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HIDDEN VOICES: THE MISSING NARRATIVES OF VOLUNTARY INTERDISTRICT
CHOICE PARTICIPANTS FROM 2000 TO 2004 AND STUDENT TRANSFER
PARTICIPANTS FROM 2013 TO 2014

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Abstract

This study explored the perspectives of students participating in the Voluntary Inter-district Choice program from 2000-2004 and the experiences of participants in the Student Transfer Program attending the same suburban district due to the lack of accreditation in their neighboring schools during 2013-2014. The study uncovered the voices of participants in the VICC and student transfer program and to provided their voices in hope that it may be used as an instrument of change.

This subjective, phenomenological qualitative study explored the lived experiences of high school students transferring to suburban districts and provides an in-depth analysis of their social, emotional, cultural and academic journey in narrative form.

Keywords: Voluntary Inter-district Choice, transfer students, auto-ethnography

Dedication

Those who desire much must be sustained by those who never allow them to quit. I would like to thank of those who believed in me and my dreams. My husband who always encouraged me to reach for what seemed to be out of reach; my committee for always pushing me to dig deeper; my village of friends and family who cheered me on every step of the way. I am so blessed to have the support of God and all those who shower me with love.

It is with great pleasure that I thank those who have supported me throughout this journey. My Dissertation Chair, Matthew Davis has been a consistent source of encouragement throughout this process; My Dissertation Committee, Dr. Davis, Dr. Hoagland, & Dr. Weathersby always challenging me to dig deeper, follow the research, and hone in on craft. My mentors and role models who have met with me, mentored me, and set lasting examples for me; I am so humbled to be surrounded by such gifted educators who always remind me that as a life-long learner, this is simply a necessary step to continue to uncover the truths for guiding the most important people in the world: our students who will become our future leaders. The great University of Missouri St. Louis that has provided me with continued growth and education throughout the years.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Days of ostracism and days of community characterized the years of desegregation experienced by many students of color who utilized the support of parents and kinship of neighbors to learn the ways of the White educational systems. School integration, desegregation and student transfer programs following civil rights legislation greatly impacted not only the St. Louis region but the United States as a whole.¹ The decision by the United States Supreme Court on May 17th, 1954, set precedence and would forever change the state of our schools.² The forced segregated circumstances of Blacks was called into question. Desegregation was said to add equality, eliminate educational injustice, and improve racial relations. The stories perpetuated through the media in the St. Louis region and beyond presented narratives of little struggle, acceptance, and success. The voices, however, of those living and breathing desegregation presented a counter story to these upbeat versions.

Fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, school districts and the African American community continued to struggle with the idea of desegregation.³ This study attempted to fill a gap that exists in the literature and exposed the voices once silenced by white supremacy. Numerous accounts of both parents and students participating in the

¹ Foner, E. and Garraty, J.A. 1991. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. History. Retrieved from <http://www.history.com/topics/brown-v-board-of-education-of-topeka>

² Foner, E. and Garraty, J.A. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. History. 1.

³ Harvey, W.B. & Harvey, A.M. 2005. A Bi-Generational Narrative on the Brown Vs Board Decision. *The Negro Educational Review*. Vol. 56, No. 1, pg. 43-49

desegregation programs speak of instances of covert segregation where Black students are separated from the

White student population or were ostracized from certain events.⁴ Court mandated desegregation uncovered similar instances of discrimination, de facto segregation, or opportunity hoarding. Missouri Attorney General John Ashcroft did not support any attempt to right the wrongs of segregation, “called the ruling plain wrong and vowed to appeal it.”⁵ The struggle for equality continued in the city of St. Louis. The Court ruling did not bring immediate change. In fact, according to the New York Times, “The court would close the books on a case even if there was still racial imbalance in the schools, as long as the imbalance was ‘due to factors beyond the control’ of school officials.”⁶

Court mandated desegregation was enacted by the Federal government and those suburban districts found in violation of this mandate by refusing to desegregate, were threatened by funding cuts, as well as other consequences. The State of Missouri and St. Louis Public schools (SLPS) assumed all cost associated with transportation because these were the constitutional violators. According to *Civil Rights 101* a course given at The Leadership Conference⁷ there were many obstacles associated with desegregation, but there were also positive academic gains. “Not only [was] desegregation the law of the land, school integration [had] also shown positive benefits.” In addition, “As William L. Taylor wrote in *The Test of Our Progress* the 1999 report on civil rights enforcement by

⁴ Horsford, S. D. 2009. From Negro student to black superintendent: Counternarrative on Segregation and Desegregation. *J Negro Education*. 2

⁵ Shipp, E. R. 1984. Wide Busing Plan Upheld in St. Louis. The New York Times. Retrieved August 19th, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/02/09/us/wide-busing-plan-upheld-in-st-louis.html>

⁶ Shipp, E. R. 1984. Wide Busing Plan Upheld in St. Louis. Para 18.

⁷ Anonymous. 2001. Civil Rights 101. Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund. NYU Press. http://www.civilrights.org/resources/civilrights101/financialchoices/article_64d193fe6d69-5421-b2c9-9e385f97fa53.html

the Citizens Commission on Civil Rights, [s]triking evidence of progress in the performance of black children over the years [was] found in the scores of 13- and 17-year-olds on reading tests conducted by the widely respected National Assessment of Educational Progress, indicated a reduction in the gap between black and white students over the past 20 years of roughly 50 percent; the scores of Black and Latino students from 1970 to 1990 increased by about two-thirds more than predicted.”⁸

Other research provided insight into the overview of desegregation efforts across the US and its implementation, as well as, discussed the dismantling of the program. Donner utilized research to explain the political injustice that may have propelled implementation of the desegregation program and how such practices have since impacted the achievement of students. The education policies and unjust practices had thus, inhibited the success of students of color.⁹

In 2001, parents, tired of having their children experience racial injustice but longing for their children to gain a quality education, saw the promise of integration programs as the only option for a quality education. The parents rejected the idea that educational equity could be achieved without participating in such a program. The perception that students, especially those in struggling districts, receive a higher quality education, however, may not be accurate.¹⁰

⁸ Anonymous. 2001. Civil Rights 101. Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund. NYU Press. 1.

⁹ Donner, J. K. 2012. Whose compelling interest? The ending of desegregation and the affirming of racial inequality in Education. *Education & Urban Society*. Vol. 44, Issue 5, 535-552.18p.

¹⁰ Black, D. 2011. Voluntary Desegregation, Resegregation, and the Hope for Equal Educational Opportunity. *Human Rights*, 00468185, Vol. 38, Issue 4.

Children in the city of St. Louis witnessed the evident struggles of their school district to provide high quality resources equivalent to those offered in suburban space. SLPS continued to work toward attaining funds promised in past litigation, “These same State funding cuts have reduced the State funding available to the St. Louis Public Schools below the levels agreed to in the 1999 settlement case. As a result both SLPS and VICC joined in a suit against the State for re-instatement of past due amounts. As of June 30, 2005 the District’s claims amounted to approximately \$112 million.”¹¹ Litigation continued until “... November 16, 2011, the District reached an agreement with the Plaintiffs in the desegregation lawsuit to use approximately \$96 million of previously restricted funds, to eliminate the debt and fund certain academic programs through FY 2014.”¹² There was litigation related to both the Intracity Desegregation Plan and the 1983 agreement related to the Intercity Desegregation Plan.

In one of the most significant cases of this era, *Milliken v. Bradley*, the Court concluded that lower courts could not order “inter-district” desegregation that encompasses urban as well as suburban school districts without “first showing that the suburban district (or the state) was liable for the segregation across district boundaries. The practical impact of this decision was a serious blow to school desegregation remedies. In fact, a line was established between city and suburban school systems, which could not be crossed in designing desegregation plans. Whites, who for decades had tried to avoid the desegregation of their schools, finally had a place to go – the suburbs -- where they could successfully do so.”¹³

Parents searched for a means to ensure educational justice for their children and sometimes looked to suburban schools to meet these needs. In this study, the experience

¹¹ Fisher, L. 2012. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. *St. Louis Public Schools*. St. Louis, Missouri. June 30th, 2012.

¹² Fisher, L. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. 7.

¹³ Tefera, A, Frankenberg, E, etal. 2011. *Integrating Suburban Schools: How to Benefit from Diversity and Avoid Segregation*. Civil Rights Project. Ford Foundation.

of students actually participating in voluntary inter-district transfer programs was examined, during the two time frames of 2000-2004 and 2013-2014. From 2000-2004 voluntary desegregation persisted. Then in 2013 two suburban districts, mainly populated with Black students were unaccredited so, once again students and parents were given the choice to transfer from the home district to other districts.¹⁴

The Unique City Lines

St. Louis is a beautiful city with its fair share of unique trials, situations and experiences. Many cities have known divisions between the County and City, but St. Louis is one that is truly divided. In 1876,¹⁵ the city and county officially split. St. Louis County has 91 municipalities, which is unique in itself (See Appendix A) and even as early as 1926, there have been continuous talks about reunification.

The reason why the merging of municipalities inside St. Louis County is so important to the larger issue of the reasons why the city and county need to reunite is because of the duplication of services, divided government, and failure to plan as a collective region for future economic growth. When St. Louis is divided into two counties and the one county, St. Louis County has 91 municipalities and other incorporated areas, the region as a whole fails because each municipality will consistently compete against each other for jobs, people, and money. Also, by having this many municipalities the region wastes valuable tax dollars on duplicating services that could otherwise be spent for other things.¹⁶

¹⁴ Anonymous. 2012 . VICC Board Extends Enrollment of New Transfer Students. Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation. October 19, 2012

¹⁵ Levitt, A. The Great Divorce: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the City/County Split. *St. Louis Riverfront Times*. May 4, 2010.

¹⁶ Levitt, A. The Great Divorce: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About the City/County Split. Para 7.

This reunification has still not occurred. Each municipality has its governing board, safety departments, and school districts. This further complicated the division of individual school districts. The county and city have unique dynamics and diverse histories that continued to affect the St. Louis Public School City and County School Districts.

Court Ordered Desegregation Programs in the City of St. Louis

The process to create a viable Intracity Desegregation Plan involved a lot of trial and error. In May 1980, after the Federal court ordered desegregation plans to begin, Judge Meredith gave up the case because of health reasons and Judge Hungate took over.¹⁷ There was much public backlash from the Intercity Desegregation Plans and many suburban districts spoke out against it. An agreement was reached with for the Intercity Plan in 1983 but the Intracity plan for all county districts by June 1, 1983.¹⁸ Students began participating in the desegregation program and some were concerned that the “best” students would leave SLPS and attend suburban districts. “I worried about getting the cream of the crop from the city, but we haven’t done that, said Franklin McCallie, principal of Kirkwood, where 19 percent of the 1,400 students are Black. Kirkwood has accepted 45 students from the city.”¹⁹ He goes on to state, “We’ve gotten some very, very fine kids, but not all ... what we are taking is kids who have a strong desire to get a fine education, which has spilled over into a lot of support for the program and for our

¹⁷ AP.1983. Voluntary Busing Plan Being Studied. *New York Times*. February 13, 1983.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1983/02/13/us/voluntary-busing-plan-being-studied.html>

¹⁸ Heaney, Gerald W. and Uchitelle, Susan. 2004. *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*. University of Nebraska Press.

¹⁹ AP.1983. Voluntary Busing Plan Being Studied. Para 16.

school.”²⁰ The perspectives of students who participated in the program are few and far between. The media often exposed black students who demonstrated gratitude and pride for the *privilege* to attend a suburban district.²¹

The 1983 Settlement Agreement and Desegregation plan changed the face of education in St. Louis.²² This plan was developed to ensure minority students received a quality education, while also promoting diversity and increasing the “African American student population to 25 percent at participating districts.”²³ The African American enrollment mandated in the Intercity Agreement was a minimum of 15% and a maximum of 25%. Some districts did reach the 25% level, however, were over the minimum. The plan would allow a variety of options for others electing to participate and continued with the following goals: the voluntary inter-district transfer program allows parents to send students to Suburban districts, magnet schools were created to give parents from St. Louis county to send their children to St. Louis city schools with unique magnet school programs; and, lastly, resources were allocated to create an extensive plan to improve the quality of schools within the city of St. Louis.²⁴

Voluntary Inter-district Choice Corporation (VICC)

²⁰ AP.1983. Voluntary Busing Plan Being Studied. Para 17.

²¹ AP.1983. Voluntary Busing Plan Being Studied. Para 6.

²² Anonymous. 1993. The mayor, the bus and the NAACP. *Crisis* (00111422), Vol. 100, Issue 8, Retrieved August 19th, 2013, from <
<http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.umsl.edu/ehost/detail?sid=1ffa7ee5-c857-46e0-ba665bdec1ad975e%40sessionmgr11&vid=12&hid=1&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=9403170013>

²³ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation. June 13, 2013. Retrieved from Choicecorp.org

²⁴ Anonymous. 1993. The Mayor, the bus, and the NAACP. *Crisis*. Vol. 100, Issue 8, 28 1.

The Voluntary Inter-district Choice Corporation was developed in 1981 to oversee the desegregation program. The mission statement reads “VICC is committed to building relationships, promoting diversity, and providing choice while enriching lives through quality educational experiences.”²⁵ The organization was also responsible for oversight of the 1983 Settlement Agreement.²⁶ “As of September, 2008, 6,774 St. Louis students were attending county schools, and 171 county students were attending St. Louis City magnet schools. At the height of its enrollment, the program served about 14,600 transfer students total. For the 2008-2009 school year, the program accepted 417 new city-to-county transfer students and 59 county-to-city transfers. A total of 3,962 new applications were received - - 3,850 for city-to-county transfers and 112 for county-to-city transfers.”²⁷ VICC offers services, support and training to the districts participating in the desegregation program in hopes of improving the success of students currently participating. “The 1999 Settlement Agreement included language specifying that the program could be extended and continue to accept new students beyond 2008-2009. A five-year extension pursuant to this provision was approved by the VICC Board in June, 2007 and a second five-year extension was approved October, 2012. As a result, new students will continue to be enrolled by district through the 2018-2019 school years.”²⁸

The St. Louis Post Dispatched posted a timeline highlighting the events in the City of St. Louis (See Appendix B).

²⁵ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. 1.

²⁶ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. 6.

²⁷ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. *Historical Background*. 10.

²⁸ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. 18.

The State pushed to end desegregation in order to escape the “\$160 million”²⁹ annual bill paid to fund the program. “Of the \$160 million, the St. Louis Public School District received approximately \$60 million each year to pay the per pupil costs for transfer students.”³⁰

While State funded desegregation was being phased out, students had the option to continue participating in VICC until the 2018-2019 school year.³¹

Desegregation in St. Louis County Districts

On October 11, 1991, Attorney General of Missouri “moved the district court to declare the St. Louis School District ‘unitary’ ... fully compliant with court orders and constitutional law. Desegregation by court order will come to an end.”³² The SLPS was declared unitary- or no longer operate a dual black and white system.³³ The phase out of the Desegregation program was underway in 2004, as over 12,000 students participated in the court-ordered program throughout St. Louis County.³⁴ The phase out of the desegregation program involving State funding, began in 1991. The majority of the population who migrated from one district to another was African American students from St. Louis City attending suburban schools in St. Louis County. There were 1,400

²⁹ Anonymous. Focus on Desegregation: Questions and Answers about the Implications of the Citywide Vote on February 2nd, 1999. 7.

³⁰ Anonymous. Focus on Desegregation: Questions and Answers about the Implications of the Citywide Vote on February 2nd, 1999. 7.

³¹ Fisher, L. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.7.

³² Heaney, Gerald W. and Uchitelle, Susan. *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*. 186.

³³ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. 1997. *Stepping over the Color Line*.130.

³⁴ Walters, L.S. 1996. School Busing at end of line in Missouri? *Christian Science Monitor*. Vol. 88, Issue 67, 1.

White students from St. Louis County also attended St. Louis City Magnet schools.³⁵ Mayor Freeman Bosley, Jr. who supported the improvement of city schools, rather than busing to suburban districts supported the improvement of SLPS. Suburban districts benefited financially from the influx of transfer students, who “account for more than 10 percent of many districts’ education budgets.”³⁶ The State of Missouri contributed \$1.3 billion to the inter-district transfer program in the St. Louis area.³⁷

Changes continued to be made regarding the transfer program. According to the VICC, a statement released on Friday, October 19th, 2012 “In June, 2007, the VICC Board unanimously approved a five-year extension to the 1999 Settlement Agreement, which continued the new enrollment period through the 2013-2014 school year. This second five-year extension allowed new enrollments through the 2018-2019 school year.”³⁸

Breitenfeld (Turner) v. The School District of Clayton

The intercity Desegregation Plan and the Turner/Breitenfeld case highlighted some of the concerns mentioned, however, it brought to light other unjust educational issues. In the desegregation plan, many felt that racial segregation was being perpetuated, while in the Turner Case, the issues were due to two school districts losing accreditation and parents feeling that they should not be responsible for paying tuition to an accredited neighboring district. Gina Breitenfeld, a resident of St. Louis city combined her concerns

³⁵ Anonymous. Focus on Desegregation: Questions and Answers about the Implications of the Citywide Vote on February 2nd, 1999. 2.

³⁶ Walters, L.S. School Busing at end of line in Missouri.14.

³⁷ Walters, L.S. School Busing at end of line in Missouri.5.

