

**An Education System Built on the Pillars of White Supremacy and Anti-Blackness:  
A Collection of Autoethnographic Studies Depicting How Black Kids Never Had a  
Chance**

Abena B. Boateng

M.Ed., Education, Special Education, Lincoln University-Jefferson City, 2007  
B.S., Information Systems and Technology, United States International University-Nairobi, 2002

Ida B. Casey

Graduate Certificate, Social Justice, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2019  
B.A., Communications, Webster University, 1988

Jamie C. Klupe

M.S., Speech-Language Pathology, Fontbonne University, 2010  
B.S., Communication Disorders, Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville, 2006  
B.L.S.-Emphasis in Spanish, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, 2002

Julie C. Moorman

M.Ed., Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2016  
M.A., Physical Education- Teaching and Coaching, University of Northern Iowa, 2011  
B.S., Physical Education, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2010

Angeline Williams-Jackson

M.Ed. Educational Administration/Principal 7-12, Park University, 2017  
M.A., Criminal Justice Management and Supervision, University of Central Oklahoma, 1998  
B.S., Criminology, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 1997

A Co-Authored Dissertation submitted to  
The Graduate School at the University of Missouri-St. Louis  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

May 2021

Dissertation Committee

Dr. Thomasina Hassler, Ph.D.  
Chairperson

Dr. Keith Miller, Ph.D.

Dr. Cheryl Osby, Ph.D.

**Abstract**

In this collection of autoethnographic studies, a group of five women with differing racial identities takes us through each of their deeply personal journeys of social justice awareness and transformation. Using the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies, these women share personal narratives of their lived experiences depicting how the education system in the United States is built on the pillars of White supremacy and anti-Blackness. Through their stories, we learn that schools are not meant for all students to succeed, and in actuality, Black students never had a chance. This collection of autoethnographic studies exposes how our school system perpetuates the larger agenda of White supremacy in our nation. The study concludes with implications of the work and suggestions for the future of multicultural education, hoping that one day we will have an education system that fosters the success of each student.

*Keywords:* racial bias, implicit bias, deficit mindset, explicit bias, hidden curriculum, culturally relevant pedagogy, zero-tolerance policies, restorative justice, intersectionality, marginalization, Color of Mind, White supremacy, autoethnography, White privilege, anti-Blackness, Whiteness, internalized oppression, Liberalism, cognitive dissonance

### **Acknowledgements**

We, as a group, would first like to thank our committee members; Dr. Thomasina Hassler, Ph.D., Dr. Cheryl Osby, Ph.D., and Dr. Keith Miller, Ph.D. for the learning, growth and reflective opportunities. Special thank you to our Chairperson, Dr. Thomasina Hassler, for your feedback, patience, and understanding. Through our work together, we have gained confidence as writers and scholars. Thank you for seeing something in us that we may have not seen and pushing us towards our goal. We would also like to acknowledge the late Dr. Matthew Davis, Ph.D. for bringing us all together on this beautiful journey. Without his prodding and pushing, we would have never discovered our voices nor would we have found the courage to actually look within ourselves to right some of the wrongs found in the educational system.

#### **Abena B. Boateng**

I would like to thank my colleagues; Dr. Ida Casey, Dr. Jamie Klupe, Dr. Julie Moorman and Dr. Angeline Jackson-Williams, for being an integral part of this masterpiece. To my boys Stephen and Spencer, thank you for always encouraging me to be diligent; you are the reason why I embarked on this doctoral journey. My parents George and Victoria, and my siblings, thank you for always supporting my dreams. Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Christiana Ashong, thank you for your unlimited encouragement and prayers. Brandy Moore, thank you for your immeasurable support, kindness and prayers. Dr. Donna Ellis, thank you for teaching me that the sky is not the limit; it is just the beginning. To the following: Dr. T. Dittrich, S. S. Mohammed, K. Agyenim, B. Harbuck,

M. Greene, the Social Justice cohort, and to everyone who has been supportive, thank you.

**Ida B. Casey**

To acknowledge my colleagues seems so trivial when I look back on the journey that we traveled together and how they supported and “had the patience of Job,” with me. If it were not for Dr. Abena Boateng, Dr. Moorman, Dr. Klupe and Dr. Williams-Jackson, my goal for obtaining this degree may have been diminished. To be a part of such an accomplished group of women was more than I could have envisioned. I couldn’t have asked for a better group to be a part of.

I would also like to personally thank Dr. Hassler, a forever longtime friend, who always gave me encouragement, had patience with me and saw something in me that I wasn’t sure I saw in myself. I especially thank her for the wealth of knowledge she shared and how she stressed critical thinking beyond.

I want to say THANK YOU to my family for their encouragement and understanding throughout this journey. Special thanks to my granddaughter Taylor who helped me understand Biostatistics, and to my close friends who never questioned why I chose to take this path at this time in my life and shared in this exciting time in my life. Much love to my daughter for always cheering me on and to my Cayla and TJ for being understanding during my Zoom classes by keeping the dog quiet.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Mathew Davis, one of the most brilliant individuals I’ve met, that left this earth much too soon. It was Dr. Davis who actually started me on this journey and always gave me encouragement. He is truly missed.

**Jamie C. Klupe**

I first want to acknowledge my colleagues; Dr. Abena Boateng, Dr. Ida Casey, Dr. Julie Moorman, and Dr. Angeline Williams-Jackson. Without your tireless support and text chains, I don't think I would have met a single deadline or believed in myself as much as you believed in me. To the Social Justice cohort; I owe a debt of gratitude. Thank you for pushing my thinking, challenging my whiteness, accepting me, and teaching me. Grammy, even though you aren't here with me anymore, I feel your spirit always. My parents, Max and Tom, thank you for letting me be me and find my own path. Jill and Anna, thank you for Friday night parties and helping take care of me and my boys. My dear friend, Liz Stygar, thank you for the countless amount of conversations, cards, texts, love, and support. To Franklin and Louis; I love you more than words can express. I hope I can always be a role model to show you that if you want something to change, go change it. Last but not least, thank you to my husband, Patrick. Without you, none of this is possible. I love you the most.

**Julie C. Moorman**

I would like to take a moment to recognize the people that made this accomplishment possible. Firstly, my husband Alex, without whom I would not have made it through this process. He always made sure I was taken care of and took countless amounts of tasks off of my plate so I could focus on this work. His selflessness is what has gotten me through the last couple of years in this program. Secondly, it'd be remiss if I did not mention the support I received from my co-authors, Abena, Ida, Jamie, and Angeline. These ladies spent hours meeting, working, and collaborating in order to make

this dissertation come together. Without them this dream may not have been a reality. Lastly, I'd like to thank my students, past, present and future, for inspiring me to be better and do better. This journey is not complete but without the aforementioned people, I would not be where I am today. At three months pregnant, I dedicate this work to my future daughter. May the world she knows be one of unity, allyship, and free of -isms.

**Angeline Williams-Jackson**

I would like to acknowledge my very own abolitionist teacher, Mrs. Rhoda Stroud who changed my life and has been my inspiration since the 6th grade, and my supporting cast: DeWayne Jackson, my husband; Colin and Cameron-my sons and my reasons why, and Debra Stevenson-Robinson, my mother who knew that education was the way out and showed me my first example of Black Girl Magic!! Last but not least, I thank my fellow co-authors, Dr. Boateng, Dr. Casey, Dr. Klupe and Dr. Moorman. We did something spectacular!!

### Definitions

***Anti-Blackness:*** Rooted in plantation-style slavery and the structurally embedded degradation of Black people and communities, anti-Blackness imagines Blackness as inherently harmful, needing to be policed and neutralized and outside the realms of humanity (Coles, 2019).

***Autoethnography:*** Wider than autobiographies, autoethnography self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation (Chang, 2008).

***Cognitive Dissonance:*** This is a term used to describe the discomfort aroused when people have cognitions and behaviors that are inconsistent with, or dissonant from, each other (Festinger, 1957).

***Color of Mind*** is a term coined by Darby & Rury (2018) on how traditional racist assumptions about race have systematically denied Black students equal dignity and respect and has created a longstanding racial achievement gap in education (Darby & Rury, 2018).

***Critical Race Theory (CRT):*** CRT examines racial inequities in educational achievement in a more probing manner than multicultural education, critical theory, or achievement gap theorists by centering the discussion of inequality within the context of racism (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003).

***Cultural Competence:*** Having knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the experiences of marginalized students, acknowledging and positively responding to the

cultural differences, using their experiences as resources in the teaching and learning process (Gay, 2000).

***Hidden Curriculum:*** In contrast to the traditional idea of curriculum, a hidden curriculum is the set of rules or guidelines that are often not directly taught but are assumed to be known (Myles et al., 2004).

***Implicit Bias:*** While unconscious, implicit bias refers to the stereotypes and attitudes that occur unconsciously and may or may not reflect our actual beliefs (Gullo et al., 2019).

***Institutional Racism:*** Structural view of racism is called institutional racism, which encompasses the *patterns*, procedures, practices, and policies that operate within social institutions to penalize consistently, disadvantage, and exploit individuals who are members of non-White racial/ethnic groups (Better, 2008).

***Intersectionality:*** Intersectionality is a framework that prioritizes an understanding and analysis of the complexity in the world, people, and human experiences, including how aspects of social and political identities might combine to create unique modes of discrimination (Collins & Bilge, 2020).

***Interest Convergence:*** A theory coined by Derrick Bell stipulates that Black people achieve civil rights victories only when White and Black interest converge, a what's in it for me. (Bell, 2013, p 37).

***Liberalism:*** A political and economic philosophy that emphasizes the protection of the rights of individuals (life, liberty, and property) based on the belief in progress, the



essential goodness of the human race and the autonomy of the individual and standing for the protection of political and civil liberties (Merriam-Webster, nd).

***Special Education:*** This term refers to specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities to reach their learning potential (Friend, 2018).

***Whataboutism:*** This term refers to the practice of answering a criticism or difficult question by attacking someone with a similar criticism or question directed at them, typically starting with the words “What about?” (Cambridge University Press, 2021)

***White Supremacy:*** This term refers to a political, cultural, and economic system premised on the subjugation of people who are not of the White, European race and ethnicity. White supremacy establishes, upholds, and normalizes hierarchy based on the premise that the less Black someone is, the closer they are to God (Rankin & Solomon, 2019).

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	<b>14</b>
Abena B. Boateng	20
Traversing through a Kaleidoscope of Persecution: Black boys in Special Education.	20
Purpose of Study.	22
Ida B. Casey	23
Black Girlhood – Vision, Voice, Freedom and Truth: How Anti-Black Policies in the Education System Impact African American Females	23
Purpose of Study.	32
Jamie C. Klupe	34
It’s Just Me: One White Lady’s Radical Racial Realization	34
Purpose of Study.	36
Julie C. Moorman	37
Inevitable or Avoidable?: Students Turned Inmates and My Role in the School-to-Prison-Pipeline	37
Purpose of Study.	39
Angeline Williams-Jackson	42
The Impact of Anti-Blackness and Internalized Oppression: A Black Woman Educator’s Experiences Navigating the Educational System	42
Purpose of Study.	44
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>50</b>
White Supremacy & Anti-Blackness: The Pillars of Our Education System	50
Colonization	55
Intersectionality	56
Institutional Racism & Interest Convergence: What This Means for Education	58
Color of Mind	61
Implicit Bias	65
Discipline Disparities	71
Incarceration	76
Internalized Oppression	77

Invisibility Syndrome	82
Cognitive Dissonance	83
Cultural Responsiveness	84
Critical Action	85
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>87</b>
Research Design	87
Theoretical Framework	93
Critical Theory	93
Critical Race Theory	94
Critical Legal Studies	98
Critical Whiteness Studies.	99
<b>CHAPTER 4: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART I</b>	<b>101</b>
Abena B. Boateng	101
Traversing through a Kaleidoscope of Persecution: Black boys in Special Education.	101
Introduction	101
Narrative 1	103
Academics: I Can't Figure it Out.	103
Narrative 2	111
Behavior: What Did I Do Wrong?	111
Introduction	115
Narrative 3	116
What-about-ism: Reality Check	116
<b>CHAPTER 5: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART II</b>	<b>121</b>
Ida B. Casey	121
Black Girlhood – Vision, Voice, Freedom and Truth: How Anti-Black Policies in the Education System Impact African American Females	121
Narrative 1.	121
Track 1, Track 2, Track 3, Terminal Track....You're OUT.	121
Tracking.	123
Narrative 2.	125
Bias Barriers.	125
Narrative 3.	129
The Harming Impact of White Supremacist-laden School Policies.	129

<b>CHAPTER 6: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART III</b>	<b>136</b>
Jamie C. Klupe	136
It's Just Me: One White Lady's Radical Racial Realization	136
Becoming a White Lady.	136
The Beginning.	136
New Town.	137
Off to College.	139
That Grad School Life.	140
Movin' to the 'Burbs.	143
Radical Racial Realization.	145
Race Discourse or Lack Thereof.	147
The Power of Whiteness: I Am the Colonizer.	148
Color of Mind Ideology.	149
Colorblind Racism: I Am Not Race Neutral.	150
I Am the White Savior.	151
Socialization.	152
Intersectionality.	154
White and Radical.	154
<b>CHAPTER 7: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART IV</b>	<b>155</b>
Julie C. Moorman	155
Inevitable or Avoidable?: Students Turned Inmates and My Role in the School-to-Prison-Pipeline	155
Socialization from Birth & White Identity Development.	155
It's Getting Pretty Dark: The Great White Flight	158
You Don't Want to Live There.	159
Teacher Preparation in a White Dominated Industry.	162
Do You Need a Bandaid?	163
My Role in the School- to-Prison Pipeline.	168
July 11, 2018.	168
<b>CHAPTER 8: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART V</b>	<b>172</b>
Angeline Williams-Jackson	172
The Impact of Anti-Blackness and Internalized Oppression: A Black Woman Educator's Experiences Navigating the Educational System	172
Preface: The Why.	172
Phase 1: Indoctrination and Racial Socialization.	174

Story 1: Flashback.	175
Story 1: Implications of Anti-Blackness and White Supremacy.	181
Phase 2: Internalization: But You Don't Know Me or My Story.	183
Story 2: Flashback.	184
Story 2: Internalized Oppression in Action.	191
Phase 3: Path to Liberation and the Long Winding Road and Beyond.	194
Story 3: Flashback.	195
Story 3: Implications of Liberation and Freedom Dreaming.	198
<b>CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>200</b>
Abena B. Boateng in Closing	200
Traversing through a Kaleidoscope of Persecution: Black boys in Special Education	200
Ida B. Casey in Closing	204
Black Girlhood – Vision, Voice, Freedom and Truth: How Anti-Black Policies in the Education System Impact African American Females	204
Jamie C. Klupe in Closing	206
It's Just Me: One White Lady's Radical Racial Realization	206
Julie C. Moorman in Closing	207
Inevitable or Avoidable?: Students Turned Inmates and My Role in the School-to-Prison-Pipeline	207
Angeline Williams-Jackson in Closing	210
The Impact of Anti-Blackness and Internalized Oppression: A Black Woman Educator's Experiences Navigating the Educational System	210
Implications of the Collective Work	212
<b>References</b>	<b>216</b>

**CHAPTER 1****An Education System Built on the Pillars of Whiteness and White Supremacy: A Collection of Autoethnographic Studies Depicting How Black Kids Never Had a Chance.**

The Color of Mind is an ideology coined by the authors of the book *The Color of Mind: Why the Origins of the Achievement Gap Matter for Justice* (Darby & Rury, 2018). Darby and Rury (2018) describe their ideology as the historically based belief that Black people are cognitively inferior, lack good moral character, and behave in a way that does not align with the White standard. These beliefs have impacted America's educational practices by "rationalizing racially exclusionary school practices and unequal educational opportunities" (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 2) for Black students. The historical impact of the Color of Mind ideology has tarnished the educational system by creating the space for dignitary injustice to become one aspect of schools' hidden curriculum (De Lissovoy, 2012). In the same way that the hidden curriculum works to stratify students, the Color of Mind ideology operates to strip Black students of their dignity and status as equals (Darby & Rury, 2018). The Color of Mind ideology also works in schools to reinforce White supremacy in those spaces (Darby & Rury, 2018). White supremacy is often imagined as men in white hoods riding horses; however, this is not the case in our modern society. White supremacy is woven into our beings' fabrics, and the tapestries are pulled taut in classrooms across America. "White supremacy must be seen to relate to the operation of forces that saturate the everyday, mundane actions and policies that shape the world in the interests of white people" (Gillborn, 2006, p. 319). In essence, Whiteness

and White supremacy prevents educators from seeing how the Color of Mind has created a system that hashes out dignitary injustice to Black students in the current education system.

This cohort of female educators from mixed backgrounds highlights how Whiteness and White supremacy have perpetuated the Color of Mind ideology and how it continues to perpetuate unequal opportunities for Black students. We hope that our joint research will be used to chisel away at the inequities that we have upheld in our current educational system. Each of the members of our cohort brings professional and personal experience from varying realms of education. This, coupled with our various racial and cultural backgrounds, provides us with the opportunity to not only share our narratives, but it also offers a unique window into how a group of women from mixed-race backgrounds can come together, find commonalities, and ultimately demonstrate the usefulness of this practice to other educators.

Our journey began in the summer of 2019, as part of a larger cohort of students within the Educational Doctorate with an emphasis in Social Justice program. We sat in our Learning Community class, tasked with finding a commonality of research ideas amongst our peers and forming a smaller cohort-based around those commonalities. Bista & Cox (2014) state that in education doctoral programs, cohorts are defined as a group of about 10-25 students who begin a program of study together, proceed together through a series of developmental experiences in the context of that program of study, and end the program at approximately the same time. The first attempt at creating a cohort outside of the larger cohort group had us trying to figure out how 12 people could really work

together on a shared document. The larger group attempted to meet a few times and quickly figured out that we needed to make a smaller group. We also realized that even though we all were in this program to become change agents, many of us had different agendas about the work's why, and we were not all coming from the same place. With this information in mind, four of us organically formed into a dissertation cohort. Once created, another classmate realized her focus aligned with ours, bringing our group to five members. In our early meetings, we were excited and motivated to tackle this idea of White supremacy, Whiteness, and anti-Blackness and how these ideas formed our beliefs and interactions in the educational system. We could bounce ideas off of one another and help each other narrow our scope and finetune our thinking. Slowly, however, our group dynamic began to struggle. We all struggled with the idea that we were tied to one another with the task of creating a unified dissertation. We all struggled with stress-inducing questions such as, how is this going to work? And what if someone does not do their part? And several members were and still are just more comfortable working alone. However, we knew that if we were going to make it through, we had to trust the process, attempt to respect each other's boundaries, and sometimes give others, and ourselves, a gentle shove in the right direction.

As we moved towards comprehensive exams, we felt that we were headed in the right direction. Once we passed the exams, the reality of a shared dissertation set in. We needed to make some changes and shift our thinking. The committee's comments helped us quickly realize that our methodology should change from mixed methods to qualitative studies. We agreed that this made the most sense due to our program's time constraints



placed on us. Once the Fall semester came, our group of five was still intact, however, the momentum shifted as our minds hit roadblocks. Some of us were stuck and did not know how to move forward with our research, leading to a lapse in productivity.

At that point, just as we did with the formation of our group, we relied on that particular connection to each other that allowed us to organically form in the first place. We had authentic conversations about our wants and needs as individuals and also as a group. We were able to reconnect, realign, rejuvenate, refocus, and move forward. Each of us knew we had to tweak our research methodology and topics to discover what we were genuinely trying to say to the world and the outcomes we were attempting to discover. The thought of changes to the plan was stress-inducing, but focusing on the why allowed us to narrow our research idea to push forward once again. According to Riggio (2013), good teams have good communication skills; are honest and straightforward; share the load; are reliable, fair; and are complementary and positive. Our group had all of these qualities in place, which helped us and will continue to help us advance through our research. Our collaborative group work has resulted in a collection of five qualitative studies that include each group member's work, findings, and insight into their passions.

Commonalities in our areas of interest lead to our group using a multitude of shared literature. Our cohort of female educators found that even within our different areas of interest, there were foundational texts that spoke to all of us in a way that propelled us further down our research paths. Even though we are researching different topics, we could align our overarching problem of practice within the texts we collectively read. The shared readings that our ideas are built on and expanded from are:

*The Color of Mind* (Darby & Rury, 2018), *Critical Race Theory in Education: All God's Children have a song* (Dixson et al., 2017), and *The Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education* (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). We all agreed that Whiteness and White supremacy are prevalent ideologies in the educational system and continue to shape Black children's unequal and inequitable education. Color of mind ideology and education have been connected and mutually supported in ways that continue to sustain White supremacy in today's schools (Darby & Rury, 2018). *The Color of Mind* (Darby & Rury, 2018) would prove to be the book we all used to support the building of our research, thought process, and purpose for the work. Another area of agreement is that the intersection of anti-Blackness, internalized oppression, and educational inequities plague the educational system; however, these ideas haven't been explored through an autoethnography lens. Lynn & Dixson (2013) offered that to begin to fill in the theoretical gap, Critical Race Theory, an intellectual movement rooted in American jurisprudence scholarship, could be employed to examine the role of race and racism in education. Lastly, another agreement area was the connection between White supremacy and how it upholds anti-Blackness ideas and biases towards Black students in all classrooms across America. Readers will see common themes throughout each member's work and our work as a whole, and how our different perspectives were used to build research around our particular area of study.

Our group knew that if we wanted to spark change in our education system and truly combat the effects of White supremacy and anti-Blackness, we needed to do more than crunch numbers. We felt a qualitative design would help us capture the essence of how anti-Blackness and White supremacy still controls our education systems and

policies. A qualitative research design also offers flexibility through emergent designs. All of the members will use autoethnography. We are all working from different theoretical frameworks within Critical Theory such as Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies, and Critical Legal studies which will be explained in more detail throughout this work. In the subsequent sections of our work, the reader will understand, in more detail, the reasons behind our unique use of qualitative research and the particular research design chosen by each group member. Even though our agreed-upon autoethnography method was selected, each of our narratives is as divergent as they are interrelated. We suspect that they will converge more as we move through our research process.

The five resulting, qualitative studies include the following:

- Traversing through a Kaleidoscope of Persecution: Black boys in Special Education.
- Black Girlhood – Vision, Voice, Freedom, and Truth: How Anti-Black Policies in the Education System Impact African American Females.
- It's Just Me: One White Lady's Radical Racial Realization.
- Inevitable or Avoidable?: Black Kids Turned Inmates and My Role in the School-to-Prison-Pipeline.
- The Impact of Anti-Blackness While Navigating the Educational System as a Black Woman Educator and How That Impacts Perceptions About Black Male Intelligence.

The following research is organized, respectively, within each of our project titles and individual chapters. After our narratives are complete, we plan to come together as a group in our writing to discuss the implications of our findings and use our discoveries to

impact change within ourselves and how we impact the field of education. As Stovall (2013) states, “Mass movements often start extremely small” (p. 289).

**Abena B. Boateng**

***Traversing through a Kaleidoscope of Persecution: Black boys in Special Education.***

Race and gender have a role to play in the development of Black boys (Dowd, 2018). One may wonder, if a group of hardworking people can succeed without depending on charity, why can't everyone do the same? This question is meant to show a discrepancy that is often misinterpreted as being an aphorism of hard work and hope revealing differences in opportunities that people might have depending on their skin color. For Black boys, challenges to their existence emerge from financial hardships and the violence fueled by poverty and historical racism as it evolves with each generation (Dowd, 2018). The color of my skin, gender, body size, speaking with an accent, which is not the norm in United States culture, and raising Black boys increases my awareness that I am invading White spaces by working in an education field that is dominated by White Administrators and educators.

As an 11-year old, I loved playing with a kaleidoscope as a means of escaping excruciating experiences of hate while I was at school and going to a world embellished by beauty and harmony in a myriad of patterns. I envisioned a challenging scenario through the kaleidoscope, whose explanations were manifested as various perspectives represented in each view. State policies are deeply rooted in schools, and these policies often perpetuate racism's ramifications (Dowd, 2018). Racism presents itself in a plethora of shapes and forms; some elements of racism are more apparent than others. Day after

day, I am enveloped in this song and dance—us versus them in the Black and White dichotomy.

I share my experiences through the lens of a student who is a Black boy participating in special education services to address an educational disability impacting social skills and reading comprehension skills. One of the Critical Race Theory tenets is counter-storytelling to reveal the truth of how racism permeates the political, social, and economic facets of U.S. society (Delgado et al., 2017). In this autoethnography, I am an 11-year-old, 6<sup>th</sup>-grade Black boy who qualified for an educational diagnosis of emotional disturbance disability—I met all the characteristics to be identified with an emotional disturbance educational disability. Notably, this Black boy has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which includes interventions and other behavior strategies for school success.

This study design is autoethnography qualitative research to examine how schools' hidden curriculum is embedded in practices fueled by institutional racism. The hidden curriculum is debatable but affects every facet of the learning climate to either promote school achievement or create mental anguish for Black boys. Racism plays a role in education to disrupt the pathway to academic success and lifelong learning for Black boys (Mills, 2003). The experiences expressed in this study are supported by research to analyze and interpret cultural assumptions of this historically underrepresented population who are of a non-White race (Chang, 2008). In this study, I will reflect on my experiences drawn from a series of events, including the maladies of institutional racism, through self-reflection and the Critical Race Theory framework.

Through the narration of these events, I will step into the shoes of a Black boy to describe my experiences and their impact. I will analyze these experiences through race, law, and power on the paradigmatic pedestal of Critical Race Theory. This autoethnography is a qualitative research method used in this study to expose and counter the reality of anti-Black and White supremacy ideology. My findings will be focused on three counter stories based on Academics, Behavior and What-about-ism.

### **Purpose of Study.**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to highlight the problem of Black boys in special education and to reveal the reality of their struggle as a result of the education system, which is deeply rooted in a history of racialized practices (Mcgee & Stovall, 2015). Although Black students work hard to alienate themselves from the threat of deemed intellectual inferiority due to systemic racism, significant social racism makes it impossible for those students to manage stress in academic and social contexts (Mcgee & Stovall, 2015). The entry point into this study is a personal narrative of the experiences of the complex nature and institutional harm to Black boys in special education. Among special education students, Black boys are overrepresented compared to their White peers (Hibel et al., 2010). This overrepresentation of Black students in special education fuels large numbers of Black students to be systematically segregated and denied education and an opportunity for a secure future (Mills, 2003). An annual report from the U.S Department of Education (DOE) states, “12-14% of Black and American Indian students receive special education services compared to 8% of White and Hispanic students and 5% of Asian Americans” (DOE, 2010, p. 25). The report also concluded that

comparatively, the disparities show more substantial numbers of emotional disturbance disability for Black students who are twice as likely to be identified (DOE, 2010). Race and inequity play a significant role in the public education system. The statistical data collected on Black boys show high discipline infractions which also leads to expulsion, suspensions, and incarcerations compared to their White peers (Hacker, 2003).

**Ida B. Casey**

***Black Girlhood – Vision, Voice, Freedom and Truth: How Anti-Black Policies in the Education System Impact African American Females***

“No one had ever asked me what it felt like to be me. Once I told the truth about that, I felt free.” Abileen Clark in the film *The Help* (Taylor, 2011).

In the movie *The Help* (Taylor, 2011), when Abilene Clark had her epiphany, how it felt to be her, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I stopped to reflect on the statement and asked myself if anyone had ever asked me how it felt to be me. My answer was an easy one, no. Someone asking me that question, what it felt like to be me, was and still is an anomaly. I always thought, who cares? I was always told how I should feel about myself, which in most cases, was positive. I’m not sure I could fully articulate how it felt to be me. As a Black girl experiencing Black Girlhood (Brown, 2016), I navigated in a society riddled with biases and low expectations of poor Black children. My Black Girlhood was the space that allowed me to be a normal Black girl, expressing my talents and exploring the opportunities that I thought would be afforded to me. Unfortunately, my experiences beyond girlhood gave me a sting of the real world of being Black and female, a sting of

invisibility, low intellectual expectations from White educators because of being Black and poor, and being denied or overlooked for opportunities afforded lighter-skinned Black girls.

In the context of methodologies, Black girlhood is an organizing construct that allows space for Black girls' experiences to be affirmed through their voices; in this instance, the acknowledgment and truths of their experiences in educational spaces. Black girlhood is defined as the freedom that allows Black girls to be who they are amid structural socio-historical biases, without judgment (Brown, 2016). Practicing Black girlhood can change the trajectory of the current focus on Black girls by redirecting the attention and efforts of blaming, shaming, punishment, or exclusion in educational spaces towards valuing and affirming Black girls even in their complexities (Brown, 2016). While intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) is the layering of Black girls' various experiences, Black girlhood provides that safe space to give voice and affirmation to those experiences forming an unspoken but understood kinship.

Black girls enter education and overall society bringing with them multiple layers that compose their identities. These layers or intersectionalities (Crenshaw, 1989), the life-lived experiences of the marginalized, are used to exacerbate their oppressive state. Further, these experiences are used as a template for how policies are shaped - using the overlapping of race, class, and gender against their very existence (Crenshaw, 1989).

Voices of Black girls are often unheard and not a part of the policymaking process, rendering their experiences unimportant and invalid in the process of policy development. Hearing the voices and stories through the researcher will substantiate how



policies impact Middle and High School Black girls. The hope is to dispel the socio-historical beliefs that play a part in the development of educational policies. Hopefully, the stories and counter-stories in the study will reflect on strategies and positive approaches to improve the educational experiences of Middle and High School Black female students.

The experiences of Black girls within schools and society suggest that social constructions of gender and femininity intersecting with race shape their educational outcomes (Blake et al., 2010; DeBlase, 2003 as cited in Annamma, S.A., Anyon, Y., & Joseph, N, 2016). Anna Julia Cooper's (1892), *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*, highlights the racialization of gender and the sexualization of race. Cooper (1892) examines sexualization, race, and gender from an intersectional approach, connecting them to systems of oppression and identifying the simultaneous impact of racism and gender discrimination on Black female bodies. She also posits the importance of education and intellectual development, recognition of Black females, respecting their differences and intellect, offering that all education levels – higher, and vocational, include women, be a road to equal opportunity (Cooper).

I have listened to Black girls as they express their desires to advocate for themselves through poetry or protest, who emphatically want to affirm their experiences of racism, sexism, or intellectual disparagement in educational and societal spaces. As I listen, I reflect, wishing that I would have had the courage as a girl to give voice to my emotions about the inequalities that I and many of my peers faced in school. I could have offered something to the fight for Black Girlhood, bringing to light the invisibility, lack

of opportunities, and the stereotypical expectations of Black girls. However, I find myself at this juncture in my life, realizing that I still have a role in this fight that has continued through the years. Black girls continue to be marginalized in all educational spaces, being denied opportunities that are easily accessed by their White counterparts and being left out, ignored, or eliminated from conversations of violence and abuse in schools (Miller, 2008). Through the expressions of Black girls, I find a place to be a voice to affirm their marginalization, and by doing so, help others see their plight.

I have chosen to use autoethnography to humanize Black girl's experiences in educational spaces, bringing to light the implicit and explicit anti-Black practices that negatively impact the academics, sociological and psychological effects. This process gives voice to my personal experiences and provides insight into the emotions and feelings connected to lived experiences. These lived experiences cannot be fully understood without including the sting of racial and gender biases of colorism – that “ism” that implies that light or White skin color is better than Black. The significance of colorism in this context is the ideological belief that light versus dark is better. Coupled with other racial discriminants, it negatively affects Black girls' mental and emotional wellbeing (Jeffries, 2019). It plays a huge role in self-esteem (Jeffries, 2019), an essential piece in understanding their academic experiences.

The study will use Critical Race Theory as the theoretical lens to help identify the implicit and explicit biases influenced by racist ideologies and structures that maintain racial inequality (Simson, 2014). Utilizing Critical Race Policy Analysis (Lopez, 2003; Parker & Villalpando, 2007) I will capture the narratives and counter-stories of the

subjects to increase awareness and unmask the ways that educational institutions use policies and practices to perpetuate the marginalization and oppression of African American girls (Lopez, 2003; Parker & Villalpando, 2007). Colorism – an ideology that privileges or prefers lighter-skinned over darker-skinned Black people (Feliciano, 2016; Reece, 2016), will show that the effects of contemporary colorism are far-reaching. Colorism will also provide a point of reference to the consistent practice or preference of light skin vs. dark skin. The colorism ideology will also emphasize that lighter-skinned Black Americans and Whites earn higher wages (Goldsmith et al., 2006), receive shorter prison sentences, are perceived as more attractive, smarter and more capable than their darker-skinned counterparts. Skin tone generates cognitive bias and as the skin shade evolves from light tones to darker ones, negative connotations about ability and competence emerges (Thompson & McDonald, 2016). The Color of Mind ideology (Darby & Rury, 2018) will give a historical view of how the doctrine of Blacks being intellectually inferior to Whites impact the achievement gap. The Color of Mind ideology embedded in educational practices, and coupled with the negative stereotypes placed on Black females, affects their academic experiences (Darby & Rury, 2018). Using these schools of thought will show how the racist, sociohistorical ideologies continue to fuel how education policies are formed and perpetuate inequality in Black girls' educational spaces.

Black females were chosen for this study to bring to light their experiences through the lens of the researchers' personal experiences. There was the realization that these same experiences and negative impacts continue to affect Black female adolescent's

intellect and self-confidence. Through firsthand observations of young Black girls experiences, I realized that my experiences mirrored theirs. Woven together, these separate but similar experiences form a tapestry that illustrates the internal pain and educational inequalities that I suffered, and Black females continue to suffer, which is a story that must be addressed.

These stories, narratives, and personal accounts will reflect the experiences and impacts of anti-Black, White supremacy-influenced educational policies in Black school systems. Through personal narratives, it is my desire to help readers become sensitive to the issues of policies that marginalize and continue to oppress Black girls. They will show how Black girls are emotionally and academically impacted, and provide a deeper understanding of why the capacity to empathize with those with cultural differences (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) is important.

This study will look at how implicit bias and anti-Blackness could have marred my academic experiences and self-assurance as a Black student both in high school and post-secondary institutions. This study will attempt to provide a cultural and sociological understanding of how anti-Black policies fuel educational biases through personal narratives, counter-stories, and observational accounts. It will reflect on how it impacts academic performance, self-awareness, future endeavors, and emotional wellness, giving a holistic view of the experiences of Black females through the eyes of the researcher. It will look at how their environment and intersectionalities affect their behaviors and outcomes in educational spaces. It will describe and analyze my personal experiences and attempt to educate people outside of the researcher's cultural experiences (Ellis, 2004;

Holman- Jones, 2005). This approach treats research as a more socially-conscious process providing a format for connecting cultural experiences with theory (Laslett, 1999).

It is essential to understand how White supremacy ideologies influence the anti-Black policies that have become barriers to educational opportunities for Black people for decades. Tracking is an example of White supremacy-influenced policies that are still being used in a subliminal form in low-income public schools that, as Moore and Davenport (1986) put it, “is a political ploy that is accompanied by social norms, differences in status, and expectations, and perceived occupational attainment” (p.13). It is the determinant for the distribution of quality versus lesser-quality education and school resources that can determine the success or unsuccessful educational services, which usually impacts race and social stratification (Moore & Davenport, 1986). As an educational practice that began in the early 1900’s, students were assigned tracks based largely on IQ and other factors such as race and skin color. The dictated placement was based on presumptions that low-income minorities were not capable of being academically successful (Loveless, 1998). Assumed or identified track three students were usually placed in the remedial, vocational, non- college preparatory program (Hatwood & Gomez, 2008 ). Placing students in tracking programs is discriminatory as stated in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination in ability grouping or tracking students (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 1964). Titles VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, the assignment of students to

schools or classes. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act deemed academic tracking a violation of civil rights, which states:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Civil Rights Act, 1964).

Curriculum tracks or ability grouping, as they are now called, still determine the academic path of a student supposedly to help them determine their career choice or whether they were capable of going beyond a certain level of education (Loveless, 1998).

How tracking or ability grouping shows up in a school or a district was and may be safe to say, continues to be dictated by the same discriminatory standards, the presumptive achievement level of the student population, and their measured background and characteristics to determine their track assignment (Gamoran & Mare, 1989). As a result, minority students continue to face unequal educational opportunities. In high schools the process for ability grouping or tracking continues on a larger scale, grouping students according to economic and presumed academic abilities (Westchester Institute, 2007). This exacerbates the educational inequities that leave them behind, a system that is demoralizing and demotivating to students in the lower tracks (Murphy & Hallinger, 1989; Oakes et al., 1992). This leaves them with inadequate education and opportunities that would give them the ability to compete with their White counterparts (Kozol, 1991).

Ability grouping or tracking is only one example of the anti-Black policies and the disparagement of the intellect of Black students that haunts the halls of the education

system today. It posits as one of many policies that fuels biases towards minority students, particularly Black females (Evans, 2016). However, the process by which track is designed sheds light on the racist ideologies that are embedded in other education policies related to Black students, girls particularly. This poses a bigger question of how education systems and school policies use the intersectionalities, the combined layers of a life lived (Crenshaw, 1989), of minority students. Or are policies designed using the single story (Adichie, 2009) concept, creating and using stereotypes, particularly with girls, to be the definitive factor by which policies are designed. Single stories, as described by Chimamanda Adichie (2009), are those images and beliefs that have been used to define a person, place, or situation. The danger of relying on a single story comes with misunderstandings, limited perspectives, and a lack of knowledge that results in an “incomplete and sometimes untrue assumption” (Adichie, 2009, 12.49). Focusing on the intersectionalities of students can be an analytic tool (Collins & Bilge, 2016) to analyze and possibly understand their complexities, and shape policies based on the understanding of the layers that students encompass. However, it seems as though intersectionalities become single stories or stereotypes used to develop policies for Black students, particularly Black girls. In essence, anti-Black policies seem to be purposefully designed to alienate and leave Black students behind, based on the belief that students' predisposition to poverty and other societal circumstances are the cause for their collective situations (Coleman, 1987; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Calabrese (1988), Fine (1986), Felice (1981), and Michaelson (1981) argued that the educational disadvantages of minority students are a result of overt and covert policies designed to ensure that there

are disparities in the social class system, which is embedded in the education of the disenfranchised, marginalized students. Unfortunately, the American education system refuses to see the system as discriminatory (Ogbu, 2003).

