

2009

The Invisiblity of White Privilege

Michael T. King
Eastern Michigan University

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Abstract

People in our society can go through life without knowing about white privilege or realizing they themselves, may have this privilege. The white or lighter skin color of a person has automatic benefits, right from birth, them not ever having to do anything to attain this privilege. The consequences are mostly good and outweigh the bad, for the ones that have white privilege. However, skin that is not white has far more injustices, they are oppressed and they are the ones that suffer, not having this same privilege. This study will recognize awareness, barriers, and successful ways to treat people all the same. This study has found enough comprehensive research to begin spreading the successful findings to our society to dismantle white privilege.

Degree Type

Open Access Senior Honors Thesis

Department

Social Work

Subject Categories

Social Work

The Invisibility of White Privilege

Michael T. King

SWRK 498

Dr. Elizabeth Schuster

July 30, 2009

Abstract

People in our society can go through life without knowing about white privilege or realizing they themselves, may have this privilege. The white or lighter skin color of a person has automatic benefits, right from birth, them not ever having to do anything to attain this privilege. The consequences are mostly good and outweigh the bad, for the ones that have white privilege. However, skin that is not white has far more injustices, they are oppressed and they are the ones that suffer, not having this same privilege. This study will recognize awareness, barriers, and successful ways to treat people all the same. This study has found enough comprehensive research to begin spreading the successful findings to our society to dismantle white privilege.

The Invisibility of White Privilege

Introduction: The importance of building societal awareness of white privilege

Let us begin with a problem: it is white privilege. White privilege is complex and hard to recognize because we cannot see it. People who are unaware of white privilege are not on an equal playing field with all people, and because of this our society suffers. Racial identities of minority groups are centered in the examining of race, but whiteness remains largely unexamined as a racial identity. This non-particularity or normalcy of whiteness makes it “transparent” (Lopez, 1996).

Racial privilege is dominant, but is not clear to those who are experiencing it. White people have racial identities and an invisible privilege of being white. They have unseen powers as the dominant race in the social world. Seeing life from our own perception is a struggle itself. It is possible that people could be naive about their white privilege over an entire lifetime, which was unconsciously learned from their culture. Most of the privileged would not even think privilege benefits pertained to them.

For people experiencing feelings like denial around issues like white privilege, a socially constructed focus can help to uncover different ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived social reality. Seeing reality as socially constructed involves looking at the ways social facts are created, institutionalized, and made into tradition. Socially constructed reality is seen as an ongoing, dynamic process. Reality is continually reproduced by people acting on their interpretations and their knowledge of lived experience (Garren and Miller, 2008, p.87).

White western representations of reality are overwhelmingly and disproportionately predominant, are culturally central, and above all are placed as the norm, the ordinary, the

standard. Representations of white people and white culture are everywhere; yet precisely because of this and their status as norm, they do not represent themselves as white, but as people who are variously gendered, classed, sexualized, and able (Dyer, 1997). At the level of racial representation, in other words, is a complete definition of white privilege.

Definitions of white privilege

White Privilege is defined as a right, advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by a white person beyond the common advantage of all others; it is an exemption in many areas from certain burdens or liabilities. There are special advantages or benefits that a white person does have over a non-white person. This special right or immunity is attached in all social relations. A display of white privilege is a social expression of a white person who expects to be treated as an equal member in all of society. Whites are not of a certain race; they are just the human race. White privilege is an automatic benefit itself, owing to no one—white privilege exists just for being white (Dyer, 1997).

In studying historical examples and theories of oppression, it becomes clear that social invisibility is an important strategy. Early feminists make this point over and over. If the design of structures of oppression are invisible and seem natural, they are more effective than structures which are visible. If people are convinced, but especially members of the oppressed group itself, that the way things are is natural or inevitable or unavoidable, people will be less likely to challenge the way things are. We should expect that members of the dominant group, the one which has the privilege, will deny that the privilege exists or that it could exist. White privilege must be carefully defined because it is contested. That contestation is itself a form of racism. Socially invisible structures of oppression are more effective and enduring than socially visible ones. We define white privilege in order to make it a problem, to show it is an

unjust, historical creation.