³⁸ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. 5.

in the Turner Case³⁹ felt that her children had a right to attend the School District of Clayton since the St. Louis Public Schools remained unaccredited.⁴⁰ The research of Professor Terrance Jones from University of Missouri St. Louis was utilized to determine the number of transfer students to be expected. The data was gathered from “a telephone survey of 601 people who are responsible for making decisions for school age children in the City of St. Louis.”⁴¹ Approximately 15,740 transfer students from the city of St. Louis would transfer out and 3,567 would transfer to The School District of Clayton.⁴² Jones’ research findings suggested that between 25 and 50 percent of students would transfer to suburban schools. The earlier decisions found in favor of the School District of Clayton. That decision, however, was short lived and

The Missouri Supreme Court unanimously reversed Judge David Lee Vincent's ruling in the case of Breitenfeld v. The School District of Clayton, et al, which previously held that the statute governing transfers from unaccredited school districts was impossible to comply with, unconstitutional and unenforceable...⁴³

The Turner case and resultant court cases drastically impacted schools districts within city and county. Transfer programs facing today’s students in 2013 from unaccredited districts outwardly seemed to be the same as that proposed in previous

³⁹ Anonymous. GINA BREITENFELD, Appellant, v. SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON, et al., Respondents, v. STATE OF MISSOURI, et al., Appellants. Supreme Court of Missouri No. SC92653. January 16th, 2013. [http://www.courts.mo.gov/SUP/index.nsf/fe8feff4659e0b7b8625699f0079eddf/768bd5062d3dde5586257af70052dd75/\\$FILE/SC92653_School_Dist_&_taxpayers_brief.pdf](http://www.courts.mo.gov/SUP/index.nsf/fe8feff4659e0b7b8625699f0079eddf/768bd5062d3dde5586257af70052dd75/$FILE/SC92653_School_Dist_&_taxpayers_brief.pdf)

⁴⁰ Anonymous. GINA BREITENFELD, Appellant, v. SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON, et al., Respondents, v. STATE OF MISSOURI, et al., Appellants. 2.

⁴¹ Anonymous. GINA BREITENFELD, Appellant, v. SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON, et al., Respondents, v. STATE OF MISSOURI, et al., Appellants. 23.

⁴² Anonymous. GINA BREITENFELD, Appellant, v. SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON, et al., Respondents, v. STATE OF MISSOURI, et al., Appellants. 23.

⁴³ Anonymous. GINA BREITENFELD, Appellant, v. SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON, et al., Respondents, v. STATE OF MISSOURI, et al., Appellants. 98-100.

years. The major difference, however, was that the State of Missouri will no longer contribute millions of dollars to support the program. The unaccredited districts must pay the transportation cost for two districts selected to participate in the transfer program. The sending district (Normandy & Riverview) were responsible for paying tuition and transportation costs of transfer students. The unaccredited districts were responsible for financially supporting the transportation of students deciding to attend the two selected districts. The controversy over the financial strain placed on the failing districts continued to be the cause of much deliberation. The transportation cost alone invited much debate and one district had even considered refusing to pay in order to sustain the local district.⁴⁴ Missouri Supreme Court ruled in favor of “allowing students in unaccredited school districts to transfer to any neighboring district ...”⁴⁵ Students of unaccredited districts could transfer to accredited or provisionally accredited districts. A total of 449 students from Normandy School District transferred to Francis Howell School District⁴⁶. Mehlville accepted 215 students for Normandy District⁴⁷. Bock writes that, “In all, 1,451

⁴⁴ Crouch, E. 2013. Normandy school board reverses, will pay transportation costs for transfer students. St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/normandy-school-board-reverses-willpay-transportation-costs-for-transfer/article_f5d34cd1-36af-57c7-84fc_ea6793d5c73e.html

⁴⁵ Reid, A. 2013. Normandy Rolls Out Surprising Transportation Plan for Transfer. *St. Louis Magazine*. Reviewed August 7th, 2013. <http://www.stlmag.com/Blogs/SLM-Daily/July2013/Normandy-Rolls-Out-Surprising-Transportation-Plan-for-Transfer/>

⁴⁶ Bock, J. 2013. Francis Howell sends first bill to Normandy for transfer students. St. Louis Post Dispatch. September 3rd, 2013. Retrieved from http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/francis-howell-sends-first-bill-to-normandy-for-transfer-students/article_20cad97e-ced1-55f6-b822-4b60ada3351a.html

⁴⁷ Bock, J. Francis Howell sends first bill to Normandy for transfer students. 5.

students requested to leave Riverview Gardens, and 1,189 asked to leave Normandy schools.”⁴⁸ While attendance and financial data has been gathered and analyzed (2013), the missing perspective was that of students who are attending suburban districts as part of this new wave of transfers.⁴⁹

As of today, Wednesday, September 25, 2013 the Normandy School District is fiscally responsible for an official enrollment of 4,067 students. Of that number, 1046 students are participating in the court-ordered accreditation transfer program which allows students from Normandy to attend nearby fully accredit school districts... Enrollment has declined 11% in terms of the number of actual students attending class in Normandy ... compared to September 2012.⁵⁰

The districts were in a state of flux, seeking to educate the remaining students, while simultaneously fighting to regain accreditation, and devising strategies to cover the financial burden placed on the district by the transfer program. The unaccredited districts were searching for alternatives to improve education. Normandy School District even considered not paying the transportation costs of transfer students.⁵¹ Local administrators who witnessed the decline of the unaccredited school districts had also proposed a plan for consideration. The plan sought to right the wrongs occurring when students transferred to other districts to “...drive the conversation surrounding struggling schools, particularly in light of the transfer situation that has given children the chance at better

⁴⁸ Bock, J. Francis Howell sends first bill to Normandy for transfer students. 7.

⁴⁹ Crouch, E. 2013. Superintendents pitch plan to aid struggling Missouri schools. St. Louis Post Dispatch. Retrieved November 15, 2013
http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/superintendents-pitch-plan-to-aid-struggling-missouri-schools/article_7c9bd0b4-a6a5-5841-951b-300b0709677d.html

⁵⁰ Anonymous. “Normandy School District Releases ‘Count Day’ Attendance.” Normandy Early Childhood Center: District News. September 25th, 2013.
<http://normandy.mo.nce.schoolinsites.com/?PageName=LatestNews&Section=DistrictNews&ItemID=57065&ISrc=District&Itype=News&IFrom=D&SID=395>

⁵¹ Singer, Dale. 2013. Districts will get paid for transfer students, Nicastro says. *STL Beacon*
https://www.stlbeacon.org/#!/content/33408/normandy_payments_102513

schools elsewhere, but at the expense of those who remain . . .”⁵² Riverview was currently spending “\$6,867 per student”⁵³ and according to the January 2014 billing from the receiving district, a total of 1,120 students were currently participating.⁵⁴

The foregoing narrative presented a story of financial strain for local districts and communities being divided, while attempting to find the most appropriate solution for providing a quality education to students. The data, however, could only present a limited view of the experience faced by students during desegregation. A richer view could only be seen and heard directly from students. My Autoethnography provides further opportunity to dig underneath the surface while Critical Race Theory, discussed the harm experienced by people of color and the benefits for Whites.

Autoethnography: The Struggles of Being Othered from 2000-2004

Autoethnography is a powerful tool, allowing the researcher to peel back layers of life experiences, related to culture, self-identity, and the wider society to present a true depiction of life through their eyes. According to Chang:

Autoethnography as a conceptual framework for research rests on four foundational assumptions: (1) culture is a group oriented concept by which self is always connected with others; (2) the reading and writing of self-narratives provides a window through which self and others can be examined and understood; (3) telling one’s story does not automatically result in the cultural understanding of self and others, which only grows out of in-depth cultural analysis and interpretation; and (4) autoethnography is an excellent instructional tool to help not only social scientists but also practitioners . . . gain profound understanding of self and others and function more effectively with others from diverse cultural backgrounds.⁵⁵

⁵² Crouch, E. Superintendents pitch plan to aid struggling Missouri schools. St. Louis Post Dispatch. 7.

⁵³ Crouch, E. Superintendents pitch plan to aid struggling Missouri schools. St. Louis Post Dispatch. 10-23.

⁵⁴ Stockwell, M. 2014. Telephone conversation March 3, 2014.

⁵⁵ Chang, H. 2008. Autoethnography as method (Developing Qualitative Inquiry).

The Conceptual Framework utilized is Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT as a lens of understanding focused on three tenets of racism as a real concept that affected every aspect of society, interest convergence that dispels the myth that racism served no benefit to society and many shared a common goal of eliminating it, and social constructions which showed that individual's ideas and personalities created racism. It came from our own thoughts and beliefs⁵⁶. It also introduced Derrick Bell's concept of Interest Convergence (1980). The idea of Interest Convergence Principle, demonstrated that "The interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites ..."⁵⁷ While the desegregation and student transfer programs appeared to contribute towards equality, "... Bell noted that the Brown decision immediately improved America's credibility in emerging third-world countries ...". Though blacks may have felt a step closer to equality "... many elite whites understood that the South could not make the transition from a plantation economy to an industrialized economy without discarding segregation."⁵⁸ The Interest Convergence Principle also shed light on the support offered from suburban districts. The financial benefits experienced by suburban districts who participated in the desegregation and voluntary integration program were numerous.

While there were success stories highlighted, the voices of student participants were limited and were often focused on the benefits involved with being a transfer student. For example, in the fall, 2013, the publication *VICC Volunteer: Highlights of the*

⁵⁶ Delgado, Delgado, R. and Stefancic, J. 2012. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. (Kindle Edition).

⁵⁷ Lynn, M. and Dixson, A.D. ed. 2013. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

⁵⁸ Lynn, M. and Dixson, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. 17.

St. Louis student transfer program, highlighted the positive experiences of two students:

Danielle Clemons and Angela Lewis.

Danielle, 22 is a graduate student...The 2009 Kirkwood High graduate admits that she knew nothing about attending college because no one in [her] family went to college. She relied on her college and career counselor... The educational support received while attending suburban districts often encourages students to broaden the scope of their goals. By witnessing those who utilize college as a means to attain social status, transfer students see this as an option. The longing to make change, however, in their own communities weighs heavily on their hearts. ...Danielle Clemons was required to conduct a major research project. Her project was entitled *The African American College Experience: Perceptions of Campus Environmental Influences at a predominantly White University in the Midwest* and she believes her findings apply to the VICC program...One factor she found that contributed to the success of African American students at a predominantly white university is mentoring by faculty...⁵⁹

Relationships with students continued to be an essential piece in helping students to feel connected to the school community. “Another of her findings is that participation in clubs and organizations leads to positive outcomes, such as the development of leadership and social skills”⁶⁰. Internal factors within the school, as well as, “outside factors have a great impact on the success of African American students, Danielle’s report concluded, racism, vicarious family experiences or personal hardships can hinder African American students from doing well academically...”⁶¹ Attaining academic success as a transfer student can be extremely challenging. Students managed the academic load, while they attempted to understand the cultural and social clues that operated the environment.

⁵⁹ Magee, .2013. *VICC Volunteer: Highlights of the St. Louis student transfer program*.

⁶⁰ Magee, . *VICC Volunteer: Highlights of the St. Louis student transfer program*. 4.

⁶¹ Magee, . *VICC Volunteer: Highlights of the St. Louis student transfer program*. 4.

The numerous accounts of both parents and students who participated in the integration program spoke of instances of covert segregation at the receiving school where students are separated from the student population or ostracized from certain events. According to Dumas (2014) "... for many black families, educators and activists, desegregation and subsequent racial equity policies have become sites of a specific form of school malaise ..."⁶² The harm experienced by students in white space is often hidden. The harm comes directly from "... the possibility of educational access and opportunity seems increasingly elusive, even as hegemonic and simply undeniable 'common sense' is that schooling is the sure pathway to improved life chances..."⁶³ The hope and belief in education changing the lives of people of color was in question. Consider Voluntary Integration parents and participants in Ellisville Elementary School who urged the Superintendent to intervene, after feeling their children were excluded from special events⁶⁴ and the perspectives of local suburban parents who felt that the accepting district overextended in order to accommodate transfer students or the battle of parents whose students attended unaccredited schools to gain admission to county schools in the area⁶⁵.

The public rhetoric downplayed the culture shock, racial tension, confusion and overall lack of preparedness experienced by students taking part in integration programs.

⁶² Dumas, M.J. 2014. Losing an Arm. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*. Vol. 17, Issue 1, 1-29.

⁶³ Dumas, M.J. 2014. Losing an Arm.4.

⁶⁴ Holland, E. 2012. Parents say school excluded desegregation students from event. St. Louis Post Dispatch. October 12th,

2012<

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/parents-say-school-excluded-desegregation-students-from-event/article_698a5e36-18af-5d5b-bf50-74b8b40bf2c6.html

An auto-ethnographic approach dissecting such realities experienced first-hand as a transfer student during the 1990's framed my approach to the narrative analysis of other Black transfer students past and present. I experienced micro-aggressions daily, but also thrived as a leader in my school eventually. The day to day ying and yang living out desegregation was a story worth telling. The complexity of true inter-cultural immersion needed deeper unpacking.

As I think back to my days in high school, I remembered days of ostracism and days of community. Racial tension was definitely everywhere but the idea of "opportunity hoarding" was one that was alive and well in this community. The term "opportunity hoarding" was when certain resources and opportunities are only made available to selected students. The number one reason parents from the city sent their children to suburban districts was to provide a higher quality of education; however, if this quality was still unavailable to many students of color when attending suburban schools, did the benefits outweigh the costs? The opportunities, networks, resources, and activities were endless. The white students, however, came with white privilege. As a young participant in desegregation, I discovered early, with the help and determination of my mother and father, the way to negotiate this system. When I was transferred from my inner city elementary school, I was so excited by the possibilities, but also so nervous to be leaving the kinship, comfort and support of my own community.

As a kindergarten child entering this suburban elementary school, I could feel the stares, the fear, and the utter curiosity of this new and complex child who lived in another world. As I spoke, none would believe I was a product of poverty or even a child from beyond the city lines. My speech was too refined, my confidence a step above the rest,

and my academic focus clearly one to be noted. During recess, however, my heart followed those who yelled and screamed, those who played basketball and double-dutch and looked just like me. But I knew they were not like me.

This became more and more clear. In my elementary school, there were two African American teachers and they were determined to help me to understand this foreign world that I was now a part of. Every time I saw them they would smile. I could feel home. Even though, I did not have the pleasure of having either of them as a teacher in kindergarten, I found home next year, when my mother requested one of them as my teacher.

The system, I thought I understood, was much more complex than my mother and father could ever imagine. My first grade teacher, however, was an insider and could far better understand just what I needed to do. She was an African American female from an economically advantaged African American family who had attained stardom as local celebrities. She cautioned me on the need to be...I'm not sure what she wanted me to be...But I know she needed me to be better than I had been. I didn't understand her utter frustration for my childish antics that landed me in detention or the distractions that stole my focus. She sternly reminded me that I, even at age 7, was here to do a job.

This was a job that was so much more important than I could imagine as a first grader. Years passed before another African American teacher came to me. I waited patiently and yearned to experience another safe haven, like that of my first grade classroom. I did not find that place again until 6th grade. My teacher was a short, stocky woman, who wore glasses and hummed spiritual tunes. My biological sister, who lived a life of whiteness, had come before me. She was a year older and my teacher had grown to

love her assimilation. It was as if she had taken on the persona of those in this world, and that she had actually forgotten or chose to forget who she really was. She had lost sight of our obligation to our community and her judgment became clouded by her internalized racism. My sister wanted to live life as if skin color did not matter. She focused on assimilating in every way possible. Even still, I was thankful for her example, because she made adapting much easier for me. My 6th grade teacher, my dear kin, did not understand why I had not yet embraced this new life.

My biological sister paved the way for my name to be known. But my path was a bit different from hers. My speech was refined, that is, of course, until I let go and unveiled the mask of my true self. The dialect of the family would shine through and I was free to be the true me when it was safe. I was often cautioned when my 6th grade teacher overheard me. My 6th grade teacher bonded with my family and provided insights too complex for me to understand. She encouraged me to assimilate, but I wanted to acculturate. I wanted to embrace both this new experience, as well as the rich heritage that lived so strong inside of me. She reminded me there was no room for such speech; others might hear me and then I would be like them... You know, them, who lived across the train tracks and those blocked in by the interstate. Or those visitors who travelled two hour bus rides to escape their poor, crime ridden lives... You know them. Confusion sunk in as I yelled and screamed that I was THEM. THEM was really me. But her stares and persistence was much louder than any of my outcries. She reminded me to stay on the path my sister had created; one where I would be seen like them: those privileged, not as different.

I continued to learn the system. I watched, I smiled, and I cried. I witnessed my peers being hoarded into the “special” classes deemed for those who experienced culture shock and did not as easily adjust to the culturally irrelevant curriculum where our culture, our life and our history did not matter. We ate lunch together and spoke on the phone, but as time continued to pass, they became strangers to me. By the time I made it to high school, I met others like me.

At first there were two...I was so thankful. Their speech, conduct and academic focus mimicked that of my own. While not embracing whiteness, they were able to switch from expressing their linguistic originality and Ebonics to speaking “standard English” to please those who held the power. They were accepted into the honor societies and leadership clubs...For the first time, I found home in other students. We supported, challenged and grounded each other over the next four years. We made a name for ourselves by taking roles as Class President, Varsity Cheerleading Captain, and National Honor Society Chair...There were us...Then, there were them.

High School and Divided Home Life

I missed them...my neighborhood and church friends. I remember when we played together and sang the latest songs on the radio. We walked to the corner store and ate Chico Sticks as we talked about our light up LA Gears. I yearned to be with them again, but I no longer belonged. I was no longer one of them, but I also was no longer the simple child from south city. I was now a product of two worlds. For the first time in my life I understood Dubois’ double-consciousness.

I was so thankful for those who came from my world, learned the system before me, braved the racial inequalities and biases, and courageously provided safe zones in

this foreign place. The emotional toll and pressure of the job I was sent to do was at times overwhelming. Thanks to those teachers of color and those of this foreign world, I quickly learned there was no place for students who did not have a desire to assimilate. Those who were able to code shift, however, served as the pillar or epitome of what a desegregation student should be...that is, if you did not want to be invisible. The foreign world used our talents to try to understand and attract other students, but we also utilized and took advantage of the opportunities provided. As much as we needed the desegregation experience, the students, teachers, and administrators also needed us.