### **Purpose of Study.**

The purpose of this study is to look at how Anti-Black or Anti-Blackness (Dumas, 2016) policies in the education system impact African American females' intellectually, academically, and emotionally and how implicit and explicit educator biases are further influenced by anti-Black policies. Are the intersectionalities of Black girls used to shape these policies that can potentially impede their success in school and ultimately in life? When we think about anti-Black behavior/ideology, immediately White supremacy and racism enter the mind. Anti-Blackness is the institutional and interactional disregard for Blackness and individuals associated with being Black (Dumas & Ross, 2016). Anti-Black educational policies, wrapped in White supremacy ideologies, and viewed as intentionally unequal, are embedded with safety-nets to protect White students from the threat assumed to be posed by Blacks to their educational well-being (Dumas, 2016).

How policies show up in schools depends on the population and pre-characterization of the students. The persistence of implicit biases are maintained through systems such as education (Payne et al., 2019). This study will reflect on how biases influence policy development in the education arena and embody anti-Black, White supremacy ideologies that fuel biases towards Black adolescent females, and how they are affected emotionally and academically (Dumas, 2016).



Cultural stereotypes of Black students are embedded in the tenets of policies, educational practices, and decisions that impact the educational experiences of Black students (Ladson-Billings, 1998). This study will incorporate social justice theoretical frameworks, the Color of Mind Ideology, (Darby & Rury, 2018), and Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical Race Policy Analysis (Lopez, 2003, Parker & Villalpando, 2007) will provide a framework for the personal narratives and observational interpretations of the experiences of female adolescents related to anti-Black school and education system policies (Dumas, 2015). It will look at how policy discourse is informed by anti-Blackness and look at what an awareness of anti-Blackness means when shaping educational policy and practice (Dumas, 2015).

Many questions arise as a result of my reflecting on my educational experiences. The autoethnography process provides me the opportunity to give voice and validation to these experiences through personal narratives. The process has allowed me to frame questions that bring clarity to my experiences and help others understand the layers that other Black girls wrestle with. As a professional in the education arena, I also ask myself questions that, when answered, help me understand what my role is in attempting to eliminate racism and biases against Black girls in educational spaces.

I pose these thoughts for self-reflection:

As a Black female educator, what role have I played in perpetuating unintentional, but apparent biases? How have my past experiences of racism and sexism shaped my interactions with Black girls? Did my experiences impact my views and development of classroom and district policies? Have my past experiences formed biases towards other

races? Last and most importantly, how can I help young Black girls find their voice in their fight for equality in educational spaces and society? Not only should I ask these questions of myself, but also in the context of efforts to reduce implicit biases in the minds of individuals (Payne et al., 2019).

**Jamie C. Klupe**

***It's Just Me: One White Lady's Radical Racial Realization***

Writing from a White female educator's perspective has been one of my most difficult educational history tasks. This fact surprises me because I am all of those things, and no one knows me better than me. I have been avoiding doing any real thinking on the subject because I know during this process, I will have to make sense of and come to terms with my White supremacy and how that White supremacy plays out in my life and career.

In 2018, I found the research and writings of Peggy McIntosh. In her work entitled *The Invisible Knapsack*, she examines White privilege (McIntosh, 1989). When I first read this article, much of what she wrote was completely new information to me. White privilege was a new concept as tiny as a flower seed buried in my prefrontal cortex. This article, however, gave this seed the water it needed to begin to sprout roots.

While I acknowledge there is a seed, I continue to struggle with why it's there. There have been countless moments in which I want to take the proverbial spade and release myself of this burden. It is relatively easy to do. As a White person, I have the freedom to remove the obligation as soon as it suits me, and White society urges me to do just this. My Whiteness presses me to believe that this seed isn't going to produce a

flower. It's growing into a weed. To discuss Whiteness not only as a racial category but as a position of power and dominance over others is to "challenge the apparent amnesia of White people concerning the existence and salience of Whiteness" (Frankenberg, 2004, p. 116).

I have been a speech language pathologist in urban and suburban school districts for the past decade. Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) in a school setting play an integral role in educational decision making in special education. Many of the decisions SLPs make reflect decisions on a macro-level. These include assessment selection and strategy as well as diagnosis qualifications and placement considerations for special education. When I first became an SLP I didn't question these decisions because they were obviously based on facts. A student was recommended for evaluation, I chose assessments based on the perceived need, evaluated the student, scored the evaluation, and the scores told me whether the student did or did not qualify for speech and language therapy. As I gained more experience and worked with students from all over the St. Louis metropolitan area, I began to notice that my perceptions of my students' abilities didn't necessarily match the previous evaluator's perceptions. I started to ask questions and start conversations with fellow SLPs to see if they, too, noticed discrepancies in perceptions of behaviors and diagnosis. When they agreed, I wondered how I might have never noticed this before. That is when I realized that I was the White female SLP in the room that didn't see race and that I had to be the one to change my perceptions.

**Purpose of Study.**

The overall intent of this work is to explore ways I have operationalized Whiteness and upheld White supremacy in my career as a speech language pathologist. My use of autoethnography as a White, female speech language pathologist (SLP) will focus on myself and will be written in the first person. However, because “White is whatever Whites and Whiteness says it is” (Leonardo, 2013, p. 85), I could write this dissertation from the perspective of the collective we. As a White woman, I can relate personal experiences that the collective we, all White women, have experienced. I won’t do that, though. I’m going to expose my shortcomings and mistakes and lessons learned, often at the expense of others, to teach women like myself that to be the change, you have to start by looking in the mirror. By using my personal experiences, I will be able to offer White female speech language pathologists a window into which they can view and analyze their own experiences and determine that “one’s mode of interpretation will be connected with communities of meaning in significant ways” (Frankenberg, 2004 p. 107). Or said another way, others may see their reflection inside of me and see that we are the same. My success becomes your success, and my failures become your failures. In doing this autoethnography, I hope to show women like me that it’s ok to admit to mistakes regarding race and that one you know, you do better.

My use of autoethnography will be grounded in critical Whiteness studies. As Ruth Frankenberg (2004) explains, “[f]or the researcher’s perspective is also connected with a politicized, thinking consciousness such that one’s mode of interpretation will be connected with communities of meaning in significant ways” (p.107). I understand that

my perspective is defined by, more than any other intersection I occupy, my Whiteness. Critical Whiteness studies “focuses on problematizing the normality of hegemonic whiteness arguing that in doing so whites deflect, ignore, or dismiss their role, racialization, and privilege in race dynamics” (Matias et al., 2014, p. 291). I want to make race, specifically Whiteness, front and center, as I examine my work as a White female educator. By centering my race and naming its operation in society as White supremacy, I intend to push the boundary of comfort to jar White female SLPs into an understanding that “whiteness is the underlying mechanism that maintains a racist system, and not acknowledging whiteness contributes to the permanence of race and racism” (Allen, 2001; Leonardo, 2009 as cited in Matias et al., 2014, p. 291).

I will organize my autoethnography into two large sections. The first section will provide my personal narrative from elementary school through my first year working in a suburban school district. The second section is my story from 2018, when I began working on my doctorate degree, and then reversed time to critically reflect on my past lived experiences to demonstrate how the past and the present often act as the inverse of each other and how once I began to see racism, I can’t unsee it.

**Julie C. Moorman**

***Inevitable or Avoidable?: Students Turned Inmates and My Role in the School-to-Prison-Pipeline***

“Black people just break the law more.”, plain and simple. My father is a retired police officer. As a cop’s kid, this was the explanation I would get when asking about racial disparities within the criminal justice system. My father was born in 1945, growing

up in the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. I feel the need to explain that I love my father and believe him to be a good man, one that would give anyone, despite the color of their skin, the shirt off his back. So you can imagine my confusion when receiving a response, such as the one in my opening statement, conflicting with morals, I believe, my parents raised me to uphold. I thought, “Could he believe this?”. “Is my Dad racist?; My Dad’s a good person. He can’t be racist. Does he know how racist the answer he just gave me is? How could he even think this way?; He can’t believe this, right?”, these were just a few of the types of thoughts racing through my head after asking a question that I hoped would lead to an open, reflective conversation. The question that was most thought-provoking for me and possibly the most important was, “Why does he believe this?”.

At this point, you can probably imagine the conversation, and subsequent discussions did not go quite as I had hoped. When I asked my Dad to explain why he thought Black people broke the law more, he simply replied, “Because it’s a fact.” He continued to tell stories giving what he considered as evidence of this fact. At this point I can’t even remember his bullet points of apparent evidence, because, at that moment in our conversation, I had an epiphany that was consuming my sole focus: “He actually, wholly believes this, and truly sees no wrong in this thought process.” I decided then and there that I would research the subject, as, at the time of what turned out to be an argument, I didn’t have any numbers to back up my side. I needed to find *real* evidence, believing that if I could back up my viewpoint and the truth with solid facts, he would, to

quote the soundtrack of my favorite Broadway musical, *Wicked*, "...be changed for the better" (2003).

Throughout my research and work as a White, female educator, I realized my Dad's statement about acts of crime was incorrect. However, I also realized, we as teachers, operating in a school system built mainly on Whiteness and White Supremacy, are quite possibly the reason many White people and police officers believe it to be true. Could we, as educators, be perpetuating this belief through disciplinary policies and daily decisions that could affect Black students into their adult lives? Have we been metaphorically pumping our Black students through what is known as the school-to-prison pipeline? The following qualitative, research study digs deeper into the aforementioned topics, with a focus on the phenomenon of racial biases and Whiteness in both our school system and society as a whole. I believe that incarceration is avoidable, rather than inevitable, for our Black students. The question then, is what role do I play in both the perpetuation and extinction of this process?

### **Purpose of Study.**

The present study was designed to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and actions (both past and present) of White educators as they pertain to racial biases in our school systems and the school-to-prison pipeline. The study will explore this topic using personal narratives, as I am a part of the whole (problem), as a White female operating within our current education system. The study will also explore how my narratives (capturing my personal experiences both before and during my teaching career), possibly implicate our school systems, myself included, in the perpetuation of the school-to-prison pipeline and

the otherwise avoidable incarceration of young, Black adults. Using myself as the primary case study, the intent of this study is to use critical reflection to help us understand what our White educators are doing as well as what they could be doing to disrupt the systematic cycle of oppression and put an end to the school-to-prison pipeline.

This study will be qualitative by design, taking a phenomenological approach to better understand racial bias in our schools through the lens of Whiteness. This study will research the phenomenon of racial bias and Whiteness through the use of autoethnography, as well as historical research and data points, arming myself with the push needed to take critical action (Ginwright, 2016) on changing the school system and outcomes for my students. A qualitative design was chosen for this study due to the sensitive nature of the research topic. The privilege that many readers of this work may have, might not allow them to understand (or allows them to forget) that, “For much of our history Black people have had to wage a relentless war against White supremacy.” (Glaude, 2017, p. 48). The decision was made that if the system is going to be changed for good, a true depiction, through critical self-reflection on lived experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), was required. “Our silence about the suffering throughout this country conspires with injustices” (Glaude, 2017, p. 48). This autoethnography will bring to light experiences that many White, female educators can relate to as far as our role in the incarceration of Black youths. Viewing my faults will allow educators a chance to see their own areas of implication. This study is being conducted in an effort to devise suggestions as to how we might, if possible, disrupt the systemic racism in our schools through critical action (Ginwright, 2016). Thus, finally disrupting the



school-to-prison-pipeline. We must first see where we are in order to see how to get to where we should be.

It is important to note that, as with most qualitative studies, this study will have an emergent design, meaning:

... the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data. ... The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and engage in the best practices to obtain that information (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 44).

This study will look deeper into the correlation between the White, female-dominated profession of education and the systematic and systemic racial bias upon which our school systems were built. Through my lived experiences, this study will look at the effects these systems may have on Black students.

The intent of this study is self- discovery, with the hope of encouraging White educators to reflect on their own practices and beliefs. When speaking about in-service teachers Brunner (1994) argues, “As students are called on to explore their own personal histories, their social, political, economic and cultural realities through a curriculum of multiple voices, their predispositions tend to become more apparent” (p. 235). Through this process of self-reflection and self-narrative, I am aiming to break down my own walls and be truly vulnerable with myself and others in the spirit of growth, change, and betterment. In addition, the hope is that, through reading my autoethnographic narratives (backed by and based on both my lived experiences and historical accounts), the readers

gain an understanding of how our schools are cloaked in Whiteness and the effects thereof, but most importantly that they use the information to encourage their own personal and professional growth. As Chang (2016) points out, “Self-discovery in a cultural sense is intimately related to understanding others” (p. 34).

**Angeline Williams-Jackson**

***The Impact of Anti-Blackness and Internalized Oppression: A Black Woman Educator’s Experiences Navigating the Educational System***

As a Black woman in America, I have had an intimate relationship with anti-Blackness and White supremacy in the educational system. Anti-blackness refers to the racism that is explicitly damaging to black people (Morris et al., 2018). White supremacy is a term used to characterize various belief systems central to which are one or more of the following fundamental tenets: 1) Whites should dominate people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist; 2) Whites should live by themselves in a Whites-only society; 3) White people have their own culture that is superior to other cultures; 4) White people are genetically superior to other people, and White supremacy is the political or social-economic system where, both individually and collectively, White students and teachers benefit from structural advantages and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not (Mills, 2013). From an early age, I learned that education is the way to liberation. I have always believed that education is liberating, and think that it would help us gain access to knowledge that would equip us for the fight for social equality and racial uplift (Ramsey, 2008). Darby & Rury (2018) highlight how we have come to this current junction in the educational system. Darby & Rury (2018) stated that

the educational system has ideologies that reinforce negative stereotypes about Black children and their ability to learn, especially Black males. From that lone Black girl in all White gifted classrooms to one of few Black administrators in my district, I have witnessed firsthand how anti-Blackness and White supremacy shapes the lives and impacts Black students' outcomes. Even before I knew my place in any class, I knew that I was Black, and with that Blackness, many of my teachers had a preconceived notion about my abilities and worth. Preconceptions of abilities and value did not only start and end with me but also extended to how my Black male counterparts are treated. The stereotypes about Black intelligence began this internalization of inferiority in me. Steele (1997) refers to this phenomenon as a stereotype threat, which has caused Black students to live down to the dominant culture's expectation in ways that it impacts their academics and identity. The overarching sentiment all through my education experience was that Black students continue to be viewed as inferior compared to their White counterparts, and even more so inadequate if they are a Black and male (Delpit, 2012). Even with this early introduction to the Color of Mind ideology, I still had hope in education. So much hope that despite my early experiences, I still found myself in the field of education. As I reflect on my experiences from student to teacher to administrator, I am now able to see how anti-Blackness and White supremacy uphold the racist ideas in the *Color of Mind*. With this mindset, Black children are looked at from a deficit lens versus a value add lens (Ladson-Billings, 1998). They continue to be undervalued and dismissed, in my opinion, based on experiences and observations. I did not know that my formative experiences would play a significant role in seeing myself, especially how I saw Black males. As a

Black female, school in my early years was not a place of violence; however, that wasn't the same for Black males. Early on, I learned that Black male students were not valued and pushed into situations that dimmed their brilliance. What is evident more now than ever before is that education and how we use it are vehicles for perpetuating anti-Blackness and White supremacy (Charron, 2009).

### **Purpose of Study.**

This dissertation will analyze how my formative years in the educational system impacted my ability to see Black male students and their worth and brilliance. I will use the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) to analyze my experiences and process my experiences in the public education system. Critical race theory is also the theoretical framework that I will use to explain my discoveries into self. My research into self and the analysis of how anti-Blackness and White supremacy impacted me will show how the Color of Mind ideology is a powerful tool in upholding anti-Blackness and White supremacy (Darby & Rury, 2018). My deficit-based thinking and internalized oppression were fueled by interactions as a student, then as a teacher, and finally as an administrator. These experiences are narrated through the use of critical self-reflections and narratives. This autoethnography will be divided into three phases. The first phase is me as a student and the indoctrination of anti-Blackness and White supremacy. Then me as a teacher, and the manifestation of internalized oppression and deficit-based thinking. Then finally, me as an administrator and the path to liberation.

These texts used in the development of my anchor stories: *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* (DeGruy, 2017) and the *Color of Mind* (Darby & Rury, 2018) as supporting

text to the first phase of research development, *Critical Race Theory in Education* (Dixson et al., 2013) and *Freedom Dreams* (Kelley, 2002) as supporting text for the second phase of research development, and finally, *We Need More Than Just Survive* (Love, 2019), and *How To Be An Antiracist* (Kendi, 2019) are supporting text for the third phase of research development. These anchor texts support and put into words how I found myself caught between the world of anti-Blackness and White supremacy and everyday experiences as a Black woman educator and the tricky navigation towards educational liberation for Black students. Unfortunately, anti-Blackness and White supremacy work hand in hand and always have and have pitted the Black female against Black males (DeGruy, 2017). Anti-Blackness and White supremacy are evident in Black male students' outcomes as I share the stories that weave in racist ideologies, internalized oppression, and radical imagination. By sharing my narratives and critical self-reflections, I hope to work through the stereotype threat, shame, guilt, and harm I have encountered from student to the administrator and the path between them. It also gives me a chance to reflect on the damage I have caused as a victim of anti-Blackness and White supremacy and how my activism ignited. These narratives will provide a lens for others to look through as they find themselves navigating the public education system as a Black woman and interacting with Black male students.

Before I knew me, Angeline, I knew that I was Black. Before I was Angeline, I was that anomaly. That well-spoken Black child who was already reading on third-grade level by kindergarten. That well dressed polite child stood silent as she watched how the adults in her world treated other students who looked like her badly and who did not have

the same value placed on them due to their average intelligence. This discriminatory behavior became evident when it was time for me, that bright Black child, to be separated from her two equally intelligent and brilliant male cousins. This early experience was a foundational piece to the development of this us against them mentality that I find in the Black community among Black women and Black men (Woodson, 1933; DeGruy, 2017). What the attention did for me was to begin to create this narrative that I was different, and by different, I must have been better than my male counterparts. It did not matter that my cousins and I all read on the same level; we were all clean and well mannered; what mattered more is that I was less intimidating and threatening as a female. My Blackness wasn't as offensive to my teachers as my cousins (Love, 2019). It was easier for my White teachers to find what little value they did in my intelligence, just as it was easier for them to discount that intelligence in my cousins. I was sent on to an accelerated class, and they remained in our regular kindergarten class. I was devastated because we were so close, and it was pounded into our DNA that we are family and family sticks together. This early memory and the trauma it caused is still fresh in my memory synapses.

DeGruy (2017) states that even though chattel slavery is over, the duration and consequence have caused trauma to Blacks in America hundreds of years later. The interaction also set up the feelings that my ancestors probably felt when families were sold away from one another. That is the idea that Whiteness is superior and has value, and people of color better not question it (DeGruy, 2017). As with slavery, our cries and protests fell on deaf ears as we tried to cling to each other, and as I wedged myself between them, trying to avoid separation. So that experience alone began the

indoctrination of how anti-Blackness plays out in education, pitting the Black female against the Black male. Reinforced was the idea that my femaleness and intelligence was more valuable than my equally intelligent cousins and their maleness (DeGruy, 2017). Of course, I did not know then what all of this meant. Still, from this experience and many more as I progressed through the education system, I learned that the Black male was not favored. If I wanted to remain a favorite, I had to distance myself from them, hence developing the internalized oppression factor, probably fueled by White feminism, that played into this false pedestal that I found myself on for many years (Lorde, 2018). After all of the dust settled, I found myself in a class full of White kids, mostly female, and the game was on from here. “If Black People are to be educated within racially diverse schools, and achieve at levels comparable to White peers, we must debunk doubts about their intelligence, character, and conduct” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 2).

I often wonder about what impact anti-Blackness and White supremacy have on the development of internalized oppression as I progressed from student, to teacher, and finally to administrator. I also wonder how anti-Blackness and White supremacy formed the basis of my interaction with Black students in particular Black male students. I am using one theoretical framework, Critical Race Theory. Critical race theory shares the oppressed’s stories, and autoethnography enables that voice to be shared (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) offered that the voice component of critical race theory provides a way to communicate the oppressed person’s experiences and realities. The first step on the road to justice is to link critical race theory and education.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) state that critical race theory can help others understand how race matters in education. Five tenets are foundational in critical race theory and are integral in the development of my understanding of how CRT is used to analyze the education systems. Still, the most important being the belief that racism is endemic to all of us in the United States and woven into our daily lives. Critical race theory, or CRT, exposes how White privilege and White supremacy upholds racial inequality (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Another crucial component of CRT is the idea of interest convergence. Much discussion has taken place among critical race theorists regarding the notion of interest convergence. According to Bell (2013) interest convergence is the idea that Whites-only allows certain privileges when it benefits them, as evidenced in the *Brown Vs. Board* landmark case. Using CRT as a theoretical framework, I am striving to use this framework to dismantle racially oppressive systems.

In 1994, critical race theory (CRT) was first used as an analytical framework to assess inequity in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Since then, scholars have used CRT as a framework to analyze further and critique educational research and practice (Ladson-Billings, 2005). CRT's framework comprises the following five tenets: counter-storytelling, the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property, interest conversion, and the critique of liberalism (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Out of these five tenets, I decided to use three of the tenets to center my experiences and find a tool to help me fight for educational justice. The first tenet that I chose to utilize was the use of counter-storytelling. I offer a counterstory through the use of critical self-reflections and narratives, in hopes that my experiences will help other Black female educators start to



focus on their practices and understand how those practices started. I also used the tenet of racism's permanence as I detail my interactions with public education institutions. Lastly, I chose interest convergence to highlight how we must be aware of the happenings behind the scenes to fight inequities and injustices. Yosso (2005) points out that researchers are still searching for the necessary tools to analyze and challenge the impact of race and racism in the U. S. Using CRT and the chosen tenets, I am developing a counternarrative that may challenge our current system and practices of oppression.

Using autoethnography as the analytical tool for research allowed me to use storytelling to examine my experiences in the educational system and all of the interactions during each phase. I am using my narratives to frame my research focus and respond to my wondering about impact. I see autoethnography as a way of inquiry in the narrative form (Ellis & Bochner, 2006). Narrative inquiry is critical self-reflection, which is foundational to autoethnography (Trahar, 2009). By being able to critically self-reflect, I hope to offer readers the opportunity to see how my wondering unfolds as I journey through the educational system.

I view this method as a way to allow me to write an intellectual autobiography that will hopefully provide healing (Glowacki-Dudka et al., 2005 ). Glowacki-Dudka et al. (2005) state that autoethnography is a form of autobiography rooted in sociology, which aligns perfectly because this tool allows me to examine the answer to my wonderings about the impact of anti-Blackness and White supremacy in a way that may inform the reader of how to change the system. Using autoethnography can also allow the reader to add to my work and, hopefully, use my work to reimagine education.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### **White Supremacy & Anti-Blackness: The Pillars of Our Education System**

"Racism, one of the most baneful and persistent evils, is a major barrier to peace" (DeGruy, 2017, p. 11). Racism functions as a collective White structural domination (Vaught, 2011). Critical Race Theorists, including Ladson-Billings (1998), work from a standpoint that racism is endemic to American culture and a permanent fixture in American society. Critical Race Theory (CRT), according to Ladson-Billings (2009), begins with the notion that racism is normal and a way of life in American society. Because it is so enmeshed in our social order's fabric, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture. CRT comprises five tenets: racism is endemic and a permanent fixture, Whiteness as property, interest convergence, counter storytelling, and storytelling, and the critique of White liberalism (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Tenets of CRT allow scholars to analyze how racism bleeds through the veins of the educational system. CRT scholars challenge racism and Whiteness in a way that reveals the damage they cause Black students while making Black students the focus instead of Whiteness (Bell, 1995). Racism is violent, and that violence is played out every day across America and in every schoolhouse where Black students sit (Kozol, 1991). CRT scholars work diligently to uncover the deeply damaging impact that racism has on our educational system (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

According to DiAngelo (2011), "Whiteness itself refers to the specific dimension of racism that serves to elevate white people over people of color" (p. 56). White supremacy is a term that refers to a political, cultural, and economic system premised on

the subjugation of people who are not of the White European race and ethnicity. White supremacy establishes, upholds, and normalizes hierarchy based on the premise that the less Black someone is, the closer they are to God (Rankin & Solomon, 2019). Racism brings with it a belief that a particular race determines human traits and capabilities that, in turn, assess superiority or subordination of a specific race (Omi & Winant, 1994). Coupled with racism is anti-Black racism (Bell, 1992) or Anti-Blackness. Ball et al. (2020) adopt the definition of Anti-Blackness from The Council for Democratizing Education's definition of Anti-Blackness as a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues. Bell (1992) highlights the idea that Black people's treatment is not just a manifestation of racism and White supremacy, but also anti-Blackness. Anti-Blackness is the socially constructed rendering of Black bodies as inhuman, disposable, and inherently problematic (Bell, 1992). The issue is not White people, but anti-Blackness.

White supremacy and anti-Blackness, and the systems created, as a result, operate in schools today in ways that favor some over others. Systemic racism is found in all aspects of Black people's lives, which reinforces Whiteness as property ideology (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As Nelson (2018) says, "the legacy of Jim Crow, de facto segregation, is one of these systems. De facto segregation refers to patterns of racial separation that are no longer required by explicitly discriminatory laws" (paragraph 3). White policy-makers consistently structure educational policies that eliminate Black students who do not fit into the dominant cultural norms, which, according to White standards, may pose a threat to the academic well-being of Blacks (Dumas, 2016;

Gillborn, 2007). White supremacy is an oppressive system infused with unmerited privilege at the expense of the suffering of people who are not White (Jensen, 2005). Leonardo (2013) reminds us that “White supremacy is an entire political system” (p. 94). White supremacy shows up in many areas of education for students through tracking, gifted, and talented program placement, and special education identification (Radd & Grosland, 2019). It also shows up for educators through unfair hiring practices and disproportionate numbers of White administrators (Radd & Grosland, 2019). White supremacy often “goes undetected, despite the major implications it imposes on the educational equity of students of color” (Matias & Mackey, 2015, p. 35). Matias and Mackey (2015) likens White supremacy to a disease in education with the only way to fully cure the disease being to commit “to teaching the manifestations of whiteness that lie underneath the mere recognition that whites hold racial privilege” (p. 35).

White privilege arguments about race overemphasize both the attitude and perspective as Leonardo (2013) states, “leaving White people room to rationalize, categorize, and, ultimately, forget” (p. 95). Leonardo describes Whites as being “habituated to think of racism as a problem of attitude or perspective” (p. 95). Levine-Rasky (2000) offers that White privilege discourse places too great an emphasis on the individual. By emphasizing the individual and individual attitudes, White privilege's more significant impact on society goes unexamined. The impact is that individuals have a feeling of helplessness and a lack of responsibility. The idea of having privilege means that one has something that others do not, which continues to perpetuate an us-versus-them mentality. White privilege discourse in education fails to bring about

change because it does not address the complicated relationship White people have with racism and White supremacy (Matias & Mackey, 2016). It overemphasizes the individual, which leads to White educators' failure to be able to attend to the part they play in White supremacy critically. They cannot evaluate themselves as part of the pillars that uphold White supremacy because, indeed, a single person cannot uphold the world (Matias & Mackey, 2016). White educators live in a tangled web, but do not see themselves as the spider. If having White privilege is not something that one asks for, how is it their fault, and what can they do to change it? It separates the individual from the system.

The fact remains that the gaps in educational outcomes for Black students are rooted in systemic racism, where White supremacy and anti-Blackness is the norm in educational settings (LaSalle et al., 2019). Unequal distribution of educational resources presents a lack of access to an equitable education. White norms in schools perpetuate inequality, and the norms that appear to favor Black children also ensure academic failure (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2011). Students who depend on getting knowledge from teachers and the education system automatically become conduits through which White supremacist and anti-Black ideologies are transmitted; they are unconsciously forced to accept the dominant ideologies and values class (Freire, 1970). While it is difficult to hear the words White supremacy without having an adverse reaction, we believe educators must hear these words and understand the context. In a White-dominated society, Whites have privileges that are unearned, invisible, and so normal that they are not consciously acknowledged as privileges or power (Howard, 1999). This denial of power is paired with the feelings of shame and guilt that become the pillars that maintain

White supremacy in our schools (Picower, 2009). Darby and Rury (2018) conclude that Anti-Blackness and White supremacy in education upholds the racism and mental castration that Black students experience in classrooms across America.

One of the leading factors in perpetuating White supremacy and anti-Blackness is educational policy (DeGruy, 2017; Gillborn, 2006). The creation of education policy is controversial and (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) influences the lives and practices of Black students (Ball et al., 2020). Anti-Blackness reflects policies and rules that address expectations and belief systems connected to Black student outcomes and success (Ball et al., 2020). Anti-Black and gender-biased school policies designed with cultural disregard focus on elimination, exclusion, and punishment with no intent to protect Black students (Dumas, 2016). The educational system is built on the pillars of White supremacy and anti-Blackness. Critical Race Theory policy analysis focuses on the processes and ways that educational policies perpetuate marginalized students' continued oppression. As schools design policies, questions on whether their policies continue to marginalize students of color or enforce gender laden ideologies go unasked (Andrews, 2017). Carter Andrews (2017) points out that schools must look at their policies and determine what they are to accomplish, whom their policies hurt, and whom they protect. When examining educational policy, it is essential to consider that explicitly racist Whites or White supremacists do not always display their attitudes by coming together in groups to create reverberating echoes of extreme hatred for non-Whites. All people who work in the education system could have unchecked implicit bias that upholds White supremacy

and impacts the decisions to enforce policies that foster a hierarchy of ultimate control over educational climate and resources (Gillborn, 2006).

Negative beliefs of Black intelligence and worth seep into every aspect of education, including curriculum, pedagogy, and resources which fuels anti-Blackness (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Not just in policy but, unfortunately, in all educational settings, anti-Blackness manifests in several critical areas including textbooks and historical memory, teachers, and in the discourse surrounding the perception of a quality school versus a lousy school, as well as which students want to learn versus those who do not (DiAngelo, 2011). According to Emdin (2016), the justification of anti-Blackness and White supremacy in schools occurs through the reasoning that educators act with good intentions. Without a recognition of the systems of oppression that are in place, there can be no undoing.

### **Colonization**

Matias (2016) defines colonial racism as “the act of one race enslaving and mastering another” (p. 86). No one would argue that slavery exists in the United States, so why write about colonial racism? Because colonial racism is the center of the power structure that continues to define our country, our systems and our people. “The positionality of those who usurped colonial power is worthy of interrogation because the manner to which he achieved that power and how he maintains is the essence of how racial colonization manifests itself” (Matias, 2016, p. 164). So, White people are the colonizers and Black people are the colonized. Having the power in the racial dynamic

“dehumanizes, and wreaks havoc in the hearts, minds, and souls of the colonized and the generations thereafter” (p. 165).

While a mental picture of a colonizer typically would be a male figure, according to Matias, (2019), “there are White women who engage in colonizer-like behaviors, oftentimes suppressing the humanity of people of color and White supporters (allies) alike” (p. 13). These behaviors are portrayed in a plethora of ways, including policing a person of color at the workplace to ensure they do not break the rules (p. 19). Matias states, “these colonizing behaviors are weapons used to harm or control the actions, beliefs and free will of people of color while gaslighting their victims and forcing them to believe they have good intentions” (p. 13). White women engage in these behaviors, using their weaponized tears “to cry and interrupt with the purpose of drawing attention away from the issue at hand, and shifting the focus of attention to themselves” (Matias, 2019, p. 20).

### **Intersectionality**

Economic status, skin color, and gender reflect the systemic racism used to address Black students' intersectionalities and policy design (Bécares & Priest, 2015). Crenshaw (1989) introduced the idea of intersectionality as a "way to conceptualize how oppressions are socially constructed and affect individuals differentially across multiple group categories" (Howard & Reynolds, 2013, p. 234). Systems of oppression categorize people by social groups based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and ability. People of non-dominant groups are treated differently and suffer abuse from institutions and individuals based on their group category or membership (Howard &



Reynolds, 2013). This phenomenon is also demonstrated within the subgroups of non-dominant groups. For instance, in schools, Black girls do not have a space, a voice, or a place of belonging, being victims of policies that exclude them, perpetuating their oppression (Dotson, 2013). Their intellect and abilities are often diminished or overlooked. Societal norms, standards of femininity, and policies aligned with the White, dominant standards of what behavior is appropriate, shape policies of socially constructed middle-class standards, enforcing assimilation and cultural denial (Annamma, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Black students face racial and gender discrimination frequently, which impacts them psychologically and academically. Black girls are affected more negatively than boys (Cogburn et al., 2011) which lowers their self-esteem. Exploring the impact of school-based racial and gender discrimination among Black girls is essential. The mistreatment and misunderstanding of Black Girls, especially in middle and high schools, are a reflection of the anti-Black and anti-gender policies that schools adopt based on the cultural norms put in place by dominant cultural expectations. As a result, this limits student potential, opportunities, and pushes a disproportionate number of girls out of school and into potentially unsafe and unhealthy situations. The education system policies are designed from a lens of White supremacy and demonstrate how gender discrimination impacts Black girls' academic and psychological performance (Cogburn et al., 2011).

When we look at Black student outcomes through the lens of their intersectionality, we find even more unfortunate outcomes (Ladson-Billings & Tate,

1995). Black students find themselves in a perpetual negotiation as they seek to reconcile their individual lived experiences with what society expects, both White and Black, which can become overwhelming and lead to academic or social difficulties (Howard & Reynolds, 2013). Ladson-Billings (1998) states that the system created the barriers and blamed the participants for losing the battle. Coupled with the unequal provision of schooling, these barriers are opportunity gaps that hinder the progress of Black students in schools. Black students experience oppression - gender, race, class, sexuality, in the spaces they occupy; schools and communities. Their experiences intersect, shaping what it means to be Black (Crenshaw, 1991). They live in a social world that thrives on their erasure and exploitation (Ladner, 1971). Blacks are usually reduced to stereotypes, particularly in educational spaces, when they do not meet the dominant cultural standard.

### **Institutional Racism & Interest Convergence: What This Means for Education**

Institutional racism or systemic racism gravely impacts the learning opportunities and academic success of Black students. Embedded in the policies that have White supremacy frameworks that dominate social and educational institutions, its goal is to restrict resources or create disadvantages for non-White racial groups (Better, 2008). The purpose of many institutional practices and policies maintain the disenfranchisement of Blackness and exert dominance and control over Black people's success (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2011). Institutional racism is a byproduct of generational acts of harm such as slavery, segregation, and discrimination, which are manifest into the dominant narrative of society. The remnants of never righting the wrongs against Blacks as a country continue to "sustain whiteness in contemporary institutions such as schools, where everyday

practices denigrate Black intelligence, character and conduct” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 12).

These practices and beliefs, held in place in institutional policies in education, health care, and justice systems, reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination towards Black-African descent (Racial Equity Tool, 2015). The widespread institutional harm caused by institutional racism creates discrimination and biases manifested by low expectations from educators. Institutionalized racism shapes policies enforced in Black educational spaces, perpetuating a low self-concept of Black students (DeGruy, 2017). Black students continue to struggle in education, being the victims of these discriminatory practices. According to Blanchett et al. (2009), “Schools that serve a majority population of students of color are quantitatively and qualitatively different in terms of their resources and the quality of schooling afforded their children from those attended by predominantly White middle-class students” (p. 390). The White economy controls institutional practices whereby Black children are denied opportunities to excel. In contrast, their White peers are immersed in academic privileges giving them an advantage over their Black peers.

Based on social identities, systems of oppression have a long history rooted in American culture (National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2020). Picower (2009) posits that race being the “key determining category for inequality” (p. 198) means that there is a dominant group that holds more power than the other. Society and the perpetuation of White supremacy ideologies have deemed the dominant race as the White race. Because of the construct of race and societal structures, equality and

equity work in favor of White people. The systems must change for other groups to be afforded equal opportunities. However, as Milner (2008) points out, “change is often purposefully and skillfully slow and at the will and design of those in power” (p. 334).

Institutional racism and interest convergence are racist twins. Institutional racism serves Whites, affording them significant advantages. However, the racist practices of oppression backfire (Blumenfeld, 2020) when exposed. Coined by Bell (1995) and expanded upon by Ladson- Billings (1998), interest convergence douses the flames of equity by highlighting the idea of the Blacks’ interests have never been taken into account unless Whites also benefit. Bell (1980) insists that no law, policy, rule, or regulation written for the protection or equalization of people of color goes without benefit to White people. Interest convergence demonstrates how laws benefit and uphold Anti-Blackness and White supremacy while continuing to harm and marginalize Black students (Darling-Hammond, 1988). One prime example that plagues education today is the 1956 *Brown vs. Board of Education* case. Derrick Bell argues the case served the interests of the White elite by removing the most apparent and crass forms of apartheid-style public segregation while leaving the fabric of de facto economic, residential, and educational segregation largely untouched (Gillborn, 2013, p.134). Though desegregation was supposed to end racism in schools, it resulted in policies meant to keep White students and staff members in advantageous positions. Bell (1980) offers that this case’s intention was more about protecting the interest of Whites and foreign policy concerns than correcting the wrongdoings of the separate and unequal educational system.

This idea of interest convergence can be found in many instances in the educational setting, from affirmative action in college admissions to the move for more teachers of color. History reveals how interest convergence is a political ploy that quiets the disgruntled when they become restless (Anderson, 2017). To maintain the status quo, the supporters of anti-Blackness and White supremacy will appear to give a little and gain a lot, while never giving up or sharing any of their power (Anderson, 2017).

The rational understanding of policy formulation and implementation does not account for the dynamics of unequal power or how supremacy and subordination influence education reform. Politics are not separate from policy—education policy is the product of disparate and competing interests between different and often unequally situated groups. It is a site of struggle generating intended as well as unintended consequences and contradictions. Race and racial powers are part and parcel of the policymaking process (Buras, 2013, p. 218).

