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Cultural resilience--a currency of social capital: Counteracting student marginalization in two urban--suburban high schools

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CULTURAL RESILIENCE—A CURRENCY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL:

COUNTERACTING STUDENT MARGINALIZATION IN

TWO URBAN–SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOLS

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with love, gratitude, and sincere wishes for God's richest blessings to Ann Anderson, my mother, my mentor, and my best friend; Joel Erby, my son, my cheerleader, and, for so many things, the reason why; Adolph Smith, my uncle and my Muse; Edward Smith, my late uncle, whose joy and courage continue to move me and so many others in a most special way; Joel Erby, II, my grandson and my joy; and to Philip A. Reich for moral support and for his example of living diversity authentically and well.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study began as an exploration of the central qualities of the lived experience of students in two urban-suburban high schools where, as an outcome of rapid demographic change, White students now represent the nontraditional racial minority and Black students represent the racial majority.   Semistructured interviews, the primary method of data collection, were conducted with students who had graduated from the high schools under study and with adults who had significant ties to the district. Student informants, in particular, shared high school experiences of marginalization that included silence, rendered invisibility, stereotyping, and bias owing in large part to their racial/cultural status whether White or Black. They revealed a more powerful reality that counteracted the effects of marginalization and enabled them to negotiate identities across boundaries of access to resources supporting social and academic success.

Social capital that facilitated development of cultural resilience counteracted marginalizing conditions related to diversity in the high school experience. An articulated and captured vision of leadership for social justice, beginning with and courageously modeled by the educational leaders of the district, is key to the intentioned diffusion of social capital and cultural resilience in support of student success in diverse high school environments.

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

Overview

This qualitative research study began as an exploration of the central qualities of the lived experience of students in two urban-suburban high schools where, as a result of rapid demographic change, White students now represent the nontraditional racial minority and Black students represent the racial majority. Student participants in the pilot phase of the current work shared experiences of marginalization that included silence, rendered invisibility, stereotyping, and bias. They asserted that these experiences owed in large part to their racial/cultural status, whether they were White or Black. However, both the informants in the pilot phase and those in the actual study revealed that there existed for them an infinitely more powerful reality that counteracted the marginalizing effects of silence, rendered invisibility, stereotypical behavior, and bias.

The students in this study demonstrated a kind of resilience that was facilitated by social networks and the values and norms shared between those networks and the high school as an institution. This resilience allowed them to negotiate identities across boundaries of access to social and achievement resources within their diverse high school environments and to attain academic success. Hence, cultural resilience and social capital became areas of scholarship for exploration in the review of literature given the promise of furthering understanding about student empowerment to counteract the effects of marginalization in the diverse high school experience. Social constructivist multicultural education, based on the core values of equity, excellence, diversity, and caring-centeredness, was also explored as a set of additional social and institutional supports that aid students to develop resilience capable of counteracting marginalization and its effects.

The students in this study were academically successful both in and beyond high school. Their stories of powerful overcoming illumine, by way of lived examples, a dynamic partnership between individual resilience and institutional supports in terms of creating opportunities for academic success and in terms of enhancing students' abilities to access and use those opportunities. Cultural resilience is encouraged when the organization offers opportunities to build social capital so that students are better equipped to negotiate identities across the multiple boundaries of access to social and achievement resources found in their diverse high school environments.

Problem Statement

The problem is that institutions have not formalized the process for building social capital. Though we sought to understand the realities of students in a nontraditional racial mix in two specific urban-suburban high schools undergoing rapid demographic change, of more importance is the discovery of strategies for successful negotiation of boundaries of access in such environments that were identified by the students in this study.

Our understanding about these issues is confounded when we are faced with life spaces in which both Black students and White students dialectically represent the majority and, at the same time, the racially and culturally different Other. Whites remain the majority outside of school while representing the minority in school. Blacks represent the minority outside of school and the majority in school. Our understanding is also limited when faced with the dearth of research that addresses the topic of White minority and Black majority phenomena, specifically in relation to overcoming the multiple boundaries of access to institutional resources in support of school success that exist in diverse school settings.

Justification for the Study

"Ms. Erby, those kids said I can't sit there because I'm White," Jason, a White, male third-grader reported with consternation and more than a little disbelieving arrogance. Jason's words initiated this journey to frame, contextualize, and find answers and their implications to the questions *What is the reality of students in a nontraditional racial mix in urban-suburban high schools undergoing rapid demographic change, and what strategies offer hope for successful negotiation of identities in this diverse setting?*

Silent and silenced or just plain ignored voices around this issue were demonstrated in the schools involved in this study. The graduates of Harrington High School (HHS) and Williams Lake High School (WLHS) in Clavon Hills, Midwest, interviewed for this study, acknowledged the experience of marginalization. However, the student informants also described ways in which they accessed opportunities for or overcame barriers to success in their diverse high school environments. The study identified key characteristics that made for significant distinctions in the experiences of the students for whom inclusion and access were the more prominent realities. Student narratives that posed relevant questions and identified those individual characteristics were instructive and institutional structures that, when they were developed, made available, and utilized, supported the success of the students in their diverse high schools in spite of rapid demographic change.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to discover, explore, and describe the lived reality of students in a nontraditional racial mix in two specific urban-suburban high schools undergoing rapid demographic change; to discern content and meaning about this little-known phenomenon; to identify key individual characteristics and institutional structures and

functions and the nature of the relationship between them whereby social capital is built, cultural resilience is strengthened, and marginalization is counteracted; to derive educational implications for ensuring student success in a diverse high school; and to encourage further research.

Research Questions

The central questions around which this study was organized were *What is the experience of Black and White students in a nontraditional racial mix in urban-suburban high schools undergoing rapid demographic change, and what strategies offer hope for successful negotiation of identities in this diverse setting?* Related research questions were

1. How is social capital built in diverse learning environments for creating and growing opportunities for student access to the institutional and human resources needed for their school success?

2. What are the characteristics of the individual that, in tandem with institutional support, empower students to negotiate multiple and authentic identities across the multiple boundaries of access found in the diverse high school environment?

3. What critical issues must teachers and educational leaders in a diverse high school address to intentionally and formally create an inclusive high school environment that makes social capital accessible to all students in support of their achievement and the enhancement of their overall high school experience?

Significance of the Study

The value of this investigation lies in its potential to

1. Contribute to the knowledge base by scripting a narrative of a minimally researched student population, particularly in the context of implications for school success.

Hence, "what has been left out in social science writing" can begin to be filled in (Stewart, 1994, cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 84), and a different voice will be placed into the discourse about student diversity in high schools.

2. Encourage and inform professional discourse and action in the diverse high school setting about structuring for inclusion and equity of access to the resources that build social capital and cultural resilience that enable students' success in and beyond high school.

3. Inform inclusive planning, policy-making, and practice in Clavon Hills Public Schools (CHiPS) and other school districts for which rapidly changing demographics are reversing or have reversed the traditional majority and minority student populations and created a *new demographic*.

4. Inform the voice of student advocacy to include students for whom reversal of racial status represents a new reality.

<div align="center">Researcher Subjectivity</div>

Getting in touch with and publicly articulating what Peshkin (1988) called the *Researcher-I*, or researcher subjectivity/bias, is only fair (Scheurich & Young, 1997), and is a strict requirement of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The process of uncovering these biases involved ongoing self-exploration and discovery and some degree of surprise at how visceral my reactions sometimes were when meeting up with my subjectivity in the field and in my writing. I discovered an intense need for giving voice to multiple perspectives. Of even greater intensity was my rekindled loathing in view of reported instances of shame-based discipline and of secrecy or denial that hid pain and injustice.

The tremendous amount of data generated and the nonlinear form it took, in addition to my intimate knowledge of the study site and my passionate interest in the topic of study,

sometimes led to interpretations in keeping with what I expected to find before answering the challenge to discover new *ah-ha's*. My growing awareness of this subjectivity required that I step back often throughout the course of the study, as an outside observer of my own processes, in order to ascertain the impact that my biases had on my thinking and behavior as a researcher and on the study.

Also noteworthy here is my position as a Black female researcher and the autobiographical elements of the racialization, marginalization, and overcoming experiences shared by the informants in this study. Through this, I discovered that I am more *at home* when grounded in the quest for knowing in ways that honor personal lifetexts as expert testimony. Creating lifetext narratives from the rich and nonlinear juxtapositions of the informants' reality can capture what it means to give voice to experiences of racialization and marginalization as a critical step in overcoming their effects and in achieving school success. On a broader scale, these voices can provide additional authenticity and immediacy to discourse on advocacy and change around these issues.

Honoring lifetexts as expert testimony is also a cornerstone of the qualitative research tradition in which the perspectival is viewed as a key data point, as is getting in touch with one's own position in relation to the focus of inquiry. I find a special kind of honesty in a research tradition that does not deny the existence of bias but, rather, demands that subjectivity be painstakingly framed, examined, and articulated as important data in the study. Moreover, the researcher is viewed as a critical informant and instrument of inquiry.

Organization of the Study

The review of literature that Chapter 2 of this study comprises is multidisciplinary in approach. Despite extensive research, there appeared to exist no single paradigm for

investigating the complex truths about the topic under study. Theoretical and research scholarship is presented about social capital and cultural resilience, critical race pedagogy, and teaching and leadership based in social constructivist multicultural education as relevant literatures for contextualizing this study.

The research methodology used for conducting this study is described in Chapter 3. A statement of rationale for the selection of the qualitative research genre, more specifically, a case study design with accompanying assumptions is outlined as an important structural element in the organization of this study. The research epistemology at the basis of the design of the study, as well as of the researcher's thought and conduct, is also included. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation procedures are described; and the validity model used to support the evidential status of the data is delineated.

In Chapter 4, a historical time line is presented that depicts the development of Clavon Hills Public Schools (CHiPS), the background site of this study, from its pre-inception to present day. The demographic history of the two high schools can be viewed as a reflection of the changes in the community at large. The challenges and opportunities presented by the introduction of diversity into district discourse are presented. The two high schools, as they exist today, are introduced on the basis of interview and extant data. Initial themes arising from the study up to that point are identified as foreshadowing some of the later outcomes.

Thematic portraits introduce five graduates of the high schools in Clavon Hills, Midwest, in Chapter 5. Through the experiences and insights of these informants, a picture begins to emerge of the experience of White students in the minority and Black students in the majority at both high schools. While the experience is sometimes characterized as

marginalization in several guises, what stands out most are the bright gems of love and appreciation that these graduates still feel for their high schools. In this light, the student informants expressed their belief that the silence around issues of diversity and marginalization and around successful negotiation of identities within their former high school environments should be brought into open, honest, and ongoing discourse. They saw this discourse as a means of ensuring the existence of a caring-centered, culturally literate and socially just learning environment in their high schools supporting success for all students.

Although eight graduates were interviewed, five were selected for inclusion. The rationale for their selection was based on the relative thoughtfulness and focused and candid richness of their participation in the interviews. The comments of the five graduates chosen went well beyond single-phrase responses and/or expressions of a lack of experiences or opinions about the issues under inquiry.

The perspectives of four adult informants with strong ties to CHiPS are the basis of Chapter 6. The voices of two other adults informally interviewed for the study during the pilot phase are interwoven into the four written perspectives as a means of validating the themes appearing in the narratives.

Key findings of the study are reported in Chapter 7. The support for each finding is outlined by way of alignment of thematized interview data and extrapolated meaning from other data sources. The findings are contextualized by the review of literature. Finally, recommendations for further research are presented.

Definition of Terms

Cultural resilience   A concept grounded in the integration experience and a term

originating from American Indian culture theory suggesting

that traditional culture can help overcome adversity (Strand &

Peacock, 2002); the "self-righting and transcending ability of

all youth, adults, organizations and communities to spring

back, rebound and successfully overcome adversity" (Werner,

1996, p. 19)

Emic   Meaning that the views or perspectives of the participants

within a particular culture or group are represented in

ethnographic writing

Exemplaric   In qualitative research, refers to sets of patterns or thematic

clusters that transfer in meaning and interpretation between

similar situations (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994)

Learning community   The educational environment, the community within it, and the

larger community in which it resides. A learning community

can be a classroom, a school, a cluster of schools joined by

level or proximity, or a school district. A learning community

may be an organization in which education is a main activity

supporting the work of the organization (Senge, Kleiner,

Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994)

Marginalization   The systematic exclusion of the culturally different or non-

dominant other from equity of access to the structures of power

and privilege that control resources, services, information and

meaning, and the rights to self-definition and self-

determination. (Adapted from Reimer, 1998)

Social constructivist   A multifaceted, change-oriented process and set of attitudes

multicultural education   and beliefs supporting a comprehensive, equitable, and

rigorous education for all students, enabling them to function

reflectively and effectively in a pluralistic society (Banks,

1994). With critical pedagogy as the underlying philosophy,

social reconstructivist education focuses on knowledge,

reflection, and action *(praxis)* as the bases for social change

 and promotes the democratic principles of social justice

(Nieto, 1996) and the humanistic principle of caring

(Noddings, 1992; Pang, 2001)

Perspectival   The emphasis on interpretations of meaning based on the

perspectives of participants in an experience/phenomenon in a

particular context. The perspectival honors the subjective as a

unit of meaning in qualitative research

Praxis   The process of connecting reflection with action in pursuit of

knowledge and social change in service to world

transformation and justice, dignity, and the rights to self-

definition and self-determination (Freire, 1970)

Purposive/purposeful   Those sampling techniques based on conscious selection

sampling   of participants in research, intentionally choosing them for

what they can lend to deep phenomonological understanding (vs. generalizability); not random (Leedy, 1997)

Racialization   The assignment of identity based on differences from normative Whiteness

Researcher-I   Requires the qualitative researcher to consciously seek out her/his own assumptions, viewpoints, and prejudices about the phenomenon under exploration. The researcher's awareness becomes a key data point in the study (Peshkin, 1988)

Social capital   "The pattern and intensity of networks, and the shared values and norms arising from those networks that enable people to act collectively . . . [and to negotiate or broker identities across boundaries of access,] trust, acceptance and membership" (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 225; Arriaza, 2003). Forms of social capital are expectations and obligations that depend on the presence of trustworthiness in the social environment, information flow in order to provide a basis for action, and norms and sanctions (Coleman, 1988)

Socialization   Contextualized by cultural norms, codes of power, and predispositions of values and beliefs, the central mechanism through which social capital is "negotiated, grown, accumulated" and utilized for access to the resources of the community or organization (Arriaza, 2003, p. 72)

Thick description	In qualitative research writing, the densely textured

representation of the social/cultural context and the meanings

attributed by participants in that context (Geertz, 1973); the

qualitative research narrative presenting "detail, context,

emotion, and the webs of social relationships . . . and evok[ing]

emotionality and self-feelings. . . . [in which] the voices,

feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are

heard" (Denzin, 1989, p. 28)

Urban-suburban	The position of a suburban community as adjacent to the

central, or core, urban community. The communities share at

least one common boundary line

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The purpose of this review of literature is to develop a conceptual framework for exploring the experience of graduates of two specific urban-suburban high schools where, following rapid demographic change, White students now make up the nontraditional racial minority, and Black students make up the majority.

Marginalization, or the systematic exclusion of individuals or groups of individuals from equity of access to the "systems [of power] that control resources, services, information" (Reimer, 1998, p. 1) and from access to meaning as well as to the rights to self-definition and self-determination, emerged from the data as a construct that defined an important reality shared by both student groups. Marginalization was experienced by the student informants in the study primarily as discrimination, silencing, rendered invisibility, stereotyping, and bias. Also emerging from the data, however, were individual and institutional responses powerful enough to counteract the effects of marginalization. Students in the study were able to successfully negotiate multiple and authentic identities across the multiple boundaries that exist in a diverse high school setting. Hence, scholarship on social capital and cultural resilience, social reconstructivist multiculturalism based in critical race pedagogy, and educational leadership with equity, excellence, diversity, and caring-centeredness as core values is represented in this review of literature.

Social Capital: Negotiating Identities Across Boundaries Leading to School Success

Two critical questions arise when considering the ways in which the marginalized student other negotiates identities across the boundaries of access in the diverse high school environment:

- What in the institution enables students to successfully negotiate identities across the barriers of access to institutional resources supporting success within the diverse high school setting?

- What is the medium of exchange, the currency, or the assets that, when paid, escrowed, or leveraged allow access to the resources of highest quality learning, safety, and freedom to be and to become in that space called high school?

In keeping with the metaphors of currencies and assets, social capital becomes an area of scholarship for exploration. Simply defined, social capital is "the pattern and intensity of networks, and the shared values or norms arising from those networks that enable people to act collectively . . . [and to negotiate or broker identities across boundaries of] trust, acceptance and membership" (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 225; Arriaza, 2003). Within the simplicity of this definition, however, there exist several nuances or subconcepts that have implications for study and understanding.

Formal and informal networks are central to the concept of social capital. In the literature, networks are viewed as the cumulative resource created by personal relationships when people interact with each other in families, schools, and local associations and in the neighborhood and the workplace (Office for National Statistics, 2001). A typology of social capital is described in terms of different kinds of networks. *Bonding social capital* is characterized by the strong bonds that are created by close connections between people, such as among family members or among members of the same ethnic or racial group. Bonding social capital is useful in terms of *getting by* in life. The term *bridging social capital* describes more distant connections between people and is characterized by "weaker, more cross-cutting ties" (Office for National Statistics, 2001, p 11), for example, ties with

acquaintances, business associates, friends of friends, and with friends from different ethnic or racial groups. Bridging social capital is useful in terms of *getting ahead* in life. *Linking social capital* describes connections with people who hold positions of power. It differs from bonding and bridging social capital in that it is characterized by "relations between those within a hierarchy where there are differing levels of power" (Office for National Statistics, 2001, p. 11), such as relationships between teachers and students and between social services agency workers and clients. Linking social capital is critical for accessing support from formal institutions.

Maeroff 's (1998) identification of building social capital as a core value of the networks that impact individuals provides a common thread that unifies the elements of the typology described above. He summarized the outcomes of social capital as being inclusive of a sense of belonging, of security, of academic curiosity and achievement, and of knowing and "finding a place in the mainstream" (p. 46).

There is disconfirming evidence in the literature that leads some key researchers, such as Woolcott (in Lynch, Due, Muntaner, & Davey Smith, 2000), to indict the concept of social capital rather harshly by suggesting that it "risks trying to explain too much with too little and is being adopted indiscriminately, adapted uncritically, and applied imprecisely" (p. 404). In spite of this indictment, however, there is a consensus among a large body of key researchers in the field (e.g., Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000) that bring together the conceptual elements of social capital as, what Burt (2000) calls a "metaphor about advantage" (p. 3). Hence, while perspectives on the conceptual nature of social capital vary in terms of origin and the types of accompanying evidence,

agree[ment exists] on a social capital metaphor in which social structure [based in

social relationships, networks, and norms] is a kind of capital that can create for

certain individuals or groups a competitive advantage in pursuing their ends. (Burt,

2000, p. 3)

This consensus identifies social capital as germane to this study in terms of its function as a

conceptual backdrop for understanding more about the nature of social resources in the

school environment, itself a social context, and how students access these resources for

academic success. The findings of several studies on social capital within the context of

schools, utilizing measures represented by both structural and functional variables, cited

below, support the existence of a strong relationship between social capital and the academic

achievement of adolescents.

Meier (1999) coupled the early work of Coleman (1988), which introduced social

capital as a "resource inhering in the relationships between and among actors" (Meier, 1999,

p. 5) with recent research that refined the way in which social capital is defined and

operationalized. The resultant study examined the impact of specific social capital indicators

on academic achievement, disruptive behavior, and the ultimate decision to stay in or drop

out of school. The dimensions, or variables, of social capital this study sought to measure

were *forms,* or the relationships that create social capital; *assistance,* or that which is

generated through these relationships; and *quality,* or the character of these relationships and

the assistance provided. Meier's findings (1999) support earlier research that suggests that

the impact of social relationships on academic achievement among adolescents may be

explained in part by the quality of those relationships and the assistance they provide.

Additionally, this study suggests that teachers may provide even more assistance than parents

in terms of academic achievement "since this is their primary relationship with students" (p. 17). Disengagement from school was identified as a cumulative process related in part to inaccessibility of social resources that includes conflict with the norms of the environment. Last, this study suggests that the transfer of valuable information regarding opportunities for academic success is facilitated by positive relationships between teachers and students.

Cartland, Ruch-Ross, and Henry (2003) studied the capacity of a school environment to be inclusive in order to gain understanding about how social isolation can lead to peer aggression. Adolescents used a *hospitality scale* as two primary measures: to determine the extent to which they felt that they had social capital in school and the extent to which they provided social capital to other students. Based on the work of Cotterell (1996) that called for the development of "'supportive [hospitable] school environments,' in which administrators build a sense of community in the school by extending adult- and peer-support networks," this study put forth two hypotheses:

- For adolescents, a key element of social capital in the school is the level of hospitality to be found in the school environment

- The schools' capacity to be inclusive is an actual experience of the adolescent regardless of the status of inclusion as a normative belief in a democratic society.

Findings indicate that there is a relationship between adolescents' perceptions of the hospitality shown in their schools and the number of social resources they find there. Additionally, adolescents who found more resources at school added to those resources for others. Inviting more research were the suggestions that the presence of a hospitable school environment may mediate risk behaviors related to violence and that the school environment may be seen as hospitable only when an adolescent is able to avoid behaviors sanctioned by

that environment. Finally, this study holds that further research on measuring hospitality in schools may provide an indication of the extent to which the school environment is structured to mediate participation in behaviors related to violence. Conversely, I add the suggestion that hospitality be examined as it may relate to mediating participation in successful school behaviors.

Uekawa, Aladjem, and Zhang (2005) concentrated on teachers as actors in their study of the role of social capital in comprehensive school reform. The conceptual framework of this study comprises three primary features:

- Social capital is viewed as "a resource that resides in social relationships and helps individuals to achieve individual and group goals" (Burt, 1992, in Uekawa et al, 2005, p. 2)

- Social capital outcomes impact school capacity or the degree to which a school is able to make meaningful changes in its educational practices

- Social capital exists in organizations when two structural features are in place, that of collegial foci, or relationships and networks, both formal and informal, that encourage and support communication between educational professionals, and social roles, or the formal and informal roles played by individuals within a school.

Overall, the findings of this study support the growing body of literature that points to the critical role of social capital in improving organizational performance in general and in successfully implementing of school reform in particular. The researchers stated, "Where organizations are able to build social capital, performance improves. Where schools build social capital, student achievement improves" (p. 14). Last, the authors stated that the more

social roles individuals fulfill, "the richer the web of social networks" so that "as the social roles stabilize, social relations [become] the locus of learning" (Uekawa et al., 2005, p. 14).

Missing from these studies, as rich as they are, is an examination of the role of social capital in diverse school environments. Of particular interest here are those school settings witnessing a complete reversal in terms of traditional majority and minority populations. This reality certainly suggests boundaries possessing various degrees of permeability and other challenges requiring successful negotiation of identities toward achieving school success. The research introducing the next section provides for the identification of cultural resilience as a specific currency of social capital that has potential for high gains in the diverse school setting.

<div align="center">Cultural Resilience: A Currency of Social Capital</div>

The concept of cultural resilience is grounded in the integration experience and is a term originating from Native American culture theory suggesting the overcoming power of traditional culture in face of adversity (Strand & Peacock, 2002). In the current work, cultural resilience is viewed as a currency of social capital. In keeping with the original conceptualization by First Nation Peoples, cultural resilience is defined as "the self-righting and transcending ability with all youth, adults, organizations and communities to spring back, rebound and successfully adapt in the face of adversity" (Werner, 1996, p. 19). It is this socially capitalized cultural resilience that may be foundational to the empowerment of racialized students in a diverse school environment to negotiate identities across institutional and social boundaries of access toward the achievement of academic and social success. This section of the review of literature examines research on institutional social capital and

cultural resilience among students, forces that together counteract marginalization in diverse high school settings.

Arriaza (2003) conducted an action ethnographic research study that examined ways in which conflict between teachers and students mediates building social capital as measured by the generation, processing, and outcomes of disciplinary referrals. The goal of the study was to ascertain the role that social networks play in development and accumulation of social capital among students of color.