The evolution of the transfer program had resulted in many changes over time. Understanding and documenting personal narratives of transfer students was a meaningful step towards dismantling oppression in US that resulted from the Brown decision.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the perception of high school students of color participating in desegregation programs from 2000-2004 compared to the perceptions of high school students from Normandy and Riverview Gardens High school who had opted to attend the same suburban district due to the unaccredited status of their neighborhood district during the 2013-2014 school year.

The perception and experience of students of color was one often unexposed. The common thread of attending the same suburban high school, ten years apart provided insight into their experiences. Students who participate in desegregation or voluntary inter-district programs were often faced with both challenges and opportunities that might be best articulated by the students themselves. Support for students participating in such

programs impacted the success and attitudes of students. Cohen and Roper⁶⁶ and W. Scott Ford's study of contact hypothesis showed that "interracial contact situations that are perceived as being of equal status by whites are not perceived in the same manner by blacks..." as cited in *Interracial Public Housing in Border City: Another Look at the Contact Hypothesis*.⁶⁷

Research Questions

How did the perspectives of students participating in the voluntary desegregation program during 2000-2004 relate to those of students participating in 2013-2014 due to the loss of local districts' accreditation?

What were the social, emotional, and academic experiences of students who chose to participate in desegregation in 2000-2004 and those participating during the recent transfer from failing schools?

Significance of Study

As current litigation continued, the perspectives of students attending the same suburban high school during the 2000-2004 court mandated desegregation and the 2013-14 transfer program provided valuable insight regarding the academic, social and emotional benefits and harm. The findings of this study provided a framework for further study into desegregation where all stakeholders, including students had a positive

⁶⁶ Cohen, E.G and S.s. Roper. 1972. Modification of interracial interaction disability: an application of status characteristics theory. *American Sociological Review* 37: 643-57.

⁶⁷ Robinson, J., Preston, J.D. 1976. Equal status contact and modification of racial prejudice: a reexamination of the contact

hypothesis. *Social Forces*. University of North Carolina Press. P911-924 Retrieved from <http://sf.oxfordjournals.org/content/54/4/911.abstract>

reaction to the program. This study also provided an in depth look into the student experience for two separate time periods.

Students who participated in desegregation programs were often face with both challenges and opportunities that might be best articulated by the students themselves.

As litigation continued, the perspectives of students provided valuable insight for future policy makers and educators.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study include the fact that only one receiving district that participated in VICC program and the Student Transfer Program due to unaccreditation had been included in this study. Time of study was from January 2014-October 2014 and did not include further litigation. The Sample of the study only included the student perspective. The information contained in this study did not include additional litigation, research or changes proposed to the student transfers after April 2014.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were found in the methodology due to limited memory and experiences. Access to participants in the desegregation program from 2000-2004 was limited due to the lapse in time. High school students might remember their perceptions of the VICC program in which they participated in 10-15 years ago. In 2013-2014 students had limited experiences in receiving school.

Definitions

Throughout this study, I used terms specifically designed for my topic of study. For clarity, I provided definitions.

- Acculturation requires merging the culture of the majority without sacrificing cultural beliefs.⁶⁸
- Autoethnography according to Vone`che defines it as a text that was always written from the retrospective viewpoint of a person interpreting his or her own past.⁶⁹
- Brown v. Topeka was a court case comprised of “...five separate cases that were heard by the U.S. Supreme court,” in addition to separate but equal, the main “issue of segregation in public schools” was discussed. These cases were Brown v Board of Education of Topeka, Briggs v Elliot, Davis v. Board of education of Prince Edware County (VA), Boiling v. Sharpe, and Gebhart v. Ethel ...” These cases were heard together because “the main issue in each was the constitutionality of state-sponsored segregation in public schools.”⁷⁰
- Consent Decree was “a settlement of a lawsuit or criminal case in which a person or company agrees to take specific actions without admitting fault or guilt for the situation that led to the lawsuit⁷¹.”
- Counter-narratives used storytelling to present a counter-story to the narrative told regarding an experience or series of events.⁷²

⁶⁸ Konya, I. *A dynamic model of cultural assimilation*. 2.

⁶⁹ Hamdan, A. 2012. *Autoethnography as a genre of Qualitative Research: A journey Inside Out*. University of Western Ontario Alumni. Canada.

⁷⁰ Anonymous. History of Brown v. Board of Education. US Supreme Courts. <http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx> . 11.

⁷¹ Anonymous. 2008. *West’s Encyclopedia of American Law*, edition 2. The Gale Group.

⁷² Lynn, M. and Dixson, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. ?.

- Cultural Assimilation involved learning and adopting the behaviors deemed appropriate by the cultural majority.⁷³
- Critical Race Theory begins with the notion that racism was a “normal ... permanent fixture of American life ... Thus, the strategy becomes one of unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations. Second, CRT departs from mainstream legal scholarship by sometimes employing storytelling to ‘analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render blacks and other minorities’ one-down.”⁷⁴ In addition, “According to Barnes Critical race theorists integrate their experiential knowledge (emphasis added), drawn from a shared history as ‘other’ with their ongoing struggles to transform a world deteriorating under the albatross of racial hegemony.”⁷⁵
- Desegregation was court mandated transfer where urban students of color attended suburban schools outside of their neighborhood or community to gain educational opportunities or resources unavailable in local district.
- Integration was uncourt mandated transfer to suburban districts; racial mixing involving people of color and whites in the same institution, activity or role and “Describes it as a form of intergroup interaction that eliminates segregation and inequality while recognizing racial identities.”⁷⁶

⁷³ Konya, I. 2002. *A dynamic model of cultural assimilation*. Boston College.

⁷⁴ Delgado, Delgado, R. and Stefancic, J. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. xiv.

⁷⁵ Landson-Billings, G. 1998. Just what is critical race theory and what’s it doing in a *nice* field like Education. *Critical Race Studies in Education*. Vol. 11, No. 1, 7-24.

⁷⁶ Anderson, E. 2010. *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Internalized Racism was the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power.⁷⁷
- Opportunity Hoarding were opportunities provided to select students unavailable to others who might also qualify.
- Social support was the assistance provided to students participating in desegregation program to encourage understanding of the culture and school norms.
- Student Transfer Law was a law “enacted in 1993 allowing students to move to a new district when their home district loses its accreditation and required the unaccredited district to shoulder the tuition payments for the transferees.⁷⁸
- Transfer Student refers to students participating in the Student Transfer Program from Normandy & Riverview School District due to the loss of accreditation of the home district.
- White privilege was unearned treatment or resources provided based on being a member of the Caucasian race.

Summary

⁷⁷ Bivens, M.S. 2011. An Architectural & Historical Survey of both sides of Cora Avenue from Dr. Martin Luther King Drive to North Market Street in the City of St. Louis, Missouri. Survey Report., RHCDA.

⁷⁸ Zubrzycki, J. 2013. Missouri Districts Verge on Bankruptcy After Ruling. Edweek. September 24th, 2013.

This study presented a counter-story of the desegregation experience that only a student could provide. Throughout history, the desegregation process had been thoroughly reviewed and analyzed, but there was limited research providing the student perspective. It was my goal to utilize qualitative research methods, such as interviews to uncover the voices and perspectives of students. By presenting this perspective the current system and process of desegregation might be reviewed to improve the experience of the students involved. The remainder of the study was divided into five chapters. The second chapter provided a thorough critique of Wells and Crain's *Stepping over the Color Line*⁷⁹. The third chapter outlined the research design and methods utilized to gather data. The fourth chapter included an analysis of data and the final chapter provided a summary and recommendations for future study.

School Integration in St. Louis resulted from an extensive political, social and emotional history of events. By understanding the literature and current legislation surrounding the topic, the counter-narratives of the students participating in transfer programs, might provide richer insight into the climate of St. Louis.

⁷⁹ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. 1997. *Stepping over the Color Line*. Yale University.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter, I provided an overview of literature related to litigation, desegregation programs in the City of St. Louis, a critique of Amy Stuart Well's *Stepping over the Color Line*, and an analysis of the distinction between the media's perspective and desegregation and Blacks. This chapter provided conceptual information separated by themes central to the topic of desegregation and transfer students in St. Louis.

Past Litigation

Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896 challenged the Jim Crow Laws when "Homer Plessy refused to give up his seat to a white man on a train in New Orleans...contending that the Louisiana law separating blacks from white on trains violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment."⁸⁰ Plessy v. Ferguson served an important role to draw attention to the idea of *Separate But Equal* and the many inequalities associated with this concept. Supreme Court did not find in favor of Plessy. The fight for justice continued and eventually led to the development of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.⁸¹ The NAACP enacted countless litigation to attempted to abolish school segregation in 1954. The Supreme Court heard the outcries of inequality. Brown v. Board of Education was made up of five separate cases throughout the United States dealing with the injustices of school segregation. "In 1953, Chief Justice Warren was able to...bring all the Justices to agree to support a unanimous

⁸⁰ Anonymous. History of Brown v. Board of Education. US Supreme Courts. <http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx> . 2.

⁸¹ Anonymous. History of Brown v. Board of Education. US Supreme Courts. <http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx> . 3.

decision declaring segregation in public schools unconstitutional. The decision was announced May, 14, 1954.⁸²

While *Brown v. Board of Education* further encouraged progress, there was little change reflected in the everyday lives of students until much later. Dr. Harvey's *Life as a Brown Baby* tells of the cruelty of segregation that continued, even after the *Brown* decision. Harvey explained "segregation was mean and ugly and humiliating. It was a state of affairs that made you know your place...while the local high school that my older sister and I went to was racially integrated, the neighborhood grammar school...was all black. Apparently people in the North didn't know about *Brown v. Board* either."⁸³ In 1972, almost 25 years after the Supreme Court decision, according to Uchitelle and Heaney "no real progress had been made to desegregate schools in the city of St. Louis"⁸⁴ parents were concerned. As a result, litigation continued even to this day in 2014.

Desegregation: A Gift or Curse?

"Separate is not equal."⁸⁵ Both the federal government, as well as State and local districts had worked to offer alternatives to segregated schooling. As a result, States had created integration programs to address specific needs. While some believe that providing students with choice allowed for a flourishing of knowledge and access to a higher quality education; others felt that this same choice allowed students to be once again

⁸² Anonymous. History of *Brown v. Board of Education*. US Supreme Courts. <http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx> . 3.

⁸³ Harvey, W.B. & Harvey, A.M. A Bi-Generational Narrative on the *Brown Vs Board Decision*. 45.

⁸⁴ Heaney, Gerald W. and Uchitelle, Susan. *Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis*. 17.

⁸⁵ Betts, J.R., Rice, L.A., et al. 2006. Does school choice work? Effects on student Integration and achievement. *Public Policy Institute of California*. California, 1-221

segregated according to their economic or racial status.⁸⁶ San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) used a lottery system to operate their school choice program.⁸⁷ The study conducted by Betts and others looks for correlations between students who transfer and those who choose to stay in their neighborhood district. Some based the decision on ... “academic factors, such as class sizes, test scores, student demographics and teacher credentials...only moderately influence students’ decisions to apply⁸⁸” The results did show evidence that students who attend schools with satisfactory test scores show a lower level of transfer.⁸⁹

In the SDUSD, the choice programs did not show growth in math and reading achievement above scores for those who stay in local district⁹⁰. Some believed that transferring a students to a perceived higher level school will elicit positive gains in student achievement, however, there were so many other factors determining the success of individual transfer students. Parents had tough decisions regarding their child’s education and desire the best possible academic situation, which may not be transferring students to a perceived “quality school.”⁹¹ Evidence suggested that where parents send their children to school was not often based on just academics.⁹²

⁸⁶ Betts, J.R., Rice, L.A., et al. Does school choice work? Effects on student Integration and achievement. 5.

⁸⁷ Betts, J.R., Rice, L.A., et al. Does school choice work? Effects on student Integration and achievement. vii.

⁸⁸ Betts, J.R., Rice, L.A., et al. 2006. Does school choice work? Effects on student Integration and achievement. x.

⁸⁹ Betts, J.R., Rice, L.A., et al. 2006. Does school choice work? Effects on student Integration and achievement. x.

⁹⁰ Betts, J.R., Rice, L.A., et al. 2006. Does school choice work? Effects on student Integration and achievement. xviii.

⁹¹ Betts, J.R., Rice, L.A., et al. 2006. Does school choice work? Effects on student Integration and achievement. xviii.

⁹² Thomas, P. 2011. 21st Century Segregation: Inverting King's Dream Monday, 17 January 2011

There was much debate on the effectiveness of desegregation and transfer programs and whether the benefits are solely for students of color who attend suburban districts or if white students also gain insight, knowledge and skills. While there was not a clear cut answer, there are past publications that look to uncover this information. Dumas drew mention to racial marginalization and the fact that desegregation and voluntary inter-district programs have mainly served black students, even in Seattle. “Hollingworth insisted that the aim of school desegregation was not to improve the academic achievement of black, but to increase their access to educational resources and people who were different from them.”⁹³ Critical Race Theorist provided further insight into this perspective.

CRT provided insight into the idea of Interest Convergence and how it directly impacted desegregation, integration and voluntary transfer programs. “Whites may agree in the abstract that blacks are citizens and are entitled to constitutional protection against racial discrimination, but few are willing to recognize that racial segregation is much more than a series of quaint customs that can be remedied effectively without altering the status of whites. The extent of this unwillingness is illustrated by the controversy over affirmative action programs, particularly those where identifiable whites must step aside for blacks they deem less qualified or less deserving. Whites simply cannot envision the personal responsibility and the potential sacrifice inherent ... that true equality for blacks will require the surrender of racism-granted privileges for whites.”⁹⁴

⁹³ Dumas, M.J. 2014. *Losing an Arm*.709.

⁹⁴ Bell, D.A. 1980. Comment: *Brown vs. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma*. *Harvard Law Review Association*. 522-23.

While some were willing to acknowledge blacks deserve a quality education and access to equal resources, however, when making quality education available to people of color affects the privileges and opportunities of whites, the ideas were often thwarted. Bell explains "... on a positivistic level – how the world is – it is clear that racial equality is not deemed legitimate by large segments of the American people, at least to the extent it threatens to impair societal status of whites."⁹⁵ While the majoritarian views suggested that desegregation and voluntary student transfer benefit only people of color, CRT unveils the fact that the benefits of whites prevail in our society. During a time when the "...U.S. prestige and leadership have been damaged by the fact of U.S. segregation, it will come as a timely reassertion of the basic American principle that all men are created equal ... "and it also served to "... [reassure] American Blacks that the precepts of equality and freedom so heralded during World War II might yet be given meaning at home" since so many black Veterans were facing continued injustice. In fact, in 1949, African American Actor Paul Robeson expressed "It was unthinkable ... that American Negroes would go to war on behalf of those who have oppressed us for generations ... against a country [the Soviet Union] which in one generation has raised our people to the full human dignity of mankind."⁹⁶ The last benefit evident from eliminating segregation is the fact that "... industrialization in the South"⁹⁷ could be attained.

⁹⁵ Bell, D.A. Comment: Brown vs. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma. 523.

⁹⁶ Bell, D.A. Comment: Brown vs. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma. 524-25.

⁹⁷ Bell, D.A. Comment: Brown vs. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma. 525.

Desegregation, integration and voluntary integration programs were presumably implemented to benefit and enhance the quality of lives for people of color, while Interest Convergence continued to remind us that these benefits were secondary to those attained by Whites.

The Hidden Voices of Amy Stuart Well's *Stepping Over the Color Line*

The complexities surrounding school desegregation and student transfers were innumerable. The emotional, social, and political agendas and motives have been so great, it was difficult to give voice to those stakeholders in the front of desegregation battles. Well's book provides the perspectives of a limited number of students, administrators, policymakers and teachers participating in school desegregation.

Wells introduced students participating in the desegregation program and provided student background information, which allowed the student to be categorized. While it was important to understand there are patterns that exist in the standards and values of students of color, categorization of students and their decision to attend suburban schools remained problematic.

Wells & Crain created categories to describe the different perspective provided. People of color were labeled as separatist, beat down, or assimilationist. The separatist, so the authors claim, embraced the power of people of color and do not support integration, while the "beat down or nihilistic" allowed the constant injustices resulting from years of mistreatment and disappointment to silence aspirations and simply accept the inequality faced.⁹⁸ The assimilationist suffered the destructive thoughts of internalized

⁹⁸ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. *Stepping over the Color Line*. 17.

racism supporting the white way of life and tearing down people of color.⁹⁹ While categories presented served as an informational tool to understand the attitudes presented, the harm of feeding the narrative of black anger, subordination or internalized racism was real and evident throughout the text.

There was a richness of the black community that guided many of the decisions and sacrifices made missing from the text. The quality of a school system often determined the quality of a community. When discussing SLPS, Wells and Crain stated “ the resulting student transfer program has drained the city of a total of nearly 25,000 black students over the thirteen year course of the plan, it continues to deliver millions of state dollars to the bankrupt urban school system,”¹⁰⁰ such language suggested that the desegregation plan benefitted the black community and did not take into account the harm experienced by students of color, as well as the limitless benefits experienced by suburban districts and the detrimental impact experienced by SLPS.

The millions of dollars, however, pouring into the suburban districts did not serve to benefit the black students who are bringing it in. The texts even stated, “If it were not for the extra desegregation funding from the state and the opportunity for thousands of black students to transfer out of the once-overcrowded north-side schools, and into the suburbs, this urban school system would be in even worse shape.”¹⁰¹ There is little to no

⁹⁹ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. *Stepping over the Color Line*. 17.

¹⁰⁰ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. *Stepping over the Color Line*. 129.

¹⁰¹ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. *Stepping over the Color Line*. 128.

acknowledgement of SLPS losing accreditation in 2005-06 school year¹⁰² and the educational encouragement provided to the younger generation to attain more, stand taller, and fight harder for their beliefs. These messages and ideas internally affect students of color and were often at the root of every decision.