### **Color of Mind**

Darby and Rury (2018) deploy the phrase, Color of Mind (COM), to describe the deeply embedded attitudinal and institutional norms that diminish Black students' intellect, character, and conduct. COM ideology highlights how belief in Black inferiority has led to an achievement gap in education and how COM sustains Whiteness and anti-Blackness and the intentional construction of racist ideas to support a deficit mindset as it pertains to Black intelligence. "The Color of Mind is a caustic ideology that has buttressed Whiteness, understood both as a descriptive thesis indicating that Whites are superior to Blacks, and as a prescriptive thesis signaling that Whites should dominate

Blacks or enjoy a more favorable allotment of societal benefits and burdens” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p.12).

Darby & Rury (2018) assert when the historical context focusing on education solely comes into play it “shows that the Color of Mind and education have been connected and mutually supportive in ways that continue to sustain White supremacy in today’s schools” (p. 12). They describe how historically, White educators have believed the idea that Blacks are predisposed to lower intelligence based on physical attributes like skull size and skin color. This belief is a reflection of the perpetuated COM ideology by indicating that the ills of Blacks is embedded in their DNA. The following scenario depicts how COM plays out in schools across America: White teachers believe Black students do not or cannot achieve at the same rate as their White counterparts. Because their White teachers do not believe they can achieve at the same rate or sometimes achieve at all, it removes any reason for the teacher to spend extra time attempting to help Black students. In which case, Black students are written off as a lost cause, hence the achievement gap. Though we would like to believe scenarios like this are problems of the past, they are not. Darby and Rury, featured a quote from a Nobel-Prize winning geneticist as recent as 2007, who said “Black people are less intelligent than white people” (p. 29). The COM ideology perpetuates that there are differences in cognitive abilities between Blacks and Whites and that Blacks are inferior to Whites mentally and intellectually and not capable of being educated, a belief that defends racism and segregation. Despite the fact that this ideology has been discredited, pointing out that there is no evidence that racial differences are connected to intellect or IQ, (Ossario,

2011) schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century still sustain some semblance of the COM ideologies to develop policies. COM is the foundation of unequal opportunities, perpetuating the achievement gap (Darby & Rury, 2018).

According to Darby and Rury (2018), one cannot adequately understand the persistence of the achievement gap until one knows and understands the history that continues to inflict all varieties of dignitary harm on Black people. “Philosophy dictates that confronting the Color of Mind and its manifestations within racially diverse schools today is an imperative of justice” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 2). One can’t tackle the educational system without addressing the cause. According to Darling-Hammond (2010), there is a historical context at play and COM is at the foundation of unjust and pervasive school practices. White educators have moved to “a no less racist ideology that social and economic status now contributes to this achievement gap” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 2).

Related to COM ideology is the concept of dignitary injustice. Dignitary injustice occurs “when laws, practices, or social arrangements constitute an affront to our equal status” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 4) and is born from the belief that Black students are inferior to their White counterparts. In order for Black students to use education as a pathway to success and opportunity, it will require leaders to take “on schools systemic sorting practices that convey messages that Blacks aren’t intelligent, are poorly behaved, and can’t concentrate long enough to learn” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 28). In essence, COM serves to dehumanize Black students by stripping away their dignity through subtle operations of White supremacy which in turn affects their ability and opportunities to

learn (Darby & Rury, 2018). Because of the negative effects of White supremacy in education, the authors posit that the dignitary injustices of the educational system are what is responsible for the “educational debt” that is owed to those students (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 27). The COM and deficit mindsets based on racial assumptions within our classrooms are roadblocks to Black students’ success.

COM and deficit mindsets feed into the hidden curriculum in today’s school. The hidden curriculum is the unstated rules that are implied and conveyed through words and actions that are the norms of everyday life (Miller & Seller, 1990). According to Myles et al., (2004), the hidden curriculum content affects social interactions, achievement, and safety. The hidden curriculum includes expectations and assumptions concerning behavior, and specific knowledge manifested through the interpretations of body language which is often unintentionally taught to students at any time or place (Myles et al., 2004). For example, a Black student is expected to assimilate to a culture that is majority White, an unspoken way to teach them to obey the rules. However, as Myles (2011) explains, the problem with the hidden curriculum is that it is difficult to assume that students already know and understand this type of curriculum or its implications when it is not followed.

The hidden curriculum, built on both explicit (COM) and implicit biases reflect the inequalities and denial of the needs of Black students. This ignores their needs for the insertion of the dominant cultural norms. Anderson (2011) sums up the backfire of the hidden curriculum, and its cohorts of implicit and explicit biases, deficit mindset, and color of mind stating that children enter schools with needs so deep and urgent that when



(not met) and plunged into the frenzied pace and shallowed coverage of the public school system (and its hidden curriculum) they let teachers and the system know that their needs are not being met.

### **Implicit Bias**

Implicit bias works in the brain as two systems. System 1 is unconscious awareness and System 2 is conscious processing (Staats, 2016). These two systems work together as part of a person's cognition. Our unconscious awareness is constantly processing millions of stimuli from our environment. Because our unconscious mind operates this way, many of the associations made between environmental stimuli occur outside of a person's conscious cognition, or implicitly (Staats, 2016). This unconscious processing system explains how a person who has no intention of displaying bias does. The part of the brain that processes identities in others like race, gender, and age processes information so quickly we do not realize it is happening. This quick processing leads to implicit bias that affects the quality of instruction and support for Black students (Staats, 2016).

Implicit biases form involuntarily. They lead us to unknowingly form stereotypes, affecting how we interact with the people and things around us. Bias can be enshrouded in uncorroborated practices that can be challenging to prove (Bell, 2018). The biases we carry, whether they manifest explicitly or implicitly, mold our thoughts, expectations, reactions, and thus decisions. Staats (2016) asserts, based on human cognition research, that most people rely on their unconscious mind to make decisions, also pointing out that the system of the brain responsible for unconscious thought "operates automatically and

extremely fast” (Staats, 2016, p. 30). Research on implicit bias shows that aspects of personal identities such as race or ability status are associated with typical stereotypes that influence the perception of and interaction with others (Gullo et al., 2019). Research further supports that these unconscious decisions negatively affect minorities and people of color disproportionately.

Staats (2016) later explains

Because the implicit associations we hold arise outside conscious awareness, implicit biases do not necessarily align with our explicit beliefs and intentions. Individuals who profess egalitarian intentions and try to treat all individuals reasonably can still unknowingly act in ways that reflect their implicit— rather than explicit—biases. Thus, even well-intentioned individuals can act in ways that produce inequitable outcomes for different groups (p. 30).

Bryan (2017) claims White teachers form implicit bias at a young age and that bias is reinforced throughout their lives

As young children, White teachers receive stereotypical messages about Black boys in society and K-12 schools. These stereotypes and biases are often reinforced in preservice teacher education programs. They also determine how they interact with Black boys when they become teachers; thus explaining the disproportionate disciplining of Black boys and underscoring their role in sustaining such disproportionality in school discipline as they extend an intergenerational legacy of the negative view of Black boys by socializing White children into such deficit thinking about them (p. 235).

Implicit bias, coupled with a lack of understanding of Whiteness as a social construct, leads to Black students' detrimental effects. According to Gillborn (2005), one of the most influential and dangerous aspects of Whiteness is that White people have no awareness of Whiteness as a social construction, let alone their role in sustaining and playing out inequities which lead to Anti-Blackness ideology. Anti-Blackness is part of our collective DNA housed in implicit bias (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006).

The frightening fact is that educators that do not exhibit explicit bias can make decisions that reflect their implicit bias, therefore having an unintentional negative impact on their students. Benaji & Greenwald (2016) describe ways the brain sees what it wants to see. The most pertinent point of the illusions they describe is when an illusion is revealed, and the truth of the visual is presented, the "knowledge you now have has no corrective effect in diminishing the illusion!" (Benaji & Greenwald, 2016, p. 5). Merely pointing out implicit bias does not resolve bias, which is especially worrisome when considering how implicit bias contributes to inequitable decisions in education.

Black students are in a battle for their bodies, minds, and souls in the public education system and often find that they cannot breathe due to the suffocating impact of White supremacy and Anti-Blackness (Asim, 2018). Presently, numerous research studies, articles, and reports have shown troubling outcomes regarding Black students' education in the United States (Darensbourg et al., 2010; Prager, 2011). The performance of Black students on national achievement assessments is lower in comparison to the performance of most other subgroups. A growing trend in research shows a positive correlation between the race of the teacher and Black student outcomes. Still, the current

reality remains the same; their education is significantly impacted due to savage inequalities (Kozol, 1991). Using CRT scholarship to analyze this problem in the educational system shines a glaring light on how systemic racism significantly impacts Black students, and Anti-Blackness found in schools (Howard & Reynolds, 2013). Stereotypical ideas that Black students cannot achieve or will misbehave persist mostly beyond the conscious thought of teachers, which, as stated previously, over eighty percent of whom are White (LaSalle et al., 2019). The intersection of Anti-Blackness and Black student achievement offers additional ideas into the deep-rooted causes of educational inequities (Kozol, 1991). There is the continued belief that low levels of achievement or behavior issues are the fault of minority students and must be caused by a function of genes, culture, or a lack of effort (Ogbu, 2003). However, no facts show that achievement gaps or apparent differences in educational performance are based on race, gender, or innate lack of ability in Black students (Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2014).

Systems of oppression and Anti-Black policies place a series of barriers in the way of Black students' education and careers, hindering their progress toward success (Morris et al., 2018). How schools fail Black students can be tracked to the education system's Anti-Blackness premise, used in developing policies, causing an educational failure for Black students (Evans, 2016). The history behind the idea that racial differences in intelligence, character, and behavior have influenced the education system, perpetuating Black students' bias. The idea that Black students are less intelligent has led to the over-identification of Black students for special education services. Students who

receive special education and related services are often segregated from their non-disabled peers and placed in more restrictive environments. Black students are placed disproportionately in educational disability categories, such as emotional disturbance disability and consequently, placed in special education classrooms for a significant part of their school day apart from their non-disabled peers (Serpell et al., 2009). This segregation fosters stigma and resentment toward learning (Skiba et al., 2006).

Today kids in K-12 schools judged to have such deficiencies are sorted into lower-track classes, receive more punitive disciplinary measures, and are assigned to special education for the emotionally disturbed or learning disabled. As a consequence, many are marginalized and stigmatized, which has a profound impact on their academic achievement (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 12).

The federal and state-mandated laws are aimed to deflect racial inequalities. However, it has not rectified the challenges of segregation and lack of equitable resources for Black students in education. Howard & Reynolds (2013) called for “scholars to move away from genetics and cultural explanations of Black underachievement and examine structural causes” (p. 232).

Black students remain voiceless in their experiences, causing emotional discourse, academic fallout, and revealing how implicit biases impact educational outcomes (Ellis, 2004; Holman-Jones, 2005). We must begin to focus on Black students, especially females, and the layers of life and school experiences that impact their existence. Much of the research done on Black students' academic experiences have reflected on others'

attitudes towards Black students, which devoids their voices. Hearing why they resolve to drop out of school, suffer from emotional downfalls, or have low self-awareness through narratives gives voice and validation to their experiences. There is little research done on the impact of racist, anti-Black educational policies on Black students (Boston & Baxley, 2007; Mirza, 2009; Pinder, 2008). Black students have been left out, misunderstood, and ignored or passed over for educational opportunities such as gifted classes, and STEM opportunities, which can lead to lower self-confidence and negative self-perceptions of higher-level courses (Moses et al., 1999). Even though Black students can and do excel in elementary, middle, and high school grades, and are interested in STEM careers, this interest decreases beyond these grades. Black students seem to consider lesser career choices (Jones & Shorter-Goodman, 2003; Sadker, 2000) usually due to being excluded from high-level courses and having their desires extinguished. Gholson (2016) researched why Black boys and girls are not steered to or relegated to mathematics education. As an example of how Black students are not included in important data the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center found that data on Black students, particularly girls, was non-existent. The reality is, Black students are pushed in the shadows of mathematics education (Gholson, 2016). This exclusion also stems from achievement tests, school tracking, and low socioeconomic status of Black students (Moses et al., 1999). Black students often experience poor academic preparation in STEM areas (Moses, et al., 1999).

### **Discipline Disparities**

Holding onto the reins of White supremacy and anti-Blackness, policy-making authorities in education are not only perpetuating inequitable decisions in schools but encouraging it. Policies, primarily related to discipline, are created based on implicit biases, and the idea of White is right/you are wrong or deficit mindsets. Rules and policies put into place within our schools frequently target Black students. Ford (2016) points out that in his experience as a teacher of “those kids” Black students are being kicked out of class for what seemed to be typical high-school, off-task behaviors. Still, those students’ actions were being perceived differently and thus handled more severely for whatever reason. These disparities date back to the segregation and desegregation of schools. According to Adaku Onyeka-Crawford (2018), “You have to wrestle with the fact that anti-Black messages have been handed down from generation to generation. Race appears to play a central role in teachers’ appraisals of students and related expectations” (pp. 1-13). In a study by Neal et al. (2003), 136 middle school teachers in a Southwest suburban school district watched videos depicting one Black and one Caucasian student engaging in different movement patterns (e.g., walking styles). Within the videos, all other physical variables were held constant (e.g., height and weight). The findings showed that teachers rated students who were engaged in culture-related movement styles as lower-achieving, more aggressive, and more likely to break the rules compared to their White peers (Serpell et al., 2009).

According to Rocque (2010), “substantial research exists to illuminate possible explanations for racial disparity in official discipline policies- it is imperative to

determine if minorities are offending more frequently compared to their peers or are officials biased in enforcing the rules?” (p. 558). “Unfortunately, the very definition of what counts as “problematic” (like the assumptions that determine what counts as an “appropriate” response) is shaped by dominant ideologies, including widespread assumptions about race and racism in society” (Gillborn, 2013, p. 129). The term White-normative behaviors encompasses the idea that Whiteness and White supremacy are so deeply rooted in today’s culture that White behaviors or cultural norms are seen as the appropriate way to act. Studies of school suspensions often reveal results showing that Black students are two to three times more likely to be suspended than their White peers (Skiba, 2002). Teachers play a role in the assumptions students have about what constitutes appropriate behaviors. Research shows that students, both Black and White, are like sponges soaking up the subliminal messages teachers are unconsciously sending when correcting behaviors and setting expectations (Bryan, 2017). White teachers, oftentimes, come into the profession with preconceived notions of what is right and what is wrong based on societal norms set up by White people, in turn correcting and disciplining Black students for being bad when the very definition of bad was set up to single them out. Because of stereotypical beliefs and deficit mindsets, Blacks are viewed as not capable nor having a desire to be successful, deeming them not meeting the dominant idea of appropriate behavior (Darby & Rury, 2018). Onyeka-Crawford (2018), points out that school policies have subliminal references to Black students related to dress, hair, etc. Almost monthly, a school dress-code pops up (Samuels, 2020). Biased systems address topics of attire, hairstyles, and anything that defies the dominant cultural



norms and standards, reflecting on their differences as deficits, not matching the dominant cultural standards (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). These biases, as well as the adultification of Black students- assumptions that they are more mature and need less nurturing than their White counterparts - dictate the treatment Black students receive at school and what they encounter as a result of dominant cultural norms and beliefs (Epstein, 2017). Their continued encounters with race and gender biases result in unfair treatment and incorrect labels (e.g., aggressive, disruptive, loud, and non-compliant) (Rhor, 2019). Students are always watching and can pick up on subtle hints and cues; if we continue to marginalize our Black students in front of our White students, the cycle will continue to perpetuate.

Zinnser et al. (2019) found that high teacher stress levels are significant predictors of student expulsion requests. We can only assume, due in part, to a severe lack of resources and support (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017), that in low-income communities, primarily inhabited by minority students, that teacher stress levels increase. It's no secret that the teaching profession is populated predominantly by White women (Bryan, 2017, p. 329). When taking into account that teachers could be reacting to decisions with a combined lens of both implicit bias and high stress, there's no wonder why there is a large body of research outlining racial discipline disparities (Cook et al., 2018; DeMatthews et al., 2017; J. Wallace et al., 2008; Girvan et al., 2017; Ford, 2016).

Black students are more likely to be retained in schools, suspended, or labeled (Aud et al., 2010). "People start to internalize those things, and it's more harmful than it is helpful" (Onyeka-Crawford, 2018). Leaders in education create policies without regard

to and frequently cultural disregard for Blackness, which results in racial and gender inequality and disproportionality in terms of disciplinary actions (Dumas, 2016). For example, mock-battle greeting posturing could result in a discipline referral. The mock-battle greeting is common among Black students and refers to an ethnic greeting-bonding perceived aggressiveness, which includes attempts to bond in greeting rituals and verbal greetings and utilize physical or verbal aggression (Sherwin & Schmidt, 2003). Black students greet each other with ebullience by standing close and facing each other while posturing in a fighting stance punching the air. The punches are pretended punches in the face, but then they hug each other. Mock-battle greeting posturing is regarded as a pontificate greeting propelled by mock harsh mannerisms, physical and verbal aggression, and often violations of school policy (Sherwin & Schmidt, 2003). Black students who express this greeting are often ostracized from school with the admonition they exhibit behaviors that impede learning (Sherwin & Schmidt, 2003). Students must be domesticated or stripped of their culture to be accepted in schools (Freire, 1972). In 2015, Connie Wun looked at the multi-layered disciplinary policies in schools and how they double as surveillance practices: Through this process, Black students are subjected to continuous surveillance in schools, which has become a way of silencing them and in some instances, subjecting them to punishment by school staff. For Black students, schools are hostile, geopolitical spaces that threaten their learning. Anti-Black school discipline policies and informal punitive practices subject Black students to constant surveillance and perpetually disavow and de-values their lives. This is a correlation to the Color of Mind (Darby & Rury, 2018) that positions

Black students as objects needing to be surveilled (Anderson, 2016). Biased attitudes and education policies towards Black students reflect a continued pattern of oppression, perpetuating Black students' disadvantages. They face surveillance and punishment if their appearance, or attitudes are divergent from the dominant culture (Blake et al., 2010).

For decades research has documented discipline disparities in schools. Black students have been overrepresented in discipline data, and despite this knowledge, the outcome stays the same. Bryan (2017) states

Educational scholarship has called attention to the disproportionate ways Black males are disciplined in schools, which has become the catalyst to their entry into the school-to-prison pipeline through which they are funneled from K-12 classrooms into the criminal justice system. (p. 326)

Biases are evident in discipline disparities impacting Black students and inappropriate confrontations between police and School Resource Officers. This acts as an introduction to the criminal system (Chesney-Lind, 2010; Tate et al., 2014). Anderson (2016) states that Black students are refused access to agency, autonomy, and self-defense against multiple forms of violence, including gratuitous punishment inflicted by school faculty.

Regrettably, Black students are receiving different and harsher disciplinary punishments than Whites for the same or similar infractions. They are disproportionately impacted by zero-tolerance policies--a fact that only serves to exacerbate already deeply entrenched disparities in many communities (Guadalupe Valles & Villalpando, 2013, p. 260).

Zero-tolerance policies were created to maintain the balance of power: these bleed over into our schools and are taught to our Black and White students at a young age. Racial discipline disparities in education and zero-tolerance policies are introducing Black students to the criminal justice system at an early age (Abudu & Miles, 2018; Langberg & Ciolfi, 2017; Rocque & Snellings, 2018). This phenomenon is known as the school-to-prison pipeline (SPP). Kim et al. (2010) define the SPP as “the intersection of a K-12 educational system and a juvenile justice system” through education and discipline structures that facilitate school disengagement” (p. 1). The labeling and criminalization of Black students in school is not new (Noguera, 2003; Monroe, 2005).

### **Incarceration**

Historically, Black incarceration rates have been five to seven times higher than for Whites for the last 50 years (Tonry, 2010).

The rapid increase in the US incarceration rate over the last few decades has been described as an epidemic. ... This prison boom has primarily affected Black Americans, especially Black males. By 2011, Black incarceration rates were over six times higher than White rates... (Lum et al., 2014, p. 409).

Researchers try to explain this phenomenon in a multitude of ways. Interestingly, Lum et al. (2014) compare incarceration to a contagious disease, insisting it can be “passed” from current and/or former, incarcerated individuals to someone (friends, family, etc.) close to them. They cite stressors, such as economic and household strains, intergenerational associations, and behavior problems, caused by a loved one’s incarceration, which then lead to their incarceration. This works to strengthen Black

people's cycle of oppression, especially in low-income communities (Lum et al., 2014). In addition, research from Lum et al. (2014) points out that since 1980, incarceration of Black males has increased at a rate much higher than the increase of Black males actually committing crimes. Tonry claims

Although violent crime arrest rates for Blacks are higher than for whites, the differential has long been declining. Group differences in violent crime do not explain racial disparities in prison. What does explain to them is a combination of police practices and legislative and executive policy decisions that systematically treat Black offenders differently, and more severely, than whites. Policymakers emphasized law enforcement approaches to drug abuse over preventive ones. Police drug law enforcement focused effort on inner-city, primarily minority, neighborhoods, where many black Americans live, and on crack cocaine, of which Blacks are a large majority of arrested sellers (2010, p. 274).

Research by Tonry (2010) maintains that "Those practices and policies were shaped by distinctive sociological, psychological, and political features of American race relations" (p. 273). Overwhelmingly, the explanations of these disparities point to racism stemming from implicit and explicit biases: even though policymakers and those in power knew that minorities would be most affected. They are also targeted by the policies and laws being put into place, they backed them and many times promoted them.

### **Internalized Oppression**

Anti-Blackness offers a frame for internalized oppression and an insight into why Black teachers continue to perpetuate Black students' injustices in the educational system

(DeGruy, 2017). Being married to racism puts Black students and educators in a perpetually dysfunctional relationship with one another. This relationship has one believing that they deserve the treatment received because something must be wrong with them (DeGruy, 2017). Often, policies focus on physical characteristics and identification of cultural and ethnic heritage and traditions and false esteem, promoting feelings of hopelessness (DeGruy, 2017). The cultural beliefs, policies, and practices that criminalize Black students affects their psychological and academic wellbeing. According to Hughes & Demo (1989), Black people's lack of self-esteem emerges from systems of racial inequality. The Clark doll studies is an example of how oppression can poison the views of the marginalized. The experiments showed that Black children attributed positive characteristics to a White doll and negative attributes to a Black doll even though their skin color closely resembled the Black doll (Clark & Clark, 1950). Although the findings were challenged, these results suggested that Black children feel inferior based on skin color, and they perceive the White race to be comparatively better (Bergner, 2009). Black people are not aware of how Whiteness and Anti-Blackness have shaped their experience in this country and how these practices further marginalize and alienate each race from the other (DeGruy, 2017; Anderson, 2017).

Black women and men internalize racism and create a scenario where, as victims of racism, they become victimizers (DeGruy, 2017). The impact of internalized racism on Black female and male students is detrimental. However, Black males are affected in a far more dangerous and harmful manner at the hands of the one person who is never supposed to harm them, the Black female (DeGruy, 2017). Emdin (2016) states that the

problem of Anti-Blackness doesn't just apply to White teachers; it also applies to Black teachers indoctrination in White supremacist ideas. Along with Emdin (2016), there is a concern when Black teachers have the same mindset as White teachers when it comes to Anti-Blackness and White supremacist ideas. As we analyze current trends in education, it would appear that the teacher's race does not matter, as previously stated. When we look at the data, it suggests that Black students are continuing to not make the gains as their non-Black peers (US Department of Education 2019a), which leads us to believe that the teacher's race does not matter. Yes, representation matters for Black students, and they may fare better in classrooms taught by Black teachers. Still, until Anti-Blackness is uncovered and destroyed, schools will remain the same for Black students, i.e., violent perpetrators of dignitary assaults (Darby & Rury, 2018).

DeGruy (2017) explains internalized oppression in a way that creates a path between generations of internalized Whiteness and current reality for many Black people (DeGruy, 2017). DeGruy (2017) states, "The primary purpose of this book is to encourage Blacks to view their attitudes, assumptions, and behaviors through the lens of history to gain a greater understanding of the impact that centuries of slavery and oppression have had on our lives" (p. 10). DeGruy (2017) states that our interactions with others develop self-esteem and self-concept. "I am not who I think I am, and I am not who you think I am. I am who I think that you think I am" (DeGruy, 2017 p. 5). "Internalized oppression (also called "self-hate") is when a member of an oppressed group believes and acts out the stereotypes created about their group" (Jones, 2010, p. 2). Internalized racism is defined as "the acceptance, by marginalized racial populations, of

the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves” (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000, p.255; Taylor & Grundy, 1996). DeGruy (2017) speaks about how trauma is passed down from generation to generation and that trauma, internalized oppression, and self-loathing. “The legacy of trauma is reflected in many of our behaviors and our beliefs. These behaviors and beliefs may have been necessary for survival at one time, but today they undermine our ability to succeed” (DeGruy, 2017, p. 102). A prime example of this was when slaves risked their lives, learning how to read. Other slaves watched this punishment and decided that reading wasn’t worth their lives. DeGruy (2017) “While we pass on some of what we learn through direct instruction, the bulk of our learning takes place vicariously, by watching others” (p. 103). Identity development starts at birth, and the socialized experience as minorities impacts that identity development, which can be further expanded on by the Nigrescence Theory of Black identity development (Cross et al., 1991).

Expanding on this concept of identity development, “when the young begin believing that their future is bleak, they respond in ways that boggle the imagination” (DeGruy, 2017, p. 105). Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is a condition that exists when a population has experienced generations of trauma and continues to experience oppression and institutionalized racism (DeGruy, 2017). “Our beliefs color everything with which we come in contact. They strongly influence how we think and feel” (DeGruy, 2017, p. 105). If all that Black boys see is their lack, then there is no wonder why there seems to be an issue with them succeeding. “Children and adolescents who receive little appreciation for the actual value of their contributions can easily grow up with an



undervalued assessment of their worth, ultimately believing themselves to be of little to no value” (DeGruy, 2017, p. 108). DeGruy calls this vacant esteem, which is the state of believing that you have little or no worth. This internalized oppression is what we are contending with when we look at the historical significance of slavery and how the sin of slavery continues to impact Black people today (DeGruy, 2017). Racist Socialization states that it is not uncommon for people held captive to take on the views of their captors (DeGruy, 2017). “One of the most insidious and pervasive symptoms of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is our adoption of the slave master’s value system” (DeGruy, 2017, p. 116). The connection here is the foundation for internalized oppression. Blacks never saw it coming, because, like trauma, this was passed down to them (DeGruy, 2017). DeGruy (2017) states that many Blacks have adopted the attitudes and views of racist White America. They see themselves and others through the lens of Whiteness and “mold ourselves to accommodate white prejudices and endeavor to adopt their standards” (p. 116). Black voices have been hushed, rendering them and their life experiences unimportant. The academic and emotional impact of policies on Black students causes disproportionate out of school time, risk of being unsafe or involved in or being victims of crime, being denied or overlooked for educational opportunities, and overall lower self-esteem. The biases and anti-Black attitudes towards Black students intellect and worth are historic (Darby & Rury, 2018), affecting their psychological, emotional, academic, and intelligence, all having their roots in the racist depiction and treatment of Black people during the Jim Crow era and still rises in the mainstream media today (Lawton, 2017). The literature used looks at how stereotypical cultural realizations and

expectations of educators and their perceptions of Black students influences their attitudes towards Black adolescents, and how bias and anti-Black policies affect Black students. Policies have substantial effects on Black students because most are directed towards their personage or directed towards discipline and discriminatory actions.

### **Invisibility Syndrome**

Invisibility syndrome is a cognitive state where “ a person believes that their personal identity is threatened by strands of racism” (Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014, p. 13). Vaughans & Spielberg (2014) described invisibility syndrome using a paradigm of factors associated with specific behavioral responses triggered by racism. They described seven unique factors below:

- One feels a lack of recognition of appropriate acknowledgment
- One feels there is no satisfaction or gratification from the painful and injurious encounter
- One feels self-doubt about legitimacy and a sense of belonging
- There is no validation from the experience and lack of self-worth
- One feels disrespected
- One’s sense of dignity is compromised
- One’s basic identity is shaken, if not uprooted. (pp. 15-16)

The psychological experiences derived from the invisibility syndrome are crucial to forming “perspectives about the identity and inclusion in, or exclusion from society” (Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014, p. 16).

### **Cognitive Dissonance**

Cognitive dissonance suggests individuals experience discrepancies between longer-held thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs and the decision-related actions and attitude changes that deviate from these ideas. Behaviors resulting from decisions should reflect these accepted ideas, and inconsistencies with the standing ideas and feelings create discomfort for individuals when they contradict their prior beliefs (Wong, 2009).

Wong (2009) described Festinger's (1957)

cognitive dissonance theory as a state in which a person's mind has a mechanism that creates an uncomfortable feeling of dissonance, or lack of harmony, when we become aware of some inconsistency among various beliefs and items of knowledge that constitute our mental store (p. 246).

Dissonance can be evoked when a person believes that the action is unpleasant, but they will engage in an activity despite the potential for a negative outcome (Harmon-Jones, 2019). McFalls and Cobb-Roberts (2001) posited, "teachers need to be cognizant when asking students to discuss topics that go against their frames of reference and integrate multicultural curriculum to promote a positive learning climate (p.165). Additionally, "because they exposed information that is inconsistent with their prior beliefs and experiences, they are likely to experience dissonance that may be expressed outwardly in the form of resistance" (p.165).

Brogaard & Gatiza (2021) suggests that cognitive dissonance can illuminate different forms of racism:

Habitual racism, fostered by repetitive habits, is implicitly and subtly racially motivated. Comparatively, explicit racism is racially motivated explicitly and sometimes violent. A type of racist action referred to as inadvertent bigotry, is implicit, but not racially motivated. The inadvertent bigotry racist seeks to attenuate their actions' dissonance by justifying their actions and attitudes are not racially motivated. The habitual racist believes that their actions are not racially motivated based on their cemented egalitarian beliefs. The explicit racist experiences a dissonance between their racist actions and what they deem is an acceptable egalitarian societal practice. Understanding cognitive dissonance helps us to understand and lessen its impact on racism (pp. 219-220).

### **Cultural Responsiveness**

Insufficient education and training on culture and cultural differences add to the cycle of oppression in schools. Cultural responsiveness is having knowledge and awareness of students' experiences, and it acknowledges the cultural differences of students and uses their experiences as resources in the teaching and learning process (Gay, 2000). Cultural responsiveness is vital in Black students' educational experiences, allowing them to feel that they are a significant part of their academic experiences because they are understood (Miller, 2010). Teachers' opportunity to understand their students' lives, culture, and self-identities allows them to voice their existence. Education must take the stance to focus on understanding Black students' culture, looking at the range of social phenomena that impact their lives. Cultural responsiveness can help educators understand their students' views and life experiences and negotiate social and

cultural norms (Brittian, 2012). Howard & Navarro (2016) state that schools' populations are rapidly growing in cultural diversity. Banks' research predicts that "By 2050, public schools will boast a majority of students of color in trend-setting states like California and Texas." (Leonardo & Boas, 2013, p. 313). Education, as a White-dominated profession (Bryan, 2017), poses an even larger threat to equitable decision-making. Preservice teachers are inadequately trained in cultural differences, leaving them to make uneducated decisions based on Whiteness (Hawkman, 2018). Ladson-Billings (2005) talks about how teacher education programs create specific rhetoric embedded in the idea of saving students without knowing their current needs. White teachers have a responsibility to seek out culturally relevant professional development, set an example for their White students, and level the playing field for their Black students. Bryan (2017) echoes this idea when stating, "teacher education programs must be strategic in providing preservice teachers opportunities to examine themselves and their teaching and disciplinary practices" (p. 330).

### **Critical Action**

Progressive reform is necessary as the path toward eliminating Anti-Black attitudes (Shange, 2019). The hope of transforming our school system into an equitable model built for all students' success will call for "critical action" (Ginwright, 2016, p. 23). Critical action is defined by Ginwright as something that, "occurs when community members", or in this case, educators, "perceive the conditions, traumas of daily life as both wrong and subject to redress." (2016, p. 23). Taking critical action requires that we have a shared vision of our future (Ginwright, 2016). However, before we can

collectively work towards that vision, we all must come to the realization that our system was not built for the success of all of our students and it is unjust, but more importantly that we have the power to change it (Ginwright, 2016). Change can feel hopeless at times, especially when the entire system seems to be built to keep those in power, in power, but if we are ever going to change the outcomes of our Black students, we have to first believe that our current system is not permanent, or at least it does not have to be (Ginwright, 2016).

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

According to Ellis et al. (2011), the purpose of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of phenomena that exist in society and insight into the lived experiences of others. Qualitative research allows researchers to “address the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 181). Qualitative data are analyzed for individual contributions and merged for practice implications. In this study, autoethnography’s qualitative research design explores how Whiteness, Implicit Bias, and Anti-Blackness impacted the researchers. When describing qualitative research, Creswell and Poth (2018) advised “the researcher to situate himself or herself within the study to reflect his or her history, culture, and personal experiences” (p. 193). By sharing critical self-reflection and personal narratives, the researcher will share their stories with others as we engage in the work of critical reflection through autoethnography. Reflecting on personal experiences in the most honest way provides the researcher a window into which they can also view and analyze their own experiences and realize they are not alone but are “connected with communities of meaning in significant ways” (Frankenberg, 2004, p. 107).

Adams et al. (2015) used the term “crisis of representation” when discussing how the humanistic element has been absent from social science. Autoethnography, as a qualitative research method, serves as a method to infuse the human experience because it “uses a researcher’s personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences” (Adams et al., 2015, p. 14). Wider than autobiographies,

autoethnography self-consciously explores the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation (Chang, 2008). The deconstructed personal experiences will counter how Anti-Blackness and White supremacy have and will continue to negatively impact if nothing is done to change the trajectory of racial inequity in education.

This cohort of researchers will work to apply the following core ideas of autoethnography

- recognize the limits of scientific knowledge (what can be known or explained), particularly regarding identities, lives, and relationships, and creating nuanced, complex, and specific accounts of personal/cultural experience,
- connect personal (insider) experience, insights, and knowledge to broader (relational, cultural, political) conversations, contexts, and conventions,
- answer the call to narrative and storytelling and placing equal importance on intellect/knowledge and aesthetics/artistic craft,
- attending to their work's ethical implications for themselves, their participants, and their readers/audiences (Adams et al., 2015, p. 25).

Critical Race Theory is one of the frameworks discussed in this autoethnography. It will provide a framework for identifying discrimination, gender bias, and oppressive social structures in policies, school rules, and school systems. The value placed on storytelling is another component of CRT. CRT scholars use stories to debunk myths in education, whereas Dingus (2006) discusses the importance of hearing the voices of those marginalized through narratives. Stories also offer an alternative to Black students'



current narrative in public schools. Bell (1987) and Ladson-Billings (1998) set the stage for the use of storytelling that allows those impacted by racism, implicit bias, and internalized oppression the freedom to tell their stories, countering narratives rooted in anti-Black ideology. These counter stories privilege the knowledge and personal experiences of groups impacted by racism and oppression through the parables, narratives, allegory, interdisciplinary treatment of the law, creativity, and the first person (Bell, 1986; Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT allows those impacted by anti-Blackness and internalized oppression to tell their own stories to debunk the myth about Black inferiority (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) highlight that the outcome of telling your own story provides a sense of connectedness and belonging in marginalized communities. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) push CRT scholars to value the component of storytelling to frame their reality. Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) state that the use of voice in CRT narratives provides a conduit for marginalized communities to articulate their lived experiences and realities clearly.

From a historical perspective, Black stories never mattered, yet they can be used to change the narrative about Black people in America (Dixson et al., 2017). These stories are often ignored by Whites or discredited if they do not fit into a narrative that White people and their fragility can handle (DiAngelo, 2018). White fragility, according to DiAngelo, is the phenomenon by which White people become angry, defensive, or hostile when confronted with the idea that they are complicit in systemic racism. The stories that counter the past continue to be the basis of anti-Blackness. By not dismissing what happened in the past brings their experiences to the here and now. DiAngelo states

there are many risks involved for people of color who decide to speak openly and directly about race and racism relating to the educational experiences. Coupling this with people of color also confronting their own internalized oppression and being honest about their complicity in upholding anti-Black practices and White supremacy allows readers to fully understand that this is a risky, yet powerful tenet to use in research.

According to Trahar (2009), narrative inquiry is foundational to autoethnography because it allows researchers to investigate and reflect on their personal stories and how they shaped their culture, beliefs, and experiences. Autoethnography is a method that uses a combination of autobiography and ethnography. It is purposefully used by researchers as a process and product (Ellis et al., 2011). Glowacki-Dudka et al. (2005) described autoethnography as a form of autobiography; autoethnography supports individuals through the use of narratives to step outside their immediate personal constraints to examine their social world through new eyes. Autoethnography, as stated previously, was chosen to allow the researchers to tell their personal stories and analyze those stories in a way that enables the researcher to understand their role and those of others in the educational system. The focus is on understanding the perpetuation of Anti-Blackness and White Supremacy. Autoethnography provides the opportunity to exclude sterile research often used when studying the cultural experiences of non-dominant cultures (Conquergood, 1991; Ellis, 2007; Riedmann, 1993). As Ladson-Billings (2009) speaks to the use of autoethnography, saying that if we are serious about solving... problems in schools... we will have to expose racism in education and propose radical solutions for addressing it. Personal narratives and observations will

be significant in the process of inciting change. Confronting Anti-Blackness and White supremacy through storytelling will hopefully allow the reader to connect to how White supremacy upholds racist practices in the educational system and how that has impacted educating Black students and males in particular (Asim, 2018). Direct countermeasures to dismantle any system is risky and uncomfortable, but attempting to dismantle Anti-Blackness and White supremacy is even more uncomfortable for both races when we are dealing with remnants of White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018). Despite White fragility, these stories have to be told if we are to collectively fight anti-Blackness and White supremacy in our schools in a way that will permanently end systemic racism in our public education system (Kendi, 2019).

The study design will incorporate personal narratives, self-reflection, and the profound impact of White supremacy beyond a superficial level. This study will also use reflections of both past and present experiences. Frankenberg (2004) discussed how to use reflection purposefully to critically evaluate past writings with new knowledge by “noting that one does not always know or notice all that one knows” (p. 114). Autoethnographers “use personal experience to create nuanced, complex, and comprehensive accounts of cultural norms, experiences, and practices” (Adams et al., 2018, p. 33). By situating themselves as both the researcher and participant, researchers can “strive to work consciously from within the parameters of one’s location” (Frankenberg, 2004, p. 117).

As Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) pointed out, “validation rests on the quality of the researcher's craftsmanship throughout an investigation, on continually checking,

questioning, and theoretically interpreting the findings” (p. 284). In light of this, there will be multiple strategies used to validate this qualitative research. As explained by Creswell & Creswell (2018), (a) use of rich, thick descriptions will be used to convey the findings; (b) peer debriefing: where a peer review and asks questions about the study to ensure it speaks to more than just the researcher; (c) clarification of researcher bias: using self-reflection and open narrative throughout the work on what shapes the researchers’ interpretation of the findings; (d) triangulation of data: using multiple sources to justify themes. The researchers will also use narratives from various historical periods and past studies to cross-reference their own experiences with past and current research.

“Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the finding by employing procedures, whereas qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects.” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 199). As each researcher is the sole researcher in their portion of the study, there is no threat to reliability. However, using autoethnography, validity and reliability are not necessary components of research using this method.

When speaking to generalizability in qualitative research, it should be pointed out that “Particularity rather than generalizability is the hallmark of good qualitative research” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 202). However, the use of explicit, detailed descriptions in this study will hopefully allow the reader to judge whether the researchers’ realizations may be transferable to their own lives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This study aims to use an autoethnographic, narrative style of writing to grow personally, professionally, and encourage others to do the same.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### ***Critical Theory***

Critical Theory is the reflective assessment and critique of social culture. It provides that space to challenge status-quo ideologies and to think through inequality as an outcome of social and cultural structures (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019). The use of various critical theories such as critical race theory, critical Whiteness studies, and critical legal studies will be used to critically analyze the researchers' experiences to push thought forward toward the action and emancipation of the oppressed (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019, p. 5). Qualitative research grounded in critical theory doesn't necessarily follow the same trajectory as research that is considered the norm in academia. However, we have found that typical research projects that deny the participants' lived experience and are viewed as neutral science are anything but that. According to Carprecken (1996), "we have found that much of what has passed for "neutral, objective science" is, in fact, not neutral at all but subtly biased in favor of privileged groups" (p. 7). Our qualitative research projects will "aim to delve deeply into everyday lived experiences, the meaning that people make from their lived experiences" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 7).

Our projects are not meant to be static and simply written into a book but used to help ourselves and others make sense of the world and our place within it. Using autoethnography as a qualitative research method grounded in critical theory, we hope to point out structures that exist within education that continue to "subordinate or marginalize particular groups of people" (Winkle-Wagner et al. 2019, xiii). "Critical theory has been applied to methodology in ways that have allowed researchers to become

more active and social justice-oriented” (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019, p. 8). Critical theory coupled with autoethnography, “creates new possibilities and a space for dialogue” while at the same time centering the human experience of the researcher as a participant (Winn, 2019, p. ix). Creating the space for the researcher as a participant model of autoethnography allows us to critique how our personal experiences have been shaped by the “social structures, norms and inequities” of our society (Winn p. x). Grounding our autoethnographic in critical theory will allow us to “uncover the explicit and implicit meanings, both visible and hidden” within our lived experience (Yao, 2019, p. 160).

### ***Critical Race Theory***

Critical Race Theory’s (CRT) origin is unique. It finds its beginning in critical legal studies (CLS) in the mid-1970s and made its appearance as a cohesive theory in 1989 at a first-ever workshop held at St. Benedict Center in Madison, Wisconsin (Taylor et al., 2009). The marginalization, frustration, and dissatisfaction of people of color with CLS led to CRT being born, forming its epicenter (Delgado, 2001). CRT is a race-based theory that analyzes the systemic racism that is a part of all systems (Valdes, 2002). West (1995) describes CRT as a movement that is part of a long tradition of human resistance and liberation. CRT is the vehicle used to dismantle racism with the goal being to move systems and beliefs to more socially just processes, dispelling the myths and stereotypes that have historically influenced policies (Valdes, 2002). CRT looks at the barriers set up by systems that consistently marginalize Blacks and examines how race becomes the impetus for how policies are designed and impact people of color (Valdes, 2002). Critical Race Theory states that scholarship that asserts marginalized groups’ voices should be

privileged over the dominant narratives to begin to re-shape the typical story told about education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). By using CRT as a framework for this work, it allows for the reader to ascertain how the intersections of race, racism, and dominant power structures operate in the school system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have shown how using CRT to examine race and its impact on equity in public education can lead to systemic changes (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

CRT examines the intersection of race and racism in this country using these five tenets: counter-story telling, racism is permanent, Whiteness as property, interest convergence, and the critique of White liberalism (Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The five tenets of CRT are pivotal in analyzing the varied forms of social inequalities perpetuated through educational institutions (Hiraldo, 2010). Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) explains that the idea of counter-storytelling stems from the powerful, persuasive, and explanatory ability to unlearn ideals strongly believed to be accurate. Racism is a prevalent, daily issue for many, if not most Black people. Taylor (2009) observes that racism is normal in the U.S, and this normalcy promotes color-blindness and meritocracy. Freeman and Bell teach that, “racism is normal—the usual way American society does business—and that racial oppression serves important majoritarian interests” (1978; 2005, as cited by Delgado & Stefancic, 2013, p. 25). Whiteness as property exposes how deeply rooted racism is and how Whiteness can be considered a property interest (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Bell (1995) describes interest convergence when stating that “the

interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites” (p. 22).

CRT views policy not as a mechanism that delivers progressively greater degrees of equity, but a process that is shaped by the interests of the dominant White population: a situation where genuine progress is won through political protest and where apparent gains are quickly cut back (Gillborn, 2013, p. 134).

White liberalism, tied to colorblindness, suggests that we Americans live in a post-racial society thus remediation is unnecessary (Vaught, et al., 2013). However, CRT opposes this thought in its continued fight for equity and equality.

Through the use of autoethnography this collection of research focuses largely on the tenet of storytelling and counter-storytelling. Dingus (2006) discusses the importance of hearing the voices of those who have been marginalized through the use of narratives. She states that “personal narratives illuminate how race, social class standing, gender, and personal relationships compounded individual support, resistance, and participation in the movement to desegregate Southern schools” (p. 213). CRT also looks at the stories of the marginalized as validation of their lived experiences (Delgado, 1989). Focusing on the deep understanding of stories and narratives, it allows these counterstories of the marginalized to counter the perspectives of the majoritarian (Delgado, 1989). This is where narratives are used to incorporate the stories of the marginalized, which usually are not a part of the policy design, particularly in education policy discourse (Aleman, 2006).

The value placed on storytelling is a strong component of CRT. Dingus (2006) describes how CRT scholars use stories to debunk myths in education by placing



emphasis on the importance of hearing the voices of those who have been marginalized. Stories are also used to offer an alternative narrative about Black students in public schools and allows those who are impacted by racism and internalized oppression the freedom to tell their stories, countering narratives rooted in anti-Black ideology (Bell, 1987; Ladson-Billings, 1998). These counter stories privilege the knowledge and personal experiences of groups impacted by racism and oppression through the parables, narratives, allegory, interdisciplinary treatment of the law, creativity, and in the first person (Bell, 1986; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) highlight that the outcome of telling our own story provides a sense of connectedness and belonging in marginalized communities. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) push CRT scholars to value the component of storytelling in an effort to frame their own reality. Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) state that the use of voice in CRT narratives provides a conduit for marginalized communities to clearly articulate the lived experiences and realities facing these communities.

From a historical perspective, Black stories never mattered, yet they can be used in a way to change the narrative about Black people in America (Dixson et al., 2017). These stories are often ignored by Whites or discredited if they do not fit into a narrative that White people and their fragility can handle (DiAngelo, 2018). White fragility, according to DiAngelo (2018), is the occurrence by which White People act defensively or hostile when confronted with the notion that they are complicit in systemic racism.

The stories that counter what has been and continues to be the basis of anti-Blackness when it comes to Black people bring their experiences to the here and

now, and are not dismissed as what has happened in the past. DiAngelo (2018) states that there are many risks involved for people of color who decide to speak openly and directly about race and racism relating to the educational experiences. Coupling this with people of color also confronting their own internalized oppression and being honest about their complicity in upholding anti-Black practices and White supremacy, allows readers to fully understand that this is a risky, yet powerful tenet to use in research. Storytelling empowers the powerless when they are able to tell their own stories, but it also places the storyteller in a vulnerable state (Dixson et al., 2017).

### **Critical Legal Studies**

Critical Legal Studies (CLS) is a derivative of CRT and Legal Theory. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Law, it was developed in the United States in the 1970s (Law, 2018). Law (2018) states, “In its early stages, CLS was distinctive in two respects: first, it was located within legal scholarship rather than sociology or political science; secondly, it sought to address the inequities of legal doctrine” (Law, 2018, Critical Legal Studies section). CLS, specifically focuses on the critique and philosophy of law and legal issues (Law, 2018). Francot & Vries (2011) state,

Critique implies a method of observation, analysis, interpretation, and argumentation, representing a point of view on what is wrong with the law in contemporary society. The perspective is shaped by the argument that there is something wrong with the law. This is how critical legal theory distinguishes itself from mainstream legal theory. What is wrong with the law is its actual and potential normative abuse (unintentional and intentional), and made visible in the

side-effects of modernization. Social developments demand a critical perspective on law and legal scholarship to lay bare this abuse (p.14).

CLS holds that laws are created and implemented based on the biases and aspirations of those in power and that the abuse of the law is “normative” (Francot & Vries, 2011, p. 14), much as CRT asserts that racism is normative (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The normative nature of racism keeps minorities at a systematic disadvantage and maintains the status quo: keeping those in power in power and minorities incapacitated. CLS examines the protection of power structures by law (or the abuse thereof), and how those laws ensure an ever-growing, intentional, racial divide (Francot & Vries, 2011).

### **Critical Whiteness Studies.**

Critical Whiteness studies “focuses on problematizing the normality of hegemonic whiteness, arguing that in doing so, whites deflect, ignore, or dismiss their role, racialization, and privilege in race dynamics” (Matias et al., 2014, p. 291). This theory will provide a “framework to deconstruct the material, physical, emotional, and political power of whiteness” (Matias & Mackey, 2015). According to Matias and Mackey (2015), critical Whiteness studies provide researchers a way to “investigate the phenomenon of whiteness, how it is manifested, exerted, defined, recycled, transmitted, and maintained, and how it ultimately impacts the state of race relations” (p. 34).

As White women working in the education setting, one of the most critical aspects of our use of critical Whiteness studies as a framework for our research, as Frankenberg (1997) writes, is to “further distinguish between assertions of white supremacy or superiority and critical self-examinations of whiteness” (p. 4). Every aspect of our

narratives must be evaluated critically to demonstrate the normalcy and complacency of Whiteness and how Whiteness operates within us and how we operationalize Whiteness in our schools. In this way, framing the issue runs into the possibility that we are centering Whiteness and even raising it above other race studies (Leonardo, 2013). However, when writing about Whiteness Frankenberg (2004) advises the “best that one can do in scholarly work is to recognize its situatedness and strive to work consciously from within the parameters of one’s location” (p. 117). Therefore, critical Whiteness studies will act as an anchor for our narratives to situate ourselves in our Whiteness and evaluate how this social construct continues to reify White supremacy in schools (Picower, 2009, p. 198).

**CHAPTER 4: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART I****Abena B. Boateng***Traversing through a Kaleidoscope of Persecution: Black boys in Special Education.***Introduction**

I had several opportunities to work in special education settings as a substitute teacher, which sparked my interest in becoming a special education teacher. I was intrigued by the myriad of ways students received academic, behavioral, and related services to facilitate their learning. I learned about the varied categories of educational disabilities, the extent of their severity, and how my teaching practice could make a positive difference for students with these disabilities. My understanding has led me to consider how I could support students to master skills they could generalize and use across all academic and non-academic settings. As I discussed these issues in special education with my academic advisor, I realized that my calling was to learn, grow and be reflective as a special education teacher.

I recall some positive and negative experiences with teachers when I was younger. The positive experiences left me with sweet happy memories and the drive to excel academically. The negative experiences, to this day, gives me gut-wrenching, painful feelings of despondency. My experiences with teaching students led me to consider equity, equality, and inclusivity for children with special needs as foremost. These considerations are especially critical for Black children in special education because they are systematically marginalized, disenfranchised, and excluded from equitable educational opportunities. Vaught (2011) states, “schools are multicolored at the front

door, and in the same vein, racial disparities and segregation is evidenced in the classroom and schoolwide. Black students are deprived of opportunities and results that affect outcomes” (p. 144). These stagnant issues are manifested through the state’s education, the bolstering of poverty, and the juvenile justice system (Dowd, 2018).

For this study, I describe my experiences in two narratives through the voice of an 11-year-old Black boy named Chadwick. In a third narrative, I shift the perspective and narrate the kaleidoscope of the impacts of racialization on Black people working in the education profession. In these first two narratives, I introduce Chadwick as a Black boy whose day-to-day endeavors in special education unravel and manifest the challenges and impact of racism (Mcgee & Stovall, 2015). Although the purpose of his specialized instruction through his Individual Education Program is achieving academic success, he is weary by the weight of the stigma of a special education label and feels resentment toward racial biases he experiences when being singled out because of his skin color (Mills, 2003). His racial identity is infused with a toxic combination of invisibility syndrome (Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014) and cognitive dissonance, which emerges from his perpetual internalizing of feelings of oppression. Chadwick experiences bouts of confusion where he experiences the dilemma of what society deems to be acceptable social interaction, which is not in alignment with what he has been taught at home. According to Vaughans & Spielberg (2014), “Black mothers teach their Black boys how their assertive behavior can be construed as threatening, and Black males, in turn, learn to integrate male values which are lessons unique to being Black” (pp. 21-22). No matter

the frequency of Chadwick's parents encouraging him to put in his best effort at school, he feels an urgent need to be accepted without feeling different and inferior.

Vaught (2011) notes the following

White supremacist structural and ideology seeks to destroy Black achievement and success. Black families and communities encourage Black children; however, the White public message to Black students is that they are failures, despite strides to overcome the hurdles of consistent lack of equitable access to schooling (p.153).

Chadwick yearns to belong in a school where his interactions with peers and teachers are positive. He begins his school day hoping he does not encounter sitting at a black desk and facing a white wall. Chadwick seeks to be immersed in learning content that is culturally relevant to him. Chadwick speaks his truth as he feels his world spiraling into invisibility.

### **Narrative 1**

#### ***Academics: I Can't Figure it Out.***

*It is a warm morning in September. I say goodbye to my Mama and Papa as I run out the door to wait at the bus stop. I feel something fall out of my pocket; it is my kaleidoscope. It is my favorite toy that I play with and keep in my pocket at all times. I pick it up from the ground and see a spider crawling on the kaleidoscope. This spider must feel free and powerful, and I want to teleport to a place where I can also feel free and powerful. Suddenly, I wish I was this spider turned into a Black spiderman who is a superhero. He is smart, strong, kind, funny and uses his superpowers to protect himself*

*and make things right for people treated badly. Spiderman's friends do not all look the same. Some are tall, short, Brown, or White, but they work together to protect and make everyone safe. I want to escape into his world so I can feel respected. Racial encounters embed feelings of one's dignity being compromised and belittled (Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014).*

*My name is Chadwick; I am an 11-year-old Black boy in 6th grade. My PE teacher says I am 5'8" feet tall and weigh 200 pounds. I am not exactly sure what this means; I guess I am too big for my age. My mama makes sure she helps me keep my dreadlocks clean, and they are very long past my shoulders. I love my hair, and my heart feels very big and happy when I am walking around with it because I see a lot of people with a skin color like mine who have this same hairstyle, and it looks cool. The only times I feel no one wants to be around me is that when I walk in the halls at school, I see both White kids and White teachers look at me too long and walk to the side, far away from me. According to Vaughans & Spielberg (2014), this is an example of invisibility syndrome where "a person's identity is enfeebled by racism which is evident in a plethora of interpersonal settings" (p. 13). I keep telling myself it should not make me uncomfortable, but the pain I feel in my stomach makes me want to just stay at home and not walk outside my door. Once I step outside, I feel uncomfortable because of the way I am treated at school, like I need to be somewhere else and don't belong. Vaught (2011) argues that "Black children, their families, and communities are racially infantilized to the extent they are excluded from civic engagement and academic excellence" (p. 152). I have always had a hard time reading, especially long pages with big words. Because of*



*that, everything I have to read in my classes is so hard, and I don't want other kids to know that I can not read; some of them know and make fun of me. On the bus, in the cafeteria, and in different parts of the school, other kids look at me, laugh, and call me "special dark."* The casting of denigration by a White person to a Black person (based on certain characteristics, features, traits or attributes) is routine as claimed by Vaught (2011), who asserted what may be regarded as a joke, is at the expense of a Black person hence, the name calling. *I keep yelling at them to stop, but they keep on calling me that. All the teachers at my school and other adults are White.* Compared to Black teachers, the majority of teachers in public school are White teachers (Vaught, 2011). *My art teacher is the only kind teacher who helps me understand my work when I am in her class. Other teachers yell when they speak to me. When I tell my teachers I need a break from what we are learning, to play with my kaleidoscope, which helps me relax so I can focus better, or if I say I am feeling tired and want to put my head down, they tell me not to be lazy, sit up, and do my work. I wish my teachers could show me how to do my work the way I can understand.* An educator's perception of a child is swayed by attributes of the child's racial identity, emerging from historical stereotypes of below-average intelligence, profiling, deleterious family or community circumstances (Harry & Klingner, 2014).

*In my reading class, my reading teacher always calls me to answer questions. I know she knows that I have a hard time figuring out how to read and understand what I am reading. The words just do not make sense to me. Why was it such a big deal that I told my teacher I would not read aloud, and she got mad? It was her fault; she kept*

*making me angry by saying I need to speak to her in a nice tone and with no attitude. I tried not to talk back to her to defend myself, but she wouldn't stop yelling at me. Black children are denied opportunities to excel in achievement, the purpose being to keep Whiteness and the disenfranchisement of Blackness at a great distance (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2011). Then she would keep saying this in a loud voice and didn't care if everyone in the class could hear, "Do what I am asking you to do, or I will write you up." My heart is always beating loud in my ears when I say, "I didn't do nothing. I told you I don't want to read in front of the class; quit bugging." I can't have anybody knowing my shame that I can't read. I have my rep to protect. No, not today or ever, I will not read in front of the class!*

*Every reading test or quiz I am given is so long, and even after I try my best, I feel my stomach burning hot when I see that I do not know the answer to the question. I start sweating and I look around the classroom for places I can hide. Sometimes I just give up. Well, I took a quiz today and scored two out of ten points. My work was about reading and writing about a family vacation. I'm not sure what vacation means or looks like, and I don't go anywhere but to school, the mall, and my Mawmaw's house down my street. I wish my teacher had pictures to show me what I am supposed to do with this work or some examples I can use. In order for students to achieve academically, teachers need to investigate the student's frame of reference, background knowledge, and respect student differences (McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001). I listen to what she is saying about our work for the day, but still don't understand. My teacher put all the scores on the SMART Board, but our names showed up as my heart dropped to my stomach as if I was in really*

*big trouble. I wonder why she hid the names only after everyone in the classroom had seen my name and score; two out of ten points. Some White kids in the classroom laughed and called me “special dark” because of that. Sometimes I just give up, and don’t want to do any work at all, but I know I want to be happy with good scores which show I got everything right. Harmon-Jones (2019) affirmed, “Dissonance is evoked when a person is engrossed in an unpleasant activity with the purpose of deriving a distasteful outcome” (p. 6).*

*At the last parent-teacher conference, my teacher said I was reading on a first-grade level, but gave me picture books that I know I can read to my 3-year-old sister. I can’t have everyone knowing my shame. I know I am not reading on first-grade level and not reading on sixth-grade level either. So, I asked my teacher, “What is my reading level for real? Straight up, no cap.” Do you know what her answer was that I would never forget? She said I have problems with how I speak because I don’t speak good English. I’m confused. Is it because of what I said or how I said it? She said she would ask a special teacher to help me speak good English. I don’t understand what she is talking about; this is how everybody in my family speaks, and I know what they are saying. (Jenson, 2005) posited, “the racist culture refers to the “Black vernacular” implicitly, as a language which is a diluted form of the Standard American English” (p. 8).*

*I know I am in a special class for reading and behavior. I also have a hard time understanding other subjects and I am always getting into trouble. All my classes are in the special classrooms all day long except for art and music. In music class, there is a*

*teacher and another adult who keep telling me I better behave myself, or I will get a write up even when I am minding my own business. These special classes are for kids who need help like me, but there are other Black kids who I think are very smart, never get in trouble and in special classes too. I don't know why. Black boys are often disproportionately placed in special education classrooms for a significant part of their school day without their non-disabled peers (Serpell et al., 2009). I am in special classes because I get angry and have a hard time controlling my anger. When I get angry, I pull my hood over my head, scream, cuss, and break things, so I don't have to listen to teachers and walk out of the classroom to calm down by the door. Times like this, I wish I was White and not Black. All the White kids who get in trouble are just told not to do it again in a nice way. Not me!* The results of a study described by (Bergner, 2009) suggested inferiority was associated with skin color where Black kids perceived the White race to be the better race. *My teacher said that I need to give eye contact when speaking to a grown up, or I am disrespectful. My Mama taught me that it is rude to look into the eyes of grown folks when talking to them.* The hidden curriculum is manifested through the interpretation of body language (Myles et al., 2004). *Because the teacher did not say I could walk out or stand by the door, I got in trouble. I don't give eye contact, I also get in trouble, but I will not give eye contact no matter what. How am I supposed to stay in one place and listen to being yelled at? I would rather stand by the door.*

Vaughans & Spielberg (2014) have drawn attention to the fact that, “there is emotional distress of Black males associated with their identity as it is interwoven in a socioeconomic and cultural structure whose practice of racism negatively influences the

norms of conformity and inclusion” (pp.15-16). *I wish my classes were all regular classes where no one would know that I am in special classes.* Due to the need for special education and related services, students are often segregated from their non-disabled peers and placed in a restrictive environment. This placement could foster stigma and resentment for learning (Skiba et al., 2006).

*During breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria, when the White kids walk past me, they look at me, laugh and call me “special dark” and the Black kids only sit with the Black kids. Maybe it is because when we sit next to the White kids, they always get out of their seats and move away from us.* A person’s racial identity or ability status is associated with different stereotypes that can influence how others perceive or interact with that individual (Gullo et al., 2019). *When I try to talk to the school counselor in the office, who talks to kids when they are having a bad day, he says I should come back later. Always. When I go back, he always has different stories about why he cannot see me to talk to me about my problems and that makes me angry. Adults at school always say when you have a problem, talk to an adult, but they are not there when you want to talk to them.*

*I want to feel normal and hear people say good things about me, but I yell, scream, break things, and cuss when I am angry. When I do something right, and my teachers are not saying I am doing a good job, that makes me angry. I am a good kid, and I don’t want my teachers to yell at me or put a blue divider around my desk to put me away from other kids, but I act out and can’t help myself. Putting my hoodie on my head is not allowed in the classroom, but I put it on my head even when I know not to do that. I*

*know I am too fat, and eating greasy food is bad for me. Still, when I go to the cafeteria or at home, I always like to choose and eat fatty foods like pizza, burgers, and fries. My favorite snack is hot Cheetos, which I eat before breakfast and always keep a bag in my backpack to eat all day long. Understanding cognitive dissonance helps us to understand the impact of racism in our daily lives (Brogaard & Gatiza, 2021). I later feel bad about it because the doctor says I will get sick because I am this big at my age and that I should not eat greasy foods, which makes it hard to walk and breathe at the same time. When it is hard for me to do work sometimes, I act out and know that I will go to ISS, but I don't want to go to ISS. I just want to get my teacher's attention, but I always get mean attention. Individuals, through cognitive dissonance, behave in ways that counter their attitude and are faced with the dissonance. They know their decisions and choices go against their beliefs but will continue to make those poor choices (Wong, 2009) .*

*My Papa and Mama tell me to go to school all the time, and I need to work hard to finish middle school and high school. I do not feel like learning anything at school because I wear shame from the time I get on the bus to go to school, until the time I get home, from knowing how I will be treated at school. School is too hard and painful. The only other class I like is PE, but I only get PE when I have a good day. My teachers use it as a reward, and I am a growing boy, which is the only chance I get to play. I feel like I do not belong here, and it makes me feel very sad.*

**Narrative 2*****Behavior: What Did I Do Wrong?***

*Every day, I look forward to hanging out with my friend Tyshon on the bus, at school in the cafeteria, and in the hallways. I do not have a phone, but Tyshon does. We talk about different stories at home, at school, on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, or Tiktok all the time. When we spoke or laughed, the teachers yelled at us and said we were too loud and acting out aggressively. Me, Tyshon, and the other Black kids in my class had a special way of saying hi to each other. We stand close, face each other and act like we are about to punch each other in the face, then we hug each other. This ethnic bonding greeting among Black boys is perceived to be aggressive. In a study, teachers exhibited bias in rating students who were engaged in this culture-related movement as lower-achieving (Sherwin & Schmidt, 2003). When the teachers see us doing this, they write us up and report us to the principal for being loud and aggressive. Why do they have to report us to the principal when we are just playing around and saying hi? We were not hurting anybody. The principal said the teachers were right and we are too loud and aggressive, and somebody could get hurt, but this is how I say hi to my friends. I remember calmly telling the principal, "Sir, we didn't hurt nobody; we just said hi, no need to trip." I also asked him how I was supposed to know this was breaking the rules when I was social with my friends. The principal said that I was disrespectful. I tried to defend myself by speaking out. But he won't let me speak, so I walked away from him, so I didn't get into more trouble. The principal sent me to ISS for being rude and walking away. While I was in ISS, one of my teachers brought worksheets for me to work on. I*

*could not read the words or have them read to me, but she said I have to finish everything before school is over or it will not be graded; then she left the room. I sat quietly at my black desk, facing a white wall.* Studies which show disproportionality in school suspensions, often reveal consistent results. Black students are suspended two to three times more than their White peers (Skiba, 2002).

*Every day, I see White kids slap each other in the back loudly, run down the halls from the cafeteria to the classroom, and I do not hear them being called to the office. They do this even in front of teachers, and the teachers do not yell at them. The teachers who say something to them say it very quietly and nicely that they should not run.* Race and inequity play a significant role in the public education system. For example, Black males have high incidents of discipline infractions, which also leads to expulsion and suspensions, and incarcerations compared to their White peers (Hacker, 2003).

*When I get mad, I get into fights, too. One of the students said to me, "special dark, you talk funny; we are not in the ghetto." I punched him square in the face. I was suspended and told to stay home because I punched a kid. How is staying at home going to help me learn what I need to learn at school? No one believed me that he started it first! If he was not mean to me, I would not have punched him. How would the principal and the adults who said I was wrong, feel if the kid had said the same mean things to them? I kept reporting to the teachers that this kid and some other White kids called me that, but when I got in trouble, no one said I was right. Instead, they said, "Next time, talk to an adult before taking matters into your hands." When I was at home on suspension for punching a kid, I did not get any school work for a long time. After I*



*finally got my work from school, I was supposed to go to a library near the school for a teacher to help me. All the grown folks at home worked all the time, so nobody took me to the library for my teacher there to help me with my work.*

*I spent many of my school days in the principal's office and not in the classroom where I am supposed to learn how to read. Some days, I just sat in the office from the time I got in trouble until at the end of the day when it was time to go home. Other days, if there was a teacher in the in-school suspension (ISS) room, I went there, always sitting by myself away from everybody else at a black desk facing a white wall. There are always more Black kids than White kids in the ISS room. I hate going to school and attending another school called ISS while I am at school. I always wonder, aren't the adults at the school seeing that by me going to ISS all the time, is not helping my grades, and I am not learning anything when my work is given to me without any explanations?*

*In my behavior class, which says social skills on my schedule, my teacher always wants us to talk about our feelings. When I say that the kids and teachers are mean to me and say or do things to make me mad, she says I should not talk about that or talk like that. I don't know what she thinks I am saying, but I mean when the teachers are always yelling at me, and the White kids call me "special dark," it makes me mad, and I get into trouble when I act out from being angry. I asked my teacher why she was always angry at me. She asked me loudly in front of the class, "Chad, did you take your anxiety meds today?" When I heard this, I felt my embarrassing body, leaving me to hide in the corner of the classroom away from everybody, while my happy, respectable body stayed in my seat so no one could see me to believe I was taking meds because something is wrong*

*with me. My name is Chadwick, not Chad, and I don't even take any meds!* There are a disproportionate number of Black children who are in special education compared to White children and are stigmatized because of the special education label. Vaught (2011) posits, "Equal participation in society is difficult as a result of the overwhelming number of Black children with a special education label because special education in itself is a racial label" (p. 164).

*Mama and Papa were told I had too many write ups and too many suspensions. Because of that, I had to go to a different school and I missed my friends. I didn't know anyone there. All my work was on a laptop which we were not allowed to take home. I was given homework every day, but we did not have Wi-Fi at home, or a laptop. Mama said she went to my school to beg for help because I did not have a laptop to do my homework at home. Well, the school did not have an extra laptop or Wi-Fi Hotspot for me. So, Mama's friend printed out my work. The teachers told Mama they wrote examples on the papers, and I had to figure the rest of the work out. I could not read and understand what was on the papers.* Institutional racism or systemic racism gravely impacts the learning opportunities and academic success of Black students as its goal is to restrict resources or create disadvantages for non-White racial groups (Better, 2008).

*At my new school, I sat at a black desk, facing a white wall everyday. I am supposed to work on my own on stuff I don't understand. I got my homework on paper, but no one at home was able to show me how to do the work on the papers, so I just put some answers down on some of the papers and did not answer some of the other questions. I saw my grades in the mail that came in a few weeks later, and I had an F*

*grade in all my classes, even in art. My teachers also left a note on the papers that they could not read my handwriting, and most of my answers were wrong anyway. But I thought my teachers and principal were going to help me not get an F in all my classes. Isn't that why I am in special classes to get help, so I don't get F's? At least that is what my Mama and Papa said when they saw my F grades. I was eating noodles when Mama and Papa were talking about my grades, and I pretended my noodles were long strings with the letter F taped to it. I felt so sorry for myself that the food I was eating tasted like sand.*

### **Narrative 3**

#### ***Introduction***

From this point, the narratives take a different form. Instead of continuing the 11-year-old Black boy's narrative point of view, the content shifts to racialization that has impacted me as a Black educator. As a Black teacher, I have also encountered situations where I felt uncomfortable and disheartened as a result of White professionals using their implicit bias to undermine my qualifications. Examples include uncountable experiences where special education providers, including speech pathologists and occupational therapists, walk into my classroom and bypass me and approach the first White person they see and ask, "May I schedule service minutes with XYZ student?" Instead of asking me, they walk past me, the student's teacher, without any acknowledgement, while I stand nearby (Gullo et al., 2019).

I also experienced racist stereotypes at a back-to-school district event with other teachers and staff members. I sat next to a White teacher who introduced himself to me

during our break-out session, and without asking me if I was a teacher's aide, he asked, "Why did you decide to be a teacher aide? There is financial support from the school district for teacher aides who want to be certified teachers." My response was that it was my preference and choice to be a certified teacher. This experience reveals that sometimes, regardless of accomplishments and accolades, being Black in America brings out the profound issues that are uniquely American, such as doubts and questions about competence and disdainful reactions toward Black people in professional settings. Vaught (2011) claimed, "Black individual affluence does not protect one from racism and the authority of Black individuals can be undermined" (p. 13).

### **Narrative 3**

#### ***What-about-ism: Reality Check***

*Conversations I had with my colleagues at the workplace shed light on different perspectives which were implicitly or explicitly racially motivated.*

*( Conversation with a White colleague in my classroom)*

*Colleague: Any student with an educational diagnosis of emotional disturbance has the propensity to break the norms of law and order regardless of race. Lack of compliance with authority figures could get anyone in trouble with the law. It has nothing to do with race.*

Matias (2019) notes

There are White women who take on the role of superior-like characteristics in order to gaslight and harm people of color. They pretend to help out, but their intentions are emotionally and psychologically conniving as they claim to be

victims of oppression. They act this way for their own interests and benefit (p. 13).

*Me: Most often than not, despite following law enforcement's directives, a Black student with or without an emotional disturbance educational diagnosis experiences racism and brutality at an officers' hands. These incidents occur regardless of Black students' compliance with requests from authority figures and are often more consequential and prevalent than White students' encounters with law enforcement in similar situations.*

Historical interactions between Black people and the police have set the stage for these continuing issues. This also explains the prevalence of Black incarcerations compared to White incarcerations (Hacker, 2003).

*Colleague: What about kids who bully other kids in my neighborhood? I have the same conversations with my White boys to be careful when they leave the house. So they are not bullied by the kids in the neighborhood. I have also taught them to compromise and comply when approached by an authority figure or law enforcement. What about serial killers who could attack my boys? Both White and Black kids are approached the same way, and it has nothing to do with race. According to Jenson (2005), he affirmed, "It is important to break through the attitude that our economic, social and political structures are not cemented on the foundation of racism. The not-knowing and denial of racism create more harm than good" (p. 65).*

*Me: I respect your point of view, but I hear defensiveness, blaming, and total derailing of productive discourse.*

*Colleague: What about how the media concoct and embellish racism as an ongoing problem when it is not? As a White woman, I have experienced oppression too from men. Black people always pull out the race card. Slavery ended a long time ago, and Black people need to work as hard as White people do to extract and extricate themselves from poverty. White privilege paves the way for opportunities for White people compared to Black people. However, it is challenging for a White person to admit to reaping the benefits from White privilege (Matias, 2019).*

*After the last word was uttered, my colleague suddenly started crying profusely. Between sobs, she explained that she was a single mother raising four children under very difficult conditions. Despite all these challenges, she said she was able to accomplish the inevitable, through hard work and without seeking financial assistance from charity or the government.*

*Colleague: What about the fact that I own a house, pay my bills and stay out of debt? Why can't Black people do the same if we live in a country of opportunity? Please do not think I am racist, I don't see race or color because I treat everyone equally, and I also have Black friends. It is challenging for Black people to be gainfully employed.*

According to Jensen (2005),

“Black people are more of a liability during a job search than having a criminal record because of racial discrimination based on perceptions of the suitability of minority applications” (p. 18). This depicts the challenges that Black people endure when they apply for employment and are met with hurdles due to racial discrimination. Vaught (2011) explains the contradiction of White teachers saying they do not see race, “many

teachers proclaim they do not see race; however, they single out demographics of a particular class or the color of their neighbors” (p. 64).

*As the conversation continued, my colleague dropped her voice to almost a whisper, and with tears still rolling down her face; she retrenched and glanced around suspiciously toward the door. As soon as she saw another teacher walk in, she quickly changed the subject, wiped her tears, made a comment about allergies, and cheerfully began a conversation about her plans for the weekend with the teacher who had entered the room. Desensitizing a paradigm of horrific racism, laced with the notion that it does not exist or is exaggerated, is challenging to contend without building the resilience to educate using the truth about systemic racism (Bell, 2018).*

*A few years back, I worked with students at a high school. White teachers would often bring Black students from their class to my class for me to talk them into behaving appropriately. The teachers implicitly and explicitly believed that as a Black person, I should automatically connect with the Black student. By making a connection, they assume the student would acknowledge the error of their ways, and I would have managed their challenging behaviors. Oftentimes, the White teachers would comment, “What about these kids’ rude behavior to their teachers? They need to be taught a lesson. I hope you go Black Mama on them, so they follow the rules.” (Jensen, 2005) states, “In a White-supremist society, White privilege manifests itself in many forms and all White people benefit in some settings” (p. 19).*

*The teachers made these statements about the Black woman surreptitiously, and I pointed out to them, that this comment was a stereotypical assumption that the Black*

*woman has the tendency to be loud, aggressive and bend any Black child to their will.*

Vaugh (2011) stated, “Although Black women in a White supremacist society were attributed to be authoritarian and unyielding, they were regarded not deserving of the right to exhibit this authority” (p. 143). *I also observed, the teachers only sent Black students to me and not students of other races. These are lived experiences of a Black woman navigating the education profession while anchoring personhood.*



**CHAPTER 5: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART II****Ida B. Casey**

*Black Girlhood – Vision, Voice, Freedom and Truth: How Anti-Black Policies in the Education System Impact African American Females*

**Narrative 1.*****Track 1, Track 2, Track 3, Terminal Track....You're OUT.***

*As a high school student in an urban, St. Louis inner-city high school, I had a friend who told me that her last day in high school would be at the end of the school year, which would be at the end of our sophomore, or 10th-grade year. I was somewhat puzzled and sad at the same time. We had been friends since elementary school and always walked to school together. She was one of the first friends I had when I went to middle school. I didn't understand what she meant and assumed she was moving away. She explained that because she was a terminal education student, she was in a two-year program. According to my friend, terminal education students were only allowed to attend high school for two years. These were students, through testing, who had been placed in an academic program to help them meet their vocational and assumed personal needs to become productive adults. They were possibly identified as not academically capable to attend post-secondary institutions based on IQ tests (Barnes, 1973). I remember her using the term "terminal ed." This meant that she had reached the highest level attainable in her assigned education program, usually designed for students, who by circumstance or design, complete their education at a point before traditional graduation (Martorana, 1947). I wondered if this also meant that these students were ineligible to*

*attend a college or university because they only completed a two-year high school program and not a four-year college preparatory program (Barnes, 1973). My friend also told me that she would receive a certificate of completion, not a high school diploma, for the two years she attended high school. I now understand that terminal education students may have been considered Special Education students at that time because of their assumed learning deficits based on IQ tests. The certificate of completion was a reflection and indication that the student could complete the requirements in his or her educational plan (Hatwood & Gomez, 2008).*

*There is a looming question around this practice and the dismissal of students in lower tracks, allowing them only to complete two years of high school. My friend's departure from high school was after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which deemed tracking and ability grouping a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2015-2016). How was the school district allowed to go against the law, or were their actions overlooked because they were African American?*

*I suppose my feelings about my friends' departure from high school, after only two years, left me confused. In my mind, the decision had to be the right thing to do because it was a school or education system policy. There was a sense of trust in the education system. After all, at that time, many of the teachers, district supervisors, and administrators were Black, so they had to have the student's best interest at heart. This mindset placed Black educators in a quasi fictive kinship (Chatters, et al., 1994) category. There was that community, family, and church connection between students, educators, and their families in the Black SLPS system (Chatters, et al., 1994). Because of the*

*esteem held for Black educators and the familiarity via community connections, there wasn't any conversation, to my knowledge, about the unfair and inequitable policies towards Black students.*

### ***Tracking.***

Tracking characterizes students based on the socioeconomic tenets that limit their academic possibilities. It is one of those quiet, unassuming anti-Black policies masked as a justifiable reason for students' segregation and separation (Hatwood & Gomez, 2008). Based on student characteristics, disadvantages, and pre-existing inequities in achievement, these reasons are reinforced and compensated for through the provision of unequal or lesser academic experiences, especially for Black girls (Gamoran & Mare, 1989). Tracking or ability grouping still contributes to low-income and minority students' poor academic performance in low-income districts, maintaining the barriers that deny students the same educational opportunities as their White counterparts, creating a poverty of learning (Hatwood & Gomez, 2008). Darby and Rury (2018) state that systemic practices of tracking are upheld by the color of mind ideology, sustaining the trauma of slavery, anti-Blackness, and dignitary injustices towards Black people.