As part of this study, an existing duality is identified and examined in terms of the ways in which

[students] write a narrative of resistance with contradictory cultural norms, which offer, on the one hand a space for teachers to become protective agents who build students' capacity to decode cultural signals, to develop a strong racial and cultural identity, and to cope with stressful borders and institutional barriers. On the other hand, schools offer this very same space that can be used to reproduce and perpetuate inequities and injustices. (p. 71)

Interpersonal conflict, as an event across peer and authority lines, is the central unit of analysis in the study under review and serves to document the complexity of power, norms, and resistance through the "role that language, cultural discourse and social networks play in the process" (Arriaza, 2003, p. 74). This study operationalizes the previous definition of social capital by describing it as the capacity of individuals and groups of individuals "to negotiate social borders and institutional barriers" (p. 72). This capacity is developed over time through social networks and the intervention of protective agents or those individuals who have some institutional authority (e.g., teachers, school leaders) and the potential to play

"counter-hegemonic roles." These roles help students to develop the "sophisticated skills necessary for negotiating social and cultural borders and institutional barriers" (Stranton-Salazar, 1997, in Arriaza, 2003, p. 73).

Socialization is another key element in the conceptual framework of this study. Socialization serves as the central mechanism through which social capital is "negotiated, grow[n], and accumulate[d]" (Arriaza, 2003, p. 74).   Socialization is contextualized by cultural norms, codes of power, and predispositions or beliefs and values. Hence, socialization

> is a process and a space where groups and individuals negotiate their social positions as based upon their own social capital differential. Otherwise stated, groups and individuals carry certain habits, understandings, skills and knowledge as markers of their social status, which in turn mediate their social position. (Arriaza, 2003, p. 76)

Two longitudinal studies on socialization and social capital conducted by Catalano, Haggerty, Osterle, Fleming, and Hawkins in 2004 identified elements of (a) control theory as important for moving the child out of the home and into school and (b) social development theory for explaining the role of schools in the socialization process. Control theory speaks to the creation of informal controls that impede behaviors that interfere with school success through school commitment and attachment.   Social development theory identifies socialization as the process for producing that kind of school bonding by providing "opportunities for involvement; teaching of social, emotional, and cognitive competencies so that individuals will be successful in schools and other settings; and recognition for skillful performance and effort" (p. 259).   Empirical data from both studies support the premise that strong school bonds inhibit behavior that is inconsistent with the norms and values of the

school. Further, these data support contributions to the knowledge base by social development theory, finding that

- Positive norms are likely to give rise to positive behavior; however, if norms are negative, negative behavior is likely to result

- In the *well-organized* school, in which teachers esteem students and believe that all children can learn, and in which peer culture supports academic achievement, bonding to school is likely to produce social competency and other positive student outcomes, and reduce negative behaviors

- Social and emotional competence represent content for teaching and learning, just as does cognitive competence

- Students tend more to develop a stake in achievement if they are "taught content in ways that motivate, engage, and involve them in their learning" (p. 259)

- Academic success may be enhanced when school bonding is monitored and supported just as academic performance is monitored and supported.

The findings of the Catalano et al., (2004) and Arriaza (2003) studies reviewed above are rich in terms of their potential application to the current work and to the formation of foundations for further study. Consider that

- Children and youth accumulate social capital by learning to negotiate within and across racial and ethnic groups, as well as within mainstream society

- Just as other social relationships, the teacher-student relationship has the potential for building social capital. The relationship is productive, that is, generates social capital if it leads to student learning and achievement

- Teachers provide access to learning and achievement and, thus, to social capital, only when they combine high expectations and care

- Teaching and learning are determined less by imposed administrative authority than they are by students' willingness to engage with the content and the teaching-learning process

- Teachers will be allowed to do their job when they have earned students' trust. Hence, "respect will ultimately mediate power relations between students and teachers" (Arriaza, 2003, p. 89). Without the power that comes from mutual respect, "teachers are left exclusively in charge of delivering forma knowledge, using their forma authority to mediate classroom dynamics" (p. 89)

- Coping, often understood as a kind of resilience, is defined as "problem-solving capacities, network orientations, and instrumental behaviors that are directed toward dealing with stressful borders and institutional barriers" (Katz, 1999, in Arriaza, 2003, p. 73)

- Within social networks, students must be keen observers of how their own culture and that of others function to enable them to "cross back and forth across the different stressful borders, and engage institutional barriers more successfully" (Arriaza, 2003, p. 75). A key understanding here is that social networks operate in and around commonalities such as friendship, race, language, and culture on the importance of school bonding for healthy development of children (Catalano et al., 2004).

The Kauai Longitudinal Study (in Werner & Smith, 1989, 1992, 2001), a seminal work in cultural resilience scholarship, unearthed key elements of social capital critical to the

development of cultural resilience in youth with implications for the support of school success:

- Caring relationships with teachers, school staff, administrators, and peers

- High expectations

- Provision of mastery experiences

- Opportunities to participate in activities in the school community that foster cooperation and inherently call students to contribute.

These variables of social capital presented consistently in association with positive outcomes and high-risk protection for adolescents across all settings and environments. The research of Constantine, Bernard, and Diaz (1999) for the Healthy Kids Resilience Assessment Development Team of the California Department of Education termed these variables *external assets* or *protective factors* within schools that facilitate the development of *internal assets* or *resiliency traits* within the student. Resiliency traits, such as social competence, autonomy and sense of self, and sense of meaning and purpose, are viewed as outcomes of social capital as evidenced by caring relationships, high expectations, mastery learning, and meaningful participation. So, then, students are aided in the development of resilience or "an inner force, a self-righting tendency" that drives the developmental process of learning to meet basic human needs for "safety, connection, belonging, identity, respect, mastery, power, and ultimately, meaning" (Constantine et al., 1999, p. 15).

The outcomes of exploring the relationship between social capital and cultural resilience promise to be instructive in terms of educational planning for inclusion that would provide skills for accessing resources for school success for all students. A consideration of the role of race and ethnicity in relation to the building of social capital in diverse school

settings would inform better understanding of certain boundaries of access and how cultural resilience aids in crossing the boundaries. This consideration introduces the next section of the review of literature.

Critical Race Pedagogy: Identifying and Crossing Racial Boundaries of Access

In theorizing race in education, critical race pedagogues Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) drew on the racial formation theory of Michael Omi and Howard Wiant (1994) in an effort to "decipher the social-structural and cultural significance of race in education." Summarized, this theory posits that "the theme of race is situated where meaning meets social structure, where [racial] identity frames inequality" (Omi & Wiant, 1994, cited in Isaksen, 2001, p. 5).

The significance of this theory in the current context rests in hopeful outcomes generated from discussions based on two considerations: (1) allowances that, in the past, race held a place of centrality in terms of determining the economic, political, and cultural configuration of the modern world; (2) the question posed by Wiant (2000), who mused about whether there will ever come a time when race can be transcended, although he answered, "Probably not." He held out hope in that "the entire world has a chance of overcoming the stratification, the hierarchy, the taken-for-granted injustice and inhumanity that so often accompanies the race concept" (p. 14). Therefore, needed are renewed and strengthened democratic commitments and the understanding that global survival and prosperity in the new millennium depend on a drastically more inclusive and tolerant view of race and race relations. These changes in attitude and action may perhaps allow for an understanding that, like religion or language, race is "[a] part of the spectrum of the human

condition while resisting the strong urge to categorize and stratify [local] national or global societies" (p. 14).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) sought to map these views onto education in order to analyze school inequities. Like critical race theorists, critical race pedagogues hold that implementation of the law has been duplicitous in sustaining White supremacy in our society, and, by extension, has similarly upheld hierarchies with regard to gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, etc. These theorists agree that the challenge of agency anywhere in this society is predicated on the fact that in our culture, race is ideologically defined by the dominant group. The dominant group assigns to itself the position of colorlessness and culturalessness (Rosaldo, 1989) "and the very ubiquity of that position constitutes not only automatic privilege for [the dominant group], but also the established norms against which all else is measured" (Isaksen, 2001, p. 9), and found "different" (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995, p. 14). Related question arising, then, are the following: What meaning is assigned to race and racial identity in the sites under study? How are racial and other identities negotiated across boundaries of access to resources for school success?

Curtis (1998) placed the role of meaning assigned to race and racial identity squarely within the context of schools by delineating areas of impact in that setting. She stated emphatically that race matters in schools because

• It is in the curriculum that particular versions of history (truth) are taught, and the decisions become apparent as to what canons have been adopted.

• Race is at the foundation of who is seen and who is invisible.

• Race is at the foundation of the creation of the "illusion of inclusion" (Curtis, 1998, p. 136) while at the same time excluding meaningful participation of the other.

- Teachers and students are racial and racialized beings.

- "The inclusion of our historical and social locations as they are related to power, oppression, and privilege has the potential to be a compelling component in the structure of curriculum" (Curtis, 1996, p. 139).

Diamond & Moore (1995) cited studies that validate correlations between *cultural currency* and learning and being and provided implications for building the kinds of relationships on which good teaching and productive learning are predicated. The cited studies state the following:

- There is a link between culture and achievement such that an improvement in learning can be expected when "instruction is compatible with students natal-culture patterns" (Diamond & Moore, 1995, p. 7)

- A significant predictor of academic success is the extent to which students' cultures and languages are incorporated into the school program (Cummins [1986] and Compos & Keatinge [1984], cited in Diamond & Moore, 1995)

- Reading comprehension and memory are influenced by students' life experiences and cultural backgrounds (Lipson [1983], Mason & Au [1990], and Steffensen, Joag-Dev, & Anderson [1979], cited in Diamond & Moore, 1995).

The overall implication is that the school environment in which social capital is formally and purposefully built holds promise for creating schools and structuring teaching and learning for powerful self-determination and educational reform, and the development of cultural resilience in students that counteracts marginalization. Such a learning environment would be characterized by caring-connectedness (Noddings, 1992; Werner & Smith, 1992;

Pang, 2001), cultural literacy (Diamond & Moore, 1995; Arriaza, 2003), and renewed and strengthened democratic commitments for social justice (Wiant, 2000,).

Multicultural Education and Leadership: Structuring and Capitalizing Schools for Powerful

Self-Determination, Emancipatory Reform, and Cultural Resilience

The current work adopts a combination of caring-centered and critically reflective processes and the social reconstructionist or sociopolitical perspective on multiculturalism that merge the historical orientations with current research to create an eclectic and comprehensive conception of multicultural education. This orientation, based in critical theory, focuses on the structures of the institution of American education. It challenges orientations that tolerate and even celebrate difference without "contest[ing dominant group] values that serve as the invisible referent against which difference is defined" (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995, p. 14). Further, critical theory at the foundation of this approach challenges the use of "difference [as a] marker for novelty which conceals the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions out of which difference becomes valued or demeaned" (p. 37).

Hence, blending the definitions posited by Sonia Nieto (1992), the National Association for Multicultural Education (1993), James Banks (1996), and Valerie Ooka Pang (2001), multicultural education is viewed here as a multifaceted, caring-centered, and reflective change-oriented process and set of attitudes and beliefs that begins with self and supports comprehensive, equitable, and rigorous education for all students. The goal is to enable students to function effectively, critically, and reflectively in a pluralistic, democratic society. The key construct put forth by these writers is that diversity is held as a core value. This value is demonstrated by challenges in favor of acceptance and affirmation and of access to the opportunities for school success for all students. Authorship of the definition

above is also shared by the informants in this study. Their narratives identified caring-connectedness as a core value at the basis of their interactions with persons in their high schools who were instrumental in their academic success. As a core value, caring-connectedness represents not only an element of human interactions, but a key aspect of social capital supporting student negotiation across boundaries of access to resources facilitating school success.

Important work on the structuring of classrooms for equity also came from Damico and Sparks (1986). They based their research on the seminal work of Gordon Allport (1954). Allport's contact theory posited that opportunities for cross-group contact are essential for the reduction of prejudice. In addition, there must be several conditions present to support these opportunities: equal status among groups; cooperative interdependence between groups; and positive support of contact by those in authority. Stuart Cool (1969, cited in Damico & Sparks, 1986) added that the conditions should be instituted for encouraging acquaintanceship, and that the "behavior of the group in question should contradict stereotypical beliefs" (p. 115). The key finding of the study is that school structure can be used as a mechanism for personal/interpersonal development as well as for cognitive development. This finding appears to advise that schools can and should be intentioned and purposeful in building cross-group social networks as a key support to teaching and learning and with diversity, equity, and caring-centeredness as core values.

Ideas expressed in this chapter sought to develop a context around the complexities of marginalization. This context fostered deeper understanding of an insidious system that seeks to keep humanity apart. Additionally, the need for a *praxis*-oriented multiculturalism that would systemically operationalize social capital allowing students access to resources

that support school success was documented. In this study, the informants made powerful suggestions as to how to create such an environment in our schools that the literature terms socially capitalized for caring-centeredness, cultural literacy and resilience, and social justice. With diversity, equity and excellence, caring-centeredness and reflection as core values, the work of Werner & Smith (1992), Noddings (1992), Bigelow et al. (1994), Diamond & Moore, (1995), Pang (2001), and Uekawa et al. (2005) describes such learning environments as being grounded in the lives of students, positive, multicultural, antiracist and projustice, critical and praxis oriented, structured for meaningful participation and contribution, academically rigorous, and culturally literate. Activities would be organized around social relationships as a resource for learning and access and for developing resiliency assets in students.

The research methodology that guided the work of this study is addressed in the following chapter. The steps for conducting the study and the rationale for them are identified. The goal of the research methodology was to move this work from scholarship to the lived reality of the informants and to hear what their stories convey to us about marginalization and its overcoming in their diverse high school environments.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Qualitative Nature of This Study

Qualitative research methodologies and epistemologies provide powerful exploratory

tools for delving into complex truths, especially when relevant elements have yet to be

identified (Bogden & Biklen, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Cresswell, 1998). As a case

study, this work is designed to be emic (honoring the lifetexts of the participants) and holistic

(contextualizing events of the total experience). The goal is to create a work that is credible

and coherent through writing that is both descriptive and interpretive (Noblit & Johnson,

1982, p. 87; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polakow, 1997).

The qualitative nature of this study allows that review of literature will be ongoing,

presented as a means of documenting claims and interpretations, and encourage reflection

throughout the research process. The selection of an exploratory and descriptive case study

design is based on several considerations: (a) the structure of the research questions; (b) the

focus on contemporary events; (c) the lack of required control over behavioral events; and (d)

the fact that the main sources of evidence were systematic interviews and observations, the

latter having been conducted during the pilot phase of the study (adapted from Yin, 1994).

The interview aspect allowed for purposeful conversation that provided words-as-data for

exploring and comprehending the subject under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in

Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 79). Each informant was identified by pseudonym. Several

explanatory or thematic propositions (Carter, 1993) or general statements of fact grounded in

the data (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) were generated as the findings of this case study.

These findings may have implications for other diverse high school environments undergoing

rapid demographic change in which the traditional racial majority and minority student populations are in various phases of reversal.

Assumptions and Rationale for Qualitative Design

The qualitative researcher asks others to "teach me about your world" (Polakow, lecture, 1997) and then tells the story in its perspectival and experiential richness. "Context, character, contradiction and complexity" (Carter, 1993, p. 11) inform understanding of the human storyline with the participants of the particular theater at the center of inquiry. In this study, I respectfully asked the participants to reenter the theater of their high school learning communities to teach me about that world. The assumptions are that reality is both subjective and multiple, meaning is constructed by all involved in the research setting (Creswell, 1998, p. 76), and the informants are recognized as experts on their world (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Polakow, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Collins, 1991).

The expert views of the informants in this study were thematized narratively as the strategy for shaping and capturing the uniqueness of their views, musings, recommendations, and questions, thereby enlivening this work. Understanding of the lived reality and insights of the informants and the parallels and differences in their experiences were supported by narrative thematization. Additionally, these themes served as the foundation for the development and discussion of broader thematic analysis, or macro themes, and for ferreting out the implications and significance of these themes suggested by the study. Engagement with each lifetext offered up themes by way of creating "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973, p. 7) or content and crafting of detailed stories or portraits and perspectives that reflect the meaning gained from and corroborated by the words and experiences of the informants.

Exploration of the "real and symbolic interactions" between people and the natural settings further informs understanding given the recognition that "settings vary in the extent to which they provide fixed meanings and the extent that alternative meanings are available and created" (Bogden & Biklen, 1992, p. 37). In this study, the settings were studied over time and described from the historical to the contemporary. The high school graduate informants were asked to place themselves back into those settings and to share remembered experiences and lived insights.

The ethnographic tradition described by Glesne & Peshkin (1992), Maykut & Morehouse (1994), Yin (1994), Leedy (1997), Creswell (1998), and Denzin & Lincoln (1998) undergirds the selected mode of inquiry for this study because of the following characteristics: (a) strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon; (b) the tendency to work primarily with "unstructured" data, in this case interviews and extant data, over an extended time in the field; (c) investigation of a small number of cases in detail; (d) analysis of data that involves "explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of descriptions and explanations" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 111); and (e) use of the narrative in describing the cultural behavior of a group or individual (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Creswell, 1998). Honoring lifetexts as expert testimony is also a cornerstone of the qualitative tradition in which the perspectival is viewed as a key data point, as is getting in touch with one's own position in relation to the focus of inquiry. I find a special kind of honesty in a research tradition that does not deny its biases but, rather, painstakingly frames, examines, and articulates them as important data in the study. Moreover, the researcher is viewed as a critical informant and instrument of inquiry.

Research Epistemology

The research epistemology proposed by Patricia Hill Collins in her work *Black Feminist Thought* (1991) provided grounding for my relationship to informants in this study. Collins described four *contours* or epistemological characteristics, of the approach she uses in qualitative research:

1. *Concrete experience as a criterion of meaning.* Data are sought from those living or who have lived the experience as witnesses in their own lives. Their "wisdom" is used to judge meaning. Theoretical knowledge is viewed as a less able judgment criterion in the validation of knowing (pp. 208-212).

2. *The use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims.* Data are sought through conversation between individuals and groups of individuals. Connectedness between the researcher and the informants is viewed as essential in the validation of knowledge (pp. 212-215).

3. *The ethic of caring.* The researcher's emotions and "inner voice" are deemed appropriate in the inquiry context. The capacity for empathy allows the researcher to seek data through "an epistemology of connection in which truth emerges through care" in contrast to "an epistemology of separation based on impersonal procedures for establishing truth and the other" (pp. 215-217).

4. *The ethic of personal accountability.* Data are sought that cull out the systems of values and beliefs on which knowledge claims rest, that is, those of the informants and of the researcher (pp. 217-219).

Procedures

The Pilot Experience

A formative, or pilot, design was implemented to assess the need for comprehensive inquiry on this topic. Because viability for conducting this study was found, the next steps included defining the context of the study, surfacing and exploring issues from a number of perspectives, enhancing my knowledge and skills base as a researcher, and establishing my credibility in that role. Each step contributed, ultimately, to the trustworthiness of the research outcomes (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p.147). The formative, or pilot, phase included

1. Facilitation of seven focus groups on site with students grouped by race and gender, a full-day observation of one student, several classroom observations, and observations of school entry, lunch, and dismissal from the perspectives of various areas of the buildings

2. Development of a case study describing the work of Clavon Hills Public Schools (CHiPS) administrators as they struggled with designing a model for cross-cultural competency training aimed at self-empowerment to train staff back at the sites

3. A seven-day intensive training in the S.E.E.D Project (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) at Rutgers University (see Appendix E)

4. A year-long cofacilitation of diversity training with self-selected administrators of CHiPS

5. Interviews with two members of the CHiPS Board of Education and the Director of Public Information for CHiPS, a City of Clavon Hills councilman, and with the then-superintendent of CHiPS

6. Interviews with parents at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels in the district

7. Preparation of a case study on White students in the numeric minority at Harrington High School, one of the sites of this study.

Data Collection Process

Harrington High School (HHS) is one of two high schools in Clavon Hills Public Schools (CHiPS). Graduates from HHS were selected for this study because they attended the high school that was first to host a White student minority and now does so to an overwhelming degree (5.6 % White students and 92% Black students in the 2003-2004 academic year). Additionally, HHS was first to host a significant number of faculty members of color as well as an administrative staff that was 100% African American from 1996-1997 until 2002-2003. Many of the White veteran teachers remain. Hence, the site offers a rich historical context. Graduates from Williams Lake High School (WLHS), the second of the two comprehensive high schools in CHiPS, were selected because more diversity exists at that site (see Table 1).

The majority-minority, or White minority, experience is a newer one, providing the opportunity to witness what happens when the personality of a school culture is in the process of change. I interviewed a total of eight graduates, representing both schools, because they could provide a diverse view of their high schools' White-minority or Black-majority experience. Equally as important would be their perspectives as persons who had successfully negotiated organizational boundaries, as evidenced by their status as university students. Additionally, their perspectives would include actual attitudes and opinions about, and applications learned from, their total high school experiences in their current venues. Other informants were seven adults with deep and significant ties to the school district. Each interviewee received descriptions of the study, data collection procedures, and provisions for

confidentiality. Copies of the informed consent letters, designed by informant groups, were approved by the superintendent and the high school principals (see Appendix A). Prior to the collection of data, permission for the participation of human subjects in this study was granted by Eastern Michigan University (see Appendix C).

The decision to interview graduates of CHiPS was made primarily so that the study would benefit from the actualized experience of these students in their current postsecondary ventures. From a practical standpoint, tacit withdrawal of support for the study by the principal at Harrington High School (HHS) occurred when my relationship to the site became that of insider in nature. Additionally, a number of conditions had always been placed on the study at Williams Lake High School (WLHS) so that control over the study would have never been in my hands as the researcher.

Interviews and Observations

Informant group 1: Students. Purposive sampling techniques based on snowball sampling (Makut & Morehouse, 1994) were engaged. Informants selected shared the following characteristics: (a) each was an alumnus of CHiPS, having graduated during the 1978-1990 era or from the periods 1990-1995, 1996-2000, or 2001-2002; each had participated in some form of extracurricular activities during high school; and (c) each had been a member of the honors program in his/her high school. The informants provided perspectives about their school lives in both academic and nonacademic settings and on the interrelatedness of both in terms of the total high school experience. The number of interviews and observations were determined as part of the emergent nature of the research design. Ultimately, a combined total of eight graduates representing both high schools were interviewed. We met in restaurants in Clavon Hills and on the campuses of the universities

that several of the students attended. The contribution of the two informants from 1978 was

a historical and comparative student perspective of HHS, the only high school in the district

at that time, when Blacks were in the numeric minority and Whites were in the majority.

       Informant group 2: Adults with deep and significant ties to the district.

1. Central administrators

2. CHiPS Board of Education members. Of the three who had agreed to participate in

    interviews in their dual roles as school district officials and as parents of graduates from

    the district, only one actually gave an interview.

3. Teachers who were observed during the formative phase of this study

4. Teachers who were interviewed on the basis of the following profiles: (a) Tenure in

    CHiPS of ten years or less, (b) tenure in CHiPS of more than ten years, (c) teacher in

    general education courses, (d) teacher in special education, and (e) teachers who have

    taught classes with only one White student and classes with more than one White student

Interviews and Researcher Journaling

       Interviews were tape-recorded for immediate transcription. Researcher journaling

helped me to gain insight into my own subjectivity and the possible impact on the various

aspects of the study. Journaling also helped me to understand my thinking, developmentally,

as the study progressed. Additionally, I gained better understanding of the challenges and

celebrations throughout the process. Each of these strategies provided opportunities for

gaining in-depth understanding of the experience under study from the perspectives of those

living the reality.