In an interview with a parent who did not participate in the transfer program, the parent discussed the fact that her son never had an interest in the transfer program and there were negative influences he could be involved with that he withdrew from. The authors used this information to display this parent as powerless, “That Troy’s mother is thankful that her son takes care of himself and makes his own decisions says something about her belief in her ability to help him make those decisions” and even adding that “ The powerlessness that pervades her life...despite Troy’s supposed ability and willingness to clean up after himself ... the main room was in disarray. Dirty dishes overflowed from the sink and covered the already cluttered coffee table.”¹⁰³ To draw attention to the organization and location of the home, without discussing the political, social, and emotional factors that impacted the area people of color live in as well as the employment opportunities available was an injustice in itself and served to contribute to the negative stereotypes regarding people of color. While there was much poverty, violence and drugs, there was also a kinship that ties students and people of color back to their community. People of color decided between remaining in a broken and impoverished community and attaining

¹⁰² Norwood, K.J. 2012. Minnie Liddell’s Forty Year Quest for Quality Public Education Remains A Dream Deferred. *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*.

¹⁰³ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. *Stepping over the Color Line*. 158-59.

economic and educational stability. This was a decision that White students or parents were not asked to make.

Suburban Districts and the Current Student Transfer Program

Two suburban districts had opted out of the desegregation program, but some had decided to keep the program in place. The support for desegregation was so strong in one district that students from the suburban community demanded to be heard and even organized a demonstration

to demand that their voices be heard. The VICC Board approved a five year extension in June of 2007, so new students continued to be enrolled through the current school year, 2013-2014.¹⁰⁴

Not all suburban districts continued to participate in the transfer program. Those currently involved were “ ... Affton, Bayless, Brentwood, Clayton, Hancock Place, Kirkwood, Mehlville, Parkway, Rockwood, Valley Park, Webster Groves and St. Louis Public Schools. Transfer students remain enrolled in the Lindbergh and Pattonville school districts, and students continue to be served by the St. Louis County Special School District.”¹⁰⁵ The data also stated “As of September 2013, 4,770 St. Louis students were attending county schools, and 121 county students were attending St. Louis City magnet schools.”¹⁰⁶ While the program continued to operate, enrollment continued to decrease “For

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous. Accessed 2012. History of Voluntary Transfer Student Program. Parkway Schools Higher Expectations Brighter Futures. Retrieved from

http://www.edline.net/pages/ParkwayC2/Programs_Depts/Programs_G/Pupil_Personnel_Education_Eq/Voluntar_Student_Transfer_Pro/History_of_Voluntary_Transfer

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. *Historical Background*. Para 7.

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. *Historical Background*. Para 9.

the 2013-2014 school year, the program has accepted 399 new city-to-county transfer students and 86 county-to-city transfers. A total of 3,821 new applications were received -- 3,674 for city-to-county transfers and 147 for county-to-city transfers.”¹⁰⁷

The State of St. Louis Public School District (SLPS) and VICC

The underlying goal of all past litigation, including voluntary transfer, desegregation and school choice had been to provide all students with a quality education. “As Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance and Promise demonstrates, to date, none of the previous reforms had resulted in satisfactory or improved public education within the city of St. Louis.” Students continued to struggle academically, “Where only four public schools met 2008 Missouri State Standards.¹⁰⁸” The Federal Government continued to propose initiative to improve education for all students. There is “\$4 billion¹⁰⁹” in funding available for the Race to the Top fund” to “provide intensive support to low-performing schools.¹¹⁰”

The evolution of the transfer program had resulted in many changes. The 2013-14 school year was the expiration of the VICC program, however, “Suburban districts do not want to experience a sudden dramatic reduction in enrollment that would result in considerable layoffs and under-utilization of facilities.¹¹¹ Charter school initiatives beginning in 2001 had also affected the enrollment of VICC and SLPS. “The first charter

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights. *Historical Background*. Para 10.

¹⁰⁸ Thaman, D. P. and etal. 2009. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise. Chicago, IL: National Association of Charter School Authorizers and IFF.

¹⁰⁹ Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.7.

¹¹⁰ Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.7.

¹¹¹ Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.8.

schools in St. Louis opened in 2000-01 and by 2007-08 there were 15 charter schools serving students in St. Louis...charter schools enrolled a total of nearly 7,700 students.¹¹²

During the 2007-08 school year, SLPS had 26,495 students¹¹³ and the VICC enrolled 7,555 students.¹¹⁴ In the 2007-08 school year, not one of the four high schools were in “Tier 1 schools.”¹¹⁵ Tier 1 School was “ a public school that met at least half of the Annual Proficiency Target in both Communication Arts and Math, meaning that in 2008 at least 25.5 percent of students were proficient or above in Communication Arts and at least 22.5 percent of students were proficient or above in math.”¹¹⁶ The table in Appendix C shows the VICC enrollment by zip code in the 2007-2008 school year. Student participation ranged from 4%-20%, while the SLPS de-accreditation took effect on June. 15th, 2007.¹¹⁷ The transfer program, even after being discontinued in 1999, student transfer participation levels, remained relatively intact.

In **Appendix C** of Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise the data was as follows. The table showed a large population of students were still enrolled in the desegregation program during the time of its phase out. According to VICC, “... As of the end of the 2012-13 school year, a total of 4,931 students had been served by the VICC transportation service, with an average ride time (one way) of 55 minutes. In

¹¹² Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.10.

¹¹³ Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.10.

¹¹⁴ Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.11.

¹¹⁵ Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.26.

¹¹⁶ Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.16.

¹¹⁷ Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.80.

total, VICC buses and cabs traveled about 6.6 million miles during the past school year¹¹⁸.”

The VICC oversaw the transfer program. The program outlined estimated expenses and enrollment for the 2013-14 school year. According to the June 13th, 2013 Board Meeting highlights:

These amounts assumed total student enrollment in September, 2013 of 4,935 students (down from the current year’s September enrollment of 5,130), and reflect the continued favorable impact of new school funding formula under SB287. Cost of education payments to county districts will increase from \$7,000 to \$7,200 (including Title I funds) per pupil, for the 2013-2014 year...Approved all final VICC transportation routes for 2012-2013. As of the end of the 2012-2013 school year, a total of 4,931 students had been served by the VICC transportation service, with an average ride time (one way) of 55 minutes. In total, VICC buses and cabs traveled about 6.6 million miles during the past school year.¹¹⁹

For current Enrollments see Table 1.¹²⁰

Current litigation continued to play a major part in the Student Transfer Program. Currently “five identical bills would revamp Missouri’s student transfer law ...” are

¹¹⁸ Anonymous. 2013. Board Meeting Highlights June 13rd, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.choicecorp.org/BH613.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Anonymous. Board Meeting Highlights June 13rd, 2013. 1.

¹²⁰ Anonymous. Board Meeting Highlights June 13rd, 2013. 1.

being discussed in the Senate. The bills address different issues ranging from class size, accreditation, to transportation cost of student transfer programs.¹²¹

¹²¹ Griffin, M. 2014. Five Bills Heard Jointly Seek to Restructure Missouri's Student Transfer Law. St. Louis Public Radio.

January 22nd 2014.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I discussed the methods used to conduct this qualitative study. The research design was outlined and explained, followed by an overview of participants from each time period, and an explanation of the interview protocol.

This study examined the practice of school desegregation through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the theoretical framework. Storytelling was used as the analytical tool to explicate research.

Research Design

This qualitative study documented and compared the insights and experiences of male and female students of color involved in integration and desegregation programs between 2000-2004 and 2013-2014. The first group of participants decided to attend predominately white suburban schools as part of a court ordered plan; the second group chose to change districts as a result of the loss of accreditation in their home district and opted to attend the same suburban school.

My research questions lend themselves to a qualitative phenomenological method because it will allow for an in-depth insights provided by the participants of their experience as students attending a district outside of their neighborhood which was presented using CRT's storytelling. The Phenomenological study exposed key experiences of adolescent students of color to uncover the experience of desegregation from those who choose to attend a non-community district.

The study focused on in-depth interviews with student participants in the Voluntary Inter-district Choice program from 2000-2004 and the transfer students due to unaccredited status of neighborhood schools from 2013-2014 attending the same suburban school during two different time frames. Utilizing a total sample of 12-16 students (6-8 from each group) will allow representation of both males and females during the two time periods as well as sampling from various school districts.

The sample consisted of males and females from both time periods and differing perspectives regarding their experience. The sample will include students with both positive and negative perspectives, which will be determined using a survey instrument before selecting participants for individual interview.

This qualitative study utilized CRT's storytelling, which focuses on the use of counter-narrative. While the work of Irv Seidman's (2013) in-depth interview protocols using audio recordings and transcripts, seemed fitting for collecting some data. In order to truly uncover and present the counter-story of the participants, the CRT lens was more appropriate. In fact, "CRT scholars use chronicles, storytelling and counter-narratives to undermine the claims of racial neutrality ... rather racism and racial discrimination were deep and enduring parts of the everyday existences of people of color."¹²² even more so "thus, chronicles, storytelling, and counter-narratives are used to make visible the racial biases that are deeply embedded in the unstated norms of American law and culture."¹²³ While phenomenology expressed the lived experiences, CRT exposes the overt and covert harm of racism.

¹²² Lynn, M. and Dixon, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. 19.

¹²³ Lynn, M. and Dixon, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. 19.

In fact, “It [was] because of the meaning and value input into whiteness that CRT became an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power ...¹²⁴” It was the focus on “whiteness” that provided a place in research and society for Critical Race Theory. In order to uncover the lived experiences of students, it was extremely important.

Edmund Husserl’s (1982) concept of phenomenology was used to capture the lived experiences of the participants from their perspective and provided a first person narrative of life as a transfer student.

Conscious experiences had unique features: “we *experience* them, we live through them or perform them. Other things in the world we may observe and engage. But we do not experience them, in the sense of living through or performing them. This experiential or first-person feature — that of being experienced — is an essential part of the nature or structure of conscious experience: as we say, ‘I see / think / desire / do ...¹²⁵’ ”

Diverse perspectives were sought from networking and snowball sampling. Snow ball sampling will be utilized by means of technology. By creating a face book account and contacting individuals through the school, who expressed interest in participating in the research.

Participants

¹²⁴ Landson-Billings, G. 1998. Just what is critical race theory and what’s it doing in a *nice* field like Education. 9.

¹²⁵ Smith, D.W. 2003. Phenomenology. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>

After soliciting students, utilizing social media and emails, participants will complete a demographic survey provided to the school district. This survey will be used to find the most diverse sample, including men and women of color who participated in the VICC program or the transfer due to unaccreditation, with differing perspectives and experiences, who attended suburban schools during high school.

Snowball sampling was used to gather about 20 participants, from the 20 participants further information was gathered to determine the final sample included in interviews and focus groups. Half were sought out from the St. Louis VICC program in 2000-2004 and the others from the transfer due to de-accredited status of neighborhood schools from 2013-2014, but all students selected for the interview attended the same suburban school. Utilizing a sample of 12-20 was the goal to allow for varied participants during the two time periods, attending the same suburban district. The sample consisted of males and females from both time periods and differing perspectives regarding their experience. The group from 2000-2004 offered more reflected appraisal of their choice. Although questions were open-ended, I probed opinions and experiences within home community, transfer community, microaggressions, academic challenge and social networks.

Researcher as participant

Since I was a transfer student to a suburban school during the 2000-2004 period of time, I still had connections with adults who were part of the desegregation efforts. The participants selected did not have any ties or connection to me. The sample included students with both positive and negative perspectives which was determined from a pre-survey before they are asked to participate in individual interviews.

Managing and Recording Data

After soliciting students, utilizing social media and emails, participants completed a demographic survey. Each of the participants were interviewed individually. The study focused on the following areas: Participation in the suburban district, extracurricular experience, parental & peer support, future implications and social & emotional experiences.

Participants selected to participate in interviews completed using the following procedure:

1. Each participant was asked to participate in at least one in-depth interview approximately 1 hour.
2. Participants were not paid or compensated for travel expenses, although the interviewer will arrange meeting at a convenient location.

Data Analysis Procedure

Interviewing was a tool that many qualitative researchers rely on to convey the story of the participant. There were many different types of interviewing. The participants were interviewed to gain a full perspective of their experience, using CRT's story telling. Irv Seidman's interviewing framework. Seidman's (1937) technique focused on unveiling the inner thoughts and uncovering experiences through In-depth Interviewing,¹²⁶ while CRT went a step further and stated counter-narratives were presented. Storytelling as a means to analysis served to paint a realistic picture of the

¹²⁶ Seidman, I. 1937. Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences. 3rd edition. Columbia University.

student's experiences. As the participant provided feelings and thoughts the experiences uncovered a story and the story exposed the benefits, harm, hurt, pain, and racial injustices. In fact, Siedman (1937) stated, "I interview because I am interested in other people's stories...stories are a way of knowing..."¹²⁷ The researcher will develop a "subjective understanding"¹²⁸ of the experiences of each participant and "At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience."¹²⁹ While the techniques presented by Siedman were useful, "CRT tenets and research [are] 'an analytic tool for understanding school inequality' ... CRT can be used to question the variables chosen ... to establish counter-narratives in qualitative research."¹³⁰

Rubin and Rubin (1995) focused on interviewing and see it as an invaluable tool in collecting qualitative data. Interviewees were thought to be *conversational partners*¹³¹ in order to gain an understanding of their world. Interviews were described as "a window of time, one incident at a time..."¹³² While Rubin & Rubin provided valuable insight, Siedman's works seems to support a more holistic meaning of interviews and CRT dived deeper to present the voices of those who were often silenced in research. By uncovering the story or the meaning of individuals, the lived

¹²⁷ Seidman, I. 1937. Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences. 7.

¹²⁸ Seidman, I. 1937. Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences. 9.

¹²⁹ Seidman, I. 1937. Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences. 9.

¹³⁰ Lynn, M. and Dixon, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. 21.

¹³¹ Rubin, H.J., Rubin, I. 2005. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. SAGE.

¹³² Rubin, H.J., Rubin, I. 2005. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. 11.

counter experience became real as presented through the eyes of the participant. Rubin & Rubin focused on three main goals: “First, successful qualitative interviewing required an understanding of culture...Second, interviewers are not neutral actors, but participants in an interviewing relationship... Third, the purpose of qualitative interviewing was to hear and understand what interviewees think and to give them public voice.”¹³³ CRT presented an approach to interviewing where stories are uncovered. The voice of students was often masked, hidden, or silenced, even if done so inadvertently, so this approach was most effective.

Interviews were audio and video recorded and transcribed for accuracy. The data was coded to identify any key themes or common concepts among participants. The data was then be analyzed for common themes or concepts. The goal was to provide a cohesive narrative of the lived experiences of the participants to unveil the hidden subjective experiences of transfer students.

A focus group was considered to add depth to the story. While the interviews provided an overview of the participant’s experience, the focus group was considered to allow us to go a step further. The opportunity for “Shared expression¹³⁴” is important, but there is also sometimes pressure to suppress thoughts, opinions or experiences to fit the group majority. The focus group was not utilized. Rubin & Rubin’s cultural interviews might also provide an example to listen intently, rather than interrogate.¹³⁵ While Rubin & Rubin provide insightful information, counter-stories of CRT are “ ... stories of those individuals and groups whose knowledge and

¹³³ Rubin, H.J., Rubin, I. 2005. Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data. 19.

¹³⁴ Rubin, H.J., Rubin, I. 2005. Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data. 27.

¹³⁵ Rubin, H.J., Rubin, I. 2005. Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data. 27.

histories have been marginalized, excluded, subjugated or forgotten in the telling of official narratives ... grounded in real-life experiences and empirical data and contextualized within a specific social setting.”¹³⁶ The interviews captured the experiences of students, while allowing students to speak their truth, rather than being influenced by the insights of others in a focus group.

Role of Researcher

As a participant in the VICC program, an autoethnographic approach was used to describe my secondary educational experience in a suburban district shared with some research participants. Autoethnography allowed the memories, experiences, struggles and triumphs to be conveyed without manufacturing. The reality of the experiences was best communicated through storytelling. Vone`che defined it (Autoethnography) as a text that was always written from the retrospective viewpoint of a person interpreting his or her own past; its form and content largely depend upon the author’s current preferences and opinions and part of its function was to preserve and remain faithful to the writer’s personality...the autobiographer will become the true subject of his or her own narrative... In the gathering and telling of “stories,” we are gathering “knowledge *from the past and not necessarily* knowledge *about the past...*”¹³⁷ I reflected on Rubin’s work that acknowledged the humanity in qualitative researchers. While it was unrealistic to expect neutrality, it was important to elicit multiple points of view for an accurate narrative. The lens that presented all information was CRT.

¹³⁶ Lynn, M. and Dixon, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. 252.

¹³⁷ Hamdan, A. 2012. Autoethnography as a genre of Qualitative Research: A journey Inside Out. University of Western Ontario Alumni. 586.

As a researcher, my responsibility and focus was on exposing a story missing or limited in the majoritarian views. CRT focused on different types of counter-storytelling and the one most fitting for my research was "... composite stories or narratives. With this type of storytelling, a variety of sources of data was used in order to create a group story regarding experiences with racism..."¹³⁸ As the researcher, reflecting on my personal experiences was fitting "... the group story [was] situated within historical, social, and political context and can draw from autobiographical and biographical events."¹³⁹ Utilizing storytelling served as a means to undue misconceptions or re-tell the story of students of color from a perspective that truly reflected the lived experiences of the students. While "Quantitative methods use majoritarian assumptions that allow for the hiding, manipulation, and exploitation of data, which in turn helps to de-racialize the experiences of people of color."¹⁴⁰ Race and racialized education served as the consequence of Federal and State mandated and programs that focused on the benefits for whites. Dumas stated "...we must critically reflect on the cultural political-economic significance of creating special educational programs to appeal to white students ...". In fact, the programs put in black schools were to benefit white students. "Thereby sending three ideologically loaded messages: first, that Black students -absent the presence of Whites- do not deserve ... specialized or advanced learning ...". In addition, "... it was morally necessary and acceptable to compensate White students for the burden of going to school with black people ... third, racially integrated education need not mean that White students actually interacted with Black students as intellectual peers."¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Lynn, M. and Dixson, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. 253.