Evidence shows that tracking or group differentiation of gender, class, ethnicity, and race are linked to the courses students are directed to take (Breton, et al, 1970; Heyns, 1974; Porter, et al, 1982). Tracking also has a profound, negative impact on the academic careers of students, denying those in lower tracks educational equality (Oakes, 1992). Girls are more likely to be encouraged to take classes related to home and family (Loveless, 1998). They are not encouraged to take courses traditionally thought for

affluent males such as math and science, being stereotyped as incapable of intellect or completing higher-level courses. Anna Julia Cooper (1892) saw it during her time as an activist and feminist, Black women's intellect was devalued and not taken seriously. Her personal realization was when she witnessed that her male classmates were encouraged to take more rigorous courses than female students (Cooper, 1892). The commitment to women's equality speaks to the unspoken, yet apparent discrimination and disparagement of Black female intellect and lack of inclusion and respectability (Cooper, 2017). Cooper (1892) argues, in *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*, that Black women have a unique epistemological standpoint from which to observe society and its oppressive systems as well as a unique ethical contribution to make in confronting and correcting these oppressive systems. Black women are not only impacted by racism and sexism, but they are also ignored (Cooper, 2017). They are unacknowledged by White women and men, and Black men, and invisible in the realm of intellect. Cooper posits that this is a factor in the systems of oppression that must change, stating that, "We must begin seeing the Black female body as a form of possibility and not a burden, investing emotional energy in Black female social existence and intellect" (Cooper, 2017, p. 3).

There is a legal or constitutional issue related to Tracking or Ability Grouping, which centers around the characteristics of this type of policy or system, perpetuating students' separation for different educational treatments (Oakes, 1992). From a constitutional perspective, tracking and ability grouping can be viewed as barriers to equal educational opportunity (Oakes, 1992). Tracking also creates classifications that

determine the quantity and type of education students receive, affecting the student's access to education (Oakes, 1992).

It is somewhat puzzling that schools or school systems practicing tracking or ability grouping were not challenged even though they were violating the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1965. In most instances, research showed that many educators seemed to be unaware that the segregative effects of tracking could be deemed unlawful (Education Week Staff, 2004). However, was it a lack of knowledge of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, or were schools practicing tracking and ability grouping allowed to continue in those minority segregated systems, continuing to subject minority students to an inferior education?

### **Narrative 2.**

#### ***Bias Barriers.***

*As a student with an interest in certain subjects and having an obvious and proven talent for dance, I found little or no help or encouragement to excel or pursue my interest in my talent or academic interest. I was told by my counselor, a White female, that I should refocus my academic interest and consider a lesser field of study, whatever that meant. She clearly told me that I probably would not be accepted into the university. I suspect that her statement was based on a standardized test or IQ or tracking test and her cultural bias. According to testing results, I fell in the category of track two or average intelligence. According to her, the University of Missouri-St. Louis only accepted students with above average ability. I'm assuming above 2.5 GPA was the acceptance point, in which I fell. Her words would quickly meet with untruth. As she spoke, my acceptance*

*letter was in the email. However, I must not ignore the emotional impact that my counselor's statements had on me. I remember crying to my parents about her statements and feeling that I had no academic future. But, because I had loving parents who taught their children perseverance and self-confidence, my worries turned into the confidence they had instilled in me.*

*I was also a very talented dancer. My ultimate dream was to become a professional classical dancer. By participating in the dance team and proving my talents, I hoped for scholarship opportunities in dance. My counselor told me that scholarship opportunities for dance were rare, especially for Black students. Other than athletic scholarships, usually awarded to male athletes for football, basketball, and track and field, girls were usually only awarded academic or track and field scholarships. I also felt my talent was overlooked because of my skin color being too dark. It was for this reason that my dreams were deferred and, as time passed, diminished. I pushed back any thoughts of being a professional dancer and began doubting my ability to become a psychologist.*

Black students face racial and gender discrimination frequently, which impacts their psychological and academic stability. Black girls are affected more negatively than boys (Cogburn et al., 2011), which lowers their self-esteem. Exploring the impact of school-based racial and gender discrimination among Black girls is essential. The frequency of gender discrimination, both academic and psychological, and its impact on Black girls, points to the reasons for low academic performance and how education system policies are designed from a lens of White supremacy (Cogburn et al., 2011).

Ladson-Billings (1998) contends that the system created the barriers, put the obstacles up, then blamed the participants for losing the battle. These barriers, coupled with the unequal provision of schooling, are opportunity gaps that hinder the progress of Black students in schools. Black female students, particularly, are usually reduced to stereotypes, particularly in educational spaces, when they do not meet the dominant cultural standard. They live in a social world that thrives on their erasure and exploitation (Ladner, 1971).

In a report on Black girls and education, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and the National Women's Law Center (2014), reviewed how race and gender biases of school systems, educators, and school administrators impact the educational experiences of Black girls. They are often overlooked for gifted programs and STEM opportunities (NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and the National Women's Law Center, 2014), and subjected to exclusionary practices such as non-inclusion in extra learning opportunities. These practices perpetuate feelings of disengagement stigmatized by the learning environment (Chesney-Lind, 2010; Tate et al., 2014). Black girls experience being eliminated and ostracized, not having the same academic enrichment opportunities as their White counterparts. This has a significant impact on their overall outlook of the education system and ultimately their lives (DeBlase, 2003).

Black girls have been left out, misunderstood, ignored, and passed over for educational opportunities such as gifted classes, leading to lower self-confidence and negative self-perceptions of higher-level courses (Moses et al., 1999). Despite the fact

that Black girls excel in elementary, middle, and high school grades and have an interest in STEM careers, this interest decreases beyond these grades. Black girls seem to consider lesser career choices (Jones & Shorter-Goodman, 2003; Sadker, 2000), usually due to being excluded from high-level courses and having their desires extinguished. Gholson (2016) researched why Black girls are not steered to or relegated to mathematics education. In the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, data on Black girls were non-existent. The reality being that Black girls were pushed into the shadows of mathematics education (Gholson, 2016). Also, this exclusion stems from achievement tests, school tracking, and the low socioeconomic status of Black students (Moses et al., 1999). Black students often experience poor academic preparation in STEM areas (Moses et al., 1999).

A study done by the Harvard Kennedy School's Women and Public Policy Program found that Black female students statistically are least recommended and rated least prepared for higher-level courses and opportunities by high school counselors. This can have an impact on their likelihood of future or long-term success (Francis et al., 2019). The study further shows that Black girls are disadvantaged when it comes to being recommended for higher-level academic opportunities that can positively impact their future endeavors. When counselors are asked to make recommendations, Black girls are subject to conscious or unconscious bias, which calls for systemic interventions to address implicit biases among counselors and possibly other educators (Francis et al., 2019).



**Narrative 3.*****The Harming Impact of White Supremacist-ladden School Policies.***

*I reflect on an incident while working in a middle school that, in my estimation, was an example of how some White supremacists influenced school policies impacted the actions and biases of school staff towards, in this scenario, African American female students.*

*During the early morning arrival of students, a young middle school female student was pulled from her classroom line for wearing a hoodie, which securely covered her head. As a non-participant in students' morning passing to their homerooms, I hoped that none of those school staff who were sticklers for rules would notice the young lady. I had no problem with students wearing hoodies, especially if it was wintertime, and the hoodie may have been the only form of warm outer clothing owned by the student. I felt that some rules, especially this one, banning hoodies, were irrelevant to students' ability to learn and should have no impact on whether a student is admitted to class.*

*Unfortunately, upon entering the school, she was immediately spotted by the counselor, her homeroom teacher, and the School Resource Officer, all of whom began to reprimand her for breaking the school policy of no headgear, emphasizing that she knew it was against the policy. The young lady became extremely upset and emotional. She tried to explain why she had covered her head with the hoodie because of being teased by her classmates about her haircut. Supposedly she had been bullied and taunted throughout her bus ride to school, so to stop the teasing, she covered her head with the hoodie. The student was emotional and tried to explain but was denied the opportunity to explain, not*

*being allowed to give voice to her emotions and the situation. A feeling of anger came over me, along with the overwhelming need to go to her rescue and defame the adults' actions in this scenario, not to mention pointing out that the rule had no impact on a student's ability to learn. I reflected on her emotional state, remembering how I felt when being verbally and publicly embarrassed in front of my peers and not having an opportunity to give voice to my personal pain. The student was forced to remove the hoodie which displayed a short, natural haircut. I thought how beautiful she was with her new hairstyle. I also asked her what she thought about her hair cut and she immediately said she liked it. I reassured her that it was a very nice haircut and she was beautiful. I wished I had the book *Hair Love* by Matthew Cherry to give her some encouragement about her hair. I also thought about India Arie's song, 2006, *I am Not My Hair*, which talks about not defining oneself by your hairstyle. Unfortunately, no comfort or understanding was provided to this student by her tormentors, which is the case with many girls. As Monique Morris points out in *Push Out, The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* (2015), zero-tolerance policies in schools, explicit and implicit biases, and the intersection of racism and sexism create systems that suspend a disproportionate number of Black girls.*

*As I observed this incident, I welled up with disappointment at the lack of understanding of educators as well as their persistence to enforce such a non-essential rule. There were two disturbing scenarios being played out – the criminalization of a Black girl in an education space that should offer safety and nurturing (Morris, 2015), and the perpetuation of oppression and lowering of self-esteem through school policies*

*(Cribb & Haase, 2015). I was saddened that two African American female school staff stripped this young lady of her dignity and self-respect. Secondly, there was the enforcement of a school policy that had nothing to do with the academic performance of this student or any other student. The threat to suspend her or be placed in In-School Suspension (ISS) for breaking an unwarranted and non-essential rule perpetuated the denial of education to Black girls for non-essential reasons accelerated for Black girls (Morris, 2015). There seemed to be no interest in realizing how she was impacted by her daily life. I questioned in my mind the relationship of the no headgear policy to the ability to learn. I also felt that the message of not good enough or pretty enough was being transmitted to this young lady as a result of the student responses to her new hairstyle and the enforcement of the school policy that denied her self-realization.*

*This message was one with which I was so familiar. As a young African American female, I faced many hurtful outcomes, which seem to be apparently due to the color of my skin. I never doubted my talent or intelligence, but there seemed always to be someone in the academic arena that found words of discouragement. I painfully remember when I was a freshman in college how a White instructor treated the Black students in the class. I was one of three Black students in a foreign language class, two females and one male. I must point out that one of the female students was lighter-skinned and seemed to be favored by the instructor. When the instructor would ask a question, she only called on the White students or one particular Black student. Because class participation was incorporated into the grades, it was vital for me to answer questions and participate in class discussions. Numerous times I would raise my*

*hand to answer a question, but the instructor NEVER acknowledged me. She would motion for me to put my hand down. As a young, new college student, this was very discouraging and racist. As a result, I was subjected to receiving a poor grade for not participating. This racist behavior from the instructor could have harmed my self-awareness. Fortunately, I had parents who padded me with encouragement and high self-esteem, which gave me a positive sense of self-awareness.*

Kania et al. (2018) discuss Mental Models - habits of thought, deeply held beliefs, and assumptions that influence how Black students experience the education system through policies, institutional rules, and priorities that guide the actions of those with power in the organizations or systems, (Kania et al., 2018). The result - their being treated unfairly and labeled as aggressive, unfeminine, disruptive, loud, and non-compliant, stereotype codes indicating that Black girls don't fit into the norms of feminine behavior. These biases are evident in the disparities in the lack of academic opportunities, resources and exclusion as well as the possibility of inappropriate confrontations between law enforcement and school resource officers and young Black women (Chesney-Lind, 2010).

Looking at the implicit biases of educators and how the education policies and practices can have a long-range effect on the achievement of Black female students, can be essential to the equality of policies (Valles & Villalpando, 2007). Also, the stereotypes placed on Black adolescent females have become barriers to opportunities and on teacher expectations (The Graide Network, 2009). Biases are displayed through their grading processes – scoring Blacks high for inadequate work or scoring White students higher

than Blacks for the same level of work, identifying a disproportionate number of Black students for Special Education classes. Onyeka-Crawford (2018), points out that school policies have subliminal references to Black females related to dress, hair, etc. She points out that anti-Black messages have been handed down from generation to generation. People start to internalize those things, and it's more harmful than it is helpful (Onyeka-Crawford, 2018). The experiences of Black girls in schools, and more broadly in society suggest that social constructions of gender and femininity intersecting with race shape their educational outcomes (Morris, 2016). Societal norms around gender and femininity aligned with White, middle-class values (Annamma et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998), creates a system of excessive surveillance in educational spaces. It carries with it punishment of Black girls personalities, actions, or attire that don't meet with what society and educational institutions expect (Morris, 2016).

Kimberle Crenshaw's (1989) single-axis framework defines the dominant culture's desired outcome: to erase and void Black girls' identities, experiences, and intellect. This framework describes the intent of those policies that cause Black girls to drop out of school, discourage or eliminate their participation in higher-level opportunities, and render them voiceless in situations of violence and abuse in school (Crenshaw, 1989). The effects of girls being excluded from opportunities to learn and grow impact their lives and future possibilities and their social, emotional, and academic development. Morris (2016), suggests that Black girls are affected by criminalizing practices that makes them susceptible to exploitation, justice system, dehumanization and

death. Nationally, Black girls are five times more likely than White girls to be suspended from school (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2015-16).

Black students experience oppression because of gender, race, class, and sexuality, in the spaces they occupy; schools and communities. Their experiences intersect, shaping what it means to be Black (Crenshaw, 1989). Black girls are the only group of girls disproportionately represented in schools' discipline continuum (Morris, 2018). For Black girls, schools are hostile, geopolitical spaces that threaten their learning. They are faced with zero-tolerance policies and policing built on standards of White femininity (Hines-Datiri & Andrews, 2017).

Black students (males and females) find themselves in a perpetual negotiation as they seek to reconcile their individual lived experiences with what society, both White and Black, expects which can become overwhelming and lead to academic or social difficulties (Howard & Reynolds, 2013). For instance, in schools, Black girls don't have a space, a voice, or a place of belonging, being victims of policies that exclude them, perpetuating their oppression (Dotson, 2013). Their intellect and abilities are often diminished or overlooked. The policies that impact Black girls are built upon the societal norms and standards of femininity that are aligned with the White, dominant standards of what behavior is appropriate, shaping policies that are of the socially constructed middle-class standards, enforcing assimilation and cultural denial (Annamma, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Dominant members can decide who benefits or doesn't benefit from opportunities (National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2020). The mistreatment and misunderstanding of Black students, especially in middle and high

schools, are a reflection of the Anti-Black and anti-gender policies that schools adopt based on the cultural norms put in place by dominant cultural expectations. As a result, this limits student potential and opportunities, and pushes a disproportionate number of Black students out of school and into potentially unsafe and unhealthy situations.

**CHAPTER 6: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART III****Jamie C. Klupe***It's Just Me: One White Lady's Radical Racial Realization***Becoming a White Lady.***The Beginning.*

I have wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember. I would line up all of my stuffed animals and spend hours teaching them their ABCs. Learning for me was a way to open up the world or perhaps escape. I grew up the only child of a single mom who was always struggling. Struggling to find a job, pay bills, keep an apartment, stay sober and be a mother. I felt like a burden to her. She told me I was a burden. Being her daughter was difficult and forced me to grow up much quicker than other kids. I spent a lot of time alone or taking care of her or covering for her when she was drunk in public. She was the burden. Because of the chaos at home, I had developed some survival skills like fading into the background, predicting adult's moods and behaviors, and a keen sense of awareness of my surroundings. My teachers interpreted my survival skills as quiet, helpful, eager to please, and followed directions well. The more praise I received for these attributes, the more I honed them. Then I started to earn recognition for doing well academically. So, I worked harder. The harder I worked, the more praise I received until I found my only sense of worthiness inside that school.

The town I spent my elementary years in was a majority White, rural town in central Illinois. All of the kids in the school were White, and there was a mix of socioeconomic levels. My grandma provided all of the education on this subject. There



were specific rules that I had to follow in regards to my friends. Some friends could come to our house to play, but I could never go to their home, some I could play with outside only, and some I was discouraged from playing with at all. All of this had to do with who their family was and others' perception to see me playing with particular kids. My grandma did not want me to be associated with White trash. I did not understand at the time, but there were fine lines between who is considered White trash and who is not. One of the factors is socioeconomic status, and I clearly remember growing up on welfare. Other measures were not as clearly defined but involved what church someone went to, their relatives, their friends, the part of town they lived in, etc. All of this factored into what level of friendship I was able to have.

*New Town.*

I moved out of that small town to another smaller town in northern Illinois with my aunt and uncle in middle school. My new town was White, and the people occupied a much higher socioeconomic status than in my previous hometown. Suddenly, my Wal-Mart jeans were too obviously not purchased at the mall. When kids would talk to me, they would inevitably ask about my parents, and I would explain that I lived with my aunt and uncle. Then I would listen to the subsequent questions about what happened to my parents. I explained that my mom moved away from me when I was in the third grade, then I lived with my grandma, then my family decided I should move to live with my aunt and uncle. Suddenly, the kids were nice to me and talked to me in class. The kids wanted me to sit next to them during lunch after I was placed in advanced reading. I was so excited to have new friends in this new town that I completely ignored that they were

only nice to me because they felt sorry for me. They didn't feel sorry for me for long, and soon, I was old news. I went back to being Jamie with the weird family and the Wal-Mart jeans. My grades began to fall, and soon I went from an all-A student to an all-C student. I struggled to pay attention, especially during Math class, because I was too preoccupied with what people thought about me. My family members believed and accepted that this school's curriculum was more challenging than the previous one, and as long as I didn't get anything lower than a C, no one encouraged me to get better grades.

As a high school senior, I took a class that paired students with job shadow opportunities. I shadowed at a local elementary school for an hour every morning in a first-grade classroom. I loved it. I loved all of their tiny desks and chairs, the way they needed my help to unzip their coats, their tiny little voices, and how they would get excited over the smallest activity. By the time I started shadowing at this school, I knew I wanted to work in an inner-city school in Chicago. I knew that I had what it takes and that my love for my students and love of teaching would be all I needed to save those poor little inner-city Black kids. This desire to move to Chicago and teach in the inner city came from my family's many visits to the city. About the time I moved, my uncle took a two-week certification course for work offered in Chicago. My aunt and I spent our days basking in the sites and sounds of the city, and at night we would walk the city and pass fancy restaurants with sleek Black town cars waiting to whisk diners away to penthouses in the sky. We spent time in the city every Thanksgiving week at an Illinois County Officials convention. The city, decorated for Christmas, sparkled. I got to wear fancy clothes and eat at those fancy places I had once longed to enter. I dazzled all of the

adults with my ability to sit quietly, speak when spoken to, and entertain myself. We rarely went outside of the downtown area during our frequent visits except when we visited friends, and we only went to their apartment. I had no idea about the inner-city community in Chicago. Working and living in Chicago represented freedom, money, and being completely different from the kid in the Wal-Mart jeans.

*Off to College.*

I didn't end up in Chicago. I was discouraged by my family because the school I wanted to attend was in a dangerous neighborhood. Also, I didn't have good enough grades to get into such a big state school. Instead, I attended a small state university in Illinois. I didn't realize how isolated my small town was until I started college. I had never interacted with so many different types of people. I was in awe of the diversity and would sit in the quad and soak it up regularly. It was so wonderful to be in that place and not see color. I didn't see color on the quad, in class, in the dorms, or on the shuttle to and from campus. I also didn't see color across the table from me at lunch, at a party, or in a study group because I did not have any friends that were not White.

The road to where I became a speech-language pathologist takes a couple of turns here. I didn't graduate with a degree in education, let alone speech-language pathology. I earned a degree in Liberal Studies with an emphasis in Spanish, a general, non-specific degree. I was a double major in Liberal Studies and Spanish until the last semester of college when I dropped two of the classes I needed to finish my Spanish degree because I lacked confidence in myself and my abilities. I was encouraged by one of my Spanish professors to go into education and become a Spanish teacher. However, when I talked

about my job shadow experience, my uncle liked to say, "those who can't do, teach. And those who can't teach, teach P.E." Those words lingered and, paired with my lack of confidence, meant I spent the next two years working as a waitress trying to figure out what I wanted to be when I grew up.

After soul searching, I decided I had to go back to school. I re-enrolled in that small state university in Illinois and found the speech-language pathology profession on a chance encounter with an enthusiastic advisor. My second experience was not unlike the first, except I didn't spend much time on the quad, and I had lost some of my ideological tendencies. I spent most of my time in a single classroom, the on-campus speech clinic, or the department workroom. This time around, I didn't think about diversity because there were no students of color in the department. My experience with Black people was limited to my neighborhood in the city and at work.

***That Grad School Life.***

I attended a private, Catholic university in the suburbs of St. Louis for my Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology. I earned a full scholarship provided by a grant written in conjunction with the university and a not-for-profit organization that provided educators with monetary scholarships. The funding provided me a full scholarship to the university, and in exchange, I realized my dream to work in an urban school district. Four women (three White and one Black) earned the scholarship, and we became fast friends. The workload was intense, and working a full-time job all day and attending graduate school at night took its toll. During the spring semester, my friend, a Black woman, was having difficulty keeping up in class and earned a C in one of our courses, which lowered

her GPA to below the graduate school standard. She shared with me that she was encouraged by the dean to leave the program. At the time, I rationalized that the program was too difficult for her and that her writing and clinical skills were not where they should have been. I assumed her undergraduate program at the HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) wasn't as rigorous as mine. I did nothing to encourage her or to help her fight the system. I was selfish and protected myself and my opportunity. My friend, the only Black student, left the program. During my second year of graduate school, I found out that another student earned a C in one of our classes shortly after my friend left the program. She was also encouraged to leave the program by the dean. However, she stood up to the dean and requested to retake the class. The dean made the concession; she took the course a second time and was allowed to stay in the program and graduate with her class.

My first experience as a speech-language pathologist was at an urban middle school. I was both exhilarated and terrified going into that school. I was excited because I love working with adolescent language and writing but scared because I had no idea what it was like to work with middle school Black students. When I stood in the hallway between classes, it was utter chaos. I was overwhelmed with the noise and movement and the occasional fights. I didn't understand this school environment, and I didn't have any behavior strategy skills because that is not something I learned as a speech-language pathology student. I had one group of 8th-grade boys for language therapy who had been challenging to manage in my therapy room. The boys would start arguments with each other and with me. They became defiant and refused to participate. They began to skip

therapy when I would call for them. I had to get their language minutes each week somehow, so I decided to ask my friend, a Black woman, to push into her classroom for their language minutes. I gave up trying to see them in a small group setting. I thought their behavior was too bad. I was afraid of them and what they might do. I gave up trying to make a connection with those boys. I believed that I tried.

During that same year, a Black male student in 8th grade came up behind me in my therapy room while I was seated at a table, hugged me, and then put his face in my breasts. With my heart pounding, I sent him back to class and alerted the principal and my supervisor about the situation immediately. I was terrified that I was going to get fired. I thought for sure this student would tell people that we had some kind of inappropriate relationship. Instead, my supervisor's first question was whether I would press charges against the student. The following day, the young man and his father, my principal, the security guard, and my mentor had a meeting to discuss the details of what had occurred. Again, I was terrified. I thought for sure that I would have to convince this room of Black men that I didn't do anything inappropriate. Instead, the principal asked if I was going to press charges. I was relieved but also confused. I looked at this boy sitting across the table. He had chubby cheeks and always addressed me as ma'am. He was a 13-year-old boy who made a mistake. Why would I involve the police?

After working at the middle school for a few years, I moved to a different school in the same district. This school was a public, separate day elementary school, which means all of the students had Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The occupational therapist (OT) and I decided to stage a play with one of our shared classes. After weeks

of rehearsals, the students performed in front of the entire school and their families. At the end of the play, the OT and I stood up and thanked the OT and physical therapy (PT) departments for their help in putting together the production. One of the OTs gave us each a bouquet, and we smiled and waved. Later, the OT came to my office in tears to tell me the classroom teacher (a Black woman) found her in the hallway and called her a racist. I asked if the teacher gave a reason, and it was because we didn't thank the teacher and the classroom staff for their participation and assistance in the production. I promptly wrote all of the team in the room an apology note for leaving them out of recognition for the class accomplishment. I did this because I didn't want them to be mad at me. Not because I believed they deserved the credit.

***Movin' to the 'Burbs.***

I left my position in the urban district and began a job in the suburbs. As I became acclimated to the building and began forming relationships with colleagues in the building, I noticed something. Winks, nudges, innuendo, and things left unsaid dominated conversations with White staff members. For example, one teacher was relating to me her frustration with a parent not signing a note and returning it to school. She said, "she's only 23, and she has another little one at home." What was the subtext in that conversation? We disagree with the choices this woman has made in having two children at a young age, and she can't handle it. She probably didn't finish high school since she was pregnant and is, therefore, less intelligent. She is poor. She is alone. What I did not do in that situation is stand up for the parent of that student. I did not tell that teacher that my mom was only 20 when she had me. Why? Because I hate conflict. Because what she

said wasn't that bad. Because I'm often too complacent in my Whiteness, I don't want to be labeled that lady who always has a comment or finds ways to point out people's mistakes.

During my first year at this school, the entire staff spent every professional development day of the year at equity training. I spent my first day with all of the other new staff members because we had missed an initial training session the year before. I was excited and made sure I entered the space with an open mind. There was a mix of people there. We all had various intersections of power and oppression. We began by sharing stories concerning education and when we first knew we were smart. Of course, I knew I was smart in elementary school because all of my teachers told me. One woman told a story about a guidance counselor who was the only reason she graduated from high school. One woman told a story about dropping out of high school because she dated a White man and her family disapproved. Another woman told a story about the difficulties she faced being a lesbian in a small rural area. I was in tears during all of these stories. The impact of being othered in school was lost on me. I always sought solace in classrooms. Didn't everyone?

The next activity was called the fishbowl. The instructor asked the women of color to stand together in a circle and join hands. She talked with these women together, then individually, then all together again. It reminded me of going to church as a young girl and going up to the altar to pray and have adult church members come and sit with me in prayer and encouragement and love for God and me. And that's what this woman did in that circle. But I sat on the outside and watched these Black women get this love



and encouragement and attention, and I felt so lonely I started to cry. I didn't realize I have been conditioned to be the center of attention, to receive praise, encouragement, and love from teachers and those in power. When I sat on the outside, I felt jealous and sad. I felt less worthy. I felt emotionally drained but cognitively enlightened. I decided then that I needed to learn more about White privilege and its connection to my practice as an educator. I knew difficult work must begin on my part to understand the underpinnings of race and my implications in racism because if it didn't, children would be the ones to wear the scars of my White supremacy.

### **Radical Racial Realization.**

My story doesn't end there. In many ways, it begins there. Not long after the equity training, I applied and was accepted into a Doctor of Education program with an emphasis in Social Justice at a Missouri university. I became part of a cohort of about 30 individuals inhabiting various intersections of power and oppression. I made an effort every single class to come prepared and to listen to the ideas of others. Within the first month of class, I experienced the first of many mind-bending breakthroughs that challenged my very existence as a White female educator. Reflecting on this time made me realize the person I was before no longer exists. And so, where one journey seems to end, another begins. This one starts with me crying in class.

Our cohort had a discussion that centered on Black children wearing the scars of the education system. I had no reference in my experience for this type of radical thinking. What kind of assault on Black bodies in the education system would cause scars? Dumas (2016) discussed anti-Black theory concerning the "struggle for

educational opportunity, which is to say a struggle against what has always been (and continues to be) a struggle against specific anti-Black ideologies, discourses, representations, (mal)distribution of material resources, and physical and psychic assaults on Black bodies in schools" (p. 16). He went on to explain that to be Black in school meant to be the other and that "Black is constructed as always already problem-as nonhuman; inherently uneducable, or at very least unworthy of education" (p. 16). Realizing that school, a place where I have thrived, could be a site of violence for Black students, and I played a part, was what made me cry in class that day. Leonardo and Porter (2010) discuss action against racism as "violently anti-violence" (p. 140). The violence I experienced was "a humanizing form of violence...that shifts the regime of knowledge about what is ultimately possible as well as desirable" (p. 140). The lived experiences coupled with the reading became a site of violence necessary to catapult me towards deeper reflection necessary for change. The rest of my journey takes place in the parallel universe I have spoken of before. My previous journey is inverted so that my story becomes my past and my present and future.

My experience during the social justice training at work, on the surface, taught me that I had no experience as an other. My Whiteness was pervasive in my recollection of that event. I have experienced being othered in school, but I didn't realize it until I wrote this dissertation. I was othered in school for being a poor kid without a traditional family. As I continued contemplating my sense of being othered in school, I remembered how much time and energy I spent trying to be like everyone else. Middle school isn't an easy time in anyone's life, but adding to that intensity was a constant awareness that if I didn't

wear the right jeans, shoes, or hairstyle, I wouldn't be accepted. The constant awareness of being different is exhausting, especially for Black students. Leonardo and Porter (2010) assert that schools are a "hostile and unsafe environment for many students of color whose perspectives and experiences are consistently minimized" (p. 140).

***Race Discourse or Lack Thereof.***

My thoughts turned to my work in the suburban school district. I began to think back on the hallway conversations. "White Americans, while claiming to be anti-racist, are somehow able to acquire and to share with one another negative stereotypes that they use, consciously or unconsciously, to justify the subordination and oppression of people of color" (Hill, 2008 p. 31). I did not choose to speak out. My inaction in those moments became action. Because of my lived experience, I feared retribution. I not only feared that I would be singled out and dismissed, I feared being seen as a racist and calling out racism. Leonardo and Porter (2010) speak to the fear educators have when race is part of the discussion. "Whites fear that they will be exposed as racist..." (p. 150). To remain silent means to remain safe.

But what exactly does that mean, and why did I continue to do it? DiAngelo (2018) suggests one reason I chose silence is due to my "internalized class inferiority" (p. 141). Internalized messages of inferiority may prevent me from speaking out because I feel like my voice is meaningless. However, I need to do the difficult work of uprooting and stamping out of this internalized inferiority, especially as an educator working with mostly Black students. DiAngelo reminded me that as I learn to understand myself and my intersections with power and oppression, my oppression isn't a pass because "in

practice, my silence colludes with racism and ultimately benefits me by protecting my White privilege and maintaining racial solidarity with other White people" (2018, p. 141).

*The Power of Whiteness: I Am the Colonizer.*

During my initial thoughts on my time in the urban district, I thought about my White privilege. I thought about holding power but not realizing it. When I started to read back on the literature and truly reflect on the power I held over that young boy, I realized that it's not simply that I have operationalized Whiteness through my White privilege. Still, I have done so because I am the colonizer. During a second-semester doctoral class, I recall having a guest speaker lead class. The topic of relegating resources to White schools in the urban district came up. As a parent who sends her children to a White school in an urban district, I was interested to hear the take on this issue. The issue centered on the parents of the White students and their messages when they take on roles in the Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO). They hold the money, and they hold power. I jumped in to discuss my children's PTO role and what I had done to try to encourage diversity within the PTO but had not been successful. The guest speaker in class told me that I was, in fact, colonizing the school. I didn't understand, and as she continued to break down the meaning for me, she likened me to an abuser in an abusive relationship. I came to understand the reference as one of power and domination. Evaluating my reflections on my time in the urban district did not immediately lead me to understand myself as a colonizer. I have continued to ponder the concept and how I inhabit that space. In my narrative about my decision to use a push-in model for therapy for a group of Black boys, I acted in the colonizer role because I made it seem as though this was the

best therapeutic approach for them. In reality, it was the best for me. Matias (2019) taught me that "colonization is sold as a benefit to the colonized when, in fact, it is always at the expense of the colonized" (p. 13). In my example of the teacher who called out my friend as a racist, I acted as the colonizer by playing at innocence in the situation and emotionally manipulating the staff when I wrote letters of apology. Matias (2019) explained how White women (Becky) "engages the colonized in emotionally and psychologically manipulative ways, gaslighting them to question whether Becky is truly helping or actually harming" (p. 13). In my story about the young man, who I felt, touched me inappropriately, I was in the colonizer position again. All of the people I reached out to assumed my innocence in the situation. I didn't expect it, but I got it. I held power over that young man's fate. My honor was at stake, and Matias (2019) taught me White women's honor has been "historically defended in unjust, inhumane ways" and "has real racial ramifications for people of color, particularly for Black men" (pp. 11-12).

### ***Color of Mind Ideology.***

I internalized the Color of Mind (COM) ideology and used it to understand the educational institutions that I was a part of. Because I am White and attended all-White educational institutions in elementary, middle, and high school, there was no challenge to the hegemony of Whiteness in education (Matias & Mackey, 2015). I understood education to be something for White people, created by White people. This played out in the narrative about my friend in graduate school who left the program. I accepted that the program wasn't for her and rationalized that conclusion due to my Whiteness. While I felt her absence as a friend, I did not feel her absence in the program. DiAngelo (2018)

discussed the pitfalls of growing up in segregated environments, one of which is that "as White people, we are taught not to feel any loss about the absence of people of color in our lives" (p. 142).

In my practice as an SLP, I engaged COM to reason why my Black male students were not able to participate in small group therapy. I did not find fault with my own pedagogy and instead blamed the students and their families. "Deficit thinking takes the position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because: (a) students enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child's education" (Yosso, 1996, p. 75). Rather than actively engage my Black students, I relied "upon inaccurate, though readily accessible narratives about urban students and schools..." and assumed they didn't care about learning and I couldn't change that. (Whitaker, 2018).

***Colorblind Racism: I Am Not Race Neutral.***

During my time as an undergraduate student, I actively employed colorblind racism. "Colorblind racism is accurately described as a mode of feigning an oblivion to race" (Leonardo & Porter, 2010, p. 150). While I don't remember prescribing not to see race, I did identify that racial difference didn't matter. With this line of thinking, I denied racism, which only acts to uphold White supremacy. One of the ways I operationalized colorblind racism is through my observations of Black students on the quad. I was objectifying those students for my own enjoyment. Rather than see them as fully human with full lives, I saw them as something other than White. Because I did not learn about race and racism in college because I chose to maintain the status quo, colorblind racism

followed me into the therapy room with my students. Miller and Harris (2018) describe how this frame of colorblind racism led to a false sense of equality because I believed I was treating all students the same. The reality is, I denied the lived experiences of my Black students, thus leading to their dehumanization.

Matias et al. (2014) discuss how Whites can be emotionally disinvested in seeing race. This emotional disinvestment then serves to maintain racism and White supremacy because as White people occupy racial spaces, our privilege allows us to see or not see racism and make determinations of what type of action is or is not racist. As I reflect on my colorblind racism, I see that I was emotionally disinvested in seeing race on campus. My lack of emotion or empathy kept me from forming personal relationships with Black people. I also realize that my emotional disinvestment was purposeful to protect myself from "feeling discomfort, shame, or personal responsibility for the realities of racism" (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017, p. 915).

***I Am the White Savior.***

As I continue to unravel my active role in White supremacy, the White savior complex has repeatedly reared its ugly head. Growing up White in a White town left me to learn about the larger world from tv and teen magazines. Traveling to Chicago then reinforced the narrative because I didn't travel beyond the borders of White society. I never countered images of the homeless and the rhetoric of bad neighborhoods and occupying those neighborhoods. I viewed working in an urban center as a practice of narcissism. I believed it was them who needed me. Miller and Harris (2018) beg White educators who choose to work in majority Black schools to evaluate their why critically.

Why decide to teach in an urban setting? "Are we there to repeat the historical narrative of White saviors, to feel better about ourselves as we "help the less fortunate," or to advance our careers?" (Miller & Harris, 2018, p. 6). Without this critical reflection and inquiry, White educators are doomed to "perpetuate the cycle of colonizing, saving, and profiting at the expense of our students. Without considering what our race entitles us to, we minimize our intentions, convincing ourselves of the righteousness of our actions" (Miller & Harris, 2018, p. 6). When I applied for the scholarship from Fontbonne, I applied because of the financial benefit and because of my naivete related to race. I thought of working in an urban district as a way to demonstrate my liberalism, save the children, and get paid.

### ***Socialization.***

Harro (2018) described human socialization as a cycle that is "one way of representing how the socialization process happens, from what sources it comes, how it affects our lives and how it perpetuates itself" (p. 27). Humans are socialized "to play roles prescribed by an inequitable social system. This socialization process is pervasive (coming from all sides and sources, consistent (patterned and predictable), circular (self-supporting), self-perpetuating (intradependent), and often unrecognizable (unconscious and unnamed)" (Harro, 2018, p. 27).

The cycle begins at birth. Humans are born into a society with previously established societal characterizations. There is no choice of individual identity or group belonging. According to Harro (2018), the next component of our socialization begins immediately after birth and is shaped by the adults who raise us. The adults present in our



lives teach us how to act, react and the societal expectations and parameters. Next, we are introduced to socialization's institutional and cultural aspects at school and through participation in larger groups outside of our home. We learn how to categorize people based on the messages we receive. Girls like one thing and boys another. Black students only play certain sports. Asian students are good at math. These stereotypes are then reflected by "media (television, the Internet, advertising, newspapers, and radio), our language patterns, the lyrics to songs, our cultural practices and holidays, and the very assumptions on which our society is built" (Harro, 2018, p. 30). All of the messages we receive are internalized and enforced by society. We are praised for maintaining our roles and labeled as troublemakers if we do not. Socialization can have adverse effects if it remains unchecked. Harro tells us that the core of the cycle of socialization is maintained by "fear, ignorance, confusion, insecurity, power or powerlessness" (Harro, 2018, p. 32).