Review of Documents

The following documents were identified for review. "The importance of material evidence in providing insight into other components of lived experience" was noted (Denzen & Lincoln, 1998):

1. *District's High School Curriculum.* Multicultural content

2. *HHS/WLHS Parent, Student, Teacher, and Administrator Handbooks.* Ideal behavioral and academic norms and expectations; supports and sanctions; written building culture

3. *Free and Reduced Lunch Summary Disaggregated by Race.* A socioeconomic status indicator

4. *HHS and WLHS Yearbooks.* Witness to trends in demographic change and evidence of what is celebrated in each school

5. *Student Discipline Data.* Analysis by offense and outcome, race, gender, and staff generating the referral document and expectations of staff for how infractions are to be handled. (Note: I was unable to access this information, as no district-wide analysis format seemed to exist despite the years-old recommendation that this type of analysis occur on a regular and consistent basis (see Chapter 4)

6. *District Demographic Data from 1975 to the-Present.* Record of demographic change

7. *Student Report Card from HHS/WLHS.* Record of ways academic performance and behavior are assessed and identification of the important skill sets and attitudes in each high school

All of these documents suggested different perspectives on students and served as tangible evidence of the people in the "beliefs and behavior of the formal culture" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 337). Interpretations of the meanings found in these documents were corroborated by observation and interview data.

Confidentiality

The right of participant confidentiality was honored at all times. Names and places were changed in coded transcription and in the final research report in order to protect the identity of the participants in the study. Tapes of interviews were erased immediately after transcription. Interview transcriptions and field notes were kept in a locked file to which only I had access.

Information obtained during the study was shared with members of the dissertation committee in their advisory and mentorship roles only as necessary. Information obtained during the study was not shared with anyone outside of the dissertation committee.

Methods of Validation

Altheide and Johnson (1994, cited in Leedy, 1997, p. 168) defined four types of interpretive validity:

1. *Usefulness* – Does the research report enlighten its audiences? Move those under study to action? Maykut & Morehouse (1994) expanded this proposition to include members of the research community and others who find a research study "so compelling, so filled with 'truth value' that they are willing to act on it outside the realm of social research" (p. 147).

2. *Contextual Completenes* – Is a comprehensive view of the phenomenon provided?

3. *Researcher Positioning* – Does the researcher have an intimate acquaintance with her *researcher-I* (Peshkin, 1988) or her own influences in the research setting (e.g., personal beliefs, values, biases, etc.) and their implications?

4. *Reporting Style* – Are descriptions thick? Is there logical and balanced interplay between the concrete and verbatim principles of qualitative reporting?

In qualitative reporting, a key test of the validity of research themes lies in the ability of those whose lifetexts are being explored and described to "see recognizable reality" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 176). This study engaged the informants in the role of corroborators. A narrative portrait that thematized the data from each interview transcription was written for each student informant, and a perspective narrative was written for each adult informant. A copy of his/her individual, written narrative was sent to each respondent for his/her review and corroboration and/or commentary on clarity and representational accuracy. This member checking strategy asked informants to comment on if and to what degree they "[saw] recognizable reality" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 176). Data triangulation, or using multiple methods of data collection from multiple sources, contributed to the trustworthiness, or validity, of the study's outcomes by allowing for deeper understanding of the focus of inquiry from a variety of perspectives and from different ways of knowing (Eisner, 1991; Holloway, 1997; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Thematic convergence from these varied sources and methods lent more credibility to the research findings.

An audit trail (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), or chain of evidence, (Leedy, 1997) was developed as a means by which to record the research journey. The audit trail thus allowed

for an understanding of the paths taken and thereby enabled judgment of the study's trustworthiness.

Research journaling continued as a means to become acquainted with my "researcher-I(s) or tamed subjectivity" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18). Ongoing consideration of these jottings kept me aware of my own perspectives as data points in the study and the role of my perspectives in mediating research activity.

CHAPTER 4: THE MAKING OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT

The School District: Historically Speaking

Clavon Hills Public Schools (CHiPS) of Clavon Hills, Midwest, was originally designed as a K-8 county school structure of ten elementary schools "fractional" with neighboring townships. It became first a consolidated school system in order to "provide better schools and a high school program for the children of the township" (Siver, 1987, p. 40) and later became the comprehensive school district that it is today.

The launching of Sputnik moved curriculum into a place of prominence on the district's list of concerns as it did in school districts across the country. In response, new course offerings were included in the curriculum. such as research and independent study, Math Seminar, and calculus. CHiPS was the first public school district in the state of Midwest to offer calculus at the secondary level (Siver, 1987, p. 76). The high school also added advanced courses in biology, chemistry, and physics. The foreign language department added third-year courses in Latin, Spanish, and French. Other important curricular additions at the high school level included classes in radio speech and engineering drawing.

As CHiPS grew to peak numbers of 16,350 students in the 1969-70 academic year and 17, 800 by 1980, changes in curriculum were being considered, along with the district's future. Curriculum recommendations and implementation greatly increased the appeal of CHiPS. Key among these curricular and instructional changes were

- the placement of guidance counselors in each of the elementary schools

- class sizes under 30, with 25 considered ideal

- an increased emphasis on providing for the varying abilities of children

- the improvement of the teaching of reading and mathematics, and

- the creation of joint in-service opportunities for teachers and administrators to enhance the rapport between them for the betterment of the educational program (Siver, 1987, p.128)

Enter Diversity

The data displayed in Table 1 bears out rightful anticipation of a trend toward re-homogenization of the student population similar to that which created a Black majority population in the contiguous urban area to which Clavon Hills is joined. When the district's Black and ethnic student enrollment reached 53% in 1990-1992, Clavon Hills residents and school and government officials recognized and articulated that enough of a racial imbalance existed in the city's schools to commission a 22-member task force. The mandate of the commission was stated in two ways that imply different sets of values setting the direction for change:

1. To eliminate the "imbalance because that's the real world" (Trimer-Hartley, 1991, A1)

2. To find ways to maintain integrated classrooms, a hallmark of and a selling point for CHiPS, and to halt the type of movement that segregated cities

The latter was the focus of the Lebanese-Cuban chairperson of the task force, who stated, "I don't want my children to learn in a school system that is all Black, all White, or all anything" (Trimer-Hartley, 1991, A4).

The task force generated a list of recommendations aimed at maintaining integrated classrooms and attempting to make inclusion an inviting reality. Five of the seven key recommendations were implemented to a greater or lesser degree. Key recommendations implemented (•), and those not implemented (■) were the following:

- Development of magnet programs at the high schools in math, science, creative arts, and international studies. (The task force wanted to begin at the high school level, as both high schools were witnessing racially motivated unrest at that time.)

- Establishment of an aggressive minority recruitment plan to diversify the 94% White staff at the time of the task force recommendations

- Encouragement of the use of lessons that emphasizes cooperative learning among students from varied backgrounds

- Promotion of cross-cultural activities and exchanges throughout the district. This occurred as a citywide celebration of diversity. It is no longer the size or magnitude that it was for the first several years after its inception.

- Infusion of multiculturalism into the curriculum. (Infusion has been implemented to a degree. Importance has waned in view of constantly shifting priorities that characterize education in this country. However, the current cross-cultural curriculum, as written, promises a rich treatment of issues of unity, equity, and diversity with the potential to challenge attitudes, beliefs, and behavior, particularly if instruction is bold and powerful.)

- Increase in staff understanding and sensitivity to racial and cultural differences via an annual training program. (Preliminary observations of this study point to the need for renewal and total support of preservice and in-service experiences and programs dealing deeply and courageously with issues of diversity and equity, expectations of excellence, and rigorous mastery education for all students.)

- Evaluation of discipline at each school and a guarantee that it is used consistently regardless of race, religion, gender, or ethnicity

Table 1

Clavon Hills Public Schools: District Summary of Membership Percentages

Official Fourth Friday Count At Critical Junctures

Interval	Native American/ Alaskan	Black	Asian American	Hispanic	White	Multi-Ethnic
1985-86	.11	**33**	2.0	.41	**64**	.48
1989-90	.13	50	2.0	.41	47	.46
1994-95	.19	**64**	1.7	.75	**33**	.45
1999-00	.08	80	0.1	.07	19	.19
2003-04	.13	87	1.7	.53	9	.89
HHS 2003-04	.00	92	0.08	.06	5.6	.08
WLHS 2003-04	.01	82	0.02	.06	13.9	.01

Clearly, the above data demonstrate that the White student population continues to decline in CHiPS. With the exception of Black students, this is the case with all other ethnic/cultural groups as well. HHS data show that the percentage of Black student enrollment is higher than the district average for the 2003-2004 school year. The White student enrollment is less than the district average. Table 1 indicates that the student population in CHiPS is essentially biracial as represented by the increasing majority of Black students and the increasing minority status of White students. This trend would seem, minimally, to call for reflection about meaning, implications, and priorities based on the challenges posed and opportunities afforded CHiPS by this demographic information. The question again becomes *What critical issues must be considered in a demographically changing high school learning community that would contribute to an inclusive and successful total high school experience for all students?*

The Two High Schools

As late as 1949, Clavon Hills had no high schools. Students reaching the eighth

grade who had the means and wherewithal to continue schooling attended high school in

neighboring districts. Voters approved a bond issue in 1949 to begin construction of

Harrington High School (HHS). The Board planned to have the first stage of the building

completed and ready for occupancy by eighth and ninth graders in September of 1950.

Because of a number of setbacks, this did not occur, unfortunately, until March 12, 1950

(Siver, 1987). Meanwhile, gym classes were held in the bus garage, and some other classes

met in the hallways. Whistles were blown to signal the beginning and end of classes until the

bells were functioning. In the late 1950s, two sections were added to the building. In 1967,

Williams Lake High School (WLHS) was constructed in response to the housing boom of

the1960s.

Both high schools have their own very distinctive personalities. Because of its

lengthy history as a homogeneous location, WLHS is still known as "the White high school"

even though its demographics show an 82% African American population. The reputation of

WLHS is more laissez-faire than that of HHS. For example, a vast number of WLHS

students respond to the disliked seventh-hour home base/elective schedule by leaving campus

early without punitive action. HHS, on the other hand, is characterized by strict adherence to

the parent-student handbook that calls for various numbers of days of out-of-school

suspension for each of the 71 listed rule infractions.

Despite what has been described, each school boasts of its own special brand of

nurture. Students and teachers spend time just talking with and listening to each other,

sometimes calling each other by funny and good-natured nicknames (not always face to

face), and greeting each other with hugs. At HHS, students and staff who really knew the principal (now retired) joked with him and saw him as a source of support. At WLHS, many more students saw their principal (now retired) as a resource and took advantage of his open-door policy when they needed help or just wanted to say hello. The number of students in the National Honor Society and those taking AP and honors classes seem to be on par between the two high schools.   At both high schools, many students participate in after-school activities, so much so that there are after-school, or late, buses to help get students home when the activity schedule is complete. Drama students demonstrate the same flair. Cheerleaders demonstrate the same perkiness. Jocks demonstrate the same swagger. The forensics teams demonstrate the same seriousness about world affairs.

An accepted commonality between both high schools is the role of locker selection and the hallways they occupy, as well as self-selected parking designations. The outcomes of the selection process dramatize the way that racially/ethnically diverse students effect distancing from one another for closeness to friends in their own groups. Despite integrated fall locker assignments at WLHS, for example, students always find their way to the hallways they have designated for themselves:

> You've got the White kids in one wing, Chaldean kids are in another wing, and Black kids are in another. . . . Just go to the WLHS parking lot at 2:07 or 2:15, whenever they let out, and see who goes to which section of the parking lot. It's that deep. Chaldeans here. Blacks here, and Whites there. (Interview with Andrea White, March 29, 2003)

There are designated areas of the student parking lot for race/ethnicity-specific groups to park their cars at HHS as well. Because of the preponderance of African American

students, however, all hallways and parking lot areas are Black. Small pockets of White students maintain lockers side by side, and park together in the same area of the student parking lot.

Delana Treadwell, the 1979 graduate of HHS interviewed for this study, spoke of a time when these choices were very much culturally and racially motivated as Black students began to be a more and more visible presence in Clavon Hill's only secondary school at that time:

> Each group had their own hallways: the jocks had their own hallway, what we called burn-outs, and they wore leather jackets, the greased hair--the smokers--they had an area, the Blacks had an area. So, it was very structured where you went. (Interview with Delana Treadwell, March 18, 2003)

It seems that this tenacious, cultural tradition for students serves an important purpose related to group membership.

The graduates of both high schools whom I interviewed were very candid in terms of how they defined the problematic and how they defined what is hopeful as related to school performance and comfort. The challenges identified were

- Silencing as ignored student voices.

- Boundaries of access to institutional resources, such as discrimination based on race and gender, and rendered invisibility

- Identity. Who am I in this space? Under what circumstances are my social and academic selves in partnership? When are they in conflict? How best can I reconcile these identities toward successful school outcomes?

The characteristics providing hope were

- Caring-connected relationships with mentoring adults

- High expectations and rigorous mastery learning as members of the honors program

- Opportunities for participation in and contribution to extracurricular group activities.

The context presented in this chapter provides a space in which to hold for analysis the student and adult interview profiles, as well as the role of organizational structure in shaping the trajectory of the high school experience.

CHAPTER 5: PORTRAITS OF FIVE GRADUATES

Introduction

Eight graduates were interviewed for this study, all of whom *cut their teeth* on Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) programs at their respective high schools. Additionally, each participated in numerous school and community activities and frequently shared a unique closeness with their teachers and key administrators in their high school. Hence, all of the students interviewed fit into the category of active and connected honor students. They told of their own high school experiences and shared their observations of the experiences of students who were less well connected to their high school and community. Their words, feelings, stories, and musings enliven the current work and are thematized in narrative form in this chapter.

The informants were not always spared some of the marginalizing experiences related to race and gender that they observed occurring in the life space of peers who did not share the same status of connectedness to their high school community. The student informants were members in good standing of a social and academic network that counteracted the effects of marginalizing experiences and exposed them to a wealth of positive and supportive learning and growth experiences, better ensuring their school success. This membership provided a kind of safety net for the informants—a special place where excellence in academic performance, positive school behavior, and involvement in school and community activities were keys to opportunities for rigorous learning as a means for fulfilling high expectations and to safety and security, to perks and prestige, to laud and laughter, and to sensitivity and support.

The facts of the informants' successful status as students and their positive cross-cultural interactions may be instructive. Beliefs and attitudes, beginning with the self, and strategic interventions are presented that could be explored for making the White minority/Black majority and other experiences of diversity more inclusive and supportive of the development of caring and respectful relationships upon which successful teaching and learning are predicated.

The students interviewed were Black and White, male and female, and attending or graduated from institutions of higher learning. Even though pseudonyms are used to identify the informants, the essence of their thoughts, feelings, and experiences are captured. Each informant read and critiqued his or her portrait on two separate occasions, both at various times during the draft phases. In these reviews, informants reported on the accuracy and the flavor of their narratives. On one occasion, a suggestion was made for refocusing an area of the text so that it better reflected accuracy of meaning. The majority of the student informants were surprised by the maturity of their own observations and insights captured by the interview narrative. Their thoughtfulness and candor provided extremely rich data for this study, and several of the informants continue to show an interest in its progress.

Of the eight graduates interviewed, five were selected for inclusion in this chapter. The rationale for their selection is based on the relative thoughtfulness and elaborate and candid richness of their responses to the interview questions. The comments of those chosen went well beyond single-phrase responses or expressions of a lack of experience with or opinions about the issues under inquiry. Of the five males invited to participate in the study, one responded affirmatively. His contributions are rich and insightful.

The narratives of the extremely vocal and insightful young people interviewed for this study are presented in the order in which they were interviewed and provide a contemporary context for review of the issues under inquiry. The only exception in the order of presentation is that of Delana Treadwell. Her narrative appears last and serves as a forceful historical context in which the movement of CHiPS can be gauged in terms of how well it has benefited, if at all, from its 25-year experience with diversity. In order of presentation, then, please meet

Tiffany Horste. European American female. Graduate of HHS in 2002, attending a regional university at the time of the interview.

- Kevin Botsford. African American male. Graduate of HHS in 2001, attending an out-of-state university at the time of the interview.

- Jennifer Wojek. European American female. Graduate of WLHS in 2002, attending a regional research university at the time of the interview.

- Andrea White. African American female. Graduate of WLHS in 1999, attending a regional research university at the time of the interview.

- Delana Treadwell. African American female. Graduate of HHS in 1979, employed with a State agency at the time of the interview.

<div align="center">Portraits</div>

<div align="center">*Tiffany Horste—"Bridges to Cross"*</div>

Imagining her as she disembarks from the school bus in a sea of Blackness, enters the building, and navigates her way to her locker, three aspects of her high school identity are immediately apparent: Tiffany is White, female, and in the numeric minority. What will later become apparent is that, just as Tiffany had to cross the bridge between home and school

daily, she also had "bridges to cross" while in school as well. She found ways to accomplish these complex feats fraught with challenges including lack of knowledge of the rules, vulnerability, and instances of marginalization experienced as ostracism and rendered invisibility if not discrimination.

The crossing equipment she brought to these bridges included resilient personal traits including connectedness with friends and teacher-mentors in the honors/AP and theater communities, and a commitment to her education. These supports were of real importance that allowed Tiffany to push ahead even during those times of challenge. The bridges enabled Tiffany to cross over fear, periods during which she felt a lack of belongingness, and marginalization experienced as ostracism and rendered invisibility, if not outright discrimination. Tiffany perceived the gloomy shadows surrounding the bridges to a school culture where she "had a lot of problems with teachers just not caring." She reported that some teachers treated their students inequitably, with lasting impact, and who just "didn't care enough to teach the students to care about their peers, including [her]self."

At first, Tiffany minimized the experiences of marginalization experienced at school in relation to her skin color. Eventually, however, she shared a powerful example of marginalization that occurred in a general education social studies class that rendered her invisible and her voice mute. The situation supported the understanding that Tiffany would find solace in her honors/AP classes where there were "at least two or three other White students," teacher advocates, and mutual caring and respect. Outside of that realm, there were times when, she said,

> I did feel put down by the rest of the class because I was White. . . . I can't think of all
>
> the instances or if there were very many, but [there was] one that always stood out in

my mind. . . . I was the only White student in my history class. We were doing this assignment where there were kings and lords, and you had to make allies and stuff, and nobody came to me. Ever! Period! And I was really disturbed. . . .The teacher didn't care to teach the students enough to care about their peers, including myself. It only happened once, but it really like emotionally screwed me up. It was that one time that [will stay] with me forever.

This experience occurred during a simulation, which by its very nature, took a lengthy amount of time and interaction. Given the rules of simulations and that Tiffany would stand out, being the only White student in the class, gave pause about the culture of the classroom that would allow any one student to be left out, no matter his/her race or ethnic background. What a teaching moment was wasted when the reason for Tiffany's ostracism was obviously racial, and nothing was said about her treatment because of her race. She was left to process the experience and her feelings about it all alone—an experience so daunting "that [it] will stay with [her] forever." Neither were the Black students allowed the potential growth opportunity to learn about and reflect on prejudice. Certainly, among the central elements of a school culture that would allow this to happen is a lack of respect, caring, and personal accountability and a disregard for that which is just and simply humane.

Even after this experience, Tiffany contradictorily allowed that "color was never an issue for [her]." In further contradiction, she shared that there were "family issues if you wanted to date a Black guy or something. So, I had to deal with that. You know, emotionally, psychologically, and everything like that."

There appeared to have been times when dealing with Whiteness in her school environment required just about as much energy as Tiffany could muster to merely get

through to the end of the day. These days had to be dealt with "emotionally, psychologically, and everything like that" as well. We talked about the White kids who coursed the halls between classes, looking at the floor and not making eye contact, as if engaged in a kind of selective invisibility:

> I have seen the other kids that you're talking about. They ease their way around, or look at the floor. I mean, I've had my days where I just stared at the floor and I didn't want to talk to anybody. I felt like just being there, and the way that the students, in their minds, they have this idea that I was a bad person because of what my ancestors may have done to their ancestors. So, there was always that small, itty-bitty little tension that I didn't want to talk about because I don't like confrontations. You know? That's my own personal thing. [But], there were times when I had to cross a bridge and fight a battle, but I made it through in the end.

So, Tiffany knows some things. And what she knows, she knows from the same place of knowing, as a White-minority student in a Black-majority high school. She knows about marginalization in the forms of ostracism, rendered invisibility, and discrimination. She also knows about acceptance, support, good-natured nicknames, and encouragement from this same perspective, and from the same source—Black people:

> I had [Black] friends who saw me as one of their own. And I have this mole on my arm where they were talking about, well, that's my natural color and the rest of me was just a birthmark. So, I felt like, kinda like I was in the in-crowd, you know? . . . I had a lot of nicknames. Actually, one of them was J.B.; that stands for 'Jiggly Booty' [she smiled at the memory].

Some may wish to know how the nickname represented by the initials *J.B.* might be considered a term of endearment. Briefly, since I can remember, Black high schoolers have talked about White girls' not always being terribly well endowed in that area of the anatomy, in direct contrast to what was valued in the Black community. So, her smile at the acceptance symbolized by the moniker *J.B.* makes perfectly good sense in this time of growing self-knowledge and with Tiffany's sense of strong affinity with Blacks.

Involvement in extracurricular activities, particularly in theater, provided Tiffany with strong friendships and accolades and with outlets to create and to orchestrate. Theater also afforded Tiffany the opportunity to develop and to try out various identities, undergirded by the safety of a script, a director, fellow actors, and the knowledge that a mistake merely called for another take. Her enthusiasm was infectious when she spoke of theater as a highlight in her high school career. As the stage manager, her roles were many, and her contributions and influence were visible. While observing a rehearsal for the school play, *Dracula,* I watched Tiffany in action as she gave an order here, a word of encouragement there, and yelled for lighting and sound checks to the appropriate crews at the back of the school auditorium. She hugged the rainbow of actors, often helped with sets, and collaborated with her assistant. She also made sure that the frequently fashionably late star of the production was in make-up. "Theater is my life," Tiffany said, " and I loved working with these people!"

The opportunity to play roles in different characterization and situational scenarios was also a part of Tiffany's fascination with theater. After all, where else could she play a role in which being the White daughter of a biracial female and a Black male "wouldn't seem natural?" As a member of Thespians and student council, Tiffany attended many

conferences involving students from all over the primarily White county in which she lives and attends school. She described these experiences in terms of the levels of comfort and discomfort she felt with others in attendance: "There were more White people there, so I felt more at home with the Black people that I knew, and the White people scared me, truthfully."

So strong was Tiffany's affinity with her Black peers that, even socially, she felt uncomfortable with other White teens. She shared that she had attended a party in a toney, northern, and fairly distant city in her county. She asked the disk jockey if he would play *The Cha-Cha-Slide,* a very popular song and dance in her community. The disk jockey allowed that he was not familiar with that tune. Tiffany then asked him if he could play something that *The Hustle* could be danced to. On the turntable went a country western song that was not quite what Tiffany had in mind. It was then that Tiffany began to prepare for the trip home. She reported feeling "misunderstood and totally out of place."

Because Tiffany found sanctuary in her membership in the honors /AP community and involvement in school activities and with her Black friends, she had much to share with teachers and administrators about their roles in a diverse school environment. She described the necessity for an ethos of caring in which teachers care about the students and also "want to be doing what they are doing─you have to love [teaching]." She did not feel it necessary for their methods of teaching to change, but she described the greatest educational heist of all by sharing how she had been robbed of the opportunity to learn in an emotionally safe environment. The provision of such an environment is the role of the teacher and the leadership:

if they [the teachers] treat any one person differently, it's gonna throw everything off,

and it's not going to be able to succeed in teaching all the students everything they

need to know. Like the problem in my history class, being the only White person, I

didn't learn a whole lot. I mean I can remember some things, but I don't know; I

blocked it out of my memory. Not because, really, that the teachers didn't care, but

the students, the teacher didn't care enough to teach the students to care about their

peers, including myself.

This is the unfortunate outcome of Tiffany's experience of marginalization in her history

class. Or is this the outcome for all students who know marginalization in their schools as a

personal reality?

Tiffany would point out to teachers and administrators that "it is not just, you know,

Blacks and Whites." She spoke of the Jewish, Asian, and Indian students in her school,

about whom she knew very little and would have liked to have learned more. She mentioned

February as being Black History month, but she did not know the history of its need and

creation. Mentioning other groups about whom she knew so little was her way of suggesting

that the emphasis be shifted more toward inclusion. This, she said, "would open dialogue

which [she thought] would be one little step that would open up a new door, a whole new

hallway of doors, for everything else."

