DISSERTATION


VOICES OF HISPANIC AND LATINA/O SECONDARY STUDENTS IN

NORTHERN COLORADO: POETIC COUNTERSTORIES


Submitted by

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ABSTRACT


VOICES OF HISPANIC AND LATINA/O SECONDARY STUDENTS IN

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This study examines the experiences of Hispanic and Latina/o middle and high

school students in a public school district in Northern Colorado over four years (2006 to

2009) as described by the students themselves and analyzed and interpreted by a member

of the same cultural group. Informed by a pilot study, the dissertation includes a

document analysis of the transcriptions of 105 open-ended responses of Hispanic and

Latina/o $8^{th}$ to $12^{th}$ grade students to the question, "Describe a time when you or someone

you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity." In February and March

of 2011, two purposefully selected focus groups with eight Hispanic and Latina/o

students were asked four specific questions, including if they had similar or different

experiences than those in open-ended responses. All eight students described racialized

experiences in their schools and shared additional insights from their experiences,

including their feelings and suggested changes for schools.

The archival data and focus group transcripts were analyzed using Critical

Thematic Analysis (CTA), a blended approach of analysis methods supported by a

Critical Race Theory (CRT) research lens. Poetic analysis was used as a final step of

analysis, and nine research poems are presented as a form of counterstory. The five main

implications of the research included the suggested inclusion of students' voices in

educational debates, the need for understanding the sociopolitical context of schooling for

Hispanic and Latina/o students, school-based policy, the role of schools and educational

leaders in intervening when racism abounds, and the potential use of arts-based research

to address critical issues such as race in qualitative research.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Above all, thanks to God for the continued ability to dig deep, to go the distance, to give me strength of character to live for His glory, and for placing supportive people along my path in the Ph.D. journey.

To family, friends, support group members, and mentors who selflessly gave in different ways, so that this work could be completed. I especially thank my family who took on extra childcare duties to give me more time for my comprehensive exams in Fall 2010, to edit version of my chapters, and to attend my seminar/support group. We all sacrificed time together, so I could work from one deadline to the next to make this dream a reality.

And, last but not least, to the students who participated in my pilot studies, archival data and focus groups. May this work inspire change to better support each of you to reaching a high school diploma and beyond!

¡Mil Gracias a todos! *Thanks to everyone!*

## DEDICATION

I began the Ph.D. journey when my girls were one and three years old. I was determined to show them that girls can do anything! My partner Todd, who has been my best friend since I was 13 years old, committed to this dream with me. He quickly learned to care for the girls and to trust himself in sticky situations while I went to school at night and studied on weekends. I am forever grateful to him for his generosity and his ability to provide for our girls. They have genuine and connected relationships because of the many hours when they relied on each other.

To my oldest daughter, Grace Isabel, who encourages me through her deep thinking and sincerity. Her poem "Working" written when she was six years old inspired me to finish this dissertation, and to find work that fills me up.

To my youngest daughter, Madilynn Lee, who reminds me to be sensitive and thoughtful, and that life, work, *and hence this dissertation*, are incomplete without authenticity and creativity.

To both our girls I cite the final words of a poem written by Lydia Cortés (2003) as she remembers her schooling and the words of her father, "…tú puedes hacer lo que quieres. Yo te apoyo en todo. Siempre" (p. 39) translated by her sister, Sonia Nieto, "You can do whatever you want. I will support you in everything. Always" (p. 38).

May this work remind you that girls can do anything, that while Latinas may have more barriers to hurdle, I will be here to support you as you move forward in achieving your dreams—siempre. *Always*.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> I was rewarded for pure memorization. Even in my history classes in college, I would freely embellish the "facts" with my observations. I found in my graduate education that my observations were often termed "bizarre," "unfounded," or "unrelated" to those things we studied. In a small-group communication seminar, my focusing on the dialectic tension that I observed between group membership and individuality earned me a B, while a presentation in which I handed out cookies and merely parroted the theories of another scholar was rewarded with an A. In a relational communication seminar, I was chastised in the margins of a paper for assigning a positive value to relationships that work out. The in-vogue "theory" posited in the field was that all relationships *end*. (González, 1995, p. 84)

Research since the 1960s demonstrates "the subtle interplay between a school's ways of knowing, talking, thinking, and behaving and those of students from a wide variety of non-mainstream, ethnic backgrounds" (Viadero, 1996, p. 40). In the quote, a Latina professor recalls this 'interplay' or clash between her cultural style in education and that of peers and instructors and its impacts on her academic experience. Her personal story exists as a type of counterstory, which challenges the majoritarian story of the higher education experience of people of color. Research has stated that often students of color, particularly Hispanic/Latina/o students "often feel as if their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal educational settings" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 106) as described above. Additionally, her story enlightens readers of an example of how she was "minoritized, racialized, and marginalized" (Cavanagh, 2009, p. 53) in her graduate studies due to her cultural background.

Minoritized, racialized, and marginalized' are terms that help us understand how she and "young people who suffer from a social order that supports systemic discrimination based on differences due to minority status, race, and living on the margins of society" (Cavanagh, 2009, p. 53) experience education. Her story illustrates the ways she was marginalized in the classroom environment. As a graduate student and educational researcher, I believe that hearing the role race and ethnicity play in students' lives in schools and school communities is an important first step to the success of each and every child. It is a belief supported by educational advocates.

> Of particular interest to us is the topic of race and its role in the education of the country's children. We believe that race—and thus racism, in both individual and institutionalized forms, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged—plays a primary role in students' struggle to achieve at high levels. (Singleton & Linton, 2006, pp. 1-2)

While disparities in educational experiences and outcomes exist for many students in U.S. schools, the focus of this study is on Hispanic/Latino (H/L) students. The choosing of the term, Hispanic/Latino was a complex and debated decision. Terminology chosen for ethnic groups is important to recognize because of the historical, social, and political implications of identity (Oboler, 1992; 1995). The terms are often used interchangeably in national studies and reports (e.g., Lopez, 2009). Below is an example of the internal 'wrestling' Latina/o and Hispanic professionals endure with regard to this decision in other work.

> Planning and developing the Hispanic Latino Leadership Institute has been a challenge. Starting with the simple task of naming the Institute, differences among Hispanics/Latinos were evident. What should we name the Institute and why? Are we Hispanics? Should we use the term given to us by the U.S. Census Bureau to identify people of Hispanic origin and name it the Hispanic Institute? Are we Latinos? This term is proudly used by many to reflect the mixture and diversity as well as the commonalities shared by those of us of African, Indigenous, and Spanish descent. Should we, then, name it the Latino Institute?

But, if we do, what happens to those who do not identify with either? (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention [CSAP], n.d.)

In this dissertation, Hispanic/Latino was utilized as it represents the way students in school systems are currently asked to identify their ethnicity (See Definition of Terms), and the term was shortened to H/L for readability but not in any way to minimize the complexity of ethnic identity.

To create context for the dissertation study, the introduction presents critical race theory (CRT) as the lens that guides the study. Next, the background, research problem, significance of the study, purpose of study, research questions, definition of terms, research assumptions, and researcher's perspective and role are shared. The introduction concludes with a brief summary of chapter one.

CRT, the ideological lens of this study, holds five key tenets. First, the permanence of racism is described as "racism is ordinary… an everyday experience of most people of color in this country" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). Second, there is a call for the critique of liberalism, neutrality, and colorblindness. "CRT argues that racism requires sweeping changes, but liberalism has no mechanism for such change. Rather liberal legal practices support the painstakingly slow process of arguing legal precedence to gain citizen rights for people of color" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 213). Because racism is normalized in U.S. society and therefore in schools, colorblind approaches (Rist, 1974), exclusive of race, that use a broad stroke to respond to issues are not sufficient and this type of neutrality can be detrimental to the success of students of color in schools. Third, a historical context is necessary to uncover racial subordination such as interest convergence (Bell, 1980). Interest convergence suggests the interests of people of color are "accommodated only when they have converged with the interests of

powerful Whites" (Taylor, 2009, p. 5). *Brown v. Board of Education* of 1954 is an important legal decision that when examined through a CRT lens is said to have been made with alignment "to the interest of White elites to portray American society as racially just and as true followers of its democratic principles" (Lazos Vargas, 2003, p. 3). Fourth, an interdisciplinary approach that is mindful of intersectionality is important to understanding the linkages among studies from various scholars and the impact of race as related to other areas of oppression. The fifth tenet of CRT is the notion of "a unique voice of color" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 9), which offers historical and personal experiences with oppression that

> Black, Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their White counterparts matters that the Whites are unlikely to know. Minority status, in other words, brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 9)

'Presumed competence' refers to lived experiences of people of color giving credence to their voices to speak about them. Often, racialized experiences are not recognized as reality or are only viewed as isolated events and therefore not deemed credible (Ladson-Billings, 2006a). Voices are often found in storytelling.

The majoritarian story is told from the perspective of dominant culture representatives and reinforces the dominant position in the telling of the story. On the other hand, CRT theorists

> define the counter-story as a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform. (Solórzano & Yosso, 2009, p. 138)

Additionally, counterstory can be used to negate arguments of merit and colorblindness (Taylor, 2009) when those in power listen and respond respectfully. This study offers the lived experiences of H/L secondary schools through their own voices situated in a form of counterstory. The counterstories are presented as poems developed through critical thematic analysis (CTA) which included poetic analysis.

## Research Problem

Inequities in education for H/L students in the United States are well documented from preschool through graduate study (Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006). Many inequities exist, including "marginalization, lack of access, limited resources and institutional and cultural factors that collide" (H. Garza, 2006, p. xvi). 'Minoritized, racialized, and marginalized' (Cavanagh, 2009), related concepts introduced earlier, help readers understand how inequities manifest themselves as "young people who suffer from a social order that supports systemic discrimination based on differences due to minority status, race, and living on the margins of society" (p. 53). Race and institutional and cultural factors are important to this research problem situated in disparate educational outcomes for H/L students in schools (H. Garza, 2006). CRT scholars state "Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States—[and] is easily documented in the statistical and demographic data" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 48). For example, inequities are demonstrated through a host of educational outcome rates for H/L students as in graduation, dropout, literacy, and college preparedness (Alliance of Excellent Education [AEE], 2009). The disparities are also demonstrated in behavioral disciplinary data and are found to be related to race and ethnicity (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). While many performance indicators of

student achievement exist, the graduation rate disparities between H/L students and their White and Asian American peers are consistent with the focus of this study.

Authors have addressed national data and statistics related to this indicator (Colorado Department of Education [CDE], 2005; Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004; Rowan, Hall, & Haycock, 2010). The AEE (2009), a national policy and advocacy group, worked toward getting high school students to graduate with work, college, and life readiness skills and looked at graduation rates across the nation. Nearly 1.3 million students fail to persist in obtaining their high school diploma each year and 7,000 students drop out of schools each day in a given school year in the United States. In the 50 largest cities included in the study, an estimated 600,000 students dropped out of the class of 2008 (AEE, 2009). Of those who fail to persist each year, more than half are students of color (AEE, 2010a). Currently, one-half of all Latino students graduate from high school (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). This is a striking disparity in graduation among H/L youth and their White and Asian American peers as will be demonstrated in Chapter two.

As the nation grapples with how to increase graduation rate of all students, there are a multitude of reasons why students dropout of high school. According to one study, "Respondents report different reasons: a lack of connection to the school environment; a perception that school is boring; feeling unmotivated; academic challenges; and the weight of real world events" (Bridgeland, Dulilio, & Morison, 2006, p. 4). Another study pointedly states "race... and other demographic data are not accurate indicators of dropout risk" (Sparks, Johnson, & Akos, 2010, p. 47). Instead the authors cite retention, scoring below grade level on a state standardized test, failing Algebra I, or receiving a long-term

suspension as risk factors for dropping out for all students. While the studies make compelling points, the authors miss the proverbial elephant in the room—race.

Critical theorists and advocates for educational equity point to the disparity in graduation rates and dropout rates and reference Cornel West's (1994) words to emphasize that race *does* matter (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Others assert there is an "inconvenient truth: race and ethnicity matter" (Hawley & Nieto, 2010, p. 67). Some research studies sought to understand the experiences of H/L youth in schools through ethnography (Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999), ethnographic case study (Nieto, 2000), photo voice (Marquez-Zenkov, Harmon, van Lier, & Marquez-Zenkov, 2007; Scacciaferro, Goode, & Fausto, 2009), and ethnographic journalism (Thorpe, 2009). Several of the above referenced studies enlighten readers on the cultural gaps that exist between home and schools based on race, and at times, from the students' perspective.

Additionally, studies in the 2000s have included the use of CRT as a methodology and theoretical lens to examine school inequities (e.g., Alemán, 2009; Bell, 2003; Bell & Roberts, 2010; Knaus, 2009; Romero, 2008; Solórzano & Ornelas, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Watson, 2010). Examples include the examination of disparities in advanced placement courses in schools in California (Solórzano & Ornelas, 2004), race and racism uncovered through the arts (Bell & Roberts, 2010), and use of CRT in the classroom to engage students in dialogue (Knaus, 2009). There is beginning exploration on how to use counterstory as a tool to reveal the injustices and inequities that exist in schooling with students as participants in action research and analysis (Romero, 2008). A more recent qualitative study addressed the racialized experiences of undergraduate Latino students (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009).

This qualitative document analysis focuses on giving voice to adolescent students (Weber, Miracle, & Skehan, 1994) through use of qualitative document analysis, critical thematic analysis (CTA), a blended approach of analysis methods supported by a CRT research lens, followed by poetic analysis, and re-presented as a form of counterstory. The analyses of archival open-ended questionnaire responses and focus group transcripts are used to describe H/L secondary students' experiences of race and to illustrate the students as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 106) thereby legitimizing instead of silencing their voices.

## Significance of Study

Nationally, each year approximately 1.3 million students fail to graduate from high school with more than half of that number being students of color (Editorial Projects in Education, 2010). The economic impacts of students who do not graduate are high and have been reported recently to raise awareness and bring a sense of urgency to the topic (Swanson, 2008; 2009). For example, "Dropouts from the Class of 2010 alone will cost the nation more than $337 billion in lost wages over the cost of their lifetimes" (AEE, 2010a, p. 4). Due to dramatic economic impacts, graduation rates affect young and old from all races and all walks of life.

In Colorado, nearly 17,400 students did not graduate from high school in 2009 and the costs are remarkable. "The lost lifetime earnings in Colorado for that class of dropouts alone total more than $4.5 billion," and "Colorado would save more than $280 million in health care costs over the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas" (AEE, 2009, para. 3). To underscore the significance of the issue addressed in the study, Colorado's economy would see an addition of over $5.1 billion by

2020 "if students of color graduated at the same rate as White students" (AEE, 2009, para. 3).

National statistics would not be complete without noting individual's costs of dropout and non-graduation. The ramifications for individual dropouts include lower financial earnings, poorer health, and higher rates of incarceration (AEE, 2010a; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Fields, 2008; McKinsey & Company, 2009), thereby directly impacting "physical and emotional well-being" (Vasquez, 2006, p. xii) of individuals, families, and communities. While national, community, and individual costs are high, the true significance lies in our personal integrity and the responsibility to each and every child in our schools and communities.

While race has been used as a variable in the 'achievement gap' conversation, it is not often considered as part of solution-building or the schooling process (Hawley & Nieto, 2010; A. Lewis, 2001). Part of the solution-building starts with G. Howard's (2006) four steps in creating cross-cultural understanding through a healing process that includes: "honesty, empathy, advocacy, and action" (p. 73). This dissertation study is an offer to teachers and educational leaders to hear the honest "brutal facts" (J. Collins, 2001, p. 69): the poems describing H/L secondary students' experiences with race. The poems are an offer to exist as counterstory and are a calling for educators to respond empathetically, to be moved to advocacy and action on behalf of students. The study serves as a cultural critique, evaluating racism and questioning the "powerful edifices of truth and knowledge" (Lazos Vargas, 2003, p. 8) of traditional research.

The concerns surrounding the 'achievement gap' remain critical, yet the need to address race in the creation of solutions remains elusive. The ability to view H/L students

as 'holders and creators of knowledge' (Delgado Bernal, 2002) is imperative. The current study used race-based methodology and methods to legitimize, honor, and emancipate the unique voices of H/L secondary students in Northern Colorado through the use of counterstory. Additionally, analyzing the ways racism is perpetuated in the studied schools and communities offers opportunities for educational systems to respond. With this study, I encourage schools to better serve H/L students by including race as part of solution-building, not just a variable in reporting disparate academic outcomes.

### Purpose of Study

The purposes of this qualitative study are to:

1. Describe H/L secondary student experiences of race in their schools and communities in a public school district in Northern Colorado.

2. Create and offer counterstories via the studied students' voices.

### Research Questions

To address the concerns discussed above this dissertation explores the following research questions:

1. How do Hispanic/Latina/o secondary students in a public school district in Northern Colorado experience race in schools and communities?

2. What additional cultural identities exist as part of racialized experiences of Hispanic/Latina/o secondary students studied?

### Definitions of Terms

The following is an alphabetic listing of terms to provide common language and understanding of the researcher's perspective and, unless indicated otherwise, how terminology is used throughout the dissertation.

A*djusted membership base*—the starting number of students in a freshman (9th grade) high school class which is added to as students enter in that group and have the potential to graduate with the class (CDE, 2010a).

*Counterstory*—serves to challenge institutionalized racism by building community among people who are disenfranchised, challenging the majoritarian story, nurturing community, and serving as pedagogical tools to transform education (Yosso, 2006). Some authors write the term as 'counter-story' and others as 'counterstory,' so it will appear according to the each author's usage.

*Culture*—Inclusive of material elements, observable patterns of behavior and customs, and "'ideational' elements: ideas, beliefs, knowledge, and ways of acquiring knowledge and passing it on" (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001, p. 1).

> *Dropout rate*—is the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during a single school year. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year. (CDE, 2010b, p. 3)

*Equity*—responsibility for supporting the high-level learning of all students, with thoughtful consideration of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, sexual orientation, age, religion, ability, and gender.

> *Graduation rate*—the formula begins with each school and district's entering ninth-grade class. This cohort of students is tracked and adjusted for verified transfers in and out of the district through the end of the 12th grade year to determine the final membership base for the graduating class. The graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who receive a diploma by the adjusted membership base. (CDE, 2010b, p. 2)

*Hispanic/Latino*—ethnic category defined as "Hispanic or Latino: Persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or

origin, regardless of race" (CDE, 2008, p. 2). The ethnic designation is asked of parent or

guardian upon school registration or is identified by school personnel if it is left blank

(CDE, 2008). Hispanic and Latino are not used by all persons of the listed descents, nor

are they used interchangeably by members within the H/L community, but are utilized in

this study due to the CDE ethnicity reporting required for the school districts. The ethnic

categorization is an example of the ways people of color are forced into a category

created by federal, state, and local governments and is representative of the struggle

students face in school systems. H/L is the shortened term used in the study to assist with

readability. I acknowledge the complexity of choosing terminology.

*Institutional barriers*—roadblocks to access and opportunity perpetuated by

school systems, sometimes referred to as structural barriers. Barriers are within the

control of educational leaders and teachers to change. Examples can include publication

of materials in one language only, opportunities accessible by Internet only, and low

expectations of certain populations.

> *Majoritarian Storytelling*—is *a* method of recounting the experiences and
> perspectives of those with racial and social privilege. Traditionally, mainstream
> storytelling through mass media and academia rely on "stock" stereotypes if and
> when they discuss issues of race…Majoritarian narratives tend to silence or
> dismiss people who offer evidence contradicting these racially unbalanced
> portrayals. (Yosso, 2006, p. 9)

> *Microaggressions*—Probably the most grievous of offensive mechanisms spewed
> at victims of racism and sexism are microaggressions. These are subtle,
> innocuous, preconscious, or unconscious degradations, and putdowns, often
> kinetic but capable of being verbal and/or kinetic. In and of itself a
> microaggression may seem harmless, but the cumulative burden of a lifetime of
> microaggressions can theoretically contribute to diminished mortality, augmented
> morbidity, and flattened confidence. (Pierce, 1995, p. 281)

> *Poetic Analysis*—qualitative data analysis that includes the use of poetic forms

throughout the data analyses processes. An arts-based qualitative research method that

can be utilized during transcription of data, theme development, or at the end stage of presentation of data.

*Race*—"A socially constructed category, created to differentiate groups based primarily on skin color, phenotype, ethnicity, and culture for the purpose of showing superiority or dominance of one group over another" (Yosso, 2006, p. 5). Accordingly, race is closely tied to ethnicity and the two words are often used interchangeably, especially by government agencies (CDE, 2008, p. 8). Through this study, the terms will be used separately when possible to respect the distinction between the two terms.

*Racialization*—discrimination from people outside of the racial group based on a perception of membership in a racial group. "…inputting a hereditary origin to certain intellectual, emotional, or behavioral characteristics of an individual based on group membership" (Duany, 2011, p. 1).

*Racism*—"Prejudice and/or discrimination against people based on the social construction of race. Differences in physical characteristics (e.g., skin color, hair texture, eye shape) are used to support a system of inequities" (Anti-Defamation League, 2005, p. 11). The social construction of race is defined as "a racial group is socially and not biologically determined" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 33). "The systemic oppression of People of Color—privileges Whites" (Yosso, 2006, p. 5).

*School persistence*—obtaining a high school diploma.

*Secondary students*—typically refers to students in middle and high school, specifically in this study, eighth through twelfth grade students.

### Research Assumptions

The four assumptions underlying this study include:

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1. Students' written responses were true to their lived experience at the time of data collection.

2. The data coming from 105 H/L students ages 13-19 over a 4 year period lead us to believe there are common themes that describe the ways H/L secondary students and people they knew experienced race.

3. Illustrated by the data, there are exceptional ways in which cultural identities intertwine and impact students' racialized experiences examined through CRT's inquiry of intersectionality.

4. Secondary H/L students' experiences with regard to race in schools and communities directly impact their sense of belonging, access to learning, academic success, and school persistence.

## Researcher's Perspective and Role

The study topic and purpose manifested from my personal and professional experience as a Latina educator. I have worked for 13 years on addressing inequities in education and affectively and academically supporting students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. There were several factors informing the final choice of research topic for this dissertation study.

First, as an adult equity advocate and mother of Latina daughters, I am passionate to find solutions to the disparities in educational outcomes and school inequities. Second, as I began taking courses in the Educational Leadership Ph.D. program at a land-grant university, I became aware of past and current faculty and staff who had negative experiences based on linguistic and cultural diversity (e.g., Aoki, 2003; Canetto & Borrayo, 2003; C. Lewis, 2003: Viernes Turner, 2002). Reading texts by hooks (2003), Ladson-Billings (1998), and Ladson-Billings and Donnor (2005) further reinforced that racism is as relevant in academia as it is in all other settings.

Third, as I began to question race and racism in the academy, I was prompted to consider the ways scholars and academics are questioned and not seen as valuable (e.g.,

Canetto & Borrayo, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005; Middleton, 2003; Turner, 2002). For example, a study analyzing 64 faculty women of color found (1) feeling isolated and underrespected; (2) salience of race over gender; (3) being underemployed and overused by departments and/or institutions; (4) being torn between family, community, and career; and (5) being challenged by students in assumption of expertise (Turner, 2002, p. 80) to be common experiences. Similarly, many of my own school and workplace experiences reflected the 'silencing' and 'multiple marginality' (Turner, 2002) found in the research, and I wondered if these were shared experiences of H/L students in middle and high schools. I thought of the students I have worked with as part of a Culturally Responsive CRLP (known throuhout the study as CRLP).

At this point, I remembered a promise I had made to find a culturally responsive way to give voices to my silenced students. As the project director of the CRLP, which was created and is delivered to build on the strengths, values, and traditions of the H/L community and to respond to challenges faced within H/L communities, I have concerns. My concerns are related to the racialized experiences of the student with whom I have worked. Students have shared a variety of stories of a "subtractive process" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 3) in which their culture and language are often not valued or honored in their schools. This essentially subtracts their "social and cultural resources," (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 3) leaving the students at great risk for non-persistence of high school. It became clear that their stories "were ones that begged to be told" (Coles, 1989, p. 30). I felt drawn to qualitative inquiry as a means of helping others understand my experience and that of other Latinas/os in educational systems.

Additionally, I realized a strong connection to Critical Race Theory (CRT). Connecting with scholars and searching databases, I began to uncover authors and scholars who made sense of the shame I felt (hooks, 2003) and the trauma I endured in 'battling' in the discussions of the majoritarian story of the racial 'achievement gap'. At the American Educational Research Association's CRT Pre-conference (2010) in Denver, Colorado, I felt similarly to Angela Harris' (2001) description of her early encounters with CRT: "At that workshop, I discovered what had been missing for me as a student" (p. xix) and my own tears fell as I sat listening to confident voices speak of the power of understanding CRT and its operations in my life. Scholars such as Stovall, T. Howard, Alemán, and Delgado Bernal spoke informally about the ability to understand why and how racism impacts institutions of learning. They unknowingly encouraged me to no longer internalize the racism, but taught me that by utilizing CRT, I could free myself of the bondage of internalized oppression and bring about social justice in schools. I understood that using CRT as an analytic tool for understanding educational inequity could release the shame and open the doors for understanding the roots of educational inequities.

Additionally, I felt that I needed to find the right way to reveal the students' voices so that those from the academy and practitioners would listen. I moved toward a blurred genre of "arts-based educational research (ABER)" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 3) incorporating both science and art "to make new insightful sense of data during and beyond the research project" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 9). I chose poetic analysis "to shed light on the educational situations we care about" and hope that my work is a "result of artistically crafting the description of the situation so that it can be seen from another

angle" (Eisner, 2008, p. 22). This angle then becomes the counterstory, a challenge to the majoritarian story of students of color in middle and high school settings, which is virtually void of conversations of experiences of race.

**Summary**

Chapter one provides a comprehensive overview and background for the current study. The research problems guiding the study include several large concepts related to academic performance outcomes particular to H/L students. Examples include low national and state (Colorado) graduation rates, the framing of the 'achievement gap' conversation defined as a majoritarian story (Love, 2004), and cultural gaps between majority White teachers and their diverse students across the United States. Context for understanding how H/L secondary students' racialization found in counterstory can legitimize, add to, and reinforce the research canon to include "ignored or Othered voices" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 26) was provided through an introduction to CRT.

Additionally, the significance of the study demands we continue to devise solutions to closing opportunity gaps with careful, thoughtful, and impactful consideration of race in systems, through relationships, policy, and practice. Anything less will likely perpetuate the problem. To address the consideration of race in this way the purposes of this study are to: (1) Describe H/L secondary student experiences of race in their schools and communities in a public school district in Northern Colorado; and (2) Describe additional cultural identities as part of racialized experiences of H/L secondary students in Northern Colorado. To meet the stated purposes, the research questions that guide the study are: (1) How do H/L secondary students in a public school district in Northern Colorado experience race in schools and communities?; and (2) What additional

cultural identities exist as part of racialized experiences of H/L secondary students

studied? To present context and understanding for the study, the definition of terms,

research assumptions, and researcher's perspective are shared.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To create a meaningful context to understand the inequities in education the literature review addresses seven key components that align with the research design. The components discussed are: (1) CRT as the theoretical lens for this study and its connections to education; (2) disparities in educational outcomes for H/L students; (3) the framing of the national 'achievement gap' conversation; (4) educational inequities perpetuated by policy, practices, and people; (5) cultural gap among school leaders, teachers and their students and its implications; and (6) culturally responsive teaching that uses the gifts and assets of cultural groups in education; and (7) educational change to support educational equity.

### Critical Race Theory

Many scholars have comprehensively explained the roots of CRT (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993; Milner, 2008) which was inspired by philosophic and civil rights movement leaders in their efforts to move toward social justice and to end oppression for all people. From early critical theorists and critical pedagogy came critical legal studies (CLS) in the 1970s as a response to inadequacies in addressing race and racism in legal issues (Ladson-Billings, 1999). For example, scholars concluded "antidiscrimination laws in themselves were inadequate measures against persistent and pervasive discrimination and racism in society" (Zamudio, Bridgeman, Russell, & Rios, 2009, p. 456). Legal scholars such as Alan Freeman, Derrick Bell, and Richard Delgado were at the forefront of the

creation of CRT and joined with likeminded scholars to host their first conference in 1989 (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The tenets of CRT include the permanence of racism in the United States; the critique of claims of color blindness and neutrality and liberalism; a critical historical review and analysis that often finds interest convergence; the infusion of interdisciplinary perspectives and attention to intersectionality; and the sharing of lived experiences of people of color, each as a call for the end of racial oppression (E. Alemán, 2009; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Matsuda et al., 1993). Over time, CRT has evolved to include focus on distinct issues of subordination and oppression as defined by African Americans, Latinas/os, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, feminists, Whites, and the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities (GLBT), sometimes self-identified as "queer" (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 26).

**CRT in Education**

CRT entered the discussion in education as critical theorists began to question how race is a factor in educational inequities. After much discussion and criticism, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced a particular strategy in which CRT can be used as a means of theorizing race and to provide a means to "use it as an analytic tool for understanding school inequity" (p. 48). The CRT tenets as connected to education are described as the: (1) *inter*centricity of race and racism; (2) challenge to dominant ideology; (3) commitment to social justice; (4) centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) interdisciplinary perspective (Yosso, 2006). These align with the tenets as described above and can be connected directly to discussions of educational systems. These scholars introduce the framework as "(1) Race continues to be a significant factor in

determining inequity in the United States; (2) U.S. society is based on property rights; (3) The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 48). Tate (1997) followed the introductory article with more detailed ways to use CRT in educational research and practice.

The foci of this study and its use of CRT in education assumes the permanence of racism in the United States, critiques the colorblind theory in education and in educational reform, focuses on the sharing of lived experiences of students of color, in particular, of H/L backgrounds, and calls for the end of racial oppression in school communities. "A CRT perspective on the literature is akin to applying a new prism that may provide a different vision to our notions of school failure for diverse students" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 215).

**Permanence of Racism**

According to Ladson-Billings (1999), D. Bell (1992), a founder of CRT, introduces the 'permanence of racism' in his book title and asserts "racism is a permanent fixture of American life" (p. 213). CRT purports that racism exists for most people of color in the United States as "ordinary, not aberrational—'normal science,' the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). CRT provides a lens from which to understand why race still matters in the United States, and in particular in educational systems comprised of policies, practices, and people. Almost all U.S. people of color feel that racism is something they must contend with and learn to confront on an almost daily basis, whereas a majority, though not all, White Americans are unable to see racism as a significant social issue (Jones, 2008).