Understanding the cycle of socialization helped me learn how I became who I am. I know that I was taught the right way to be a girl. I was taught that there were different ways of being poor and our way made us better. I was taught that race isn't something to think about, let alone discuss. I was taught that everyone should love Jesus. I was taught that men and women have babies. I was taught that people who use wheelchairs are feeble. Whether I learned by being explicitly taught or because I observed behaviors doesn't matter. What matters, according to DiAngelo (2018), is two-fold. First, I need to determine my oppression sites, how I've internalized the oppression and how it impacted my feelings of inferiority. The second piece explores how my internalized domination makes me feel as though I'm better than Black people (p. 141).

***Intersectionality.***

Understanding socialization isn't enough on its own. Evaluating my intersectionality has helped demonstrate how aspects of my socialization interact. Collins and Bilge (2016) relate the core insight of intersectionality to be "that major axes of social divisions in a given society at a given time, for example, race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, and age operate not as discrete and mutually exclusive entities, but build on each other and work together" (p. 4). Depending on any given situation, my intersectionality works in various ways. For example, in a social setting with women, I feel more comfortable voicing my opinions. However, if I'm at work, I err on the side of not saying anything unless it is to agree. My social stratifications are not fixed but are fluid and shape the way I react in various situations.

**White and Radical.**

I have reached another ending in my story and, yet again, I know this to be another beginning. Just as Leonardo and Porter (2010) posit, "when the oppressed open their wounds through communication, they express the violence in their dehumanization that they want the oppressor to recognize" (p. 151). I have splayed myself for the purpose of openly acknowledging the violence that I imposed on the oppressed. This was not done in vain but for the purpose of being the violent act that shakes another White educator out of their parallel universe and into reality.

**CHAPTER 7: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART IV****Julie C. Moorman*****Inevitable or Avoidable?: Students Turned Inmates and My Role in the School-to-Prison-Pipeline***

We are living in a dangerous, confused, and troubled world—a world that needs leaders, educators, and classroom teachers who can bridge the impermeable cultural, ethnic, and religious borders, envision new possibilities, invent novel paradigms, and engage in personal transformation and visionary action. (Banks, 2006, p.xi)

This autoethnography is a depiction of my personal journey and transformation from adolescence to adulthood as a White female, with an emphasis on my role as an educator. As a White female in education I represent the majority of the workforce, thus I would argue that many White women in the industry have had similar experiences to mine. To better understand how I, and White women like me, affect the school-to-prison-pipeline (SPP) we must start where all stories begin... at the beginning.

**Socialization from Birth & White Identity Development.**

At some point we all become aware that we are different. “White racial identity development describes a process in which individuals move through developmental stages of no awareness of their racial identity through integration and self-awareness of their racial identity.” (Linder, 2015, p. 536). I never really understood what it meant to be White. Honestly, I am still grappling with this phenomenon. To have so much unsolicited power and privilege due to the color of my skin is a hard concept to fully understand.

White identity development is an individualized path paved with guilt and shame. The amount of time it takes us to move through this process relies largely on our upbringing. Our upbringing, or socialization, is dependent upon the generation before us: our parents and thus the traditions and beliefs bestowed upon us. From birth, we are socialized to believe there are specific ways to behave and that only certain ways of doing things are acceptable. Those that do things differently are doing things the wrong way. This idea of our ingrained sense of right vs. wrong can be explained by using a concept as simple as a family, holiday dinner and the side dishes served: think back to the first time you had a holiday dinner outside of your family tradition whether that be your first time at your significant other's family holiday or the first time you celebrated through a potluck with friends. Almost certainly, you thought something was missing or that something tasted weird (not as good as your family's recipe). It simply wasn't right. This is how all our thoughts and opinions are reinforced as young children. We are taught how to do something or how to act with no other explanation than, "because" ("Because I said so."; "Because that's the way I was taught."; "Because that's the right way."; "Because that's the way we do things."). And we believe it. Due to the simple explanation of "because", history has been forced to repeat itself time and time again while racist ideals still ring true.

Linder (2015) asserts that White Identity development models show similarities to ally development models. I believe allyship to be the final stage or end goal of White identity development. If we aim to create a socially just society, as the majority, allyship must be our goal. With that, I argue that White identity development is one in the same as

ally development, or at least it should be. Ultimately, though all of these models differ in ways, Reason et al. (2005) reminds us that “Each reinforces the importance of reflecting upon and individually redefining what it means to be White” (p. 532). Though there are models that show upwards of seven “statuses” or stages of White Identity development (Linder, 2015), I believe, based on my own journey, there to be five: (1) ignorance, (2) awareness, (3) awakening, (4) meaningful work, and (5) allyship.

Stage one (ignorance) is where we reside before race is brought to our attention. As White people, we have the luxury to ignore the fact that skin color affects people because we are not affected negatively by our White skin. Black children are exposed at a much younger age to the perils of racism and aren’t afforded the luxury to be able to ignore skin color as a contributing factor to their quality of life. As young White people, racial ignorance is truly bliss.

We hit Stage two (awareness) when race is finally brought to the forefront as being an issue. As you will see in my narrative below, I reached stage two in sixth grade. I would argue that most White children become racially aware when it is pointed out that race, as an issue, is *their* issue (Black people’s), not *ours*. This stage is when we realize we are different, but it is reiterated that Black people are the ones making that a problem. This is when we deflect and defend, and ultimately when colorblind racism rears its ugly head. People in stage two may say things like, “I never owned slaves. I don’t even think my family did.”; “They’re the ones with a chip on their shoulder.”; “Black people say racist things to me all of the time.”; “Privilege? They don’t know my debt. I can’t just get whatever I want when I want.”; “I don’t see Black and White. I just see people.”; “I treat

everyone the same.”; “Really they are just dividing us more with all of this talk about race.” Stage two is when we are finally aware that we are different but deny any hand in the problem. After all, admitting we are part of the problem would come with far too much shame, guilt, and responsibility.

***It's Getting Pretty Dark: The Great White Flight***

*I grew up in Spanish Lake, a suburb in North St. Louis County. I was the youngest of five kids of which I was the only one to attend public school for my entire educational career. While living in Spanish Lake I attended, and have many fond memories of, Larimore Elementary School. Larimore was a building that served students from kindergarten through sixth grade. After starting there in kindergarten I can still remember the feeling of finally being a sixth-grader. Being the big man on campus came with a feeling of such accomplishment and pride. After the completion of sixth grade, I was supposed to attend, what was at that time, Kirby Middle School. However, my family decided it was time to move. My three older brothers attended Kirby, but my parents just didn't want to send their baby there too because, as I remember hearing it explained to other adults, “It was getting pretty dark.” The fact that the school and the neighborhood were “getting pretty dark” was never explicitly explained to me however it was clear to me that we were one of the last families of those in our social circle left and that for whatever reason, it was time for us to go. My family moved from Spanish Lake to Imperial, MO as part of what is now known in the St. Louis region as the Great White Flight.*

*I think it is important to note that the racist ideals, exploited by the real estate industry, that fueled my parents' fears, eventually forcing us to move, were never explicitly taught to me. I went to a school that served both Black and White students. I was never taught that my Black friends were different or lesser. At this point, I was never told that I couldn't or shouldn't hang out with someone because of the color of their skin. However, somehow at the age of 12, it was clear to me that we could not stay: that it would not be a good idea. I wasn't given the sense that Black and White people couldn't coexist rather White people shouldn't stay in a region where they would be the minority population. Everyone (that was White) was leaving, so we should too.*

I don't really remember the first time I realized that being White was better or that the way White people did things was right. Though I don't believe either to be true, I do know that as a White person it is implied and many times taught throughout our life, not always directly addressed, but in some form, we are taught about the difference between *us* and *them*: why they should stay there and we should be here. As you will see in my narrative below, these ideals continued to be reinforced throughout my life.

***You Don't Want to Live There.***

*After spending two years in small-town Iowa, the first earning a Masters degree and the next, beginning my teaching career, I decided it was time to move back home to the St. Louis region. My then boyfriend, now husband, came back with me and we were looking to buy a home. We hired an old friend of my parents' as our real estate agent (older White, Female). Like all home buyers, I had a vision and a wishlist: I wanted an old home in the city with tons of charm and close to nightlife. After realizing our budget*

*might be better suited for the county, we began looking in both North and South St. Louis County. I won't say I was picky, but at this point in the search, after giving up on much of my wish list, I will say I was pretty particular on the type of house I'd be willing to settle for. I sent tons of houses to my agent, requesting showings. We sometimes looked at 15 houses a weekend. However, some houses she refused to show us because "the neighborhood was pretty dark" [there are those words again (pretty dark)]. She even went as far as to tell us, "You don't want to live there, there are a lot of Blacks there." It's as if she thought she was doing us (or my parents) a favor, possibly protecting us in some way. I'm embarrassed to say we kept her as an agent because she was a friend of the family and in White culture, for some reason, grace is given to racist, older White people when they say something racially inappropriate because they "grew up in a different time" and "they don't know any better". I wish I did more than convince her that we were aware of the areas we were choosing to look at houses and we were fine with having Black neighbors. I wish I had the courage at the time to call her out and switch agents, but it is taught in White culture that you shouldn't talk about race especially if it will cause confrontation. So instead we politely insisted she show us the homes we sent.*

The lessons both implicitly and explicitly taught throughout childhood help to form our belief systems and thus how we interact as adults in society. However, at some point, children form opinions of their own. We take bits and pieces of what we have learned and use them to inform our own decisions and beliefs. The older we get, the more we begin to question the way things have always been done.



That questioning starts stage three (awakening); it truly is like waking up from a dream: you thought everything was one way and then almost instantly, everything is different. You see everything how it truly is: systematic and systemic racism, dating back to colonialism, prevalent in every structure and institution that you are aware of and many times a part of. Stage three is when White people begin to better understand their own culture and how it affects the culture of those around them. This stage is the metaphoric line in the sand. You have to make a choice. You cannot pretend the problem isn't there anymore. You are either part of the solution by way of action or part of the problem by way of the just as loud, if not louder, inaction.

Stage four is self-explanatory; it's when you move past just being against racism and do something truly meaningful, to reverse it. Though I strive to be an ally (what I identify as the fifth and final stage of White identity development), the late Dr. Matthew Davis taught me that being an ally is not a characteristic a member of the majority can use to describe themselves. One is only truly an ally when members of the oppressed group recognize them to be one. I would shamefully and currently categorize myself in stage three: I am aware of the racial injustices of this world, and though on a daily basis I try to be anti-racist through my actions and interactions with others, I've not truly done anything meaningful to advance the lives of Black people nor reverse the effects of racism that have plagued and oppressed their people for generations.

Racism is normalized and woven into the fabric of our society. It becomes second nature and normal. I feel I am still in stage three because of the normalization of racism. Race and racism are both omnipresent and invisible to White people. Part of the problem

is that White children do not just learn about White superiority from their families; rather friends, churches, and schools also reinforce these values. (Bryan, 2017). The systematic racism in our school system serves as a deterrent to a healthy White identity development, and thus allyship. Systemic racism and socialization combine to become a strong influence throughout adolescence. This is why I believe it is important for universities, specifically teacher preparation programs, to create environments for young, White adults to learn about diversity and inclusion as college may be the first time these concepts are introduced with little outside, negative influence.

#### **Teacher Preparation in a White Dominated Industry.**

Our college years are formative and instrumental in shaping who we become, specifically when speaking to our diversity awareness and social justice threshold. (Milem & Umbach, 2003). Research shows that students seek out racially familiar, socially comfortable college experiences (Milem & Umbach, 2003). It is up to universities to put our young students in diverse settings they may not be seeking on their own. It has been shown “that by providing opportunities for quality interactions with diverse peers as well as curricular and co-curricular education related to racial diversity,” White students are more likely to participate in ally behaviors (Reason et al., 2015; Milem & Umbach, 2003). Universities and school systems need to force students into study groups, dorms, and extracurricular activities with people that look different than them, thus providing them with transformative experiences. Most importantly, we need to provide safe spaces for difficult conversations (Reason et al., 2015). I did not have these experiences in my undergraduate program, which is probably why I understand the

importance of them. I went to a university that was largely a commuter school which allowed me to go to class and leave without forming many true bonds. As I was going to school to become a teacher, most of the students looked like me. However, I was in a Physical Education Program so though, representative of the teacher industry, most of the students were White like me, but contrary to the teacher industry as a whole, many of my classmates were male. This distinction still left my experience far from the categorization of diverse. At such an impressionable time in my life, I was never presented with the opportunity, socially or academically, to learn about cultural relevance without the influence of my family. As you will learn in my narrative below, my first experience in a safe space to discuss racial inequities didn't come until well into my teaching career, as a result, up until this point, I'm sure I harmed many students with my well-intentioned ignorance.

### ***Do You Need a Bandaid?***

*I graduated with my Bachelor of Science and earned my teaching certificate in 2010. At that point, the teacher preparation education program I was enrolled in did not have any formal education or training in diversity, cultural proficiency, or social justice. It wasn't until my second Masters degree that I even received a course in cultural relevance. The first explicit training I received on the topic came through a professional development that was offered to me and my co-workers in 2018. At that point, I knew basic level knowledge on the topic. I understood the importance but didn't quite understand my role. The training was for our entire staff and spanned multiple days. The information given was more than important, it was life-changing. The problem was, not*

*everyone was in a place to hear it or receive it. This, though born with the best of intentions, in turn, ended up as a failed attempt to bring us together, rather was the catalyst of what began to rip us apart. The majority of White people felt attacked and the majority of Black people finally had an invitation to speak about injustice, however, with no plan of resolution, became bitter. The topics and conversations essentially ripped off a bandaid, exposing a wound that we didn't have the skills to heal.*

*There was one exercise that stood out to me. They grouped White people together. We stood in a circle with our Black colleagues in an outside circle surrounding us. We (the White people) each drew a piece of paper with a scenario that we were to read out loud to the group. The scenarios were those that were examples of daily lived experiences of people of color. My scenario was basic and barely even scratched the surface of what social injustice looks like, but the basic level hit me as I'm sure it has many other White people before and after me. The paper read something to the effect, "I can never find a Band-aid that matches MY skin." I know this is such a basic concept; the idea of nude-colored or skin-toned and the implications these descriptors have. Though basic, it served as a gateway and allowed a level of reflection and awakening that I had not experienced before.*

... the transformation of White teachers is defined by both pain and possibility.

Coming to terms with one's identity is a formidable task. This is true for all people but for Whites, it is especially troublesome because admitting that they have benefited unfairly from their White skin is not only personally disturbing but

also challenges head-on the myths of meritocracy and fair play with which they have been raised. (Banks, 2006, p. xvi)

It's no secret that our student populations continue to become more diverse while our teachers remain predominantly White (Bryan, 2017). The lack of adequate teacher preparation programs is leading to perpetuated harm to our Black students. This can be seen through zero-tolerance policies and daily disciplinary decisions stemming from both implicit biases as well as a complete lack of understanding of our students' culture, all contributing to the school-to-prison-pipeline. It's hard to think about the harm I may have inadvertently caused my students, specifically my Black male students, in the early years of my teaching career due to my lack of understanding my students, where they came from, what was important to them, and just their culture in general. In order for our education system to be built for the success of each student and to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, our teacher preparation programs require critical change. Universities need to do their part in fully preparing teachers for the field of education. I know from my personal experience that these programs are not currently preparing White teachers for classrooms that are growing in diversity. When speaking to the changes needed in our teacher preparation programs to both prepare White teachers and protect Black students from the school-to-prison-pipeline, I defer to the suggestions laid out in Bryan (2017),

1. Teacher education programs should be intentional in preparing White preservice teachers in culturally relevant pedagogy.

2. Teacher education programs should provide specific courses on educating African American males to help White preservice teachers undo stereotypes and biases about them.
3. Teacher education programs should work with K-12 schools to establish Afrocentric schools, which cater to the cultural needs of Black boys.
4. Teacher education researchers should continue to conduct research with, instead of on Black male students to disavow deficit frameworks, which, in most cases, negatively describe Black boys and their experiences in schools and society at large.
5. Teacher education should encourage preservice teachers to engage in classroom ‘management’/facilitation practices, which allow them to listen to the voices of Black male students in PreK-12 classrooms.
6. Teacher education programs should create initiatives to not only recruit minoritized students, particularly Black males (and females too), but also retain them in preservice education programs to ensure they become certified classroom teachers to support the cultural needs of Black boys as a way to interrupt their disproportionate disciplining in classrooms.

Our White teachers need to have a clear picture of the world and the part racism plays in it before entering the profession. I was not afforded this opportunity. When it’s all said and done, “Teachers should be able to examine the gap between American ideals and realities, and to develop a commitment to act to help close it.” (Nieto, 2006, p. xii). White teachers need a healthy White identity along with multicultural educational (and

social) experiences in order to be successful in today's classrooms. Banks (2006) explains,

Part of the process of including Whites in multicultural education means defining Whites as “ethnics” who have their own histories and identities. Without recognition that Whites are ethnic—a designation usually reserved for anybody who is not White, and sometimes for those groups of European heritage that have not quite “melted” into the pot—it is too easy to characterize Whites as “normal” and others as “different” or “exotic”. At the same time that I thought White identity needed to be included as a dimension of multicultural education, I also felt that this recognition needed to be accompanied by a critical and truthful acknowledgment of White privilege, power, and abuses throughout U.S. history. Especially important in this regard is for White teachers to recognize their complicity in creating and supporting the conditions in schools that lead to failure for so many students of color. (p. xv)

As data shows the complicit nature of many White teachers, including my former self, can lead to the avoidable incarceration of our Black students, specifically Black boys. Our White-washed education system is funneling students into the criminal justice system. My narrative below depicts a scenario that along with my father's (a retired police officer's) views, peaked my interest in the school-to-prison-pipeline which lead me to questioning my role in it all.

**My Role in the School- to-Prison Pipeline.*****July 11, 2018.***

*On July 11, 2018, school security officer Porsha Owens was murdered at the age of 28, in an attempted carjacking. Porsha was trying to load her three children in her car before work when a man approached her, gun drawn. An altercation occurred, two shots were fired, one hit Porsha. While she was on the ground, the man stole her purse and gun then ran away after not being able to get the car started. Her oldest child, at eight years old, hid his siblings under the car for safety and ran to get help for his mom. Porsha at some point attempted to cross the street while injured, her children followed. Inevitably and horrifyingly Porsha died from her injuries on the street, in front of her children (ranging in ages from 3-8). This story haunts me. The idea that those babies had to witness the cold-blooded murder of their mother is devastating and unfathomable to me. Who could do such a thing? What kind of person could kill a woman, let alone a woman with her three young children by her side? Was he some type of monster? The thing is, when I knew him, he wasn't. In 2018, at 18 years old he murdered Porsha, but from 2011-2014, he was my student, a middle school boy with a sassy mouth and a million dollar smile.*

*The idea has since tormented me that for three years I was a figure in this boy's life. Five days a week, for 30 minutes a day I had this little boy in my care. Just four short years later, he ended up taking someone's life. I can't help but think that I missed something. That I missed an opportunity to affect something that could have changed the trajectory of this boy's life. Did the unintended harm I caused him due to my lack of*



*cultural knowledge contribute to the events that led him to the decisions he made that day? It has made me question my role as a teacher and my role, whether as a contributor or complicitor, in an education system that is only built for the success of people who look like me. Though it was never my job or intention to save him and I can objectively understand that he had free choice and committed this crime out of free will, there is no denying I, as a White educator have a role in the school-to-prison-pipeline and an obligation to attempt to dismantle the cycle of oppression that plagues Black kids in our schools.*

I got into education as I believe many teachers do, ready to make a difference in the lives of children. As preservice teachers, we are taught that we are supposed to help them. That the kids are the ones that need help (or saving). Our current teacher preparation programs are creating White saviors through the messages we send to our teacher candidates early in their careers which work to uphold the anti-Black ideals our education system was built upon. Messages like “Black student test scores are low because their parents don’t care: they can’t even show up to parent/teacher conferences.” When in reality that students’ mom cares a lot, working double shifts and most evenings to support her children, and just can’t make it to the conference at the time you scheduled it. The true context is never considered. It’s just portrayed that we have the answers and they need our help. I believe, this in itself, is a form of self-preservation of the White supremacist ideals upon which our school systems are built: We are right. They are wrong. We have the answers. It’s our duty to help them. This scenario with varying details is played out over and over in our schools today, and yet we never look at fixing

the root cause, the education system. Instead teachers, as the one's taught that we have the answers, are always looking at fixing the students by punishing the behaviors out of them. Through the teacher preparation course of study we are purposefully conditioned to be White saviors. "When educators see themselves as saviors but find it is not so easy to "save," the stereotypes of unfixable systems and unteachable students are often reinforced." (Lehman, 2018, p. 48).

In 2019, I left my PE classroom to become administrator. I think I made this switch because, though I don't remember the exact moment, I finally realized the kids weren't the ones that needed saving, that the system itself was the one in need, and if I wanted to impact change on a larger scale I had to move to a position that had more power. I hoped to have a larger impact on the policies that affected decisions made at a classroom level, directly impacting students on a daily basis. I would end zero-tolerance policies and disproportionate disciplinary actions. This was the way I was going to help my students. I thought I would have the power to directly affect their outcomes. However, my administrative goals were still backed by the idea (taught to me and perpetuated by my actions) that I am the answer, that I can make the change, that I can save those who need saving: please follow because I have the answers. My need to help in reality does nothing but render my students silent. Throughout a school day, I may ask students what they want or need, but I am always speaking to a specific scenario. I don't ask my students these questions when speaking to their future or their life outcomes, I am actively leaving them voiceless due to the false ideology that it's my job to fix it for them instead of with them. My intentions are in the right spot, but as they say, the road to Hell

is paved with good intentions. Through this journey I have realized my role in the school-to-prison-pipeline isn't that of enforcing zero-tolerance policies or disproportionately disciplining Black students over White like most studies would lead you (and me) to believe. Rather historically, my role in the school-to-prison-pipeline is that of perpetuation through the delusion that it is my job to fix this situation *for* these children. In this role I have stolen their voice and undoubtedly caused harm. My role then moving forward is to give their voices back. I need to be an ally not a savior. Linder (2015) explains that as we work towards allyship, we need to continue to explore our privilege "and work with, rather than for, people in the targeted group" (p. 537). The question then is, how? Lehman (2018) sums up the findings and next steps of my research perfectly

How, then, do we hold onto our ideals but direct them in a way that is helpful, not harmful? How do we keep purpose but remove pity? In large part, it seems this reworking must be driven by our students. We must reduce our power to allow the ones we are aiming to serve to lead us in changing how we serve them (p. 48).

**CHAPTER 8: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY PART V****Angeline Williams-Jackson*****The Impact of Anti-Blackness and Internalized Oppression: A Black Woman******Educator's Experiences Navigating the Educational System***

From that lone Black girl in all White gifted classrooms to one of few Black administrators in my district, I have witnessed firsthand how anti-Blackness and White supremacy shape lives and impact Black students' outcomes. Even before I knew my place in any class, I knew that I was Black, and with that Blackness, many of my teachers appeared to have a preconceived notion about my abilities and worth, which for me at the time was positive but upheld certain stereotypes about Black male intelligence. My deficit-based thinking and internalized oppression were fueled by interactions I had as a student, bleeding into how I interacted as a teacher and finally as an administrator. In this chapter I will discuss the indoctrination of anti-Blackness and White supremacy; then the manifestation of internalized oppression and deficit-based thinking; and finally the path to liberation and how that played out in my educational career. Unfortunately, anti-Blackness and White supremacy work hand in hand to pit Black females against Black males (DeGruy, 2017). Anti-Blackness and White supremacy are evident in my experiences as well as in my observations of Black students' outcomes, particularly males.

**Preface: The Why.**

I often wonder about what impact anti-Blackness and White supremacy have on the development of internalized oppression as I progressed from student to teacher and

finally to administrator. I also wonder how anti-Blackness and White supremacy formed the basis of my interaction with Black students in particular Black male students. The journey to liberation is not easy and is constant, but staying on the path is integral to my activism and quest for socially just educational practices for all students, mainly Black students. My narratives expose a sense of vulnerability that only an autoethnographic approach can capture.

Since my wonderings have caused me to analyze how internalized oppression played into my academic life and ideas about Black male intelligence, I feel that it is pertinent to explore the origins of my thoughts about Black male intelligence and the perpetuation of internalized oppression. Throughout educational circles, there is a push for Black students to be taught by Black teachers, and for teachers to use culturally responsive pedagogies, but one factor worth exploring is the idea that Black students will perform better if they have a mirror for a teacher (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Accounting for the race of a teacher is not enough, but a sure start in the push for more inclusive educational practices and responses if, and only if that teacher rejects the systemically racist practices found embedded in the public educational system. Emdin (2016) agrees that we need more teachers of color, and especially more Black males, in which both the students and teacher will benefit. Emdin thinks that we are functioning within a system that has white folks who are ineffective, but that same system creates black teachers with white supremacist ideologies and they're just as dangerous as white folks who don't understand culture (Downs, 2016). With the idea that Black students fare better with Black teachers, the first phase of my narrative begins.

**Phase 1: Indoctrination and Racial Socialization.**

The first concept foundational for my research is the Color of Mind (COM) ideology coined by Darby & Rury (2018). This concept provides clear examples of the historical nature of racism and the impact racism has on the educational system. The authors deploy the phrase, Color of Mind, to describe the deeply embedded attitudinal and institutional norms that diminish the intellect, character, and conduct of Black students. By studying and analyzing this concept, I understood the intentionality of racism and how the ideology of inferiority and anti-Blackness plays out in the educational system. “The Color of Mind is a caustic ideology that has buttressed whiteness, understood both as a descriptive thesis indicating that whites are superior to blacks, and as a prescriptive thesis signaling that whites should dominate blacks or enjoy a more favorable allotment of societal benefits and burdens” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 12). When the historical context focusing on education solely comes into play it “shows that the Color of Mind and education have been connected and mutually supporting in ways that continue to sustain White supremacy in today’s schools” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 12). Darby & Rury (2018) sum up that, historically, White educators have moved from the idea that Blacks are predisposed to lower intelligence and support this notion based on physical attributes like skull size and skin color to support the myth that Blacks are not as intelligent as Whites. White educators have moved to “a no less racist ideology that social and economic status now contributes to this achievement gap” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 2). Darby & Rury 2018, highlight how the Color of Mind sustains Whiteness and anti-Blackness and the intentional construction of racist ideas to support a deficit mindset

as it pertains to Black intelligence. According to Darby & Rury (2018), one cannot adequately understand the persistence of the achievement gap until one knows and understands the history that continues to inflict all varieties of dignitary harm on Black people.

***Story 1: Flashback.***

My first experience with racism in the school setting was rooted in puritan beliefs dating back to slavery, which was the idea that there are some anomalies to Black intelligence. Some Blacks can be intelligent like Phillis Wheatley, and I was the Phillis Wheatley of my kinder class. Before I knew me, Angeline, I knew that I was Black. Before I was Angeline, I was that anomaly. That well-spoken Black child who was already reading on third-grade level by kindergarten. That well-dressed, polite child stood silent as I watched how the adults in my world treated other students who looked like me badly due to their perceived lack of intelligence and my perceived intelligence. This discriminatory behavior became evident when it was time for me, that bright Black child, to be separated from her two equally intelligent and brilliant male cousins. This early experience was a foundational piece to the development of the *us* against *them* mentality that I find in the Black community among Black women and Black men (Woodson, 1933; DeGruy, 2017). This attention began the narrative that I was different, not just different but better, than my male counterparts. It did not matter that my cousins and I all read on the same level; we were all clean and well-mannered; what mattered more is that I was less intimidating and threatening as a female. To teachers, my Blackness was less offensive than that of my cousins (Love, 2019). It was easier for my White teachers to

find what little value they did in my intelligence, just as it was easier for them to discount that intelligence in my cousins. I was sent on to an accelerated class, and they remained in our regular kindergarten class. I was devastated because we were so close, and it was beat into our DNA that we are family and family sticks together. This early memory and the trauma it caused are still fresh in my memory synapses.

DeGruy (2017) states that even though chattel slavery is over, the duration and consequence have caused trauma to Blacks in America hundreds of years later. The interaction is what my ancestors probably felt when families were sold away from one another. That is the idea that Whiteness is superior and has value, and Black people better not question it (DeGruy, 2017). As with slavery, our cries and protests fell on deaf ears as we tried to cling to each other and as I wedged myself between them, trying to avoid separation. So that experience alone began the indoctrination of how anti-Blackness plays out in education, pitting the Black female against the Black male. Reinforced was the idea that my femaleness and intelligence were more valuable than my equally intelligent cousins and their maleness (DeGruy, 2017). Of course, I did not know then what all of this meant. Still, from this experience and many more as I progressed through the education system, I learned that no one favored the Black male. If I wanted to remain a favorite, I had to distance myself from them. This played into the false pedestal that I found myself on for many years (Lorde, 2018). After all of the dust settled, I found myself in a class full of White kids, primarily female, and the game was on from here. “If Black people are to be educated within racially diverse schools, and achieve at levels



comparable to White peers, we must debunk doubts about their intelligence, character, and conduct” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 2)

This early experience created a sense of insecurity and shame in me. I loved my cousins; however, I did not want to be treated as they were treated, so in my mind, I began to separate from them, internalizing that Black males were bad and not brilliant. This experience set the stage for my indoctrination into White supremacy, anti-Blackness, and the consequences of both. Part of my kindergarten year was spent in Missouri, but shortly after the start of the school year, my family and I moved to Minnesota. This move was a shock to me on so many levels. I moved from a predominantly Black world with lots of extended family to a predominately White world with no extended family. The school dynamics remained the same: White teachers with no diversity in the student make-up because I stayed in gifted classes. My brother was a baby then, so it would take some years for me to see this Black female and Black Male dynamic play out in the school setting that hit even closer to home.

I can't remember my kindergarten teacher's name or my 1st and 2nd-grade teachers' names, but I remember that they were all White, one male and two female. I also remember how I felt in kindergarten and first grade. These early experiences introduced me to stereotype, threat and deficit-based thinking. Steele (2010) offers that by imposing certain conditions of life on to others, that social identities can be affected and things as important as performances in the classroom and on standardized tests, memory capacity, athletic performance, the pressure we feel to prove ourselves, even the comfort level we have with people of different groups are impacted. However, by third

grade, I met Mrs. Maria Fields. Mrs. Fields is a biracial teacher and my first encounter with someone who remotely looked like me. Three years into the public school system helped me develop a good sense of shame and guilt about being that Black girl that had the mark of difference. Mrs. Fields had her work cut out for her. I quickly bonded with her and wanted to be the teacher's pet. My third-grade class was more diverse, with Hmong, Somali, and White students, but still no Black students. Mrs. Fields was the teacher who taught the gifted classes, and as usual, I was the only Black student. I struggled with my identity and wanted to be like the White girls in my class. I wanted long hair and pinkish skin. One day, Mrs. Fields caught me with my sweater wrapped around my head. I was pretending like it was hair. I can recall that Mrs. Fields had me stay after school that day. I never liked to be in trouble, so I can remember being filled with anxiety and tears. I felt that all eyes were on me as the other students were dismissed, which fueled my internalization of shame. After she cleared it with my mom and assured her that she would bring me home, our conversation began. I do not remember it verbatim, but I remember her trying to convince me that I was beautiful just the way I was and that I was an intelligent kid despite my racial inferiority complex. I loved Mrs. Fields a great deal because she was a reflection of me, a lighter reflection, but a reflection nonetheless. She did not build in Black pride or provide me with the tools to develop that pride, but she did love me and helped me feel more secure in her class. She was able to buffer some of my feelings about being the only Black girl and help me feel better about that. She was my W.E.B. DuBois because she was more of the work hard, be smart, and you can do what you want type of guidance, which propelled me to be a

perfectionist in school. Since Mrs. Fields was biracial, I now understand why she couldn't give me what she didn't have when it came to being Black. That would come many years later.

Skipping to 6th grade is when I met my Harriet Tubman, my true abolitionist teacher. Mrs. Rhoda Stroud, who I still write about to this day when I talk about my why, was exactly who I needed at the time. By 6th grade, my brother was well into his educational career also. He was a more brilliant student by far, but he was a Black male child who did not fit any mold. By the third grade, he was kicked out of school so often due to his playful nature and assumed insolence that it was no wonder how he ever learned anything. I was embarrassed by him and often pretended like I did not have a brother. I would cringe when he would see me in the hall and try to speak. This response was a consequence of my early indoctrination of White supremacy and anti-Blackness. I did not have the words for what was happening then, but I now know that this was the consequence of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (DeGruy, 2017). These ideologies were so powerful that they made me turn against my brother while in public. Mrs. Stroud was the type of teacher that Love (2019) was thinking about when she wrote *We Must do More than Survive*. Mrs. Stroud was my abolitionist. She provided me with the necessary tools to develop a strong sense of Black pride and acceptance of myself. She was a more authentic reflection of me than Mrs. Fields was, and she was able to offer me the tools needed to build up my racial identity and acceptance. I remember when she realized that I was struggling with my identity. She told me to go to the public library and read all of the books about Black people. This was the very example that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

refers to when discussing the danger of a single story. I would do anything that she told me to do; that's how much I loved her. I started with Maya Angelou's *I know why the caged bird sings* and moved on to Alex Haley's *Roots*. I could remember connecting with Maya Angelou's character in this profound narrative because I struggled with finding my voice and allowing my brilliance to shine.

Mrs. Stroud's classroom was full of stars, both male and female, who looked just like me. This was my first experience being in classes with so many other Black students. I wish that I could say that I was happy about this, but I wasn't. I had grown used to being the only and I did not want to share my Black teacher with them. My early indoctrination made me believe that Black males were not as smart as me, so I was offended that we were in the same classes and they excelled also. Since I was used to being the only smart Black girl, I saw them as my enemies and not allies. I wanted to shine and be the favorite token student. Mrs. Stroud made sure that she was a teacher who provided us with a culturally relevant educational experience that convinced me that I could be the next Thurgood Marshall. As a child, I wanted to be a lawyer, and Mrs. Stroud made sure she kept that dream alive for me with her reminders about my intelligence, good character, hard work, and perseverance. Mrs. Stroud was my lifesaver in the 6th grade in more ways than she ever could know. To this day, I still aim to please her and can now process and understand what she sparked in me many years ago. I also have been on a quest for many years to find this true example of abolitionist teaching. According to Love (2019), abolitionist teaching is built on creativity, rebelliousness, boldness and other characteristics that abolitionist exhibited in the their fight for the

abolishment of slavery. An abolitionist teacher is one that will demand and fight for an educational system that allows Black students to thrive (Love, 2019).

Over 34 years ago Mrs. Stroud created a classroom and educational experience that valued Black intelligence, both male and female. She made sure that she taught the whole child and never believed that we were less intelligent. She was a staunch advocate and passionate surrogate mother to so many of us. She had enough love to go around to make each one of us feel like we were her favorite. When I made a mistake, I would burst out in tears because I never wanted to disappoint her. She was the epitome of what Rita Pierson (2013) referred to so eloquently, as a champion. Rhoda Stroud was our champion in the 6th grade. She made sure that we knew we were capable and just as worthy as our White counterparts. She sparked the idea in me that maybe there was an alternative to the narrative developed through my early educational experiences.

***Story 1: Implications of Anti-Blackness and White Supremacy.***

I can remember going into education with the idea that I would change lives and impact students as Mrs. Stroud did in my life. What was definitely missing in me was this sense of being an abolitionist teacher. Since I was a special educator, I would always have an overrepresentation of Black males in my classes or under my watch (Blanchett et al., 2019). I never questioned this fact or looked into why this was the case. I accepted the data and the explanations for the data with no thought to asking why. I was there on a mission to do the very best job possible to educate my students. I can recall a particular situation with one of my Black male students who continued to have behavioral outbursts and would often talk about how he didn't need to be in the class.. Instead of first getting

to know his abilities, I went back to the data and the IEP. I took the IEP document as if it were the gospel of his educational experiences thus far. Throughout the document, there were anecdotal examples of his behavior and data supporting his lack of progress on standardized tests, and his IQ was below the norm (Darby & Rury, 2018). I quickly developed a relationship with his mom, and we brainstormed ways to keep this young man out of trouble and learning. I still allowed the IEP document to guide my thoughts about him, but I also had a nagging feeling that he was brighter than what the paperwork indicated. Then one day, it dawned on me to try to integrate him into a general education classroom to see if his behavior would improve around his peers versus being in a self-contained cross-categorical classroom. Of course, as with most elementary classrooms in this district, the teacher was young, female, and White, and as expected, this young man continued to act out. I was perplexed because I thought that the peer influence would help, but I failed to account for this particular young man's unique intersectionalities. He was a Black male child with an IEP who lived in a single-parent home below the poverty line. Statistically speaking, he was acting as he should.s. As the year progressed, I accepted his placement and kept him in my classroom with some more challenging work. I let him down. I did not push to normalize the exceptionality of this brilliant Black male child, even though I had a gut feeling that he was more than his IEP stated.. I often wonder what would have become of this young man had I insisted that he stay in the general education classroom and push for him to come off his IEP. Before I left Texas in 2007, this young man found his way into the juvenile justice system. This

news was heartbreaking to me but, when he was my student, I didn't know how to love this young man to greatness or advocate for his education.