Tiffany described feelings of discomfort with White students during freshman

orientation at the university. When she saw a Black student, she shared that "I just flocked

towards him because it was something I had been used to, and it was something I knew."

She has since dared to reach out to make new friends even though "it was a very, very hard

struggle at the beginning of the year."

Tiffany is taking risks in class as well. She described an incident that occurred in her script-analysis class during which the class read a play satirizing aspects of the African American experience. Tiffany was quick to explain that the author of the play was Black so that I understood that it was not someone outside of the race poking fun at Blacks. One of the two Black students in the class shared his experience of coming to a predominantly White university after graduating from a Black high school. The student told of the angst he had experienced. Tiffany felt compelled to share her own experience: "I <u>had</u> to raise my hand. 'Well, I came from an all-Black high school to an all-White university, and to be honest, I was scared.' I gave my input on how it was. It was really freeing to kinda let that out there." Letting the students and the professor know of the marginalization that she had sometimes experienced as the White-racialized other—a topsy-turvy situation in a society where Whites constitute the majority—shed a new light on the professor's and the students' perceptions of what a minority and majority experience can look like. Tiffany also shared her acceptance by her Black friends as a *charter member* of that community although she was that same racialized White other. Her professor and her classmates were appreciative of the new insights she provided. "So, it was a bridge I had to cross, and I'm still crossing bridges right now."

Kevin Botsford—A Different Twist

Kevin is an African American male who was, at the time of this writing, a junior at an out-of-state university. When I first saw him before our midterm interview, he was rounding the corner in a local restaurant after completing his internship day at the Lear Corporation in Clavon Hills, Midwest. I was struck by his bright and confident countenance, his 6-foot-4-inch height, and his smile that gave light to his whole being and to the spaces around him.

After I reiterated the task at hand, we started the interview by exploring his feelings as a member of the Black majority student body at historically White-majority Harrington High School (HHS). As an honors/AP student who was active in a host of sports and school activities and an exemplar of positive school behavior, Kevin shared, with pride, that it had been a "comfortable experience" for him. He was "not bothered by the stress of trying to fit in or by the problems of being a majority in a minority school." Additionally, he had the opportunity to interact with persons of other cultures who made up the student body at HHS. Because he "did not sense a focus on race," he felt he was allowed to be judged on the basis of who he was and

> how I carry myself. . . . On my speech and how I communicate with you, how I interact with you, and not on my skin color. I think that dealing with multiple cultures in Clavon Hills Public Schools (CHiPS) has really helped me to do that where we don't focus on race or color or gender, and I'm able to interact with you on the basis of my intellect.

> However, since graduating from high school, Kevin has been told on a number of occasions that attending a Black-majority high school was "not the real world." According to these sages, Kevin had missed the growth opportunity of "struggle" as likely would have been the case had he attended high school in a White-majority context. Kevin allowed that there might be something to that declaration but maintained his conviction that his was a positive and immensely helpful experience in terms of learning how to negotiate his way in the world beyond high school. Because, for Kevin, race was not an issue in his high school experience, he was freer to explore other aspects of self. He was freer to develop a more multifaceted sense of self for whom race was but one aspect, and one of lesser importance.

Unlike several other graduates interviewed, Kevin perceived the status of White minority students as basically a positive one. He asserted that these students gained a number of benefits in terms of expanded insights and empathy because of their minority experience. While allowing that "it might've been tough," he maintained that

they get to experience what we get to experience out in the real world, you know. But I think that unlike us or unlike the typical situation of the minority, they actually didn't have a problem with it, and they actually benefited from it. They got to see first-hand what it's like to be a minority and interact with the majority. So, they got two ends of the stick. They were actually more versatile and more adaptable to different situations than others in their culture.

Kevin's views took on a different slant from those of his interviewed peers, again when he was asked to share his thoughts on the silence surrounding the whole minority-majority issue. He was aware that both students in the minority and those in the majority experienced instances of marginalization in several guises: "White students who didn't embrace Black culture, like our music, or our way of dress, or who were not active in the community were on the outside. They were usually not in honors or AP programs." Despite these observations, Kevin stated that "[White students] don't make much of a fuss about it . . . . It's like they aren't put in a situation where they are truly a minority where their views would be looked upon as less than their [Black] counterparts." Kevin felt that the societal majority perspective is held in higher esteem than that of the societal minority. Therefore, minorities have had to "make a fuss" in order to be heard. When minorities speak up, according to Kevin, the initial reaction from "the powers that be" is, "like, you're just

complaining because you're a minority, whereas, if [Whites] said something, then it's like ok, hold on, let's see what is unfair about it, and more investigation goes into it."

Because Kevin holds that "communication and dialogue are the keys to everything." I got the impression that he felt that everyone should "make a fuss" when faced with situations of inequity, discrimination, and any observed hurt visited on someone because of his/her race, color, gender, or ethnicity. Kevin agreed that "every success evolves around dialogue and communication [and modeling added later]. When you run into problems and destruction and misunderstandings is when communication is broken and the wall goes up. We learn fear and hate."

While in high school, Kevin participated in several opportunities for diversity training and interaction on diversity issues with his Black, White, Asian, and Hindi friends. They were "able to talk about and learn these things about other cultures." But since leaving high school, the opportunities for this kind of dialogue and interaction have become limited: "We don't have that sit-down time." Consequently, Kevin urges educators to "address it [diversity] at a young age," be positive role models, "and teach others who have not had multicultural exposure." By graduation, these young people would be able to be confident and caring in their dealings with others different from themselves in some way, knowing that, as Kevin stated,

> I've been exposed to this culture. I know how to interact with these people. I've heard and understand their ideas [and experiences], so I know how to interact with them. I can [also] teach my kids or others [who] haven't had exposure to this. I can teach them what I've learned.

Kevin provided another hint about how to create a positive cross-cultural communication and interaction experience through participation in school activities. The "sense of focus" afforded by participation in school activities created "a common bond, a common interest" that minimized, even nullified, racial and cultural differences:

In sports, if we have Whites [on our team], we're still cheering─you run for HHS, and when you win, you get team points. That's how we looked at it. It was all about the team and winning. That's what the focus is. The focus is not on the culture or the race.

Kevin's outlook on the roles of teachers and administrators went straight to the heart of teaching and learning as the main goals of the organization. Their roles are twofold: "Be [a] fair and positive role model, and facilitate inclusion." On being fair, Kevin stated that in the "effective [school] environment," students need only be concerned about what they are trying to "get out of school, not if a teacher or administrator is fair, or has [the students'] best interest at heart." Modeling positive cultural/racial interaction requires staff and administration to "be an example," because

even if we open[ed] up communication [and] were fair, that's cool, you know. But if we want our students to adopt a certain behavior or certain mind-set, we have to also give them an example [of] how to go about thinking like we want them to think, and acting like we want them to act.

Facilitating inclusion would allow staff and administration to welcome all students into all activities rather than creating African American experiences and attempting to recruit White students as an afterthought or excluding them completely by action and/or orientation. When

considering the viability of European American clubs at HHS, Kevin responded by pointing out the irony of such a situation:

> You see, that's what tickles me. Because from the inside looking out, we don't see a problem with not recruiting other races, you know? We're always the last to get something, so can't we have our own stuff? But, yeah, if there was a European American club, there would be a great fuss, like, "Oh no, you're prejudiced, you're preaching segregation." . . . But, it's like whoa, whoa! You can't say you want things one way and do the total opposite. . . . We can't really say anything if we don't open our doors to them. . . . I think things need to be done with students so that they don't feel that they have to have things just [oriented toward] a certain culture.

Kevin's thoughts on improving the high school experience for all students attest to a very strong sense of integrity and responsibility for the success of others for such a young man for whom rationalization would be acceptable given his presumed immaturity. Although he was never included in the group of Black students about whom some Black teachers said, "Don't want to learn," Kevin stated that he could understand "those generalizations because [he was] kinda guilty of that [himself]." He explained that the way to make a difference was to consider the following:

> Like, all right, if I see this, then what am I doing or what am I not doing to change the situation? . . . Instead of putting [the problem] off on them, I put things back on me to say "If I see this, then what can I do to change it, or what is my solution to the problem?"

Kevin's truth places the responsibility for change on oneself when one is faced with an undesirable situation. He views "integrity" as the most important commodity in our dealings

with situations that impact human lives. Kevin would be the one who brings to the table observations about situations in need of change, along with possible solutions.

Kevin's maturity, compassion, and willingness to be self-reflective are elements that many multicultural education theorists include in their way of looking at our diverse world. This young man has much to teach us and is willing to do so.

Jennifer Wojek─"Embrace Diversity and Go For It!"

In the 1970s, she would have been called *Blue-Eyed Soul*, more so because of her comfort with people of color than because of any kind of Black affectation adopted as her way of being. Jennifer Wojek's interview was characterized by deeply and positively insightful comments about her White-minority experience at Williams Lake High School (WLHS), peppered with hilarious one-liners about some of the ironies of that experience. Throughout our time together, the overriding theme was "integrated schools can work. . . . That a Black majority/White minority school succeeds." She fiercely articulated and defended her lived values and beliefs: tolerance and acceptance, the benefits to be derived from cross-cultural interaction, and her belief in the goodness of her school and her school district:

> People assume it's a bad environment. The majority gets scared because the minority's increasing, and they all run. The White flight. And they're running from something that could be so beneficial to them and their children because they just don't know. "There are [Blacks] crossing Border Road! Look out!" Don't let your biases and the need to protect your old beliefs stop it from happening. I wanna go, "Clavon Hills Public School District is one of the best in the State, and don't even start with me."

A key person who helped Jennifer to wholly participate and to be successful in this "rare and unique" experience was her principal, Mr. Rod Blake. He "was very adamant" that his students develop broad perspectives on diversity. This was reflected by the district's curriculum and Mr. Blake's participation on the curriculum design team, by his connectedness with his students and staff, and by the charge he set forth for the student leaders of the school. ("He's so amazing.") Jennifer and other student leaders at WLHS were given to understand the importance and the uniqueness of the kind of diversity represented in their school. They, then, were to learn how to relate to their fellow students, whatever their backgrounds might happen to be, and to model that behavior. "We had to come together with our differences and figure out, ok, where is the difference, but where is the likeness? And that's how we kinda worked it out."

Jennifer spoke warmly about how the friendships and associations created through her leadership and the numerous other activities in which she participated made her high school experience a special one. "We did everything, kept very busy." Jennifer was a member of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) for the Clavon Hills Community Foundation, the student board, madrigals, the traveling choir at her church, the National Honor Society, and the Student Perspective Committee and captain of the girl's tennis team (and, by 12th grade, its only White member). "We had a little clique at the top, us little scholars. Look out! I was in a lot of honors and AP classes, which was, to be honest with you, a really good mix of race and diversity." This little scholarly clique included a few of her "best girlfriends," two of whom were Black. It was the latter "[who] helped me learn a lot that I didn't know before because we were so close." They were close enough to interact

playfully with one another, and their communication was open, trusting, and honest enough to set expanded boundaries with one another.

Jennifer recounted an experience of going roller blading with her friends. It started to rain. The Black girls began a mad dash to find shelter, saying, "'I'm going to get naps.' And I was like, 'Naps!?' You guys got these little curls going, and I'm, like, 'Get your fro, girl.'" The whole group laughed at the exchange and Jennifer's with-it-ness. But, Jennifer also described what happened if she "stepped over the line. . . . I'd get a check. Not a rude check. But I'd get, 'Jen, why would you say something like that?'" Jennifer's openness and receptiveness allowed her to "double-think it and then go, 'Ok, that's not right. Reline. Re-do.'" She chose to refrain from anger and defensiveness in her emissarial or balancing role (Grant & Breese, 1997) between her Black and White friends.

That Jennifer includes certain elements of the critical multiculturalist in her self-definition is evident. But although she sees herself as "more than just White," she is not sure where to go from there in a positive sense. She knows how she does not wish to be defined: "George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. No thank you. I don't want to come from those people. The White pride thing is very weird." Jennifer seems to identify any White-only elements with "White pride" or "White power." Both, to her, have a supremacist bent, something she finds totally intolerable. Yet, as our conversation continued, Jennifer seemed to view Black clubs and organizations in school, even if less than actively inclusive of White students, as accepted realities. Jennifer shared that there was a Black Awareness Club in her high school to which one White student belonged. But groups like Pom Pons, cheerleaders, and the like "frowned upon White girls. Now, I got a booty. I can shake it. But . . . ." There was a Jewish Club that she assumed dealt with the cultural aspects of being Jewish. But even

though the interview question asked about her feelings about the formation of a school club

or group for Whites, she, once again, equated the notion of such a club with White power and

supremacy:

> But the White power thing would never fly. . . . Why would you need that? Even
>
> though they [Whites] are definitely in the minority situation [in school], they are the
>
> majority in the real world. I look at White power. Now, what do I do with that?

Jennifer shared that gender bias was more of an issue for her than was racial bias. It

appeared that the boys were "pushed" to achieve more than the girls. As AP students, girls

often represented the minority in class. But with true theorist insight, Jennifer shared that

"gender and race go hand in hand." Another student, to be profiled later, validated the

observation of gender bias and elaborated on it. Just as with race and the Black-majority/

White-minority reality, a cloak of silence existed between administration, staff, and students

around the gender-bias issue as well.

According to Jennifer, opening up dialogue would give people an opportunity to

change their biases, to understand that conversation about tough issues can be positive, and to

recognize what a unique environment CHiPS accords its students. Setting up forums for

dialogue is one of the responsibilities of faculty and administration, and the inclusion of all

constituencies is critical, including parents and the larger community. Through her work

with the Clavon Hills Community Foundation, Jennifer participated in such a forum with

corporate, educational, and community leaders to develop a city-wide, day-long workshop on

diversity. Jennifer worked with adults in the corporate sector to bring in Harry Belefonte as

the key-note speaker, a very heady experience, indeed: "Mr. Belefonte," Jennifer swooned, in

awe, as she wondered half aloud to herself, "can I kiss your toes?"

In addition to her role as a person who develops forums for ongoing open and representational dialogue, Jennifer sees teachers and administrators as role models who "need to practice what they preach. Little people are watching you." Additionally, teachers need to be more inclusive of other cultures in their instruction. Jennifer learned a lot about African American history that was not in history books, but, like Tiffany, she would have liked to learn more about other cultures as well, "Hispanic history. We never learned about Arabic history even though we had, like, a 10% population [of students] with Arabic backgrounds." Jennifer's advice is to go below the surface to help students understand other cultures "from an inside perspective." This would "completely add to the unique environment" that is her high school alma mater.

Upon graduation from high school, Jennifer attended a university in the contiguous urban center for a brief time. She stood out among groups of her White peers, when activity-based field trips took her classes to the downtown area of the city, as the student most likely to connect with Blacks and people of other cultural backgrounds. She then attended an out-of-state university on the west coast for a short time, where the ethnicities were different, but experiences around race and ethnicities were still more akin to those found traditionally in the mainstream. Jennifer finally ended up at her "beloved," first college choice, a regional research university—old friends, liberal atmosphere, close to home and her week-end job, the place that would give her family its first college graduate. Because of her high school experience, Jennifer continued her efforts to open her circle of friends to include more students of color. Often, these efforts were not totally welcomed by the students Jennifer tried to befriend. Sometimes, her efforts to maintain a connection with her "rainbow coalition" of high school friends were less than welcome as well:

Going into the university setting and hooking up with people who didn't experience what we experienced is very different. We're from the 'Hills' [said like a cheer]. That's the thing we joke about: I'm a ghetto girl from The Hills. I think my interaction with other races is a level of frustration almost because they've [Blacks on campus] grown up in an environment as a minority, and they feel that they need to clique with their own race. They need to protect themselves as a minority against the big bad majority. I don't see myself as a majority. I see myself as someone who would love to interact with them. Even some of my old high school friends, Black and White, seem hesitant about continuing our friendships. But, still, I'm very lucky to have had the opportunities that I had, and I feel honored to be able to look at things the way that I do.

Jennifer shared an experience of one awful day that changed her outlook about some of her fellow students at her "beloved" university and pointed out just how much there is left to do. As she crossed The Square in the center of campus on that crisp fall day, she saw spray painted on a wall words so ugly and upsetting to her that she sat down on The Square and "cried my eyes out. It was one of those moments where I was sick to my stomach, and so frustrated." The graffiti read: "Only niggers want affirmative action." Upon returning to her dormitory room, Jennifer, still upset and crying, called her mother. Her mother exclaimed, "What's broken?!" At that moment, it must have seemed to Jennifer that everything was broken—the whole way we see others and our relationship to them, our lack of compassion for each other, our inability to transcend color to get acquainted with the whole person.

Despite this experience, Jennifer recognized that the message painted on the wall did not reflect the feelings of everyone on campus, and she continues to hold fast to belief in the merits of multiculturalism and to honor her ability to own her own insights. Especially given the realities of who she is and what she represents rather than acquiescing to the racial distrust and hatred that the world too often presents, Jennifer's belief in humanity is not to be denied. She still admonishes, with hopeful vehemence, that we should "Embrace diversity and go for it! Broaden your perspectives. . . . It can succeed!"

Andrea White—"Rod's Kids"

Listening to her broad and airy manner of articulation and the figures of speech she uses in conversation, one would think that Andrea is a Valley Girl recently moved to Clavon Hills, Midwest, from sunny California. Speaking face to face, it is rather surprising to find that the conversation is with a young Black woman hailing originally from Anglewood, a northern suburb of Clavon Hills, Midwest.

As our conversation began in Andrea's off-campus apartment at the regional research university she attends, there was immediate rapport and candor. It became apparent that Andrea is not only intelligent, but that she is very wise. Learning is for life application. Her wisdom lies in the facility with which she sees and implements those applications. As the interview continued, Andrea's proper Valley Girl style became more vernacular. The resultant patois loosened the flow of conversation even more. We were as two fast friends discussing serious world events as they played out in the microcosm known as Williams Lake High School (WLHS). We shared an occasional "tsk, tsk" at the ironies we discovered, sighs about things of profound yet such unnecessary sadness, and peals of laughter and giggles about the fun of remembered teen-age life.

Andrea is very knowledgeable about who she is. Perhaps her thoughtfulness about her identity and total self-acceptance come from her experience of having been a true minority in school most of her life. She described her identity and interactions at WLHS:

> Well, I don't really feel like I represented very well the majority view only because when I moved to Clavon Hills, I moved from Anglewood. When I moved to Clavon Hills, I was made fun of because of the way that I talk. I naturally kinda gravitated more toward the White folks just because they never talked about the way that I talked. They accepted me for the way that I was. . . . I had my share of Black friends, but, socially, I hung out with White people. . . . There were definitely girls who did not like me, and I don't know. I don't want to say that it was jealousy. Maybe they thought I was trying to sell out or that I was not true to who I was.

As with all of the students with whom I spoke, much of Andrea's identity was caught up in her honors and AP academic status and involvement in school and school-community activities. She, too, like Jennifer, proudly daubed herself "one of Rod's [the principal] kids. We were the good kids. We were the smart ones. We were like the ones that he kinda put out there. . . put us up on pedestals, like, 'These are my good kids.' And so, I'm like one of Rod's kids, I'm telling you." This status kept Andrea out of, at least, one possible scrape with a girl who had threatened her. Word had it that the girl perceived Andrea as acting White, like she was better than everyone else, and the girl did not approve. After the threat was shared with "Rod," Andrea "never heard from her again." Being one of "Rod's kids" was pretty powerful, and the perks awarded that status clearly communicated the value placed on excellence in academic performance, school and community involvement, and positive school behavior. It was Rod's seeming mascots who were held up as exemplifying

the entire student population at WLHS in Board presentations, at administrators' meetings, and in the community despite the very different realities for students who were not viewed as "us little scholars."

Andrea provided an example of this different reality—this unspoken class or caste element associated with academic tracks with the honors programs representing the upper, institutionally privileged class and general education representing the lower class in which institutional marginalization was more likely to occur to students, both Black and White.

Andrea described how "White students are skimmed off and tracked in honors and AP." This is apparently a different world from that of general education. In the former, White students were often in the majority at WLHS. In the latter, there might be only one White student registered in a particular class. The honors/AP experience provided for a level of comfort that the singular White student in the general education population did not necessarily feel:

> I can't really imagine what it must have been like for a White person being the only one in a class. . . . You have students in there who probably aren't very tolerant . . . students who come in who don't really deal with White people on a regular basis and whatever. . . . Like I said, I can't imagine. I would not want to be that little White girl who is just in, you know, the average English class—I wouldn't want to be her. I wouldn't. And then I realize why so many White kids choose to go to other schools or choose to go to private schools or you name it. I think that that's a problem in itself. "Yeah, I hate the fact that I'm the only White kid in your class, and I don't feel comfortable, so I have to go." I hate that. I think that's awful, but at the same time,

hey, I ain't mad atcha, you know? Because I wouldn't want to be you. I wouldn't

want to be in that position.

Andrea voiced an empathic understanding of why the presence of two or more White

students in these classes would encourage them to "clump or group together." It seems that

Andrea has done her own share of clumping:

It gets to be like I see a lot of that here [at the university]. You get the clumping.

. . . If I'm one of maybe two or three Black persons in my class, oh, you better believe

that we become fast friends, you know what I'm saying? We do group together, we

just do.

This is a time when Andrea's facility at moving between two different worlds—the ability to

have her *feet in two canoes*—pays off to her benefit. It appears that the decision to cross

over or to seek out members of one's own racial group or members of another can be

contextual or associated with the conscious assessment of the benefits to be derived from that

choice.

Another area of the high school experience that held much in the way of life

application lessons for Andrea was her participation in school and school–community

activities. Andrea served as the WLHS student representative to the CHiPS Board of

Education and on the Students Perspective Committee and the Youth Advisory Committee.

She was a member of the soccer team, the National Honors Society, and Scholars in Action,

a highly selective project-oriented honors program. Andrea also wrote grants for the Clavon

Hills Community Foundation. The litany could go on, bringing greater appreciation for the

question "How much tape do you have?" posed by Andrea when I first asked about her

involvement in school activities. These experiences increased Andrea's multicultural contacts and gave her a whole set of life skills to draw upon:

> Well, I definitely have the ability to communicate and to interact with people from different backgrounds smoothly. You don't find that everywhere. There are a lot of people who come from very homogeneous atmospheres: Black, White, whatever. And so, to have this [skill] in a university that bases a lot of its work on group projects, especially in the psychology department, is extremely helpful. If you have to work in a group with an Asian kid, a Jewish kid, and another Black kid, you can handle it. You can talk to people. Well, that definitely puts me heads above a lot of students here. So, just coming from Clavon Hills . . . gives me an edge. I would say that it does.

Without warning or encouragement, Andrea extolled the virtues of her high school. She pitted it against "the four top high schools" in the neighboring and "loftier" suburbs and found them lacking. Upon her arrival at the regional research university as a freshman, Andrea was incredulous to find the degree to which her high school differed from others in terms of academic offerings. "What do you mean you only had two AP classes? Where I came from, we had, like, thirteen." Andrea continued, "I think WLHS is a good school and I received an excellent education." We both wondered if we were dealing with people's perceptions of a 'Black school' as a bad school despite the realities inside:

> I just think it's so sad because CHiPS just has so much to offer. I know people at Princeton, and they are thriving. I have a friend at Harvard, and he is thriving. I have friends at my current school, and they are thriving. It's not like these [CHiPS schools] are poor schools. People can go and learn. So much is taught.

But when the issue of discrimination was raised, Andrea recounted two examples in her experience at WLHS—one incident was race based, the other was gender based. She began by speaking endearingly about her AP English teacher, a Black woman, calling her "Mama Hicks." Andrea then shared how appalled she was that her previous English teacher, a White woman, recommended many White students to AP English but did not recommend her:

> She really seemed to favor her White kids. I don't know, but she definitely catered to them. That didn't upset me until she didn't recommend me for AP English. When she told me she didn't recommend me, I was, "Oh?!" (Andrea placed her right hand on her chest and caught her breath replaying her incredulity at this declaration). "You've got to be kidding." I am not good at everything, but English I can do. Like, I can write, like, that I can do. I don't do math. I don't do science; I don't do foreign language. English? I have a pretty good grasp on that!