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Educational researchers have asserted racism takes place at four levels including: individual, organizational, social, and civilizational (Scheurich & Young, 1997). When a reality of a civilization is built on one perspective, the norms and standards support one group (majority group) over others, people tend to act this out on an individual basis. "Overt racism, then, is a public, conscious, and intended act by a person or persons from one race with the intent of doing damage to a person or person of another race chiefly because of the race of the second person" (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p. 5). Covert racism, on the other hand, "is not explicitly public" (p. 5). When racism is understood in its complexity and depth, the assertion becomes more clear. Racism exists everywhere. "Therefore, the strategy of those who fight for social justice is one of unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 213).

**Critique of Colorblind Theory**

In the post civil rights era, according to Ray Rist (1974), teachers see their students through a colorblind lens, which assumes all students have a singular (White) experience in the world ignoring the experience of color. Colorblindness included seeing "racial and ethnic differences as irrelevant to education. Each child is to be treated, in terms of racial categories, like every other child" (p. 62). The belief included that with this treatment, "all will have equal opportunity to educational opportunity" (Rist, 1974, p. 62). While the use of the colorblind perspective was a strategy taught in diversity trainings in the 1980s, since then researchers have learned the importance of acknowledging and responding supportively to cultural differences (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2003). However, today teachers still hold strongly to the colorblind

perspective in the classroom and differences are not attended to because they are ignored or teachers refuse to acknowledge them (Nieto, 2001).

A CRT scholar contests the use of colorblind theory and perspectives as he believes it silences groups affected by racism leaving them unable to speak their truth or bring up racism without fear of reprisal (Taylor, 2009). One recent study displays "adults in particular spoke publicly in de-raced language, as if race did not matter, in regard to the very topics for which they privately suspected mattered most problematically" (Pollock, 2001, p. 3). People have been taught within the educational system to believe a colorblind perspective and this halts societal progression when we ignore the importance of race (Burkholder, 2007). The importance of moving away from a colorblind perspective is well stated by a CRT scholar. "By insisting on a rhetoric that disallows reference to race, groups affected by racism cannot name their reality or point out racism without invoking denial and offense" (Taylor, 2009, p. 8).

**Historical Context**

How the "origins of property rights in the United States are rooted in racial domination" (Harris, 1995, p. 277) can create understanding of the uses of CRT to analyze disparities in education. While the privileges owned by Whites are often "invisible, unearned, and not consciously acknowledged," a study's findings argue "these privileges, ideologies and stereotypes reinforce institutional hierarchies and larger systems of White supremacy" (Picower, 2009, p. 198). An author uses a personal family example to help create understanding about White privilege and property rights

> My grandfather was a painter and wallpaper hanger who did fairly well in his life by buying property, renovating it, and then selling it. I grew up with the family story that he only had a second-grade education and look how well he did. Yet he was buying property at a time which property ownership was much easier for

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white people. As a part of New Deal legislation, Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a deal with southern senators that the money for low-cost federal subsidized housing loans would be made available to white families and not to families of color, because the southern senators wanted to keep African Americans working as sharecroppers. Part of that New Deal legislation was specifically crafted so that people like my grandfather could buy property. I have inherited then, the benefits of that piece of systemic, historic white racism. Even today, I can walk into a real estate office and will more likely be shown places in 'better' neighborhoods. I am also more likely to be given a better mortgage deal. (Sleeter, 2000/2001, p. 1)

This phenomena can be seen in many aspects of schooling using a CRT lens. For example, White dominance can be uncovered when schools disaggregate the rates of participation in school athletics, activities, and advanced educational offerings (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). When the disproportionate numbers of participation are noted, schools can analyze which students *own* the participation in school opportunities. When advanced educational opportunities are *owned* by majority White students, it serves as an everyday school example of property rights.

Uncovering White dominance and property rights can support learning "how the lives of our students have been scripted by their membership in groups differing in degrees of social dominance and marginality" (G. Howard, 2006, p. 34), and how students of color have been treated as outsiders and their learning needs have gone unmet. G. Howard (2006) offers a brief literature review of educational and social science research pertaining to social dominance, which includes (1) minimal group paradigm understood as the inherent way in which in-groups and out-groups are formed and responded to often by trivial means (Tajfel, 1970); (2) social positionality which determines how we construct knowledge and uncover truth (Rosaldo, 1989); (3) social dominance theory, which informs us of the ways systems have relied on dominant and subordinate structures (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993); and (4) 'privilege and penalty,' which

inform readers that as a right to group membership, we are afforded rewards and/or punishments (McIntosh, 1988). G. Howard (2006), further, shares these four topics to create a strong foundation for understanding White dominance, a key to re-educating ourselves about the ways dominance impacts schools systems.

A CRT scholar summarizes these concepts. "The result is ironic. Whites cannot understand the world that they themselves have made. Their political, economic, and educational advantages are invisible to them and many find it difficult to comprehend the non-White experience and perspective that White domination has produced" (Taylor, 2009, pp. 4-5). The need for understanding the historical context of schools is important and will be discussed further in this chapter. Because the White dominant experience exists as the majoritarian story, it is necessary to hear voices that have been silenced.

**Interest Convergence**

When a historical context is drawn, it is often noted that interest convergence is at play in national and local decisions related to people of color. "Interest convergence stresses racial equality and equity for people of color be pursued and advanced when they converge with the interests, needs, expectations, and ideologies of Whites" (Milner, 2008, p. 333). A CRT scholar suggests "interest convergence could be used as a tool to help explain and operationalize race and racism in the field [of education]" (Milner, 2008, p. 332).

Milner (2008) refers to several clear examples of how educational decisions in K-12 schools are made to benefit White students including an example of a school district that began bussing immigrant students into a high achieving school in the district. While those learning English would benefit from the bussing, the White students would have an

opportunity to become bi- and trilingual. The benefits to White students are what

informed the final decision to bus the immigrant students to the high achieving school.

To simplify interest convergence Milner (2008) provides the following example

> The district and school were willing to negotiate and provide the resources
> necessary for the 'non-English speakers' to 'learn English' because the majority
> White students would, of course, benefit from the various racial, ethnic, cultural,
> and linguistic backgrounds that would be present and represented in the school.
> There was a convergence of interests between Whites and the 'non-English
> speakers.' (p. 333)

CRT scholars argue that "people of color have to begin to set the terms of interest

convergence rather than accept those that Whites offer" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 214).

**Intersectionality**

As CRT focuses on racial discourse, a central tenet includes the intersection of

race with class, gender, ability, and sexuality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano &

Yosso, 2001).

> Questioning of race alone, or in isolation from other identity components, does
> not, and can not, explain or craft the setting for the inquiry into the interaction of
> sex and race to effect gendered inequalities. Consequently, much work remains to
> be done in the areas of intersections of race, sex, and class with culture, language,
> and sexuality. (Hernández-Truyol, 1999, p. 813)

Derived from the search for complex understanding beyond that of the myth of "the

universal woman" with its one-size-fits-all practices "were dreadfully inadequate in

describing the experiences and needs of diverse groups of women" (Lockhart & Mitchell,

2010, p. 1). Out of these considerations, particularly between Black and White women in

the feminist movement, intersectionality was born (Crenshaw, 1991; Lockhart &

Mitchell, 2010). "Because of their intersectional identity as both women *and* of color

within discourses that are shaped to respond to one *or* the other, women of color are

marginalized within both" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). The framework supports the idea

"women have multiple and layered identities [sic author] derived from biological

inheritance, social relations, political struggles, economic status, and societal power

structure" (Lockhart & Mitchell, 2010, p. 17).

Social and cultural patterns of oppression intersect in race, gender, socioeconomic

status, and ethnicity (P. Collins, 1998; Crenshaw, 1991). The experiences related to each

of these aspects of identities (and others) shape our existence and cannot be separated

from who we fully are. Noted authors advocate for intersectionality in the analysis of

violence on women of color. The inclusive lens is useful because of the very "limitation

of race or gender-only frameworks" as "intersectional approaches contexualized in lived

experience belie the us/them thinking that constructs race and gender as parallel and

different systems where men dominate women, whites oppress people of colour, and

oppressors victimize the oppressed" (P. Collins, 1998, pp. 935-936). As such, attention to

intersectionality can provide a deeper and wider understanding of the many identifiers

expressed in the experiences of discrimination and oppression by H/L youth in schools

and communities.

**Counterstory**

> Through the eyes of the "other" we are able to penetrate the barrier of social
> positionality and see ourselves from a more realistic perspective. When we
> expand the focal point to include other marginalized groups, it becomes clear that
> the shadow of dominance is not merely a theoretical construct but a living reality
> that continues to occlude the clear light of opportunity for many of our students
> today. (G. Howard, 2006, p. 50)

G. Howard (2006) refers to 'the other' as one from a non-dominant cultural group whose

story can support the personal understanding of White teachers. Delgado and Stefancic

(2001) refer to 'the sharing of lived experiences of people of color' as the "notion of a

unique voice of color" further defining as "the voice of color thesis holds that because of

their different histories and experiences with oppression, Black, Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their White counterparts matters that Whites are unlikely to know" (p. 9).

Instead of trying to convince people that racism exists, "Counterstories seek to document that persistence of racism from the perspectives of those injured and victimized by its legacy…[to] bring attention to those who courageously resist racism and struggle toward a more socially and racially just society" (Yosso, 2006, p. 10 ). Counterstories serve to challenge institutionalized racism in the following ways: building community among disenfranchised, challenging the majoritarian story, nurturing community, and serving as pedagogical tools to transform education (Yosso, 2006).

As CRT scholars work diligently to address the tenets of CRT as mentioned above, they are often met with resistance from academia. Critics contend that storytelling, for example, is not a scientific process. Conversely, Ladson-Billings (2006a) states "[CRT] sees itself as an approach to scholarship that integrates lived experience with racial realism" (p.vii). The difficulty in achieving racial realism has been that throughout U.S. history, "The experience of racism was seen as purely subjective" (p. viii). CRT provides a lens for understanding the socially constructed reality of race as part of the lives of most people of color.

Non-dominant stories often go untold and are excluded, allowing the continuation of the dominant discourse where stories of European Americans are primary and are known as truth. "Counter-storytelling is a means of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes. The use of counterstories allows for challenging privilege discourses, the discourses of the majority, therefore, serving as a

means for giving voice to marginalized groups" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27). G.

Howard (2006) describes the privilege of "voice."

> Dominant groups have the power to control public discourse. Whites in Western nations have written the official history, established the systems of education, owned the media, directed the flow of funding, disproportionately influenced the political climate, and occupied the seats of power in most social institutions. Because of our social position, we have had the power to silence or interpret other people's voices and cultures. (p. 65)

Because of this continued practice, CRT scholars encourage the use of "counter-story"

(Solórzano & Yosso, 2009) to make room for marginalized voices (Ladson-Billings,

1998) and to support a wider discussion of race in U.S. educational systems that can lead

to change.

## Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)

Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit) complements the work of CRT in that it

encompasses the underpinnings of CRT but "focuses more specifically on the

experiences of and realities of Latinos" (Villalpando, 2004, p. 42). "LatCrit Theory calls

attention to the way in which conventional, and even critical, approaches to race and civil

rights ignore the problems and special situations of Latino people—including

bilingualism, immigration reform, the binary black/white structure of existing race

remedies law, and much more" (Stefancic, 1997, p. 1510). At the time of Stefancic's

(1997) comprehensive annotated bibliography, he states there were over 100 law review

articles and books that encompassed Latina/o critical legal scholarship. LatCrit theory

scholarship in particular brought a Chicana/o, Latina/o consciousness to CRT in

examining racialized layers of subordination based on immigration status, sexuality,

culture, language, phenotype, accent, and surname. Scholars have used this in addition to

CRT to strengthen an additional perspective in addressing educational inequities in higher education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Villalpando, 2004).

## Hispanics/Latinos in U.S. Education

### Historical Perspective

CRT also calls for the provision of historical context in educational research (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). Research in the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century has enlightened us on the historical inequities within the education of Hispanic Americans in the United States (Diaz Soto, 2007; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; MacDonald, 2004; MacDonald, Botti, & Clark, 2007). MacDonald (2004) offers an in-depth narrated history from 1513 to 2000 including historical documents and references to understand the complexity of the experiences of H/L students in the United States. Sanchez (1934) reports the disparate number of Spanish-speaking students who enrolled in the twelfth grade as compared to the number who were enrolled in first and second grades in the state of New Mexico in 1932-1933. Two percent were found to enroll in the twelfth grade which led him to many questions, including the lack of school persistence for this group of students in that state. He wrote: "…in spite of any and all excuses that might be offered, *the Spanish-speaking group is not receiving a comparable education*" (Sanchez, 1934, p. 769).

While my dissertation focus is on education particularly of H/L secondary students, it is clear that race as a barrier to accessing college begins earlier than higher education, noted in the mid-40s at a national level, and is now true for H/L youth as well as African-American youth as reported by Zook (1947). The Truman Commission on the Status of Higher Education of 1946 identified six barriers to accessing college: (1)

economic; (2) regional variations; (3) restricted curriculum; (4) race; (5) religion; and (6) gender (Zook, 1947). In regards to race as a barrier to accessing college, Zook (1947) refers to the "suffering of Negro citizens" (p. 32) as he states the "low educational attainments of Negro adults reflect the cumulative effects of a long period of unequal opportunity" (p. 32).

In the 1980s Antonia Hernandez, Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, stated "We are not only a 'Nation at Risk,' we are a nation which has already gambled away and failed to provide equal opportunity in higher education for its Hispanic Americans" (MacDonald et al., 2007, p. 487). Another concern was the use of the "at-risk label which went from describing the nation to describing certain children. Being at risk became synonymous with being a person of color" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 218).

In the mid-1990s, a report from the President's Advisory Commission (PAC) on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (1996) shared findings in the executive summary of *Our Nation on the Fault Line: Hispanic American Education* that:

> The nature of the problem with the education of Hispanic Americans is rooted in a refusal to accept, to recognize, and to value the central role of Hispanics in the past, present, and future of this nation. The education of Hispanic Americans is characterized by a history of neglect, oppression, and periods of wanton denial of opportunity. ("Our Nation," 1996, p. 1)

In the early twenty-first century a variety of civic reports that outlined the outcomes of students in the United States, including high school graduation were published (Greene & Winters, 2002). Disparate high school graduation rates between students of color and their White peers from a few states are provided to emphasize the disparities in high school graduation rates, as noted in a brief alphabetized list in Table 1.

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Table 1

*Selected States' Graduation Rates in 2001 by Group, in Percent (%)*

| State | State | African American | Latino | White |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arizona | 59 | 54 | 50 | 70 |
| Colorado | 68 | 55 | 47 | 75 |
| Georgia | 54 | 44 | 32 | 61 |
| Florida | 59 | 51 | 52 | 63 |
| New York | 70 | 51 | 53 | 82 |

*Note*. Adapted from "Public school graduation rates in the United States. Table 1: Graduation Rates by State and Race" by Manhattan Institute for Policy Research (Greene & Winters, 2002)

Table 1 is an important geographical representation of the widespread disparities in graduation rates. White student graduation rates are higher than the states' rate (all students) included on the table. Utilizing these particular states, the White students' graduation rates and those of Latinos differ by 11 to 29 percentage points, with most close to 29. Latino graduation rates are lower than African Americans in Arizona, California, and Georgia and only slightly higher (one to two percentage points) in Florida and New York.

More compelling is a second table that identifies the student population involved in their study, Hispanics/Latinos (Greene & Winters, 2002). The table is represented as Figure 1 as it was adapted from an online source.

*Public School Graduation Rates in the United States*

| Table 5: Ranking of Hispanic Graduation Rates by State | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Rank** | **STATE** | **Hispanic Graduation Rate, 2000** |
| 1 | LOUISIANA | 73% |
| 2 | WYOMING | 72% |
| 3 | HAWAII | 67% |
| 4 | VIRGINIA | 62% |
| 5 | ALASKA | 61% |
| 6 | TEXAS | 57% |
| 7 | INDIANA | 57% |
| 8 | ILLINOIS | 57% |
| 9 | CALIFORNIA | 55% |
| 10 | DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA | 55% |
| 11 | WISCONSIN | 54% |
| 12 | RHODE ISLAND | 54% |
| 13 | NEW MEXICO | 53% |
| 14 | CONNECTICUT | 53% |
| 15 | MASSACHUSETTS | 50% |
| 16 | PENNSYLVANIA | 50% |
| 17 | COLORADO | 49% |
| 18 | DELAWARE | 49% |
| 19 | FLORIDA | 48% |
| 20 | OREGON | 46% |
| 21 | NEW YORK | 40% |
| 22 | MISSISSIPPI | 23% |
| | **National** | **53%** |

Figure 1. Public school graduation rates in the United States. States with sufficient numbers of Hispanic students are represented by percentage in ranking order. Source: Adapted from Manhattan Institute for Policy Research (Greene & Winters, 2002).

According to the Figure 1, Colorado ranks 17th, with their ability to graduate H/L students as compared to 21 other states in the U.S. with available or sufficient data.

By 2003 outcomes of neglect were seen related to 18 to 24 year olds by group: 90% of Asian, 80% of White, 77% of Black, and 65% of Hispanic were high school

graduates (Shin, 2005). In 2007 the graduation rates in Colorado as compared to those of

the nation are shown by race as created from the AEE (2010b) in Table 2. The table

identifies several interesting points. First, the state has lower graduation rates than does

the nation for Native Americans and Hispanic students. And the state is graduating Black,

all students, White, and Asian students at a higher rate than is the nation.

Table 2

*Colorado High School Graduation Rates by Race (Class of 2007)*

| Race | Colorado graduation rates (percentage) | National graduation rates (percentage) |
|---|---|---|
| American Indian | 49 | 50 |
| Hispanic | 54 | 55 |
| Black | 69 | 51 |
| White | 80 | 76 |
| Asian | 83 | 79 |
| All Students | 73 | 69 |

*Note*. Source: AEE, 2010b, p. 1

Another useful table is provided on the CDE website includes gender and programs as

well as racial groups. Figure 2 is a comprehensive listing of sub-groups of students whose

data are analyzed by the state on an annual basis as part of Elementary and Secondary

Education Act (ESEA). Looking at the data across race/ethnicity, gender, and programs,

there are concerns for all of Colorado's students and the state as well.

| Colorado Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Instructional Program | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | Percentage Point Change 2008 to 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| State Total (all students) | 79.9 | 80.9 | 80.5 | 81.8 | 83.6 | 82.5 | 80.1 | 74.1 | 75.0 | 73.9 | 74.6 | 0.7 |
| American Indian | 58.4 | 62.6 | 55.3 | 58.3 | 65.8 | 66.9 | 62.6 | 56.9 | 58.9 | 57.5 | 55.9 | -1.6 |
| Asian | 82.9 | 85.2 | 82.7 | 86.2 | 87.0 | 87.1 | 86.1 | 82.5 | 83.5 | 82.8 | 85.7 | 2.9 |
| Black | 70.6 | 69.1 | 69.2 | 73.7 | 76.8 | 76.5 | 74.0 | 62.7 | 65.4 | 64.1 | 64.3 | 0.2 |
| Hispanic | 64.0 | 65.0 | 64.3 | 65.5 | 69.6 | 69.0 | 63.7 | 56.7 | 57.1 | 55.6 | 57.8 | 2.2 |
| White | 84.3 | 85.3 | 85.3 | 86.4 | 87.5 | 86.6 | 85.5 | 80.8 | 82.0 | 81.6 | 82.3 | 0.7 |
| Male | 76.7 | 77.6 | 77.4 | 78.5 | 80.3 | 79.3 | 77.5 | 70.3 | 71.5 | 70.7 | 71.4 | 0.7 |
| Female | 83.3 | 84.3 | 83.6 | 85.2 | 87.0 | 85.8 | 82.7 | 78.0 | 78.6 | 77.4 | 78.0 | 0.6 |
| Students with Disabilities | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | 86.6 | 76.5 | 68.5 | 63.7 | 63.0 | 64.3 | 1.3 |
| Limited English Proficient | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | 88.6 | 79.7 | 65.9 | 55.4 | 52.0 | 53.3 | 1.3 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | 87.8 | 81.6 | 69.7 | 63.2 | 59.3 | 61.2 | 1.9 |
| Migrant | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | 92.4 | 82.7 | 70.5 | 61.1 | 58.0 | 58.3 | 0.3 |
| Title 1 | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | 89.6 | 84.0 | 60.8 | 51.7 | 45.3 | 45.8 | 0.5 |
| Homeless | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | 73.4 | 66.0 | 57.4 | 51.3 | 52.3 | 56.2 | 3.9 |
| Gifted & Talented | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | n/r | 98.2 | 97.6 | 94.1 | 93.1 | 92.2 | 91.6 | -0.6 |

NOTE: The graduation rate is a cumulative or longitudinal rate which calculates the number of students who actually graduate as a percent of those who were in membership over a four-year period (i.e., from Grades 9-12) and could have graduated with the current graduating class. A graduation rate is reported for each graduating class (i.e., the Class of 2008). The rate is calculated by dividing the number of graduates by the membership base. The membership base is derived from the number students entering ninth grade four years earlier (i.e., during the 2005-2006 year for the class of 2009), and adjusted for students who have transferred into or out of the district during the years covering grades 9 through 12.

Figure 2. Colorado graduation rates by race/ethnicity, gender, and instructional program. CDE provides this history to demonstrate changes in graduation rates by race/ethnicity, gender, and instructional program during the years 1999-2009. Source: (CDE, 2009).

In the ten year span represented, graduation rates have declined in recent years. It is reported that nationally, in 2009 "The gaps separating African-American and Latino twelfth-graders from their White peers are bigger now than they were in the late 1980s. These gaps in reading and mathematics performance are coupled with glaring differences in graduation rates for different groups of young people" (Education Trust, 2009, p.1). Noting Figure 2, in 2009 there was a gap in graduation rates in the state of Colorado at 24.5 percentage points between Hispanic Americans and their White peers.

In 2010, "denial of opportunity" ("Our Nation", 1996, p. 1) to Hispanics in Colorado's education system is shown in Figure 3, a trend report by CDE (2010b). It is a startling reality that Colorado is failing to graduate 25 percent of its state total student population. The state total represents all students combined and is represented by the bars in which a dip for the state total is noted from 2003 (83.6%) to 2004 (82.5%). Asian students appear to edge out of their dip by 2005 (86%) and lead higher than any

individual demographic group. By 2007, the graduation rate for Hispanic students in

Colorado has fallen below the state total, all other demographic groups, and is below

60%.



Figure 3. Graduation rate by race/ethnicity – 10 year trend. CDE provides this historical
graph to demonstrate changes in graduation rates by race/ethnicity over a ten year time
span. (CDE, 2010b)

The disparity referred to in the state's graduation trends has been referred to as a crisis

where "Our goal…is to make the public aware of this issue and make improving high

school graduation rates a central part of national education reform. We believe the first

step must entail highlighting the severe racial disparities in high school graduation rates

that exist at the school and district levels" (Colorado Children's Campaign, 2006, p. 2).

In 2007, then Colorado Governor Ritter shared concern about the state's loss of the overall student potential, "About 30% of Colorado high school students do not graduate. Less than half of the Black, Latino and American Indian students who start high school in Colorado actually finish" (Ritter, 2007, p. 1). While some point to flawed calculations and uncertainties in the accuracy of reporting (Colorado Children's Campaign, 2006), the disparate percentages of Latino students finding academic success are alarming. This disparity has been referred to as a crisis (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

**Current Trends**

Between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2005, the population of Hispanic-origin groups in the United States outgrew other groups with an increase of 21 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). It is noted, **"**With 42.7 million people, the Hispanic population accounted for 14 percent of the total U.S. population on July 1, 2005" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005, p. 2). In 2007, it was reported that one-fifth of the children in the United States, birth to eight year-olds were Hispanic ("Para Nuestros Niños," 2007). In 2010 Hispanics were the nation's largest minority group at 15% of the U.S. population (Fry, 2010). The portion of population varies by state. In Colorado in 2008, 20.2% of the population was of Hispanic or Latino origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Among Hispanics in the United States, 34% were 18 and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005, p. 2) with Latinos comprising approximately 18% of all youths in the U.S. ages 16 to 25 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009, p. 7). From 1972 and 2000, Hispanic student population has grown by 11 percentage points (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). Between school years 1993-1994 and 2005-2006, the number of Latino students enrolled in U.S. public schools doubled (AEE, 2009). In 2000, 44 percent of the minorities in K-12 public

schools were Hispanic (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). "There are now approximately 10 million Hispanic students in the nation's public kindergartens and its elementary and high schools; they make up about one-in-five public school students in the United States" (Fry & Gonzales, 2008, p. 1). In 2010, approximately one in four kindergartners was Hispanic (El Nasser & Overberg, 2010).

By the year 2030, Hispanic youth are projected to be one-fourth of the young people in the nation ("Para Nuestros Niños," 2007). These projections urge schools and communities to address the educational inequities of Latino youth and to consider the ways we frame the conversation about them.

## Educational Debt

The 'achievement gap' in education refers to the disparity in academic performance among groups of students. 'Achievement gaps' are identified through a variety of indicators in K-12 education, such as student grades, standardized test scores, dropout rates, and high school graduation rates. Closing these gaps has become a focal point of education reform efforts (*Education Week*, 2004). Initiatives offered in Colorado have included research reports and task forces and work plans on closing the gap in PK-12 schools through higher education (CDE, 2005; Munn & Lovell, 2010). These gaps are created and maintained by educational systems that have been in existence to separate the skilled from the unskilled (Vollmer, 2010). CRT scholar Ladson-Billings (2006b) refers to the gap as an 'educational debt' to focus the framing of the problem in a responsive and critical way.

A concern to me as a researcher using a CRT lens is in the way I frame the problem. When referred to as an "achievement gap," who becomes responsible and what

are the implications in assigning responsibility? Not only is the problem framed in an

individualistic and competitive structure set up for some to lose and some to win, it

encourages the use of deficit-based thinking or theory where students and families are

blamed by members of school systems (Valencia, 1997). Another problem is stated.

> …traditional means of measuring student performance in schools is that such approaches often fail to recognize how students exhibit leadership skills, creative and artistic ability, initiative in analyzing tasks, risk taking, persuasive speaking, consensus building, resiliency, and emotional maturity…Unfortunately, the manner in which schools are structured frequently inhibits the students' ability to express these skills and show their intellectual prowess. (T. Howard, 2010, p. 13)

Herein lies the tension and gap in the achievement literature: understanding, researching,

and reporting the role of race, systemic inequities, and institutional barriers, such as

cultural gaps, low expectations, and deficit thinking, which are often created and

maintained by dominant educational systems within a culture of power (Delpit, 1988). G.

Howard (2006) echoes this notion as seen in Colorado's disparate graduation rates.

> It is no mere coincidence that the children of certain racial, cultural, linguistic, and economic groups--those who have for centuries been marginalized by the force of Western White domination--are the same students who are now failing or underachieving at disproportionate rates in our nation's schools. The race-based achievement gap in public education is the demographic embodiment of our history of White social, political, and economic dominance. (p. 118)

**Schools as Systems**

Schools are referred to as systems throughout this study because they exist within

the historical context of education in the United States and are ingrained in a culture of

power (Delpit, 1988). These school systems are comprised of policy, practice, and

people.

**Historical Underpinnings**

Throughout the 1800s and much of the 1900s America's public schools were set up for reasons that included socializing immigrant populations (Moe & Chubb, 2009). As others have noted, "From at least the start of the 20th century, one job of schools was to help assimilate the large numbers of immigrants flocking to the nation's shores" (Viadero, 1996, p. 40). Teaching, curriculum, and instructional practice have continued to support the assimilationist perspective (Lindsey et al., 2003). In the late 1990s educational researchers still found this to be true (Valenzuela, 1999) for H/L students. There is a history of disregarding racial conflicts in the nations' history (Taylor, 2009) and the way race has impacted the educational system. Another researcher describes the history as "Western academic institutions have accepted these assumptions because they have become what Gramsci (1992) would term hegemony—ideas ingrained in the everyday thinking or common sensibilities of the masses and thus evolve into perceptions that appear natural and absolute" (Cammarota, 2007, p. 89).

**Culture of Power**

Another consideration when discovering how teachers and students from differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds understand each other is the culture of power that inherently exists in school systems and is upheld and perpetuated by policy, people, and practices. Delpit (1988) opened a controversial conversation around a continual theme she saw as an educator supervising faculty of color when she coined the term "culture of power" (p. 282). The five aspects of power are defined as:

1. Issues of power are enacted in classrooms.
2. There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a 'culture of power.'

3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.
4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture make acquiring power easier.
5. Those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence. (Delpit, 1988, p. 282)

The components of the culture of power that inherently exist within public education settings (Delpit, 1988; 2006) are important to review to create further context for the dissertation and are discussed in terms of policy, practice, and people.

**Policy.** The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2001 was created to increase accountability while ensuring educational opportunities for all children (*Education Week*, 2004). Unfunded and widely unsupported, NCLB intended "Schools are accountable for overall student achievement and for the achievement of low-income students, students from each major racial and ethnic group, limited-English students, and students with disabilities" (Education Trust, 2004, p. 1). The legislation requires schools to disaggregate and report achievement data by the above mentioned sub-groups in K-12. There has been varying responses to the reporting aspect of the legislation. Some believe that NCLB has actually left students behind as it has narrowed curriculum and has excluded those it most purports to support (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gay, 2007; Hursh, 2007). An example includes,

> As evidence of its unintended consequences emerges, it seems increasingly clear that NCLB as currently implemented is more likely to harm most of the students who are the targets of its aspirations than to help them, and it is more likely to undermine—some would even say destroy—the nation's public education system than to improve it. These outcomes are likely because the underfunded Act layers onto the grossly unequal school system a set of unmeetable test score targets that disproportionately penalize schools serving the neediest students, while creating strong incentives for schools to keep out or push out those students who are low achieving in order to raise school average test scores. (Darling-Hammond, 2007, p. 246)

Others have welcomed the equity lens that had been much needed in educational reporting. "Whatever the wide array of problems with the No Child Left Behind Act, it is, in part, a legislative response to the pervasive failure of schools and school districts to provide a high-quality education that ensures the success of all students" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p. 602).