The introduction of this paper presented white privilege as invisible, and the paper will review literature about this privilege. The introduction defined the importance of building society's awareness of white privilege and the need to treat all people equally. White privilege is defined in the introduction because some people with white privilege do not know they have it. Classroom based research explains why some white students have obstacles accepting the facts of white privilege. However, there are successful ways of introducing white privilege to these audiences. Further considerations on white privilege are presented as drawn from society in general, then from inside of classrooms. These considerations explain the importance of recognizing white privilege, that it does exist, and point to the necessity of becoming accountable for past behaviors, and the biggest one—that an apology is an important component of change. A historical review on white privilege comes first from the south where black people were never treated equally. White privilege continues to pass from one generation to another, but this is where it began. This section explains why African Americans do not trust white people. My personal reflections are important because there was no awareness of white privilege on my part for many years. Several cross-cultural classes opened that awareness in me, and several of my life experiences are also explained. Stories from the field are also included in this section; they are from classes and lectures educating others toward an awareness of white privilege.

Classroom based research on white privilege

This section of my literature review will report on class-room based research on white privilege. These studies focus on ways others have approached teaching young people about white privilege. A real problem is that white students see “whiteness” as normal—the “natural”

and ordinary, the only way of being human (Dyer, 1997). Dyer's testimony comes from teaching at three universities with fewer than five percent minority enrollment. Many times, class courses had 100 percent white students. In this sea of white faces, whiteness is invisible and non-existent—it is all the students see. It has been stated, "People should judge people by their character, not by the color of their skin" (Frankenberg, 1992, p.63). It comes easy for white students to learn about other cultures and ethnicities and be able to digest that material. However, they are not often able to see themselves as racial beings in their own culture; instead, "race" does not apply to them because they are white, the "norm." It is easy to judge what we can see (people with a race), but not easy to judge what is naturalized (invisible whiteness).

Teaching about white privilege in an all-white community has a barrier. It is likely all white students have ever seen and understood is whiteness. The white students first have to rationalize that the privilege exists and then digest that it also favors them. Their resistance ranges from extreme hostility to a "wall of silence" (Cohen, 1995). Some privileged students believe that inequality is not their problem. These students believe that it is not an issue and that they have nothing to add to this type of discussion. These invisible barriers are modal, being programmed in their minds as the only way of thinking. Education in our society attempts to minimize this. However, many are unaware of white privilege.

According to Pence and Fields (1999), a serious infraction such as white privilege begins in a white-dominated learning environment. A classroom approach on education for students about white privilege has this first definition. Davis (1992) notes, in classrooms there are three feedback positions: they are resistance, paralysis, and rage. Resisters deny that there is such a thing as white privilege. Students experiencing paralysis may be able to talk about this new term, but will also become numb, weary, and suddenly quiet about it. Finally, some students may

exhibit anger, even rage, and belittle those who share information that this sort of thing (white privilege) may exist.

McIntosh's (1995) study introduced participants to whiteness in everyday consumer products. She mentions that the words "natural or nude" pertain to being white. Shoulder length hair with a natural curl is often considered "normal." Students in white-dominated classrooms may resist learning about white privilege, not wanting to examine it deeper, believing it to be untrue. McIntosh's way of introducing the invisibility and importance of white privilege has opened many awareness discussions about how white people are used as "the norm." An experiment allowed students in this study to observe others in their natural settings (not anything different than what they see all of the time). Sending students into the real world has gotten good results. "Students who test their own theories and draw their own conclusions, enhance the learning and acceptance process" (Lehman, quoted in McIntosh, p. 78). McIntosh's exercise supports a person's own self discovery; it helps students realize that they *are* privileged and the way they have been living kept their privilege "invisible."