A meeting with "Rod [the principal] and Mama Hicks's got it all straightened out." Andrea was placed into Mrs. Hicks' AP English class.

Andrea saw herself as having had no experience of racial discrimination despite what the above might intimate. She felt that all of her teachers "pushed [her] to do [her] best. . . . It's tracked; I mean it worked out [for me]. For others, it doesn't [work]. . . . [In honors programs and AP classes] you follow the same kids, you have the same teachers; they all have the same expectations of you."

Andrea did concede that she had "big gender issues" and that she was not hesitant in "voicing [her] concerns." In trying to achieve higher PSAT scores, "thirteen boys were pulled from her classes and secret Saturday meetings were held with them to prep them for

the PSAT." With justified indignation, Andrea asked rhetorically, "And why did I score higher than at least two of those guys? . . . But that's just one of many examples that I felt like being a girl there was not your best situation. WLHS pushed their boys much more than they pushed their girls."

Our conversation about the silence around issues of diversity and equity harkened the stories recounted by Delana from the late 1970s although the situations described occurred more than 30 years later:

> Just go to the WLHS parking lot at 2:07 or 2:15, whenever they let out, and see who goes to which section of the parking lot. It's that deep. Chaldeans here. Blacks here, and Whites there. With the lockers, the White kids are in one wing, Chaldean kids are in another wing, and Black kids are in another. Students are very aware. Kids don't talk about it, and administrators don't talk about it because they don't want to rock the boat, in my opinion. [Some teachers] don't realize that there is something to talk about. They see that they've got the thing going, and as long as we don't have an all-out race war . . . . It is definitely a great separation in the races. That was part of the reason why I had such a hard time with just hanging out with my friends—there was really no intermingling [in common areas of the school]. I mean, like, yeah, there was in my level of classes because everyone just kind of had to work together.

For Andrea, improving her alma mater involves increasing caring-connectedness and protective agency allowing students safety and encouragement to take academic and cross-cultural risks. She strongly implied that barriers are broken down when students work together to achieve common goals. Additionally, she suggested that project-oriented clubs

and organizations could, very well help to bring students together. She placed a lot of pressure on "Rod" because "he has power":

> He needs to make people care by making them feel like [these issues] affect them.
> He loves WLHS; it is his heart, and I know that. So, in order to reach him, I would
> try to get him to understand that if he wants to keep the school that he loves so much,
> then there's gotta be something done about what's going on. There's gotta be a bit of
> dialogue. I also think it's important to take away a lot of the fear that some of those
> White students feel. . . . I think it's really hard, but there has to be a way to make the
> administration and faculty care, to make them find a way to know that it affects them.

Andrea also encouraged teachers to "just teach everyone fairly" and to understand that students have different styles of learning. "Differentiate instruction to reach all students, and teach everyone fairly," she reiterated.

Andrea ended our conversation pensively and with encouragement for the current work, viewing it as important and potentially able to encourage change. "I can't wait to see how everything turns out because I think that these are really, really pressing questions that need answers."

Delana Treadwell—Can We Talk?

> When you can dispel ignorance and open up understanding, then people can get
> along. It's ignorance that blocks the progress because people are just going along
> with their own assumptions. They're just going along with what they think is true as
> opposed to finding out what the reality is about people – Black and White. . . .
> Nobody wants to talk about it. Nobody wants to explore.

The year is 1978, and Delana's family, having integrated their northwest neighborhood of the city, is now one of the few Black families in Clavon Hills. That community's first attempts to acknowledge the fact of its new and ethnic residents gave rise to one of Delana's earliest memories—a memory etched by fear and anger into her psyche:

I get angry when I see some things because I remember my dad being followed by the police every single day, you know? Our family was among those who integrated our northwest neighborhood in the city and [later] our Clavon Hills neighborhood. My dad worked hard for a living to live in a nice house; he just didn't deserve to be harassed. He was followed by White policemen in the city and then by White Clavon Hills police. So, I get angry because I still see prejudice in our society today. I get tired of White people. I've had to deal with it. I've faced it, you know, in school [and] on my job. . . . but I also realize that all White people are not like that. So, I look at the individual, not at them collectively because there are just as many prejudiced Black people as there are White people.

Paralleling the community experience was the high school experience—persons in authority who were not ready for the racial changes that had only just begun in their community or high school. Delana and I talked about how she got along given her Black minority status and all of the racial unrest around her in society and at Harrington High School (HHS). Delana paused thoughtfully and then went on to describe how her problems were mainly with the teachers and administrators because of her junior-year activities as a change agent in 1978. "I was a rebel . . . a revolutionary person. If I could have been a Junior Panther . . . [laughter]." Her first area of change activity targeted the misunderstandings, unrest, and silence about issues of race. Delana was among the charter

group of students to participate in the Camp Leden leadership experience that was organized as a cross-cultural retreat addressing racism and communication in response to racial unrest at HHS. Following the Camp Leden experience, Delana and a group of fellow student participants organized an exchange program between HHS and a high school on the west side of the contiguous urban core. The students learned a great deal about each other. They talked and laughed together. They discovered that many of their concerns and life celebrations were the same. They learned that the students in the city "weren't killing each other in the halls." The major difference was that West City High School had gates in their hallways, the same gates that eventually found their way into the CHiPS high schools.

After this one exchange experience, however, Delana reported that a group of White parents spoke to the CHiPS Board of Education about perceived safety issues with regard to their children going into the city, "and they nixed it. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. That was very discouraging [and disempowering] for us. They cut the legs from under us, and things went back to the norm. Yes, it's so hard to change. It's so hard to change."

Delana told of another experience, one that occurred at the end of her senior year at HHS and remains personally heartbreaking. The experience attests to the pain engendered by seeing color before seeing the child and by responding to perceptions of what the community's reaction to change might be.

Delana was selected salutatorian of her graduating class. She recounted that a number of efforts were made to prevent her from serving in that role. Pressures from her parents and others in the Black community of Clavon Hills, Midwest, strongly and successfully encouraged the administration of the school district to allow Delana to take her place as the salutatorian, she recalled. However, the picture of her speaking at the podium

during graduation was not included in the yearbook. After telling this story, Delana pulled

out the picture taken of her by the yearbook photographer as she was speaking on that Spring

1979 graduation day. She shared the picture of a younger, obviously passionate Delana with

me. When I returned the photograph, I noticed visible signs of resigned sadness in her

demeanor. She knew exactly where to find the picture, so at the ready, even after all of these

years. "This is the only proof I have that I did speak," she said ruefully, almost to herself.

Recovering quickly, Delana recounted an experience that, once again, might be laid at

the feet of marginalization as stereotyping at best and discrimination at worst and the

potential for tremendous harm, no matter the guise. During her first semester at the urban

college she attended, Delana became highly confused when her high school grades of As and

Bs in English at HHS morphed into grades of Ds and Fs in college freshman English. While

in high school, Delana had written in vernacular, or Black English, and her teachers had said

nothing. How confusing, because surely they knew that the King's or Standard English was

the language of education, the marketplace, politics, and all other areas that allowed people

to get ahead in this society. Surely, these teachers knew, "didn't they?":

> I thank God for this one particular teacher who was going to flunk me [in] my first-
>
> year English [class] because I wrote in Black English, ok? That was never pointed
>
> out to me at HHS, and I took English; I wrote papers. But it wasn't until I got to
>
> college, so I am thinking back now. Did my teachers set me up to fail? They had to
>
> have recognized that I was not writing proper English. They had to. And it was
>
> never brought to my attention until I got to college and the teacher told me, "You
>
> write well, your ideas are put together really well, but you just I be, we be, she be"
>
> [laughter]. . . . She suggested that I see a tutor . . . and my papers ended up going

from Ds and Fs to As and Bs. That made me angry because I'm thinking they knew

that back in high school. These were not dumb teachers. But they never brought it to

my attention. Why?

A question of such potency was one that neither Delana nor I wanted to attempt to answer

aloud although we were sure, in the silent and knowing spaces of our hearts, of what the

answer truly was. To avoid the profound sadness, even anger, that the answer might

engender, we left the question a rhetorical one.

Delana identified the area of sensitivity to students' backgrounds and needs as an

important topic for teacher pre-service and in-service training. On the basis of her

experiences, she believed that her high school teachers could have benefited from sensitivity

and knowledge of different cultures. Delana was one of the lucky ones who met the right

teacher in college who chose to teach this Black student, and they, together, were successful

at putting Delana on track. Delana chose to be a student by taking and using the teacher's

advice to her advantage. Delana also spoke of the need for open and honest communication

between teachers and students as another way for the contracts between teachers and learners

to be honored. She, like the other informants, was very adamant about the power of sensitive

and caring communication to foster cross-cultural understanding and to change people's

minds about themselves and each other:

> [Teachers and administrators should] listen to the students. Talk to the kids. You can
>
> learn so much from just talking to the kids. Listen to what kids think they need.
>
> Because they will be honest with you if you provide a safe environment for them to
>
> talk where they are not being judged and looked down upon. . . . As adults we come
>
> in with our own baggage─our own experiences and our own expectations. So there's

this tunnel vision. If we open it up to kids and say, "What do you think?" Kids, they

want to talk. They want to let you know how they feel. . . . That should be the first

step. . . . And I think, kind of like with the whole Camp Leden experience, don't just

involve the kids. Take some teachers up there and let them get into groups, and let

the kids be the facilitators with the teachers on the other side. . . . I would love to be a

fly on the wall for that one.

Addressing specific problematic situations and behaviors with HHS students of today

should be carried out courageously yet caringly. Delana sees one such problem for some

Black students, who do not know the legacy that made their majority status possible,

reflected in their behavior: a lack of commitment to their education and a lack of pride in

their school. She expressed concern for the White students in the minority who have been

"left behind," bringing up a possible class issue. About them, she mused,

I have always wondered, too, with the White kids who are left in the district, what

they're feeling. If they're feeling like they've been left behind, you know, like they

were poor White trash because all of the other Whites were able to flee or escape, and

they didn't, so are they feeling left behind? They need someone to deal with that

aspect because that's gotta be just awful. Because you're being looked down upon,

and I'm sure the White kids [from other suburbs] look down on them, like, "Oh, yeah,

you're that White kid that goes to school with all those Blacks in Clavon Hills." And,

they're catching it from both ends. That needs to be dealt with; it really does.

Delana and I ended our time together talking about the dangers of silence around such

important issues. Delana summed it all up with the word *denial*. As long as we don't talk

about those difficult issues, as long as we do not admit that [we] hold certain biases . . . as

long as we can deny them, then [they don't] exist." Delana had already shared her view of

the benefits of open dialogue in terms of "dispel[ling] ignorance and open[ing] up

understanding [to help] people get along." Yet, we both knew that getting through denial to a

place of authenticity is a most difficult, although worthwhile, task. Delana wondered who is

going to take it on for the sake of us all.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Two key themes emerged from the narrative texts of both Black and White students

in this study: marginalization, but, what is more, its overcoming in favor of the achievement

of school success. The experiences of marginalization shared by the informant group were in

the forms of ostracism, silencing, rendered invisibility, stereotyping, and gender and racial

bias. However, for these students, the main storyline is one of overcoming the exigencies of

marginalization in favor of achieving success in high school and beyond.

Although the total high school environments did not fully support the development of

cultural resilience in students for their successful adaptation in the face of adversity, the

students in the informant group found social capital where it existed and accessed and

utilized it by way of their membership in the Honors/AP communities and their avid

participation in school and school-community activities. Their membership and participation

surrounded them with the protective and guiding agency of strong and caring-connected

social networks that allowed them to thrive in their high school environments. The student

informants took maximum advantage of this and other external assets of social capital found

in their high schools by living up to high expectations for mastery and high-level learning

and for adhering to valued norms of behavior; availing themselves of the many opportunities

to participate in school and school-community activities as contributing members; and contributing to and utilizing social networks for their growth and success.

Students' resilience, supported and augmented by the social capital built through their high school experiences, allowed them to explore, develop, and negotiate multiple and authentic identities across the multiple boundaries found in diverse high school environments. Students saw themselves as "us little scholars," "the good kids." Additionally, they were goal and achievement oriented, open and honest communicators and strong problem solvers. They were uniquely experienced in cross-cultural relations because of their "exposure to diversity" in their high schools. Their identities as persons of integrity and courage as change agents for improving opportunities for all students, particularly in view of bias and inequitable treatment, providing caring-centered and reflective multiculturalism; a model for teachers and administrators. Knowledge about and sensitivity to one another and open and honest discourse provide the means. Each informant spoke to a need and desire to understand other cultures "from an inside perspective." Each spoke to the importance of communication to overcome barriers to cross-cultural understanding. "When communication is broken and the wall goes up, we learn fear and hate." "[Teachers and administrators should] listen to the students. Talk to the kids. You can learn so much from just talking to the kids. . . . They will be honest with you if you provide a safe environment for them to talk."

Moreover, teachers and administrators are shown the value of an ethos of caring connectedness at the foundation of an educational environment in which relationships become the locus of learning and becoming for students. It is relationship that names the

English teacher "Mama Hicks" and describes the principal as "awesome" and identifies with him as "one of Rod's kids . . . one of his good kids."

The student informants in this study found, accessed, and utilized powerful supports in their school environment for their success. The knowledge and skills that they gained from their capitalized high school experience held them in good stead in their postsecondary ventures as well. Their stories can be instructive in terms of how opportunities for success in high school might be expanded to touch even more students. This was a goal of their change agentry. Can it be any less for us as educators?

CHAPTER 6: TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS HAVE A SAY

Introduction

The current chapter gives voice to adults with strong ties to the district. Mr. George Dunlap is a social studies teacher at Harrington High School (HHS) with more than 30 years of teaching experience, and Mr. John Norton teaches in the Support Services Department, also at HHS, with a decade of teaching experience. Both teachers met the requirements of the informant profile outlined in chapter 3. Additionally, they attest that their views are reflective of those of the thinking of a number of their colleagues, even if the opinions of the teachers interviewed vary considerably from those of one another. Their narratives serve to define several institutional barriers to cross-cultural negotiation for access to quality resources that the student informants in this study successfully traversed.

The following participants represented district and city governance bodies, CHiPS:

- Dr. Joel Stovall, a White male, who serves as director of communications and informal historian for the district. He wrote his 1987 dissertation on the post-World War II history of the development of CHiPS. Dr. Stovall is also a member of city government in Clavon Hills.

- Dr. Anne Evans, a White female, is the superintendent of an area intermediate school district and a former superintendent of CHiPS.

- Nancy Davenport is a White female and school board member.

- Martin Langston is a Black male and long-term member of Clavon Hills city government.

Shared perceptions and insights of the latter two informants appear as validating contributions to the reporting. Rather than being named in narrative design, their limited but important comments are incorporated into the portrait narratives presented in this chapter.

All of the informants expressed a keen and ongoing interest and a willingness to participate in this study from its inception. The resultant narratives serve to define institutional barriers, and, by contrast, to identity crossings that would soften if not completely dissipate those barriers and better enable students to successfully negotiate multiple identities for positive academic and social outcomes.

Perspectives

George Dunlap – From Hippie, Change-the-World Certainty to Middle-Age Doubt

Mr. Dunlap is a White male teacher at Harrison High School (HHS) who graduated from college in the 1960s, a most defining era. His ideals and attitudes were very much shaped by the socio-psychology of that time: Flower Children; the Chicago National Democratic Convention; liberalism; Woodstock; SNCC; Stokeley; the JFK, MLK, and RFK assassinations; Angela; and the Peace Corps. Mr. Dunlap still wears jeans and a now-graying and reminiscently long hairstyle. He still speaks passionately about those times with appreciation for the uniqueness of the life experiences to which he was exposed and for the contributions they made to his life philosophies.

Like so many other School of Education graduates of the late sixties and the early seventies, George believed, without a shadow of a doubt, that he could change the world. He was passionate and compassionate, energetic and enthusiastic, learned and liberal. After all, he had his bachelor's degree in education in hand. He was a certified and qualified teacher beginning his first teaching job in the autumn of 1965. Over the next few years, however, the differences he was so anxious to make met with school cultures that were quite established and not terribly amenable to purposive change, especially by one so *wet behind the ears*. So, as the decades passed, there may have been little change in the organizational culture of his

workplaces—perhaps only the kind that comes with time. The major change may have occurred in him and others of his era.

His options for development as an educator included involvement in ongoing self-reflection and reflection on his practice, a commitment to life-long learning modeled for his students, and a continued belief in the worth of the students and their right to a rigorous and equitable education. He continued to believe in his abilities as a change agent and therefore continued to push against the system on behalf of his thirty-something-year-old beliefs about the positive roles of education in the lives of students. Another set of options, however, may have caused George to grapple less fervently with his and others of his era's "own failures to produce the kinds of changes [they] advocate[d]" (Cochran-Smith, 2000, p. 157) and to rhetorically interrogate, if at all, the assumptions that are deeply embedded in the cultures of the workplace.

After all these years, there is not much that George has yet to experience in his profession. The new strategy presented by the superintendent at the last in-service was already old knowledge to George and his peers. Besides, the so-called new strategy does not work anyway since *they* came, the changing population—so unlike the students they used to have, the Jewish kids who wanted to learn, who read on or above grade level and whose parents were so supportive. Central Administration does not know what teachers are dealing with now, and the availability of intervention resources is on the wane. Yet, the expectations for high levels of performance have not changed. And, if someone mentions the *d* word (diversity) one more time . . .

Instead of working with increased fervor to assuage his pain and despair at the state of education in our society through collective change efforts, George and some others seem

to have adopted hostility, apathy, and/or perceptions of themselves as master teachers despite their failure to even *see* their students. The basic strategies underlying these belief systems and assumptions may have begun to create their lesson plans and inform their instructional methods. They may have started to hold their students as captive audiences as they showcased themselves and their ability to monologue at length or as they taught via benign neglect. They lectured on various issues—sometimes even controversial ones—but did not create a forum for dialogue. They assigned a chapter of reading and the completion of the questions at the end of the chapter or put on a videotape of *To Kill a Mockingbird* while students slept, did homework for other classes, or chatted quietly with their neighbor. Rather than engaging students in guided viewing and reflective discussion, the teachers read the newspaper. They became less and less engaged in the business of schools. Less and less did they honor the teaching-learning contract by seemingly forgetting that teaching happens only when learning takes place.

Mr. George Dunlap is caught somewhere in this quagmire of decision making about his identity as an educator. His interview comments were often contradictory, as if he was struggling to be what he professed to be while denying what he seemingly had become. He sees himself as an advocate for his students while at the same time maligning them for their shortcomings. Here, he lays claim to a positive rapport with his students:

My initial instinct would be that most of [the White students] don't seem to have a hassle racially. My experience is just that most of them seem to be blending in well, or mixing with Black students. I have a very good rapport with lots of students in my classes and students in the school. . . . If there are problems, they would come to me. I've had very few incidents, none that I can recall off-hand, that a White student has

come to me and said that they were targeted . . . . I don't think too many of them [Black students] play, as Johnny Cochran said, the 'race card.' I don't sense that they feel superior because they are the majority. . . . I would say, basically, that the two races, by and large, are fairly cohesive. At least in terms of race. [To the contrary, he noted] as I am trying to envision the lunch times, the White kids do seem to hang out together. I have noticed that.

Although Mr. Dunlap is less sensitive to racial issues than his stated awareness would support according to the perceptions of other informants, he is quite sensitive to the "vicious[ness]" with which students sometimes treat each other. When faced with an instance of such strongly named behavior, his response is quick, and his approach no nonsense:

Well, kids are vicious with each other. A Black student, yesterday, in class—a relatively unattractive, overweight Black girl—was giving a speech. Another Black student called her "Shrek"—the green ogre in the movie—and I got on him big time. Big time! I made him write a 300-word letter of apology or he was going to get a month of Saturday detentions; I was going to call his parents and embarrass him to death. And he had no idea he could have taken a 14-inch knife and jabbed it into her heart and not have inflicted as much pain as he did with that one ignorant statement.

Unfortunately, the intervention ended with no effort at helping the young man comprehend how the young woman felt given his remark. There was no effort to help him understand how he would have felt if he had been the one targeted. The morality issue was not dealt with. The real lesson taught was that engaging in such behavior is undesirable because you may be caught and punished. That it is just plain wrong for human beings to

treat each other this way was left out of the lesson plan, as was any attempt to engage the class in observing at least one aspect of an ethos of caring or empathy.

The punitive aspect of the intervention was indeed dealt with quickly and in a no-nonsense manner, particularly if these methods mean discipline that is shame-based. Although there may be a need for a punitive aspect to dealing with such behaviors, these situations are also opportunities for the teaching of affective skills associated with socialization in a socially capitalized school environment (Arriaza, 2003). However, taking advantage of these teaching moments for the latter purposes seemed to be less likely to appear in Mr. Dunlap's response repertoire. This is quite possibly a result of a long-standing school culture that allows for the assignment of over 500 days of suspension in one year for a freshman class of just over 400 students, taken from the *HHS Suspension Report by Grade*. Over 200 detentions were assigned in one week according to the *HHS Detention Report* for the week of March 17, 2003. No strategies were in place for preventive intervention before reentry into school or as part of the discipline process.

Within the context of the questions *How is it that people learn to treat each other better*, and *How do we create a space in our schools for all students without such strong dependence on rules and impositions?* Mr. Dunlap loosely quoted a line from the film *The Ghosts of Mississippi*: "You can't legislate how people feel about one another, and you can't impose whatever you want to impose, and so, it has to naturally occur." I asked Mr. Dunlap if he felt that it was enough to rely upon this kind of understanding and communication "naturally tak[ing] its course." Mr. Dunlap began with a solid suggestion for addressing this issue before immediately returning to a monologue, approaching a diatribe, about all of the

things that are wrong with students and how no one is providing the necessary help to effect

change.

Mr. Dunlap described a situation in which the reading specialist sent the results of a

study she had completed on student reading levels to the appropriate central administrator.

The results were met with accusations of prejudice and insensitivity on the part of the reading

specialist. The reading specialist retired that same year. Given this set of events, Mr. Dunlap

described communication between staff and central administration as "contentious" and

vociferously declared his feelings about the seeming hopelessness of it all:

> Our reading specialist was simply trying to gain support to develop an alternative
>
> concept to meet the needs of most of the student body, who is reading at 3-5 years
>
> below grade level. That leads into the significant issue that kids can't read, in
>
> combination with apathy, a lack of motivation, you have low MEAP scores, low
>
> GPAs, drop-outs, and various other issues. And you need reading specialists. . . . And
>
> the problem is worse now than it was then. And it hasn't bottomed out, and it's not
>
> bottoming out. I see no end to the bottom. It hasn't bottomed out [stated with a
>
> shoulder shrug, and residual contempt in his voice at the treatment of his good friend,
>
> the reading specialist, leading to her "premature" retirement].

Trying to get at the subject of diversity another way, we quickly ended up covering

the same ground: a perceived lack of mutual respect between students and between students

and staff; students' low self-esteem; and poor academic skills. However, homophobia was

mentioned as a diversity issue on the increase among the student body. Mr. Dunlap stated

that he had no problem addressing this issue with his students. He employs lectures and

articles, and shares his personal experiences about his gay and Black friends. ("And if you

look real close, you will see that I'm a Caucasian. . . . We're all God's children. We're all God's children except gay people," he said wryly). Mr. Dunlap shared that these kinds of conversations are just "too uncomfortable for teachers to address." But he addresses them— "no problem." He allowed that it is "essential" to discuss these issues "because you're dealing with fear of the unknown, as in the case of homophobia. I think it [lack of dialogue] perpetuates a certain type of stereotype, generalization, even racist [and homophobic] philosophy in some ways."