G. Howard (2006) adds that when the data are disaggregated it forces us to look at who is being served at high levels in our schools and who is not. Achieving equity in educational outcomes through NCLB has become a hot topic that has affected educational systems at K-12 levels over the first decade of the 21$^{st}$ century. NCLB, now known as ESEA, has encouraged a certain amount of accountability and stirred a general concern about how diverse students will attain the standards. Yet without having clear understanding of the role race has in students' experiences in schools, the solutions will be one-sided—from a monocultural perspective. If the epistemological underpinnings of education are dominated by White perspective, it reinforces this monocultural perspective, because values, beliefs, and attitudes are tied to the thinking creating such policies and analysis thereof (Scheurich & Young, 1997).

**Practices.** CRT scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings contends, "If we look at the way that public education is currently configured, it is possible to see the ways that CRT can be a powerful explanatory tool for the sustained inequity that people of color experience" (1998, p. 18). She considers the need to address school curricula, instruction, assessment, funding, and desegregation to support her perspective. Discipline practices such as selection of disciplinary actions and sanctions are often culturally driven and are another concern in teacher practice (Gregory et al., 2010). Because practice is often influenced by

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the cultural gap between teachers or educational leaders and their students, the practices will be discussed in the context of the heading "people."

**People.** To understand the culture of power as described by Delpit (1988) and specifically how power manifests in schools and classroom settings, multicultural education scholars recommend a "serious examination of the culture and social structure of the school…such as…power relationships between teachers and students, and teachers and administrators" (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995, p. 153). Teachers, with good reason, have been instructed to maintain control in classroom, but "equity pedagogy challenges the deep structure of schools because its requirements for scheduling, arrangement of physical space, and control are frequently at odds with traditional instructional methods that reinforce the structure of schools" (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995, p. 154). Two examples of the power relationship that reinforces traditional instructional methods include when students are instructed to listen to the teacher and not to interrupt (Delpit, 1988) and requiring that student learning and producing knowledge be confined to one location in a short amount of time (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995).

The second point made by Delpit (1988) is described as related to the codes or rules for participating in power. A researched example is seen as students who exist as "outsiders" (Marcum-Dietrich, 2008, p. 80) in their schools. The example, according to Marcum-Dietrich, illustrates that in a place where the ways of interacting and communicating are not always known to all participants—power belongs to one and not to all, and assumptions and decisions about one's competency are measured based on the access to power. For example, students with parents who have attended college may receive encouraging and continual messages about attending college, and have family

members who have 'paved the way' and therefore have "social capital" (Hanifan, 1916, p. 130) that gives them power they do not know they had. The personal networks and connections from which a person or family "is potentially able to derive institutional support" (Stanton-Salazar et al., 2000, p. 216) has serve as 'social capital,' thereby inherently creating access to certain rules of power.

Third, Delpit (1988) describes how the holders of power are more easily able to access learning in schools because "the upper and middle classes send their children to school with all the accoutrements of the culture of power; children from other kinds of families operate within perfectly wonderful and viable cultures but not cultures that carry the codes or rules of power" (p. 283). She adds "'Middle-class' is used broadly to refer to the predominantly White American 'mainstream'" (p. 282). There is power and privilege in skin color and property ownership, which adds to this complexity. Marcum-Dietrich (2008) identifies science students as 'outsiders' because, according to her, their families are not employed by local chemical companies and they do not talk about science at the dinner table. While these children of company employees may have less access to power in other settings, in the science classroom, they have access to the rules of power as Delpit (1988) refers to. This example provides a certain level of understanding of the rules of power but is limited in that it does not include race, a factor that cannot be changed with employment.

Fourth, explicit teaching of the rules of a culture allows for easier access to the power. School handbooks addressing the rules attempt to address this concern as do other school-wide strategies. A national movement of positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) has trained thousands of educators with four basic elements that

incorporate data, outcomes, practices, and systems (Sugai & Horner, 2004). The PBIS focus is "teaching behavioral expectations directly" (Sugai & Horner, 2004, p. 7). Students are taught and shown the behavioral expectations such as how to walk in hallways, how to clean up after themselves when using the restrooms, and how to use the cafeteria successfully. What is lacking with these traditional strategies as described by Delpit (1988) is to teach the rules of power, such as "interactional styles, embedded meaning and taboo words or actions" (p. 283). Recent research of a national sample of elementary and middle schools has shown that while PBIS strategies offered generally positive outcomes for the aggregate population, there was "significant disciplinary disproportionality for Black and Latino students in both office disciplinary referrals and administrative consequences when the data were disaggregated" (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 65).

Fifth, discussion of the existence of power can be in itself a challenge. Further analysis of CRT lends itself directly to this discussion, but Delpit (1988) provides some powerful examples of what it is like to have the truth created by the group in power. Delpit (2006) presents the experience of a Black female principal she interviewed who describes how she feels when talking to authorities about the children of color in her building. "If you try to suggest that's not quite the way it is, they get defensive, then you get defensive, then they'll start reciting research…It becomes futile because they think they know everything about everybody. What you have to say about your life, your children, doesn't mean anything" (p. 22). Through the principal's words, the way perceived truth is created by a majoritarian story and the power differentials demonstrated become clear when a person of color's perspective is dismissed in

schooling conversations. This is yet another example of epistemological racism that supports the prevalence of White power at the institutional and societal levels (Scheurich & Young, 1997). Further inquiry in the literature supports the context of this study in the 'culture of power' and its implications for H/L secondary students.

## Cultural Gap

In the introduction chapter of this study, I share some painful and frustrating experiences that a Latina professor reflected on regarding her graduate studies. Educators must make room for those stories to be told and heard to understand the institutional barriers that exist for linguistically and culturally diverse students in mainstream schools. With culture defined as being inclusive of material elements, observable patterns of behavior and customs, and "'ideational' elements: ideas, beliefs, knowledge, and ways of acquiring knowledge and passing it on" (Trumbull et al., 2001, p. 1), the need for conversation about culture and race in classrooms and their surrounding communities is clarified. An educational equity advocate reinforces this concept. "Even without our being consciously aware of it, culture determines how we think, believe, and behave, and these, in turn, affect how we teach and learn" (Gay, 2000, p. 9; Scheurich & Young, 1997).

A cultural mismatch suggests "the classroom culture or the teacher's culture is at odds with the culture of ethnic minority students" (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 63). Yet, their culture is often the way the classroom setting is created and maintained. The culture mismatch has been shown to lead to discipline and achievement disparities between students of color and their White peers. This phenomena, also known as "culture clash,"

(Viadero, 1996, p. 39) exists when schools are not in alignment with the cultures of students in attendance.

Michie offers the experience of an African-American teacher in a White school as "I've seen some teachers who have had some wonderful lesson plans who would be outstanding teachers, but one of the things that hurt them in the classroom was that they were White" (Michie, 2007, p. 4). It is important to note that it is not simply about being White, but that the typical worldview is that values that play out in classrooms are only understood through one lens—the White mainstream lens. So, how does this become a 'culture clash' (Viadero, 1996)? One example of culture clash has been used in describing the assumptions a White teacher makes about Black students who may not respond to questioning in the classroom related to time-telling. Where White families may routinely assess the knowledge of time-telling, Viadero (1996) explains "In the African American children's families such questions were posed only when someone genuinely needed to know the answer" (p. 39). In this case, the teacher's assumption may be that the African-American students do not know how to tell time, and the students' assumption may be a lack of clarity about why the teacher is asking the question to which she already knows the answer. Additionally, educators may rely on assumptions and continue to respond to the situation with discipline that further complicates the culture clash. When the culture of schools and the ethnic backgrounds of the students who attend are not in alignment, the cultural gaps that exist can impact academic achievement (Gay, 2000; Gregory et al., 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

**White Teachers of Diverse Students**

Researchers have focused on the cultural discontinuity of White teachers in diverse classrooms (Davis, 2007; G. Howard, 2006; Landsman & Lewis, 2006). It is well-documented that although the demographics of students are shifting in classrooms, teachers in U.S. schools remain largely White (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004), creating a cultural gap between teachers and their students. Leadership of schools, specifically the school principal role, is similar. For example, by 2010, approximately one in four kindergartners were Hispanic (El Nasser & Overberg, 2010), yet in 2003-2004, 4.8% of public and private school principals in the United States were Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], n.d.b). School leaders, teachers, and the inherent structure of schools model a racial paradigm. "The particular symbols used, the knowledge have been agreed upon by the majority of the members of a particular cultural group: in the case in the United States, dominant White middle-class males" (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 1992, p. 105). Educational researchers elaborate on this point. "School culture is relatively consistent across the United States and reflects the individualistic values of the dominant, European American culture" (Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull, 2008, p. xiii).

While we know that the school culture is not created at the hands of individuals alone, "If a schools' standard pedagogical method is culturally congruent with the culture of White students but not with the cultures of students of color (a widespread problem-- … this is institutional racism" (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p. 5). In a study in schools related to Latina students, Aragon (2010) describes the incompatibility as "systemic institutional misunderstandings of the cultural differences found between educators and

Latina students" (p. 44). It is no wonder many students who enter the school doors begin

feeling like a 'guest' in someone else's house (C. Lewis, 2003; Spann, 1990) in which

they do not belong fully, similar to what those in the academy have referred to as the

"chilly climate" (hooks, 1997, p. 97). Students in this situation must give up part of who

they are to participate (G. Howard, 2006; Suinn, 2006). As addressed in the opening

quote of this dissertation, students who hold values that differ from the dominant cultural

lens that is used to create and maintain those cultural norms often have to let go of their

beliefs or values to conform if they desire a good grade. This incompatibility is supported

by earlier research by Brophy and Good (1974) that teacher's perceptions are based on

their own personal social values and therefore, their perceptions of students' abilities and

efforts are often inaccurate. The cultural assumptions that White teachers make about

their H/L students contribute to negative educational responses and outcomes. The

concern is supported by a CRT scholar,

> We are hobbled by the paradox of a largely White teaching staff whose practices, consciously or not, contribute to the racial achievement gap yet who are unable to see what they are doing. Despite evidence of disproportionate expulsion rates, tracking into vocational or non-academic programs, and limited access to Advanced Placement opportunities, we have yet to agree that these problems exists, much less craft co-racial approaches to fixing them. (Taylor, 2009, p. 9)

Will evidence of racialized experiences from H/L secondary students support an

understanding of the problems that exist for marginalized members of our school

communities?

**Low Expectations**

> A report in Colorado regarding the pervasive achievement gap referred to the problem "Not surprisingly, we have found a fairly benign phrase to describe this catastrophe: "the achievement gap." It is more comfortable than another phrase: "the soft bigotry of low expectations." (CDE, 2005, p. 6)

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Educational researchers describe the effects of teacher expectations as "effects on student outcomes that occur because of the actions that teachers take in response to their expectations" (Good & Brophy, 2000, p. 74). Ways that perceived high or low achievers are treated differently in the classroom include distant seating arrangements, less attention, criticism, less feedback, and demanding less (Good, 1981). In teachers' and educational leaders' inaccurate assumptions of which students are capable of learning at high levels and those who are not, students are left out of educational opportunities as stated "We make assumptions about who can and cannot learn, and the more uncomfortable with difference, the greater likelihood that we will relegate certain children to lower levels of expectation and academic opportunity" (Green et al., 2005 as in G. Howard, 2006, p. 119).

One of the most frequently researched concerns for students of color and low socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds includes low expectations due to language and cultural differences (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1997; G. Howard, 2006; Jussim, Eccles & Madon, 1996; Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Nieto, 2000; Taylor, 2008). Low expectations expand to the opportunities offered to students of color and other underrepresented students in classrooms starting from the early grades. Teachers' beliefs and actions that follow are critical to the success of their students (Ferguson, 2003; T. Howard, 2010; McGee Banks & Banks, 1995). Low expectations are experienced by Latina/o students in our classrooms (Hughes, 2003; Romero, 2008; Wayman, 2002). It is a manifestation of how teachers respond negatively to diversity that impacts students' access and opportunity to higher levels of learning.

Examples of these negative responses are affirmed by Hughes (2003) who presented reflections of 32 academically successful Mexican-descent students and their experiences in high schools. A student's perception of low expectations by teachers include:

> It never surprised me when the new immigrants were pushed out. I don't think I could have withstood the kind of terrible stereotypes of them. There was a time when if you were in ESL [English as a Second Language], it was taken that you were also stupid. Not that there was a language barrier, it's just that you don't know anything. And that your education is inferior (*Mejicano* male). (p. 232)

Hughes (2003) shares another heartbreaking example of low expectations held by a teacher in which the teacher doubted the student's ability to be a "high" achiever:

> And my first day in it was an accelerated chemistry class. I was the first one to class. It was the first class of the day. The teacher walks in, looks at me, and walks out of the room and looks at the room number. Comes back in and asks me if I was aware that that was Chemisty 1X, rather than Chemisty 1. And I told him yes, I was aware that this was Chemistry1X. This is where I belong. And he kind of looked at me in disbelief and just shrugged and went into his office (*Mejicano* male). (p. 233)

> Romero's (2008) dissertation reveals similar low expectations faced by Chicano youth in Arizona. One student described his educational experience by saying,

> It wasn't only the kids, it was the teachers. The teachers didn't think we could know what they were saying… 'I don't know why the office, they send me these stupid Mexicans…what are you doing here? You're not good enough, so what are you doing in my class? (p. 157)

Romero concluded the teachers and administrators held a belief that the student did not deserve the same rights as one of his White peers.

These examples of negative racialized student experiences are critical to building context for what is described as low expectations and the way low expectations manifest in schools and classrooms and alter academic access and opportunity for learning for students from Hispanic backgrounds. G. Howard (2006) states, "…high expectations that

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are seamlessly linked to a deep and persistent commitment to the power of belief in our students' intelligence can provide the only real foundation for school change" (p. 125).

**Deficit Theory**

With low expectations of students of color in classrooms today, the common assertion of deficits rather than assets or strengths often manifests in classroom interaction. Instead of examining the structure or functions of schools, schools often point the proverbial finger at students or their families' internal deficiencies for educational failure (Valencia, 1997). A deficit perspective is described as one in which people are "defining students by their weaknesses rather than their strengths" (Gorski, 2008, p. 34) and becomes the way of understanding students. Deficit theory has two strategies for reinforcing this worldview: (1) building on stereotypes; (2) overlooking systemic and perpetuated inequities (Gorski, 2008). Often these manifest as teachers perceptions' of inherent student deficits such as cultural inadequacies, lack of motivation, poor behavior, poverty, language, and families and communities (Diaz Soto, 2007; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). G. Howard (2006) defines this phenomenon:

> From our assumption of rightness, we can easily conclude that our professional judgments are correct and that those who don't achieve, or don't perform in ways that are comfortable and familiar to us, are either not sufficiently intelligent or inadequately supported by their home environment. The deficiency, from this point of view, lies in the child or in the home, and not in the system of schooling or in the shortcomings of educators. (p. 119)

An important example that exists for many, but not all, H/L students is their access to the English language. A synthesis of research found that culturally diverse students whose primary language is not English are often viewed by teachers as having a cultural deficit instead of viewing their primary language as an asset (Irvine & Armento, 2001). Sheltered English instruction typically focuses on the language content, but at times is

inclusive of culturally responsive perspectives in supporting H/L students. Holding a deficit perspective ascribes blame to students for uncontrollable issues instead of encouraging individuals with the power, teachers and school leaders, to take responsibility for positive change.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Cultural competence is defined as "systems, agencies, and practitioners with the capacity to respond to the unique needs of populations whose cultures are different than what might be called "dominant" or "mainstream" American" (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989, p. 18). The practice of cultural competence requires "the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will enable individuals, organizations, and societal institutions to respond effectively to a diverse society" (Lockhart & Mitchell, 2010, p. 5). The need for cultural competence by professionals in practice has been indicated related to mental health, domestic violence, nursing, social work, and later in education (Cross et al., 1989; Hess, Lanig, & Vaughan, 2007; Lindsey et al., 2003, 2009; Lockhart & Danis, 2010; Wells, 2000). Much of the work around culturally responsive teaching had been explored in the mid-late 1990s after mental health professionals introduced a cultural competence model to address identified cultural differences impeding health care delivery (Cross et al., 1989). For example, it was discovered that people's of color "languages, customs, values, lifestyles, beliefs, and behaviors differ" from those of the care providers and needs for improvement in service delivery were inferred by practitioners (Wells, 2000, p. 190) and disparities in treatment were acknowledged in the proposal to better serve diverse populations (Cross et al., 1989).

The proposal included the following underlying values and beliefs:

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1) The family if viewed as the primary system of support and main point of intervention; 2) The system must recognize that minority populations are at minimum bicultural thus holding a unique set of mental health issues to which the system must be equipped to respond; 3) Clients make choices based on cultural forces; these choices must be addressed for effectiveness; 4) Inherent in cross-cultural interactions are dynamics that must be acknowledged, adjusted to, and accepted; 5) The system must sanction or mandate the incorporation of cultural knowledge into practice and policymaking; 6) Cultural competence involves collaboration with relevant support within the minority community, such as, neighborhoods, churches, healers, etc.; 7) Cultural competence extends the concept of self-determination to the community; 8) Service delivery addressed through minority participation on boards of directors, administrative teams, and program planning and evaluation committees is critical to effective services; 9) A system staffing pattern that reflects the demographics of the planned clients; and 10) Culturally competent services begin with equal and nondiscriminatory services, and include additional responsive services matched to the client population. (Adapted from Cross et al., 1989, pp. 8-9)

Because differences exist in medical care and in education, the model was adapted for use in the education field as demographics changed in schools (Lindsey et al., 2003). While there are many theories to define culturally responsive teaching, to assist in differentiating between the healthcare field and education, Villegas and Lucas (2002) propose six strands within curriculum to prepare culturally responsive teachers to effectively reach and teach all students to assist in differentiating between the healthcare field and education.

Such a [culturally responsive] teacher (a) is socioculturally conscious, that is, recognizes that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality and that these ways are influenced by one's location in the social order; (b) has affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing resources for learning in all students rather than viewing differences as problems to overcome; (c) sees himself or herself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students; (d) understands how learners construct knowledge and is capable of promoting learners' knowledge construction; (e) knows about the lives of his or her students; and (f) uses his or her knowledge about students' lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar. (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 21)

Culturally responsive teaching includes incorporating multiple aspects of students' cultural experiences as part of their learning (Trumbull & Pacheco, 2005). Not only do children learn about themselves and the world around them within the context of culture, but culture can be understood to impact teaching and learning as described earlier. When culture is understood in this way, a bridge is created to guide the discussion among teachers related to teaching, learning, and addressing cultural gaps. Culturally responsive teaching is a comprehensive approach to support all parts of students' lives in the educational process.

Proponents of culturally responsive teaching purport there is strength in cultural diversity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Studies have shown when diverse students' social experiences are integrated into the learning process, the negative myths are debunked for Navajo, Cherokee, Native Hawaiian, African American, and Latino students (Gay, 2000). Following is a discussion of successful culturally responsive teaching. While not exhaustive, the included studies show how teachers and schools have incorporated assets, or gifts, of the H/L cultures into classroom practices, demonstrating how viewing, accessing, and honoring students' cultures as assets can bring positive educational outcomes.

**Funds of Knowledge**

Funds of knowledge are the resources students and their families have that often go unnoticed, unobserved, or untapped as ways of contributing to the academic learning process available to underserved students in public school settings. The original pilot studies exploring the incorporation of the "funds of knowledge", funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 1990, included the assumption, "that the educational process can

be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about their students' everyday lives" (González, Moll & Amanti, 2005, p. 6). González et al. (2005) work shares the opportunity for use and development of relationships between schools and families. "The guiding principle in our work is that the students' community represents a resource of enormous importance for educational change and improvement" (Moll, 1992, p. 21). Nearly 20 years later, Moll (2010) reiterates, "For so-called minority children, especially in the contemporary social context, educational resources and opportunities must include integrating their language and cultural experiences into the social and intellectual fabric of schools, much as these have always been seamlessly integrated into the education of privileged White children" (p. 454). Studies have examined the use of funds of knowledge. For example, a study highlights 14 Puerto Rican households with regards to funds of knowledge and finds the value of literacy in ways that have otherwise gone unnoticed (Mercado, 2005). In another case study, it was revealed that 20 adults from the community participated in a funds of knowledge project contributing to the learning process of children. The funds of knowledge were incorporated into classroom instruction and were connected to homework, and both strategies increased literacy in English and Spanish (Moll, 1992).

**Social Justice Education Program (SJEP)**

Romero (2008) writes in his dissertation about the Social Justice Education Program (SJEP) he and colleagues from Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) in Arizona developed and found successful in several pilot sites. "It [SJEP] is an example of the embracing of students' home cultures and their intellectual capacities to bring social change to schools and communities" (Moll, 2010, p. 457). SJEP is described as

> Students develop an ontological understanding of how to use their funds of
> knowledge to generate more equitable social relations by ameliorating conditions

and opportunities for themselves, their families, and their communities. For
marginalized communities, useful or important knowledge is linked to practices
necessary for survival in harsh social and economic environments. (Cammarota &
Romero, 2009, p. 56)

Authors describe the importance of SJEP by connecting the research to the everyday

concerns students face in their school communities.

> Young people from oppressed communities experience social and economic
> threats on several levels: personal, community, and society. Therefore, knowledge
> critical for their transition into healthy adulthood must be embedded in a social
> justice youth development process that helps young people sustain positive racial,
> ethnic, and gender identities; strong commitments to improving conditions within
> their communities; and sincere empathy for those beyond their immediate
> communities who may also suffer from oppression. (Cammarota & Romero,
> 2009, pp. 56-57)

SJEP was introduced with 17 Latino high school students in the spring of 2003

over two academic school years. Fourteen of the 17 were considered 'at-risk' by their

school and were invited to participate in critically conscious curriculum. The program

evaluation measured "four areas: academic engagement, college interest, community

involvement, and social awareness. 93% of students in the SJEP felt that the project

curriculum had made them more likely to graduate from high school" (Cammarota, 2007,

p. 94). When the study results were published as a journal article, 15 of the 17 students

graduated from high schools and two were on track to complete their final credits for a

general educational development (GED) test or in night classes (Cammarota, 2007).

**Hispanic Latino Leadership Institute (HLI and HLLI)**

The Hispanic Latino Leadership Institute (HLI), a school-based ethnic-specific

conference first developed by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (n.d.) in the

early 1990s, focuses on issues of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs within the Hispanic

and Latino communities (Barela-Bloom, 2005; CSAP, n.d.). Students are invited to apply

to the program and are then led through a curriculum with learning objectives that honor H/L cultural values and norms in the teaching and learning process. For example, HLI allows opportunities for students to gain a stronger sense of self through self-reflection and self-awareness based in ethnicity (Barela-Bloom, 2005). Students participating in HLI have a safe place to navigate their cultural identity, speak openly about racism, discrimination, and cultural barriers they are facing in their schools and explore ideas for becoming active in creating change, a social justice aspect paramount to multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching (Banks, 2001; Gay, 2000). In a quantitative study of the culturally relevant secondary school model the HLLI program (title changed by community members from HLI to HLLI), situated in Larimer County, Colorado, Barela-Bloom (2005) found an increase in grade point averages (GPA) for participants.

These evidenced practices show that high quality educational programs can be developed while honoring the gifts of the culture of H/L students and their families. The question is, do we have the will to do things differently, to consider the cultural needs of H/L students as part of educational change and reform?

## Educational Change

There is an urgent need for educational change. Theoharis (2009) reflects on a call from Ronald Edmonds' effective schools research in the late 1970s as "not only are schools failing many historically marginalized students but also the causes of that failure are known and remediable. Thus it is a matter of will and commitment, and not some sort of mysterious or elusive process, whether school will change" (Theoharis, 2009, p. 1). Since the 1980s, we have seen "a generation of attempts to reform and improve American public schools" to better serve Hispanic Americans (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 1).

Yet, the strategies and action items chosen are not inclusive of understanding the racialized experience of students in schools.

> Educational leaders collectively view themselves and the schooling enterprise to be inherently non-racist. In fact their tightly held beliefs and understanding regarding the significance of race makes it difficult for teachers to comprehend, examine, and rectify the very ways in which race dramatically impacts achievement. (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. xv)

Educational researchers challenge schools to engage cross-culturally to comprehend, examine, and rectify the concerns of race and student achievement.

> Clearly race and income are connected to school experiences, access, and opportunity and consequently to student achievement, yet in traditional education circles there has been a tendency to see that as evidence of the difficulties inherent in educating these children, rather than the flaws of the educational practice itself. (Theoharis, 2009, p. 6)

Utilizing an equity pedagogy (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995), avoiding equity traps (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004), and implementing culturally responsive teaching and educational practices (Villegas & Lucas, 2002) support positive opportunities and access for H/L students in schools. Organizational change and leadership must accompany the discussion of education reform or reform efforts will continue to fail at addressing educational debt owed to students of color.

Theoharis (2009) shares his dissertation work completed alongside seven other school principals working toward social justice and equity by rethinking curriculum and instruction by supporting effective programs, listening to students, examining institutional barriers, and striving for transformational leadership that is inclusive and equitable. This call for equitable leadership is part of current professional development for formal school leadership as well as informal leaders such as teachers when viewed and utilized as school leadership. "Authentic and personally engaged, accountable, and

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responsive leadership that assesses honestly, celebrates success, and urgently corrects inequities" (School Improvement Network, 2010, p. 13) characterize leadership needed to eliminate disparities in students' performance by eliminating inequities in school systems. It will also include an internal look, a long-term view as suggested by teachers of color, "changes to White teachers' belief systems, thought processes, self-concepts, interaction patterns, and classroom practices that are deeper and in many ways more personal, and thus require a greater commitment" (Michie, 2007, p. 4). A study gave the following suggestions as a starting point: listen to teachers of color; examine privilege and 'Whiteness;' be honest about personal gaps of knowledge and commit to learning more; clarify purposes for teaching, challenge students—don't pity them; and be resilient (Michie, 2007). Listening and responding to counterstories created from students' experiences can serve as a framework for these efforts.

Additionally, educational researchers have focused on four equity traps that have been found to limit equity in schools' policy, practice, and people include a "ways of thinking or assumptions that prevent educators from believing that their students of color can be successful learners" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, pp. 601-602). The traps include "the deficit view, racial erasure, employment and avoidance of the gaze, and paralogic beliefs and behaviors" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p. 601), which must be addressed by individuals as part of educational change. The first trap, the deficit view is discussed earlier in this chapter in which students and their families are blamed for their lack of attainment of skills. The second trap, "racial erasure" (p. 613), is a borrowed term describing the hope that many have that if they discontinue addressing race, it will disappear. The third trap, "avoidance and employment of the gaze" (p. 619) refers to a

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type of surveillance that teachers felt they could avoid from "parents, teachers, and the administrators like they had experienced in their White middle-class schools" (p. 619). Additionally, teachers avoided 'the gaze' in their interactions with students "treat[ing] the students …in ways that would not have been tolerated at their former middle-income schools" (p. 620). The fourth equity trap of paralogic beliefs and behaviors "exists when a conclusion is drawn from premises that logically do not warrant that conclusion" (p. 624). As mentioned earlier, teachers were found to treat students in less than respectful ways, "losing control, screaming at their students. They then went on to conclude that these negative and destructive behaviors were caused by how their students treated them and each other" (p. 624). The authors have found in their study that the described equity traps do not allow equity. The study is summarized as "Consequently, if it is going to be possible to achieve equitable schools, as more and more states are requiring and as, at least rhetorically, is called for in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, it is necessary to find ways to change teachers and administrator attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors" (p. 628). This is a call for us to let go of the colorblind perspective, deficit thinking, and other equity traps to ensure an equitable education for each and every child in schools.

A wider discussion of race in U.S. educational systems will be needed to influence such change in people, policies, and practices. The change will require a paradigm shift for school systems. It must be a reform or change process that questions deep beliefs, values, habits—potentially one's worldview. This type of change which questions one's worldview appears dangerous to people (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) and requires large amounts of new learning to reshape thinking. This is an adaptive change.

One common source of leadership failure is when adaptive challenges are treated as technical problems. Whereas a technical change requires a change by those in power regarding the way things are done such as operations, an adaptive challenge is achieved when the people with the problem internalize, own, and resolve the problem by changing old ways of doing things (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). By way of example to illustrate the differences between these two types of change within a classroom, an example follows: teachers typically call on White middle-class students more to respond to questions than non-White students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds creating disparity in the classroom. A technical change that could be implemented includes rearranging the seating weekly to change the teacher's proximity to each student. An adaptive change could include the infusion of meaningful professional development such as Generating Expectations for Student Achievement (GESA). "GESA raises consciousness about equitable teaching behaviors and learning expectations, helping teachers and other educators work to reduce disparities in the ways they treat students" (Beyerbach, Burrell, Cosey, Perry Evenstad, Grayson, Parsons, & Ramalho, 2009, p. 201).

Adaptive changes in educational systems are critical to the success of each and every child in schools. When educators take up the work and decide to serve all students in the unique and specialized ways needed, students are not left behind. Marcum-Dietrich (2008) admits to the concerns of students who exist as "the outsiders" (p. 80), and describe her attempts to connect with a young Latina female of whom she made incredibly damaging cultural assumptions. The study relays her efforts to "start viewing Sandra as a female, a Hispanic, and a gifted individual" and success was found "By designing instruction that views her diversity as an intellectual resource rather than as a

problem" (p. 86). The outcome was an immediate increase in performance and engagement in the classroom. Equitable educational change requires systemic epistemological change, inclusive of people, policy, and practice.

**Summary**

Hispanic and Latino youth have struggled to find high levels of academic success and to be high school graduates in the United States. The literature review provided an in-depth look at CRT as the context for the study, an examination of the disparities in the U.S. educational systems for H/L students that have existed over time, educational systems structured in a culture of power, and cultural gaps between majority White teachers and their non-White students. Finally, change that addresses equity and excellence in educational systems was addressed.