¹³⁹ Lynn, M. and Dixson, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. 253.

¹⁴⁰ Lynn, M. and Dixson, A.D. ed. *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. 253.

¹⁴¹ Dumas, M.J. 2011. A Cultural Political Economy of School Desegregation in Seattle. Teachers

Interview Protocol

Each interview was conducted utilizing oral histories from the State Historical Society at UMSL. This information was public information accessed at the University of Missouri St. Louis and will be used to answer all interview questions.

After interview was completed using historical data, the information will be stored in locked file on personal laptop, which can only be accessed with the encrypted password. The laptop was kept in a locked file cabinet when not being utilized to gather information.

Verification/Limitations

There were limitations built into the use of Autoethnography and Storytelling as a research tool. The ability to rely on memory and human perception, rather than using traditional data analysis procedures, such as formulas, charts, and statistics can be seen as problematic. While some argue regarding the legitimacy of Autoethnography as an academic writing form,¹⁴² it seemed to be the most appropriate to convey life experiences.

College Record. Vol. 113, Issue 4, 703-734.

¹⁴² Ellis, C., Bochner, A. P. 2000. Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity. Handbook on Qualitative Research, 2nd ed. Denzin and Lincoln, ed. Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications. September 25, 2013 date retrieved November 15th, 2013
<http://normandyalternative.mo.nch.schoolinsites.com/?PageName=LatestNews&SectionDistrictNews&ItemID=57065&ISrc=District&Itype=News&IFrom=D&SID=395>

Chapter 4 Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of high school students of color participating in desegregation programs from 2000-2004 compared to the perceptions of high school students from Normandy and Riverview Gardens High school who have opted to attend the same suburban districts due to the unaccredited status of their neighborhood district during the 2013-2014 school year. This chapter provides the findings of six in-depth interviews; four for the desegregation program and two from the transfer due to unaccreditation. The targeted number of interviews was twelve, however, only six were met due to saturation of information provided during participant interviews.

The chapter details findings were provided “...by way of ‘thick description’...”¹⁴³ The details provided will allow for the reader to make his or her own connections and draw conclusions from the information provided from the interviews. The approach for data analysis required the researcher to “read and reread the interviews to note core ideas and concepts... code material to group similar ideas...” and to “figure out how the themes relate to each other.”¹⁴⁴

The analytic approach utilized for the analysis was Phenomenological research which “[made] use of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of an ‘essence’ description.”¹⁴⁵ The participants interviewed for this study attended the same suburban high school, however, there was a ten year time difference,

¹⁴³ Bloomberg-Dale, L. *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation: A Roadmap from Beginning to End*. 111.

¹⁴⁴ Rubin, H.J., Rubin, I. 2005. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. 229.

¹⁴⁵ Bloomberg-Dale, L. *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation: A Roadmap from Beginning to End*. 98.

as well as, contrasting circumstances leading to the decision to participate in student transfer.

In this chapter, a review of the research questions was provided, along with a summary of the findings from the six interviews, followed by common themes emerging from the data. The research questions: 1). How did the perspectives of students participating in the voluntary desegregation program during 2000-2004 relate to those of students participating in 2013-2014 due to the loss of local districts' accreditation were analyzed and the perspectives of current and past students are provided. 2). What were the social, emotional, and academic experiences of students who chose to participate in desegregation in 2000-2004 and those participating during the recent transfer from failing schools?

While all participants specifically highlighted the academic and educational opportunities available in the suburban school district, all seemed aware that some students were not able to understand and navigate a successful path to take advantage of such opportunities. Participants 1-4 were in the Intercity Program, called VICC. Participants 5 & 6 were participants in the Student Transfer Program. The idea that encompassed term "opportunity hoarding" was mentioned during the interviews. Opportunity hoarding refers to Charles Tilly's idea that "members of a categorically bounded network acquired access to a resource that was valuable, renewable, subject to monopoly, supportive of network activities, & enhanced by the network's modus operandi, network members regularly hoarded their access to the resource, creating

beliefs & practices that sustain their control.”¹⁴⁶ In White space, students of color were under scrutiny and those who were unable to assimilate were not deemed worthy of certain privileges held by those in power. Those who were able to assimilate were presented with a number of different opportunities. Participant 3 stated,

I was notified every step of the way...when to take the ACT...ummm, how to study for the ACT, opportunities to study for the ACT, when to apply for scholarships, and the fact that there were various scholarships. There were various opportunities to actually go on college tours and visit the schools. One of the school I actually visited, I attended and also had plenty of, umm, scholarships, as well, so it pretty much was almost a full ride, I only had to pay for a semester my second year, well, my third and fourth year. Being able to go to that school actually prepared me for my career, so I think it all goes hand in hand.

Participant 3 benefited from the opportunities associated with acceptance, rather than attendance, at the suburban high school, by being afforded with resources and support to attend college in an affordable manner. The participant made a direct correlation between her current career and the opportunities provided in high school. While this participant was fortunate enough to reap certain benefits from her attendance, there was little acknowledgment of those who were left uninformed, unprepared and unsupported during their transition to the suburban school. The research further explains the restrictions associated with opportunity hoarding.

¹⁴⁶ Tilly, C. 1998. *How to Hoard Opportunities*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. 91.

Douglas Massey further explained that opportunity hoarding “occurs when one social group restricts access to a scarce resource, either through outright denial or by exercising monopoly control that requires out-group members to pay rent in return for access. Either way, opportunity hoarding is enabled through a *socially defined process of exclusion*.”¹⁴⁷ Many of the participants interviewed were each accepted in White space and were provided specific privileges due to their status. However, the type of resources offered differed according to the skills deemed worthy by the dominant culture.

Participant 2 who was very actively involved in sports and mentioned his desire to obtain additional opportunities. This participant measured quality through the opportunities associated with the athletic programs. Stating, “I felt like the athletic programs that were out in Kirkwood, gave me a better opportunity to compete for scholarships in some of the better ranked schools in the Country. Primarily, I would say that would be one of the main reasons I really wanted to say in Kirkwood, aside from the educational piece.” This participant specifically stated the contrast between the opportunities afforded to athletes in neighborhood schools versus those available in the neighborhood districts.

Five out of six of the participants made mention to opportunities provided through attendance in White space, however, these same participants recognized that the treatment of other students of color differed. Rather than digging deeper to address the evident divisions of resources, internalized racism allowed the participants to buy into the rhetoric that these other participants chose not to take advantage of the opportunities provided. This mindset allowed the assimilated desegregation or transfer participant to blame other students for their lack of success in White space.

¹⁴⁷ Massey, D. 2008. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. Russell Sage Foundation. 6.

Findings 1

One of the overwhelming responses from participants involved opportunities resulting from attendance in the suburban district.

1. The majority of participants viewed attending the suburban district as a chance for improved educational opportunities.

While it was no secret that all parents desired an academic setting where his or her child could be safe and productive, many believed that White space would be the most fitting option. Participant 1 directly stated, “I think that...so I was in the Kirkwood School District...so I think that a lot of those teachers developed my, ummm, love for learning. They molded me to who I am today.” While all eight participants directly stated the benefits of the educational and academic environment, most also expressed feelings of racism, division, and internal conflict.

The perceptions of students revealed the belief that attendance in the suburban district was a privilege that should be taken with great care. This sense of emotional pressure and personal responsibility weighed on students. Participant 2 stated, “I always felt like I was given every opportunity to be successful. Foreign language classes were offered in middle school, ummm, just the culture itself was something I would say was one of the biggest positives...” The responses of all participants indicated the belief that in order to be successful academically and in the future, there must be some realization that the suburban school environment created opportunities for advancement. The opportunities seemed to outweigh the emotional strain and pressure placed upon the students.

Six out of six (100%) of the students interviewed described their participation in a desegregation or transfer program as an opportunity. Not only do students value this experience, but also parents also shared similar sentiments. Two of six (33%) of the participants were raised in a single-parent home where the mother is the head of the household and solely made the decision for the student to participate in the Desegregation or Transfer program. Nevertheless, even in two parent homes, six out of six (100%) of participants reported parents who displayed a positive attitude toward the suburban district. Participant 1 even stated that “I think she really appreciated the education and the support we got from the school,” when discussing her mother’s views of the Desegregation Program.

All participants referenced the perception that the quality of education is higher than that available in the home district. The majority of participants during the 2000-2004 genre even expressed they felt welcomed into the district, contrasting to some of struggles experienced by the transfer students. Both transfer participants expressed ideas expressed in the media that demonstrated negative views toward allowing the students to transfer due to unaccreditation. Participant 6 stated an article in the school newspaper, which expressed that transfer students were not welcome due to concern that test scores would be lowered in the suburban district. Participant 5 mentioned overhearing students refer to Black students according to the neighborhood he or she resided in. Both participants expressed specific incidents where they felt targeted, however, the events were immediately rationalized. Participant 6 stated, “The kids who live in the Kirkwood... In like the *Kirkwood Fire*, they said that Riverview kids are going to ruin their test scores, but (pause) I don’t think I’m a part of that.” The participant no longer

wants to be grouped with the students from the home district out of fear for acceptance and exposure to opportunities.

Participant 3 eagerly provided information on her experience as a Desegregation student:

Ummm, reflecting back on it in my adult years, the experience was an amazing opportunity. I got a great education that prepared me, ummm, exceptionally well for college. I graduated and went on to get my Masters. I do attribute that to the training and education received at Kirkwood. And also, it's been an invaluable experience just to be in my current career, as well. Ummm, I enjoyed the staff, the teachers, the administrators. Everybody was always very welcoming and opening, no matter what I was going through...and...it was just an enjoyable experience that if I had to go back, I would totally do it again. I wouldn't do anything differently.

Since the purpose of the data was to “organize the interviews to present a narrative that explained what happened or to provide a description of norms and values that underlined cultural behavior,”¹⁴⁸ in order to find the themes in the perspectives of students, deeper reflection and attention to public rhetoric was needed.

Both participants and parents believed that the opportunity to transfer would provide greater educational advancement, but few were aware of the emotional and mental harm that can occur. The importance of “...using the participants' own words, the

¹⁴⁸ Rubin, H.J., Rubin, I. 2005. Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data. 229.

researcher aims to build the reader's confidence that the reality of the participants and the situation studied is accurately represented."¹⁴⁹

The words and sentiments of the participants as they mentioned the views of their parents regarding quality further demonstrated how public rhetoric can impact personal perspective. Douglas Massey speaks to the social psychology of racism and categorization.

In a very real way, stratification begins psychologically with the creation of cognitive boundaries that allocate people to social categories. Before categorical inequality can be implemented socially, categories must be created cognitively to classify people conceptually based on some set of achieved and ascribed characteristics."¹⁵⁰

People of color and the resources, products, and institutions located in black space had been classified subconsciously as subpar. These ideas were perpetuated in the media, as well as in various text. Wells and Crain state, "... We are not convinced that the St. Louis Public Schools [would] ever offer African-American students the same educational opportunities that students receive in the suburbs."¹⁵¹ These same perspectives transferred to personal choice but also larger mediums such as legislation, which impacted funding and resources. In turn, those in power often did not see value in investing in spaces occupied by people of color; Furthermore, people of color adopted the same modes of thinking. "The roots of social stratification thus lie ultimately in the cognitive construction of boundaries to make social distinctions, a task that comes naturally to human beings, who are mentally hardwired to engage in categorical;" In turn, "People

¹⁴⁹ Bloomberg-Dale, L., M. Volpe. *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation: A Roadmap from Beginning to End*. 1

¹⁵⁰ Massey, D. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. 8

¹⁵¹ Wells, A. Crain, S. *Stepping Over the Color Line*. 337.

use schemas to evaluate themselves and the social roles, social groups, social events, and individuals they encounter, a process known as social cognition.” While social construction is not permanent, the categories into which they divide up the world may change over time and evolve with experience, but among mature human beings they always exist and people always fall back on them when they interpret objects, events, people, and situations.”¹⁵² Parents believed students were receiving a superior education due to the social constructs that affect public rhetoric. While the physical structure, resources and funding creates an admirable picture, the experiences of students of color provide a realistic account of the true experiences of student transfers.

Findings 2

The perspectives of the four VICC students and two Student Transfer Program participants reveal the belief that cultural diversity is an asset to the suburban district.

1. Students of color believe they enhance the school diversity and culture.

The rich culture, speech, and experiences of students of color enhances the overall wealth of knowledge available in the suburban environment. Black students are almost always asked to sacrifice in order to fit into the White experience, while Whites are not asked to do the same.

Some blacks have been integrated into the white experience: they attend predominantly white institutions, are taught by mainly white faculty, attempt to join school organizations primarily run by their white classmates, and study books written by whites that exclude the fuller stories of the experiences of racial minorities in America. Blacks have learned the “language” of the dominant white culture, have bonded with whites over issues important to the white community, and have learned to

¹⁵² Massey, D. *Categorically Unequal: The American Stratification System*. 9

remain silent while white teachers and assimilated nonwhite teachers ignore racial implications in the curriculum and in their classrooms.¹⁵³

When Whites were placed in an environment where social & racial diversity was lacking it presented many challenges to their development as citizens and human beings. Kupenda argued “whites stand to benefit greatly from diversity in the following ways: diversity eliminates limiting fallacies that harm white students, it replaces limiting points with progressive options, and it teaches patriotism.¹⁵⁴ Diversity presents both White and Black students with the opportunity to see an accurate depiction of the corresponding culture’s lifestyle. When diversity lacks in education, students are not receiving the type of education that allows them to function as productive citizens.

By believing the disparaging images about blacks and other minorities that the media bombarded her with, this student’s education was deficient—she was harmed by her lack of cultural understanding. Her lack of diverse educational experiences that might have countered these misconceptions resulted in a law student who lacked the necessary perspective and sensitivity to function as an attorney in an increasingly diverse America... Not only are whites injured by the fallacies from the media that portray minorities and the poor in a negative light, whites are also injured by the overwhelmingly positive representation of whites in the media.¹⁵⁵

Unless these ideals are challenged, Whites may continue to function believing that he or she, in fact, entitled to unearned privileges. “More diversity would give white students opportunities to challenge the fallacy of white superiority and confront their own expectations of white unearned privilege. As a result, they would learn to work harder

¹⁵³ Kupenda, A.M. 2008. *Simply Put: How Diversity Benefits Whites and How Whites Can Simply Benefit Diversity*. Seattle Journal for Social Justice, Volume 6, Issue 2. 650.

¹⁵⁴ Kupenda, A.M. 2008. *Simply Put: How Diversity Benefits Whites and How Whites Can Simply Benefit Diversity*. 652.

¹⁵⁵ Kupenda, A.M. 2008. *Simply Put: How Diversity Benefits Whites and How Whites Can Simply Benefit Diversity*. 653.

and would not underestimate the academic abilities, competitiveness, and fairness of nonwhites.”¹⁵⁶

The lack of exposure to different cultures allows for stereotypical attitudes and ideals to flourish and for racism to breed. It could result in the majority group to resist the authority and question the knowledge of people of color.

Resisting blacks as authority figures is based on a fallacy of incompetence, a fallacy of nondesirability. Many things could be at the root of the fallacy—fear, lack of familiarity, even hatred. Diversity, though, as it did with this young woman, helps eliminate such fallacies and can help whites to obtain support in their personal and educational issues, as it may be a nonwhite that is best situated to help them. In order to develop well-rounded citizens, all students to be exposed to diversity and to feel valued.¹⁵⁷

Students of color need to feel accepted and needed while interacting in White space. Participant 6 discusses this as she reflects on her experiences as a stepper and member of the talent show.

I mean, there are some things I feel like the black people make Kirkwood unique. There’s like the really shy side of Kirkwood, then there’s like the live side. WE had a step team and all the dancers were cool and it was like a lot of black people over it...

Providing students with an opportunity to express their culture and creative abilities, not only enhances the overall school diversity, but establishes an environment conducive for creativity. Students of color provide unique perspectives through dance,

¹⁵⁶ Kupenda, A.M. 2008. *Simply Put: How Diversity Benefits Whites and How Whites Can Simply Benefit Diversity*. 657.

¹⁵⁷ Kupenda, A.M. 2008. *Simply Put: How Diversity Benefits Whites and How Whites Can Simply Benefit Diversity*. 656.

expression, and creativity that White students, might not otherwise be exposed to. Rather than simply outwardly accepting students of color, “True integration is not just about blacks having the opportunity, for example, to learn corporate law at a white institution. It also should include opportunities for white students to have exposure to cultures that were different from their own.”¹⁵⁸ In order for students to experience healthy integration, the goal cannot be assimilation. The goal must be to acculturate students. White students were deprived of many social experiences, when there is little to no interaction with students of color.

While there was often a focus on the benefits of desegregation programs for students of color, white students benefit as well. For example, white students who attend racially diverse schools demonstrate more racial tolerance than their peers in segregated white environments. It is also the case that school desegregation programs have little or no negative effect on white students’ test scores, particularly for those schools that are predominately white. It is unfortunate, however, that white students are the least likely group of students to attend racially diverse schools, making them the most segregated of all racial groups.¹⁵⁹

While this information was not surprising, it served to reiterate the importance of not only interacting with diverse groups of people, but also the importance of a shared experience. The majority group should be unaccustomed to students of color changing every aspect of his or her speech, behavior and beliefs.

The academic, social and psychological benefits of integrated schools are an asset not only to students and the communities they live in, but to the progress of this nation as well. Integrated schools produce a more engaged citizenry and a stronger workforce, and provide students important skills for understanding diverse communities, which is a growing asset in today’s multicultural and interdependent global economy. Finally,

¹⁵⁸ Kupenda, A.M. 2008. *Simply Put: How Diversity Benefits Whites and How Whites Can Simply Benefit Diversity*. 669.

