" (p. 154), and when considering that some students feel "preparation to teach in diverse classrooms [is] one of the least successful aspects of [teacher preparation] programs," further attention needs to be given to diversity training for teachers (Johnston, Carson, Richardson, Donald, Plews, & Kim, 2009, p. 2). Rather than waiting for teachers to enter the work force to face their own racial identities and attitudes, teacher preparation programs should provide a forum for student teachers to openly discuss race in association with education. Some researchers note:

When student teachers assign cultural identity to *the other* while refusing to interrogate their own cultural location, they are engaging in an act of resistance to the perceived threat that multiculturalism represents to their own identities (Conle et al., 2000, Finney & Orr, 1995 as paraphrased in Johnston et al., 2009, p. 3, italics in original).

To begin with examining one's own racial identity and attitudes provides student teachers with a foundation for examining racial attitudes generally held in U.S. society.

In 2004, Johnston et al. created a forum for student teachers to discuss personal and society-wide racial attitudes at their university, which they called the "Diversity Institute." While the university where Johnston et al. performed this diversity training is located in Canada, it

should be noted that racial attitudes in Canada are similar to those held in the U.S., as is the lack of diversity in the teaching force. In the Diversity Institute, student teachers were asked to participate in workshops centered on themes of awareness, discovering, becoming, and debriefing (p. 6). While some student teachers showed no immediate changes, others gained an increased awareness of racial attitudes on how they enter the classroom (p. 8).

Even though diversity training for teachers generally centers on the large population of White teachers, as noted by Milner (2010), “teachers of color do not automatically understand how to address the complexities inherent in teaching culturally diverse students” (p. 120). Therefore, teachers of color are not exempt, and should be included in diversity training.

However, neither Johnston et al. (2009) nor Milner (2010) included multiracial students in their reforming of diversity training. To truly understand *all* students present, teachers should be made aware of the complexities multiracial students will bring to the classroom.

Additionally, even after new teachers have left universities and are in classrooms of their own, it is critical that they continue observing their own behaviors. Herman (2009) suggests “more professional development for teachers in the area of race and achievement” (p. 39).

Cornbleth and Korth (1980) note:

Generally, student teachers tend to be especially concerned with making a favorable impression and being viewed by their students as unbiased and fair. Therefore, they might be particularly careful to avoid overt preferential treatment of individuals or groups (p. 262).

However, somewhere between student teaching and teaching in their own classrooms, teachers become less concerned with being unbiased and fair. Cornbleth and Korth also found that “teachers perceived the white students more favorably than the black students” (p. 261). How do we create a career-long understanding of the need for teachers to treat every student equally?

This research cannot answer that question, but it might draw attention to the need for a more inclusive and accepting environment for all students.

CONCLUSION

It is a peculiar sensation, this [multiple]-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his [multiple]-ness,—[a race here, and another there]; [multiple] souls, [multiple] thoughts, [multiple] unreconciled strivings; [multiple] warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (adapted from du Bois, p. 7)

When W.E.B. du Bois wrote those words in 1903, he was discussing the place Negroes had in the United States' society. A century later, these words, in addition to acknowledging du Bois' multiracial ancestry, can help explain the place multiracial students have in today's American classrooms. Between categorizing multiracial students as one race and the lack of acknowledgement of the multiracial experience in curricula and diversity training for teachers, multiracial students are too often forced to pick one identity with which to navigate a hostile education system, and in some cases, that choice is not their own.

Research on multiracial students has been limited because sociopolitical powers have done little to recognize their mixed-race categorization in schools. However, this is detrimental, not only for multiracial students, but for all students. Continuing to examine multiracial students and their experiences will create a deeper understanding of all students' experiences. In turn, this will begin to broach other social identities labeled as 'other' in the classroom, making our education system more affective for all.

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