Research shows the history of racism and exploitation of marginalized groups should be a part of schooling (Nieto, 2000) and multicultural educators should advocate social justice to be integrated into culturally responsive curriculum (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The social justice approach to education is essential for young people of all backgrounds to know they are not victims of their circumstances and they can become part of the change desperately needed to disrupt and eliminate educational inequities, so they do not internalize the racism and self-hatred that exists in so many communities (hooks, 2003; Pollock, 2008). CRT and counterstories can assist by uncovering the systemic injustices perpetuated by well-meaning and good intentioned teachers.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The Methodology Chapter includes a presentation of the pilot studies that guided and refined the methodological choices within the study. Two pilot studies investigated the fit and use of archival data and determined the best focus group questions. Next, the research questions for the dissertation study are presented with the study design including my worldview, research paradigm, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The data description, data management, and strategies to support credibility are shared as they inform the data analyses for the two sources of data, open-ended questionnaire responses and focus group transcripts.

## Pilot Studies

The archival data included responses to one open-ended question from a student program application form. The focus group pilot studies will be addressed at the end of this section. The open-ended response question pilot study had the following purposes and research questions.

1. Describe H/L secondary student experiences of race in schools and their communities

2. Investigate multiple methods of data analysis

3. Determine effective data analysis methods to use

The research question for the pilot study was "How do Hispanic/Latino secondary students experience race in their schools and communities?"

**Process**

To serve as a brief introduction to the development of the dissertation, the process

for the pilot study of the open-ended question is described. As Program Director of the

program, I collected data from 194 H/L secondary students ages 13-19 over a 6 year

period, 2004-2009. The application to the CRLP included attributes such as age, gender,

grade level, and an open-ended question. The annual number of students' responses in

Table 3 range from 25 to 49.

Table 3

*Archival Questions Utilized in Pilot Study with Number of Responses, 2004-2009*

| Year | Question as on Application | N of Student Responses |
|------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 2009 | "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity." | 28 |
| 2008 | "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity." | 49 |
| 2007 | "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity." | 25 |
| 2006 | "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity." | 25 |
| 2005 | "What issues do you perceive the H/L community confronts on a day-to-day basis (in school, community, workplace, etc.)?" | 32 |
| 2004 | "What issues do you perceive the H/L community confronts on a day-to-day basis (in school, community, workplace, etc.)?" | 35 |
| | Total | 194 |

Not all responses to the selected question were utilized. The following exclusion

criteria were used and are reflected in the numbers in Table 3:

1. Illegible responses

2. Responses that were not congruent with the question, for example, on occasion,
a response appeared to be to a different question on the application form

The open-ended responses used in the pilot study, and the subsequent dissertation study, were initially collected for program improvement, not for research purposes. The pilot study was completed as a class project for a qualitative research methods course within the researcher's Ph.D. program. Yet, sensitivity to participants was considered at the earliest stage of the data analysis, including throughout the coding processes. Because of the sensitivity of the topic of prejudice, discrimination, and racism in any community, pseudonyms and unique identifiers were used, and the school district was not named.

Validity strategies (Creswell, 2009) were utilized to ensure accuracy of the pilot study and included clarifying the researcher's bias (Creswell, 2009), reflexivity (Robson, 2002), memoing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and prolonged engagement (Creswell, 2009). The researcher's bias is shared in the pilot study and reflexivity was attended to through the use of research reflection memos. Borrowed from phenomenological approaches to qualitative research, reflexivity is "awareness of the ways in which the researcher as an individual with a particular social identity and background has an impact on the researcher process" (Robson, 2002, p. 172). Memoing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), keeping track of thoughts and analytic processes, was done to support the validity of the pilot study. It is known that "the ability to put aside personal feelings and preconceptions is more a function of how reflexive one is rather than how objective one is because it is not possible for researchers to set aside things about which they are not aware" (Ahern, 1999, p. 408).

The steps in the pilot study included:

1. Open-ended responses from archival data from 2004 to 2009 (six years) were transcribed

2. Enumeration, open-coding, clustering, domain analysis, thematic analysis were performed

3. Analytic questions were used to guide each analysis method listed in item 2

4. Reflection memos were created during and after each analytic process

5. Spelling of students' responses was corrected

6. Poetic analysis was performed

7. Presentation of data to the instructor in fulfillment of a Ph.D. course assignment was completed

8. Dissertation committee met to discuss use of project in directing the dissertation study

9. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was sought to use the class assignment as part of the dissertation

A qualitative research design was utilized because it allowed for an extensive search for common themes throughout the writing process from beginning to end (Eisenhart, 2006; Gibson & Brown, 2009). As the pilot study offered an opportunity to try various qualitative data analysis strategies and approaches, I moved among 'quasi-statistical strategy word count' (Banning, n.d.) such as enumeration (Cobb, n.d.; Feinberg, 2009) and 'ethnographical approaches' (Banning, n.d.) which included: 'domain analysis' (Spradley, 1980), 'clustering' (Miles & Huberman, 1994), 'thematic analysis' (Boyatzis, 1998), and 'poetic analysis' (Eisner, 1997). While multiple methods were utilized in the pilot study, the three methods highlighted here are enumeration, domain analysis, and poetic analysis to show a broad perspective of methods employed.

**Enumeration processes.** First, when transcribed open-ended responses were entered into an enumeration program, a web frequency indexer (Cobb, n.d.) accessed on the Internet, a list of 1,063 words with the counts for each was generated as it included

the responses of 194 students. When the text was inputted into the frequency tab, words were ranked by the frequency with which they were used. For example, the word used the most times, was "I" (199 times). Then I sought the words that might be identified as themes and looked at their frequency, such as people (53), school (42), racial (25), racism (22), community (21), Hispanic (19), and discrimination (13).

The second enumeration process utilized was Wordle™. Wordle™ is described by its creator, as a "toy" (Feinberg, 2009, p. 1) yet captures a 'word cloud' visual of the collection of frequently used words or expressions in the transcript. Larger fonts are used to depict the words used more frequently. The printout gave a similar output as the frequency indexer, although it was a visual representation of the most used words (See Appendix A).

**Domain analysis.** The two enumeration processes provided a beginning to identify the main topics from the open-ended responses and encouraged me to move into a low-level open coding process, which led to a domain analysis (Spradley, 1980). Throughout the inductive analysis, I began to note themes related to the experiences of race and the responses to race, such as bias, discrimination, and acts of racism experienced by students or someone they knew. Domain analysis (Spradley, 1980) provided a way to create distinct "buckets", which became filled with the responses. A step utilized to uncover cultural domains included creating a list of "universal semantic relationships" (Spradley, 1980, p. 93). The relationships are in Table 4 and include examples I found to describe each relationship and form provided.

Table 4

*Sample of Domain Analysis used with Examples from Pilot Study*

| Relationship | Form | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Strict Inclusion | X is a kind of Y | Called me a beaner [is a kind of] racial comment |
| Cause-Effect | X is a result of Y | Sadness [is a result of] discrimination |
| Rationale | X is a reason for doing Y | Skin color [is a reason for] harassment based on ethnicity and race |
| Location-for-Action | X is a place for doing Y | School [is a place for doing] negative community responses based on race/ethnicity |

*Note.* Table adapted from Spradley, 1980, p. 93.

As seen in Table 4, themes began to develop through the creation of the listed relationships. In working through the previously noted steps in the domain analysis, themes developed from the forms: kind, result, reason, place, and function from the students' responses. While categories began to emerge, the data seemed flat and confined by brackets. I began to wrestle with how to create space for the students' experiences of bias, discrimination, and racism outside of the metaphorical box. I sensed how critical the students' voices were to understanding achievement, graduation rates, and dropout rates in our community. I sensed the emotion of the students' lived experiences getting lost by moving to the categorized themes such as "discrimination" and "racism". I was still concerned about how to get people to care and empathize with the students' experiences as I agree with A. Lewis' (2001) assertion that race is considered as a variable regarding school outcomes but gets lost in the conversation of race in the process of schooling. Yet, much like Poindexter (2002), "I continually feared that I would not be able to sufficiently

give voice the respondents' stories and not be able to translate their experiences in a way that would be useful and meaningful to readers" (p. 708). At this time, my instructor suggested engaging in poetic analysis (Cahnmann, 2003).

**Poetic Analysis.** The first useful strategy I found was the "poetic device of listing" (Cahnmann, 2003), which ignited a creative energy to flow whereby the voices melded together in theme areas. In reconnecting with the students' (or someone they knew) experiences with race, categories developed such as "to whom," "in what ways," "where racism takes place." These categories began to flow from the voices of the respondents. This poetic process created momentum and energy around the students' responses and led to a new way of understanding the data. The process helped create an understanding of the everyday life of secondary H/L students and the people they knew— through their voices as captured in the archival data. Recent research has considered this archival poetry or transcription poetry in which "the poems seem to emerge completely from the data set" (Lahman, 2011, p. 126). "Although students of color are holders and creators of knowledge, they often feel as if their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal educational settings" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 106). The poetic flow was a way to capture the students' experiences and deem them as credible. From the preliminary findings shared here, the development of a poem was built (See Appendix B). My process echoed that of Poindexter (2002) whereby she describes her process of creation.

> As I coded each transcribed interview, I copied phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that seemed to highlight the unique personality or perspective of the respondent and transferred them into another computer document. At the end of that process, I arranged the respondents' phrases into stanzas that seemed to me to best represent him or her. The result was a poem in the actual words of the interviewee. (Poindexter, 2002, p. 708)

For me, the transcription included students' open-ended responses (not interviews), and the words came from the many students between the years of 2004 to 2009 (not interviewees), but the process was strikingly similar. The poem created "voice" adding to the social construction of the reality of people of color, in this case, the secondary H/L respondents in this pilot study.

**Preliminary Voices Shared.** The poetic analysis of the pilot demonstrates the direction I headed using the poetic device of listing. The poem was created using the unfocused transcription where the lines of the poems are open-ended responses directly from the students. This is the key component that lets the students' voices be realized, so the story is their own. The categories illustrate the life experiences of secondary students and the ways they are racialized.

In each stanza, we learn who was on the receiving end of the racialized experience ($1^{st}$), where and how racialized experiences happened ($2^{nd}$) and who held the power and privilege providing the experience ($3^{rd}$). In the fourth stanza, there are several distinct features. I sensed the responses placed in categories and themes became disconnected from the students, but the categories supported the themes identified and became significant within the stanza. The terms, 'stereotypes,' 'prejudice,' 'discrimination,' and 'racism,' were direct quotes relayed by students of their experiences and were added as headings into the stanzas where they fit. This work began to answer the research question. It is worth noting that when quotes were used in the poem, they were exact phrases or names the student had heard or were called.

In the fifth stanza of the poem, the students responded to the racialized experiences. They are real and honest. The title of the poem jumped out of the

transcription at me several times. It was a very simple one-word response to the application question. The students' responses support the CRT study lens that purports that racism is ever present in a harsh yet poignant way—*"every day"(*Student 86*)* .

**Focus Group Pilot Studies.** A second pilot study included two focus groups held at two different times to test the questions, determine fit, and support the plan to use purposeful sampling. In both focus groups, participant ages ranged from 13 to 16 and consisted of both female and male participants, all of H/L background. The first focus group of five students was held in February 2010 to ascertain comfort level and its' fit to researcher and to the first dissertation research question. The second focus group with seven different students was held in October 2010.

The themes found in both focus groups supported the themes identified and developed in the open-ended responses with more detailed information about students' racialized experiences. This finding supported the notion to legitimize the voices of the students through focus groups as a form of member checking. The need to do purposeful selection of focus groups participants was also verified. While participants from similar age, ethnic background, and gender were necessary to serve as an adequate member check of the open-ended responses, other considerations were deemed necessary. These included choosing students and attending to their language of comfort and willingness to speak in a focus group.

**Discussion and Plans for the Dissertation Study**

As the poem showed (See Appendix B) in raw and real ways, descriptions of prejudice, discrimination, and racism were normal in the lives of young people of color, particularly noted here, in the lives of H/L secondary students. Even when the experience

was not that of the students', it was part of their lives as they hear descriptions of racialized experiences from family and friends. The poem unveils the repetitive, continuous use of hurtful language, actions, and treatment by a variety of people and those of people they knew, in a variety of locations as written "In everything, community, school, workplace, etc."

What became important in the data analysis during the pilot study was the demonstration of what CRT tells us, (i.e., that racism is normal and is confronted on a daily basis (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Youth, ages 13-19, are enduring and internalizing racism in their schools and communities. The pilot study with this set of data inspired further analysis of a similar set of data. It allowed for several changes in the study design.

Table 5

*Issues Discovered in Pilot Study and Changes Projected for Dissertation Study*

| Issue discovered | Change/Adaptations for dissertation |
|---|---|
| Question change in 2005 | Data set will include 2006 to 2009 responses (four years) |
| Need to legitimize the data | Focus groups will serve as member checking for the open-ended question responses |
| Need for increased validity | Triangulation of data collection and methods to include focus groups |
| Need for demographic data | Attribute data would be included: age, gender, and grade level |
| Repeat students | Include students' response from latest year of application through exclusion criteria |
| Tried many methods | Document analysis will be the overall approach with critical thematic analysis used as the methods |
| Loss of CRT focus | Added additional tenets of CRT to literature review and research questions |

Table 5 demonstrates the seven issues of concern discovered in the pilot and the changes implemented in the dissertation study.

Critical self-reflection is a necessary part of the process to move toward emancipation of marginalized groups (Willis, 2007). The first issue in Table 5 is better understood by looking at Table 3 showing a change in the open-ended question from 2005 to 2006. It was found in 2004 and 2005 where 'issues' were solicited responses were often relatively brief, due to the framing of the question, even one word. Beginning in 2006, asking "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity" naturally solicited responses with more detail. This prompted a change for the dissertation study to narrow the data set to years 2006-2009 (four years) during which time the first question remained stable.

The second issue discovered was following the CRT lens, a credible way of legitimizing the voices heard in the transcriptions was necessary. Holding purposeful focus groups to provide member checking on the data was determined to be an effective solution.

Third, a need for increased credibility and trustworthiness was discovered. A set of validation strategies was chosen to assist: prolonged engagement, triangulation, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, and thick descriptions (Creswell, 2007). While there are critical theorists who purport these types of strategies are unnecessary, it was important to have a study that was validated using these analyses. Another means of arriving at trustworthiness is representativity. In setting up the design and methodology, I was not concerned with creating a sample that was representative of a wider population, also known as external representativity, but was most focused on internal representativity. The internal focus ensures the findings true for like-students in like-settings. To address this, removing repeat participants was added to the exclusion criteria. Fifth, in trying many analysis methods, the most effective ones to use in the dissertation were uncovered. Document analysis became the overarching method utilized. A critical thematic analysis (CTA) was developed to support this dissertation work, to uncover and develop common themes from all responses.

The fourth issue was related to the depth of the data and the ability to understand the multiple cultural identities from which students' experiences take place, such as age and gender. To support this need, attribute data available on the application would be used, including age, gender, and grade in school at the time of filling out the application to become part of the CRLP.

The final concern was found when reviewing literature on CRT in education. It is noted that CRT is a comprehensive analytic tool in which a "racial analysis can be used to deepen understanding of the educational barriers for people of color, as well as exploring how these barriers are resisted and overcome" that must be addressed throughout the entire process (Taylor, 2009, p. 9). This was addressed in the literature review and the use of counterstory to maintain consistency with the theoretical lens of CRT. Based on the pilot study findings, it was determined the students' racialized experiences included more than race alone. Perceptions of students' national origin, language, and immigration status were often referred to. Acknowledging intersectionality, the multiple ways cultural identities collide, and meaning is made for us became important to incorporate an additional CRT tenet. To include this thoughtfully, a research question was added to explicitly explore the role of multiple cultural identities in the students' experiences.

## Research Questions

To arrive at the purpose of the study, the research questions were:

1.  How do Hispanic/Latino secondary students experience race in schools and communities in the studied school district in Northern Colorado?

2.  What additional cultural identities are part of racialized experiences of Hispanic/Latino secondary students studied?

## Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

In qualitative research, theory can serve as the lens for inquiry or be created through the study (Creswell, 2009). The lens for inquiry is the CRT lens. My epistemology can be understood as my worldview, which relies on the subjective and individual human experiences of research participants. CRT scholars influence my

research lens "For the critical race theorist, social reality is constructed by the formulation and the exchange of stories about individual situations" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 57). Through open-ended questions and focus groups, I sought to understand the individual experiences of secondary H/L students in a school district in Northern Colorado.

**Research Design**

A research design, as defined by Creswell (2007), consists of the very full process by which research is first conceptualized through the final stages of reporting. Flick (2002) gives a well-researched background how qualitative research has grown from the 1900s to its predicted future. Yet even with this historical perspective comes new questions about choosing a research design. From "approach" (Creswell, 2007) to "strategies of inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) researchers seek the best ways to explain their paradigm for study.

My worldview is a "general orientation about the world and the nature of research" (Creswell, 2009, p. 6), best described as constructivism. The social constructivism worldview reflects the idea that emulates my personal interest in seeking understanding of the world in which I live as reflected through individual experiences, particularly regarding race. CRT is a useful lens for this inquiry as "[CRT] sees itself as an approach to scholarship that integrates lived experience with racial realism" (Ladson-Billings, 2006a, p.vii). The difficulty throughout U.S. history in revealing racial realism has been that the majoritarian story has existed as "The experience of racism was seen as purely subjective" (Ladson-Billings, 2006a, p. viii). CRT provides a lens to understand

why race still matters in the United States and particularly in educational systems comprised of people, policies, and practices.

My paradigm position is defined as critical theories whereby knowledge stems from structural and historical insights. Critical theory emerged from Marxism and the work of the Frankfurt School in Germany in the early 1900s. Current critical theory "… is a modern expression of classical Marxism that emerged in an era when those who owned the means of production often oppressed the workers" (Willis, 2007, p. 48). The critical theory paradigm continues a focus on the roots of oppression and power relationships related to gender, race, and ethnicity (Willis, 2007).

My inquiry posture is of "transformative intellectual as advocate and activist" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). I believe we can learn from understanding the history of the ways H/L students have been treated in U.S. educational systems and by advocating for a current counterstory of H/L secondary students in the 21st century, we can learn more and do more. This adds to the contemporary experience.

A useful way to define ontology is "the nature of reality" (Creswell, 2007). My ontological belief is captured in Guba and Lincoln's (2005) updated description of inquiry paradigms such as "the reality of participants is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values that are crystallized over time" (p. 195). As such, reality is shaped by history and the factors listed above.

My epistemological perspective includes the subjective and individual human experience as stated best by CRT scholars, "For the critical race theorist, social reality is constructed by the formulation and the exchange of stories about individual situations. These stories serve as interpretive structures by which we impose order on experience

and it on us" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 57). As the inquirer, I place value on the

experiences of my participants to understand their experiences and vice versa. This aligns

with the reference to the critical approach as an emancipatory approach or genre

(Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Robson, 2002; Willis, 2007), which involves the following

tenets:

> (1) focuses on the lives and experiences of diverse groups (e.g. women, minorities, and persons with disabilities) that traditionally have been marginalized; (2) analyses how and why resulting inequities are reflected in asymmetric power relationships; (3) examines how results of social enquiry into inequities are linked to political and social action; and (4) uses an emancipatory theory to develop the research approach. (Robson, 2002, p. 28)

These tenets align well with the study focus on lived experiences, inequities, and power

relationships in educational systems and link the choice of methodology to the data

sought, analyzed, and presented. Methodology can provide "a sense of vision, where it is

that the analyst wants to go with the research" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 8).

What was found to be missing in critical pedagogy was the intersectionality

among race, class, and other areas of oppression and hence CRT was born to address

social, political, educational, and economic concerns related to race (McKay, 2010). With

this in mind, I acknowledge "Critical race methodology, with its counter-stories and even

poetic modes of expression, articulates a response to Anzaldúa's (1990) challenge that 'if

we have been gagged and disempowered by theories, we can also be loosened and

empowered by theories'" (as in Solórzano & Yosso, 2009, p. xxvi). The dissertation and

methodology are guided by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) as "Race continues to be a

significant factor in determining inequity in the United States" (p. 48) and, therefore, in

education. Utilizing the CRT lens, the researcher believes powerful and important voices

focusing on inequities should be found and brought to the surface.

Finding the mechanism to surface the voices of students and their stories is encouraged through advocacy for educational equity. "Qualitative data are powerful. They evoke images and recapture remarkable events. They make good stories; they make knowledge claims. They offer surprise insights about how people make sense of their lives" (Eisenhart, 2006, p. 567). Providing opportunities for exploration (Creswell, 2009; Rogers, 2003) and a commonly understood purpose of advancing a socially just agenda (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) were additional reasons for choosing a qualitative study. Exploration of participants' knowledge, interpretations of their life experiences, and implementation of a socially just research agenda, each directly link to my choice to use a qualitative research design. And finally, Lazos Vargas (2003) captured the essence when she wrote "Quantitative research methods capture the *frequency* and *magnitude* of the impacts of various kinds of discriminations, such as stereotyping or how a dominant group may engage in preferential in-group behavior. Qualitative studies complete the picture as they capture *how* race operates" (emphasis by author) (p. 9).

## Data Description

To engage in the emancipatory research approach described, I gained permission to use the described archival data and to add focus group interviews for depth of data.

The data were collected in the state of Colorado in a public PK-12 school district in the years of 2006 to 2011. The district serves approximately 15,000 students in a tri-city area which encompasses nearly 400 square miles. The school district is one of the largest employers in the area, and the population demographics of the school district have changed over the past ten years. Social and economic changes, such as large employers whom have left the community, have impacted the demographics and needs of students.

For example, the percentage of free and reduced meals eligible students increased significantly from 21% in 2002 to 32% in 2010, and the school district's portion of Hispanic student population doubled between 1998 and 2010, from 8% to 16%. One district initiative to respond to the changing demographics includes the CRLP, the source of the archival data for the study.

**Open-Ended Question Responses**

The archival data consists of students' responses to a selected open-ended question on a paper and pencil application to the program. The annual number of students range from 25 to 49. The question, "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity" was asked each year from 2006 to 2009. By analyzing the transcriptions of these responses, the student voices are unleashed and become understood as a counterstory.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.** The responses chosen from the open-ended question included those from 2006 through 2009 (four years) that were legible, coherent, and if from repeat participants were from their most current applications. Not all available responses were utilized. Responses were removed from years 2004 and 2005 because the responses were found to have less depth due to the framing of the question noted in Table 3. For example, responses were often one word or a brief descriptor such as 'racism', 'racism', discrimination', and 'issues on how to deal with racism and jobs' instead of the experiences offered in the responses from years 2006 to 2009 likely due to the change in questioning adding 'describe a time.' These responses provided in-depth insights into what, how, where, and when of experiences, which impacted secondary students and the people they knew.

Table 6 demonstrates several insights related to the archival data. First, higher applicant numbers than that of the pilot study are shown. A more careful and comprehensive search of application responses allowed for this discovery in the study. When implementing the inclusion and exclusion criteria, repeat participants were found throughout the years. This was the most frequent reason for the number of acceptable responses to be less. These findings served as further consideration for increasing the level of credibility of the data based on learning from the pilot study. Table 6 shows when the exclusion criteria were enforced, nearly a third of the responses was removed for the data analyses.

Table 6

*Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria used for Student Applicants, 2006-2009*

| Year | N of applicants | Exclusion criteria enforced | N of acceptable responses |
|------|------|------|------|
| 2009 | 40 | 8 | 32 |
| 2008 | 57 | 17 | 40 |
| 2007 | 28 | 15 | 13 |
| 2006 | 29 | 9 | 20 |
| Total | 154 | 49 | 105 |

**Focus Groups**

Using focus groups as a data collection strategy supported a critical approach to understanding oppression (Willis, 2007) as it provides the opportunity to listen and pay attention to what people have to say (Krueger & Casey, 2000). A safe and comfortable well delivered focus group of five to eight (Krueger & Casey, 2009) in which multiple realities are learned and shared (Krueger & Casey, 2000) provide this opportunity. The five characteristics of the focus group included "1) people, who 2) possess certain

characteristics, 3) provide qualitative data, 4) in a focused discussion, and 5) to help

understand the topic of interest" (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 6).

Focus groups were a useful strategy for two purposes—to triangulate the data

collection methods and to use as a form of member checking. To achieve this, the focus

group participants were purposefully chosen as students in the age bracket consistent of

those who responded to the open-ended question (13-19 year olds) and included both

male and female participants. The participants had common characteristics being of H/L

background and being willing to share their opinions. The purposeful sampling reflects

the desire for transferability as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) "it *is* his or her

responsibility to provide the *data base* that makes transferability judgments possible on

the part of potential appliers" (p. 316). To support the creation of such a data base, the

first focus group composed of an eighth grader and two tenth graders from H/L

background, two females and one male in February 2011 met in a community building

where the CRLP had taken place (a familiar location). The second focus group consisted

of five participants: two males and three females, four tenth graders and one eleventh

grader, spanning the age range 15-17 years old. Despite the low number of participants in

the first group, their responses indicated they were familiar with the complexity of the

research topic and had high-levels of personal experience (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

The focus groups were a type of member check, a peer debriefing of the 2006

through 2009 archival data. The peer debriefing included a three-step process. First,

students were welcomed and seated at a rectangle table in the community room. Five

posters were hung around the room with information about the archival data and the

focus group questions (See Appendix D). Pens, markers, and note pads were available in

the middle of the table. Second, I thanked the participants and explained the peer debriefing process in which they would reflect on themes found in the transcripts of the racialized experience question posted around the room. I verbally explained the open-ended question that had been responded to, the themes found in the question responses posted and read aloud quotes that were markers of each theme found in the transcripts. Then I asked each participant to walk around each charted theme and reflect on it individually and silently to determine if the theme was complete and accurate based on their own experience. After the silent reflection, the participants were asked to return to the table when they were done reading. When all were seated, I explained the next step in the process.

Each student was given a two-sided handout with the questions for the focus group on one side and the other side blank. The students were instructed on the use of the handout: to write their responses on the front-side of the handout, to share verbally their responses, or to draw and label their responses to the questions on the back-side of the handout. The focus group questions included:

1. From the information you heard (described experiences), how have your experiences been similar or different?

2. What would you like to add that would describe your personal experiences in schools?

3. Based on your personal experiences, what do you disagree with that you heard in the described experiences?

4. What changes would you suggest for schools to keep the described experiences from happening to others?

The students were provided with sticky pads of paper (none used) and pens to write additions or clarifications to the themes on the chart paper or on their handout to be left at

the end of the focus group. They filled in the attribute information on the handouts, but left the rest blank. Students made no additions on the posters. Their thoughts and ideas were captured in the verbal focus group recording and through the notes made by an assistant. The assistant was a female identifying herself as Hispanic who had been involved with the CRLP for eight years. She sat at a separate table and took notes of what she heard and saw to use in the transcript development. An additional benefit of the focus group included "the additional insight gained from the interaction of ideas among the group participants" (Mertens, 1998, p. 32) as the findings in chapter four demonstrate.

<div align="center">**Data Management**</div>

**Data Collection**

The pilot study with the open-ended responses provided the rationale for selection of data collection methods and data analysis methods to align with the research questions and theoretical framework. The data collection methods and data management steps included:

1. Solicited and received letter of cooperation from the school district of study

2. Applied for and received CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to include analysis of archival data provided by the school district, and permission to host focus groups with identified students (See Appendix E)

3. Obtained archival data (student responses to "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity) and requested attribute data from school district

4. Prepared data including the removal of repeat participants to ensure use of each voice once. When repeat participants were found, the inclusion criteria were utilized with the most recent responses included.

5. Prepared data which included assigning pseudonyms to provide anonymity for identifying information such as student, school, and district, and names of people or schools named in the student responses

6. Typed student responses from question as an "Unfocused transcription" (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 113) directly as written

7. Inputted data into NVivo 9 including attribute data (gender, age, grade at time of application completion, and school status as of June 2010) from the application form and the school district and linked to the racialized experience question utilized for the dissertation

8. Utilized NVivo 9 as a software database to organize the data and themes

9. Created an inductive coding process, critical thematic analysis (CTA), with methodologist to align with theoretical lens, data collection methods, and analysis methods

10. Completed qualitative document analysis using CTA on the open-ended responses

11. Corrected spelling errors to use themes in the focus groups and to ensure the voices are not lost by distraction of decoding in the analyses

12. Performed two focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2009) for the purpose of triangulation of data collection methods and data sources

13. Transcribed focus group interviews

14. Analyzed focus group transcriptions with CTA

15. Completed CTA across the archival data and the focus group transcriptions

16. Performed poetic analysis

17. Created poems as counterstories

18. Interpreted counterstories

19. Presented counterstories and analysis

## Data Analysis

This study required an in-depth approach to analyze the data, adequately uncovering voice, and creating counterstories of the experiences of secondary H/L students with regards to race in their school and communities as suggested in the research questions. CRT informed the qualitative research design with an overarching qualitative

document analysis (QDA) (Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese, & Schneider, 2008; Flick, von

Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). QDA is also known as ethnographic content analysis (ECA)

(Altheide, 1987). Critical thematic analysis (CTA), a layered inductive analysis process,

draws from respected analyses to identify themes from the data and was developed for

this study, to ensure a critical perspective be used throughout the analyses.

**Critical Thematic Analysis (CTA)**

First, ECA is "defined as the reflexive analysis of documents" (Altheide, 1987, p.

65). The documents analyzed include the transcripts created from the open-ended

responses and the focus groups. The data were analyzed separately and then

comparatively using an inductive coding process developed with support from my

methodologist who is a field researcher and believes in making the methods fit the

research. CTA was an effort to keep the critical race theory lens at the forefront of the

analysis process while choosing methods that supported the emphasis of race at the center

of the study. CTA was a piece-meal approach which included aspects of thematic

analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss,

1967), critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996), and poetic analysis (Eisner, 1997).

**Thematic Analysis.** To begin, the racialized experience responses were analyzed

using CTA. Aspects of thematic analysis can describe the processes used to seek themes

to understand the topics raised from responses to the questions (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun &

Clarke, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Researchers often write as though themes

emerge but it requires a critical eye to find the themes that may otherwise go unseen and

to fully develop those themes (Gibson & Brown, 2009) and it takes a race-conscious eye

to consider the themes from a CRT lens. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest two levels of coding for thematic analysis, and this is where the CTA process began.

**Critical Analysis.** Carspecken (1996) offers a critical analysis model, borrowed from ethnography, that is comprehensive and fits an approach of developing an ethnographic study through a critical theory lens. This study was not a critical ethnography, but looked to the analysis process for a strategy to ensure the value orientation of criticalists "to refine social theory" (1996, p. 3). To do this, an additional layer of analysis was added after the "low-level coding" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 147), which stayed close to the primary record and needed little abstraction and the "high-level coding" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 148) where inferences were made. Both of these steps assist in uncovering themes from the racialized experience responses and the focus group transcriptions separately.