Mr. Dunlap had no suggestions for opening up broad-based discourse beyond the individual classroom. He is doing his part in his own classroom, so it is up to others, it would seem, to engage their own students in conversations about those difficult-to-discuss subjects.

Mr. Dunlap, like some of his peers, began teaching in the suburbs in a more traditional time, when White students were in the majority and Black students constituted a small minority. Public schools in this country have always been Eurocentrically organized (Willis, 1998). Now, our urban-suburban schools are becoming more and more socially organized Afrocentrically. Mr. Dunlap is caught in the middle of the change yet working to catch up, and constantly assessing his progress, finding himself doing quite well. It is the student body, parents, and central administration whom he finds lacking.

John Norton—"What Do You Mean, You Don't See Color?"

Mr. Norton, a Black male, teaches in the Special Services Department at Harrington High School (HHS). He is a cofounder and cofacilitator of *Project Manhood,* a mentoring and rights-of-passage group whose members are Black male students with the exception of one White male student. Mr. Norton was one of two adult informants who dared to share

whispered truths about HHS and Clavon Hills Public Schools (CHiPS). These whispered truths acknowledged the difference in the complexion of the student population and sought to identity educational implications. These whispered truths cited where and with whom change agentry lay that would find all students worthy and capable of learning and make the school environment maximally responsive to their educational and social needs.

By way of context, for many years, CHiPS was considered a White, elite school district. Perusing HHS yearbooks from 1965 to the present, the first staff member of color appeared on a yearbook page in 1970. She was the accompanist for the vocal music program. In that same year, a White teacher was depicted in Black-face, with her hair plaited in many braids and each braid tied with a piece of a rag that had been torn into strips. She and a colleague were conducting a lesson to "bring U.S. racial history alive for their American History-English Seminar." I only wish I knew what lesson the students really took away from this *looking like Topsy* (Beecher-Stowe, 1852) approach to the objectives.

By 1972, there were three Black seniors whose photographs appeared in the HHS yearbook. Each subsequent year, more and more Black students appeared as their presence was interwoven into the fabric of HHS. By 1998, there were four White graduates depicted in the yearbook. Also evident was the change in building culture in terms of the arts. Over time, the student play productions changed from *Oklahoma, Guys and Dolls,* and *The Crucible* to *The Wiz, The Piano*, and *Fame.* Many more Black students were working behind the scenes, contrary to a former drama teacher's feelings that "Black students like to be out front, and White students are better equipped to handle the technical end of stage productions." The music department added a jazz band.

For the past fifteen to twenty years, the term *changing population* could be heard in teachers' lounge conversations. The term came to be a pejorative one—a code for "*they* are crossing Border Street and taking over." Mr. Norton articulated *the* whispered truth so matter-of-factly as to give permission to those still grieving the change to start living the new reality and to live it fairly well through acceptance of what is:

> I think that some of the [teachers] believe that because the ethnic part of the
> demographic structure is changing, they equate it [the school and the district] toward
> an urban-type situation. And I think the kids see that because we're Black, we're
> more of an urban school so that the tone of the school changes. Clavon Hills isn't the
> elite Clavon Hills anymore. . . . HHS is a Black school on the other side of Border
> Street. The perception is that the schools are going down, which is going to make
> property values go down. Although, economically, many of our African American
> students live in an elite status that is above where many African Americans live in
> this country.

Here, there is no doubt about the role of race and racialization in defining how we see ourselves and how others see us. It has the power to modify perceptions about whole environments and to instill an ethos in schools of elitism or of Mr. Dunlap's "blaming the victim" (Ryan, 1971, p. 10) apathy. It has the power to change instructional purpose and methodologies, as well as expectations of which students will succeed and which will fail. For a number of years, the district endeavored to avoid its current Black-majority status, and the associated perceptions by trying to devise strategies to keep White residents in Clavon Hills and to attract other White families. About these efforts, Mr. Norton responded:

I don't understand the motivation behind it. Because we teach in a public school, we teach the kids who live in the community which we have no control over. So, I don't understand how . . . or why they [central administration] were attempting to make [the district] or keep it diverse so that we don't become all Black.

Mr. Norton expressed other areas where energy might be expended that would yield more educationally effective results. For him, "honest and authentic communication" about racial issues in relation to teaching and learning is one such area:

One of the biggest problems we have in America is that we're not honest. We need to talk. Caucasians need to hear from African Americans that we think racism still exists. We need to be able to point out how it exists. We need to recognize that African Americans were victims of a Holocaust . . . . That's not to put down what the Jews went through. . . . But we need to engage in dialogue about issues of . . . any type of injustice, any type of prejudice. We need to be talking about the fact that we know that our kids learn differently. Our Eurocentric pedagogical practices are very restrictive to our students.

Mr. Norton cited accountability for student learning as a responsibility for all educators that begins with "know[ing] your client—dealing with who they really are." However, he assigned the responsibility for a higher level of accountability and cultural knowledge to Black teachers for Black student learning. As a people, he explained, "African Americans have had to know about other groups, especially Whites." The problem is that "we can tell you more about them than we can about ourselves. . . . We can't tell you about our Black intellectuals, the forefathers [and foremothers] who fought and struggled for the liberation of Black people." Further, he explained,

If we're [Black teachers] teaching our kids and our kids are still performing poorly,

that means we're accountable for them, and we should give back to them. Our Black

teachers need to teach our Black kids. When we teach them math, we don't teach

them about the great Black mathematicians. They don't talk about Ben Banneker,

they don't talk about the genius of the pyramids. . . . In science classes, they don't

talk about George Washington Carver, Ben Carson, or Ron McNair . . . We want to

say to our Caucasian counterparts, "You don't know our kids." But, how well do *we*

know our kids?

It is obvious that Mr. Norton holds an important place in his teaching for

Afrocentrism. Yet, in doing so, he does not quite seem to see how, despite its

instructiveness, this approach can alienate some students and fail to meet all of his students'

needs for a broad-based and multivocal education. On the other hand, there are Black

teachers at HHS and Williams Lake High School (WLHS) who are held captive by their own

internalized oppression acted out as intracultural prejudice. Several students in the initial

focus groups (1997) shared that there were Black teachers who put down Black students in

front of the whole class. They made statements such as "Black kids don't want to learn."

Mr. Norton agreed that this perception, sadly, is still the case in too many instances.

For both Mr. Dunlap and Mr. Norton, there is a sense of resignation about the

existence, meaning, and implications of the majority-minority population. Mr. Dunlap's

resignation is about issues of the inability to legislate feelings and attitudes and about what

he sees as the ability of the White students to "blend in." Mr. Norton's resignation centers

around his perception that the process of acculturation makes White students comfortable

with their minority status among Blacks in the majority. When the subject of discomfort

with their minority status was broached by some White students, the discussion went no further than acknowledgment, minimization, or the same resignation, particularly if efforts at inclusion had been unsuccessful. The White minority student population is not included in any public discourse about the makeup of the student body and educational or social meaning and implications. Mr. Norton has had private conversations with several White students, however, and noted,

> I know I'm taking a risk, [but] because I've had conversations with a few Caucasian students in my classes and in my mentoring program, I think many of them have grown up around African Americans such that they don't see that much difference. It's part of their acculturation, if you will . . . they're used to it. I do know that there is a population of students, a few Caucasians, who are segregated socially. . . . [At lunch time] there is a section of the building where the White kids hang out. . . . For the most part, I know they segregated themselves by the library, or would go under the bridge (which I still have to discover where that is). . . . They don't see any, or should I say, feel any . . . inequality, maybe. I've had conversations with a few White young people, and that's what I've got back, that they don't feel or see the difference.

Paradoxically, however, if an adult White person professed a philosophy of humanistic monoculturalism that replaces race with colorlessness in favor of shared humanity (Davidman & Davidman, 1994), Mr. Norton would become rather agitated:

> Appreciate the difference. That is what I would really love to see. Acknowledge that, folks! Caucasians say, "I don't see color, I just see a person." And, I say, Wow! If you don't see that I am a Black man in front of you, then you have a problem. You're blind! You're blind! You're lying to me! And I question that because I see a

White person in front of me. Do I judge you by it? No. Am I prejudiced because of it? No. Do I have an opinion about you because of that? No I don't. But I see a White person, and I can appreciate that we're different in that sense.

When asked how we can overcome the silence about race and the view that the failure to see color is a positive response to race, Mr. Norton takes the onus of responsibility straight to the top: "the President of the United States." Mr. Norton feels that it is the responsibility of the President and other politicians to "get Whites there. If the President were to make a public acknowledgment─apologize on behalf of the United States and say, 'We've done a grave wrong,' and from that begin a conversation." For Mr. Norton, the issues addressed in this study and related concerns will take someone in a position of high authority to provide the mandate that creates the forum for the important discussions that need to occur.

In both of the foregoing narratives, there is an ambivalent acknowledgement of the role of race and racialization of both Black and White students in the school milieu. On the one hand, race is viewed as having little to no impact, one way or another, on teacher attitudes and practices. One the other hand, these same attitudes and practices are viewed as institutional barriers affecting both students and teachers in terms of their ability to reach and teach each other.

Dr. Joel Stovall─"I Despair"

Dr. Joel Stovall is a White male central administrator who serves as the director of district communications in CHiPS and as district historian (Siver, 1987) and serves as a Clavon Hills city government official. From his loft in the crow's nest, his berth in the district by virtue of these positions, Dr. Joel Stovall shared a panoramic view of the CHiPS learning community. He provided candidly global perspectives on the issues addressed in the

interview. He also presented insightful segues explaining the local and broader significance of these perspectives.

Dr. Stovall despaired at much of what he saw. His despair came as a result of the effects on interpersonal communication and relationships caused by the "profound changes in the way Americans live." The front porch is a thing of the past. We push a button to open and close the garage door. We enter our air-conditioned homes without going outside. We fill our leisure time with "our personal electronic devices that can keep us singularly engaged," and we hire lawn-maintenance and snow-removal services rather than meeting and greeting our neighbors as we once performed these tasks ourselves. "The problem with our society is that we don't tend to get to know each other. We are easily disconnected from one another."

This failure to connect because of the various innovations introduced into our lifestyles comes at an extremely high personal and social price—"a lack of trust, [feelings of] a heightened need for security, and indifference toward others. . . . Security, however, does not build trust." The fall-out continues "when you feel uncomfortable and you don't have people interacting in productive ways. Then, on a larger scale, people tend to move away from what they don't know and what they fear." Dr. Stovall allowed that schools of choice, parental proximity to the job, and child-care needs for younger siblings may be some of the reasons that many of Clavon Hills White students, particularly at the high school level, are transferring to schools in neighboring and Whiter suburbs. Some of the students come back to Harrington High School (HHS) and Williams Lake High School (WLHS) to attend sports games and still root for their old CHiPS high school as if it were still home. But despite the reasons, "homogeneity is created. Integration is not served well, nor is diversity."

Dr. Stovall defined the diversity that remains in Clavon Hills in terms of socioeconomics in which a number of White families live on the mid-to-low echelons of that ladder. He also views the diversity represented in CHiPS as intraracial:

I can tell you there is such diversity within the African American community. First, we know that no group is monolithic. Certainly, it's very evident in Clavon Hills. I mean, we have this whole spectrum of kids and families from the Caribbean, and this huge Nigerian population. . . . Another difference is the religious beliefs that the kids bring, whether it's Jehovah's Witness, Baptist, or not particularly religious at all, or the Methodist.

In terms of the White students, Dr. Stovall sees a "whole range of statuses from elitism to aliena[tion] and intimida[tion]. And then I see kids who have managed to survive. 'Survive' it may not be the best word, but they just make it." Others go to extremes in order to be accepted by their Black peers. By way of example, Dr. Stovall offered the following:

This one kid who was hoping to assume the ghetto Black gangsta kind of thing . . . this MTV thing. He really couldn't pull it off. He was such a fraud. This particular kid was so ridiculed. I mean, he was so miserable because he rejected his Whiteness and turned to Black . . . baggy pants, the swagger. The kids said, "You're ridiculous." He was miserable, this kid.

Dr. Stovall noted, with profound sadness, that he "continue[s] to see kids sacrifice their own self-perception" in exchange for anticipated acceptance. Although this is not new, there is the added wrinkle of the nontraditional minority status of White students. There are so many fewer peers with whom they can relate given limited contact during school because they are so thinly spread out among programs and classes and school interests and activities.

Dr. Stovall views Black students as being empowered by their majority status. So, too, are *abuses* seen:

> I think some of the kids, they don't realize, and this is true of all kids, they don't realize what a good situation they have. I look at the kids that have cars, nice clothing, mom and dad both work, and they haven't had to struggle, really. For others, their families struggle. But, I think it's an empowering thing to feel that there are people like them. And, then, there are abuses . . . like putting down those in the minority, whether Chaldean or White.

On a broader scale, Dr. Stovall is worried about those young people who do not know how to present themselves confidently to the world. He worries about those young people who

> cannot look you in the eye. They cannot give a decent handshake. They have this distance. And when I look at the kids in the Business Academy, where they have been taught how to make an impression. How powerful that is!

These are students with issues so different from those of the students who demonstrate the cultural resiliency and maturity of their peers, who are able to successfully negotiate their way through the high school experience.

Coming out of the on-site and interview research, there are questions to be posed at this juncture. Why is it, given the importance of these skills, that they are not viewed developmentally and taught to all students? What might the relative ability to present oneself have to do with the way the school culture mirrors the student to himself or herself? Suspensions, detentions, shaming, blame-the-victim belief systems, racial put-downs, gender and gender identification issues, nuanced class distinctions, valuing the brightest and best and

others less so . . . this culture will always leave someone out. This culture does not appear to hold diversity and inclusion as core values. For that matter, it does not appear to value all students in equal measure, nor does it seem to recognize that every student brings something of value to the table.

Dr. Stovall spoke of the silence around all of these issues by allowing that people are less likely to talk about things that "discomfort them." He suggested that some are fearful that they might be judged to be a racist if others in the conversation object to or misunderstand their opinions:

> If you're in defense of White kids, then it's all you're interested in. It really hampers. I guess I always thought there needed to be some kind of leadership in terms of setting some kind of ground rules. . . . It's like a good marriage. You don't blame, you don't disrespect, you don't devalue someone else. But, you talk about the issues when you have them. . . . But I don't see a lot of that anywhere. I see silence. I see blame and I see the "walk-away." I despair.

Dr. Anne Evans─The Place is Here and the Time is Now

During her tenure in Clavon Hills Public Schools (CHiPS), Dr. Anne Evans, a White female, was a truly hands-on superintendent. She was a presence everywhere, from schools and classrooms to the bus garage; from plays, concerts, and open houses to community meetings, parent-teachers conferences, and the local video store. Despite leaving this position for a county-level superintendency, she is extremely articulate about issues affecting CHiPS from the perspectives of all constituencies. She spoke most insightfully about the dynamics of the various issues posed in the interview and suggested doable and strategic methods for turning marginalization into inclusion, disconnection into connection, and

blame-the-victim self-absolution to demonstration of compassion and shared responsibility for the students served. Dr. Evans also demonstrated a deep and insightful knowledge of the district, courageous advocacy for children, and an in-your-face impatience with those who put their own needs before the needs of the children they serve and then blame students for their shortcomings. Because of these attributes, Dr. Evans was willing and able to tell a powerful yet hopeful story—one that ends with a new vision capable of writing a different and positive reality.

Dr. Evans's style is to go directly to the heart of the matter. Unless the listener can *take it straight with no chaser*, he/she will have to hurriedly find ways to recover from his/her surprise or angst so as not to miss the opportunity to extend the conversation or to hear the next insightful comment. For example, when asked what she thought were the central qualities of the reality of White students in the minority in the district's high schools, her first comments were the following: "Whites don't know how to be in the minority. They wouldn't have the *hutzpah* to form a White student union. They would think, somehow, that that was wrong." She prefaced this comment by describing the characteristics that are likely to lead to comfort or discomfort for majority-minority students attending Black-majority high schools in Clavon Hills. She described the probable result if the family has choices about how to create a more comfortable situation for their children:

> I think it sort of depends on the kids. Kids that are kind of outgoing and find their connections in content, activities, and so on, probably, it's better. Kids that don't are isolated, and they don't feel at all connected. I think there's a certain dissociative disconnection that all the White kids, as a majority-minority, have because, just as when Blacks were in the minority, they didn't see themselves reflected in the music,

in the culture, in the subculture of the school. And I think White kids are in that boat now. Their culture, while it's the dominant culture of the society, is not represented regularly in the discourse of the school. [The discourse] isn't about who they are. . . . So, I think, as I view them, that they're out of the mainstream. So, then, of course what happens is if the families have choices to make, they choose to put [their children] in an environment where they are most comfortable. In Clavon Hills, that juncture happens, of course, at 6th grade, and most definitely, at 8th grade going to 9th grade.

Dr. Evans did not feel that the Black majority population fared that much better because in her view, "Black kids don't know how to be in the majority, either." She intimated that from the middle phases of school desegregation to the present, after much research, intervention, and opportunities for positive experiences, many White families are "evolved enough" to be able to say to their child, "Say, why don't you invite Marci over?" However, she stated,

I don't think Black kids do that [for] White kids who're in the minority. I don't think [that] they don't like them necessarily, but they're not going to include them, they're not going to be sensitive to the fact that these kids are the only ones, or just that there's a few of them. [Black kids] are still dealing with how they feel in the big society. They leave the culture of Harrington High School (HHS) or Williams Lake High School (WLHS), where it's mostly Black, but, then, they go out into the big world where it's mostly White and they interact with White people. That whole layer of prejudice and so on. So, it's almost like you can't blame them for not being evolved enough to realize that they need to be more sensitive and more caring about

it. They will recognize it later in life, but they don't recognize it right now because

it's not the nature of young people. . . . They don't get support from their parents . . .

because the Black parents are carrying too much crap from their own to get past it—to

help their kids get past it.

In addressing the value of student engagement in dialogue about issues of race and

ethnicity, Dr. Evans first identified two additional groups of young people who have no voice

and no forum for exploring who they are in their high school and societal experience:

The value [of dialogue] is that it can go a long way to making the schools,

particularly the high schools, better places to be. I really think it's the kids that can

lead the way. The adults got too much s--- going on with them. But kids don't. . . . If

we had facilitated dialogue and discussion among kids at school . . . it's kinda like

Camp Leden, that happened. It happened across race and across class, between

negative and positive folks. They really had an opportunity in that setting to really

talk about it and everything. . . . And then they returned. You know, they kinda say

"hey" to each other in the hallway for about a week, and then they got back into their

little thing. But it's possible, so, recognizing that it's important, it doesn't have to be

all the kids in the school, but there needs to be opportunities for kids to talk about it,

especially the biracial kids. . . .Who do they date? Who do they hang out with? . . .

and gay kids and how they're at issue too. Talk about being marginalized, whether

Black or White, they're not even on the map. These are kid issues because they deal

with them every day. So, why not have an opportunity for kids to be in dialogue?

They come up with much better solutions than we do.

If this dialogue would be of such value, why does silence exist? Why will no one truthfully say that there's an elephant in the living room? Dr. Evans spoke to the complex dynamics surrounding this necessary and important action on behalf of students as well as parents, teachers, administrators, and society. The three-year formative effort at training administrators to conduct the difficult conversations back at the sites met with much resistance and limited success despite the consultants, the trainers, and the in-house work. Dr. Evans began her assessment of this effort by stating, "I think we started wrong. We should've done a pincher movement (demonstrates crab pincher action). We should've tried to work with administrators because I think that was a laudable effort. But we should've started with the kids [also]." Further, she said,

> the White folks on the administrative team just couldn't deal with it. Wanted to marginalize it or wanted to invalidate it, but in a positive way. They wanted to look at you and all the others, and say, "Well, she made it. Look, you did it." So, it's really kind of a left-handed compliment. I think that's a part of it. And on the African American side, it was just too much anger, too much baggage, too much "ain't it awful?" It's not bogus, I mean, the way people felt. But they couldn't step over it. And too, I think really that it is a lifetime of living in a White world. . . . There's no way I can appreciate it because I'm not Black, but I really do get it, that it's real. It happens everyday in this world to you guys. And some people can rise above it, and some people can't.

In addition to problems associated with affect, the administrators were never sure of what the goals or desired outcomes of the training experience were or how to get there:

I think trying to go back and apply at the school site, we could never do because we were never sure what we were really trying to be about. We were trying to be about all kids can learn no matter what, and the administrators couldn't get past their own stuff dealing with that [imagined, difficult] teacher and figure out how to sit down and have a conversation. Or, you're the [Black] middle school principal who was always nice to the White kids but wouldn't listen to their parents who were saying, "Hey, you know, my kid feels like [he's] getting picked on." It was, like, "Get over it," you know. . . . It's, like, "It's your turn in the barrel" or "You're going to make it anyway because you're White." It's, like, "See how it feels kind of a thing. We've been dealing with this our whole lives." It's an understandable reaction, but it's not helpful. And as a White superintendent in a mostly Black district, it's not an issue I could raise. No one takes it on, so the elephant sits in the living room. In order to get somewhere with it, we would've had to be after it. We would've had to really gotten down to a level of comfort with each other as people, and we never could get there because of the nature of Clavon Hills. Clavon Hills is not the kind of place where you get down to this. It's too much b---s--- that goes on, too much oneupsmanship, too much I gotta have an edge on this one, that one, and we don't have that problem at this school—yeah, right.

These statements by Dr. Evans brought up some very serious morality issues for the leadership of CHiPS. Several morally mandated requirements exist for schools. Included are commitments to student advocacy, addressing safety and justice in the learning environment, acceptance, belief in others, and a willingness to change school culture in order to educate all

children. No place in the code is it written that personal discomfort with specific issues

exempts educators from these moral obligations.

Without a doubt, the impact on leadership brought on by rapidly changing

demographics in the district is monumental. Dr. Evans pointed out the need to maintain

standards, "not because the kids are Black, but because you just need to." She spoke of how

the introduction of the academies, "fulfilling a broader kind of educational agenda," led some

Black parents to view the district as "experimenting with their children." Raising the GPA

requirement to a 2.0 in order to participate in organized sports and activities was viewed by

some as "racist. It never was done when the White folks were here." There are parents who

work hard to keep their boys, in particular, away from the *hood* mentality. Dr. Evans

commented about other parents, however, who, she suspected,

> rode in on the coattails of affirmative action who didn't have to work that hard to get
>
> where you are if you got in because you were Black or Hispanic . . . you don't know
>
> what it means to work hard. (I noticed that the thinking in California was the same of
>
> a certain generation, ok). . . . And so, you won't pass that on to your kids. And it's
>
> changed now. You don't get anyplace anymore on affirmative action coattails.
>
> You've gotta have a work ethic. . . . Some of the kids, we have to push really hard.

In addition, there have to be programmatic and curricular hooks in order to keep and

attract students. But the tough fight to create the successful academies and block scheduling

has been lost now. Dr. Evans asked the question, "How can we get rid of these wonderful,

forward-looking ways of doing high school?" She answered her own question by ascribing

these failures to "so many small-minded people" and the need of some to dismantle programs

associated with her (Oh, the politics of it all). The only beacon of light she saw was Rod

Blake prior to his recent retirement from the principalship at WLHS. "He's the only one who comes close to getting it."

The interview ended with Dr. Evans riding a wave of hope as she described the opportunities afforded the district by its changing demographics. "Oh yeah! I think the greatest opportunity for Clavon Hills is to prove that it doesn't matter, that kids can be black or purple or green or white and excellence can be achieved and maintained. Is she really talking about a vision that demythologizes the long-held and deeply entrenched belief that high standards cannot be maintained when a school district is predominantly Black and/or when low socioeconomics is a reality for a number of students, Black and White? Dr. Evans thoroughly understands the challenge involved, but it is one that is "achievable." Dr. Evans sat up in her chair (commanding attention), placed a fist on the conference table (for emphasis), leaned forward (for connection with the listener), and with a slightly deepened voice (signifying power and courage), she declared:

> Given enough vision and foresight to understand what the dynamics are, and operate within them. . . . [A key dynamic is] we do have some diversity, but no multiculturalism. Now, diversity is socioeconomics. . . . [There must be] enough courage to put blinders on [demonstrates], and plug your ears [demonstrates] at certain times to the nay-sayers. . . . You just have to keep moving with them yammerin' at your tail. . . . Extreme amounts of "big picture" are important—looking down the road in spite of what people are telling you and protesting against.