¹⁵⁹ Tefera, A, Frankenberg, E, etal. 2011. *Integrating Suburban Schools: How to Benefit from Diversity and Avoid Segregation*. 4-5.

integrated schools increase civic engagement and help to prepare students to serve our growing democracy.¹⁶⁰

Both Black and White students should be taught the importance of shifting practices according to the environment. A true quality education would prepare students to excel academically but should also encourage attitudes and practices that enhance the quality of our society.

Findings 3

While all six participants value the opportunity to attend the suburban district, the divisions between the Black residents, students of color from the original VICC program, and the Black Students from the Student Transfer Program are apparent.

1. All participants sensed divisions between transfer students, students attending the neighborhood school, and students who are residents at the suburban school.

Participant 2 sheds light on the classification of labeling of students of color while occupying White space. He states, “. And then, you at times deal with the ummm, I guess being classified as a deseg student. The students there know that you don’t live in Kirkwood. They know you that you don’t live in that particular school district and you get grouped as a whole with some of the people who don’t take advantage of their opportunities.” Five out of six of the participants specifically mention a separation between themselves and other students of color. This separation results from one of the following: other students or color demonstrating negative behavior while attending the suburban district, students of color participating in a different transfer program, or students of color who reside in the suburban district who are often not seen as “real black

¹⁶⁰ Tefera, A, Frankenberg, E, etal. 2011. *Integrating Suburban Schools: How to Benefit from Diversity and Avoid Segregation*. 5.

people,” as explained by Participant 2 & 6. Participant 6 mentions, initially, being shocked by the speech and mannerisms of black students who reside in the suburban community. She explains, “Well, there are some black people who act like some of the white people. But it doesn’t really matter. (Pause) When I first got here, it kind of mattered because I was used to a certain type of standard or whatever, but now it doesn’t matter because people are different.” The students, though unspoken, are asked to select side: *Who am I in this White space?* The six participants interviewed seem to have assimilated into the accepted norms in this White space in order to access the available opportunities. Five out of six of the participants referenced other Black students, unable to assimilate as outsiders in some way. The participants create a clear distinction between themselves and those students. Participant 6 even mentions her immediate struggle to learn and adapt to the new culture; “...it was like a big transition ...like last year, I got in trouble a lot because it like a different atmosphere. I didn’t know how to like... go on about my day because it was like a different environment, but I have learned a lot and like, I wouldn’t be like as smart as I was, well, like, as smart as I am now if I still went to Riverview. She even mentions that once she learned the acceptable norms, she no longer is reprimanded. Behaving as a student would at her neighborhood district, is unacceptable in the suburban district. This becomes evident when a past transfer student is referenced. Participant 6 explains, “There was a guy named _____, he got kicked out like the first month. He ummm, he had a negative attitude. Anytime anybody said anything to him, he was like going off and yelling and he was doing the same stuff he did at Riverview, which was unacceptable to Kirkwood.”

Participant 4 provided descriptive information regarding the kinship established between her and a group of African American transfer students. As the events are recounted, her eyes twinkled...she smiled...she paused and relived the bonds established.

I had my close knit group of friends who I probably ate lunch with every day. We were pretty much in a lot of the same classes... we were cheerleaders together, same community service organizations. We may have even worked together outside of school...umm, I think for the most part, if we had to be labeled anything, we were probably a group of nerds or book worms...We were pretty focused, that's what I like to say to be honest. But I engaged with different groups as well...

My friends thought pretty highly of me, I think, for the most part. We all supported each other and encouraged each other... I don't quite know what more descriptive word to use there, but we all support each other, appreciated each other and loved each other, so...

As participant 4 continued to discuss her support system, she even mentioned a teacher who was so impressed by her group of friends that she began working with them outside of class, though none ever had her as a teacher. The kinship and pure determination demonstrated by these young women motivated others to join their support system. The suburban district, not only developed a deep appreciation for the dedication of students, but undoubtedly needed the athletic skills of Black students from the city.

After entering the transfer program, participants seemed to experience lasting changes that divided or separated them from the kinship of their home community. A majority of the participants, 5 out of 6 mention the disassociation with neighborhood

youth and participant six specifically states “Ummm, well, I don’t listen to the same music they (students from her home neighborhood) listen to. I feel like I’m smarter... and when they use words...I’m always, like correcting someone’s grammar.” Internalized racism is evident in an overwhelming number of responses. The most common being the mention of opportunities being afforded to “Everyone,” but some students unwilling to take advantage. Even with ten years separating the two groups of transfer students, those who successfully maneuver this new atmosphere share many common ideals. Participant 1 recounts the inner turmoil experience by Black students as they struggle to withhold pieces of their identity.

I guess my personal opinion would be that ... (cough) in suburbia, ummm, as an African American person you get classified in two different groups. You are either an athlete or they’ve got or you are look at as, society would say hip hop or thug, per say. The way that you dressed is different from what they are accustomed to so you’re classified differently. They look at you as if, you, I guess at a certain point, are beneath them. You’re consistently dealing with that battle of ummm (pause). If you pay attention in school and you get good grades, your own culture says you’re a sellout for trying to better yourself. If you, fall into the norm of your own culture and you wear baggy clothes and you don’t necessarily do well in school, you might be cool, but you’re not advancing in life. So it’s a catch 22 per say. Damned if you do, damned if you don’t.

The VICC and Student Transfer program presents students of color with many choices, where the path to be chosen is unclear. Not only, were they constantly dealing

with being reminded they are all at times, unwelcomed guests, but also that their blackness might also be in question due to those choices. Students were often unprepared for the culture shock that ensued.

The Desegregation participants entering during elementary years learned the culture of the suburban schools through their experiences, however, all participants believe that an orientation program would be helpful for students entering the district during the later years. Participants 5 & 6, student transfers due to the unaccreditation of their neighboring school district, mentioned the culture shock experienced as they entered the suburban district during their high school years.

The Participant 2, a male participant from the Desegregation program mentioned the division that occurred once transferred to suburban district. The association with neighborhood youth discontinued and the association shifted to those who on the athletic teams. As a student, the academic benefits took a backseat to athletics. Participant 2 also mentions how “opportunity hoarding” was also evident on athletic teams. The talent of many youth went unnoticed by the coaching staff, the opportunity was hoarded and provided to students who the White coaches saw as more deserving. These decisions may have inhibited the ability for certain students of color to be prepared to participate in Division I programs, rather, after high school, many took the Junior College option as a last resort.

While the participants saw evidence of inequality, the positive benefits seemed to outweigh the momentary issues. Participant 6 provides information regarding the school newspaper stating that Riverview students will decrease test scores, but she immediately disassociates herself with the comment, by stating “I don’t think I’m a part of that.”

Transfer students often learn to be so grateful for the opportunity to be welcomed into the culture, they become numb to the emotional harm experienced.

Moreover, despite the fact that certain opportunities were not available to all students of color, an overwhelming number of participants still believe they are welcomed and supported in the suburban district. Participant 2 states, “I’ve come back to, umm, Kirkwood to actually work and give back to the community because I actually know that sense of pride from being in that particular community. I felt that although I was visiting, I still felt a part of it...” Many of the students believe they have a joint community. The community they resided in and the school community attended. When it comes to future opportunities and decisions, three out of the six participants specifically mention rejoining the suburban community to raise their children, work or coach. None of the six participants mention rejoining their home community.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the data reveals common themes and trends. The themes emerged from the participant responses regarding support, academics, and overall experiences of students of color attending the same suburban school one group of students participating in desegregation and other group of students transferred due to the unaccreditation of the neighborhood school district. The perspectives of students participating in the Desegregation program from an early age to those student transfers who began attending the suburban district as high school students due to the unaccreditation of the neighborhood district, overlap in a number of ways; from perspectives regarding the home and school community to the academic opportunities presented and even the microaggressions and internalized racism experienced.

The participants provided findings that were organized according to overarching themes. The primary findings of this study is that all participants interviewed see their attendance in the suburban district as an opportunity to enhance future endeavors, while many are unable to see the emotional and psychological toll associated with this experience.

The second finding was that the majority of participants believe that students of color enhance the suburban district. While this was not a value that seemed to be reinforced by the dominant culture, the participants were able to reflect on benefits directly based on the attendance of Desegregation and Transfer students.

The third finding was that there are divisions between students of color from the city, black suburban student residents, and white students. The divisions were clearly defined by all groups, however, students were expected to assimilate to the values of the dominant culture in order to avoid ostracism. Many did so without refute.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Suggestions for Future Research

Summary

The perspectives of students of color participating in desegregation and transfer programs were often hidden, non-existent, and unsought out. These perspectives revealed accounts of academic success, internal division, and assimilation into a “new world,” of opportunities. After experiencing life in a suburban school system many were forced to choose between educational advancement and the kinship of a community that no longer recognized them. In preparation for this study, questions were developed to discuss the following topics: home community, transfer community, microaggressions, academic challenges and social networks. The participant responses demonstrated experiences with each of the topics.

Home Community

Both the VICC and transfer students demonstrate distance in the home community. Though the social class of the VICC and transfer students differ, an

overwhelming number discuss residing in a predominately African American neighborhood while attending the suburban district. Each participant expresses a division from the home community after attendance or the non-existence of any interaction with neighbors. As a student I can remember feeling disconnected and even reference this in the earlier Autoethnography. The transfer student was now aware of a new normal, which I relate to the double consciousness introduced by Dubois.

I missed them...my neighborhood and church friends. I remember when we played together and sang the latest songs on the radio. We walked to the corner store and ate Chico Sticks as we talked about our light up LA Gears. I yearned to be with them again, but I no longer belonged. I was no longer one of them, but I also was no longer the simple child from south city. I was now a product of two worlds. For the first time in my life I understood Dubois' double-consciousness.

Dubois spoke of "Double consciousness...[as an] individual sensation of feeling as though your identity is divided into several parts, making it difficult or impossible to have one unified identity... He asserted that since American blacks have lived in a society that has historically repressed and devalued them that it has become difficult for them to unify their black identity with their American identity..."¹⁶¹ As a transfer student, the desire to fit in and understand the new environment results in some many unanswered questions, as well as the desire to be accepted. As a participant, merging and understanding the sometimes impoverished and limited experiences in your home

¹⁶¹ Edles, L.D., AppelRouth, S. 2009. *Sociological Theory in the Classical Era: Text and Readings*. Pine Forge Press, an Imprint of SAGE Publications. 2nd ed. 351-52.

community and the economically privileged suburban community presents a dilemma. It can seem impossible to embrace the experiences of both. “Double consciousness forces blacks to not only view themselves from their own unique perspective, but to also view themselves as they might be perceived by the outside White world.”¹⁶² The majority of the participants mention a division between their home and school community. While they are unable to name and identify the theories behind their experiences, Participant 6 specifically describes the division. She describes her assimilation process, “It, like, changed me a lot. I used to like listen to a certain type of music, but I like listen to, you know pop and stuff like that now, that I wouldn’t have thought of listening to...like a whole different experience. Here, you can be more of yourself than back there.” She even begins to adopt the dominant culture as her own and the kinship with her home community fades. Participant 6 adds, “...But I’m not at home all the time. Like, I don’t really go outside anymore, you know. Inside, like when I come home and then like, I’m out here a lot.” The school community has replaced the home community. Students do not simply attend school. The activities, language, speech and experiences are now a part of the student’s lived experiences. The participants take on an extended self or sometimes even replace and remove elements of their old personality. The participant believes this is the acceptable or more specifically the way to establish success in our current society. By adopting the speech, activities, style and mannerisms of our White counterparts it might in some way allow for social and economic mobility and it devalues the experiences learned and embedded in the Black community. “According to Du Bois the prejudices of white people elicit “self-questioning, self-disparagement,

¹⁶² Edles, L.D., AppelRouth, S. 2009. *Sociological Theory in the Classical Era: Text and Readings*. 351-52

and lowering of ideals” among black people. The internalization of anti-black sentiment from the outside world thus begins to shape the black American experience.”¹⁶³ The student’s desire to have the lifestyle and privileges of their White counterparts causes them to assimilate to their new culture and even to believe that the White way of living is superior to that of Blacks.

The justification for this was articulated by four of the six participants when discussing the contrasting ideals, speech, and academic levels. VICC and transfer students residing in Black space seem to be aware of the differences that exist between them and their home community, however, they were unable to navigate to find commonalities because of their contrasting daily lives and the messages presented in the media that further reinforce internalized racism. After attending the suburban district, students of color mentioned the differing speech as one of the main areas that sets them apart from peers. The VICC and transfer students also mentioned being exposed to academic and social opportunities that seemed unavailable in black space.

All participants interviewed expressed the feeling that attending the suburban district had in many ways prepared them to be successful in the “real world.” This world of diversity, technology, security and academia was contrasted with their home community.

Internalized racism sets in as the students saw numerous resources, a safe and caring learning environment, extra-curricular activities, and economic prosperity. Internalized racism tells the participants those who assimilate have a desire to access opportunities, that those who refuse to do so, are unable to access. This was something I

¹⁶³ Edles, L.D., AppelRouth, S. 2009. *Sociological Theory in the Classical Era: Text and Readings*. Pine Forge Press, an Imprint of SAGE Publications. 2nd ed. 354.

experienced in my own home. As my older sister became immersed in the life of Whiteness, she began to associate the negative experiences and challenges faced in our home community, with our family's inability to take advantage of the opportunities we were given. The earlier description stated:

She loved her assimilation. It was as if she had taken on the persona of those in this world, and that she had actually forgotten or chose to forget who she really was. She had lost sight of our obligation to our community and her judgment became clouded by her internalized racism. My sister wanted to live life as if skin color did not matter. She focused on assimilating in every way possible.

Participant 6 shared a similar philosophy as she divided herself from her home community. She even described this experience as “feeling more like [herself].” This division also affects the relationship with the authority figure in the household.

As a Desegregation participant, I often hid the emotional confusion from my parents. Each participant expressed in one form or another that parents had high expectations and this attendance was treated as an opportunity. It became much easier to shield and to protect parents from any struggles experienced not directly associated with academics. The stares, ostracism in upper level classes, and stereotypical remarks were issues often kept from those in the home community. There was an underlying feeling of both responsibility and fear. Responsibility to assimilate and to be accepted into this new environment that seemed to provide limitless opportunities. Fear resulting from parents overreacting or attempting to protect us from the inevitable microaggressions to be faced.

The participants, myself included, were often enamored by the economic freedom and would be willing to sacrifice any part of themselves for these privileges. Many adopt the idea that these privileges were available to anyone who would like to access them, though, this is not the case.

Conclusion 1: Transfer/Suburban Community

As students assimilate to the suburban community, many experience feelings of acceptance, as well as ostracism. The students were very aware that they are not residents of the community, but through assimilation, were in many cases accepted as insiders. “In an unequal society with deep cultural or ethnic cleavages, in which one social group is privileged and others are not, members of disadvantaged groups face an incentive to embrace the dominant culture and assimilate into the most advantaged social group.”¹⁶⁴ Transfer students were exposed to privileges, resources, and tools in the suburban setting that were simply not available in the home district. This in itself provided motivation for assimilation.

All participants interviewed were able to find a niche by joining athletic teams, clubs, or other extra-curricular activities. Participant 2, 3 & 4 were cheerleaders who used their skills to encourage school spirit. While they seemed to be insiders, this experience was still filled with constant pressure to adapt, morph and transform to get the values evident in White Space. As cheerleaders, the Participants were expected to speak in a specific dialect to be respected by the school and community members in the suburban district. In addition, participants would only be allowed to incorporate certain pieces of their culture. The squad would complete an annual “Stomp,” which was choreographed

¹⁶⁴ Eguia, J. 2011. A Theory of Discrimination & Assimilation. New York University.

by the students of color. The majority of other routines would reflect the ideals of the dominant culture. Other participants joined similar organizations.

Participants 5 & 6 joined the track team. While Participant 1 mentioned how a yearning for quality athletic programs was his main motivated for attending the suburban district and how a reputation was built by taking advantage of access to certain experiences due to this attendance in the suburban district. He also, however, mentioned the talents of some students of color being underutilized leading to limited choices for collegiate opportunities. Even as an insider because of athletic talents, students of color still were labeled and used to advance the programs in White space without being afforded with lasting opportunities for continuing education and scholarships.

As an insider, one might be allowed to participate on the team, however, as an outsider the only athletic scholarships available were to Junior colleges, rather than Division I universities.

Conclusion 2: Microaggressions and the Suburban District

VICC and transfer students discuss experiences of covert racism, which might best be described as microaggressions.

The term ‘racial microaggression’ was coined by Chester Pierce after the Civil Rights era to bring attention to the shift in racial relations and less-recognized racist behaviors that are “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges, which are ‘put downs’ of Blacks by offenders. More recently, Derald Wing Sue and his colleagues refined the definition to “commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Harwood, S. A., Choi, S., Orozco, M., Browne Hunt, M., & Mendenhall, R. (2015). *Racial microaggressions at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: Voices of students of color in the classroom*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The microaggressions could take the form of labels given to different student groups, conversations during courses stereotyping the behavior of students of color, or simply a lack of acknowledgement for students of color to participate or be considered for certain opportunities. The most common microaggressions were:¹⁶⁶

- Being the only student of color in the classroom
- Hearing stereotypes in the content of lecture and other course materials
- Being dismissed or ignored by the instructor before or after class
- Hearing inappropriate comments made by instructors before or after class
- Listening to the perpetuation of unaddressed stereotypes during classroom discussion
- Being called on in the classroom to offer the “student of color perspective”
- Receiving hostile reactions to participation in the classroom discussion
- Being excluded from participating in a group project
- Experiencing racial jokes and teasing in the labs
- Being discouraged during meetings with one’s academic advisor
- Overhearing racist conversations between students in the classroom

Both transfer students mention the school newspaper expressing concerns regarding Black students from unaccredited schools, lowering the test scores of the suburban district. The media reports numerous accounts of outrage.