**Constant Comparative Method.** The next analysis included looking for common themes among the racialized experience responses and the focus group transcripts. This is a step within the constant comparison method because the themes identified in the first set of data were then sought in the second set of data (the focus group transcripts) as a means of answering "Is the fact a fact?" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 23) The facts include the descriptions of experiences, which were checked with those found in the focus groups' transcripts to assert credibility. This aspect of constant comparative analysis was used to determine if the racialized experiences by young people in the four years from 2006 to 2009 were true in 2011. It is important to note that the complete process known as constant comparative analysis or grounded theory (Glaser & Straus, 1967) was not employed. This study did not move toward creating or testing new theory, but to

investigate the way CRT could be used to understand the students' stories situated in the 'achievement gap' conversation related to public middle and high schools. This analysis was utilized to support the analysis of the two sets of data when they were linked. The findings will be shared in chapter four.

**Poetic Analysis.** To create counterstories, I embarked on a third level of analysis suggested by Carspecken (1996), which was "arts-based educational research (ABER)" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 3) also known as arts-based research (ABR). ABER techniques have created additional opportunities for voice to be expressed (Cahnmann, 2003; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Eisner, 1997; Faulkner, 2009; Furman, Langer, Davis, Gallardo & Kulkarni, 2007). Poetry is one form of ABR inquiry which "can be viewed as a vehicle through which to communicate powerful and multiple 'truths' about the human experience" (Furman et al., 2007, p. 302) and can be useful to create empathy (Eisner, 1997) and meaning between a reader and the poet (Willis, 2007). Additionally, as found by a feminist qualitative researcher, "I find poetry particularly useful for its ability to play with, expose, highlight, and undermine power" (Leavy, 2010, p. 240), an important aspect of this research study.

Researchers have examined the purposes of poetry in qualitative research, and have found them to include six major uses: poetry allusion, cultural poetry research, participant poetry as data, data poems, research experience poems or poems from the field, and autoethnographic poetry (Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, Graglia, Richard, & Schendel, 2010). The last three uses are relevant to this study.

First, data poems utilize the participants' own words and are found in data collection such as interviews (Koelsch & Knudson, 2009; Poindexter, 2002). In this

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study, the transcripts of the archival data and the focus groups are the sources of data for the data poems. It has been stated "Writing up interviews as poems, honoring the speaker's pauses, repetitions, alliterations, narrative strategies, rhythms and so on may actually better represent the speaker than the practice of quoting snippets in prose" (Richardson, 1996, p. 521). Second, two research experience poems, created from the fieldwork and used as a mechanism to share that experience (Brady, 2001; Finley, 2003) were created. Third, autoethnographic poetry is based on the experiences of the researcher, such as the reflexive journaling that is shared be shared in chapter three.

There has been exploration regarding the trustworthiness of research poetry as related to poetic re-presentation of research, research poets' training and experience, explanation or interpretation, and trustworthiness (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Eisner, 2008; Lahman et al., 2010; Piirto, 2002). Piirto (2002) has developed stringent criteria for assessing the experience of research poets, including requiring an extensive background in the specific ABR discipline, such as poetry. Others have stated "Put simply, traditional measures of validity are not appropriate criteria for judging research poems" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008, p. 13). Lahman and colleagues (2010) state the criteria as "Therefore, if one wishes to write poetry the only criteria we can comfortably put forth at this time is that one must read, read, read, poetry in order to then write, write, write poetry" (p. 47).

To support Piirto's (2002) suggested criteria, I looked back on my own college transcripts, curious about legitimizing my heartfelt desire to circle back to my creative energy and passion for writing creatively. I found only few hours in creative writing in my bachelor's work many moons ago, yet I felt compelled to continue on this journey

including arts-based research (ABR) and as Behar (2008) stated "You will reach a point, as I did, where there is no choice but to work from your poetic self" (p. 67). And thus, I poured myself into a variety of poetry books—young childrens, adolescents, and seminal pieces from H/L community, and ABR, specifically research poetry.

I poured over books of different types of writing including poems that resonated and guided me to learn more fully about the experiences of people of color such as Julia Alvarez's poems (2004a), essays (1998), and stories written for middle school readers based on fictional interpretations of the life of young Latinas growing up in the United States (Alvarez, 2002; Alvarez, 2004b; Cofer, 2004) and the edited volume by Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983). In addition, I was curious about other authors and how they defined their own experiences from the vantage point of color and gender such as Sherman Alexie's account of a middle-aged student wrestling with ethnic identity being Indian in a White school (2007) and hooks' (2003) authentic experiences as an African heritage female in education. Poets such as Neruda (1972) and Angelou (1986) encouraged me and moved me to write poetically with deep issues such as race, pain, and feeling in mind.

And, as discussed in the first chapter of the dissertation, in raising young daughters, I model cross-cultural understanding and build bridges through conversations. I have introduced and analyzed poetry by diverse authors to support my daughters' learning the use of language in creating visual imagery and the connection to diverse aspects of cultural identities found in books such as *Hip hop speaks to children: A celebration of poetry with a beat* edited by Giovanni (2008). Additionally, I was fortunate to have a fellow student pass on a book that was developed from young girls' experiences

with race entitled *My sisters' voices: Teenage girls of color speak out*. The author, Jacob (2002), thought of the idea as her personal response to books that were published in the early 1990s about girls' experiences. She found that the experiences were written exclusively from the dominant culture lens—White female experiences. Jacob (2002) states

> Reading both books profoundly helped my own search for self and my understanding of other girls. However, after reading and connecting to both, I felt something was missing. Pipher had discussed girls of color and so had Shandler. Yet I felt my struggle had not been truly identified. I felt as though girls of color had a unique and rarely validated struggle. I believed that in addition to bearing the weight of being teenagers and female, we also carry the enormous issues of race and ethnicity. (p. xv)

As I read the introduction and proceeded through girls of colors' experiences from their voices, I again sensed I had come full circle. I felt vindicated in my struggle to complete the Ph.D. I have found tremendous renewal and passion in the Ph.D. process to find meaning in the data through the creation of research poems using the students' voices and in my own self-reflection in the "fieldwork." I do not consider myself an expert in poetry, just a lover of poetry. "Unlike those creating hybrid forms, most creators of art for scholarship's sake have years of training in their art form in addition to their studies in the social sciences" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 10), but perhaps my attempt at blurred genre in which science and art meet and multiple perspectives are heard and responded to will create meaning and purpose.

**Counterstory**

Reflecting on the pilot study, I was determined to ensure the research is consistently addressing the theoretical lens: CRT. "The use of voice or 'naming your reality' is a way that CRT links form and substance in scholarship" (Ladson-Billings,

1998, p. 23) and is utilized in the data presentation. I echo Yosso's (2006) notion to

"humanize some of these statistical realities along the Chicana/o educational pipeline" as

she uses "a method of presenting research called storytelling" (p. 4). This message of

humanizing the work was important to me, particularly in relation to presenting the

stories of H/L youth. For me, my presentation of data exists within the framework of

"composite counterstories" which requires: (1) empirical research data from archival data

and focus groups; (2) literature on the topic; (3) judicial records; and (4) author's

professional and personal experiences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Using these four

critical components of my study, a form of counterstory is presented, as separate

counterstories—the research poems created as part of the study.

"Counterstories seek to document that persistence of racism from the perspectives

of those injured and victimized by its legacy…[to] bring attention to those who

courageously resist racism and struggle toward a more socially and racially just society"

(Yosso, 2006, p. 10 ). A CRT scholar asserts that beyond its function of community-

building, counterstories can have a "…destructive function. They can show us that what

we believe is ridiculous, self-serving, or cruel. They can show us the way out of the trap

of unjustified exclusion. They can help us understand when it is time to reallocate power"

(Delgado, 2000, p. 61). To set the use of counterstory further into the context of this

study, Yosso (2006) describes it.

> A counterstory…begins with an understanding that inadequate educational
> conditions limit equal access and opportunities in Chicana/o schooling. Pointing
> out the biased and subjective formulae of the majoritarian story, the counterstory
> reveals that Chicanas/os usually attended overcrowded, run-down, and racially
> segregated schools. Too often, these schools provide low per-pupil expenditures,
> few well-trained teachers, and limited access to a quality, college-bound
> curriculum. Instead of blaming Chicana/o students or community cultural
> traditions, a counterstory addresses the structures, practices, and discourses that

facilitate high dropout (pushout) rates along the Chicana/o educational pipeline. (p. 4)

The use of counterstory as a cumulative way to present these data aims to result in the most empowering message and the greatest opportunity to move toward the initial aim of the inquiry, "critique and transformation; restitution and emancipation" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194) created in this study. While the majoritarian story frames the achievement gap between H/L students and their White and Asian American peers as quantitative variables in discussions, the research and data collected and analyzed provides a counterstory. It points out the ways racism manifests itself in the school setting, something that too often goes overlooked in school systems.

**Trustworthiness**

To ensure that I complete the proposed study with high-quality data, I have followed two schools of thought. First, Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide particular language associated with trustworthiness in naturalistic inquiry that is useful in this study due to its qualitative nature and inquiry into students' racialized experiences and suggestions for change in their school communities. Therefore, credibility and transferability are addressed. To do this, several of Creswell's (2007) validation strategies "Prolonged engagement, triangulation, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, and thick descriptions" (pp. 207-209) are described and used. Feasibility and authenticity will be addressed as additional means to assess trustworthiness of the study.

**Credibility.** Credibility asserts there are ways to heighten the opportunity for findings to be deemed credible and is found when those who create the various realities approve them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To address credibility, four distinct methods were chosen: prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checking, and

reflexivity/transparency. Prolonged engagement refers to sufficient amounts of time in the research setting to allow for re-emerging themes to be noticed and confirmed (Krefting, 1990). To address prolonged engagement, I have worked as the CRLP director since its inception in 2002, and had the opportunity to work with the students involved in the program directly during that time. While the study has involved those eight years (as part of the pilot studies and the dissertation), the final archival data came from four of those years. I collected the data annually and have read through it each year, so I consider myself close to the open-ended responses, the participants, and the outcomes of the annual program. Finally, I facilitated the focus groups of the students, some of whom were participants in the CRLP held in 2010 and the member checking as additional data collections.

Use of multiple data sources and methods to understand a concept more fully is triangulation (Robson, 2002). There are four common pertinent types of triangulation--data collection, observeration, methodological approaches, and theory (Robson, 2002; Willis, 2007) and each can be used to build a more credible and rigorous study. In this study, open-ended questions were a "way of gaining an overview of ideas" and were followed with focus groups to provide current "individual opinion and experience" (Gibson & Brown, 2009, pp. 58-59). This enabled the researcher to compare two sources/forms of data using multiple types of analysis methods, which provide a sound strategy for providing credibility.

Within the focus groups, credibility was attended to through member checking (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2002) in which "the researcher solicits participants' views of the credibility of

the findings and interpretations" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). Member checks include "taking data collected from study participants and your tentative interpretations of these data back to the people from whom they were derived, asking if the data "ring true" (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 102). The focus group participants reconvened the week after the focus groups were held. Therefore, the member checks allowed the students to check and provide feedback on the data collected the previous week, to determine if their voices were accurately captured. A copy of the full transcript was handed to each participant for his/her review. I verbally explained the contents of the transcript and invited each participant to review their captured thoughts to ensure they were complete and accurate. I provided ten minutes of silent reading of the transcripts. After ten minutes, I explained the next step of ensuring the themes I identified were accurate and complete. Students were provided with sticky notes and pens to write additions or clarifications to the recordings, to be stuck to the chart paper. They were invited to move their notes if they felt it would better describe a different theme. This allowed for "the direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they have come—the constructors of the multiple realities being studied (member checking)" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). Two students added written comments to their quotes to offer fuller meaning. Other additions and changes were not suggested. They each verbally agreed that the transcripts were an accurate representation of the conversations.

Another step in addressing credibility is to acknowledge the effect of my personal history on the research (Krefting, 1990). I recognize my on-going connection to the program from which the archival data were obtained. Therefore, I concentrated on my own "reflexivity" (Geertz, 1990 in Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 8; Robson, 2002) to allow

opportunities to reflect on meaning created throughout the study. One ideal way to provide research reflection is through the use of "memos" defined as "the researchers' record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 110). Memoing created an outlet and structured place to consider and respond to the students' perceptions about their racialized experiences, thereby creating increased credibility.

Analytic technique including memoing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were vital throughout the analytic process to support my own reflexivity (Robson, 2002). I found this useful when working in NVivo 9 and finding nodes, as well as in my hand coding processes. Some memos were typed into NVivo 9 and the others were handwritten into the margins of my transcripts or on the backsides of sheets of transcripts. Due to my positionality as a Latina educator, the memoing was a successful strategy to "put aside personal feelings" (Ahern, 1999, p. 408) as they arose. A particularly personal example included

> By the time I got to Student #46 with the open-coding/manual coding, I had already taken a few mini-breaks to cry and take deep breaths I asked, "What does this mean for people of color in the U.S.? And how is Arizona's current law impacting this? Using the reflective memos will be critical to maintain my sanity and to try to keep a sense of objectivity in the analysis. (Gabriel, 2010a)

As Ahern (1999) suggests, the work is in setting feelings aside through reflexivity rather than being objective because researchers are not always aware of what the data reveals. Although I have spent many years working closely with the students in the program from which the data came, the reality from the transcripts were still incredibly painful to analyze and internalize. Another aspect of my positionality that I reflected on in one setting was that of being a mother, a *Latina* mother of young girls.

This is terribly sad. I am crying over the computer. Sitting in the empty computer lab on a Saturday morning. Missing my children playing in the summer sun to analyze this sadness that I fear my girls will witness and be involved in as they grow older. I fear all the time what liability I bring to their lives. How will my being brown impact their experience in the world? How will this study support a better life for many children? And, is it unfair that I expect myself to be able to do this? How do I make it manageable, attainable, successful? I cannot change the world in all ways, but can I change the world in one way? If so, what is my one way? Creating a counterstory to unveil a truth that is so difficult to hear. What would be beautiful is to have a room full of others crying. Instead of me tearing up all alone in PD [Professional Development] sessions, hearing of the disparate number of Hispanic females who underperform against their peers and who dropout—even more than the Hispanic males. A professor asked a good question 'What do I want to learn with this study?' I can do this. (Gabriel, 2010b)

These reflective memos allowed me to process the experience of being a Latina and analyzing discrimination that is taking place for young Latinos. It reflects on my own worst fears and the process I went through in that one summer morning to work through the feelings, to process the fear and to move forward. It is also revealed a startling example of the loneliness factor that professors of color refer to often in the academy (Canetto & Borrayo, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005; Middleton, 2003), especially when one's research is geared at topics that others would rather turn and run from. I often felt lonely having few other people of color in my courses, few chances to discuss the sadness, fears, or self-doubts I had, or the difficulty in collecting and analyzing the data that was so personal to me.

The reflective memoing allowed me to practice the analysis of concepts, ideas, and experiences throughout the study and to demonstrate my ability to rely on theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998). "Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 41-42). "Cultural intuition is a complex

process that is experiential, intuitive, historical, personal, collective, and dynamic"
(Delgado Bernal, 1998, pp. 567-568). The example included here from my own reflective
memoing highlights the ways I practiced reliability.

**Transferability**. Transferability differs from generalizability as it requires the
researcher to know both the sending and receiving contexts. In this, the researcher's
responsibility is to provide a description of the research context with data to allow future
researchers deep enough understanding to know if the data are similar in nature to their
planned study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To support transferability, thick description and purposeful sampling were part of
the study. "When qualitative researchers provide detailed descriptions of the setting, for
example, or provide many perspectives about a theme, the results become more realistic
and richer" (Creswell, 2009, p. 192). Thick description involves "the contexts of people's
actions and practices so that they become intelligible in their own terms" (Gibson &
Brown, 2009, p. 8). Careful use of the transcriptions of both the open-ended question and
the focus groups allowed for explicit thoughts, perceptions, and experiences of
participants to be realized and included in the presentation of findings to support
transferability.

Purposeful sampling included the solicitation of known student participants to the
focus groups. All students who attended the 2010 CRLP were invited by mail (See
Appendix G) to participate in the focus groups because of their ethnic and racial
background, age, and school district of attendance being similar to those who responded
to the open-ended questions in the years from 2006 to 2009. The students were
encouraged to participate if they were willing to share openly in a small group. An email

invitation was also sent to those with email addresses. In presenting "sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison" (Krefting, 1990, p. 216) transferability is addressed.

**NVivo 9—A Tool**

Educational researchers note that technology can assist in the qualitative research process (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Robson, 2002). ©QSR International NVivo 9 (NVivo 9), a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (©QSR International Pty Ltd., 2011), was utilized to assist in the CTA, beginning with the development of themes and codes. First, the transcriptions were inputted for the critical thematic analysis. NVivo 9 was used to organize the variables such as gender, grade, and age allowing for movement and searching among the data quickly. The word search feature supported the researcher to locate coded text quickly and to access all input to guide further inquiry using the matrices tool to quickly find the answers to analytic questions and sort themes.

**Summary**

Uncovering inequities in education is often done without the voices, words, and stories of H/L students with regard to their experiences with race as related to educational outcomes such as graduation. Their voices are often missing from the majoritarian story, which "distorts and silences the experiences of people of color" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2009, p. 136). Through the implementation and presentation of pilot studies that guided and refined the methodological choices for the study--research questions and design, data description, management, and analysis--the ability to view H/L students as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 2002) was created. This study was created to

legitimize, honor, and emancipate the unique voices of Hispanic/Latino secondary

students in Northern Colorado.

**CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

The findings of the study are presented through use of critical thematic analysis (CTA). The use of CTA, as described in chapter two, is important as it relies on a critical race theory (CRT) research lens putting race at the center of the analysis. First, the themes from the archival data are presented and interpreted. Then the themes from the focus groups are presented and linked to the archival data findings. Next, procedures for completing a poetic analysis are shared and a presentation of the findings is shared as two types of research poems, data poems and research experience poems are interpreted.

**Archival Data**

As part of the document analysis of the archival data (open-ended response question), I was interested in uncovering and developing themes related to the descriptions of the experiences related to race and ethnicity in students' written responses. To do this, I began with a low-level coding process, which is close to the original data and "requires little abstraction" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 146). As "every researcher approaches the coding process differently" (Roberts, 2004, p. 143), the low-level coding process included my coding by hand and data management utilizing ©QSR International NVivo 9 (NVivo 9). The majority of coding by hand is referenced in the pilot study section (chapter three) through a series of qualitative "ethnographic approaches" (Banning, n. d.). I moved back and forth between coding by hand and electronic coding (known in NVivo 9 as manual coding) to suit my cultural style and support the effective development of themes. To illustrate, when NVivo 9 felt rigid,

seemingly due to its linear nature, I went back to laying out pages of open-ended

responses on tables and manually coding with a pencil. Even the use of pens and

highlighters were confining and the flow of discovery slowed or was feared to be halted.

The sense of working with the paper copies renewed the spirit of the students' voices for

me and invigorated the process to keep me centered on student voices-- not the systemic

process. I have noted the shift in this approach throughout the chapter and have chosen to

be real and life 'full' rather than lifeless to give voice and remain explicit in my

positionality throughout the research and my report of findings.

## Student Experiences of Race

My first analytic questions were chosen to address the first research question,

"How do Hispanic/Latino secondary students in a public school district in Northern

Colorado experience race in schools and communities?" A series of analytic questions

guided the beginning of my process to answer the research question and included: 1)

What types of experiences were identified in the archival data?; 2) What markers of

racialized experiences exist in the archival data?; 3) What details help describe each

experiences, such as who, what, where, when, and for what reasons?

### Process

As I began searching for markers stated in the analytic questions, NVivo 9 was

used to assist with coding, referred to as manual coding. "Free Nodes" are the stand alone

themes chosen before one begins the coding process or throughout the coding process. In

the open coding process, "Free Nodes," a type of container to hold the codes, were

created. Each node was created inductively as I began to read through the transcripts (in

NVivo 9). The free nodes were descriptors of the experience or lack thereof and were

titled accordingly: (1) The experience; (2) Who it happened to; (3) Who reacted to race; (4) How it was handled/responded to; (5) Where; (6) When; (7) What was happening when experienced; (8) None; and (9) What is needed. This list was then altered and transferred into a "Tree Node" section where it could be more fully developed. For example, the ninth and fourth node were merged to the fourth node as listed above, which included the ways those offended responded to a racialized experience. Additionally, the eighth free node was merged into the sixth node, as both referenced a time descriptor or 'when'. This list of "Tree Nodes" served as a codebook (See Appendix H) and was added as analysis progressed to answer both research questions.

The tree nodes and their frequencies of references by students are reported in Table 7. The frequencies of each node are presented as their sources and references. Sources refer to each student respondent, also known as a 'case' in NVivo 9. Yet, sometimes a source (student) did make a reference to a node more than once. For example as seen in Table 7, 94 students described an experience they had in the archival data question, "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity." Therefore, those descriptions were coded in the tree node "the experience." Yet, the 94 sources made 100 references to a racialized experience. The references are the frequencies (numbers) of times a node is referred to or reported. The references are the numbers used through the rest of the chapter as these give an accurate accounting of the specific number of times an experience is described.

Table 7

*NVivo 9 Nodes and their Frequencies*

| Tree Nodes | Sources | References |
|---|---|---|
| The experience | 94 | 100 |
| Who it happened to | 60 | 62 |
| Who reacted to race | 48 | 48 |
| How it was handled/responded to | 44 | 45 |
| Where | 40 | 42 |
| When | 39 | 39 |
| What was happening when experienced | 18 | 18 |

Answering my second research question, "What additional cultural identities exist as part of racialized experiences of Hispanic/Latino students studied?" led me to do analytic processes. First, queries of the attribute data (from the cooperating school district) such as gender, year, grade level (at time of application), age (at time of application), and the racialized experiences included in the archival data were made to uncover additional patterns.

To begin, I wanted to see if the experiences differed by any of the attributes. Table 8 lists the highest frequencies of reported racialized experiences by attribute in relation to the 94 sources. Of the four years of data, 2008 had the most reports of racialized experiences (n = 38), with 40% of the total experiences reported in that year. With regard to gender, 24 males and 69 females reported experiences. A query by grade level reported that 29 eighth graders, 15 ninth graders, 20 tenth graders, 17 eleventh graders, and 12 twelfth graders report racialized experiences.

Table 8

*Highest Frequency of Racialized Experience by Student Attribute*

| Attribute Category | Attribute with Highest Frequency | Number (N) | Percentage (N = 94) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 69 | 73 |
| Year | 2008 | 38 | 40 |
| Grade | 8th | 29 | 31 |
| Age (years) | 16 | 24 | 26 |

However, the archival data responses seemed to be fairly contingent on the respondents themselves, who varied year by year as applicants to the CRLP. For example, the pilot study discussed in chapter three revealed that 2008 was the year with the most program applicants who responded to the open-ended question (n = 49). Additionally, over the years, there were more female applicants, hence the high frequency of female respondents. Additionally, there were fewer student applications received by junior and senior (11th and 12th grade) high school students. Fewer H/L students in the higher grades of high schools reflects research on the "Chicana/o educational pipeline model" whereby of 100 elementary school students, 44 graduate from high school (Yosso, 2006, p. 3).

To consider the critical lens in the continued analyses, intersectionality was addressed through other means. I brought out the transcripts again in hard copy to do additional coding by hand. To begin, I chose the following analytic question, "What markers of language, national origin, or perceived immigration status are referred to in the accounts of racialized experiences?" Of the 105 responses, additional cultural identities, inclusive of race and at times tied directly to ethnicity were revealed. Closer analyses of these markers of cultural identities add to the complexity of stating how a racialized response takes place. The respondents highlight that as a group, over time,

deep layers of who they are and who they represent as H/L secondary students living in Northern Colorado are questioned, demeaned, and marginalized. The students share examples involving national origin (n = 21), language (n = 6), skin color (n = 4), and class as connected to income level (n = 1) as described in the experiences to follow.

**The Experience**

There were 100 references to racialized experiences provided by 94 of the 105 students. Ninety percent of the students can reflect back on an experience in which they or someone they knew were racialized, defined as having endured discrimination based on their race (Cavanagh, 2009). Markers included a range of experiences along a continuum of negative treatment and are described as two main types of experiences: those done (an action) to respondents or someone they knew and those said (a verbal interaction) to the respondents or someone they knew. These findings connect to past research which describes some like incidents as racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1988). More recent research used this concept in clinical psychology to differentiate between three types of microaggressions: "(1) *microsassaults*, or intentionally and explicitly derogatory verbal or nonverbal attacks; (2) *microinsults*, or rude and insensitive subtle put-downs of someone's racial heritage or identity; and (3) *microinvalidations*, or remarks that diminish, dismiss, or negate the realities and histories of People of Color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). While the study was not developed to categorize experiences using this specific lens for inquiry, the experiences described can often be described using similar language.

**Experiences Described as an Action**

First, I found the descriptions included a continuum of actions, as someone was discriminated against, excluded, judged, or labeled. Examples are included for those with highest reported frequencies.

**Discriminated against**. With 34 experiences coded at this node, it is important to clarify the term "discrimination" and to share some examples. "Discrimination is the denial of justice and fair treatment by both individuals and institutions in many arenas, including employment, education, housing, banking and political rights. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial thinking" (Anti-Defamation League, 2005, p. 11). While examples existed related to housing (n = 1) and employment (n = 3), the remaining descriptions coded (n = 30) were connected to individuals who received unfair or differential treatment such as "…my father [would] be treated differently in stores and restaurants because he is Puerto Rican" (Student 09). Specific to this dissertation, I also have highlighted examples of discrimination in schools (n = 9) such as "…the teachers wouldn't help her with her work because of her color skin" (Student 43). This is a real and harsh description of the way a student was received and treated in his/her school, revealing a denial of educational opportunities and access to academic content. Another example highlighted inequitable discipline practice in schools, "We noticed the staff only confronted colored kids about the dress code never the Caucasian kids" (Student 19). This finding mirrors an urban high school study that included four Chicano students and the findings of "perceived injustices in rule application where students believed teachers' disciplinary actions, at times, were directed toward them and other students of color,

because of their racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural heritage" (Hernández Sheets, 2002, p. 112-113).

**Exclusion**. While unjust and unfair treatment is defined as discrimination, a further consideration included when someone was directly removed from an opportunity or excluded from one altogether. The next most frequent experience included examples of discrimination related to exclusion in employment and education (n = 12). An example of overt discrimination noted by a student coded as exclusion was "My grandfather wasn't given a job because he was Dominican" (Student 105). In this example, the power structure is based in employment and this example of exclusion from employment can be related to property rights (Harris, 1995) as described in chapter two. In schools, an example that was coded as both discrimination and exclusion included "I remember a time when me and a few of my friends weren't allowed to be a part of a group because we were Mexican and we didn't know what to do about it because we thought we were just like them and the only difference was our skin color…" (Student 75). In this, the property rights (Harris, 1995) consist of co-curricular learning opportunities, which given the chance for intercultural learning, research shows will lead to academic success. When the students were excluded from an opportunity, they in turn lost access and opportunity to school-based knowledge that leads to academic achievement outcomes.

**Judged.** Nine students reported their experiences of being prejudged and judged by others for who they appeared to be. Prejudicial attitudes and racialization played out in these instances, "One of my friends was being judged because he was Mexican" (Student 24). Students picked up on the prejudicial treatment in schools as reported, "They look at

us Latinos as bad kids" (Student 55) and "The staff pick[s] on all the Mexicans because they judge the color…and they thought all Mexicans were in gangs" (Student 14).

Students also described their sense and perception of the prejudice in communities where community members state their assumptions of low expectations based on the student's appearance—generally ethnic features that lead to racialization. In one instance, a high school student who has been given an assignment in a life skills class to take home a baby doll that cries and wets to teach about teen parenting encountered racialization. "My friend and I went to the mall and she had the fake baby assignment and when we walked by an older couple we overheard one say 'Well, of course she would have a kid, look at her!'" (Student 59). While some people may feel this comment is connected to the student's age, research has shown that these kinds of put-downs are more accurately examples of microinsults connected to the respondent's racial heritage (Sue et al., 2007). The school's intentions to teach abstinence by having young women carry a baby simulator around the community as a simulation exercise does not account for the way young students of color are received. In what ways might the racialization impact the learning experience, and does it further marginalize a student?

**Labeled.** Seven students reported experiences in which they were labeled as connected to their race or ethnicity. Each description was fairly distinct and the labeling varied from "… I was labeled as a mischief maker" (Student 103), "...dropouts…" (Student 68), to "…we are always stereotyped" (Student 52). One respondent alluded to the startling reality of the way many people racialize H/L people in general when they stated, "I know someone who is afraid of Mexicans" (Student 52). While these experiences are low in number and vary greatly, they are important when considering the

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sociopolitical context of education. The sociopolitical context of society includes laws, regulations, policies, practices, traditions, and ideologies (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 4) and schools exist within those.

**Experiences Spoken**

The second type of experience described in the archival data was what was "said". These themes included "racial comments" as a category. Although one might argue all are forms of racial comments, some spoke to a specific aspect of cultural identity, not always solely based on race or ethnicity. The racial comments described here are identified by other researchers as microassaults (Sue et al., 2007) because they are "intentionally and explicitly derogatory verbal or nonverbal attacks" (p. 274). Table 9 lists the frequencies (from highest to lowest) of the coded nodes listed under parent node "Said", those being racial comments, national origin, 'Go back…,' language spoken, skin color, and income level.

Table 9

*What was Said with Frequency of Reports*

| What was Said | Frequency of Reports |
| --- | --- |
| Racial comments | 30 |
| National origin | 13 |
| "Go Back…" | 8 |
| Language | 6 |
| Skin color | 4 |
| Income level | 1 |

**Racial comments.** Thirty of 105 respondents describe their racialized experience with the term "racial comment" or "slurs" or used derogatory terms or slurs. For example a student reported "The time that I got confronted with a racial comment was when I was at school but mostly everywhere I am people would tell me racial comments" (Student 6).

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This supports a research study done in 2005 regarding harassment which found that "Latino/a students are more likely than White and Black students to experience racially-based harassment" (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005, p. 4) with specific examples to verbal harassment.