Chaisson's (2004) study involved 3,500 students from Midwest Central University. Ninety-five percent of the students were white and most of them came from working class families. "These students can graduate and have limited views on race, as this is an almost all white school" (p.347). In this study, terms like *social construction of race*, *whiteness*, and *privilege* are introduced into the classroom. Students are assigned papers on these topics and show they are using critical thinking skills. Discussions are introduced about people of color to the students. It is explained how race, ethnicity, and privilege affect people. Taking apart the social construction of mostly white classrooms is one of the first approaches that may help students learn about white privilege. The defending of biological and social status is very

controversial. Some white students do not see the invisible benefits in this first exposure. These responses tell us that this education must be included in predominantly white classrooms. This outcome also suggests that white classrooms in white-dominated schools must make conscious and deliberate efforts to place race in the center. It is critical to introduce our different cultures, ethnicities, and races into the classroom.

Gillespie's (2003) case study helped the students to become aware of white privilege by doing research for a grade. They became more aware, and only then, by doing white privilege research they ordinary would not have done. Lawrence (1953) notes, "A good case keeps the class discussion grounded upon some of the stubborn facts that must be faced in real life situations" (quoted in Gillespie, p. 473). Students in the study did not have to self-disclose their personal views during the discussion. But after listening and seeing the study results of others, they found that some realization of what white privilege is got through to them. It was a beginning level of success.

Further considerations on white privilege

People also need to recognize white privilege outside of a classroom. These studies address non-educational approaches to investigating white privilege. Garren and Miller (2001) describe a painful perspective of white privilege in the United States generally; it is denial, lack of awareness and lack of acknowledgement by many white people. Reconciliation cannot begin until we recognize the historical and collective legacy of race. We must acknowledge and validate the wounds and scars it has caused and the terrible damage it has inflicted on generations of people of color. This acceptance precedes any formal apologies. White people need to listen to the narratives and consequences as told by people of color, without denying, or rejecting these stories. This is the foundation of making racial amends. This is not an easy step,

as many white people do not concede they have racial privilege. Lack of awareness and acceptance are often accompanied by common mechanisms of denials, such as believing that “slavery is a thing of the past,” or distancing with one-sided statements such as, “the Jim Crow Laws do not exist any longer.”

“Invisible Knapsacks of White Privilege” by McIntosh (1995) describes how whites carry an invisible privilege. As a white woman, she drew an analogy from her frustrations with males who are taught not to recognize their gender privilege. Plus she discovered she had learned to ignore her own white privilege. However, now she is aware of white privilege “as an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions which includes, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks” (1989, p. 10). This invisible privilege has been available to white people since the beginning of this country, the implicit racial contract upon which the nation was founded (Dyer, 1997). The special provisions have been encoded into laws from the outset, when white people were granted citizenship and this right was denied to people of color (Lopez, 1996). The social construction of whiteness is reaffirmed consistently, although reinterpreted by United States courts which have had a profound influence on who could enter this country and what rights they were afforded if they could get in (Lopez 1996). McIntosh listed forty-six of the knapsack’s provisions.

Why does this knapsack remain so invisible? Many pressures and social psychological forces combine to minimize the visibility of white privilege. Deconstruction of white privilege threatens the ideas and myths about this nation that may be taken for granted; it challenges the notion of meritocracy and equal opportunity, which are cornerstones of democracy (McIntosh, 1995). Examining white privilege can threaten a person’s sense of self, the belief that he or she is a good person who does not condone nor collude with racism (McIntosh, p. 76). She reports

that the knapsack remains invisible because of the erroneous assumption that its contents are neutral, normal, and universally available to everybody. This view echoes the myth that racism results from individual acts, perpetrated by bad people, and not from a web of systematic privilege. Another factor that we and others (McIntosh, 1995, p. 7) have noticed is that many; if not most white people do not feel powerful. Actually many feel disempowered because of their gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, and personal misfortunes and tragedies, so there is resistance to assuming this mantle of race privilege.