Many of the students who opted to transfer landed in places like the well-heeled Francis Howell School district, just west of the Missouri River and about 30 miles from Normandy. In the wake of the court’s ruling in June, parents in the Francis Howell district packed school board meetings and town halls to denounce the decision. They said they feared that students from troubled neighborhoods would bring drugs and violence. They worried about the potential for overcrowded classrooms and lowered academic averages. A few suggested that metal detectors be

¹⁶⁶Harwood, S. A., Choi, S., Orozco, M., Browne Hunt, M., & Mendenhall, R. (2015). Racial microaggressions at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: Voices of students of color in the classroom. 6.

erected and that drug sniffing dogs and armed guards be deployed to keep Normandy students under control.¹⁶⁷

The fears and overall racism stereotyping of transfer students spoken loud and clear in the media was often masked in the school setting. Such beliefs manifested itself within the intake or schedule process. During participant 6 explained that during the intake process, the suburban school tested all students and changed their classes for second semester. The student explained that her new schedule was easier and she believed the school was attempting to offer assistance. In reality, students of color were often tracked and placed in lower level classes.

There were also many other accounts of microaggressions expressed by both transfer and VICC participants, however, these students are so enamored by the smiles and opportunities, they often saw these racist and unjust practices and behaviors as being directed to other Black students. Those “others,” who in some way, have not learned to appreciate the opportunity provided.

The students were often tested before being placed in an academic setting. This is a form of tracking that provides certain opportunities to certain students. These microaggressions allow opportunity hoarding to take place, where black students who academically excel continue to do so and those who struggle remain in lower level classes.

Conclusion 3: Academic Challenges and Social Networks

While the participants encounter academic challenges, they are able to persevere due to the social networks established. An overwhelming majority of participants express

¹⁶⁷ Lee, T. (2013). Missouri school busing causes crippling fallout. MSNBC. December 9th, 2013. Updated December 11th, 2013. < <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/heres-how-not-deal-failing-schools>>

that the support system of the suburban district enables them to navigate through White space. The support of teachers and other students as they open their homes to the students is greatly appreciated.

Participants who are unable to succeed in mainstream classrooms can be switched to other academic environments more suited to their level.

In this study the participants share the common thread of feeling fortunate to attend this suburban district, rather than to be subjected to the violence, subpar education, and educational distracts evident in neighborhood districts. Internal racism has caused a majority of the participants to feel that they must separate themselves or that they are already separate from other students of color unable to assimilate into this culture. This culture is one that will better prepare them for the careers and an upscale life style, so they divide and conquer. They divide from the kinship of their old community. The old community unable to understand their speech and way of life accepted by the transfer students who have begun to assimilate into the school community. The school community is very aware that the students are “outsiders,” nevertheless, many of the students feel embraced and accepted once assimilation takes place. Those who do not or are unable to assimilate seem to be temporary visitors to this new environment.

Participant 6, a student transfer, specifically states that some students who are unable to learn to adapt to the school culture are often removed from the suburban district. The students who successfully acclimate to this new environment do not wish to be labeled or associated with those who are unable to do so. The participants articulate this by stating that the same opportunities were afforded to all students, however, some chose not to take advantage.

This logic reflects many of the fundamental principles associated with internalized racism. The participants interviewed clearly state their satisfaction with their participation in the program. The overarching and shared sentiment is that this opportunity should not be taken lightly. As the “chosen” students, each participant expresses the positive educational and social benefits of attendance in the suburban district. The underlying statements of internalized racism and division from other students of color is extremely evident.¹⁶⁸ While in White space, Black students are exposed to a system where certain Black students are unable to navigate and operate in a way that is acceptable to the dominant group. Rather than adopting the ideals of dominating group that these students are somehow unworthy, Black students could support the growth and development of the struggling students of color. Internalized racism does not allow such experiences to occur. On the other hand, the students distance themselves from those who maintain their position as outsiders.

Amy Stuart Well’s *Stepping Over the Color Line* and the Student Perspectives from 2000-2004 & 2013-2014

This text was one of the few provided to the public to provide the student perspective regarding his or her experience in the Desegregation Program. While this text provides perspectives of key stakeholders, the categorization and misrepresentation of the experiences of people of color can be addressed by analyzing the student perspective. In the text, the students of color interviewed were labeled as separatist, beat down, or assimilationist. They do not support integration, while the “beat down or nihilistic”

¹⁶⁸ Landson-Billings, G. 1998. Just what is critical race theory and what’s it doing in a nice field like Education. *Critical Race Studies in Education*. Vol. 11, No. 1, 7-24.

accept inequality,¹⁶⁹ and the assimilationist suffer from internalized racism supporting the white way of life.¹⁷⁰ Wells so neatly put students of color into boxes that they themselves were still trying to understand. While internalized racism, acceptance of inequality, and a lack of support for integration were a part of the ideals expressed, they are simply pieces of the puzzle. The decision to participate in a desegregation or transfer program changed every facet of the student's lives. They experienced social, emotional and academic confusion as they attempted to navigate this new environment with little direction. Wells and Crain state, "The problems of housing segregation and employment discrimination have not been resolved, so when the desegregation order ends, everything is able to return to 'normal'..."¹⁷¹ While the authors discussed the social and political inequities, the emotional conflict experienced by students was dismissed repeated. Commenting "What an odd state of affairs when the white suburbanites bemoan the inconvenience of the transfer plan more loudly than the students who make that trek to the county five days a week." While the participants were often passively accepting of the fate before them, it was simply due to the belief that education and personal growth was associated with such sacrifices. The white counterparts mentioned by Wells and Crain who said "They [felt] sorry for black children who have to get up at 5:00 in the morning to take an hour long bus ride..." were more concerned with the implications of Black children invading White space. The participants reference this experience. Transfer participants 5 & 6 on one hand, mentioned feeling welcomed to the district, while on the other hand, they both discussed the student newspaper expressing academic implications of allowing the

¹⁶⁹ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. *Stepping over the Color Line*. 17.

¹⁷⁰ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. *Stepping over the Color Line*. 17.

¹⁷¹ Wells, A.S. Craine, R. L. 1997. *Stepping over the Color Line*. 336.

transfer students to invade the academic environment. Similar sentiments were expressed in the text as Wells and Crain point out, "...Many angry white residents do not hesitate to voice their opinions of the desegregation program and the transfer students."¹⁷² Years later the desegregation and transfer participants were met with the same hostile sentiments. Even though, the outward appearance of the school building and the information presented to the public initially reflected an environment completely open and supportive of the transfer program, many were in opposition. Wells & Crain continued to present hopeful anecdotes regarding the progress of the program, "There is evidence from some of these districts, for example, that white suburban communities [were] becoming more accepting of African Americans, not only as schoolmates for their children but also as neighbors."¹⁷³ The limited progress made does not negate the emotional and social torment students experience as he or she attempted to understand the stereotypical and damaging views expressed regarding people of color. There was detailed information regarding the academic benefits for the impoverished Black students participating in the desegregation program, however, the analysis simply overlooked the sacrifice, harm, and emotional strain placed upon students of color.

Many participants experienced social and emotional stressors associated with attempting to transition into White space. The mindset of each student can determine his or her level of success. According to Wells & Crain, "...For instance, a black student's belief that he or she can make it in the white world- a more accurate barometer of potential success in the in the suburbs than are standardized test scores."¹⁷⁴ The journey

¹⁷² Wells, A. Crain, S. *Stepping Over the Color Line*. 321.

¹⁷³ Wells, A. Crain, S. *Stepping Over the Color Line*. 343.

¹⁷⁴ Wells, A. Crain, S. *Stepping Over the Color Line*. 184.

to graduation as a student of color in White space required a number of different skills. The student must not only, overcome culture shock, racism, and emotional stress, but he or she must possess the ability to persevere through these encounters. Participant 6 discussed the inner turmoil experienced during the transfer stated, "... it was like a big transition ...like last year, I got in trouble a lot because it like a different atmosphere. I didn't know how to like...go on about my day because it was like a different environment..." The student was emotionally torn as she attempted to navigate appropriate behavior, social clues, and the overall culture associated with this new environment.

Wells & Crain also make mention of the DNRS or students who do not return to the suburban district. At the beginning of the chapter, this quote speaks to the difficulty experienced.

What struck me about this little girl was the depths of her pain and rage. She was angry. And yet her anger had no voice. It could not say, 'Mommy, I am upset that all these years from babyhood on, I thought I was a marvelous, beautiful gifted girl, only to discover that the world does not see me this way.' Often she was 'acting out.'¹⁷⁵

While Wells & Crain do briefly discuss the provoking of Black students who attend White space, the idea and pain and harm were left as mere words to describe emotions. The students who refused to assimilate were labeled as "resistors... These students, sent to the county schools by domineering parents, saw within the suburban schools' disciplinary codes an effort on the part of white educators to play into the racial attitudes of white suburban communities..."¹⁷⁶ The validity to the claims expressed by

¹⁷⁵ Wells, A. Crain, S. *Stepping Over the Color Line*. 219.

¹⁷⁶ Wells, A. Crain, S. *Stepping Over the Color Line*. 224.

students seemed to be missing throughout the information presented by Wells & Crain. Students expressed pain and harm in a number of ways. Rather than validating these feelings or emotions, the authors seem to simply group or categorize, rather than to peel back the causes of pain. When Black parents or students seemed angry, it was often due to years of emotional harm or disconnect from the academic environment. Students of color often felt disconnected or offended by the curriculum.

A Native American student sat in her tenth grade classroom at our school, reading the classic novel of modern dystopia, *Brave New World*. In it, Aldous Huxley introduces a place called the “savage land,” where modernity has never taken hold. Here live in relative squalor Native people and rebels or cast-outs from the mainstream society. By the end of the book, Huxley ultimately makes clear that this “savage land” is really the only “civilized” place in society, where values are morally correct, perspectives proper, human life is understood and lived in its most humane and compassionate meanings, and people are wiser and more human than their modernized counterparts.¹⁷⁷

Desegregation and Transfer participants lived in a dual consciousness that impacted every aspect of his or her life. As a participant, attending the suburban school from a young age had lasting effects on his life, behaviors, and beliefs. As a young adult, I labeled myself as a “deseg kid.” This term was also used by both Whites and Blacks during the program as a means to distinguish student whereabouts. While many, including myself, spoke without malice. The weight of that label was everlasting.

The “acting out” described by Wells & Crain were due to years of suffering at the hands of a White curriculum. In many instances, Black students were subjected to curriculum where it reinforces stereotypes, past racist experiences or simply does not

¹⁷⁷ Edelstein, D. (2007). Teaching Race in Schools in the 21st Century. BlackPast.org
< <http://www.blackpast.org/classroom/teaching-race-schools-21st-century>>

reflect people of color. “The research indicates time and again that Black students often feel excluded, ignored and omitted from the curriculum in which they engage at school. Henry Codjoe cites Giroux's 1986 research when he points out that "the school actively silences students by ignoring their histories... by refusing to provide them with knowledge relevant to their lives."¹⁷⁸ The students year after year are subjected to a curriculum that frustrates and infuriates people of color who begun to wonder if the academic environment is for them.

Conclusions

Participant responses regarding the home community, transfer community, microaggressions, academic challenges and social networks provided detailed accounts of lived experiences while attending the suburban district.

While the participants were unable to name and label the sacrifices that were made to maintain the “opportunity” to attend the suburban district, it was evident through the perceptions discussed. Even as an outsider, many are able to establish relationships with insiders, which allowed them to learn the culture and feel as if, they are not accepted; however, the kinship of other students of color continues to play a huge role in survival in the white space.

The theme of yearning for quality and safety within schools was something that the majority of participants mentioned directly. Feeling safe and not being plagued by violence were other ideals expressed by students should feel is available to them, while receiving a quality education. The participant interviews demonstrate that both parents

¹⁷⁸ Williams-Taylor, C. *Engaging Black Learners through a Relevant and Reflective Curriculum*. Ontario Ministry of Education. Queen’s Printer For Ontario, 2015.

and participants feel as if the decision to “transfer” to a suburban district is one of the few means of doing so. While this may not be the case, there were various areas where the experience of students of color could be enhanced.

Recommendations for Future Research

VICC and transfer programs have and continue to affect students of color, funding, suburban districts and the political, social and academic climate of schools across the nation. In this study, the perspectives of six participants simply provided an overview of the many different issues, themes and experiences of the students who bravely take part in desegregation and transfer programs. There are a number of topics that would allow for extending the research.

Participants mentioned the need for orientation and/or transfer programs for students entering the suburban district. The students would benefit from an orientation that presents the cultural norms of the environment, as well as, providing students and their parents an opportunity to meet teachers & students, while also discussing the expectations with students. The orientation might also provide students with a chance to interact with other student leaders, athletes and club members in order to dialogue about their experiences and to provide discussion regarding the cultural differences. The participants might also benefit from support services outside of the school environment.

There were also many accounts of internalized racism where students express negative connotations regarding their home district or community, due to a lack of education on the history of schools in the St. Louis Region. Students and their parents could be introduced to services within their community. There also might be opportunities for students to interact with other students of color from the home district and for them to

have dialogue about emotions and experiences in a purposeful way. Parents and students participating in desegregation program should be encouraged to learn and acknowledge the history that led to such programs.

In addition, the acknowledgment that participants and students courageously sought to understand the culture of those in the suburban district due to their desire to take advantage of the opportunities. This should outweigh any perceptions which state that education is somehow devalued in communities of color. Some information regarding the history, perseverance and uniqueness of students of color should also be expressed to the residents in White space, just as the just as people of color were presented with this information.

There was also a number of factors that could be considered by teachers and administrators in white space.

Certain strategies are known to contribute to a positive interracial school and classroom environment. At the school level, administrators and teachers should clearly communicate that diversity is valued. Affirmative and trusting relationships between the school and its families and communities should be established and maintained. Administrators should recognize the importance of preparing teachers for diversity and initiate programming to provide training. High expectations should be set for students in a context of culturally relevant curriculum and teaching practices. Academic levels, like advanced placement, honors and Special Education should be de-emphasized or eliminated completely. At the very least, these levels should not be racially identifiable.¹⁷⁹

In addition to those issues and factors directly related to students, there are a number of larger political issues in question. The inequity that still exist in education, where the quality of schools were determined by the residing neighborhood was one that continues

¹⁷⁹ Tefera, A, Frankenberg, E, etal. 2011. *Integrating Suburban Schools: How to Benefit from Diversity and Avoid Segregation*. 36.

to plague many parents and youth of color. One hundred percent of participants cited either their parents or their own personal feelings regarding the Desegregation or transfer program is due to attaining a quality education.

Many urban schools who had participants transfer risked bankruptcy due to the financial strains placed upon the school district. Policymakers must discuss alternative solutions to student transfer in order to sustain the communities throughout our region. Without quality schools, the pillar of the neighborhood was void.

Should students have to attend a suburban district in order to have a meaningful, secure, and supported educational experience? The social, political and emotions implications of such decisions had a lasting impact on the lives of all students.

Appendices

Appendix A

St. Louis County Communities

Related Links: [Municipal Tax Rates](#) | [Fire Districts](#) | [School Districts](#)

Mid County

Bel-Nor	Bel-Ridge	Bellerive	Beverly Hills	Breckenridge Hills
Brentwood	Charlack	Clayton	Frontenac	Glen Echo Park
Glendale	Greendale	Hanley Hills	Hillsdale	Huntleigh
Kirkwood	Ladue	Maplewood	Normandy	Northwoods
Norwood Court	Oakland	Olivette	Overland	Pagedale
Pasadena Hills	Pasadena Park	Pine Lawn	Richmond Heights	Rock Hill
Sycamore Hills	University City	Uplands Park	Velda City	Velda Village Hills
Vinita Park	Vinita Terrace	Warson Woods	Wellston	

North County

Bellefontaine Neighbors	Berkeley	Black Jack	Bridgeton	Calverton Park
Champ	Cool Valley	Country Club Hills	Dellwood	Edmundson
Ferguson	Flordell Hills	Florissant	Hazelwood	Jennings
Kinloch	Moline Acres	Riverview	Saint Ann	Saint John
Woodson Terrace				

South County

Bella Villa	Crestwood	Fenton	Grantwood Village	Green Park
Lakeshire	Mackenzie	Marlborough	Saint George	Shrewsbury
Sunset Hills	Webster Groves	Wilbur Park		

West County

Ballwin	Chesterfield	Clarkson Valley	Country Life Acres	Creve Coeur
Crystal Lake Park	Des Peres	Ellisville	Eureka	Manchester
Maryland Heights	Pacific	Town & Country	Twin Oaks	Valley Park
Westwood	Wildwood	Winchester		

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Appendix B

¹⁸⁰ Patterson, Steve. 91 Municipalities in St. Louis County Too Many, Too Few or Just Right? Urban Review. <<http://www.urbanreviewstl.com/2011/02/91-municipalities-in-st-louis-county-too-many-too-few-or-just-right/>>

Timeline/Chronology

- 1847 Missouri legislature bars education of Black people.
- 1865 Missouri constitution includes phrase “separate schools may be established for all children of African descent, setting up the dual system for black and white students.
- 1866 28 years after opening its first public school, St. Louis opens its first schools for Black people.
- 1875 Sumner High School opens; for more than 50 years, Sumner is the only high school available to black students in the city and county.
- 1877 First black teacher is hired by St. Louis Public Schools.
- 1896 The United State Supreme Court sets out the “separate by equal” doctrine in Plessy v Ferguson.
- 1924 Stowe Teachers College is opened for black teacher trainees in St. Louis.
- 1928 Douglass High School opens in Webster Groves; first high school for black students in St. Louis County.
- 1947 Archdiocese of St. Louis desegregates its parochial schools.
- 1954 U.S. Supreme Court rules that segregated education is unconstitutional in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka.