Thirteen students reported the specific slurs used for H/L people in the United States that they had been called, "spic" (n = 3), "wetback" (n = 4), or "beaner" (n = 6). While these comments happen in many locations, many students reported the use of slurs in schools. "…students on campus will say racial comments (Student 12) and "In our school many people say racial slurs" (Student 91) reflect the reality of the experience of H/L students. These examples are microassaults, "intentionally and explicitly derogatory verbal or nonverbal attacks" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Whether or not people saying the derogatory terms understand their connotations, the terms are directly tied to history of how people of color have and continue to be "Minoritized, racialized, and marginalized," (Cavanagh, 2009, p. 53) in the United States. For example, "derogatory terms such as "spic" and "greaser" were coined to describe Mexicans in Texas, …[the] myth of racial inferiority helped to justify U.S. conquest of a large part of Mexican territory … Mexican Americans in the emerging Southwest" (Duany, 2011, p. 4). Using the racist terminology is an assault against another human being.

**National origin.** The frequency count for national origin (n = 21) increased from Table 10 (n = 13) because I merged the "Go back…" node with "National origin" because I found the comments related to perceived national origin. This additional cultural identity is not often spoken of in schools I have worked in because people are afraid they will be perceived as racist if they talk about the students in racial terms

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(except when referring to educational outcomes). Yet the impact on students is great. Perceived national origin and what was found to be an endemic anti-immigrant sentiment in the community included "One time me and my sister were walking to my friends house and a jeep drove by and yelled 'go back where you came from!" (Student 85), "Walking around by the library and [someone] said 'Go back to Mexico!' and called me a spic" (Student 74), and "When I was outside and some guy yelled out his car 'go back across the border!'" (Student 63). This type of experience was not isolated to the larger community, but was found in classrooms as well "When a girl was telling another girl to 'Go back to Mexico'" (Student 34) and "A white student made the comment that all Mexicans illegal or not should go back to Mexico" (Student 28).

These comments are threatening, scary, and reflect the anti-immigrant sentiment rampant across the United States. Anti-immigrant legislation throughout the 2000s has continued to fuel the sentiment that plays out in school communities (Markon, 2011). An article reported answers to the question posed to understand what was fueling the anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States (Dizikes, 2010), and he found that people were in favor of immigrants who have "refined" job skills instead of manual laborers.

> From this perspective our results are both bad news and good news. They suggest that public opinion should be less of a problem for immigration policies that specifically target high-skilled immigrants. But the results also suggest that a fair amount of the anti-immigration sentiment is driven by deep-seated cultural factors that are difficult to change with policy tools. (Dizikes, 2010, p. 1)

This sentiment is not limited within certain sectors of communities, it is being heard and felt by students in this study as illustrated in the descriptions of racialized experiences.

**Language.** As an aspect of national origin and an additional cultural identity, references to language spoken were reported in experiences of six students. The six

reports all demonstrated the negative sentiment discussed previously, as Spanish is seen as a low status language in the United States as described by Walqui (2007).

> Consideration of dialects and registers of a language and of the relationships between two languages includes the relative prestige of different languages and dialects and of the cultures and ethnic groups associated with them. Students whose first language has a low status vis—a—vis the second may lose their first language, perhaps feeling they have to give up their own linguistic and cultural background to join the more prestigious society associated with the target language. (Walqui as cited in Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007, p. 9)

The sentiment attached to the use of Spanish is negative and at times threatening. "I remember once when my friends and I were at the movies and we were waiting in line to get our tickets. This old guy came up to us and told us that it was America. That in America they spoke English not Spanish. We felt so bad" (Student 25). The described experience demonstrates the way young people internalize this negative messaging through sadness and disappointment in self instead of addressing the systemic issue in which strangers are allowed to make young people feel inferior for speaking a low status language.

A misperception of knowledge of language was part of the racialized experience for one student "We were at the hospital and this old lady nurse was being really mean and talking bad stuff about us because she thought we didn't understand English" (Student 46 ). With an additional cultural identity, language, implied by a student, he/she notes the discriminatory attitudes heard regarding language "Well I personally look more like my mom who is white than my dad who is Mexican, so people decide to tell me how much they hate Mexicans for not learning English" (Student 66). Hateful and prejudicial thinking is described in these examples. **"**Some of my friends use to be made fun of because they couldn't speak English" (Student 04). This response affirms the discussion

of interest convergence in chapter two where Milner (2008) reflects on support for multilingualism for those from the white middle class backgrounds yet as described by student 4, those who are working on learning their second language of English are treated poorly.

A final example of the way language was a topic of racialization included a students' reflection on an earlier experience in school, "In kindergarten my teachers said I couldn't do the work because I spoke Spanish" (Student 16). The participants in this study were in eighth to twelfth grade, so recalling this experience signifies a long-term effect of a teacher's choice of words on a student's success.

**Skin color.** Another manifestation of cultural identity includes phenotype, a specific observable characteristic as seen in skin color. Skin color is one such aspect that is noticed and sometimes becomes a source of racialized experiences (Omi & Winant, 1998). Four of the responses included experiences described with the words "skin color." Examples included, "It was in 8th grade we were having problems with this student because of my race and skin color. I felt very upset because she was making fun of me" (Student 50). Even with limited detail in the archival data description, the student clearly states the problems existed because of his/her race and skin color. Another student refers to being "picked on" and "teased" (Student 31) because of his/her skin color. An in-depth example of the way skin color is responded to in a classroom was shared as "One time when I was in 6th grade my friend was told to pick up the supplies from the other children and he [another student] called her a maid, so then I asked him about it and he said he called her that because of the color of her skin…" (Student 44). Additionally, "When my sister and I attended elementary school we were picked on and called black because of

our skin color. They would tease us for being darker skinned than them and at that time we were the only Hispanic students in our school" (Student 31). C. Lewis (2003) and Middleton (2003) affirm this experience in their writings as they reflect on being people of color in dominant culture higher education institutions in the similar region of the United States where the study takes place. When young people grow up in these types of settings, is there a role that schools can play in offering realistic affirming examples of people of color where few live?

**Income Level.** One other experience was reported as being made by a teacher to students in a classroom regarding an assumption of the income levels of the H/L population, "my teacher answered the student saying most Hispanics don't have money to spend on little things like glasses" (Student 20). This was striking as a singular described experience related to perceived income level since many schools have looked to discuss poverty before they have been willing to address race in schools. Additionally, as educational advocates have introduced frameworks and strategies to address poverty in schools (e.g., Jensen, 2009; Payne, 2001), these conversations are devoid of the intersections between race and class as demonstrated in the student response. Due to this, strategies chosen to overcome the barriers that exist continue to fall short and educators are misled to categorize and stereotype students based on their families' income and make sweeping generalizations as noted by Student 20.

**Who it Happened to**

An additional analytic question included, "Who experienced the racialized experience?" This question was critical because the question on the student application asked for a description of an experience of "you or someone you know." Not all

respondents reported who. Thirty-four student respondents identified themselves as the person having received the racialized experience. Family members were mentioned 22 times and friends were reported 22 times. There was also a high frequency of students reporting an event that took place when they were with other persons--such as "my friends and I"(Student 25) or "me and my mom" (Student 71). In instances of two persons referenced, the reference was coded twice, once for family member or friend and once for student. Students are formed and shaped by their environment. Messages they receive or hear in their immediate or extended family and community circles can impact their perception and reality regarding how safe he/she may feel or his/her perception of belonging in the school community.

**Who Reacted to Race**

While earlier questions analyzed the types of described racialized experiences, another analytic question was asked to uncover the connection between the offender (the person who reacted to race) and the student who reported the racialized experience: "Are the offenders known to the respondents?" This node is noted in Table 8 as "Who reacted to race" in which 48 students reported someone. Twelve of the 48 reports identified the offender as someone known to the student, and a surprising 39 reported it was someone unknown to them. Of those known to the student (n = 12) the descriptions included a few vague responses such as "many people" (Student 91) and "the world" (Student 99), declaring the students know and are connected to their oppressors. Others were more specific in their description stating a friend (n = 1), neighbor (n = 2), family (n = 2), teacher (n = 2), and acquaintances (n = 3). An example was "One time when I was in kindergarten my teachers said I couldn't do the work because I spoke Spanish" (Student

16). The inference made is to the known relationship with the teacher during his/her schooling.

Additionally, it was of interest to note the racialized experiences that took place with someone unknown in the reported experience (n = 39). The microassaults (Sue et al., 2007) took place at a higher frequency by those unknown to the reporter. Many of the encounters by someone unknown included a "guy" or "man" (n = 6), a "girl" (n = 5), or a female adult or "lady" (n = 4), general "people" (n = 6) or "someone" (n = 3). These descriptors give some insight as to age, but more importantly to the fact that there was no or limited relationship with the individual. An example of a described racialized experience included "We were hanging out and this lady yelled at us to go back to Mexico" (Student 2). I wonder if we do not know each other, perhaps we feel less accountable to the human heart. And, if so, this gives reason to continue to encourage relationship building in schools.

At times, the students reported knowing the role the individual held in the place of business or in the community, but they did not state a personal relationship with the individual. For example someone unknown whose role was known included "a lady that worked there" (Student 11), "the manager" (Student 55), "a police [officer]" (Student 57), and "staff" or "teachers" (n = 3). This power structure is important to note as the students know the power structure and roles that these individuals hold, but may not have a direct connection to the oppressor.

**Where**

An additional analytic question came after working with a university mentor throughout the proposal process. She asked, "We want to know first and mostly about

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students in schools, so where did these experiences happen?" The results were surprising. Many did not list specific locations, and the majority did not mention school as the location. Of 105 responses, 42 referenced the location of the racialized experience and they were divided into the categories of schools and community.

**Schools.** Of the noted locations, 16 students specified schools as the location of the racialized experience. While ten simply stated "at school" (Student 30), those remaining listed classes or other areas of the school where the experiences took place, such as "in Spanish class" (Student 41), "in my social studies class" (Student 28), "in my speech class" (Student 56), and "at lunch" (Student 45).

Because of the focus of this study, further inquiry and cross-referencing into nodes such as "what was happening when an experience took place" and "the experience" allowed me to learn more about the described experiences that took place in schools. I uncovered that 13 experiences were directly tied to a variety of microaggressions (Pierce, 1988) as discussed earlier in this chapter. One that really shocked me was "I have been in racial issues because at school the guy was telling me that I suck and am damned because I'm Latina, so I told him that what he tells me—I won't care because I am happy with who I am and what I am" (Student 82). Research tells us that these kinds of repeated racial microaggressions cause stress (Pierce, 1988).

Additionally, further uncovering gave a look at the role of teachers in the racialized experiences. In a few instances, teachers have led students in conversations regarding immigration which have led to H/L students being singled out or the recipient of racial microaggressions. "I was in my speech class and some chick gave a speech about immigration and everyone started arguing about it and I started fighting with half

the class about it and it made me cry" (Student 56); "Last year in my social studies class, we were having a debate about illegal immigrants when a white student made the comment of all Mexicans are illegal or not should go back to Mexico" (Student 28). These experiences spoke to specific needs in schools. What support do teachers need to address current events in culturally responsive ways? How do we set up racially-charged conversations so that H/L youth or other students of color feel safe and do not get hurt? How do teachers learn to discern that such comments allow the majoritarian story to prevail?

As a final wondering about the "where" node, I wondered about the age group of the respondents related to their understanding of the experiences. Where undergraduate college students' experiences with racial microaggressions have been researched (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009), reporting of 8th-12th grade middle and high school students' experiences is newer to research. Additionally, I questioned if responding to the open-ended question as part of the program application sponsored by the school district might have made students more or less willing to state a potential racialized experience within schools versus speaking to the broader community.

**Community**. Twenty-seven of the 42 reported experiences took place in locations within the community of study, such as a place of retail, entertainment, government or non-profit buildings, open space (n = 6), workplace, or "everywhere" (Student 6). One student described the racialized experiences as taking place "in our community" (Student 76). Of those in the community category, retail included the highest number of reports of racialized experiences (10). Retail included places such as malls, clothing and grocery stores, and restaurants. Examples included students being followed by retail employees or

being harassed by others in these areas, such as, "Not too long ago me and some friends went shopping. A lady that worked there kept on following us to see if we were going to steal anything" (student 11). While generally youth may respond with this similar example, Peggy McIntosh (1988) connects this experience to her conversations of unpacking white privilege as it is a less common experience for Whites as a group to be followed by store owners and workers than it is for people of color. Additionally, it has been defined as an example of a racial microaggression when "a person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 276).

Five of the 42 relayed racialized experiences took place in non-profit and government locations such as "at the hospital" (Student 46), city utility building (Student 21), "library" (Student 74), retirement community, and at the police station (Student 57). While many may not consider these community spaces to be likened to schools, scholars encourage educators to consider the sociocultural and sociopolitical context in which schooling resides (Nieto, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). To further understand this context, I am reminded by an educational reform advocate from a website "… we cannot touch the [educational] system without touching the culture of the surrounding town; everything that goes on inside a school is tied to local attitudes, values, traditions, and beliefs" (Vollmer, 2010, para. 1).

**When**

Next, for students who reported a racialized experience, uncovering "When" racialized experiences took place may be important for those in the mainstream who want to clarify the duration and repetition of the experiences. Reporting of experiences

described as a single time is not intended to minimize the experience, I ask readers to consider the depth of the sample and the time within which the study occurred. Thirty-one of the responses state a specific instance, by responding to the application question "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity." For example, "We were hanging out and this lady yelled at us to go back to Mexico" (Student 2). Yet, eight of the respondents used language that reflected multiple times or noted "sometimes" (Student 15). Another example alludes to the reality of this shared experience created by individual voices, "The time that I got confronted with a racial comment was when I was at school but mostly everywhere I am people would tell me racial comments" (Student 6). This statement is powerful in that it reflects what CRT scholars have listed as a major tenet of CRT, racism is a common experience for most people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Because most does not reflect all, the number of respondents stating they have had no experience related to their race or ethnicity were coded as "None" (n = 9). Examples of such comments included, "My family and I don't really have any problems with our racial background" (Student 5) and "I haven't experienced this" (Student 37). An interesting note included a student coded under none who simultaneously recognizes racialized experiences take place, "There was never a time, but I want all the racial comments to stop" (Student 72). This comment reflected his/her awareness of the racialized experiences of youth, even though the student did not report a specific situation of being racialized as an individual, thereby, affirming the permanence of racism.

**Context for Racialized Experiences**

While the descriptive statistics and tables noting frequencies are useful to build a

basic context of the data, what was happening when the reported racialized experience

took place provides a richer context for the descriptions of the experiences. Categorizing

the wide range of contexts in which the experiences took place proved challenging. Some

participants provided depth and others relayed the experiences more superficially. The

examples provide additional context to racialized experiences that Whites may not know

exist (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Table 10 lists the experiences that included more

depth. Examples are students' shared reflections on being one of the only H/L students in

school, confronting race and ethnicity within family or community expectations, and

facing the complex challenges of being multi-racial.

Table 10

*Context of Racialized Experience*

| What was happening | Number of reports |
| --- | --- |
| Being one of the only | 6 |
| Community expectations | 3 |
| Shopping | 2 |
| Being multi-racial | 2 |
| Conversation of immigration | 2 |
| Family expectations | 1 |
| Hanging out | 1 |
| Negative past experience | 1 |

**Being one of the only.** A student referred to attending "an all-white school"

(Student 43) and another refers to this similar dilemma experienced by a family member,

"My brother was one of the only Hispanics in the school at that time, so it was difficult

having to go through that alone" (Student 32). These students' sentiments are affirmed in

Yosso et al. (2009) research related to "the heightened awareness and stress associated with being the racial Other" (p. 667). These findings and the research connect back to the necessity for teachers to know their students as individuals to fully address their needs (Viadero, 1996; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Without this understanding, students may be experiencing pain and sense of isolation based in a variety of cultural identities, some visible and others invisible, and their needs go overlooked.

**Family and Community Expectations.** These were coded with consideration for the expectations people are often held to, which may be based in cultural values. An example of a student confronting race and ethnicity within family included "My brother's wife's family disowned her because they didn't want a Mexican to date their daughter or be a part of their family" (Student 36). An example from school is a student understanding the low expectations that others may impart include, "One time when I was in sixth grade my friend was told to pick up the supplies from the other children and he called her a maid so then I asked him about it and he said he called her that because of the color of her skin and then we discussed it with the counselor and they made him apologize" (Student 44). These types of experiences when viewed as racial microaggressions are understood to produce "feelings of degradation, and erosion of self-confidence and self-image" (Pierce, 1969, p. 31). Despite the cultural values and norms that some students bring with them from home, media, and community, how can schools successfully intervene in these situations, so that students of color are not forced to live out the stereotypes held by teachers or their student peers?

**Being Multi-racial.** In Census 2010, people had the option to self-identify with two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Schools must now address this as well,

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but it is typically a conversation related to identification in the school registration process. Hearing the stories of the complexity of being bi-racial or multi-racial, particularly for H/L students as understood in this study, is not always considered. Here two students share their insights.

> My culture represents several racial/ethnic backgrounds. I feel that the experiences that I have faced that people have shown racism, express very uneducated thoughts and stereo-types raised through anger, judgment, and assumption through segregation. Our community needs more education and a broader outlook on what each culture has to offer our society. However through residing in two homes, one my father's is primarily of an American home with all the traditional white man values and responsibilities. I also hold a place in my mother's home that represents the Hispanic cultures as the man of the house and great responsibility. I have found a way to combine my way of life through distinguishing the different requirements that are expected from me and practicing my behavior and lifestyle to form the person I want to be. (Student 77)

Another student shares an experience of being bi-racial. "Being half Latino, I have faced racist comments and exclusion from both sides. I feel that I am always having to prove who I am to the world and that sometimes they don't understand or will not listen" (Student 99). Hearing and responding to the voices and experiences of multi-racial students can support the ability of teachers, schools, and parents to better support their needs particularly when there is a cultural clash (Viadero, 1996) or a cultural mismatch (Gregory et al., 2010) between child and adult.

### Summary of Archival Data Findings

The low-level coding revealed that 95% of the students (N = 105) over a four year time period referenced an experience (n = 100) of when they or someone they knew had been racialized in schools or in a variety of community locations. The negative experiences included experiences of things said (verbal) or something done (action). The experiences characterized by verbal delivery were categorized as racial comments, based

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in national origin, language spoken, skin color, or income level. The actions included being judged, labeled, discriminated against, and excluded from participation and/or opportunities. The descriptions included information about who was racialized, who racialized the student reporting, where, when, additional context, and how the experience was responded to.

The findings demonstrate the depth and breadth of racialized experiences described by middle and high school age students in North Colorado over the four-year period supporting the tenet of CRT, the permanence of racism. The findings support an additional tenet of CRT as the intersectionality of race and ethnicity is described in the racialized experiences to include perceived national origin, home language, skin color, and perceived family income. The racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1988) were widespread and can be linked to social, emotional, and academic outcomes.

**Focus Groups**

The analytic questions that guided the development of focus group questions included "In what ways are the experiences in the archival data similar or different to the focus group data?" "What patterns related to aspects of racialized experiences will be uncovered?" and "What more can be learned from the triangulated data?" This section is presented by the four focus group questions related to the experiences as similarities, additions, differences, and suggested changes (See Appendix C). The four sections follow the line of questioning to allow readers to follow the process used for analyses.

As qualitative researchers know, a planned questioning protocol also shifts and melds conversations of focus group participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000). For example, when a new topic or way of considering an experience was introduced, I asked probing

questions that led me away from the protocol for a time, but always reiterated one of the four questions to guide the process and obtain consistent and reliable data. Additionally, I share my reflective journal entries to let readers understand the process I went through as a Latina educational researcher in the analysis process as I was so close to the participants and often their experiences. Additionally, the entries are samples of autoethnographic poetry. The full process of the focus groups is described in more detail in chapter three, but to create context for the findings, a brief overview is offered here.

The focus groups had three stages where (1) I introduced participants to the research topic and a description of focus group process; (2) I shared highlights from the archival data; and (3) I provided handouts with the questions and the recording began. The first focus group held in February 2011 consisted of three participants, one male (13 years old) and two females (15 years old). While a small group, their responses indicated they were familiar with the complexity of the research topic and demonstrated high-levels of personal experience (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The second focus group held in March 2011 included five participants, of these 2 were males (15 and 17 years old) and 3 were female (two were 15 and one was 16 years old).

All participants were of H/L background, but I purposely requested each student to fill in their race/ethnicity (along with other demographic information such as age, grade level, and gender) on the handout because I acknowledge that the term Hispanic/Latino (H/L) is a broad federally-designated term used in education, and it clearly did not match the self-reporting by this group. To illustrate, of the two sets of focus group participants, six self-identified as Mexican, one as Hispanic, and one as Latino. Oboler (1992) refers to the complexities and layers that racial identity and

labeling incur based on aspects of culture. She advocates for further exploration of Latino identity. As the focus groups began, students asked me questions about what they should write on the line with regards to their racial and ethnic identity. This questioning resonates with research that has shown ethnic identity of adolescents has been problematized by dominant culture and in systems, it often goes unexamined, but proves useful when young people have a strong ethnic identity (Martinez & Dukes, 1997). In the brief moments preparing the focus groups, I had an opportunity to respond to the students' questions as I described the historical connotations behind terms such as Mexican, Mexican American, Chicana/o, Tejana/o, Hispanic, and Latina/o. They looked relieved and filled out their own demographic identitiers on the handout as we began the focus groups. Yet, the reports of racialized experiences found in the archival data and the focus groups provide examples of the ways that dominant culture and schools as systems problematize ethnicity. And, the fact that several were distraught, frustrated, mad, and sad about the experiences caused me to wonder about their opportunities to examine their ethnic identity in supportive ways.

**Similar Experiences**

The first focus group question asked, "From the information you heard (described experiences), how have your experiences been similar or different?" The themes found that described experiences as actions done or comments said (See Appendix D) were shared in the opening part of the focus group. Several responded to the first question "Same" (Student 8). One student expanded her response as

> I think we've all had similar experiences, especially [in] the ones in school. A lot of students, mostly the Caucasian students don't really understand that what they say really does effect us. So, they speak without thinking. So they all tell us things like that, without really knowing who we are. (Student 1)

Overwhelmingly, the students reported their experiences were similar to the described experiences from the archival data in which they were recipients of racial comments related to their skin color, language spoken, and times when they became targeted in their classrooms due to anti-immigrant sentiment, and experiences in which they were stereotyped, judged, and discriminated against.

In response to the first question, one student shared his experience with racial comments in gym class related to being Mexican and his skin color. When I probed, "So other students in gym class will tell you that?" The student responded, "Yeah, or around the school." Throughout the focus group this particular student, as did others, had multiple experiences and encounters within the community and in his school because of his race and ethnicity. For example, he continued the first line of thought stating, "World history…Actually, there we know there are racist people because they talk about Mexicans every time…they are saying they came here only because of the work and then they don't get work because of us, like we are getting all the work" (Student 8). Another student reflected on similar experiences "And when we read another book it was talking about immigrants they [students] automatically started talking about Mexicans. Like it's not like they [Mexicans] are the only immigrants, you know, but that is the first thing that comes to mind and that's sad" (Student 6).

As an additional example of similar experiences being stereotyped, labeled, and discriminated against a student shared an emotional memory of her experience in the past school year.

> There was that one experience when we got off the bus one day, off the school bus. There was this guy who was chasing us with a big branch, or stick. He was swinging it and said, 'You little Mexicans, I know you tagged up my shed.' He

thought we had spray painted his shed and he was swinging the stick at us. So, I guess judging just because we are Mexican or other that we had something to do with what happened to his stuff. I guess there was gang writing or something and he was stereotyping that just because we are Mexicans we are in gangs. (Student 1)

What a frightening experience for the students to be threatened by this individual on their route to and from school! While I often wonder about students walking to school in the rain or snow in the spring or winter months in Colorado, I also think about the students who experienced this on their route to school. How does one overcome this experience? How do schools encourage attendance when students are victims of "overt racism" (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p. 5) before they arrive at school? An additional experience shared in response to the first focus group question illustrated the shared concern students had with teachers in their classrooms.

> Like someone says about the teachers like how they offended them—I was in class one day. There was a student who was American who said something and he didn't say it right. So, I said, 'That's not how you say it. You say it like this…' The teacher looked at me and said, 'Oh my God! You corrected him and *you're* Mexican!' It was like she was surprised and trying to say I can't speak English well or something. That same teacher said during [parent-teacher] conferences, she said 'How come you don't raise your hand a lot? Is it 'cuz you have an accent? Or because you don't like to talk a lot 'cuz you are afraid you have an accent and stuff?' It offended me because I don't think I have an accent. Just because I'm Mexican it doesn't mean I can't talk right! (Student 2)

The student recognized the similarity in being stereotyped and the racial comments she endured based on the teacher's low expectations and limited understanding of students from Mexico. She shared a third instance with the same teacher from her middle school "Another time there was this girl. She said like a slang word (stop and thinking). I can't remember what she said, but then then she [the teacher] said 'We aren't here to be talking Mexican…you're not in Mexico'" (Student 2). The focus group allowed for much more

of this in-depth experience to be shared as I could ask probing questions to develop a rich description of each experience.

One student mentioned a difference that was remarkable in the setting as he shared that at times racial comments had been used as compliments in his experience such as, " I get a lot of stuff because I'm Mexican, but I take it as a compliment. I don't think it's bad, like, my friends say, 'Oh, I love your skin color.' I'm just like, 'Thanks!' Because I really do, I love my skin color. I wouldn't want to be white. I'm proud. I really am" (Student 7). He was the only student to express experiencing racial comments in a positive way, and students in the group shook their heads in disagreement as he described his experiences. It was as though they did not share this experience. We spoke about the context of understanding when racial comments can be perceived in positive ways and when they are negative.

**Additions to Experiences**

While the experiences were considered to be similar, the focus groups allowed for further probing and for additional knowledge and insights to be uncovered and learned from the students. The second question in the focus group protocol (See Appendix C) was, "What would you like to add that would describe your personal experiences in schools?" Themes related to immigration, teachers' roles, and racism in school.

**Immigration.** While the archival data revealed that immigration was a source of negative racial comments, the focus groups revealed additional ways immigration was a targeted source of pain to the students. For example, people asked students about his/her and their family's immigration status.

> "At school one time I was talking to one of my friends…and this girl was like, 'Oh, is your grandma illegal?' She just kept asking: 'Is your mom and dad

illegal?' I said 'no' because that is the truth, but why are you asking that? 'I have seen illegals before, but I've never turned them in or anything.' That's what she said! I thought it was kinda rude to ask [voice quiets]. That's kind of personal. I didn't really know her, so [voice drifts off with sadness on her face]." (Student 2)

The transcript offers some insight into the body language that was demonstrated and the sadness in her voice, but it is difficult for us to fully understand the context of fear in which many H/L students live when they are questioned in this manner. The account of the experience demonstrates the normalization of questioning about immigrant status, and when it happens over and over again, the anti-immigrant sentiment is lived. Additionally, it was found to be held by teachers. "My teachers asked me [like] where I was from. I know that what she was kinda getting at is if I'm illegal or not. She asked, 'So where did you move to [name of city] from?' I said, 'I was born in [name of city where study took place].' She said, 'No, no you're not, no you're not. Where did you come from?' I said, 'I was born here.'" (Student 1). Citizenship holds a sense of belonging that many do not have (P. Collins, 1998), and when questioned it can bear tremendous pain for individuals and communities. These examples support understanding the sociopolitical context in which education takes place for H/L youth and the perceived threats of citizenship they endure.

Additional to the individual questioning, focus group participants reported that class lessons and classroom discussion warm-ups are embedded with controversial topics such as immigration to get students to engage. Yet, when immigration is discussed, it feels that others in the classroom only think and talk about Mexicans as immigrants. "But these guys hate Mexicans so they start talking. It's not like they talk about people that come to the United States including Mexicans or Asians, or some other persons, these people *only* start talking about Mexicans" (Student 8). The "talking" referred to here is

negative talk and the students feel targeted, unsupported, and unsafe in classroom settings.

> "…in Civics, we like also have classes where we talk about things such as immigration and stuff and people always like bring Mexicans into it. Then they start stereotyping Mexicans and they start putting Mexicans into these little categories and stuff and what they do…and they start labeling us and I feel that if someone were to talk about an African American [that way], I feel that's not really tolerable obviously, but you know what I mean. I don't know how to explain it. (Student 7)

While the classroom discussions began with immigration, the students felt targeted and were left to their own devices to understand and comprehend stereotyping and labeling. Additionally, this student picked up on a significant issue when he questioned if it is seemingly tolerated to stereotype and label Mexicans openly in a classroom when he felt that when if this behavior took place related to African Americans, it would not be tolerated in a school setting. He raises the very issue of the racial dichotomy which has existed between African Americans and whites, and has expanded to Latinos (Hernandez-Truyol, 1999; Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Yosso et al., 2009) described as

> Americans have held views of race relations that were dichotomized into black and white. Thus, across the country one can find that Blacks have developed a strong sense of being members of subordinated social category called 'race,' but for Hispanics, location and population size have been major factors influencing their status as a minority group, and only recently have Hispanics been considered in national discussions of race and ethnicity. (Martinez & Dukes, 1997, p. 513)

The students' perspective acknowledges the complexity of moving forward in those very conversation that LatCrit purports which are a challenge for all of us, and particularly daunting for a high school aged student grappling with the racism in school classrooms.

The socio-political context in which education takes place is important to understand and respond to in classrooms (Nieto, 2000). An example includes a national

and local anti-immigrant sentiment which manifested in actions as described by a student when another student taunted her in a class debate about immigration. The following day he returned to school wearing a t-shirt stating "Go back to Mexico". She described her feelings about what took place, "They didn't make him take it off. He wore it the whole day. He was like laughing and pointing at you and at the shirt. If you were Hispanic, he would point at you" (Student 1). This makes me question school dress codes limiting alcoholic messages or imagery, but do they include racist epithets?

The anti-immigrant sentiment across the United States can lead to devastating results as identified in a special report, Marcelo Lucero, an Ecuadorian immigrant, was murdered in the town of Patchogue, NY by whites who "targeted Latino residents as part of a sport they termed 'beaner-hopping'" (Potok, 2008, p. 5). This national problem includes the growing frequency of anti-Latino hate crimes referenced, as well as an anti-immigrant sentiment referred to by focus group participants. School policy, practice, and people in schools can address this.