Helms (1990) extends the work of Pence and Fields (1999) by describing how white, one-sided thinking slowly develops awareness through stages, called ego statuses. His schema has definite stages. In the beginning, everything makes perfect sense; this could also be denial. Then, as the exposure to white privilege increases, awareness gradually evolves. It may only get to a certain point and the individual stops, but it can be progressive. The various stages are *naivete* where a white person is curious about other races, but does not recognize the background and oppression they endure. *Dissonance*, refers to a white person who recognizes differential treatment of the different races, hearing negative evaluations of people of color. A mind-set out of this stage rationalizes that we should have liberty and justice for all, and we should love thy neighbor as thy self, but may not yet be able to act on this realization. *Reintegration* is when a white person realizes that people of color should be given a fair chance in society. Next, *introspection* is where white people do not participate in anything racist and this begins with connecting with other anti-racists. *Autonomy* is where people's efforts are directed into dismantling social and economic oppression.

Feminist philosopher, Marilyn Fry (1992) notes that being white skinned, *is like being male*. It is a matter of physical traits that are biologically determined. The connection between

acting white and looking white is similar, so it is possible for a person who is not classified as white to perform in whitely ways and for persons who are white not to perform in whitely ways. “Racism is a social-political system of domination that comes from expected performances, attitudes, and behaviors, which reinforce and describe unjust systems in place” (p. 473). Feminists have paid attention to the ways gender roles encourage and nurture systems that balance men’s ideas, over achievements of women. This gender example in sexism is similar to the privileges of whiteness in racism.

This recaps the introduction and literature review, the beginning literature introduces awareness to a problem, white privilege; and—the privilege does exist. Next, different studies show white privilege has a difficult audience, but there are ways to engage it. Some known researchers shared successful results in reaching this invisible privilege and the audience that does not understand it. Some of the researched findings show some of the levels of change are not a complete transition in awareness and acceptance of this privilege; because some of the studies show only certain things are picked up, but beyond that some studies explain how the studies are reaching people in our society. The literature appears to be positive, introducing white privilege into our society through this education avenue. Social change and equality for everyone is the theme of the literature.

Historical overview on racism

A brief history of racism in the United States provides a vital context for studies about white privilege. This section details some examples of race relations from our past that further show the existence and inequality of white privilege. Most things about race were never said in words, but were impressed in the minds of the white children of the south. Black people were never treated equally. White folks sat in the front of the bus; black folks sat in the rear of the bus.

White people drank from a certain drinking fountain; black people used their own fountains.

White people ate in the dining room; black people ate in the kitchen. It is important to be attentive to everyday surroundings; uncomfortable issues can be brought up in people's minds anytime, which can lead to trouble very quickly (Abel, 1999).

Black slaves brought with them a rich unification of culture from West Africa; rather than eradicate African culture and consciousness, slavery actually served to preserve it. Diller (2007) points out that African Americans mistrust and avoid seeking help from established white agencies and institutions. White motives and agenda, throughout history and into this day, have not proved to be trustworthy. Racism makes it impossible to forget one's skin color. African American culture focuses attention on certain aspects, it teaches about what is important, like spirituality and respect, education, family relationships, political unity, fighting for the oppressed, and freedom fighting. It forms the metaphors and language used, and shapes and defines the way society thinks about psychological problems. For example, African Americans have been very disrespected throughout history. Respect is important. African American reality is different than white people's reality. As a result of denigration and oppression, African Americans often experience rage and anger. The psychological residual of Reconstruction, followed by Jim Crow laws for African Americans, results in a widespread mistrust of the governmental system, and of whites in general. Some African Americans say freely that they do not trust white people. This distrust is immediate and genuine, and white people must continuously work at being trustworthy. So it is important for a practitioner to know that this is a group of people that were lied to in this country, and if you see mistrust in an incident, that may be its roots.