- 1960s Intact busing – Nearly 5000 black students are bused to underutilized
white schools in South St. Louis to relieve overcrowding in black schools. This policy is dropped by the school board in the early 1960s.
- 1960s Rather than desegregate the all-white schools in South St. Louis, the board
builds nine new elementary schools in all-black attendance zones in the West End and North St. Louis.
- 1972 Liddell vs. the Board of Education is filed.
- 1975 The Liddell plaintiffs and the Board enter into a consent decree providing an increase in minority teacher hirings and a pledge by the Board to work to relieve the racial imbalance in the city schools; Judge Meredith issues a ConsentDecree which requires all staff racial balance by achieved by 1978; that magnet schools be established; and, that a plan for desegregating the high schools be implemented by September 1977.
- 1979 Judge Meredith rules against the black parents in Liddell and finds no constitutional violations by the school board and State of Missouri.
- 1980 March-Federal appeals court reverses Judge Meredith’s ruling and orders immediate planning to desegregate St. Louis schools.
- 1980 September- Interdistrict desegregation plan within the City of St. Louis
begins.
- 1981 September- Interdistrict transfer program begins with five suburban school districts and the City of St. Louis.

- 1983 February-Settlement agreement reached and approved by Judge Hungate.
- All 23 St. Louis County school districts participated in the Settlement Agreement.
- 1983 September – City –County Voluntary Interdistrict transfer plan takes effect; sixteen St. Louis County school districts participate.
- 1993 Saying Missouri has paid more than \$1 billion and done all it could do to desegregate, Missouri Attorney General Jay Nixon seeks to end court-ordered desegregation and the State’s involvement.
- 1996 April- Judge George Gunn, Jr. appoints Dr. William Danforth to get all parties in the desegregation court case to reach an agreement.
- 1996 September- Transfer plan has grown to 13,000 students, the largest in the country.
- 1997 March- A federal judge approves an agreement ending State responsibility in the 20 year old Kansas City desegregation case.
- 1997 September- Missouri Attorney General Jay Nixon proposes a plan to use \$304 million of State money to phase out the transfer program over six years.

1997	November- Missouri Attorney General Jay Nixon withdraws his \$304 million plan.
1998	August- Senate Bill 781 is signed into law by Governor Carnahan.
1999	February 2- St. Louis City residents vote on 2/3 cent sales tax increase.
1999	March 15- Deadline for court case settlement and passage of St. Louis City tax increase as outlined in Senate Bill 781. ¹⁸¹

Appendix C

VICC Enrollment as a Percent of Public School Enrollment by Zip Code and Grade¹⁸²

Zip Code	Elementary	Middle	High	K-12
63101-03	4.0%	11.7%	18.3%	10.3%

¹⁸¹ Anonymous. 1999. Focus on Desegregation: Questions and Answers about the Implications of the Citywide Vote on February

2nd, 1999. *Focus St. Louis*. Retrieved from http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.focus_stl.org/resource/resmgr/policy_report/focus_on_desegregation_quest.pdf

¹⁸² Thaman, D. P. and etal. Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise.80.

63104	16.8%	26.3%	27.5%	22.1%
63106	11.5%	17.1%	18.6%	14.8%
63107	9.5%	15.9%	20.5%	14.5%
63108	12.1%	15.8%	18.9%	15.2%
63109	3.8%	9.0%	9.8%	6.5%
63110	18.1%	26.6%	28.4%	27.0%
63111	17.2%	24.7%	28.0%	16.4%
63112	16.8%	22.5%	25.7%	16.8%
63113	12.7%	18.4%	20.9%	23.8%
63115	12.9%	16.0%	20.2%	16.0%
63116	10.1%	15.9%	19.4%	14.0%
63118	16.4%	26.1%	29.2%	22.4%
63120	14.9%	20.7%	22.7%	18.8%
63139	3.9%	10.0%	13.8%	7.8
				%
63147	20.4%	25.2%	29.7%	24.4%
City	13.8%	20.0%	23.2%	18.1%

Appendix D

Interview Domains

Each of the participants will be interviewed individually. The study will focus on the following areas:

- **Study Participation:** Why participate?
- **Extracurricular Experience:** Participation? Availability?
- **Parental/Peer Support:** What was/is your parent's feelings about your school?

- **Future Implications:** Collegiate? Career? Scholarships? Would you make the same decision again?
- **Academic:** What was your experience in terms of your academic learning? Support? Rigor?
- **Social Support:** What is/was your experience in terms of social networks? Was it difficult to make friends? What did friends at school think? What was the reaction of friends in neighborhood?
- **Emotional Support:** Transition Programs?
- **Internalized Racism:** How do you feel about other students of color at your school? In your neighborhood? Community?

Appendix E

Interview Protocol

HIDDEN VOICES: THE MISSING NARRATIVES OF VOLUNTARY
INTERDISTRICT CHOICE PARTICIPANTS FROM 2000-2004 AND TRANSFER
STUDENTS PARTICIPATING FROM 2013-2014

Interview Protocol

Participant # _____

Location _____

Interview Start/End Time _____

You have been selected to participate in a research study conducted by Miranda T. Ming / and Faculty Advisor, Matthew Davis based on your willingness to provide your views regarding your participation in a desegregation or transfer program. The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of high school students of color participating in desegregation programs from 2000-2004 compared to the perceptions of high school students from Normandy and Riverview Gardens High school who have opted to attend suburban districts due to the unaccredited status of their neighborhood district during the 2013-2014 school year. You have the right not to answer any question and you may decide to discontinue the interview at any time.

If you would like to proceed, please provide the signed consent or assent form acknowledging you would like to proceed.

This interview will be recorded using the audio recorder here. **The recorded interview will be kept for one year in a locked file cabinet.** May we begin?

1. Please provide background information regarding the desegregation or transfer program.

2. Who made the decision for you to participate in the program?
3. Did you get involved in extra-curricular activities or athletics? Why or why not?
4. What was this experience like for you?
5. What was/is your parent's feelings about your school?
6. Did you graduate from this school?
7. Do you feel like your decision to attend this school has affected your decisions for the future?
8. If you knew what you know now, would you make the same decision again?
What was your experience in terms of your academic learning? Support? Rigor?
9. What is/was your experience in terms of social networks? Was it difficult to make friends? What did friends at school think? What was the reaction of friends in neighborhood?
10. Did you participate in any transition programs? If so, can you provide additional information about this experience? If not, do you think something like this would've been helpful?
11. What was your experience with other students of color at your school? How do you feel about other students of color at your school? In your neighborhood? Community?

Appendix F

Coding Schema

Appendix

Interview Research Findings

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Interpretations</u>	<u>Conclusions</u>
1. Background Information?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "...I was first introduced to the deseg program, I was in the 2nd grade..." 2. Okay, so lived in south st. louis city ... I participated in the program, I want to say... from kindergarten until 12th grade. 3. Fifth grade I started with Kirkwood; I was living in South City 4. "I attended ... from kindergarten until the point where I graduated." 5. Ummm, before I came to Kirkwood, I was at Visitation Academy which is a private girl's school about 11 minutes from here. And...I came here the beginning of my sophomore year in 2014. 6. "...I'm from Riverview. We were transferred... or whatever, because we didn't have accreditation. And like, it was like a big transition ...like last year, I got in trouble a lot because it like a different atmosphere..." 	<p>-Deseg Participants: Only school experience remembered - attending suburban district from elementary through graduation</p> <p>-Student transfers attending since 2013 or 2014 only from Riverview School District</p>	<p>- Attending during early ages</p> <p>-Transition during high school</p>

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Interpretations</u>	<u>Conclusions</u>
<p>2. Who made the decision for you to participate in the program?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "I want to say my mother and my uncle who made the decisions..." (Private school attendance before deseg) 2. The decision was made for me by my mom. I grew up in a single family home and she thought it would be better for us to attend a suburban school ... 3. "My mom; I don't think my dad had much say so..." 4. "My mother." 5. "My parents..." 6. Ummm, my mom because she said that it will be a better opportunity because she wanted us to be something in life. 	<p>Matriarchal dominance; Mother= Educational Decision maker</p>	<p>Even in two parent homes the mother seems to voice the perception that the suburban district is the biggest option.</p>
<p>3. Involvement in extra-curricular activities or athletics?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "...I got involved in sports. I played football and basketball throughout my time at Kirkwood..." 2. I actually participated in field hockey my freshman and sophomore years in high school. In my junior and senior year, I was a Varsity cheerleader. "...I think that ...the diversity in the school system helped prepare me later on in life for different situations versus some of my friends who did not participate in the deseg program." 3. "Junior & Senior I was a Varsity Cheerleader—I was involved in outside of school; It helped me to establish friendship; Black Achievement & Culture 		

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Club where we visited different colleges.” 5. “I know I was always involved in somebody’s extra-curricular activity...” 6. “My parents mostly because we didn’t have a lot of money and we were really sort of rocky trying to stay in Vis...” 7. “Ummm, this year I did track because I just wanted to get in shape. In Riverview like, there wasn’t a lot of like, sports...” 		
<u>Questions</u>	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Interpretations</u>	<u>Conclusions</u>
<p>4. What was/is your parent’s feelings about your school?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “...My parents loved Kirkwood...” 2. “...I would say my mom loved it.” 3. “My mom tells me stories about the Parkway District because at that time she felt the school was prejudice; Since I continued at Kirkwood I assume that she liked it better. They also feel that I received a great education.” 4. My mom was... involved... from my understanding that may have not always have been the case. 5. Ummm...They’ve been very happy with it so far. Like, because even though it’s seemingly, well not seemingly, I am getting a good education here...” 6. “My mom loves Kirkwood. My dad, (pause) I feel that...He was glad that I 	<p>-Educational prestige associated with suburban schools</p> <p>- 2 participants attended private school first</p> <p>-1 participant attended a different suburban school first and felt it was racist</p>	<p>-Positive</p> <p>-Quality education</p> <p>-Free</p>

	joined the track team or whatever, but I feel like he always thought I was smart...”		
<u>Questions</u>	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Interpretations</u>	<u>Conclusions</u>
5. Did you graduate from this school?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. Yes, 2004. 3. Yes, 2004. 4. Yes, 2004. 5. Next May, 2016 6. 2018 	<p>-Selected successful participants</p> <p>-Graduation is expected (no doubts)</p>	Opportunity Hoarding
6. Do you feel like your decision to attend this school has affected your decisions for the future?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “...I am a better person because of the opportunity...” “...African American person you get classified in two different groups...” 2. “That’s because I wanted to stay where I was with the support I had, the rigorous learning there; because of that I think that’s why I am who I am today.” 3. “Yes, I have a daughter who is 4 and I am looking to enroll her in a good school.” 4. “My decision to attend KHSD certainly affected my decisions for the future. I am the first in my family to attend college and graduate from college...” 5. “I believe it has just because some of the courses I’ve gotten to take here have influenced what I want to do in the future...” 6. “...Ummm, I definitely think that Kirkwood has a positive outlook on life and they prepare you more for 	Future Preparation	<p>-Internalized racism</p> <p>-superior education in suburbia</p>

	the future than Riverview did...”		
<u>Questions</u>	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Interpretations</u>	<u>Conclusions</u>
7. Would you make the same decision again?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “...I would say, the support is always there. They definitely want the best for you...” 2. “...So I often had friends, all throughout elementary school, middle school and high school of all different ethnicities or background; And I think that I didn’t necessarily have a problem making friends...” 3. “I believe the education was great. The teachers were willing to help.” 4. “... Yes, I would hands down without even having to think about it, make the decision again...” 5. “Hmmm...Probably, I mean. The experience I’ve had here has been good. Or very well, so I feel like I would make the same decision to come here if I knew how it would turn out...” 6. “Ok, ummm...well, if I knew what I know now, starting off, I would be more involved at Riverview to learn as much as I could in that transition because I always thought that I’d be at Riverview...” 		-100% Affirmative

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Interpretations</u>	<u>Conclusions</u>
<p>8. What's your experience like terms of support received when entering Kirkwood?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "...my social networks consisted of different varieties of people..." 2. "... I didn't participate in any transitions programs because I started so early...I definitely think this would be a good thing so a student understands how this can help him get to the next level ..." 3. "I don't think I had any trouble communicating...Especially being a cheerleader." 4. "...My experience was pretty eclectic. I was friends with a lot of people. I had my close knit..." 5. "Uhhh, I feel like I've gotten a lot of support from my teachers. So if I need some help, they will give me help if I want it or they will give a lot of students help if they need it..." 6. "...Ummm, the thing I like about Kirkwood is that you can be really close to all of your teachers..." 	<p>-tracking Support -get involved</p>	<p>-tracking leads to subpar or "different" educational opportunities - microaggressions</p>
<u>Questions</u>	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Interpretations</u>	<u>Conclusions</u>
<p>9. What was your experience with other students of color at your school?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "...A support group...I think it's always beneficial for people because you never know what they are dealing with emotionally." 2. "...I guess like I said before, I had a lot of friends that were not of color from 	<p>-Divisions -Type casted -Black residents "too white" -support needed</p>	<p>-Support to bridge cultures -Internalized racism</p>

	<p>elementary school, middle school and a little into high school...”</p> <p>3. “I’m not sure because it’s attending a school; so maybe an orientation; I don’t think it’s different than attending a school in the area that you reside...I didn’t have any friends”</p> <p>4. “...Absolutely. I mean kids that come from an under-privileged area encounter certain experiences that affect them in different ways...”</p> <p>5. “A little bit. I mean... I am kind of a very shy and quiet person, so I’m not really good at seeking out people to try and be friends with... Uhhh, my main group of friends I would say... They’re mostly guys. And their mostly of my grade level juniors or seniors...I think mostly African American, surprisingly...no, cuz I’ve never thought about that.”</p> <p>6. “Well, we pretty much act the same... Well, there are some black people who act like some of the white people. But it doesn’t really matter...”</p>		
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Appendix G



Department of Educational Policy & Leadership Studies

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Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

HIDDEN VOICES: THE MISSING NARRATIVES OF VOLUNTARY INTERDISTRICT CHOICE PARTICIPANTS FROM 2000-2004 AND TRANSFER STUDENTS PARTICIPATING FROM 2013-2014

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number _____

Principal Investigator _____ PI's Phone Number _____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Miranda T. Ming / and Faculty Advisor, Matthew Davis. The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of high school students of color participating in desegregation programs from 2000-2004 compared to the perceptions of high school students from Normandy and Riverview Gardens High school who have opted to attend suburban districts due to the unaccredited status of their neighborhood district during the 2013-2014 school year.

2. a) Your participation will involve

- One sixty-minute audio recorded interview at a location agreed upon by the participant and researcher. Dates and times TBD.

Approximately 12 may be involved in this research.

b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be one hour to be interviewed regarding your experiences. You will be asked to provide demographic information through email by providing their age, sex, and program of participation, which will take approximately five minutes.

3. There may be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research. They include emotional strain or discomfort resulting from questions regarding your treatment

while attending school in the VICC or Student Transfer Program. You may discontinue the interview or not answer a question at any time.

a. Social media also presents the risk of loss of confidentiality. Potential participants are encouraged to send questions about participating in the study at dornm@umsl.edu rather than posting on social media.

b. The interview will be recorded through audio using a portable audio recorder. The recorded audio will be kept for a period of one year in a locked file cabinet. One requested copy of the recorded interview or interview transcription will be provided.

c. The audio recording can be reviewed at the conclusion of the interview. Additional information or clarification can be made after reviewing the tape. After the initial interview and review, no additional changes will be made to the recorded information.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about student experiences in VICC and Student Transfer Programs and may help society.

There is also the risk of loss of confidentiality by using social media. You are encouraged to use the email dornm@umsl.edu to protect confidentiality, however, there is a risk that if any information is posted on social media might be identifiable.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. If you want to withdraw from the study, you can contact me at (314) 249-0240 or dornm@umsl.edu. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.
6. By agreeing to participate, you understand and agree that your data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your identity will not be revealed. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your data. In addition, all data will be stored on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked office. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Miranda Ming (314) 249-0240 or the Faculty Advisor, Matthew Davis (314) 516-5227. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Printed Name

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

Investigator/Designee Printed Name

Appendix H



Department of Educational Policy & Leadership Studies

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Assent to Participate in Research Activities (Minors)

HIDDEN VOICES: THE MISSING NARRATIVES OF TRANSFER STUDENTS PARTICIPATING FROM 2013-14

1. My name is Miranda Ming.
2. I am asking you to take part in a research study because we are trying to learn more about the perception of high school students of color participating in desegregation programs from 2000-2004 compared to the perceptions of high school students from Normandy and Riverview Gardens High school who have opted to attend suburban districts due to the unaccredited status of their neighborhood district during the 2013-2014 school year.
3. If you agree to be in this study you will be asked to meet for sixty minutes at a location agreed upon by the researcher and participant to discuss your experiences. Approximately 12 participants will be involved. The initial communication will be completed electronically where you will be asked to provide demographic information including: age, sex, and program of participation. You may accompany your student to the interview location to provide your consent, send documents electronically or provide the signed documentation to turn in before the interview begins. During the interviews, all information will be recorded using an audio recorder. You (the parent) will not be allowed to participate in the interview.
4. There may be certain risks or discomforts with this research. They include uncomfortable feelings that might come from answering certain questions. Another risk might be loss of confidentiality due to the use of social media.

There is also the risk of loss of confidentiality by using social media. Your child is encouraged to use the email dornm@umsl.edu to protect confidentiality, however, there is a risk that if any information is posted on social media by the child, he or she might be identifiable.

5. There are no direct benefits for your participation in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about VICC, Student Transfer Program and may help society.

6. If you don't want to be in this study, you don't have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you don't want to participate or if you change your mind later and want to stop.
7. You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me at (314) 249-0240.
8. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

Participant's Signature Date Participant's Printed Name

Participant's Age Grade in School

Table 1
2014 VICC Transfer Student Enrollment

Affton	1.8 %
Bayless	2.6 %
Brentwood	2.3 %
Clayton	7.2 %
Hancock Place	4.1 %
Kirkwood	5.2%
Lindbergh	1.4 %
Mehlville	9.5 %
Parkway	22.5%
Pattonville	0.1%
Rockwood	34.4%
Valley Park	3.5 %
Webster Groves	3.8%
Special School	0.2 %
St. Louis	1.4%