**Teachers' role.** Another area that the focus groups revealed more deeply than the archival data was the role of teachers in classrooms. Unfortunately, at times, teachers were found to be ones that made stereotypical, prejudicial, or racist comments as shared earlier in this section. At other times, focus group participants spoke to the concern when a teacher did not step in to stop other students' racist comments. I inquired about this in both focus groups by asking "And, when those kinds of things have happened [racial comments by students], was there a teacher there?" Answers included "Yeah, but she doesn't say anything." (Student 6) or "She [the teacher] likes to hear the

conversation…the teacher is only standing there and watching…the teacher is only watching, she doesn't tell the students to stop" (Student 8).

Students also discussed the teacher's role when they became trapped in classroom debates about immigration, and perhaps ground rules to create safety were not set in place. For example, when a student was the only Mexican in the classroom defending immigrants, the teacher never intervened. "He was just in the middle. He wouldn't pick a side. He said he couldn't, but it was not a good topic to choose because of the student population that was in that class, I guess" (Student 1). Additionally, students question a teachers' racist tendencies when they do not intervene.

> Like even if they agree with it, it's not right, you know? I guess you can speak, well you know how there's freedom of speech or whatever, I think that's good to have that, but it's disrespectful to say things that hurt other people and just make you feel better just 'cuz you're talking. And for like a teacher not to do nothing about it—it's like you didn't know they were thinking that way. Maybe you thought he was just mean, but maybe he's, you know, racist. (Student 6)

Her reference to this kind of acceptance of hate speech as supported by the Constitution was alarming to me as a researcher, as P. Collins (1998) describes "engaging in racist hate speech is not just expressing your opinion. Such speech is designed to belittle, humiliate and tell African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans that they are worthless and will never amount to anything" (p. 924). Additionally, the experience can be noted as 'covert racism' in which it takes place in less obvious or almost hidden ways (Scheurich & Young, 1997), yet the harmful impact is still felt by students.

An important revelation was, "It does impact like your relationship with them and like how you look at them because you see that they're biased, and you're just like, well, you don't give them much credibility" (Student 7). This statement reinforced the earlier

considered literature describing the ways culture impacts the teaching and learning

processes (Gay, 2000). I infer from the research and the students' voices, when teachers

stay silent or do not step in and stop racist comments in schools, the students impacted by

the racism are marginalized and left further behind. Covarrubias (2008) found this to be

true in documenting the narratives of college-aged American Indian students.

> Discriminatory silence practices have gone largely unchecked despite their
> centrality to how education is lived moment to moment by many students of
> color. Also insufficiently checked are the ways that educators use silence in their
> classrooms, albeit unknowingly, that result in perpetuating the marginalization of
> underrepresented peoples. (Covarrubias, 2008, p. 229)

This echoes Valenzuela's (1999) understanding of 'caring' as she states

> The predominantly non-Latino teaching staff sees students as not sufficiently
> caring about school, while students see teachers as not sufficiently caring for
> them. Teachers expect students to demonstrate caring about school with an
> abstract, or aesthetic commitment to ideas or practices that purportedly leads to
> achievement. Immigrant and U.S. born [Latino] youth on the other hand are
> committed to an authentic form of caring that emphasizes relations of reciprocity
> between teachers and students. (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 61)

While work to understand 'caring' from additional cultural lenses as described by

Valenzuela may take time and a culturally responsive lens, teachers can take steps to

ensure a safe space. As a first step, teachers could set ground rules prior to hot topic

classroom discussions or organized debates, to ensure the emotional and psychological

safety of each student. Yet, the greater work is for teachers to understand the role of the

majoritarian story, and to assist in deconstructing it by being more inclusive of truth as

relayed by students of color. This can begin with an understanding of power in the

classroom.

Focus group participants also commented on how issues of power were enacted in

classrooms (Delpit, 1988). "Well, you know how teachers like pick out their certain kids

they like, and then the rest of us, it's like- whatever! I know she knows I don't like her

and she gives me attitude back. It just makes it worse when she doesn't stop it [the racist comments]. It just makes me not like her even more" (Student 5). Teachers' lack of response to racism adds an additional layer to the disconnect between the student and teacher that the teacher may not be fully aware of, particularly when a teacher and student do not share the same ethnic background (Davis, 2007; G. Howard, 2006; Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

**Discipline in schools.** Additionally, there was much discussion by the focus group participants in regard to inequitable school discipline processes. Six of the eight participants spoke about inequities in upholding school policy as they identified "between American students and Mexican students". In one of the focus groups, several, but not all, students knew each other and had been attending the same schools for consecutive years, they became visibly and verbally frustrated by the experiences they had in schools related to discipline. Interactions were with teachers, principals, and school resource officers.

> Yah, it's like the when like the white guys are like doing something wrong the teacher doesn't say anything. But they only see like a Mexican, us, and they are like, "You aren't supposed to be doing this and this," so we don't get it because the teachers are seeing the other guys like doing some really bad stuff and they don't' say anything- they only go to us. (Student 8)

They reported that they were often quick to be judged, accused of being gang-related (a further offense), and threatened to receive increased levels of discipline quicker than their white peers.

> In seventh grade, I got in a fight with this girl, and when I had to go talk to the cop he pulled out an article that said "gang affiliations" and there were Mexicans. It was a picture of Mexicans. And he said that since I'm Mexican and my friends are Mexicans… and the other girl was alone at the time…they automatically thought we jumped her. (Student 6)

This affirms the recent research of inequities found in discipline practices such as selection of discipline and sanctioning, which are often culturally driven, and is another concern in schools (Gregory et al., 2010). The perception of this inequity is discussed in an earlier study of urban Chicano students in which "they felt that teachers often overlooked or judged these same behaviors acceptable for White students" (Hernández Sheets, 2002, p. 113). To positively impact such practices, teachers and schools need a "willingness to affirm cultural traditions that are not Anglo-Saxon, or else be afraid not to do so" (Rist, 1974, p. 61). Being conscious of racial microaggressions that take place in schools is an important step for all teachers, administrators and staff to commit to.

**Racism in schools.** As the archival data showed, students have been racialized and have experienced a wide range of racial microaggressions and discrimination in schools and classrooms. The focus groups built on the locations in communities and schools that were addressed in the archival data and added locations and detailed accounts of similar incidents. Many of the patterns found were consistent with the archival data and new ones included school-related incidents described in the community, parent-teacher conferences, classrooms, gymnasium, and field trips. Many of these have been described throughout this section of the chapter, but the field trip experience is shared here.

> We went to a field trip out to [Community College] and all the high schools in this district went to go see it because they have high school programs over there. So, all the schools were together. When [one school] came, there are a lot of Hispanics there I guess, and then these American kids said, "Here come all the beaners" and stuff. (Student 2)

While teachers, principals, and school counselors work hard to create multiple educational opportunities for students through scheduling, classroom instruction, and

field trips, how can they prepare for these types of incidents? Are the adults in attendance aware of the incidents? And, how can they demonstrate their support for H/L students in standing up against racist comments?

**Different Experiences**

The third question was "Based on your personal experiences, what do you disagree with that you heard in the described experiences?" The disagreement came related to an example that was shared from the archival data. An emotional response of being sad was referenced, and a focus group participant stated, "I don't think people should be sad, I just think that people should just stand up for themselves" (Student 1). This brought up conversations about how they themselves would respond to hearing racial comments or enduring racial discrimination in their schools. For example, "I just think that people should just stand up for themselves" (Student 1) or "Just know your true self like in your heart, don't listen to what they say because you know who you really are and no one else knows" (Student 2). The way that each person described his/her responses to racialized experiences remained the difference in experience and brought up continued conversation.

**Responding to Racism**

All of the students were emotionally and verbally responsive to the archival data and the focus group comments made by their peers. One of the themes that came up in analyzing the focus group transcripts was related to the way the students responded. Despite the frustration, students talked about their ideas of how to respond to racial microaggressions. One student stated, "Just ignore it, not believe what they say. It's not true" (Student 2). Another student described his grappling with the right response

"Sometimes I feel angry but I try not to because I realize some people say that Mexicans do a lot of stuff, bad stuff…and I'm like, '*No,* the Mexicans *aren't* that way!' I'm trying to make them see another side about what they think about us (Student 8).

More often than not, these young people were put in positions were they felt they represent their racial and ethnic group and were required to or felt compelled to defend Mexicans as a group. An example included a student who was in a conversation with a neighbor

> Yeah, it's the same way, I have a neighbor and he tells me that he was a veteran and that he fought for the army… He was like, "Yeah, and then the Mexicans are in jail and then we're paying for them to eat in jail". I tell him actually "Mexicans work and they are the ones that pay." But, I don't want to keep saying more because I am Mexican and I know how he feels so I stop the conversation and leave. I leave. (Student 8)

The dilemma of responding directly to an offender or confronting others is consistent with the research, "If they confront their assailants, victims of microaggressions often expend additional energy and time defending themselves against accusations of being 'too sensitive'" (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 661).

When I probed about his feelings about the issues faced, a student described it this way, "I feel bad. I know. We know. We are Mexicans. They say a lot of stuff that Mexicans do this stuff, but actually we are the Mexicans. We do a lot of stuff for the U.S.A. to help them not to destroy them" (Student 8). The word destroyed was compelling in its gravity, especially when used as a juxtaposition to helping. What a horrible way to walk through the world—thinking, feeling, sensing, and getting messages that people feel you are in the world to destroy others even though you see your family working really hard.

Stress due to microaggressions was first addressed by Pierce (1969) with regards to Blacks and later inclusiveness in the workplace (1988). It is noted by others (Sue et al., 2007, Yosso et al., 2009) that stress caused by oppression is consistent among other populations of color as well, and it is seen in the participant's statement. This student also shared experiences earlier that led to his conclusion. He reflected with sadness on his face that in walking to the city library on multiple occasions, he was yelled at by passer-byers. He was shocked that "only for being Mexican" they could be screaming at him. His self-doubt and questioning of being singled out is consistent with current research on racial microaggressions faced in community settings (Sue et al., 2007).

Psychologists "submit that not doing anything has the potential to result in psychological harm. It may mean a denial of one's experiential reality, dealing with a loss of integrity, or experiencing pent up anger and frustration likely to take psychological and physical tolls" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 279). Loss of integrity and built up anger and frustration are shown in a student response, "It's dumb, like I don't know, it gets me mad…I would understand other types of problems, but why go there? Why your race? I'm not telling you anything for being white, don't be telling me anything for being Mexican!" (Student 5). She was verbally reflecting her anger that someone feels the right to attack her is an aspect of her core identity—her race.

My experience working in schools as an advocate and coordinator for diversity in the district where this study took place taught me that there is often no safe place in schools for students to discuss the race-related issues. To address this concern, I asked

> So I wonder about that. What's the tipping point, or the breaking point for each of you when it comes to being called the names, or having things happen in the classroom, or being somewhere in the community and in schools particularly, like what's the breaking point? At what point?

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The reactions were rapid fire, everyone wanted to talk at once, discussing where

and when the comments or actions take place, to people's faces, or behind one's back, but

ultimately feeling like the people around them have mostly only negative connections to

Mexicans. The discussion went like this:

> "People don't really say stuff at school anymore." (Student 5)
> "They don't say it to your face." (Student 4)
> "They say it behind your back." (Student 8)
> "That's what makes it harder, too. It's hard!" (Student 5)
> "Actually, when I moved here to Colorado…when I walk to the library…some white guys start screaming stuff" (Student 8).

Despite the many examples already discussed, there was discussion about how overt

racism was which connects to Scheurich and Young's (1997) article in which they state

"Racial bias or racism is typically understood in popular culture and in academia in terms

of individual acts of overt prejudice that are racially based, i.e. *overt racism*" [emphasis

by author] (pp. 4-5). A student reminds his peers that this is still very overt—it is not only

behind their backs. He was visibly saddened by reflecting on the experience.

> …When you hear Mexicans or different color skin…you could see there are different kinds but people always go for the bad, like they always think the wrong side. They don't see the people who come here and work. There's a big problem with gangs and drug dealers, but they always go from the negative stuff and they assume that everybody's the same. So like, it's not just in one place it's like I guess everywhere…people make it seem like its [racist comments] right because we are in their country." (Student 5)

The internalized racism became evident with this statement and the depth and gravity of

the experiences endured. She went on to talk about her tipping point as she commented

on the frustration she felt at times "I personally can only take so much, you know what I

mean, like if, you know, you push somebody and push somebody, then it's gonna come

out eventually" (Student 5). Her feelings highlighted my belief that race must be

considered as more than a variable in educational outcome reporting. It impacts the way students are received in schools and what they experienced.

**Changes Suggested**

"Not only do students appreciate the chance to share their insights, but, as they have told me, they also find it empowering" (Pizarro, 2005, p. 260). According to Pizarro (2005), to support this empowerment, students must be engaged in analysis of power and the ways power has led to their silencing in schools. Many of the documented experiences shared by the students demonstrate the silencing process, and the focus groups allowed for conversations and affirmations of the experiences students have encountered. To allow students' voices to contribute to suggested change, the fourth question in the focus group was, "What changes would you suggest for schools to keep the described experiences from happening to others?" Generally, the students' body language and at times, shaking heads, seemed to lead to a certain amount of frustration or sadness with being asked a seemingly insurmountable question that could not be answered. Eventually, both groups suggested three main changes that could be enacted.

First, finding ways to help students and staff know each other better seemed like a possible solution. Students suggested getting the school together to do activities and get to know each other. "If you do team building activities or something then I don't think that we would get stereotyped as much. I know it will still happen, but if we all talk we would all be floaters and talk to everyone and not just our friends" (Student 1). In the first focus group, other students agreed and felt "I think they would stop because they would know what you have gone through and everything in the past and [what] could still be going on in the future and they [would] want to help you" (Student 3).

A second idea was finding ways to create a more "positive outlook on Hispanics" (Student 7), and to defy the myths and stereotypes by teaching others about H/Ls. "Prove them wrong…Yeah, like have examples...that there are Mexicans that did this and that…rich Mexicans, so that Mexicans don't have to be poor and stuff like that, so it proves these stereotypes wrong" (Student 7).

Third, a few wondered about putting policies and rules in place that would not allow for negative racial comments. While there was initial doubt in one focus group "I don't think if schools made a rule for, you know, to stop this, I don't think it would stop. I don't think it would help" (Student 5). They discussed it more and students shared that they felt like the rules were already in place but the consequences did not inhibit the behavior. "If there is a rule about it and they break it but yet nothing happens to them-- they just get a talk, why would they stop?" (Student 5). If discipline is culturally-laden as suggested by Gregory et al. (2010), the concern is multi-layered. Multiple examples of times where school rules related to dress codes, public display of affection, and tardiness were enforced inequitably, so the creation of rules without equitable enforcement of consequences did not seem to be an effective strategy. It would require school policy, practice, and all school community members to implement and sustain a bias-free learning environment.

Despite the ideas suggested, students in both focus groups felt that racial microaggressions and acts of discrimination would not stop. "I don't think all of them would stop…Like even if they know your story, I don't know, like they don't like other races maybe, and that's just the way they are" (Student 2). With the number of stories they each shared, and the reflection on the way Mexicans as a group are treated, they

seemed to be clear about how they have been problematized in communities and schools

and what people expected of them based on the way they are treated (Martinez & Dukes,

1997). Regardless of being a high-achieving H/L in an elite academic program or holding

a 100% in a class, some peers would act surprised or dismiss their achievements,

assuming they had been given a favor. "They think we can't do it, like we're not smart

enough or something" (Student 2). These experiences support findings related to

undergraduate college students where it was found that "Nonverbal microaggressions in

academic spaces reinforce the sense that white students believe themselves to be

intellectually superior to Latinas/os" (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 668).

Students demonstrated a definite sense of inability to change a system and its'

policy, practices, or the people who make up the system. One participant stated her

frustration with the possibility of White people's ability to comprehend the problem.

> I don't think they would understand. You know how they say you could be saying
> something but it's more than just words. They're never gonna understand, I mean,
> its' not like they're gonna change color or be Mexican… Nobody's ever gonna
> tell them, 'Oh, you're white, you know, Go back to America'. We're in America!
> You know what I mean?.. I don't' think it's gonna change anything. I don't."
> (Student 6)

### Summary of Focus Group Analyses as Connected to Archival Data

The focus groups allowed for more recent and in-depth descriptions of

experiences, two opportunities to uncover fuller stories of students' racialized

experiences in schools. They also allowed me to focus on the students' personal

experiences, in contrast to *someone they knew*. Consistent with the archival data,

participants in the focus groups reported significant racialized experiences. All (n = 8)

focus group participants reported their own personal experiences of being racialized in

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schools and most included multiple references. Themes and patterns were found related to immigration, teachers' role, school discipline, and racism in schools.

The two focus groups mirrored research experiences described as "Through our focus groups, students realized they were not alone in experiencing rude remarks, nonverbal insults, and other racial incidents. Just as we listened to them, they listened to one another" (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 665). I believe the youth were empowered by their participation in the process sharing their stories and their voices. Additional information was reported including differences from the archival data, thoughts on responding to the racialized experiences, and suggestions for schools to make changes to keep the racialized experiences from happening to others. Students also described their concerns of whether or not change is possible in schools based on their very personal and painful experiences shared. The implications of the findings will be shared in chapter five.

### Poetic Analysis

In education, the majoritarian story relies on the perspective of education from a dominant culture adult lens. Students of color and other marginalized groups are most often referred to as a variable in data reporting. Schools operate on a strong color-blind theory which does not allow race to be at the center of conversations in comfortable ways. The students' voices are captured and presented in research poems to emancipate and legitimate their voices as H/L secondary students who have much to share. The students' voices as found in the research poems provide great knowledge to guide schools in reform processes when they are listened and attended to. The poems provide a counterstory to the mainstream story that is traditionally held in regards to student experiences in middle and high school in the United States.

**Poems**

In my research, I found several counterstories were built as composite counterstories (e.g., Yosso, 2006; Yosso et al., 2009). The poems offered here demonstrate a risk in meshing ABR with CRT: inviting a new type of creativity into the CRT realm. As shown, poems can be used as a form of counterstory. Each of the poems will be followed by a brief description of how each was created with my insights described. To liberate the voices, both of the students and my own—I present data and research experience poems.

**Data Poems**

<u>Racism</u>

There are racist people--

in my school.

At school.

 In his school,

at my school.



They start stereotyping Mexicans--

In my social studies class,

In Spanish class,

At lunch,

in my speech class,

gym class.

In the same class.

In school—around the school.


Mostly everywhere I am.


These guys hate the Mexicans--

It's not just

in one place.

It's everywhere.

Anywhere you look—

That's what you're gonna see.


     The data poem "Racism" includes lines directly from the transcripts and

rearranged to share that students in schools are conscious of the racism they face. All

lines including the title were taken from the students' words. The poem declares a strong

message aligning with the CRT tenet, the permanence of racism—from H/L middle and

high school students' voices.

Silenced

I hear them.



That bothers me.

It makes me sad.

I felt very upset.

I felt really bad.

I felt really mad.

It made me cry.



We are always

getting stereotyped.



I don't really say anything--

because I am Mexican and

I know how he feels.

So, I stop the conversation and leave.

I leave.

The data poem "Silenced" is lifted from transcripts and arranged to share the messages from the students becoming silenced in the schooling process, particularly around race. The title *Silenced* was not from the transcripts, but was a word I was reminded of through Delpits' (1988) article which illustrated the students' voices. Their feelings and emotions in the silencing process are also introduced in the poem.

She's only Watching

She doesn't

say anything.

Maybe she's deaf…

I don't know—No!,

She likes the conversation.



The teacher is

standing there

and watching.

She hears.

That teacher--

She's only watching.



She doesn't tell

students to stop.

She's only watching--

until the end.



Everybody is quiet—

so she can start

with another topic.


If they don't do anything—

I'm pretty sure,

it means they don't care.

They don't care *enough*.


That teacher—

She's only watching.

She doesn't tell

the students to stop.


     The data poem "She's only Watching" was created using the transcript from a

focus group discussion based on the question, "And when those kinds of things have

happened [racist comments in classrooms], was there a teacher there?" Several students

entered the discussion, and I moved lines from the transcript around to capture their

voices and feelings. The poem reveals Hispanic and Latina/o students' perspectives on

what it is like to sit in a desk in a classroom waiting for staff members to step in and stop

racist comments or behavior. Additionally, the words illustrate how teachers' silence

reinforces the status quo and racism in classrooms becomes normalized.

A Classroom Assignment

We were having

a debate--

about illegal immigrants.



Some chick

gave a speech--

about immigration.

Everyone started

arguing about it.



We were

having a discussion--

about the American culture.

People always

bring Mexicans into it…



Stereotyping Mexicans,

Putting Mexicans into

these little categories--

Labeling us.


You know,

we're not

the *only* immigrants

in the United States.


     This data poem "A Classroom Assignment" was created out of lines from the

transcripts to give a sense of how students perceive the classroom environment to become

a hostile learning environment as the topic of immigration causes them to be

"minoritized, racialized, and marginalized" (Cavanagh, 2009, p. 53). It emphasizes the

need for educators to be conscious of the implications of their instructional decisions as

related to cultural identities.

<u>Racism--It's **everywhere!**</u>

We were **hanging out**.

She had a bad experience

with Latinos, [so she] started

to take her anger out on us.

They went to a **restaurant**

and the servers said

they wouldn't feed them

because they were Hispanic.

The first time that my dad

tried to get a **job,**

he didn't get it.

The manager said

he didn't like Mexicans or Latinos.

I went shopping--

at a **store.**

We were followed.

We were accused of stealing.

She went to

an all white **school**.

She was told

To pick up the supplies

from the other children.

He called her a maid

because of the color of her skin.

Me and a few of my friends

weren't allowed

to be part of a **group**

because we were Mexican.

The boy told me

his **parents**

didn't like me

because I was Hispanic.

We thought

we were

just like them.

The only difference

was our **skin color**.


The data poem "Racism—It's **Everywhere**!" was created from the transcripts demonstrates the way racism follows the students. The power in identifying locations (bold in text) reminded me of the everyday experience that racism is for many H/L students in their schools and communities. As important is the opportunity for those who do not experience racism to hear the frequencies and magnitude of locations where racialized experiences take place. The last stanza reminds us that the 'location' is permanent for those with darker skin.

<u>My Identity—Bi-racial</u>

I personally look more

like my mom,

who is White

than my dad,

who is Mexican.



My culture

represents

several

racial/ethnic backgrounds.



I am always

having to prove

who I am

to the world.


The data poem "My Identity—Bi-racial" was created from transcripts. There were

a few students who wrote of the complexity of being bi-racial, and it stuck out as an

important topic due to the changing demographics of the United States. The bi-racial

voice is one we can learn more to better serve all students.

They Don't…

Sell me a movie ticket,

Let us eat at a restaurant,

Give him the job,

Help her with her [school] work,

Talk to me.

…Because I was Dominican, Mexican, Latino, Hispanic.

*They do*

…Label me,

…Pick on him,

…Make fun of them because they couldn't speak English,

…See our culture as less fortunate,

…Call names all the time, racial slurs:

"BEANERS!," "Wetbacks!," Spic!"

*They do*

…Disown her

…Fear us,

…Hate Hispanics,

…Fire them.

…Because he was

one of the very few Hispanics

that worked for the company.

…Because he is Mexican—

…Because of her color of skin.


*Every day.*


This data poem "They Don't…" was extracted from the transcripts and was meant to highlight the dichotomous thinking that exists, especially as related to race and ethnicity. For example, students are treated only one way or the other. The research did not provide examples in which people varied their responses to race and ethnicity. The experiences shared were negative. Additionally, the poem demonstrates a range of severity that racism can have in students' lives—from name calling to being fired from a job.

**Research Experience Poems**

Shame

We are being watched.

We can't get in the door of the school

without being watched.


All eyes on us.

No eyes on them.


Shame on us for kissing our girlfriends.

Shame on us for wearing short shorts.

Shame on us for wearing tank tops with spaghetti straps.

Shame on us for being loud in the hallways.

Shame on us for wearing matching t-shirts with our friends.

Shame on us for wearing colored bandanas.

Shame on us for wearing one pant leg rolled up on our jeans.


But they do all this, too.

But there is no shame.

There are no consequences.

They've divided us apart--

they've pitted us against each other.

Why don't we students get along?


This research experience poem "Shame" was inspired by bell hook's (2003) assertion that shame can exist as a barrier to learning. We cannot know everyone's story, but I believe that everyone has one. What I become aware of as I listened to the students' stories and watched their body language in the focus groups was that students felt shamed, blamed, embarrassed, and distrusted in the school setting. And most importantly, they noticed the disparity in the rate and way in which discipline was initiated and issued to them as compared to their White peers. The disparities noted by the students were described as directly connected to race and ethnicity, and it happens at the hands of school leaders and is reinforced by civilizational, institutional, and societal racism (Scheurich & Young, 1997).

Judged

Judged for this.

Judged for that.

Judged for wearing short shorts, spaghetti straps, or a certain hat.

Judged for fake tattoos on my face,

Judged for my ethnicity and my race.

Judged for what I say

Judged on each and every day.

Judged and followed in a store

Judged for this and so much more.

Judged and sent to jail.

Judged because you watch me fail.

Judged for the color of my skin

Judged for every instance or place I've been.

Judged for the people I hang around--

By the stereotypes, I am bound.

In my search for reading poetry to engage in the writing process, I delved into children's poetry. Additionally, I was stirred by a student's story and concluding statement during a focus group "I got judged really fast just 'cuz I'm Mexican" (Student 4). As I read through the transcripts, I used the poetic device of listing (Cahnmann, 2003) and found the theme of prejudice and judgment that students revealed. The words flowed and were fueled by the focus group participants' hurt feelings and frustration of not knowing how to respond when they are feeling unfairly judged for so many things they do in schools. The research experience poem "Judged" is a combination of research poetry as found in my field work and excerpts from the transcripts.

## Summary

Chapter four reflects the findings of the depth and breadth of CTA, an in-depth analyses and the presentation of the findings in counterstory. To arrive at counterstory, thematic analysis revealed that 90% of the students (N = 105) over a four year time period referenced a racialized experience (n = 100). The categories were described as experiences of being judged, labeled, discriminated against, and being excluded. The second category involved racialized experiences that were spoken, overt experiences of racism addressing racial comments related to perceived national origin, language spoken (or perceived to be spoken), skin color, and perceived income level. The comments most clearly demonstrate additional cultural identities beyond race and ethnicity.

The focus groups found similarities in the findings of the archival data, that all focus group participants (N = 8) reported racialized experiences that specifically took place in school settings. Additionally, the focus group participants described in greater detail their feelings, responses, and their hope and dismay for changes in schools.

The seven data poems were constructed from students' voices in the transcripts to illustrate themes found in the early parts of the analyses. The two research experience poems relied on my theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998) as I was hosting the focus groups and analyzing the archival data. The research experience poems contain both direct lines from the transcripts and include my insights and reflections of what was heard and experienced in the focus groups. For both types of poems shared "it is important to acknowledge the powerful role of the poet as one who arranges and rearranges data quotations, forming intention and meaning" (Lahman, 2011, p. 126).

For the poems to exist as *poetic counterstories*, as stated in the title of this study, it is important to honor the experiences of the students. Seeing the students as creators and holders of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002) requires us to consider the feelings as students of color in middle and high schools, and particularly of Hispanic and Latina/o ethnic backgrounds. Knowing that race, gender, class, and each and all of our cultural identities impact our ways of knowing and being in the world is an important part of being a culturally responsive educator (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Thus, the implications tie back to culturally responsive ways educational systems must serve all students in our schools. The implications of this study and those for action are the focus of chapter five.

## CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS

The final chapter in the study presents the study summary and connects the findings discussed in chapter four to implications of the research. The five main implications that will be discussed include the (1) importance of emancipating and legitimizing students' voices; (2) need to learn more about the sociopolitical context of teaching and learning for H/L students; (3) school-based policy; (4) role of schools and educational leaders in intervening when racism abounds; and (5) potential use of arts-based research to address critical issues such as race in qualitative research. Throughout the final chapter, implications as found related to tenets of CRT will be discussed to keep race at the center of this study. A CRT researcher reiterates the necessity, "Race as a concept has no biological foundation. However, it would be a critical mistake to deny the lived realities of racism in daily life" (Stovall, 2006, p. 247). Finally, conclusions from the study will be addressed, which include implications for action, recommendations for further study, and concluding remarks.

### Summary of the Study

The study summarized as a qualitative document analysis of the transcriptions of 105 open-ended responses by H/L secondary students to the question, "Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue because of their race or ethnicity" from the years 2006 to 2009 (four years). The findings revealed that 94 of 105 (90%) students over the four year time period described an experience of when they or someone they knew had been racialized in schools or in a variety of community locations. The

descriptions included information about who was racialized, who racialized the student reporting, where, when, additional context, and how the experience was responded to. The racialized experiences included something said (verbal) or something done (action). The experiences categorized as 'said' included racial comments, statements connected to national origin, language spoken, skin color, or income level. The experiences described as 'actions' included being judged, labeled, discriminated against, and excluded from participation and/or opportunities.

Additionally, two purposefully selected focus groups were held in February and March of 2011 asking eight H/L secondary students more in-depth questions related to their current experiences in schools, in particular, to get further insights related to feelings, the ways they responded to racism, and suggested changes for schools. The focus groups allowed for more recent and in-depth descriptions of experiences to uncover fuller stories of students' racialized experiences in schools. They also allowed me to focus on the students' personal experiences, in contrast to *someone they knew*. Consistent with the archival data, participants in the focus groups reported significant racialized experiences. All focus group participants (N = 8) reported their own personal experiences of being racialized in schools and the majority (n = 7) included multiple references. Themes and patterns were found related to their school experiences detailing an anti-immigrant sentiment, lack of response to discriminatory language and behavior in classrooms, inequitable discipline, and overt racism.

The archival data and focus group transcripts were analyzed using CTA as described in chapter four. Poetic analysis was used as a final step, and the poems were

presented as a form of counterstory. It resulted in nine poems, seven of which were data poems and two which were research experience poems.