There may yet be hope for these ideas to be heard and this energy and compassion to ignite positive action, as Dr. Evans is a Clavon Hills resident. She also keeps abreast of and

is involved in the affairs of CHiPS just as she promised she would before assuming her new position. She said to the school board, "I'll be watching."

Summary

The major theme coursing throughout this chapter is the presence of barriers to student success that are primarily affective in nature and perhaps the most difficult to change. On the one hand, the discourse ended despairingly about the prospects of overcoming the described barriers. On the other hand, the discourse ended with a positive and hopeful vision for change leading to overcoming barriers and enhancing opportunities for student success.

There are teachers who continue to mourn the fact of the changing population, and others who are cynically resigned. Social relationships and interactions that are characterized by distrust appear to be based on a lack of understanding about one another and a lack of sensitivity one to the other. And there seem to be questions about how to start the conversation that might identify a common space of concerns and hopes as a way to frame the discourse. Expectations of students and of self in the role of educator were shown to be low even if articulated otherwise. This observation makes the presence of inaccurate self-assessment on the part of teachers interviewed and inaccurate perceptions about others all the more understandable. The punitive nature of staff–student and administrator–student interactions and the contentious nature of staff-central administration relations create an *us vs. them* environment in which there are few winners. A call for accountability of all teachers to teach all students gives rise to the questions about the present state of teacher accountability. With the addition of the politics that sought to dismantle "forward-looking ways of doing high school," this litany can give cause for despair. Although these

observations come from a very small sample, those interviewed described their perceptions as fairly representative.

On the side of hope and positive visioning was the same honest assessment of existing barriers to student success. So, too, was a spirit of overcoming that called for multivocal and representational discourse based on meaningful engagement around issues that impact the district's students. Standards and "fulfilling a broader kind of educational agenda" have been operationalized, in part, by the creation of the district's academies and constitutes another aspect of the vision. Finally, the greatest opportunity for the district was described as "prov[ing] that [changing demography] doesn't matter—that kids can be black or purple or green or white and excellence be achieved and maintained." The mandate for leadership is to

> have enough courage to put blinders on, and plug your ears at certain times to the nay-sayers. . . . You just have to keep moving with them yammerin' at your tail. . . . Extreme amounts of "big picture" are important—looking down the road in spite of what people are telling you and protesting against.

This and the preceding chapter presented thematized data gathered from the informant groups of this study. These themes serve to foreshadow the key findings of this study and related areas for further research that are described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7: INTERPRETATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This qualitative research study began as an exploration of the central qualities of the lived experience of students in two urban-suburban high schools where, as an outcome of rapid demographic change, White students now represent the nontraditional racial minority and Black students the racial majority. In order to tell this story correctly, a key aspect of the research became that of identifying individual characteristics and institutional structures and functions and the relationships between them whereby social capital is built, cultural resilience is strengthened, and marginalization is counteracted.

The students in this study met with great success in and beyond high school owing in large measure to their ability to negotiate multiple identities across the multiple barriers to access of institutional resources found in diverse school settings. These students were able to locate and leverage existing social capital in their high schools for developing cultural resilience that allowed them not only to survive but to thrive in and beyond their high school experiences. For them, the White minority or Black majority status was rendered less a core and defining reality in their high school experiences, and more an existential fact to be situationally embraced, simply noted, or overcome.

Hence, although my expectations of observing marginalization were substantiated to some extent by the student informants in this study, findings of greater importance indicated that the Black majority–White minority issue failed to be a determinant in their success.   It became more and more evident, as the study progressed toward conclusion, that the active presence of elements of social capital within the learning community facilitative of the development of individual cultural resilience was the predominant influence leading to a

successful high school experience for the student participants in this study. The data

gathered through interviews showed that the structural and affective elements allowing

students to negotiate access to institutional resources leading to high school success were

rooted in their common experience of scholarship, membership in caring-centered social

networks, and participation in school and volunteer activities. The operational definition of

school success coming out the data centers around the diversity experience. Through this

experience, students see themselves as having gained special knowledge and skills that

enabled them to develop, refine, and confidently and successfully negotiate multiple

identities in their diverse school setting and beyond.

Findings

1. Social capital facilitating the development of cultural resilience emerged from the
   data as both powerful institutional and individual response sets for aiding students to
   cope with and to counteract marginalizing conditions, or, as Tiffany said, for
   "crossing bridges" related to diversity in their high schools.   In view of the lack of a
   formal or intentioned means of building social capital and making it openly available
   to all students, successful students were those who were able to recognize, access,
   utilize, and contribute to existing social capital in the high school environment.

Students in the informant group exhibited instrumental behaviors adhering to

institutional norms that valued high academic achievement and active participation in school

and school–community activities. Students were members of AP/Honors programs in their

respective high schools. Jennifer and Andrea, for example, prided themselves on being "us

little scholars, . . . the good kids, . . . the smart ones." Being in positive and supportive

relationships with teachers and "one of Rod's [the principal] kids" placed students in a

powerful and protected space. Andrea shared, "He kinda put us up on pedestals, like, 'These are my good kids.'" The students served as mascots who were held up as exemplifying the entire student population at their high school in Board presentations, at administrators' meetings, and in the community. Andrea also reported owning bragging rights about her high school's AP program once she arrived at university. "What do you mean," she demanded with incredulity, "you only had two AP classes? Where I come from, we had like thirteen." The perks awarded the AP/Honors status at both high school sites clearly communicated the institutional value placed on excellence in academic performance, school and community involvement, and positive school behavior.

Each student's high school resume´ listed a broad range of activities in which he/she were contributing participants. Students engaged in school activities as members of student government, sports teams, drama and forensics clubs, vocal and instrumental music ensembles, National Honor Society, Scholars in Action (a highly selective project-oriented honors program that exists at both high schools), and other school organizations. The student informants were also active outside of school as members of church and community groups dedicated to social improvement. The question posed by one of the student informants— "How much tape do you have?"—before describing her involvement in school and community activities could have been rightfully asked by each student informant. They "did everything, kept very busy."

Cross-cultural friendships and affinity constituted another element in the strong social network orientations that contributed to the resilience of the student-informant group. Informants described how students of African, European, Arabic, Asian, Jewish, and Hindu racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds interacted with each other in ways that were caring,

open, trusting, and honest enough for historical and actual barriers between them to be

challenged and overcome. Also present in each narrative written from the interviews of the

student informants was a declaration of the importance of social bonding.

Membership in caring and connected social networks by students, faculty and staff,

and administrators created a safe and nurturing learning environment for the students in this

study. The students described the comfort derived from the good-natured nicknames they

created for each other and for teachers and the approachable and supportive relationships

shared with teachers and administration allowing ease of access for gaining encouragement

and for problem solving.

The totality of cultural resilience, particularly those skills related to cross-cultural

aquaintanceship and friendship, enabled students to "interact with people from different

backgrounds smoothly. You don't find that everywhere," Andrea related. She continued

with the following:

> There are a lot of people who come from homogeneous atmospheres: Black, White,
>
> whatever. And so to have this [skill] in the university. . . is extremely helpful. If you
>
> have to work in a group with an Asian kid, a Jewish kid, and another Black kid, you
>
> can handle it. You can talk to people. Well, that definitely puts me heads above a lot
>
> of students here."

Stating this otherwise, Kevin related that students coming from a diverse high school

are "more versatile and more adaptable to different situations." This versatility and

adaptability is witnessed as empowering students to create themselves and to be themselves

authentically. Further, students are empowered to successfully negotiate multiple identities

across the multiple boundaries found in diverse high school settings. Additionally, each

student cited the diversity experience in their high schools as an important asset supporting

success in current postsecondary pursuits.

2. Caring-connectedness was conspicuous in its absence. In its place, marginalization,

as ostracism, silencing, rendered invisibility, stereotyping, and bias, was allowed to

sully the classroom atmosphere if not to create its culture.

Tiffany shared the following:

I was the only White student in my history class. We were doing this assignment

where there were kings and lords, and you had to make allies and stuff, and nobody

came to me. Ever! Period! And I was really disturbed! . . . The teacher didn't care

enough to teach the students to care about their peers, including myself. It only

happened once, but it really, like, emotionally screwed me up. It was that one time

that [will stay] with me forever.

In addition, students stated, again and again, their desire to learn more about the

cultures represented in their high schools. There was a need to know more about the cultural

identities of one another and to be able to interact more deeply in view of that knowledge.

Perhaps that part of the vision, philosophically based in critical multiculturalism and

articulated by the superintendent for the district, would bring all constituencies together in

the kind of representational discourse that interrogates marginalizing boundaries and

practices that serve to ostracize, silence, and deprive.

3. The superintendent articulated a vision of the institutional structure and function and

human resources, identified in the literature and supported by the data from this

study, that facilitate the development of social capital and cultural resilience leading

to student success in the district's high schools. What is more, she served as a

courageous model of the vision of leadership for social justice with "diversity, equity and excellence" as core values while she actively sought its diffusion, as a lived reality, throughout the whole organization. The findings point out that the administrators, who were first to be engaged in the work, were not as forthcoming in capturing the vision.

Superintendent Evans said,

We should've tried to work with administrators because I think that was a laudable effort. But we should've started with the kids [also]. . . . The White folks on the administrative team just couldn't deal with it. Wanted to marginalize it or wanted to invalidate it. . . . And on the African American side, it was too much anger, too much baggage, too much "Ain't it awful?"

Further, the lack of clarity about the goals of the training experience left administrators unsure of

what we were really trying to be about. We were trying to be about all kids can learn no matter what. The administrators couldn't get past their own stuff dealing with that imagined, difficult teacher and figure out how to sit down and have a conversation.

The primary implication supported by each of the findings just described is that there is a need for a formal and intentioned means for building social capital in the high schools under study and for making social capital available to all students. Social constructivist multicultural education, encompassing leadership for social justice, was suggested by the study as a philosophy and a set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that hold promise as a possible framework within which to effect a formal approach to building social capital in a diverse high school setting. The learning community coming out of such an approach would

certainly have at the foundation caring-connectedness, high expectations, provisions for mastery learning, and opportunities for meaningful participation—the elements defining social capital in schools and the supports that facilitated the success of the students in this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

The focus of the recommendations for further research is that of adding to the knowledge base about enabling students to overcome marginalization by successfully crossing the multiple boundaries of access to resources for academic success found in diverse high school environments.

1. Extend and expand the informant groups. Conduct a study with a broad-based student population including lower- and upper-classmen as well as high school graduates. Include students who have opted out of high school by dropping out or by attending adult education classes in order to obtain their high school diplomas. Follow an informant group longitudinally, beginning at the middle school level or at the high school level.

2. Conduct a study in other urban-suburban school districts at an earlier stage in the racial/ethnic/cultural demographic change process of the student population. What does the population shift mean in terms of how best to build social capital in the high school learning community in order to provide for access to the resources for academic success for all students?

3. Conduct a study to determine how the student informants are doing in their careers given their experience of diversity in their high schools.

4. Conduct a study to understand the role of curriculum and instruction in building social capital and contributing to the development of cultural resilience in students in diverse high school settings.

5. Explore characteristics of the social constructivist teacher and school administrator, the optimal design for training, and the implementation methodology that would facilitate an authentic multicultural, antiracist, inclusive, and projustice school environment. How viable is it to expect educators and administrators to act upon this orientation required by the workplace while the development of the supporting affective component is ongoing?

6. Investigate how school board policies on diversity and multicultural education, based in the belief that all students can learn and are capable of living up to high expectations, create a climate for thinking about and responding to these issues.

7. Conduct a meta-analysis of multicultural education programs in which social capital, operationally defined as caring-connectedness, high expectations, provisions for mastery learning, and opportunities for meaningful participation, is built in relation to student achievement.

<div align="center">Summary and Reflections</div>

This case study examined the experience of students in two urban-suburban high schools where, as an outcome of rapid demographic change, White students represented the nontraditional minority and Black students the majority. Relevance of the themes of marginalization, social capital and cultural resilience is seen in data gathered from interviews with students, teachers, and administrators. Some credibility for the expected marginalization of students based on majority–minority issues was established, but of greater

importance, however, was the discovery of structures and strategies that supported successful student outcomes. Scholarship, engagement, and active participation were behaviors valued by the school. Both Black and White students who shared in the reservoir of positive institutional values and were in caring-connected relationships with persons across networks acquired a sense of belonging and the confidence to negotiate identities across boundaries of access to opportunities for academic success.

Though critical race theory provides a guide to understanding the underlying social structures that support marginalization, implications of social constructivist multiculturalism, based in critical race pedagogy, offer the potential to theoretically ground and direct our education system for replacing these structures in favor those that support inclusion and equitable access. The finding of this study of the need for schools to be intentional in building social capital would thus be informed by considerations of (a) the significance of the social-structural and cultural aspects of race in education; (b) curriculum as "represent[ative of] a form of intellectual property" that aids in sustaining positions of marginality and centrality; (c) the subversion of multiculturalism and its benefits by leaving multicultural curriculum "mired in 'foods-faces-fashions-and-festivals' liberal ideology that offers no radical change" (Cousins 1999, p. 624); and (d) the role of institutional stereotyping of racially/culturally different students that creates and/or justifies a number of oppressive incidents such as low expectations, remedial curriculums, and separate tracking (Lynn, 1999).

Consequently, it is essential that educational leadership accept the challenge of reconstructing the social environment and building community in schools to meet the needs of the diverse student population. The social constructivist school administrator begins with

self—with his/her own construction of self and of the other as racialized, ethnic, cultural, gendered, and socioeconomically classed—both within and exclusive of the context of White male, middle-class hegemony (Maher, Tetrault, & Thompson, 1997; Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; and Ramirez, Autry, & Morton, 2000). This administrator is, then, better equipped to empower staff, students, and parents to "understand and use the cultures present in their school communities as sources of strength. [Cultures are] validated through curriculum, and cultural and political issues are integrated into the instructional process" (Sherritt, cited in The National Council for the Social Studies, 1992, p. 67).

The administrator who would *retool* teachers for effective engagement in critical multicultural education must prepare for and learn to welcome controversy centering around sensitive and difficult issues. These issues include oppression and discrimination, power and privilege, religion, gender roles, marginalization and inclusion, and the ways in which culture shapes lives and learning. Policy formation and leadership practices would need to model multivocal and critical democracy aimed at transforming the learning community toward total inclusion with equity, excellence, diversity, and caring-connectedness as clearly articulated core values. The actualization of these core values becomes a powerfully real challenge that calls for extreme courage on the part of teachers, teacher educators, and the administrators who would lead the charge. This courage would be very much rewarded with institutional change that intentionally operationalized equity of access to opportunities for school success for all students in a diverse high school setting or that intentionally built social capital.

School board policies on diversity and multicultural education should communicate the expectation and create a climate for thinking about and responding to these issues based in the belief that all students can learn and are capable of living up to high expectations. With board policy behind them, school district personnel would be provided with clarification for their efforts to address demands for curricular change and to "make decisions about involving [all] constituencies and committing human, [temporal], and fiscal resources in implementing multicultural programs" (Stevenson & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 366) that are caring-centered, reflective, and socially just.   Social capital would be built in ways that help schools connect with parents and the community. Thereby, the development of resiliency assets is facilitated that support students in successfully negotiating identities across the multiple boundaries of access found in diverse high school and other environments.

I am profoundly grateful to the students in this study, who shared stories that would not allow me to stop upon finding expected evidence of marginalization based on their status as Whites in the numeric minority or Blacks in the numeric majority.   Rather, they convincingly invited me into their world of academic excellence, caring-connectedness, cross-cultural friendships, and whirlwind schedules of involvement in school, religious, and community activities as contributing members. They showed me how their skills, inherent in the cultural resilience supported by the social capital in their high school community, moved them to success. There is a belief among the participants in this study, particularly the students and the superintendent, in the power of diversity to enrich lives and to enhance opportunities for success.   The resilience exhibited by the student participants and the presence of even informally constructed social capital demonstrate that "competence,

confidence and caring can flourish, even under adverse circumstances" (Werner & Smith, 2001, p. 173), such as marginalization based on race and gender. If students, in a learning environment supported by the elements of social capital—caring-connectedness, high expectations, mastery learning experiences, and opportunities for meaningful participation—encounter teachers, administrators, and staff who

> provide them with a secure basis for the development of trust, autonomy, initiative, and competence, they can successfully overcome the odds. That success brings hope. And that is a gift each of us can share. . . . The rediscovery of the healing powers of hope may be the most precious harvest [we] can glean in the work we do—for ourselves and for the students whose lives we touch (Werner & Smith, 1989, p. 247).

So, then, how do we plant this resilient seed of hope for all of the students we serve? I ask this question in full recognition that the season of planting is always upon us.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Letters

Informed Consent

Marci A. Erby
Address
Home Phone
E-mail

I agree to participate in one or more interviews about the essential nature and structure of

student marginalization at Southfield High School to be conducted by Marci A. Erby- as part

of her dissertation study at Eastern Michigan University. I understand that I will be asked

questions about my perceptions about the meaning of that experience, and about the kinds of

things that might be done toward amelioration. I further understand that I may choose not to

answer certain questions if I do not wish to do so.

By agreeing to participate in the interview(s), I understand that my confidentiality (and that

of my family) will be protected at all times and that I may choose to withdraw from the

interview(s) at any time if I wish to do so. In addition, I understand that I may request a copy

of my taped interview and/or transcription of the interview, and that portions be deleted if I

find that necessary.

I understand that my actual name will not be used in any written or oral report and

that a fictitious name will be assigned to me. Anonymous excerpts of my interview may be

used as part of a future research report or publication on the condition that all identifying

characteristics are deleted prior to public dissemination.

If I have any further questions I may contact Marci Erby as outlined above and/or I

may contact the interviewer's dissertation committee chairperson as follows:

Dr. Jaclynn Tracy
Eastern Michigan University
Department of Leadership and Counseling
Porter College of Education
(xxx) xxx-xxxx

_____   _____

Interviewer   Date

_____   _____

Respondent   Date

Follow-Up Interview Informed Consent Letter

Marci A. Erby
Address
Home Phone
E-mail

Dear _____

Should there be a need for a follow-up interview, it may be conducted by telephone or e-mail. In the case of the former, this notice gives permission to Marci Erby to tape record the telephone interview for confidential use in her dissertation only.

If the follow-up interview occurs by e-mail, this notice gives Marci Erby permission to use any portion(s) of my confidential response for the purpose of her dissertation only.

_____
Interviewee

_____
Marci A. Erby, Researcher

Follow-Up Interview Informed Consent

Marci A. Erby
Address
Home Phone
E-mail

Dear _____

Should there be a need for a follow-up interview, it may be conducted by telephone or e-mail. In the case of the former, this notice gives permission to Marci Erby to tape record the telephone interview for confidential use in her dissertation only.

If the follow-up interview occurs by e-mail, this notice gives Marci Erby permission to use any portion(s) of my confidential response for the purpose of her dissertation only.

_____
Interviewee

_____
Marci A. Erby, Researcher

Appendix B: Structured Interview Formats

Demographics Interview Questions

Dissertation Study of Marci A. Erby

Living the Dialectic of Center and Margin:
White—Minority Students and Black—Majority Students
In Two Urban-Suburban High Schools
Undergoing Rapid Demographic Change

Name _____

Pseudonym _____

E—Mail Address _____

Telephone Number _____

If Faculty, Staff, or Administrator

Current Position _____

# of Years in that Position _____
_____

# of Years at HHS / WLHS _____

Previous Positions Held in the District _____
_____ _____
And Number of Years _____
_____

If Former Student

Year of Graduation _____

Years of Attendance at HHS/WLHS   _____

Dissertation Interview Questions

TELL ME ABOUT…   **TEACHER**
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT…
WHAT WAS IT LIKE…   # _____
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT…

_____   _____
Date/Location   Init./Pseudonym

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?</u>

(Macro)	(Micro) Question/Sub-Questions	Notes

<u>What</u>?   What do you think it is like for White students here at WLHS/HHS?

         Minority status (< 9%)

         School organization Eurocentric, e.g. Carnegie units, lecture
         and recitation instructional practices, texts and content, etc.

         Social structure Afrocentrically organized, e.g. music, clothing
         styles (popular culture as well), assemblies, tone and timbre in the
         halls, majority status in classrooms, hallways, lunchroom, clubs, etc.

        What do you think it is like for Black students at WLHS/HHS now in the
        majority?

        Tell me about friendship groups that you have noted.
        On what basis does it seem that students are included? Excluded?

How is it for you as your numbers increase/decrease, and the school's professional culture changes?

What do you think your role is as a teacher in this overall drama?

In 1991, a diversity task force was assembled to study the maintenance of school quality, diversity and racial stability. A number of recommendations were made, may of which were carried out, but not sustained.

In 1997, administrators in the district began a three-year journey to train-the-trainer in order to facilitate difficult conversations on race, ethnicity, gender equity, and other forms of diversity back at the site.

What do you think about this?

What do you think happened after that or should have happened?

(What is it, do you think, that is at the basis of these outcomes, and the almost antagonism toward dialogue around issues of diversity?) **FOR ANALYSIS**

If you look at yourself as a teacher at WLHS/HHS in 2003, what do you think are the most critical issues here?

Tell me what you think is the role of diversity in this learning community.

(What critical issues must teachers and educational leaders in a diverse learning community consider with regard to the education and total high school experience of all students?) **FOR ANALYSIS**

Tell me about your instructional style.

Inclusion built in? How?

<u>So What</u>?　　　What do you think it means to students to be excluded – singly, if not a member of a friendship group, or as a group?

How have you noticed inclusion and exclusion to impact learning and feelings of well-being at school?

I've heard from a couple of people that White teachers hang out with White teachers and Black teachers hang out with Black teachers, e.g. lunch, hall conversations, sponsoring activities, etc.

Do you share this observation?

What impact do you think this has on students as they learn to negotiate their way cross-culturally?

Do you think that issues of race get talked about openly or not?

Do you think it would be a good idea or not?

If so, what might some topics of conversation be?

(There is a great deal of silence around issues of race and minority and majority issues.) **FOR ANALYSIS**

What merit might there be in re-opening dialogue among students
and educators about issues concerning race and inter-racial relationships,
particularly as they relate to learning and feelings of well-
being in school?

How might that occur?

Who should lead the charge and why?

What advice would you give them?

I have noticed that there are mentorship clubs for Black students
But not for White students. There are few or no recruitment efforts
for White students.

Why do you suppose this is the case?

What do you think would happen if a European-American
oriented club was formed at WLHS/HHS?

Now What?   There is a lot of talk about diversity in the media. What is your
vision when you think about your own school?

Is there anything you care to add?

Are there any questions you have of me?

BOARD

TELL ME ABOUT…
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT… # _____
WHAT WAS IT LIKE…
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT…

_____   _____
Date/Location   Init./Pseudonym

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?</u>

(Macro)	(Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions	Notes

<u>What?</u>   What is your perception of what school is like for White students in the minority at WLHS/HHS?

        Minority status (<9%)

        School organization Eurocentric, e.g. Carnegie units, lecture and recitation instructional practices, texts and content, etc.

        Social structure Afrocentrically organized, e.g. music, clothing styles (popular culture as well), assemblies, tone and timbre in the halls, majority status in classrooms, hallways, lunchrooms, clubs, bus, etc.)?

    What do you think it is like to be Black students in the majority at WLHS/HHS?

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?</u>

(Macro)   (Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions   Notes

What do you think this has to do with student learning and feelings of well-
being for students?

(ANALYZE for effects on and of student marginalization)

How would you describe the implications of the changing demography in
the district finding Blacks in the majority and Whites in the minority?

What are the challenges posed and the opportunities afforded?

Do you recall:

In 1991 a diversity task force was assembled to study the maintenance of
school quality, diversity and racial stability. A number of recommenda-
tions were made, many of which have been carried out, but not sustained.