**Phase 2: Internalization: But You Don't Know Me or My Story.**

"I am not who I think I am, and I am not who you think I am. I am who I think that you think I am" (Degruy, 2017, p. 5). This is a powerful quote. It is simple yet powerful in this phase of indoctrination. I did not understand when I read Carter G. Woodson (1933) many years ago that his words were laying out the groundwork for why internalized oppression plagues Black people today. I must note that internalized oppression and internalized racism go hand in hand. "Internalized oppression (also called "self-hate") is when a member of an oppressed group believes and acts out the stereotypes created about their group" (Jones, 2010, par. 2) and internalized racism is defined as "the acceptance, by marginalized racial populations, of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves" (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000, p. 255; Taylor & Grundy, 1996). "One of the most insidious and pervasive symptoms of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is our adoption of the slave master's value system" (Degruy, 2017, p. 116). The connection here is the foundation for internalized oppression. We never saw it coming because, like trauma, this was passed down to us. Degruy (2017), offers that many of us have adopted the attitudes and views of racist White America. We see ourselves and others through the lens of Whiteness and we "mold ourselves to accommodate white prejudices and endeavor to adopt their standards" (p. 116). If we believe in the inferiority and lack of worth passed down from generation to generation, we begin to see how those beliefs have hindered our collective success. "Our beliefs

color everything with which we come in contact. They strongly influence how we think and feel” (Degruy, 2017, p. 105). Identity development starts at birth, and our socialized experience as minorities impacts that identity development which can be further expanded on by Nigrescence Theory of Black identity development (Cross, 1991). Even though I had one year to try to dispel the beliefs that were internalized within me, my young psyche still believed in the inferiority of Black males in particular and Black females in general.

***Story 2: Flashback.***

I left the safety of elementary school and was thrown into the chaotic world of Junior High School. Junior High is where tracking and separation really took place and also where all that work Mrs. Stroud did began to unravel. Again, I found myself separated out and became one of few Black students, all female, in accelerated classes. The Black male presence was gone again and this is where the boys who were just as smart as I was began to reject this concept. I went to a liberal junior high school that did offer some diversity, but what I realize now is that when a curriculum isn’t reflective and counterproductive to Black excellence, Black male students begin to suffer. (Darby & Rury, 2018). Junior High not only brings about hormonal changes, but also changes in identity and how we want to show ourselves to the world. Those hallways and classes are filled with peer pressure and messages that are harmful to a fragile psyche. My academic journey in Junior High was filled with shameful behavior and acting out of internalized oppression.



Since I was already indoctrinated with anti-Blackness and White supremacy, it wasn't hard for me to develop what I have now learned is internalized oppression. Degruy (2017) helps me digest this shameful behavior now, but back then, I just had the shame with no idea as to why. As I sat in Mrs. B's honors science class, I was the only Black person. There was another brown girl in there who I quickly befriended. She was arabic and from France. We bonded around color. She was safe because somewhere in my indoctrination I was taught that foreign brown and Black people were smarter and better than those born in the United States. I felt safe in Mrs. B's class because it was small and science was safe: there weren't many instances within the curriculum that made me feel ashamed of being Black. We will leave that shame to English, Foreign Language, and Math classes. DeGruy (2017) eloquently helps me understand now what I was doing back then when I happened to meet my best friend. She is a dark skinned person who moved from Mississippi to Minnesota during a time where I feel kids are the cruelest. She had an accent and was extremely friendly. When Tysha walked into Mrs, B's class, she made a beeline over to me and Nadia. I remember this story vividly because I have had to deal with the shame of my behavior many times as our friendship developed. I can remember feeling ashamed and angry. Like there had to be some mistake. There was no way another Black girl could be in this exclusive class with me. I was the only smart Black girl allowed. Well it did turn out to be a mistake because she was looking for the shop class. Mrs. B asked me to show her how to get to shop, which is a class that gifted track kids would never see. I vividly remember a sense of satisfaction as I showed her out of my space into a space where I felt she belonged. She was dark and

spoke with her southern dialect so she must have been less intelligent. This is that house/field slave narrative that plays out to this day between Black women and our struggle with colorism. On that day, I remember feeling vindicated and a little bit more ashamed because Mrs. B asked me to show her the way, which made me Black by association and that is something that I did not want to be associated with. She was and is an example of this concept of implicit bias and how those biases cause harm, unintentional as it was, to Black students. I am sure she meant no harm, but why did I have to be the one to show Tysha to the shop class?

Mrs. H's english class also reinforced internalized oppression. This english class was like all other english classes, even like the ones I found myself teaching many years later. There was absolutely no reflection of diversity in the curriculum. Those books that Mrs. Stroud introduced me to were things that were never covered in my English classes. Classic, White male literature was all we got. I am an avid reader, so I absorb the messages that the hidden curriculum had to offer. I learned how to pretend to be what the hidden curriculum reinforced in me (Black was inferior and White was superior was the message I received) which further drove a wedge between my interactions with other Black students. It was bad enough that we only crossed paths in lunch and gym, but to actually be seen as only a Black student was the worse, so I changed the way I spoke and made sure to not fit any of the stereotypes of Blackness that were inadvertently reinforced through something as simple and benign as books read in english class. I was a gifted athlete, but I focused on mastering the queen's english and excelling in english class. I was aloof and distant from the other Black students which turned out to be something that

I struggled with for many years to come. I can recall reading about slavery and the holocaust, but found that I was more interested and horrified about the plight of Jewish people than people who shared my skin color and ancestry. Mrs. H. sensed something in me and was my first introduction to a White female teacher that colored outside the lines. I can remember her talking about sparking our interests and desire to read from other perspectives, but I do not remember how we landed on her pushing back and introducing Chinua Achebe to the class, but I do recall that she took a lot of flack for trying to integrate our literature with other classics. *Things Fall Apart* published in 1958 was far removed from our current 1980's situation but the attempt by Mrs. H to provide me with literature I could connect with is why she made it into this narrative. She quickly became a favorite teacher of mine because she was one of the few teachers that tried to interrupt the internalizing of oppression. The battle with internalized oppression would follow me through Junior high well into High school.

By the time I reached high school, I was deep in my shell of trying to be different and therefore accepted. Well this turned out not the way I anticipated. I can remember the racial tension from 9th grade because someone drew big lips on the board and said that Black people had monkey lips. There weren't many of us to absorb the shame of this, so the few of us that did absorb this shame couldn't carry it alone. One of the boys who I dismissed because he fit the stereotype of the Black jock was the only one who refused to walk around in shame. He found out who drew the picture and confronted the person. They ended up fighting. Eric, the Black jock, ended up calling his neighborhood boys up to come to the school and finish the fight. To this day, what impacted me the most was

when the administrators locked the school down and refused my re-entry because I happened to look like the people they were locking out. I was just as afraid as the other students and wanted to be safely inside the school building, but I found myself locked out because of my skin color. The eyes of my so-called friends are what I remember to this day. They may have wanted to help, but what they showed me on this day is that Whiteness aligns with Whiteness. When it was all said and done, White folk stick together. I wanted to stick with White folk, so I continued to try to mute the Black parts of me, no matter that every incident showed me that my skin would always expose my Blackness, especially in math and foreign language classes.

I continued to excel in all of my classes. Trying to be that perfect student so I could distance myself from my race, but this was to no avail. In my freshman Algebra class is where I found the most shameful experiences. Mr. Ono was a man of color. He happened to be Japanese. I thought by him having more melanin in his skin that I would be able to form a connection with him. What I did not understand at that time was that these model minorities suffered from indoctrinated anti-Blackness. He hated me, or so my young mind thought. He made me feel little and dumb everyday in class. I often wanted a hole to open up and swallow me. He would ridicule me and I felt would highlight my errors every opportunity that he could. I internalized this and convinced myself that I was not a good math student. This would only be reversed in college when I had the privilege of a Black male math professor. Not only was my Blackness offensive in Math with Mr. Ono, it was offensive in my French class with Ms. Weinstein. I excelled in the languages in Junior high and was allowed to take French and Spanish. I thought I

would continue to excel in High school. I also loved French because my friend Nadia spoke French. I loved talking to her and her mom and learning more conversational french. That is until Mrs. Weinstein hit me with the idea that since I was Black, I had a thick tongue and would never pronounce the language as intended. She probably meant no harm by this statement and didn't realize how deflating it was to me, but the harm was caused and I was deflated. My love for French never recovered and I gave the language up. So many teachers inadvertently destroy so many students of color with their damaged deficit based thinking which Darby & Rury (2018) state that systemic practices pertaining to tracking are upheld by the color of mind ideology and has upheld the trauma of slavery, anti-Blackness and dignitary injustices towards Black people, especially Black males. "Generational acts of harm such as slavery, segregation and racism manifest into the dominant narrative of society and are marketed as markers of change, when in fact, they persist the cycle of seperatedness and trauma" (Leigh & David, 2015, p. 4). Black students continue to have high exposure to systems of oppression that are found in the public-school setting (Darling-Hammond, 1998), and that oppression can change the course of a life tremendously.

I spent the next two years in high school trying to outrun my skin color. I took pride in being called an oreo or viewed as different, but not without taking massive hits from those who looked like me. I was teased and ostracized, but could never understand why. I blamed my lack of Black friends on this treatment, only to realize years later that I warranted some of this treatment because I was selling out on a daily basis. I wanted to be White so badly that I rejected everything about Blackness. I internalized what my

parents, Mrs. Fields and Mrs. Stroud tried to prevent and that is that Whiteness is better. The way that we collectively as Black people are treated was deserved because we were inferior in nature. I didn't want to be deemed as inferior, so I aligned myself with Whiteness and the pseudo protection of what this alignment would bring. By the 12th grade I was a complete racial mess, but what was budding out of this mess was a battle for self-preservation. I never stopped reading books about Black people and by Black people, which I think was the reason for the internal turmoil that I constantly found myself in. My home life was definitely afro-centric and full of African pride. My mom made sure we took African dance, ate African foods, and were exposed to great Black role models. She never confronted me about my attempts to be White, she only reinforced that I was Black excellence, but of course, I did not believe her because the world did reinforce Black excellence. I saw myself as the world saw me, until I met Mr. Wharton and Mrs. McWatt. These two people are iconic in the history of St. Paul, MN and most people within 10 years of my age either way have had their lives impacted by these two individuals. Again, they exemplified what Love (2019) identified as abolitionist teachers. They made sure to love us with a wholeness that allowed us to dream of great things. They both instilled in us that the limitations in our lives are those that we set on ourselves. Both of these great Black educators took me under their wing and reignited the fire that Mrs. Stroud started in the 6th grade. I was on the verge of giving up because I couldn't make White people see me as one of them and I had alienated myself from Black people to the point that I didn't know how to relate to my peers. I had created a wedge so deeply embedded that I couldn't find a way to unlodge. I fell into a depression

senior year and almost did not graduate, but these two individuals would not let me sabotage myself. Up until this point I was a straight A student, which was a blessing because 2nd semester my senior year, my GPA should have been 0.00. But in true abolitionist form, these two educators refused to give up on me and in turn, I refused to give up on myself. In order to save my life, I had to begin the process of reversing the harm of anti-Blackness and White supremacy that led to my internalized oppression. Thanks to these two, I went off to college which led to a path of racial liberation.

***Story 2: Internalized Oppression in Action.***

I can remember when I entered into education with bright eyes and a savior mentality. I had not tapped into my inner abolitionist just yet. In fact, that teacher did not exist. What existed was the idea of me regurgitating the ideas of a system that continues to harm students of color, especially the Black male student (Dingus, 2006). Again, I encountered a Black male student who I absolutely knew was brilliant, but he did not know that he was brilliant. He was a student in my self-contained English 10 class. This particular student acted out quite a bit, refused to do work, and take tests to the best of his ability. He had bought into the self-fulfilling prophecy of what education states about Black male and their learning. He was disconnected. Ten years in the educational system had stripped this young man of his confidence and will to learn. The hidden curriculum and the English 10 curriculum did not center boys who looked like him. No other classroom had representations of him and was probably the case most of his educational career. The only representation that was close to what he looked like was me, but the relationship between Black females and Black males is a unique one plagued by

internalizations of mistrust and disrespect. I am usually able to connect with my students and get into a learning routine pretty quickly, but this particular young man was not adhering to the structure in my classroom. He insisted on acting as if he had no impulse control or academic interests. I could tell from our conversations that he had a hidden well of knowledge deep down, but somewhere and somehow, he was convinced that he should live down to the expectations that society had for him. Remembering the mistakes of my past, I did not let up on him. I did have him spend his time in ISS during my class period, but I did connect with him to ensure that he had access to what we had learned in class. As I provided one on one instruction to him, I realized that this young man was in fact too smart to be in my class and was possibly gifted. I tried to talk to him about his potential, but he wasn't having it. Years of internalized stereotypes and oppressive experiences had stripped him of his desire to learn. He also was buying into reading Shakespeare or any of the novels on the 10th grade reading list. So I asked him what he liked to read and if he could make changes to my class what would they be? He suggested that I get more books that centered Black males and wanted me to know that he felt embarrassed due to being in a special education classroom. Once again, I asked my general educator counterpart to allow him to attend her class during my class period. He started acting out at first because there were some gaps, but I didn't let up on him. I pulled his mother in and had a heart to heart with both of them. I was determined to break this cycle on internalized oppression and self hate within him and within myself. At the end of the semester, he was able to successfully transition out of my special education classroom into her classroom. I did have to give him pep talks every now and then, and I



purchased books centering Black males. I was determined to learn from my past mistakes and not let another Black male student down. Since we spent so much time together in the early months of his Sophomore year, we were able to develop a bond. He would often come to me after he was out of my class for reassurance and encouragement. I wished I would have encouraged him to learn beyond the curriculum, instead I gave him the pep talk of playing the educational game of just doing the work and getting out the classes because the curriculum was not going to change unless teachers thought about changing it. Reading books about dead, possibly racist men was the norm that no one thought to disrupt. I inadvertently upheld the superiority of these authors by offering my books as supplemental instead of the core literature to use in class.

I was finding my voice more, but I still had a long way to go. Black boy joy and centering Black male intelligence were ideas just starting to manifest in my educational journey. I knew that I had to do whatever it would take for Black boys because I had Black sons. Something shifted in me from this interaction with this young man. He changed me by challenging me to think beyond how I was trained to think about Black male intelligence and special education. Unfortunately, this young man died by suicide 1st semester of his senior year. I was devastated, however, I was now in administration and was able to impact some changes when it came to engaging our Black male students. I used my voice and position to advocate for boys who looked like my sons and was able to get some books centered about Black males in the curriculum along with advocating for the hiring of Black males in core classes so Black boys could have some representation and hope. Representation matters as long as those representatives are not

upholding White supremacy and anti-Blackness. If all that Black boys see is their lack, then there is no wonder why there seems to be an issue with them succeeding. “Children and adolescents who receive little appreciation for the actual value of their contributions can easily grow up with an undervalued assessment of their worth, ultimately believing themselves to be of little to no value” (Degruy, 2017, p. 108). Degruy (2017) calls this vacant esteem, which is the state of believing that you have little or no worth. This is what we are contending with when we look at the historical significance of slavery and how the sin of slavery continues to impact Black people today.

### **Phase 3: Path to Liberation and the Long Winding Road and Beyond.**

There is no such thing as neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument to bring about conformity or freedom (Friere, 1968). Up until this point, education was forcing conformity to Whiteness and anti-Blackness ideology, but as I found myself on my college campus, I realized that I wanted education to do the latter for me. At the time I did not know that I was on a path to freedom and radical imagination. Kelley (2002) stated of his incorporation of surrealism as a part of the Black radical imagination, that

[it] offers a vision of freedom far deeper and more expansive than any of the movements discussed thus far [i.e., Marronage, Pan-Africanism, Negritude, Black communism and the civil rights movement]. It is a movement that invites dreaming, urges us to improvise and invent, and recognizes the imagination as our most powerful weapon. (p.159)

During my early years on the college campus I was not equipped to grapple with such a concept until I had the honor of attending a symposium put on by the Black Student Union (BSU), who up until this point I had no dealings with because I was still grappling with internalized oppression. The BSU hosted Angela Davis in the fall of 1992. This is a pivotal year for me because it was a year that started my metamorphosis. I can remember sitting in the auditorium listening to Dr. Angela Davis and her mighty words about resistance. Her message sparked something in my mind, but I was severely conflicted with viewing myself through her lens and trying to heal from the messages of anti-Blackness. Her feminist stance also reinforced in my immature mind my beliefs about Black males and their value. There were Black males in my college classes, but I thought of them as an anomaly because of what was being reinforced during the 90's about Black males. We were in the age of gangsta-rap, gang violence, and crack cocaine. Media portrayed these images of Black males in ways that the ones on campus were reinforced as an anomaly.

***Story 3: Flashback.***

Attending a predominantly White university in a predominantly White town was a no brainer for me. I grew up in that town, so it was only natural that I would attend college there. I was well socialized in the ways of Whiteness with a sprinkle of acceptable resistance. It was almost faddish to join cultural clubs and to fight for justice for those less fortunate. That is that middle class disconnect found in Black communities. I was the cool Black girl in the BSU, hanging up posters and getting Black intellectuals to come on campus to speak to us. It was also the year of Bill Clinton and my first ever time

being old enough to vote. I naively uttered the same saying that he was our 1st Black president, which I find utterly insulting now. I was around young people who were searching for belonging and for meaning in life, but not the meaning of what it meant to be Black in America. The Black males on campus were like mythical creatures because they were so rare. I watched how one after the other either got hurt in whatever sport they participated in or left school altogether. Once again, the educational experiences for Black males on this particular campus proved to be one that caused some form of harm, but it wasn't just harm to them. I was experiencing some of that harm as I found myself growing frustrated with White liberals talking about equity and equality and not living it.

For the second time in my educational career, I encountered a professor who felt that my Blackness was offensive and that I did not belong on the pre-med track or in her class. I was still that overachiever who now had little patience for racist behaviors and let it be known. Her microaggressions and rude behavior towards me pushed me over the edge. Sue et. Al (2007) define microaggressions as follows:

Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities (p. 271).

There I was, an 18 year old college student who was getting sent to the proverbial principal's office. This professor weaponized my Blackness and accused me of trying to harm her during a chemistry experiment. I had to accept the lie that she told, go to some

form of counseling where they were trying to convince me that they understood why I was having trouble fitting in due to my Blackness, and accept being mistreated and discriminated against because someone had the upper hand. I still hold resentment towards her and the reaction from my college advisor for how they handled this situation to this day. I felt proud of myself for advocating for myself, but as a young Black woman growing up in the 90s, I wasn't sure where my place was. I was stuck between commentary about Blackness in America that society was pushing down our throats, my budding awareness, and my staunchly middle class upbringing. My mom had me believing in the idea of meritocracy and this kumbaya MLK dream of we are all brothers and sisters. If this was the case why was I experiencing the same treatment as I did in high school, but this time I was paying money to be treated this way. So I did what many other students who looked like me did, I changed majors and had my life path disrupted due to this anti-Black attitude and White superiority. I listened to someone who did not value my Blackness or my intelligence as they told me to major in criminal justice because it would suit me better. So with a new major in mind and a burning rage, I continued along this path. A path that had me digest this idea of justice and fairness in America. The young mind is so malleable and easily influenced. Deep down in me I had some fight, however, society reinforced in me that if I chose to fight, there were consequences that would change my life course and because a college education was browbeat into me, I learned to shut it up and move along, but buried deep down was that dream of a liberated lifestyle that allowed me to be free in my Blackness.

***Story 3: Implications of Liberation and Freedom Dreaming.***

Now that I am an administrator with 20 years of experience in K-12 education, I am able to see how White-supremacy, anti-Blackness, and internalized oppression has harmed Black students. Brown Vs Board of Education was supposed to level the playing field, however, that is not what happened nor what the insidious nature of justice intended to happen (Blumenfeld, 2020). As my journey led to this moment in my doctoral process, I have had to reflect on the harm that I have caused students who looked to me as I once looked to Mrs. Stroud. This past harm was centered in White supremacy and anti-Blackness. Racist socialization played a role in how I engaged with students in the educational arena in ways that I now know were harmful, especially Black males (Dancy, 2004). If we believe in the inferiority and lack of worth passed down from generation to generation, we begin to see how those beliefs have hindered our collective success. “Our beliefs color everything with which we come in contact. They strongly influence how we think and feel” (Degruy, 2017, p. 105).

Being able to reflect and research myself in this arena has been cathartic. A type of healing has had to take place to allow me to continue in this work. The trauma that racism has caused me has to be healed and can no longer be ignored. I came to this realization when I prematurely jumped into the role of Equity champion with the task of training mostly White administrators in the area of cultural competency and equitable practices in our schools. I wish that I can say that I was more prepared due to my research and readings, but that is the furthest from the truth. I realized that this three year process

uncovered a lot of trauma that I need to resolve before I can fully engage in freedom dreaming and liberation (Kelley, 2002).

## CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

Now that our group is at the conclusion of our dissertation, we realized that this cannot be the end of our work. As we came together for the first 3 chapters we were able to realize that even though we are coming from different perspectives, we all want to holistically see changes to the educational system come about as a result of our collective work. The ability for us to stay together throughout this process speaks to the tenacity and passion we have for educational reform that will center the lives and lived experiences of Black children. The connective pieces are reflected in the tenets of our methodologies and research that all point to our original purpose for taking this journey. As we looked at different groups of Black students we found that the question we were addressing pointed to the injustices, inequities, and racism that Black students face in the education system.

### **Abena B. Boateng in Closing**

#### ***Traversing through a Kaleidoscope of Persecution: Black boys in Special Education***

A grave situation occurred early in my career. A teacher recommended a Black boy for the gifted program during a team meeting. However, during testing, his IQ score was in the deficient cognitive range. His mother challenged and questioned these scores. The White school counselor who proctored the test commented to the boy's mother, "The gifted program isn't even a good program for kids; your son does not need to be a part of it. I am not being racist, but it's the truth." Vaught (2011) notes, "Whites promote exclusivity and total enjoyment of privileges of superior schooling" (p. 41).



Vaught (2011) explained the following:

The pie is not equally divided because it is regulated by the institutional practice of White property, which is maintained for privileged Whites with the goal of not just enjoying each piece, but controlling how the pieces were cut, determining who got a piece, and depriving others from partaking of the piece” (p. 53).

She also went on to inform the Black mother that she should talk to her son’s teachers about how they can differentiate instruction for him. This mother insisted on testing again, this time with a different counselor. The results were in the high average range. The following year, prior to admittance to a gifted program at another school, her son was tested again and his scores were in the high range again. Today, this Black boy has completed high school, and achieved exemplary academic accolades because he was given a chance.

This experience described above was the push that gave me the burning tenacity to resist misconceptions about racial differences and racism. Through these and other similar injustice experiences, I fueled my drive to pursue and undertake a doctoral education that imbues me with the knowledge to push for policies so that Black children have a chance for equitable opportunities for academic success, post secondary outcomes and lifelong learning. Embarking on this educational journey with a cohort of researchers who have profound diverse knowledge in education, critical thinking and analytical skills has afforded me the opportunity to have our voices heard so that Black children will have a chance. As noted by (Jensen, 2005), “It is imperative to resist the oppressive system that causes injuries and deprive others of their rights because it is the right thing to do”

(p. 11). My aspiration is to interweave these policies with the anti-racist rhetoric narratives to reveal the truth about racism and its disparaging impact on Black children — and Black teachers — in education.

Concerns and discomfort emerge when revealing the gravity of systemic oppression and denigration of Black people, including impacts of institutional and environmental racism on Black Boys. The modern strategies of White supremacy are a new face put on old evil. Vaught (2011) states, “Racism functions as the pedestal of White supremacy” (p. 10). For example, Black students are disproportionately suspended from school regardless of the underlying circumstances, such as mental and behavioral health issues (Skiba, 2002).

Despite that, I seek to engage with people and support the dismantling of individuals’ perceptions and generalizations about systemic racism. I find the hierarchy of ingrained systemic racism is firmly entrenched by those supported by and supporting the system. There are several White people who are unwilling to take down a system that benefits them. According to Jensen (2005), “privileged people’s commitment to social change is stronger when grounded in the cognizance of their own interests” (p. 12). However, some of those individuals are teaching Black children, affected by racism and other biases; thus, they cannot very well provide for these populations. Some people believe in the strength of White power (Jensen, 2005) and refuse to believe that disparity exists, and their refusal to listen to the outcry of marginalized voices is exemplified by responses containing exaggerated and misguided emotions. The barriers these people create with blind responses lead to high emotions and further division amongst people

(Matias, 2019). My personal mission is to reveal racism's current reality because it is a barrier to equality, inclusivity, opportunities, and access for Black boys in particular.

Debunking narratives which implicitly or explicitly perpetuate racism can be accomplished through integrating counter stories on cultural appreciation, appropriation and transference of this knowledge to the classrooms (Delgado et al., 2017).

Problem-solving that does not adopt a stance of blaming can alleviate the wounds created by the dominant culture's assertion over marginalized groups. Those who benefit from the system often do not fully acknowledge how the assertion of racist power robs Black children of equality and inclusive opportunities to be successful (Mills, 2003). They believe they have some understanding, but it is couched in the falsehoods of blaming those they victimize.

My educational philosophy encompasses being an inclusive educator and an activist for social justice. Indeed, when Black people share their challenging experiences regarding racism, others should not view it as a personal attack and respond with deflection and negative attitudes about Black aesthetics. Regardless of race, people could benefit from better listening skills, empathy, compassion, and willingness to confront the discomfort of inculcating the sense of truth regarding race, racism and its impact (Neblett et al., 2009).

**Ida B. Casey in Closing*****Black Girlhood – Vision, Voice, Freedom and Truth: How Anti-Black Policies in the Education System Impact African American Females***

I began sharing a narrative about a friend that I had in middle and high school, that I felt had been denied her high school education. I felt bad for her, but at that time I had no words or even real understanding of how to express what I felt. I knew it was unfair, but she seemed to be okay with it. I discussed it with my parents, who had no answer but for some reason, seemed to understand the situation better than I. I suppose it was at this point that I realized that there was a level of trust and esteem held for Black educators during the 60s and 70s, that perpetuated the upholding of racist policies, not realizing that it denied Black students equal education opportunities. Looking back, I now understand that there was a somewhat, as mentioned, quasi-fictive kinship among Black families, students, towards Black educators.

Fast forward to the present... as I began to delve into the historical events of unequal educational practices, I began to find not only the words but the research to define my feelings about what happened to my friend and the reality of how school policies continue to mar the educational experiences of Black children.

Historically, students of color have been disenfranchised, experiencing challenges that impaired their academic success due to a lack of racial and cultural understanding by those who write and develop the policies (Lynn, 2006). Students of color have been isolated from the normal public school context that their White counterparts have been privileged to receive. This, in part, due to educators continuing to incorporate White

supremist-influenced practices and policies, justifying them by using stereotypes and lack of understanding of racial and cultural differences (Larson & Ovando 2001; Borrero et al., 2010). Because of the stereotypical beliefs, Blacks are viewed as not capable nor having a desire to be successful, deeming them not meeting the dominant idea of appropriate behavior (Darby & Rury, 2018).

I realized that anti-Blackness is the impetus not only for policies but also the implicit and explicit biases towards Black students, especially girls. I began to make the correlation between how Black girls are treated, the stereotypes and the policies that seem to adultify and erase Blackgirls' childhood (Epstein, Blake & Gonzalez, 2017) and how these ideologies influence educational policies.

Reflecting on past events and observations of how students were and are still treated in schools gave me pause to think about the role I may have played in the past in perpetuating the White supremacist influenced policies. More importantly, I began to realize that there is a great need to address the needs of Black children through a different lens, one that incorporates cultural understanding and advocacy. I read an article that shedded light on what educators or mentors can do to be beacons of light in the academic experiences of Black students. This helped me look at the issues surrounding racism in education in a different light. All of the ills of racism are revealed to us daily through various life experiences, the media, etc. It's time to look at how we can insulate those most vulnerable to the nastiness of racism, especially in school, helping them to become the strong individuals they are born to be, by becoming racial advocates or Educational Cultural Negotiators (Warren-Grice & Parker, 2017) for Black students. These ECNs as

they are called, are educational leaders that provide academic direction and challenge racial neglect and color-blindness within the public school system (Warren-Grice & Parker, 2017). The ECNs advocate for Black students by helping them navigate through issues of racial isolation and disparate racial treatment. More importantly, they challenge education policies and practices that have a deleterious impact on students of color in public urban, suburban and rural schools (Delpit, 2011). As we look for that niche in which to utilize our Social Justice knowledge, this program provides an opportunity to provide a positive and hopeful academic experience for Black children.

**Jamie C. Klupe in Closing**

***It's Just Me: One White Lady's Radical Racial Realization***

My experience in this cohort has broken me down and continues to build me back up. It has changed the way I see the world, and myself. It feels like I have been living in an alternate universe my entire life and I'm just now being clued into the Matrix. Because of this, my personal story has been difficult to write. I struggled with being honest and critically evaluating my behavior. I grappled with whether or not to share certain stories because I knew I enacted White supremacy. In the end, I was honest about my shortcomings, and because of that, I was able to fully dissect myself and see the inner working of my White imagination. Using Critical Whiteness Theory to evaluate my action, or inaction, helped me to determine how I operationalized Whiteness. "CWS focuses on problematizing the normality of hegemonic whiteness, arguing that in doing so whites deflect, ignore, or dismiss their role, racialization, and privilege in race dynamics" (Matias et al., 2014, p. 291).

However, given the scope of this project, there are aspects of critical evaluation of Whiteness that I was not able to explore further. I believe the most important is how I operationalize Whiteness as an SLP specifically. I was able to look at how my Whiteness impacted my practice as a White person and an educator but fell short in making the connection to speech language pathology. When I began this project, I assumed the connection would come naturally because that is my position as an educator. In the end, however, I realized I had much more work to do as a White person before I could begin to tackle my profession.

I also hoped that I would be able to offer more actionable steps to dismantling Whiteness. Again, the scope of the project didn't allow for this. I also learned that the work necessary for breaking down racism can't necessarily be broken down into actionable steps. To do this is reductive and emotionless and social justice work is anything but emotionless. Checking boxes doesn't build empathy or establish relationships. I won't allow myself to reduce my students or dim their lights again.

### **Julie C. Moorman in Closing**

#### ***Inevitable or Avoidable?: Students Turned Inmates and My Role in the School-to-Prison-Pipeline***

This journey began with me trying to fix the problem. I come from a background of quantitative research, coming into the program with the basics of the scientific method in my back pocket: You have a problem, you come up with a plan to fix it and then hypothesize how that plan will work, put your plan into action, examine the results, draw a conclusion. This was my initial plan of attack for my dissertation. When my committee

suggested a qualitative approach, let alone, autoethnography, I was mortified. I came up with a list of reasons as to why I should not take this approach which included but was not limited to that (1) I was not reflective enough (2) I had no interest in researching myself and (3) no one would want to read my stories. After all, who would that help? Throughout the writing of this work, I was still determined to fix the problem. I can remember my advisor telling me (multiple times, in multiple ways) when my writing or thought process reverted back to my old ways of thinking, “No. You are not trying to fix a problem. You are researching yourself. You are telling your story.”

It took me a while, but I finally realized this process was about my “personal transformation” (Banks, 2006, p.xi) as not only an educator and now a leader in my administrative role, but also as a White woman. Nieto (2006) states, White teachers must “critically analyze their ideologies, journeys, dispositions, and engage in personal transformation.”(p.xii). Personal transformation has proven to be hard. How does one know when they’ve been transformed? My journey is far from over, and it has not been easy thus far, as Nieto (2006) points out, “Taking on an identity based on privilege and the oppression of others is difficult because it brings with it a great deal of inner turmoil and anguish.”(pp. xv-xvi). I’m still learning what my role is and who I am as a White female in education. Part of what I have learned which has helped me in this journey is that “What is needed in the process of developing a healthy White identity is neither a narcissistic preoccupation with Whiteness nor a guilt-ridden journey that results only in immobilization. What is needed in a word, is hope.” (Banks, 2006, p. xvi). I’m reminded through my work that,



Just as the identities of people of color include more than simply being victims, the identities of Whites are about more than being victimizers. Involving Whites in multicultural education, therefore, needs to resolve two seemingly contradictory aims: to confront in a brutally honest way White oppression, and to promote the development of a healthy identity that is at the same time anti-racist and multicultural. (Nieto, 2006, p.xvi)

I am still learning what my Whiteness means and how it affects my students of color, particularly when it comes to disciplinary decisions and the implications that those decisions have on the perpetuation of the school-to-prison pipeline. Though my work has not solved any problems, I hope it encourages other White people, specifically those in the field of education to delve into their own White identity. In her foreword, Nieto (2006) points out what I was supposed to be learning all along, “Needless to say, one book” or in my case this dissertation, “cannot change the world—but” my hope is that through my continued reflection, others are encouraged to do the same, so therefore rather than fix the problem “it can begin the process.” (p.xvii). And that was all it was ever meant to do.

For White teachers that undergo the difficult course of facing the implications of their privilege, it means that there can be more than just pain and suffering at the end. For teachers of other backgrounds, it means that they are not alone, that they can look forward to their colleagues and allies who are committed to anti-racist multicultural education for all students. And of course, ultimately, it is the students in our classrooms who benefit the most because they will have teachers

who grapple on an ongoing basis with the difficult issues of privilege and racism—teachers who understand what it means to think about these issues deeply and who are committed to providing all their students with rigorous, supportive, caring, and quality education. (Nieto, 2006, pp. xvi-xvii)

### **Angeline Williams-Jackson in Closing**

#### ***The Impact of Anti-Blackness and Internalized Oppression: A Black Woman Educator's Experiences Navigating the Educational System***

By sharing my narratives and critical self-reflections, I hope to work through the stereotype threat, shame, guilt, and harm I have encountered from student to the administrator and the path to liberation. My research also gives me a chance to heal and reflect on the damage I have caused as a victim of Anti-Blackness and White supremacy and how my activism was ignited. These narratives will provide a lens for others to look through as they find themselves navigating the public education system as a Black woman and interacting with Black male students. I would not have been aware of the nature of harm had I not ventured into my dissertation. Being able to reflect and incorporate what I have researched and learned throughout this journey has allowed me to vow for true change. Yes, there were opportunities throughout my career that allowed me to center the Black male child's experiences when I pushed for reform, but that reform was always within the context of White supremacy.

Decades have come and gone and we continue to grapple with the equity issue in education. Oakes et al. (1992) posed the question about reform possibilities that cause educational practitioners to wonder if real reform is possible and where would we focus

our attention when there are so many harmful practices and problems within our educational system. Oakes et al. (1998) speak about this fundamental change and the need for it, however, we continue to grapple with what to focus on first. Love (2019) states that school reform initiatives must include equity, which are common movements across America, however, little has changed when it comes to educating Black children. Darby & Rury (2018), conclude that anti-Blackness and White supremacy in education upholds the racism and mental castration that Black students feel in classrooms across America. If we add gender to race and include the intersectionality of the Black male students, we find even more depressing outcomes (Ladson-Billing & Tate, 1995). “Philosophy dictates that confronting the Color of Mind and its manifestations within racially diverse schools today is an imperative of justice” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 2) and it seems to me that for the Black male it is a matter of life and death, literally.

Since history has a way of repeating itself and the remnants of never righting the wrong as a country when it comes to its Black citizens “whiteness is sustained in contemporary institutions” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 12) “where everyday practices denigrate black intelligence, character and conduct” (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 12). Ladson-Billings (2005) talks about how teacher education programs create specific rhetoric that is embedded in the idea of saving students when most teachers haven’t been taught to meet the current needs of the students that they will be teaching or understand what they may be saving them from. There is a linkage to how racism boxes in Black teachers which lead me to feel most educators will not admit that they operate under this ideology of internalized oppression openly, nor will they have an honest conversation

about their biases. This is why it is important for me to tell my story as it pertains to the interactions and complexities of educating Black students in White American institutions.

According to Emdin (2016), educators act with good intentions is the idea behind the reasons that anti-Blackness and White supremacy is justified. Emdin (2016) states that the problem of anti-Blackness doesn't just apply to White teachers, it applies to Black teachers who are indoctrinated in White supremacist ideas. Along with Emdin (2016), there is a concern when Black teachers have the same mindset as White teachers when it comes to anti-Blackness and White supremacist ideas. This idea that Black males are inferior is not only perpetuated by White teachers but Black teachers also. Gordon et al. (1994) called for scholars to move away from genetics and cultural explanations of Black male underachievement, and to examine structural causes (p. 232). The labeling and criminalization of Black boys in school are not new (Ferguson, 2001; Noguera, 2003, 2009; Monroe, 2005). Black males are the subgroup of students who will most likely be retained in schools, suspended, or labeled (Aud et al., 2010). This outcome for Black male students must change and Black female educators have to be the catalyst for that change.

### **Implications of the Collective Work**

Using Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies in tandem, allowed us to analyze how racism bleeds through the veins of the educational system. CRT and CWS challenged racism and anti-Blackness in a way that revealed the damage that is caused to Black students while making Black students the focus instead of Whiteness (Bell, 1995). We realized that all inequities and anti-Black experiences that Black students face are

embedded within White supremacist attitudes. CRT uncovers the deeply damaging impact that racism has on our educational system (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). White policy-makers consistently structure educational policies that eliminate Black students who do not fit into the dominant cultural norms (Dumas, 2016; Gillborn, 2007). We realized that “White supremacy is an entire political system” (Leonardo, 2013, p. 94), that shows up in many areas of education through tracking, gifted and talented program placement, and special education identification (Radd & Grosland, 2019). It also shows up for educators through unfair hiring practices and disproportionate numbers of White administrators (Radd & Grosland, 2019).

As a group, we feel our research points out, at the very least, the dire need for educator preparation programs to focus on social justice and culturally relevant pedagogy. Black teachers make up 6% of the teaching population; White teachers continue to dominate the workforce at 90% (Naman, 2009). Howard (2016) referred to White educators in the title of his book, “*We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know.*” White teachers should begin their careers with a solid understanding of equity and socially just educational practices. Having a cultural understanding can create a positive school climate, which can be a measurement of how students experience school. If educators embrace a cultural understanding they gain valuable information that can impact the decisions of school administrators, policymakers, and those who shape how Black students learn (Morris, 2016). Colleges and Universities should require coursework for teachers on these topics. Rethinking teacher preparation programs is a non-negotiable in

the fight for an education system built for all students to succeed. Progressive teacher training can set a foundation for success for both students and future teachers.

We call for current teachers to critically reflect on their socialization, and positionality in order to uncover their implicit biases affecting their quality of instruction, support for Black students (Staats, 2016), and discipline disparities. DiAngelo (2018) suggests that one way for White teachers to grow is to evaluate their own internalized oppression to look for reasons they may not be willing to stand up against racism. We demand White teachers see their students of color, reducing unproductive and devaluing colorblind ideologies. Educators must be willing to feel discomfort in order to grow in their knowledge of racism and school systems must provide on-going quality professional development related to bias and racism and overall school climate reform. We know the problems, and the time is now to focus on solutions and advocate for students of color.