Abel (1999) looks deeper at Jim Crow symbolic drinking fountains: a white one and one for an African-American piped off it, separately marked “colored.” They both are not the same kind of fountain. The better fountain with more quality was making a statement. This review of literature had types of pictures: a rest stop for Greyhound bus passengers on a route from Louisville, Kentucky to Nashville, Tennessee; a sign on the front of the building that said “Colored dining room in rear;” another picture showed separating the races at a water cooler in a streetcar terminal in Oklahoma City in July of 1939; next, is a picture on the third floor of Birmingham City Hall in 1951. It is showing segregated drinking fountains. Still another photo shows two drinking fountains, one labeled “white” and the other “colored” in the interior of the Williamson County Courthouse in Texas dated 1963. The separate fountains have now become one: that said, the signs have been ordered down. These pictures and signs are gone today, because of laws that dismantled them. Though the signs are gone, there is still that familiar behavior. Those becoming aware are not the ones who exhibit unjust behavior; it is the ones who are not aware yet, and racism is kept alive getting passed on from generation to generation. According to Lucal (1996) not acknowledging another person, is a form of cruelty. Oppression has different effects on people. People internalize emotions when they are not acknowledged. So, white privilege is not just something we “don’t like.” It is something that is harmful, and has devastating effects on people of color.

Racial inequality is explained, but it does not implicate the white society and gives a false picture of race privilege. White responsibility for the persistence of racism is unclear (Hooks, 1989; Sleeter, 1993). Whites can look at racial discrimination with detachment (Feagin, 1995). Whites are taught not to recognize racism, not deliberately, because they do not know white privilege is happening.

Reflections

Personal reflections

This reflection section addresses white privilege from a more personal perspective. First personal reflections explain the experiences that I have had and ways I have learned about white privilege. These are followed by stories from the field in which others have shared their similar experiences. The inclusion of personal experiences in this paper on white privilege will bring in another level of awareness to some of the supporting literature. As a white male I grew up surrounded by white privilege behavior. I never was introduced to anything else and treated people lop-sided because I did not know any other way, plus it stayed in place, as some of these studies describe, for many years. Some of my first exposure to white privilege began in cross-cultural classes in 2004 at Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor. This is not the first time I researched areas of this topic. I researched the Jim Crow Laws for a class at Eastern Michigan University in 2007. I also recently made a visit to the Charles W. Wright African American Museum in Detroit, Michigan—to see white privilege from an African American perspective.

An African American friend, who is a teaching pastor at a church in northeastern Ohio, spoke in front of five services that totaled approximately 10,000 people one weekend. Barb was explaining how God is in each of our families and cultures at each service and how we all have our own personal relationship with Him. Barb said her ancestors were slaves at one time and were proud, but mistreated people. She said they had to eat like everyone else. This next part made me emotional, feeling shame for the white race. She said the white people would butcher a cow, pig, an animal and take the choice meat from it. They would then discard the remaining meat. The black families would then mine out the organs of the animal taking whatever was left,

anything edible that the white people threw away. It was an answer to a question I had asked all my life. Why do the people of certain races eat some of the foods they do? The answer came from survival and years of adaptation to the available food. That is why it is the same way today; I have been making foods that were passed down from my family, and from my ancestors. It is the same concept, because they are the foods of the culture and what the races eat.

This next story is about George. He is a Tool and Die maker and is African American. He is married and lives with his wife in an apartment. They are planning on building a home this spring. George has a real close relationship with his family; his father is a welder in the same facility and his mother is a secretary. George told me that his grandparents lived with his parents and himself before he moved and got married. My internal reaction was, “wow,” I did not vocalize this, because at this same time I was taking my first cross-cultural class. The professor explained that because of low wages and not being able to get jobs, people of many races and ethnicities lived together, combining their wages in order to make a house payment and support one another. A question that occurred to me is, “why are they not making the same wage as people of white privilege?”