In 1997, administrators in the district began a three-year journey to
train-the trainer in order to facilitate difficult conversations on race,
ethnicity, gender equity, and other forms of diversity back at the site.
This effort was not terribly successful.

What do you think about this?

What happened afterwards or should have happened afterwards in your
estimation?

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?</u>

(Macro)	(Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions	Notes

(ANALYZE FOR what is it, do you think, that is at the basis of these
outcomes, and the almost antagonism toward dialogue around issues of diversity?
Viewing yourself in your role as a board member and _____ in 2003,
what do you think are the most critical issues here in the district?

(ANALYZE FOR What critical issues must teachers and educational leaders in a
pluralistic learning community consider with regard to the education and total high
school experience of all students?)

Tell me what you think about diversity in this learning community.

<u>So What?</u>   Do you hear the silence that exists around the issue of White minority
students and any special educational needs of Black students in the majority.
Why do you suppose this is the case?

What value do you see in opening in dialogue around these and related
issues?

How might this best be done?

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?</u>

(Macro)	(Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions	Notes

I have noticed that there are mentorship clubs fro Black students but not
For White students at WLHS/HHS. There are few, if any, recruitment
Efforts made for White student participation.

Why do you suppose that this is the case?

What do you think would happen if a European-American oriented club was started at WLHS/HHS?

<u>Now What</u>?   What is your vision for the district in terms of diversity and multiculturalism?

How is this vision being realized?

Anything to add?

Questions for me

TELL ME ABOUT   ***ADMINISTRATOR***
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT…
WHAT WAS IT LIKE…   # _____
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT…

_____
Date/Location   Init./Pseudonym

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?</u>

(Macro)   **(Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions**   **Notes**

<u>What?</u>   What is your perception of what school is like for White students in the minority
             at WLHS/HHS?

                 Minority status (<9%)

                 School organization Eurocentric, e.g. Carnegie units, lecture and
                 recitation instructional practices, texts and content, etc.

                 Social structure Afrocentrically organized, e.g. music, clothing styles
                 (popular culture as well), assemblies, tone and timbre in the halls,
                 majority status in classrooms, hallways, lunchrooms, clubs, bus, etc.)?

             What do you think it is like to be Black students in the majority at WLHS/HHS?

ADMINISTRATOR

What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?

(Macro)	(Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions	Notes

How would you describe the implications of the changing demography in the district finding Blacks in the majority and Whites in the minority?

What are the challenges posed and the opportunities afforded?

In 1991, a diversity task force was assembled to study the maintenance of school quality, diversity and racial stability. A number of recommendations were made, many of which were implemented, but not sustained.

In 1997, administrators in the district began a three-year journey to train-the trainer in order to facilitate difficult conversations on race, ethnicity, gender equity, and other forms of diversity back at the site. This effort was not terribly successful.

What do you think about this?

What are the critical issues here and now?

Tell me what you think about diversity in this learning community?

So What?   Do you hear the silence around the issue of White minority

students and any special educational needs of Black students in the majority. Why do you suppose this is the case?

ADMINISTRATOR

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?</u>

(Macro)	(Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions	Notes

What value do you see in opening in dialogue around this and related issues?

How might this best be done?

I have noticed that there are mentorship groups for Black students, but not for White students at WLHS/HHS.
What recruitment efforts, if any, are being made to bring in white students?

What do you think would happen if a European-American oriented club was started at WLHS/HHS?

<u>Now What</u>?   What is your vision for the school in terms of diversity and multiculturalism?

How is this vision being realized?

Anything to add?

Questions for me?

TELL ME ABOUT…   ***STUDENT***
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT…
WHAT WAS IT LIKE…   # _____
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT…

_____   _____
Date/Location   Init./Pseudonym

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS</u>?

(Macro)   (Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions   Notes
_____

<u>What?</u>   What was it like to be a White student at WLHS/HHS when the percentage and
               proportion of Black and White students were changing?

               OR

               Tell me about what you think it was like to be a Black student at WLHS/HHS?

               What was it like to be a White student in the minority at WLHS/HHSwhen or
               since the percentage or proportion of Black and White students were
               changing?

               Tell me about your comfort level in classes where you were the
               only White/Black student and those classes in which there were several
               other White/Black students.

What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?

(Macro)	(Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions	Notes

There exists a great deal of silence around the issue of White minority students and Black students in the majority. Why do you suppose this is the case?

What value do you see in opening up dialogue around these issues?

How might this be done?

Did you participate in any after-school programs? Tell me about how your participation affected your inter-racial experience.

What were your observations of the cross-racial friendships or interactions among teachers and staff?

How did these observations impact your growing skills at cross-cultural interactions?

So What?   How has your experience at WLHS/HHS impacted your cross-cultural skill at work and/or in college or the university?

What critical issues must teachers and school administrators in a diverse and democratic school environment consider with regard to the education and total high school experience of all students?

STUDENT

<u>What is the essential nature and structure of the student marginalization experience at WLHS/HHS?</u>

(Macro)   (Micro) Questions/Sub-Questions   Notes

There are several clubs for Black students at WLHS/HHS, but none for White students?
What do you think would happen if a European-American oriented club was formed at WLHS/HHS?

<u>Now What?</u>   What can teachers and the administration do concerning race and interracial relationships, particularly as
they relate to learning and to feelings of well-being in school for all students?

How might this occur?

Is there anything you care to add?

Are there any questions you have for me?

Appendix C: Request For Approval of Research Involving Human Subjects

Eastern Michigan University College Of Education
Date Submitted   06 Mar 00

Principle Investigator (Faculty Advisor)   Dr. Jaclynn Tracy
Department   Leadership and Counseling
Telephone #   Telephone Number
Address   Eastern Michigan University   College of Education
                                              John W. Porter Building   Ypsilanti, MI 48197

CO-PI (Student Investigator)   Marci A. Erby
Telephone #   (W) Telephone Number   (H) Telephone Number
Address   Address
Electronic Mail Address   Email Address

Title of Project   Voices from the Edge: Marginalization Among High School Students in a
                          Multi-Ethnic School District

From what source are funds expected for this project?   Self

Please note that all Human Subjects Proposals need to be submitted well in advance of scheduled solicitation of potential participants and that **no data involving human subjects should be collected prior to approval.**

Please submit a brief synopsis (400 words or less) of the proposed project. DO NOT submit your thesis or dissertation proposal, grant application, etc. These cannot be processed by the Human Subject Review Committee (HSRC) and will be returned to you.

CERTIFICATION/SIGNATURE
        I certify that the information contained in the Human Subject Review application and all

attachments are true and correct. If this proposal is approved by the Human Subjects Review

Committee, I agree to conduct the research according to the approved protocol. I agree not to

implement any changes in the protocol until such changes have been approved by HSRC. If,

During the course of the research, unanticipated risks or harm to subjects are discovered, I will

report them to HSRC immediately.

_____   _____
Signed: Principle Investigator / Faculty Advisor   Date

_____   _____
Signed: Co-Principle Investigator / Student Investigator   Date

I.   Application Status

New [ ]   Renewal [ ]   Modification [ ]

If Renewal or Modification:

      Date of last approval by this Committee:

      Principle Investigator of previous research:

      Describe any modifications in the previously approved research rotocols:

Were any human subjects problems encountered in previous research? If yes, how were they

handled?

II.   Numbers, Types and Recruitment of Subjects

A. Numbers and characteristics of subjects (e.g., age range, sex, ethnic background, health

    status, handicapping conditions, etc.).

40-50 high school male and female students of diverse racial and socioeconomic

backgrounds, academic statuses, levels of school involvement, and number of years of

education in the district.

30 adults including parents, teachers, counselors, central administrators, building level

administrators, city council representatives, and members of the Chaldean Federation.

B. Special Classes. Explain the rationale for the use of special classes of subjects such as

pregnant women, children, prisoners, mentally impaired, institutionalized, or others who

are likely to be particularly vulnerable.

High school students are the key subjects of this research because of expressed concerns

about student marginalization and its impact as shared by students, staff, parents, and

administrators.

C. How are the individual subjects to be recruited for this research? How is it clear to the

subjects that participation is voluntary and without any negative consequences?

Prospective student participants will be identified by teachers, counselors, administrators,

and the Superintendent, followed by snowball sampling techniques, and invited to

participate on a voluntary basis by the researcher.

Prospective adult participants will be identified and recruited per the process outlined

above.

All participants will be informed in writing that participation is voluntary and that there are no negative consequences associated with participation, non-participation, or withdrawal from participation after commencement.

The student support group teacher-facilitator at the high schools will assist in the co-facilitation of the student focus group sessions.

III.   Informed Consent

It is required that you attach a copy of the written "Informed Consent Form" or a written statement of the oral consent documenting the voluntary nature of participation; procedures for protection of subjects; and the right of subjects to withdraw without penalty.
Please see attached.

If your study is such that you must obtain informed consent, you should prepare a letter that contains the following basic elements where applicable:

1.   A statement that the study involves research, an explanation of the purposes of the research and the
     Expected duration of the subject's participation, a description of the procedures to be followed, and identification of any procedures that are experimental;

2.   A description of any reasonably forseeable risks or discomforts to the subject;

3.   A description of any benefits to the subject or to others that may reasonably be expected from the research;

4.   A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject;

5. A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained;

6. For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or whether further information may be obtained;

7. An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research-related injury to the subject;

8. A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

IV. Specific Risks Involved in the Research

Does the research involve any of the following procedures: (Please circle one)

Deception of the subject	Yes	No
Punishment of the subject	Yes	No
Use of drugs in any form	Yes	No
Electric shock	Yes	No
Deliberate production of anxiety or stress	Yes	No
Materials commonly regarded as socially unacceptable	Yes	No
Use of radioisotopes	Yes	No
Use of chemicals	Yes	No
Drawing of blood	Yes	No
Any other procedure that might be regarded as inducing in the subject any altered state or condition potentially harmful to his/ her personal welfare	Yes	No

Any procedure that might be considered as an invasion of

privacy   Yes   No

Disclosure of name of individual subjects participating in

the research   Yes   No

Any other physically invasive procedure   Yes   No

A. If the answer to any of the above is "yes", please explain this aspect of the research

procedure in detail.

N/A

B. Describe the procedures for protecting against or minimizing any potential risks.

No one else except the researcher and committee members, on an as needed basis, will

ever access data.

V.   Confidentiality

A. To what extent is the information confidential and to what extent are provisions made so
that subjects' confidentiality is protected?

Subjects' confidentiality will be protected at all times. No names will be used, rather will
pseudonyms or code names be substituted. Any identifying information given by one
subject about another subject or member of the school will not be used in the study.

B   What are the procedures for handling and storing all data so that the confidentiality ot the
subjects is protected (particular attention should be given to the use of photography,
video and audio recordings)?

All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet. Audiotapes of focus groups sessions
and one-on-one interviews will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's home office.
Tapes will be destroyed after transcription, and transcriptions will be identified by code
names.

A. By what means will the results of the research be disseminated? How will the subjects be informed of the results? Will confidentiality of subjects or organizations be protected in the dissemination?

Dissemination will occur in the for of a dissertation, possible future publications, and results summaries for subjects. In each instance, the confidentiality of subjects and of the organization will be maintained in the dissertation as all identifying informatio will be erased or masked in order to assure anonymity.

VI.   Describe any anticipated benefits to subjects for participation in this research.

It is hoped that this research will increase understanding about marginalization of high school students. Subjects will be aware that they have made a contribution to that increased understanding which has the potential of improving conditions for those to come. Beyond that, there is no direct benefits to the subjects.

VII.   Please describe instrumentation and protocol to be used.

Context observations will raise site-specific areas of inquiry. The focus of these initial observations will include: patterns of interaction student-to-student, student-to-adult, adult-to-student, and adult-to-adult; the changes in these interaction patterns from one location/activity to another within the school day; and the structure and 'rules' of inclusion and exclusion.

The questions surfaced by the observations will become the basis for student focus group inquiry. This semi-structured interview process will seek clarification on observed interaction patterns; in-group and out-group structures and 'rules for membership'; the degree to which students feel excluded or included in classes and school activities; how interaction patterns differ outside of school and why; students' feelings about the relationship between their racial, gender, and class diversity to exclusion and inclusion; and what conversations need to be had, and actions taken to 'demarginalize' the high school environment, if, indeed, marginalization is a reality in that environment.

One student from each high school, representing a major category per the study's student subject populations will be observed over the course of one school day in order to view the experienced along an inclusion-exclusion continuum as the existential reality of single students. Parents of observed student will be asked about their awareness of their child's experiences relative to inclusion-exclusion; how these experiences have been handled
between them; their views about the diversity of their child's school as being part of their child's education for an increasingly divers world; and their thoughts on what the content and goals of conversations should be in order to 'demarginalize' the high school experience, if, indeed, marginalization is part of their child's existential reality in their school environment .

The key area of inquiry for parents who have relocated with concerns about marginalization as a prime reason for their move will be the exploration of their perceptions of the marginalization experience for their children and conversations and actions at 'demarginalization' which might have made a difference in their decision to relocate.

Persons at the Chaldean Federation will be interviewed about the experiences of marginalization of the Chaldean high school student population, and what conversations and actions might be taken to 'demarginalize' that experience. Questions related to the participation of this population in research will also be explored.

Teachers and staff will be asked about their perceptions of student marginalization, structures of inclusion and exclusion, and how both marginalization and inclusion impacts student achievement, and their role in creating and/or maintaining an inclusive educational environment for all students.

Interviews with administrators and board members will include the above, as well as a whole leadership piece having to do with their perceptions of any specialized roles or mandates belonging to them by virtue of their leadership positions.

The City Council members will be interviewed relative to the diversity award recently by the City and its relation to the perceptions of diversity in the high schools, the use of diversity as a selling point in recruiting new residents, and how that diversity is supported in order to live up to the promises made on its behalf, and the relationship between the schools, the community, and city government on this issue, particularly in terms of an inclusion-exclusion continuum.

Extant data review will serve the primary purpose of development of district, school, community, and student population profiles for creating the context of the study particularly in relation to the profile of marginalization coming out of the literature.

Revised 11/99

Synopsis Of Proposed Research Project

Title
Voices From the Edge:
Marginalization Among High School Students in a Multi-Ethnic School District

This research project is qualitative / interpretive study informed and guided by the generative question in exploration of the existential reality of marginality among students in both high schools in a minority-majority[1], multi-ethnic school district. Drawing on the work of marginaity and critical pedagogy theorists and researchers, and the *praxis*[2] orientation of social reconstruction multiculturalists[3] , I seek to understand how marginality is experienced, and its impact perceived among students alon the single and confluent dimensions of race, gender, and class.

The ultimate aim of this study is to inform and enable critical dialogue within the District's entire learning community in the continued effort to transform its schools as environments normed by inclusion and equity and grounded in diversity as a valued human resource.

The primary methods for collecting data are audiotaped focus groups and semi-structures interviews, as well as observations of students in their high schools during the course of a regular school day. Constant comparative analysis of data recorded via focus group and interview audiotapes and transcripts, and observation field notes, in addition to an ongoing review of the literature will serve to organize data and develop themes which focus on student marginalization ad a lived reality, and the school environment's support of inclusionary and exclusionary practices.

All due assurances – written, verbal and demonstrated – will be provided relative to the maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity in analysis and reporting. These assurances will be honored by the use of code names or pseudonyms for all informants, and for any persons within the schools whom they might name. All identifying characteristics of informants and named persons will be masked. Further, audiotapes, transcripts and field notes will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's home office, and will be accessible only to the researcher and made available to the dissertation committee as necessary. Upon completion of the study, only coded transcripts and field notes will be kept on computer disk, in the locked file, as a potential support to possible publications following the dissertation. These data will be destroyed one year following the completion of the study.

Informant groups and categories of inquiry are:

- Student focus groups to begin to surface issues about marginalization and inclusion, co-facilitated by the teacher in charge of student support groups at each high school
- Four students will be observed as they go about their school day. Follow-up interviews will occur regarding their interpretations of the events of the under the marginalization rubric

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[1] Minority-Majority refers to African American students, in this case, or other traditional minority groups now in the numeric majority in a particular context.

[2] *Praxis* refers to reflection and action, ringing the oppressor and the oppressed together into a new consciousness of liberation for both groups, in service to world transformation for justice, dignity, and the rights to self-definition and self-determination (Freire, 1970).

[3] Social reconstruction multiculturalism focuses directly on issues of oppression and social inequity based on race, socioeconomic class, gender, ability, and other characteristics of human diversity.

- Adult informants with connections to the school district
- Adult informants who relocated their families out-of-district for whom experiences of their children due changes in the racial and class make-up of the district constituted a major reason for their relocation
- Elected officials will be allowed to sign an informed consent form if they wish assurances of confidentiality. Topics of interest to the researcher include: the recently received diversity award; their perceptions of their roles, in partnership with the schools, to hold and preserve diversity as resource for all residents.

Hence, this analysis will yield interpretive propositions about marginalization of high school students, and about unpacking the structures and attitudes of marginalization within the research sites aimed at broader inclusion for all students in those settings, and, perhaps, in similar ones.

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07 Oct 01

Eastern Michigan University
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RE: Student Research Involving Human Subjects --- Request for Modification

Gentlepersons:

Please accept this request for modification of my human subjects research application

which was initially approved in the spring of 2000. The need to modify the original

application comes out of my recent change in employment. I am no longer an elementary

school principal. Rather, I am now serving as an assistant principal in one of the same

high schools that my dissertation research will occur. Hence, I am now an insider in that

community.

In order to honor that feature of qualitative research which seeks to bring the researched

and the researcher together on an equal basis, and to minimize any real or perceived

power differential between us, I will neither interview or observe student or teachers

whom I supervise.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours,

Marci A. Erby
Co-Principle Investigator / Student Investigator

Dr Jaclynn Tracy
Principle Investigator / Faculty Advisor

Appendix D: Sample Research Journal Page

After transcribing the first few focus group interviews, the patness of the answers of the informants became more and more apparent. I began to feel that I wan not one of the privileged people who are allowed entry into the inner sanctum where sharable truths are kept – those which go beyond stilted niceties and platitudes. Our unfamiliarity with each other, my roles as a researcher and as an administrator in the district, perhaps my race, and the structure and topics of the focus group interviews are keys that seem not to fit here.

Only infrequently am I accorded the briefest glimpse into that poignant space of sharable truths. I critiqued my style of inquiry finding it pitifully lacking. I analyzed my questions finding them, alternately, too pointed or not pointed enough. I pondered my state of mind, the setting of the interviews, and the time in which I entered these students' lives – the spring of their senior year in high school – and began to feel that, perhaps, I am not the one who could or should tell this story, if, indeed, there is a story here to tell. Spending time with Jonathan Kozol's book, *Ordinary Resurrections,* provided an expanded perspective in which to view these thoughts and feelings. In musing about the conditions which seemed to effect the quality of intimacy of his conversations with his young informants, he speaks about the impact of being in "public situations." The responses seem to "lack the pungent authenticity" that less public encounters tend to support. Rather, the responses seem more like "generic answers, like set-pieces, or performances, that are products of unintended choreography." The students' answers to my questions about race relations in their school and who they are in that milieu, given their racial, gender, and class diversities represent, for the most part, "unoriginal but

honorable sentiments expressed in styles that are not uniquely theirs, as if they feel

somehow this is what I am soliciting."

White male students, the informants comprising the last focus group in the pilot segment

of this study, allowed me entry into their space of sharable truths. The reasons that this

honor was accorded me, I can only guess – anger and confusion being among them. But,

what gratitude and humility I felt in the presence of these young men during moments of

intensity and bareness of soul as they shared their pain and confusion, their humor and

acceptance, or lack of same, when talking about their minority status experience in their

high school. I noted, too, that my style of inquiry was less rushed and quieter. I was

beginning to sit in a more self-assured space as a researcher. I dared to stray away from

my script, viewing it less as a linear task to be completed, and more as a guide to

different pathways on an incredible journey. Again, Kozol helps me to understand the

dynamics at work here:

There's something about silence and not being in a hurry and not being in an overly

determinative state of mind, or one that's loaded with too much intentionality . . . that

seem to give a message of receptivity. I also think that children need some reason to

believe that what they say will not be heard too clinically, or jounalistically, pr put "to

use" too rapidly, and that the gift they give us will be taken into hands that will not seize

too fast upon their confidence, or grasp too firmly or attempt to push an idea to

completion when it needs to be left open, incomplete, and tentative a while.

The young men in this last focus group let me know that, indeed, there is a study here – a story that I can and must tell. Perhaps, this story is more theirs than anyone else's right now because they are newest to the minority experience, having been accustomed to, what Peggy McIntosh reveals as that place of privilege held for White males in this society. We will see.

Appendix E: Sample Multicultural Education Program On Inclusive Curriculum

WELLESLY CENTERS FOR WOMEN

Research, Education & Action

Project Description and Application Forms • Key Ideas • Faculty-Centered Faculty Development • Curriculum as Window & Mirror

If you wish to print these pages, select landscape paper orientation.

National S.E.E.D. Project on Inclusive Curriculum (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity)

Peggy McIntosh, Ph.D., Brenda Flyswithhawks, Ph.D., Emily Style, M.A., and *Co-Directors*

> *"Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed... and I am prepared to expect wonders"*

> *- Henry David Thoreau*

The National S.E.E.D. Project on Inclusive Curriculum, a staff-development equity project for educators, is in its eighteenth year of establishing teacher-led faculty development seminars in public and private schools throughout the United States and in English-speaking international schools. A week-long SEED Summer Leaders' Workshop prepares school teachers to hold year-long reading groups with other teachers to discuss making school curricula more gender-fair and multiculturally equitable in all subject areas. A Minnesota SEED anthology, published in October 1998 and available from the office at MIProg@aol.com offers a buoyant glimpse of teachers' experiences in the SEED Project including its effect on their classroom teaching.

In year-long, monthly seminars, the SEED Project enables adults to examine contemporary scholarship as well as "the textbooks of our lives" in order to inform community conversation about schooling and culture. Educators connected to the SEED network testify that, as a result of their SEED affiliation, they listen to all voices, including their own, with widened attention. SEED seminar participants handle with more confidence and competence the challenges and joys of the many kinds of diversity found in their own lives and in the lives of others. SEED helps to create multiculturally equitable and gender balanced curriculum which makes room for reflection upon the lives of all girls and boys (and women and men) with a sense of integrity and coherence.

Project directors are Peggy McIntosh, Associate Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women, who has taught in six schools and colleges; Emily Style, an English teacher who has taught in private school, urban and suburban New Jersey public schools and has done adjunct teaching for Cornell and NYU; and Brenda Flyswithhawks, Professor of Psychology at Santa Rosa (CA) Junior College. They are joined each year at the Leaders' Workshop by experienced SEED leaders in various disciplines who have diverse ethnic

backgrounds. The Project provides various types of technical assistance throughout the year for SEED seminars, which have now been led by coordinators in over 30 U.S. states, Buenos Aires, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, Toronto, Vancouver, and Dar Es Salaam. Once SEEDed, many seminars continue meeting for years.

The 2004 New Leaders' Workshop of the National SEED Project will be July 15 - 22, in San Anselmo, CA, and will enroll approximately 40 new group leaders, alone or in teams of two. Schools contribute a participation fee toward the cost of the summer training and year-long technical support. They also provide a book budget for the school-based, voluntary seminar.

The first state branch of the SEED Project in Minnesota (founded by Cathy Nelson and Dena Randolph) is in its thirteenth year of operation. Experienced SEED leaders Yvonne Robinson and Joyce Bell will co-direct the June 21 to 27, 2004 SEED training at Riverwood Conference Center in Monticello, MN. To apply, download the application form.

SEED Seminars are led chiefly by teachers in K-12 classrooms. In some cases, parents, college teachers and administrators have also led seminars.

Key questions for all participants in SEED seminars are: What would curriculum and pedagogy look like if the diverse lives of women and girls were seen as co-central with the diverse lives of men and boys? And how can curriculum and teaching methods provide, in the metaphors of Emily Style, both *windows* into each others' experiences, and *mirrors* of each student's own reality and validity?

For more information, contact:

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