Each member of our cohort has challenged themselves to think critically about their lived experiences. We all have a powerful story to share. What makes our collective story so powerful is that each of us has come to the realization that you don't know what you don't know. And when you learn, you do better. Doing better has meant working as a group of women who occupy various intersections of power and oppression without giving up on each other or turning against one another. It has meant becoming frustrated and uncomfortable but pushing past those feelings because we believe in each other and our work. Doing better means that we have lifted each other up to accomplish a common goal. Doing better for us also means doing better for Black youth and working toward our

goals of demolishing the pillars of anti-Blackness and White supremacy and rebuilding the education system on a foundation of equity, inclusivity, and love.

### References

- Abudu, N. G., & Miles, R. E. (2018). Challenging the status quo: An integrated approach to dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline. *St. Thomas Law Review*, 30(13).
- Adams, T.E., Jones S.H., & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography*. Oxford University Press.
- Adichie, C. N. (2009, July). *The danger of a single story*. [Video] TED Conferences.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)
- Anderson, C. (2017). *White rage: The unspoken truth of our racial divide*. Bloomsbury.
- Anderson, M. (2011) Curriculum, part II: The hidden curriculum. *Chalkbeat*.  
<https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2011/7/14/21097286/curriculum-part-ii-the-hidden-curriculum>
- Anderson, M. D. (2016). Students of color are disproportionately affected by school surveillance. *The Atlantic*.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/09/when-school-feels-like-prison/499556/>
- Andrews, D. C., & Hines-Datiri, D. (2017). Zero tolerance policies disproportionately punish black girls. *Sage Journals*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085917690204>
- Annamma, S. A., Ayon, Y., & Joseph, N. (2015). Black girls and school discipline: The complexities of being overrepresented and understudied. *Urban Education*, 54(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916646610>
- Asim, J. (2018). *We can't breathe on black lives, white lies, and the art of survival*. Picador.



- Aud, S., Fox, M., & Kewal Ramani, A. (2017). Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups. <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/83685>
- Ball, T., Dagger, R. & O'Neill, D. (2020). *Ideals and ideologies: A reader*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- Banks, J. A. (2006). Series Foreword. In Howard, G. R. (2006). *We can't teach what we don't know: white teachers, multiracial schools*. (J. A. Banks, Ed.) (2nd ed. pp. ix-xii). Teachers College Press.
- Barnes, E. J., (1973). IQ testing and minority children: Imperatives for change. *Journal of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-4950.1973.tb00324.x>
- Bécares, L. & Priest, N. (2015). Understanding the influence of race/ethnicity, gender, and class on inequalities in academic and non-academic outcomes among eighth-grade students: Findings from an intersectionality approach. *PLoS ONE* 10(10): e0141363. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0141363>
- Bell, D. A. (2018). *In Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism*. Basic Books.
- Bell, D.A. (2013). Critical race theory: What it is not! In Lynn, M & Dixson, A.D., (Eds.) *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 37-38). Routledge.
- Benaji, M. & Greenwald, A. (2016). *Blind spot: Hidden biases of good people*. Bantam Books.

- Bergner, G. (2009). Black children, preference: Brown v. board, the doll tests, and the politics of self-esteem. *American Quarterly*, 61(2), 299-332. [https://doi: 10.1086/653629](https://doi.org/10.1086/653629)
- Better, S. J. (2008). *Institutional racism: A primer on theory and strategies for social change*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Bista, K., & Cox, D. (2014). Cohort-based doctoral programs: What we have learned over the last 18 years. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 9, 1-20. <http://ijds.org/Volume9/IJDSv9p001-020Bista0425.pdf>
- Blair, I.V. & Viglione, J., ( 2011). The impact of light skin on prison time for black female offenders. *The Social Science Journal* 48(1), 250-258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2010.08.003>
- Blanchett, W. J., Klingner, J. K., & Harry, B. (2009). The Intersection of race, culture, language, and disability: Implications for urban education. *Urban Education*, 44(4), 389-409. <https://doi:10.1177/0042085909338686>
- Blumenfeld, W. (2020, July 4). *Confronting systemic racism: Interest convergence at the inflection point*. A Medium Corporation. <https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/confronting-systemic-racism-c7c586e03965>
- Bonilla-Silva, E., Jung, M.-K., & Vargas, J. H.C. (2011). *State of white supremacy: Racism, governance, and the United States*. Stanford University Press.

- Borrero, N. E., C. J. Yeh, C. I. Cruz, and J. F. Suda. (2010). School as a context of othering youth and promoting cultural assets. *Teachers College Record*, 114(2), 1–37.
- Boston, G. H., & Baxley, T. (2007). Living the literature: Race, gender construction, and black female adolescents. *Urban Education*, 42(6), 560-581.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085907305186>
- Branigan, A. R., Wildeman, C., Freese J., & Kiefe C. I. (2017). Complicating colorism: Race, skin color, and the likelihood of arrest. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 3, 1–17. <https://doi:10.1177/2378023117725611>.
- Breton, (1970); Heyns, (1974); Porter, Porter and Blishen, (1982). Course enrollment in the high school: The perspective of working-class females. *Sociology of Education* (1985), 58(January), 48-59.
- Brittian, A.S. (2012). Understanding african american adolescents' identity development: A relational developmental systems perspective. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 38(2), 172-200. <https://doi: 10.1177/0095798411414570>
- Brogaard, B., & Gatzia, D. E. (Eds.) (2021). *The philosophy and psychology of ambivalence: Being of two minds*. Routledge.
- Brown, R. N. (2009). *Black girlhood celebration: Toward a hip-hop feminist pedagogy*. Peter Lang.
- Brunner, D. D. B. (1994). *Inquiry and reflection: framing narrative practice in education*. State University of New York Press.

- Bryan, N. (2017). White teachers' role in sustaining the school-to-prison pipeline: Recommendations for teacher education. *The Urban Review*, 49(2), 326-345.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0403-3>
- Buras, K.L. (2013). Let's be for real. Critical race theory, racial realism and education policy analysis (toward a new paradigm). In M. Lynn & A.D. Dixon (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 216-231). Routledge.
- Calabrese, R. (1990). The public school: A source of alienation for minority parents. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 59(2), 148-157.  
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.umsl.edu/10.2307/2295640>
- Cambridge University Press. (n.d). Whataboutism. In *Cambridge dictionary*. Retrieved March 11, 2021, from  
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/whataboutism>
- Carspecken, P.F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. Routledge.
- Caton, M. T. (2012). Black Male Perspectives on their educational experiences in high school. *Urban Education*, 47(6), 1055–1085.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912454442>
- Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as a method*. Left Coast Press, Inc.
- Chang, H. (2016). *Autoethnography as a method*. Developing qualitative inquiry series(1). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Charron, K.M. (2009). *Freedom's teacher: The life of Septima Clark*. University of North Carolina Press.

- Chatters, L., Taylor, R., & Jayakody, R. (1994). Fictive kinship relations in black extended families. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 25(3) 297-312.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41602341>
- Chenowith, K. & Menzel, I. (2003). For good [Song]. On *Wicked* [Album]. Decca Broadway.
- Chesney-Lind, M., Tate, W.F., (2010). Black girls and school discipline: The complexities of being overrepresented and understudied. *Urban Education*, 54(2). 211-242. <https://doi:10.1177/0042085916646610>
- Clark, K., & Clark, M. (1950). Emotional factors in racial identification and preference in negro children. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 19(3), 341-350.  
<https://doi:10.2307/2966491>
- Cogburn, C.D., Chavous, T.M., Griffin (2011). School-based racial and gender discrimination among african american adolescents: Exploring gender variation in frequency and implications for adjustment. *Race and Social Problem*, 3(25).  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-011-9040-8>
- Coles, J. (2019). The Black literacies of urban high school youth countering anti-blackness in the context of neoliberal multiculturalism. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 15(2).
- Collins, H. P., & Bilge, S. (2020). *Intersectionality*. Polity Press.
- Cook, C. R., Duong, M. T., McIntosh, K., Fiat, A. E., Larson, M., Pullmann, M. D., & McGinnis, J. (2018). Addressing discipline disparities for black male students:

Linking malleable root causes to feasible and effective practices. *School Psychology Review*, 47(2), 135-152. <https://doi:10.17105/spr-2017-0026.v47-2>

Cooper, A.J. (1892). *A voice from the south by a black woman of the south*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library.

Cooper, B. (2017). *Beyond respectability*. University of Illinois Press.

Crawford, O. (2018). How to create better, safer learning environments for girls of color. *Education Trust*.

<https://edtrust.org/resource/and-they-cared-how-to-create-better-safer-learning-environments-for-girls-of-color/>

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersections of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1).

<http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In: M. A. Fineman & R. Mykitiuk, (Eds.), *The Public Nature of Private Violence* (pp. 93-118). Routledge.

Creswell, J.W. & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Cribb, V.L. & Haase, A.M., (2015). Girls feeling good at school: School gender environment, internalization and awareness of socio-cultural attitudes associations with self-esteem in adolescent girls. *Journal of Adolescence*, 46, 107-114.
- Cross, W. E., Jr., Parham, T. A., & Helms, J. E. (1991). The stages of black identity development: Nigrescence models. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (pp. 319–338). Cobb & Henry Publishers.
- Dache, A. (2019). Ferguson's black radical imagination and the scyborgs of community student resistance. *The Review of Higher Education*, 42(5), 63-84.  
<https://doi:10.1353/rhe.2019.0045>.
- Dancy T.E. (2014) The adultification of black boys. In K.J. Fasching-Varner, R.E. Reynolds, K.A. Albert , L.L. Martin (Eds.), *Trayvon martin, race, and american justice. Teaching race and ethnicity*. Sense Publishers.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-842-8\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-842-8_10)
- Darby, D., & Rury, J. L. (2018). *The color of mind: Why the origins of the achievement gap matter for justice*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Darensbourg, A., Perez, E., & Blake, J.J. (2010). Overrepresentation of african american males in exclusionary discipline: The role of school-base mental health professionals in dismantling the school to prison pipeline. *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 1(3), 196-211.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Unequal opportunity: Race and education. *The Brookings Review*, 16(2), 28-32. <https://doi:10.2307/20080779>

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education how America's commitment to equity will determine our future*. Teachers College Press.
- DeCuir-Gunby, J. T. (2006). Proving your skin is white, you can have everything: Race, racial identity and the property rights in whiteness in the supreme court case of Josephine deCuir. In C. Rousseau & A. Dixson (Eds.), *Critical race theory and education: All god's children got a song* (pp. 89-111). Routledge.
- DeGruy, J. (2017). *Post traumatic slave syndrome: America's legacy of enduring injury and healing*. Joy DeGruy Publishing.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory, first edition: An introduction*. NYU Press
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2013). Discerning critical moments. In M. Lynn & A.D. Dixon (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 23-33). NYU Press
- Delgado, R., Stefancic, J., & Harris, A. (2017). Critical race theory today. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical race theory: An introduction* (3rd ed., pp. 113-151). NYU Press.
- Delpit, L. (2011). *Multiplication is for white people: Raising expectations for other people's children*. The New Press.
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2012). *Missouri State Plan for Special Education, Section III; Fed. Regulations 300.8, 300.306, 800-Eligibility Criteria: Emotional Disturbance*. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Missouri.



- DiAngelo, R. (2011). White fragility. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3(3), 54-70.
- DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Beacon Press.
- Diem, S., Young, Welton, A. (2020). *Anti-racist educational leadership and policy: Addressing racism in public education*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429487224>
- Diette, T. M., Goldsmith, A. H., Hamilton, D., Darity, J. W. (2015). Skin shade stratification and the psychological cost of unemployment: Is there a gradient for black females? *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 42(1-2), 155-177.  
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.umsl.edu/10.1007/s12114-014-9192-z>
- Dingus, J. (2006). Doing the best we could: African american teachers counterstory on school desegregation. *The Urban Review*, 38. 211-233.  
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.umsl.edu/10.1007/s11256-006-0034-6>
- Dixson, A.D. (2011). Democracy now: Race, education, and black self-determination. *Teachers College Record*. 113(4), 811-830. <https://eric.ed.gov/>
- Dixon & Rousseau, C.K. (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory in Education: All God's Children Got a Song* (pp.103–126). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315870557-12>
- Doane, A.W., & Bonilla-Silva, E. (Eds.). (2004). *White out: The continuing significance of racism* (1st ed.). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203412107>

- Dotson, K. (2013). Knowing in space: Three lessons from black women's social theory. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2270343>
- Dowd, N. (2018). *Reimagining equality: A new deal for children of color*. NYU Press.
- Downs, K. (Director). (2016, March 28). *What white folks who teach in the hood get wrong about education*. [Video file]. PBS. Retrieved May 26, 2020, from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/what-white-folks-who-teach-in-the-hood-get-wrong-about-education>
- Dumas, M. (2016). Against the dark: Anti-blackness in education policy and discourse. *Theory into Practice, 55*(1), 11-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1116852>
- Education Week Staff (2004, August 4). Tracking. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/2004/09>
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research, 36*(4), 273-290. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.36.2011.4.273-290>
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd Ed., p. 733-768). Sage Publications.
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. (2006). Analyzing analytic autoethnography: An autopsy. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 35*(4), 429-449.
- Emdin, C. (2016). *For white folks who teach in the hood ... and the rest of y'all too*. *Reality pedagogy and urban education*. Beacon Press.

- Epstein, R., Blake, J & Gonzalez, T. (2017). Girlhood interrupted: The erasure of black girls' childhood. *Center on Poverty and Inequality*. Georgetown Law.
- Evans, D. (2016). The biased policies that are pushing black girls out of school. *The Cut*.  
[www.thecut.com/2016/12/education-policy-black-girls-us-public-school-system.html](http://www.thecut.com/2016/12/education-policy-black-girls-us-public-school-system.html)
- Evans-Winters, V. E., & Esposito, J. (2010). Other people's daughters: Critical race feminism and black girls' education. *Educational Foundations*, 24(1), 11-24.
- Farinde, A. A. L.. & Lewis, C.W. (2012). *The underrepresentation of african american female students in STEM fields: Implications for classroom teachers*. [Online submission]. (ED533550). ERIC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED533550>.
- Ferlazzo, L. (2019, February 24). Response: 'Holla if you see us': Black girls in spaces we call schools. Classroom q & a with Larry Ferlazzo. *Education Week Teacher*.  
<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-response-holla-if-you-see-us-black-girls-in-spaces-we-call-schools/2019/02>
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford University Press.
- Ford, J. E. (2016). Why are students of color punished and suspended at such high rates? It's time to recognize the role of implicit racial bias. *Educational Leadership*, 74(3), 42-46.
- Francis, D., de Oliveira, A., Dimmitt, C., (2019). Do school counselors exhibit bias in recommending students for advanced coursework? *The B. E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 19(4). <https://doi.org/10.1515/bejeap-2018-0189>

- Francot, L., & Vries, U. R. M. T. de. (2011). *Law's Environment : Critical Legal Perspectives*. Eleven International Publishing.
- Frankenberg, R. (1999). *Displacing whiteness: Essays in social and cultural criticism*. Duke University Press.
- Frankenberg, R. (2004). On unsteady ground: Crafting and engaging in the critical study of whiteness. In M. Bulmer & J. Solomos (Eds.), *Researching race and racism*. (pp. 104-118). Routledge.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Herder and Herder.
- Friend, M. P. (2018). *Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school professionals*. Pearson.
- Gamoran, A & Mare, R.D. (1989). Secondary school tracking and educational inequality: Compensation, reinforcement, or neutrality? *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(5), 1146-1183. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2780469>
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, & practice*. Teachers College Press.
- Gholson, M. (2016). Clean corners and algebra: A critical examination of the constructed invisibility of black girls and women in mathematics. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 85(3) 290. <https://doi:10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.3.0290>
- Gillborn, D. (2005). Education policy as an act of whiteness: Whiteness, critical race theory, and education reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(4).
- Gillborn, D. (2006). Rethinking white supremacy: Who counts in 'white world.' *Ethnicities*, 6(3), 318-340. <https://doi:10.1086/229216>

- Gillborn, D. (2013). The policy of inequity: Using CRT to unmask white supremacy in education policy. In M. Lynn & A.D. Dixon (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp.129-139). Routledge.
- Gillborn, D. (2015). Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism: Race, class, gender, and disability in education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 21(3), 277-287. <https://doi:10.1177/1077800414557827>
- Ginwright, S. A. (2016). *Hope and healing in urban education: How urban activists and teachers are reclaiming matters of the heart*. Routledge.
- Glaude, E. S. (2017). *Democracy in black: How race still enslaves the American soul*. Broadway Books.
- Glowacki-Dudka, M., Treff, M., & Usman, I. (2005). Research for social change: Using autoethnography to foster transformative learning. *Adult Learning*, 16(3-4).
- Goldsmith, A.H., Hamilton, D., and Darity, W. Jr. (2006). Shades of discrimination: Skin tone and wages. *American Economic Review*, 96 (2), 242-245.  
<https://doi:10.1257/000282806777212152>
- Gullo, G. L., Capatosto, K., & Staats, C. (2019). *Implicit bias in schools: A practitioners guide*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Hacker, A. (2003). *Two nations: Black and white, separate, hostile, unequal*. Scribner.
- Harmon-Jones, E. (2019). *Cognitive dissonance: Reexamining a pivotal theory in psychology* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Harry, B., & Klingner, J. K. (2014). *Why are so many minority students in special education? Understanding race & disability in schools*. Teachers College Press.

- Hatwood, M., & Gomez, J. (2008). How tracking creates a poverty of learning. *Educational Leadership, 65*(8), 74-78.
- Hawkman, A. M. (2018). Let's try and grapple all of this: A snapshot of racial identity development and racial pedagogical decision making in an elective social studies course. *The Journal of Social Studies Research, 43*(3), 215-228.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2018.02.005>
- Hibel, J., Farkas, G., & Morgan, P. (2010). Who Is Placed into Special Education? *Sociology of Education, 83*(4), 312-332. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0038040710383518>
- Hill Collins, P. (2009). A critical race autoethnography: A narrative about the academy, a father and a daughter and a search for love: Autoethnography, black feminist thought and critical race theory. *Journal of Colorism Studies, 3*(1).
- Hill, J. (2008). *The everyday language of white racism*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hines-Datiri, D., Carter Andrews, D.J., (2017). The effects of zero tolerance policies on black girls: Using critical race feminism and figured worlds to examine school discipline. *Urban Education, 55*(10), 1419-1440.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085917690204>
- Hiraldo, P. (2010). The role of critical race theory in higher education. *The Vermont Connection, 31*, Article 7.
- Howard, G. R. (1999). *We can't teach what we don't know: white teachers, multiracial schools*. Teachers College Press.
- Howard, G. R. (2006). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools*. (J. A. Banks, Ed.) (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

- Howard, T. C., & Navarro, O. (2016). Critical race theory 20 Years later. *Urban Education, 51*(3), 253-273. <https://doi:10.1177/0042085915622541>
- Howard, T., & Reynolds, R. (2013). Examining black male identity through a raced, classed, and gendered lens. In M. Lynn & A. D. Dixson (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 232-233). Routledge.
- Hughes, M., & Demo, D. (1989). Self-perceptions of black americans: Self-esteem and personal efficacy. *American Journal of Sociology, 95*(1), 132-159. <https://doi:10.1086/229216>
- Irby, D. J. (2014). Revealing racial purity ideology. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(5), 783–795. <https://doi:10.1177/0013161x14549958>
- Jaykamur, U.M., & Adamian, A.S. (2017). The fifth frame of colorblind ideology. *Sociological Perspectives, 60*(5), 912-936. <https://doi:10.2307/26579842>
- Jefferies, Y. A. (2019, July 10). *Mental health effects of colorism in the black community*. Be Well Blog. <https://www.mindpathcare.com/blog/mental-health-effects-of-colorism-in-the-black-community>
- Jensen, R. (2005). *The heart of whiteness: confronting race, racism, and white privilege*. City Lights.
- Jones, A. (2010). *Internalized oppression and its impact on social change*. <https://www.allisonj.org/non-profit-work/internalized-oppression-and-its-impact-on-social-change/>
- Kelley, D.G. (2002). *Freedom dreams: The black radical imagination*. Beacon Press.

- Kendi, I. (2019). *How to be an anti-racist*. One World.
- Kim, C. Y., Losen, D. J., & Hewitt, D. T. (2010). *The school-to-prison pipeline: Structuring legal reform*. New York University Press.
- Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities*. Crown.
- Ladner, J. (1971). *Tomorrow's tomorrow: The blackwoman*. Doubleday.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*(1), 7-24.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2005). *Beyond the big house: African american educators on teacher education*. Teacher College Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). Just what is critical race theory? In. E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 17-36). Routledge.
- Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W. (1995). Towards a critical race theory in education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*(1), 47-68
- Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, *97* (1),10–31.
- Larson, C., & C. Ovando. (2001). *The color of bureaucracy: The politics of equity in multicultural school communities*. Taylor & Francis.
- LaSalle, T. P., Wang, C., Wu, C., & Neves, J. R. (2019). Racial mismatch among minoritized students and white teachers: Implications and recommendations for



moving forward. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*.

<https://doi:10.1080/10474412.2019.1673759>

Laslett, S. (1999). Easier said than done: Writing an autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(08).

<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690800700103>

Law, J. (2018). Critical Legal Studies. *A dictionary of law*, (9th ed., Ser. Online Edition). [essay]. Oxford University Press.

<https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.umsl.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780198802525.001.0001/acref-9780198802525-e-971>.

Lawton, G. (2017). *How unconscious biases affect black women today*. Bustle.

<https://www.bustle.com/p/7-unconscious-biases-that-still-affect-black-women-today-36379>

Lehman, C. (2018). Shifting from “saviors” to effective teachers in urban middle level classrooms. *National Council of Teachers of English, Voices from the Middle*, 25(3), 48-51.

Leigh, K. and Davis, M. (2015). U.S. public education: The ivy tower of historical trauma. *Journal of Philosophy & History of Education*, 67(1), 19–34.

Leonardo, Z. (2013). *Race frameworks: A multidimensional theory of racism and education*. Teachers College Press.

Leonardo, Z., & Boas, E. (2013). Other kid’s teachers: What children of color learn from white women and what this says about race, whiteness, and gender. In M. Lynn &

- A.D. Dixon (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education*. pp. 313-324. Routledge.
- Leonardo, Z., & Porter (2010). Pedagogy of fear: Toward a Fanonian theory of 'safety' in race dialogue. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 13(2), 139-157.  
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.umsl.edu/10.1080/13613324.2010.482898>
- Levine-Rasky, C. (2000). Framing whiteness: Working through the tensions in introducing whiteness to educators. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 3(3), 271-292.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/713693039>
- Linder, C. (2015). Navigating guilt, shame, and fear of appearing racist: A conceptual model of antiracist white feminist identity development. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(6), 535–550. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2015.0057>
- Lopez, (2003), Parker, L. & Villalpando, O. (2007). A critical analysis of the school-to-prison pipeline. In M. Lynn and A. D. Dixson (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp 263-264). Routledge.
- Lorde, A. (2018). *The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*. Penguin.
- Losen, D. J., & Skiba, R. J. (2010). *Suspended Education: Urban middle schools in crisis*. UCLA: *The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles*. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8fh0s5dv>
- Love, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.
- Loveless, T. (1998). *The tracking and ability grouping debate*. (ERIC ED NO. 422454), Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. Washington D.C. [eric.ed.gov](http://eric.ed.gov).

- Lum, K., Swarup, S., Eubank, S., & Hawdon, J. (2014). The contagious nature of imprisonment: An agent-based model to explain racial disparities in incarceration rates. *Journal of The Royal Society Interface*, *11*(98)20140409. [https://doi:10.1098/rsif.2014.0409](https://doi.org/10.1098/rsif.2014.0409)
- Lynn, M., & Dixson, A. D. (2013). *Handbook of critical race theory in education*. Routledge.
- Lynn, M. (2006). Race, culture, and the education of african americans. *Educational Theory*, *56* (1), 107–119.
- Martorana, S.V. (1947). Terminal education at the high school level. *The School Review*, *55*(5), 291-296.
- Matias, C. E. (2019). *Surviving Becky(s): Pedagogies for deconstructing whiteness and gender*. Lexington Books.
- Matias, C. E., & Leonardo, Z. (2016). *Feeling white: Whiteness, emotionality, and education*. Brill | Sense.
- Matias, C. E., Mackey, J. (2016). Breakin' down whiteness in antiracist teaching: Introducing critical whiteness pedagogy. *Urban Review*, *48*, 32–50. [https://doi:10.1007/s11256-015-0344-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-015-0344-7)
- Matias, C. E., Viesca, K. M., Garrison-Wade, D. F., Tandon, M. & Galindo, R. (2014). What is critical whiteness doing in our nice field like critical race theory? Applying CRT and CWS to understand the white imaginations of white teacher candidates. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *47*(1), 289-304. [https://doi:10.1080/10665684.2014.933692](https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2014.933692)

- McFalls, E. L., & Cobb-Roberts, D. (2001). Reducing resistance to diversity through cognitive dissonance instruction. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 164–172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487101052002007>
- McGee, E. O., & Stovall, D. (2015). Reimagining critical race theory in education: Mental health, healing, and the pathway to liberatory praxis. *Educational Theory*, 65(5), 491–511. [https://doi: 10.1111/edth.12129](https://doi:10.1111/edth.12129)
- McIntosh, P. (1989). *White privilege: unpacking the invisible knapsack*. <https://Nationalseedproject.org>
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d). Self-report. *Merriam-Webster. Com dictionary*. Retrieved March 11, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-report>.
- Milem, J. F., & Umbach, P. D. (2003). The influence of precollege factors on students' predispositions regarding diversity activities in college. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(5), 611–624. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2003.0056>
- Miller, J. (2008). *Gettin played: African american girls, urban inequality and gender violence*. New York University Press.
- Miller, J., & Seller, W. (1990). *Curriculum: Perspectives and practice*. Copp Clark Pitman Division, Longman.
- Miller, L. A. & Harris, V. W. (2018) I can't be racist—I teach in an urban school, and I'm a nice white lady! *World Journal of Education*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v8n3p1>

- Mills, C. (2003). Reducing overrepresentation of African American males in special education: The role of school social workers. *Race, Gender & Class, 10*(2), 71-83.
- Milner, H. R. (2008). Critical race theory and interest convergence as analytic tools in teacher education policies and practices. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(4), 332-346. <https://doi:10.1177/0022487108321884>
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2020). *Core data and MOSIS manual*. <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/CD-MOSIS-Manual.pdf>.
- Monroe, C. R. (2005). Why are “bad boys” always Black? Causes of disproportionality in school discipline and recommendations for change. *The Clearing House, 79*(1), 45-50. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30182106>
- Morris, M. W., Conteh, M., & Harris-Perry, M. (2018). *Pushout: the criminalization of Black girls in schools*. The New Press.
- Moses, M. S., Howe, K. R., & Niesz, T. (1999). The pipeline and student perceptions of schooling: Good news and bad news. *Educational Policy, 13*(4), 573.
- Murphy, J & Hallinger, P, (1989). Tracking and detracking: Debates, evidence, and best practices for a heterogeneous world. *Theory in Practice, 45*(1), 4-14.  
[www.jstor.com/stable/3497011](http://www.jstor.com/stable/3497011)
- Myles, B.S. (2011). Hidden curriculum as one of current issue of curriculum. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(33) (2222-288X), 125-128.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1083566.pdf>

- Myles, B. S., Trautman, M., & Schelvan, R. L. (2004). *The hidden curriculum: Practical solutions for understanding unstated rules in social situations*. Autism Asperger Publishing Co.
- Naman, W. (2009). Who should teach black students? Research on the role of white and black teachers in American schools. *Ethnicity and Race in a Changing World*, 1(2), 26–39. <https://doi.org/10.7227/erct.1.2.3>
- National Women’s Law Center, (2007). *When girls don’t graduate we all fail: A call to improve high school graduation rates for girls*. [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org)
- National Women’s Law Center & The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. (2014). *Unlocking opportunities for African American girls: A call to action for education equity*. [www.naacpldf.org](http://www.naacpldf.org) or [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org)
- Neal, L. V. I., McCray, A. D., Webb-Johnson, G., & Bridgest, S. T. (2003). The effects of African American movement styles on teachers’ perceptions and reactions. *The Journal of Special Education*, 37(1), 49-57.  
<https://doi:10.1177/00224669030370010501>
- Neblett, E., Chavous, T., Nguyễn, H., & Sellers, R. (2009). Say it loud—I’m black and I’m proud: Parents’ messages about race, racial discrimination, and academic achievement in african american boys. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 78(3), 246-259.
- Nelson, R. (2018). Still separate, still unequal: The role of black women and girls in the legacy of brown v board of education. *Leadership: Education & Training*.  
<https://www.auw.org/2018>

- Nieto, S. (2016). Foreword. In G.R. Howard, (2006). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools.* (J. A. Banks, Ed.) (2nd ed. pp. xv-xvii). Teachers College Press.
- Noguera, P. A. (2003b). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of african american males. *Urban Education, 38*, 431-459
- Oakes, J. (1992). Can tracking research inform practice? Technical, normative, and political considerations. *Educational Researcher, 21*(4), 12–21.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X021004012>
- Oakes, J., Gamoran, A., & Page, R. (1992). Tracking and detracking: Debates, evidence, and best practices for a heterogeneous world. *Theory in Practice, 45*(1), 4-14.  
[www.jstor.com/stable/3497011](http://www.jstor.com/stable/3497011)
- Ogbu, J. U. (2003). *Sociocultural, political, and historical studies in education. Black american students in an affluent suburb: A study of academic disengagement.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the united states: From the 1960's to the 1990's.* Routledge.
- Ossario, P. (2011). Myth and mystification: The science of race and iq. In S. Kriminsky, & K. Sloan. (Eds.), *Race and the genetic revolution: Science, myth, and culture.* Columbia University Press.
- Owens, D., Stewart, T. A, & Bryant, R. M.(2011). Urban african american high school female adolescents' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences with professional

- school counselors: A pilot study. *Georgia School Counselors Association Journal*, 18(1), 34-41.
- Payne, B, Vuletich, H. & Brown-Iannuzzi, J. (2019). Historical roots of implicit bias in slavery. *PNAS*, 116(24), 11693-11698.
- Picower, B. (2009). The unexamined whiteness of teaching: How white teachers maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies. *Race and Ethnicity in Education*, 12(2), 197-215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320902995475>
- Prager, K. (2011). Policy Notes: News from the ETS policy information center. *Educational Testing Service*, 19(3), 1-16.
- Pratt-Clarke, M. (2018). A critical race autoethnography: A narrative about the academy, a father and a daughter and a search for love. *Journal of Colorism Studies*, 3(1).
- Price, J. H., & Khubchandani, J. (2019). The changing characteristics of african-american adolescent suicides, 2001–2017. *Journal of Community Health*, 44(4), 756–763. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-019-00678-x>
- Racial Equity Tools (2015). *Glossary*. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>
- Radd, S., & Grosland, T.J. (2019). Desirablizing whiteness: A discursive practice in social justice leadership that entrenches white supremacy. *Urban Education*, 54(5), 656-676. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859187838824>
- Rankin, K., & Solomon, A. (2019). *How we fight white supremacy: A field guide to Black resistance*. Bold Type Books.



- Reason, R. D., Roosa Millar, E. A., & Scales, T. C. (2005). Toward a model of racial justice ally development. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(5), 530–546. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2005.0054>
- Reece, R.L.(2016). Genesis of u.s. colorism and skin tone stratification: Slavery, freedom, and mulatto-black occupational inequality in the late 19th century. *The Review of Black Political Economy, 45*(1), 3-21. <https://doi:10.1177/0034644618770761>
- Rhor, M. (2019, May 14). Pushed out and punished: One woman’s story shows how systems are failing black girls. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2019/05/13/racism-black-girls-school-discipline-juvenile-court-system-child-abuse-incarceration/3434742002/>
- Riggio, R. (2013, January 15). Characteristics of good work team members: Are your coworkers good teammates? Are you? *Psychology Today*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201301/characteristics-good-work-team-members>
- Rizvi, F & Lingard, B. (2010). *Globalizing education policy*. Routledge.
- Rocque, M. (2010). Office discipline and student behavior: Does race matter? *American Journal of Education, 116*(4), 557-581. <https://doi:10.1086/653629>
- Samuels, Christina. (2020). Why do schools hang on to discriminatory dress codes? *Education Week*. [edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/03/11](http://edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/03/11)

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/why-do-schools-hang-on-to-discriminatory-dr-ess-codes/2020/03>

- Shange, S., (2019). *Progressive dystopia: Abolition, anti blackness, & schooling in San Francisco*. Duke University Press Books.
- Sherwin, G. H., & Schmidt, S. (2003). Communication codes among African American children and youth--the fast track from special education to prison. *Journal of Correctional Education, 54*(2), 45–52. <https://doi:41971127>
- Serpell, Z., Hayling, C., Stevenson, H., & Kern, L. (2009). Cultural considerations in the development of school-based interventions for African American adolescent boys with emotional and behavioral disorders. *The Journal of Negro Education, 78*(3), 321-332.
- Simson, D. (2014). Exclusion, punishment, racism, and our schools: A critical race theory perspective on school discipline. *UCLA Law Review, 61*(2). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2129117>
- Skiba, R. (2002). Special Education and School Discipline: A Precarious Balance. *Behavioral Disorders, 27*(2), 81-97. <https://doi:10.1177/019874290202700209>
- Skiba, R. J., Poloni-Staudinger, L., Gallini, S., Simmons, A. B., & Feggins-Azziz, R. (2006). Disparate access: The disproportionality of African American students with disabilities across educational environments. *Exceptional Children, 72*(4), 411-424. <https://doi:10.1177/001440290607200402>
- Sleeter, C.E., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2003). Critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and anti-racist education: Implications for multicultural education. In J.A. Banks &

C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), *The handbook of research on multicultural education* (2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed.) Jossey-Bass.

- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103>
- Staats, C. (2016). Understanding implicit bias. *Education Digest*, 82(1)0013-127X, 29–38.
- Steele, C. M., & Aronson, J. (1995). Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 797–811.
- Stovall, D.O. (2013). Fighting the devil 24/7. Context, community, and critical race praxis in education. In M. Lynn & A.D. Dixon (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 289-301).
- Taylor, E. (1998). A primer on critical race theory: Who are the critical race theorists and what are they saying? *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 19, (pp. 123). <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>
- Taylor, E., Gillborn, D, & Ladson-Billings (Eds). (2009). *Foundations of Critical Race Theory In Education*. Routledge.
- Taylor, J., & Grundy, C. (1996). Measuring black internalization of white stereotypes about African americans: The nadanolitization scale. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *The handbook of tests and measurements for black populations* (pp. 217–226). Cobb & Henry.

- Taylor, T. (Director) (2011). *The help* [Film]. Touchstone Pictures.
- Thompson, M. & McDonald, S. (2016). Race, skin tone, and educational achievement. *Sociological Perspectives*, 59(1), 91-111. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26340169>
- Tonry, M. (2010). The social, psychological, and political causes of racial disparities in the american criminal justice system. *Crime and Justice: Review of Research*, 39, 273-312.
- Trahar, S. (2009). Beyond the story itself: Narrative inquiry and autoethnography in intercultural research in higher education. *Qualitative Social Research*, 10(1), 30.
- U. S. Department of Education. (1964) *Education and Title VI of the civil rights act of 1964*. Office for Civil Rights. <https://www.2.ed.gov>
- U.S. Department of Education. (1972) *Title IX and sex discrimination*. Revised 2015. Office of Civil Rights. [www.2.ed.gov/about/office/list/ocr/docs/tix\\_dis.html](http://www.2.ed.gov/about/office/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html)
- U.S. Department of Education. (2006, April). *26<sup>th</sup> annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004*.
- Valdes, F., Culp, J. M., & Harris, A. P. (2002). *Crossroads, directions, and a new critical race theory*. Temple University Press.
- Valles, B. & Villalpando, O. (2013). A critical race policy analysis of the school-to-prison pipeline for chicanos. In Lynn, M & Dixon, A. (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. Routledge.
- Vaughans, K., & Spielberg, W. (2014). *Psychology of black boys and adolescents*. Praeger.

- Vaught, S. E. (2011). In *Racism, public schooling, and the entrenchment of white supremacy: a critical race ethnography*. SUNY Press.
- Vaught, S., Hernandez, G., (2013). Post-racial critical race praxis. In M. Lynn & A.D. Dixson (Eds.) *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 368-385). Taylor & Francis.
- Warren-Grice, A & Parker, L. (2017) Educational cultural negotiators for students of color: a descriptive study of racial advocacy leaders. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(1), 45-62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1294565>
- West, C. (1995). In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement*. ( pp. xi-xii.) The New Press.
- Whitaker, M.C. (2019). Us and them: Using social identity theory to explain and re-envision teacher-student relationships in urban schools. *The Urban Review*, (52)2. <https://doi:10.1007/s11256-019-00539-w>
- Williams, D. R., & Williams-Morris, R. (2000). Racism and mental health: The african american experience. *Ethnicity & Health*, 5, 243–268.  
<https://doi:10.1080/135578500200009356>
- Winkle-Wagner, R., Lee-Johnson, J., & Gaskew, A. (2019). *Critical theory and qualitative data analysis in education*. Routledge.
- Wong, A. (2009). Cognitive dissonance: A comprehensive review amongst interdependent and independent cultures. *The Journal of Educational Thought*, 43(3), 245-257. <https://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.umsl.edu/stable/23765479>

- Woodson, C.G. (1933). *The mis-education of the Negro*. Benediction Books.
- Wun, C. (2015). Against captivity: Black girls and school discipline policies in the aftermath of slavery. *Education Policy, 30*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904815615439>
- Yao, C. W. (2019). *Critical theory and qualitative data analysis in education*. Routledge.
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91.  
[https://doi: 10.1080/1361332052000341006](https://doi:10.1080/1361332052000341006)
- Zinnser, K. M., Zulauf, C. A., Nair Das, V., & Callie Silver, H. (2019). Utilizing social-emotional learning supports to address teacher stress and preschool expulsion. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 61*, 33-42.