There are many personal experiences I have been very close to since becoming aware of the internalizing behaviors characteristic of white privilege, but other times there is loud outspoken anger from men and women. I was recently in a class lecture with nine students here on campus. We were discussing white privilege. The guest speaker had done previous studies and was sharing some of her experiences with the class. I grabbed my pencil and notebook and began writing as fast as I could about the people, web sites, and what she was presenting to us. The speaker asked if anyone had any experiences of their own, and different students raised their hands. I shared I was working with two black women doing volunteer work at the American Red

Cross. It happened while we were packaging items for the holidays in 2002. I asked the two black women sitting with me at our table a question I never asked before and I told them that. I asked them both the same question. “How would you like me to describe you?” I gave them the choices that I know, African American, black woman, colored woman, or Negro woman. I said I never asked someone of a different race this question and continued looking them in the eye. They looked at me a moment, seeing I was sincere, they then looked at each other, with a sort of smile. They talked out loud saying we do not like being called Negro women, no, we do not like being called African Americans, and we do not like being called colored. They both agreed they are comfortable be called black women. They looked back at me and said, “We are black women.” This was closure I have never had before, on an uncomfortable topic, not knowing how to talk with a different race most of my life. This makes me comfortable standing up giving presentations and lectures, describing black women as black women. Two women, Victoria and Janet, helped me. I realize that not everyone will feel this way when speaking to a group, but I do not falter or bobble when I describe a black woman.

Stories from the field

A recent lecturer, a now retired Eastern Michigan University professor who has done numerous studies on white privilege, shared some of her findings in a people of color class. We were not studying privilege at the time and her drop-in presentation was fascinating. Black people know what white folks are doing at the top of the ladder; this can mean anything, but they watch how white people are “going about.” White people never have to justify their skin color and white people do not have to know what people of color are doing. Unearned white privilege is to dominate, it is a choice if you want to or not, but it is there. This widespread phenomenon is what underlies this privilege. White is normal, that is just the way it is, the unearned privilege of

being white.

The professor told us white people are spoiled; she used the term “spoiled brats,” and mentioned some examples of abuse, gambling, and Wall Street white stock broker suicides. Most people with white privilege do not have to work hard for things, and this means they can feel easily defeated. When they do not get what they want, “their way,” they can shatter emotionally very quickly because they did not have to work in certain areas of their lives, giving them the life lessons for stable esteem. Different kinds of behaviors may be taken for granted in white communities: rage, control issues, crime, divorce, abuse of televisions, and video game entertainment. Educating white people who have never heard of these kinds of examples will be difficult because they may not easily understand, many are unaware and cannot believe that the race they belong to—are doing these kinds of things.

An advantage for people who do not experience white privilege was evident in a recent cross-cultural class I was a student in. The Chinese American professor asked the question, “which race has the highest self-esteem?” We were learning about white privilege, so I thought she was going to say white people. No; the individuals with the highest self-esteem are black males. The reason was explained that a person who is not white continuously has to deal with emotions of being accepted socially. The black man must work harder than anyone; he does not stay down because he drives to better himself. This makes him durable and able to handle criticism, insults, and whatever comes his way, better than any other. Since learning about black males having the highest self-esteem, I watch wherever I go, it can be in a workshop or class with African American men, and believe that this is true. White people have automatic things happen because of this born privilege. However, to accrue self-esteem things have to be tried, mistakes have to be made, an insult, and then acceptance builds self-esteem. In the case of white

males, they may not have to try hard enough. It shows because there are a lot of big talkers, but that is what it is. Is it false pride? Humans are not like birds that know how to build a nest, that comes with instinct. White privilege has a liability, as it is not an instinct, but is socially constructed. White men and women must try, and get rejected to accrue balanced self-esteem, but often they do not. African American males have the highest self-esteem because of the way they are wrongly treated by people with privilege and racist institutions. Being rejected causes one to become self-aware, and there is a choice to do something about it or not. This means that African American men because of rejection and being repressed in life are recognized as having the highest level of self-esteem.

How many people are abused because of no awareness of white privilege? Let this topic rest, and then they can ask themselves the question: “is there merit and privilege by being born white?” Some of the people who read this will deny it, exactly as some of the people in the studies. However, their resistance may be the beginning, and then awareness may grow from that. It is a start of breaking into this invisible barrier.

The movie *Crash* was one of the first to address issues of white privilege; we watched it in a cross cultural class in 2002. As a class, we were looking for things that were not right; I remember watching the reactions and the faces of the students watching the movie. The class was diverse as we had different races, ethnicities, and cultures. In the movie, there was an African American woman on a telephone who said her name, and the white man on the other end of the phone upon hearing her name, stereotyped her. Different cultures have certain recognizable names, and the stereotyped attitude from the white man in the movie displayed this. This movie opened a conversation of how employers may, when reviewing job applications, by-

pass the names that do not sound white, then go to what they know to be Caucasian names and only choose from those.

Conclusion

Unknown to many people, white privilege has a characteristic of being invisible. There are obstacles also to educating about this privilege. This paper has looked at white privilege through the realm of education inside and outside of classrooms, in personal, and local experiences. White privilege will not go away by itself; some of the best avenues for change are through education. The topic itself stresses *white privilege*, as *invisible*. To be sure, just like the earlier studies and examples throughout the paper the different levels of understanding may already have a person thinking: “So what?” Others may think, “Maybe there is such a thing, but what do we do?”

Not all of the educating strategies about white privilege in the literature were successful immediately. The research was a way to begin to realize the barriers, but our knowledge of white privilege goes through a progression. The sequence began with example studies from universities and continues into anti-racist advocates who are known for this type of research. Within are some excellent studies showing positive results in studying white privilege. They have found ways to introduce white privilege and its invisibility into our society. The literature discusses ways to introduce white privilege to those who do not realize the consequence of what it is and does. United States history, including the brief but telling examples of racism explores how the privilege got to be a foundation in the United States. Personal experience is interaction, and it is important to consider these experiences in order to begin to understand white privilege. After looking at all of these studies it makes sense to have these kinds of educational strategies for white students. It is also important for people of color to understand that their anger and mistrust

can also be overcome by education. It may be important to acknowledge these teaching methods and personal experiences of white people and people of color before we can hope to make social changes to increase equality for all people.

After looking at these studies, education can come from personal experiences and were found to be good in bringing white students to the realization of white privilege. Another good program introduced students to white privilege by asking students to research a white privilege topic for a grade. This way showed positive results. Another successful study of white privilege awareness reported that making students aware in their natural settings helped explain to them that is what made their foundation for “normal.” One study showed how people could slowly be introduced to white privilege and comprehend the different stages and stay at a stage for some time. Others in the same study arrived at the end of the stage of awareness and want to help dismantle white privilege. This education of white privilege can go through stages of awareness in a person’s lifetime, if they discover it at all, because no awareness is also a reality as some of the studies report. We must use some of these methods to educate the unfairness of white privilege. Educating children in schools at an earlier age would seem to be a beginning to dissolve white privilege.

Caucasian communities that see life only through the lenses of white community have little exposure to white privilege and may find it difficult to understand they are privileged. Most of my life some of the literature studied fit me exactly. Growing up in a small white town in southeastern Michigan, my environment, friends, behavior, and white privilege, has now changed, and a passion of mine now is being an anti-racist advocate. Some of these researchers who have been doing anti-racist work for years are recognized just by hearing their names. They have recognized white privilege exists and understood its assets and liabilities their entire

lifetimes. If there is no interaction, and intervention, white privilege will continue to benefit white people and continue to oppress people of color. It needs to be dismantled; we cannot bury our heads in the sand as if this privilege does not exist.

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