The findings demonstrate the depth and breadth of racialized experiences described by a total of 102 middle and high school age students in Northern Colorado over the span of the study. These findings support the tenet of CRT, the permanence of racism. The findings support an additional tenet of CRT as the intersectionality of race and ethnicity is described in the racialized experiences to include perceived national origin, home language, skin color, and perceived family income. As guided by LatCrit, the specific findings within the H/L population in this study were related to others' perceptions of national origin, citizenship status, and ability to speak English. Discriminatory responses based on skin color was an additional theme discovered, but could be found for some members of other marginalized groups as well and deserves more attention than can be provided here. Additionally, as a member of the same cultural group hosting the inquiry, I brought theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998) to the analyses and poetic counterstories. The students' voices were emancipated and legitimized without being 'harvested' and used inappropriately. And while it was apparent that racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1995) and overt and covert individual acts of racism (Scheurich & Young, 1997) impact students, the counterstories move to legitimize the students' voices and experiences.

There are four identified limitations to this study. First, looking at the graduation rates across race/ethnicity, gender, and instructional programs, there are concerns for all of Colorado's students, yet the focus is on H/L students. I was transparent in the introduction including my research perspective guided by my personal interest and focus

on the H/L student population. Second, the open-ended questions were completed by individual students as part of their applications to attend the CRLP. They could have responded in certain ways due to the fact that it was an application process and students only applied if they were intent on being selected. Third, because one set of the data was archival, there was no ability to adjust or seek further clarification of the written responses. To acknowledge the latter limitation, focus group interviews were held to triangulate the data through analyses referred to as CTA. Fourth, focus group responses may have been limited by students' willingness to share personal experiences or details of their experiences in a group setting. Students were provided multiple opportunities to decline participation, and an assistant was included to support the level of comfort in the room and created a balanced level of participation by all interviewees.

## Implications of Major Findings

### Students' Voices

> *There are racist people--*
> *in my school.*
> *At school.*
> * In his school,*
> *at my school…*
>
> *(Excerpt from poem: Racism)*

The poems emancipate and legitimize the voices of the young participants in powerful ways and provide insights to racialized experiences we might otherwise not know. This is part of the central finding of the study to which we must respond. The experiences of the students in this study have reminded us that "Black, Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their White counterparts matters that the Whites are unlikely to know" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 9) and

adolescents have a voice to share (Furman et al., 2007; R. Garza, Ryser & Lee, 2010; Weber et al., 1994). Therefore, Hispanic and Latina/o secondary students (and other students of color), have voice and should be acknowledged as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 106).

For example, in the poems, readers can hear phrases and comments that may be common in classrooms and streets in the U.S., demonstrating a central component of critical race theory (CRT): the permanence of racism understood as "racism is ordinary… an everyday experience of most people of color in this country" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). This study demonstrates that students can and should be looked to as having competence, their stories should be valued, and they should be responded to as a part of education reform.

Looking to students' voices can include formal research methods (e.g., R. Garza, 2009; Garza et al., 2010; Hernández-Sheets, 2002; Marquez-Zenkov et al., 2007; Pizarro, 2005; Rodríguez & Conchas, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999; Wayman, 2002), but it need not wait until a teacher is engaged in formal research as teachers can engage in informal action research to address equity at any time (e.g., Caro-Bruce, Flessner, Klehr, & Zeichner, 2007). Informal strategies can be used to seek insights from students. For example, inviting students to submit anonymous needs, comments, and ideas to a "suggestion box" can support the teachers' knowledge of issues that arise in classrooms with timely feedback they can respond to (Gabriel, 2008). R. Garza (2009) studied White and Latino high school students' perceptions of teachers' caring and argues "Race and ethnicity must not be overlooked as an important aspect in the dynamics of caring for students. I also argue that caring for Latino and White students may be similar, yet each

ethnic group's point of view is unique" (p. 298). Additionally he suggests using findings related to students' voices "as a springboard to shape content in educator preparation courses" (p. 318) or when teachers are in the teaching setting and are interested in improving cross-cultural communication and ensuring relationship building with students from cultural backgrounds different from themselves.

It is also important to note that my study was completed by myself, a Latina, a member of the same cultural group as the students having developed relationships and trust within my own community and particularly with the participants. I addressed my reflexivity as I recognized many of the racialized experiences as my own at certain points in my life, including throughout the Ph.D. journey. My writing serves as a form of testimony (Flores & Garcia, 2009) and helped me make sense of my surroundings. I used memoing as a way to address the thoughts in my head, the pain my heart invoked by the students' voices, and a shared hopelessness felt by the students and myself regarding seemingly impossible change.

Nearer to the end of my research and dissertation writing, an example of memoing included:

The more I read, the more I understand the theoretical underpinnings of CRT and LatCrit, racial microaggressions, and masked silenced sequences, I sense myself becoming silenced in my own work setting. I have become more skillful about recognizing racial microaggressions. With this logical understanding and clarity comes pain as I understand the covert and overt racism I too, face in the workplace. While my work as an equity specialist is committed to supporting Latino students, it is nevertheless held within the very system that oppresses me and my students. Understanding the multiple levels of racism is critical to create change, but the hopelessness I sense in the focus group students is my reality as well. God, give me strength. (Gabriel, 2011)

No matter the despair in creating change, I still believe that a strong evidenced

commitment to each and every child's full and evolving story and experience is some of

what is needed to change the educational outcomes for all students.

**Role of Schools in Addressing Racism**

> *The teacher is*
> *standing there*
> *and watching.*
> *She hears.*
> *That teacher--*
> *She's only watching.*
>
> *She doesn't tell*
> *students to stop.*
> *She's only watching--*
> *until the end...*
>
> *(Excerpt from poem: She's only Watching)*

"Most Americans are offended at the notion that they could harbor racist attitudes

and perceptions. However, if we are ever to confront racism in education, we must

unpack and deconstruct it in teacher education" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 225). Put

plainly "people do not have to be racist or have any malicious intent—in order to make

decisions that unfairly harm members of another race" (Cose, 1993, p. 4). As presented in

the summary, in this study, 90% of H/L youth described racialized experiences in their

school communities. The research poem 'She's only Watching' describes the experience

of students as they become "minoritized, racialized and marginalized" (Cavanagh, 2009,

p. 53). The findings echo the narratives of American Indian college students presented by

Covarrubias (2008) in which peers and college professors would stand by in silence in the

academic setting when racist comments took place. Covarrubias (2008) describes her

findings as "The students' descriptions are embedded with details about the

psychoemotional complexities that feeling racially targeted and devalued as people implicated for them" (p. 241) and

> Consistently, students' discourses reveal that the stresses and strains of the situations they experience as discriminatory are aggravated by the fact that no one, including their professors, spoke up in protest. The hurtful nature of the uttered remarks, notwithstanding, as Susan explains, the pain of the moment, was exacerbated by the fact that 'the professor completely ignored it [the White student's statement] and went straight over it and did not address the issue *at all* and just went on for the next comment.' (pp. 241-242)

The fact that students were found to be racialized in the school setting is significant as the implications are far-reaching. The process is described as "Once groups are racialized, they develop distinct patterns of occupational specialization, educational achievement, residential segregation, marriage, cultural representation, and legal treatment by the dominant society" (Duany, 2011). Clarifying the epistemological context of racialization is important as we remember racism runs deep. While racialization takes place for many populations of color, racialized U.S. views of Latin Americans date back at least to the mid-nineteenth century (Duany, 2011).

The dominant version of American "identity was forged in the nineteenth century partially through the creation of racialized perceptions that homogenized Latin America's populations and that in turn set the context for the later emergence of the label Hispanic in the twentieth century" (Oboler, 1995, p. 18). The conception of racialization of those from Latin American descent has much history across the United States with roots in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the feelings of superiority of the dominant cultural group over Latin Americans. As described by researchers, individual, institutional, and societal racism cannot be fully addressed or understood without paying attention to civilizational racism (Scheurich & Young, 1997). Put simply, students are being

racialized in schools by individuals, which is symptomatic of the larger societal and institutional issues that have been created over time. Yet, very important questions arise when considering supporting and increasing access and opportunities for all students. For example, how can teachers and administrators recognize racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1995) when their cultural background does not lend itself to a common understanding or experience? When racism happens, what can school leaders do to intervene?

First, as discussed in the literature review, school leadership typically does not reflect the diversity of the student body (NCES, n.d.b). For example, H/L students often see and feel microaggressions (Pierce, 1995) and other overt and damaging acts of racism, but those who deliver them can remain unconscious of the harm they have inflicted. Those who are unaffected often do not notice that anything harmful took place, and can be taken by surprise when or if it is revealed to him/her. Racism often remains invisible to the members of dominant culture (Lindsey et al., 2009). Additionally, the students' voices spoke of experiencing White students using racial slurs in classrooms and the teachers did not step in to stop the racist comments. Educational researchers and advocates for equity and social justice suggest "Well-meaning teachers are sometimes unintentionally discriminatory when they remain silent about race and racism" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 74). Silence supports a colorblind perspective persistent in school settings. However these authors suggest that while consistently engaging students at all levels in structured conversations about human similarities and differences is an important strategy, it will not erase racism (Nieto & Bode, 2008). They further suggest

> Directly confronting racism and discrimination can be a healthy and caring way to address these difficult issues…rather than addressing name-calling as isolated incidents or as the work of a few troublemakers, as is too often done, discussing it

openly and directly helps students understand these incidents as symptoms of systemic problems in society and schools. (p. 75)

This strategy provides teachers a way to remedy the experiences of the students in this study related to overt racism in schools.

**Sociopolitical Context of Learning**

> *They don't…*
> *Sell me a movie ticket,*
> *Let us eat at a restaurant,*
> *Give him the job,*
> *Help her with her [school] work,*
> *Talk to me.*
> *…Because I was Dominican, Mexican, Latino, Hispanic…*
>
> *(Excerpt from poem: They Don't)*

A third implication from the research addresses the sociopolitical context of education. To understand this implication school teachers, building principals, and district administrators must look at the ways "policies, practices, traditions, and ideologies" of communities "shapes schools and therefore also shapes the experiences of the children and adults who inhabit schools" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 4). Another way to consider is stated "We do not live in some universal sense, above culture or history; we live inside a culture, inside a civilizational social construction; we live in the terms and ways of a particular social history" (Scheurich & Young, 1997, p. 8). As such, schools exist as a microcosm of the community, where attitudes, values, and beliefs spill over into schools (Vollmer, 2010). Based on the findings in this study there were two main areas of concern integral to this implication. First, it was clear from the students' voices that anti-immigrant sentiments were stated or projected and school personnel did not intervene. This can be understood as a practice as related to the sociopolitical context of education. Second, the negative messages H/L students received about their ethnic

identity through racial comments were common and, therefore, normalized. The

comments were heard continually over time and in a variety of locations, and therefore,

could be described as traditional and supported being the sociopolitical context of

learning for the studied students. Both are discussed.

To address the sociopolitical context of learning the national anti-immigrant

sentiment that permeated the school walls is explored. Over the span of years the

qualitative document analysis covers, immigration has developed to be a controversial,

unresolved topic locally and nationally, especially during election years. Propositions and

legislation were on ballots across the United States including SB1070 of Arizona.

> The law, which proponents and critics alike said was the broadest and strictest
> immigration measure in generations, would make the failure to carry immigration
> documents a crime and give the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of
> being in the country illegally. Opponents have called it an open invitation for
> harassment and discrimination against Hispanics regardless of their citizenship
> status…Hispanics, in particular, who were not long ago courted by the
> Republican Party as a swing voting bloc, railed against the law as a recipe for
> racial and ethnic profiling. "Governor Brewer caved to the radical fringe," a
> statement by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund said,
> predicting that the law would create "a spiral of pervasive fear, community
> distrust, increased crime and costly litigation, with nationwide repercussions.
> (Archibold, 2010, p. 1)

The sentiment continued and was seen as related to education, such as Arizona's

current plan to ban ethnic studies in K-12 and higher education.

> Under the ban, sent to Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer by the state legislature Thursday,
> schools will lose state funding if they offer any courses that 'promote the
> overthrow of the U.S. government, promote resentment of a particular race or
> class of people, are designed primarily for students of a particular ethnic group or
> advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.'
> ("Arizona Ethnic Studies," 2010)

The ban was signed in April 2010 (Archibold, 2010) and went into effect on January 1,

2011.

Additionally, Arizona, among other states, has continued to build the legal base against undocumented members of its communities by adding new hiring laws requiring the use of E-verify, a system that checks immigration status before employing a person (Doyle, 2011). Knowing about the laws or actions targeting undocumented immigrants is important to support educational leaders in determining the way they set up inclusive schools, including but not limited to types of classroom assignments that are fitting and what additional accommodations can support all learners.

For example, the national impact of anti-immigrant sentiment was evident in neighboring communities where the students in this study lived. Northern Colorado had an additional Immigrations and Custom Enforcement (ICE) Office built and shortly thereafter "In December, ICE raided Swift & Co. meatpacking plants in Greeley [Colorado] and in five other states, arresting 1,282 workers." (abc7News, 2007). This particular raid undoubtedly fueled some of the anti-immigrant sentiment revealed by students and described in the findings and poems. Several of the school district families were impacted as young children had no adult to pick them up after school or minors were left to care for siblings while a parent was detained by ICE. The ripple effect and implications of local and national anti-immigrant sentiment and raids are important to be aware of and are described in the focus group transcripts, findings, and poems as they took place in 2011, several years after the raids.

Teachers in social studies and speech classes who offer immigration as a topic for debate seemingly are unaware of the impact of the national divisions as connected to the sociopolitical context of learning for H/L students. To mitigate this, teachers could add a variety of culturally responsive strategies to the lesson. First, teachers must create strong

relationships in the classroom between student and student, and teacher and student, so teachers can access background knowledge of the student's and their family's national origin, home language, skin color, religious beliefs, all dimensions of diversity that create our culture. Knowing the students fully can be a catalyst to support each one individually in the learning environment. Second, teachers could create strong essential questions that address the use of the majoritarian story of immigration in the United States. Third, embedded in addressing the learning objectives, the instruction could invite thorough investigation of related concepts to race, history, and immigration. This includes potential to address relevancy and rigor in classroom instruction connected to the local and national historical context of immigration. When teachers and school leaders are conscious of the ripple effects of current legislation or community movements that are targeting marginalized groups, they can offer support to students.

The second concern related to student's marginalization in schools is connected to the climate and culture of schools as influenced by teacher-student interactions and student-student interactions. The school climate is directly affected by the racialized experiences that students wrote and spoke about in this study. "The withdrawal of some of the lower-status students as a response to the ridicule of their peers and the isolation from the teacher occasionally took the form of physical withdrawal, but most often it was psychological" (Rist, 1970, p. 428). The quote reminded me of the painful ridicule of peers and of the few but poignant quotes about teacher-student interactions related to race in my study. Additionally, a strong concern was raised by the lack of understanding of one's ethnicity. As described briefly in chapter four, students in the focus groups were unfamiliar with terminology and usage of the many and varied H/L ethnic and racial

groups. I have experienced this lack of knowledge of personal ethnic identity in rural and suburban communities over my educational career.

Understanding ethnic identity has remained as elusive to the dominant culture teachers as it has to the H/L students themselves. Yet, research tells us there are two areas of concern. First, "Many adolescents have not explored the meaning of their ethnicity" and secondly, "Moreover, if these young people have internalized negative societal stereotypes of their ethnic group, they are likely to experience lower self-esteem and self-confidence, and they may have difficulty in finding meaning in their lives" (Martinez & Dukes, 1997, p. 504). The negative societal stereotypes that have become an "every day" (Student 86) experience in society and the community where the studied students lived, worked, and studied contributes to the definition of their life experience. The negative stereotypes normalized in school settings have defined the learning environment. Curriculum, after-school programs, school and community resources, and special service providers that honor, respect, and support the development of a clear understanding of ethnic identity for students through the grade levels is critical work to begin to support students of color, in particular H/L students, in our school communities. It is important to note that personnel who are charged with these programs must be highly culturally competent. Being bi-cultural and bilingual can be an added connecting point with students and families, but cultural proficiency and an equity lens are equally important requirements when looking to address cross-cultural needs found in most student and teacher relationships. An educational researcher describes the necessity as

> Educators must engage in a critical self-analysis to consider how their actions and disposition encourage and hinder student success and achievement. As a consequence, race and ethnicity must be considered in examining the dynamics of

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caring for students in ways that are congruent with their belief systems. (R. Garza, 2009, p. 300)

This critical examination of caring suggested by R. Garza must be looked at across other areas that impact the teaching and learning process. When educators understand themselves as cultural beings, the culture of power, and the sociopolitical context of learning, their practice that impacts student learning can be built upon caring.

**School-based Policy**

*…But they do all this, too.*
*But there is no shame.*
*There are no consequences…*

*(Excerpt from poem: Shame)*

A fourth implication from the research includes the use and implementation of policy to protect, support, and advocate for students of color, particularly H/L students in schools. Rist (1974) spoke to the concern of public policy related to integration nearly forty years ago with important advice that we can learn from even today.

Policy analysts will have to bring their background assumptions into the foreground where they can be examined and interpreted for what they hold as to the nature of white and non-white interaction, the rights of children, and, most basically, the nature of social justice. For in a society where opinions and power are grossly disparate, it is imperative the powerful and the powerless alike now the answer to the question, 'Where do we stand?' (Rist, 1974, p. 63)

School leaders must garner the will to change school-based policy and practice so the policy does not serve as a barrier to educational attainment. Students in this study suggested the creation and implementation of policy that bars overt and covert racism in the form of racial slurs in schools, verbally or on clothing. They also described experiences of being recipients of inequitable discipline in school. Creating culturally responsive policy is a way to institutionalize protection of marginalized groups. Creating

cultural responsive policy that includes protected classes is an opportunity to protect and name students of a variety of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, such as disallowing biased harassment related to gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Colorado Legacy Foundation, n.d.). Yet, as the students stated, policy alone is insufficient.

To implement culturally responsive policy, three additional suggestions are made. First, "Regardless of the school staff orientation toward discipline, clear definitions regarding behaviors that merit suspensions, expulsions, and teacher referrals must be available to parents, students, administrators, and teachers" (Hernández Sheets, 2002, p. 121). Typical schools have moved away from handing each family member a discipline code but instead have them available on the website. While this is environmentally-friendly, it is not an equitable solution as the communication does not reach all families. For example, those who do not have a computer in the home or those without internet access do not receive the school communication. To move toward a culturally responsive way of sharing behavior expectations, schools could host family meetings and student meetings to create or update school discipline codes, include snapshots of the discipline code in monthly paper school newsletters (translated) and disseminate information through phone calls. Family engagement has more recently included beliefs about families' strengths, intentional relationships, and inclusive community practices (Flamboyan Foundation, 2011).

Additionally, as students' experiences described, consequences must be timely, impactful, and consistent for all across racial groups. For example, if dress codes or behavior codes are in place, they must be held for all students, not just for those who may

look or act a certain way as was found in the students' experiences. To eliminate

inequities in discipline practices, building principals must lead the inquiry into discipline

data, analyzing it openly with multiple stakeholders. A review of discipline infractions

and sanctions as discussed by Gregory et al. (2010) is a critical starting point. In a book

created for journalists to responsibly report on education as often connected to race, the

Applied Research Center (1998) stated "suspension and expulsion have serious effects on

the life chances of students. Students who are already performing poorly in school are

most likely to be suspended, although they are the very students who can least afford to

miss classes" (p. 26). Additionally, disaggregating those results can help school

principals and teachers work together to find "hot spots" for inequitable discipline that

then can be thoroughly deconstructed and used to lead change. Addressing systemic and

institutional racism with policy is not easy work, but it is necessary to change the

educational outcomes of H/L students. The work is not about blaming or shaming

individuals but to bring about awareness, to seek culturally responsive alternatives, to

learn more about culturally responsive approaches to school discipline and related

policies so that educators might support institutional change.

In 2009, a middle school principal in Northern Colorado, determined to ensure

equity and social justice with school discipline, told the teachers that school suspensions

were removed from the list of options. She challenged them to spend more time building

relationships, seeking insights from families, and to work one on one with the students.

Like many educational equity advocates, she believes that if a school's goals include

learning for all, students should not be removed from the learning environment. A

suggestion she offered her staff was to use restorative practices or high-impact learning

projects I developed as an equity specialist to address racial microaggressions and racist comments thereby increasing efficacy of those involved, decreasing harm, and supporting a culture of caring. As the students mentioned having policy in place is only part of the issue. For educators' impact to match their intentions in addressing equitable educational opportunities requires intentional implementation and accountability.

**Research Poetry and CRT**

A fifth implication from the research is based on my own experience in the dissertation journey. Bridging data collection methods and analyses to create the "research poetry," defined as

> …poems that are crafted from research endeavors, either before a project analysis, as a project analysis, and/or poems that are part of or constitute an entire research project. I believe this label places poems firmly in the contact of research, emphasizing goals of poetic inquiry as both a method and product of research activity. (Faulkner, 2009, p. 20)

Creating the poems was a powerful process that I believe legitimizes the students' authentic voices and experiences. Poetic inquiry became an "excellent means to present data about the human experience and consider poetry an ideal way to capture and present this experience in a more easily 'consumable,' powerful, emotionally poignant, and accurate form" (Faulkner, 2009, p. 22). And perhaps the use of poetic analysis may assist with fears of addressing inherent racism, a sensitive topic (Furman et al., 2007). I found authenticity, empathy, and social justice addressed through my use of data poems (Faulkner, 2009).

Additionally, I acknowledge my positionality in all steps of the research, and the use of reflective journaling and creating research experience poems supported reflexivity and transparency in the research process. "Richardson (1998) considers poetry to be

useful when we experience epiphanies in fieldwork that show humanity, and we wish to relive the instant, to show a moment of truth" (Faulkner, 2009, p. 16). These moments of truth became very personal and even in the final editing stages felt like risks to share in writing. The risk students took in sharing personal stories was emancipatory and led to the legitimization of their voices and therefore, their experiences as young H/L secondary students living and studying in Northern Colorado. There is freedom and empowerment in having your voice heard (Pizarro, 2005). This was true for the student participants and for me as illustrated in the following quote:

> …counterstories do not focus on trying to convince people that racism exists. Instead, counterstories seek to document the persistence of racism from the perspectives of those injured and victimized by its legacy. Furthermore, counterstories bring attention to those who courageously resist racism and struggle toward a more socially just society. (Yosso, 2006, p. 10)

And while it may seem like an additional risk to suggest the use of poetic analysis as a dimension of CRT, I am hopeful in the opportunity to not do what has been done before, but to open more doors in the academy for discussions of race, oppression, and social justice in additional fields of research such as Arts-based educational research.

Using aspects of CRT and counterstory to counter the master narrative of seeing H/L students' race only used as a variable in data representation has brought me full circle in this study. The poems serve as a type of counterstory and a new offering to framing the issue of the educational debt in the United States for H/L students. The poems are a call to the responsibility of educational leaders, such as classroom teachers, building principals, and school district administrators. The poems invite educators to be open and willing to listen, and to actively respond to the voices of H/L students in schools, to be conscious and supportive of a positive sociopolitical context of learning

through individual practice, and to create and intentionally implement race-affirming policy.

## Implications for Actions

While "the colorblind ideal is incredibly seductive…history tells us that it fails to function as a practical strategy to improve race relations or mitigate discrimination through our public schools" (Burkholder, 2007, p. 29). The implications of the research have included some suggestions for additional strategies to yield better outcomes for H/L students. Yet, there is more to say. Because of the research lens in this study, CRT, race was intentionally held at the forefront of data collection and analyses. In effort to fully legitimize the students' voices and experiences, the findings lead me to advocate for race to be specifically attended to as related to policy, practice, and people in educational systems. Responding to the students' voices, a few suggestions for action are offered here.

A striking finding revealed H/L students' desire for classroom teachers and school administrators to intervene on their behalf when racist comments were made. Listening and valuing students' stories, working toward cultural proficiency and becoming aware of privilege and power in schools can support the deep understanding that will be required of educational leaders to fully support H/L students in classrooms and communities. I advocate that teachers and administrators build a new consciousness about race in education, and to resist getting stuck in feeling blamed or guilty. Instead, I encourage them to move to socially just action, creating equity for all students. Actions can be done on a personal level or as part of a school organization.

First, looking internally at one's own worldview and orientation to cultural differences (Bennett, 1993; Hammer, 2007) can assist in the beginning process of learning about how race and other cultural identities impact the teaching and learning process. "Those who work in schools need to understand how they view their own and others' race, ethnicity, and culture" (Hernández Sheets, 2002, p. 121). A tip includes "…when facing cultural differences, always ask yourself the question 'Who does the accommodating?' Is it always students from nonmajority cultures?'' (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 179). Being conscious and analyzing one's own individual attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about students is critical to the success of each child (Beyerbach et al., 2009; R. Garza, 2009; Rist, 1970).

Peggy McIntosh's (1988) work regarding privilege can support building teachers and principals' greater personal understanding and knowledge to be more culturally responsive in their pedagogy. She guides her readers to be conscious of the invisible knapsack carried around as a metaphor for invisible privilege. While this can be an excellent way for us to examine privilege that stems from a variety of our cultural identities, the work does not stop there.

> Once teachers realize they are part of the cultural equation in their classrooms… they must find ways to recognize the culture of their students, to acknowledge it in their teaching, and to make clear to students from different backgrounds the previously unstated expectations that the mainstream culture—and the school has for them. (Viadero, 1996, p. 40)

When school leaders understand culture as connected to the teaching and learning process, they can use that to inform their practice in deep and meaningful ways.

Practice for principals can include creating and upholding enumerated policy, hiring, supervising, evaluating, as well as the expectations and leadership delivered as

related to being an instructional leader in a building. Theoharis (2010) published a book based on his study of seven keys demonstrated by seven principals across the nation who practice social justice leadership to address educational equity. Theoharis' (2010) seven keys included

> (1) acquire broad, reconceptualized consciousness/knowledge/skill base; (2) possess core leadership traits; (3) advance inclusion, access, and opportunity for all; (4) improve the core learning context—both the teaching and the curriculum; (5) create a climate of belonging; (6) raise student achievement; (7) sustain oneself professionally and personally. (p. 13)

The work can be done! A promising practice related to hiring includes an interview processes which fully assesses incoming teaching applicants' ability to work cross-culturally (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Consideration for teacher accountability might also be considered as new standards in Colorado's SB191 include components of educator effectiveness as related to meeting the needs of diverse populations (CDE, 2011).

Additionally, providing job-embedded professional development for staff that is aligned with understanding one's own cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2003; 2009) is important to learn and sustain equity work in schools. Some specific learning opportunities include engaging in online professional development such as online modules available through the Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.) or professional development that infuses self-reflection and change of practice by teachers to ensure that all students are indeed receiving access and opportunity for high level educational opportunities such as Generating Expectations for Student Achievement (Beyerbach et al., 2009) or Te Kotahitanga (Meyer, Penitito, Hyands, Savage, Hindle, & Sleeter, 2010). Yet, none of this is worth anything to the students sitting in classrooms if teachers do not act in the moment of racialized experiences that can include racial microaggressions.

A nationally representative study analyzing harassment in schools offers this strategy, "Teachers may need to be made more aware of problems that students are having in school and be willing to identify themselves as resources for students experiencing harassment" (Harris Interactive & GLSEN, 2005, p. 5).

While pre-service education is lacking skill building such as (1) learning about positive aspects of diverse populations; (2) understanding the language acquisition process; and (3) overcoming stereotypes of Mexican-descent students to ensure academically challenging classroom instruction (Hughes, 2003), teachers can learn more about classroom pedagogy that is inclusive. For example, teachers may consider a variety of classroom strategies to allow for inclusive, multicultural, and culturally responsive teaching strategies (Gay, 2000; Irvine & Armento, 2001). Prior to summative evaluation, the Flamboyan Foundation (2010) has developed a model used by the Harvard Family Research Center that is inclusive of culturally relevant ways to do family engagement and allows schools and teachers to rate themselves along a rubric. The tool requires the personal head and heart work be done simultaneously, but it can change classroom practice and outcomes. Another potential strategy includes cooperative learning in classrooms.

An article guided by Allport's (1954) contact theory and Slavin's early work suggests "cooperative learning groups encourage positive social interaction among students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, they have great potential to facilitate the building of cross-ethnic friendships and to reduce racial stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice" (Slavin & Cooper, 1999, p. 648). The researchers state that although "increasing positive intergroup relations may not be explicitly stated by teachers as a goal

of cooperative learning, it would be difficult for students to believe that the teacher supports racial separation when the teacher has assigned the class to multiethnic teams" (Slavin & Cooper, 1999, p. 650). The findings in my study emphasize that teachers have more work to do than just assigning cooperative learning groups. Other necessary steps include uncovering the culture of power (Delpit, 1988), unlearning personal bias and privilege, being willing to stand up for students of color, dismantling stereotypes and prejudices, and building personal relationships with the students. Teachers and school leaders must gain background knowledge related to the sociopolitical context of learning for H/Ls in the U.S. and how racialization takes place, and take the courageous stand when racism abounds.

For example, "Latino students' extraordinarily high dropout is related, in part, to their lack of attachment to school and a sense of, not belonging" (Gándara, 2010, pp. 28-29). This requires us to ensure belonging through a culturally responsive lens. "Educators must develop meaningful, caring relationships with students to provide channels of understanding that establish respect for students. For example, for some Latino students, respect involves validating their language and cultural identity (Pizarro, 2005)" (Garza, 2009, p. 300). Cammarota and Romero (2009) have found incredible success in teaching for acknowledging cultural identity through teaching critical consciousness, which build an academic identity and find meaningful and personalized purpose in learning. Yet, even teachers who feel they cannot revise curriculum, there are small steps that they can take. For example, with respect to the topic of undocumented immigrants living in the United States, teachers can work to create safety in the classroom for all students. Frontloading classroom discussions and assignments by teaching a more complete historical context of

learning topics than traditionally taught (i.e., Loewen, 2004; Zinn, 2003 ) could support

students learning stories other than the majoritarian story. Also, a brief, but targeted

vocabulary assignment including terminology related to controversial topics in a

classroom discussion, speech, or debate can build schema and background knowledge for

all classroom members about the nature and importance of the language we use and the

way we frame dialogue if we are to advocate for safe anti-oppressive learning

environments. (Kumashiro, 2000; Nieto & Bode, 2008). And, asking students to debate

multiple sides of a hot topic issue such as immigration rather than only the pro or con

side can create an informed global citizen. These are a few suggested steps that classroom

teachers can take to lessen the chances of students being marginalized during a classroom

discussion, debate, or speech. The students' voices and experiences reflected limited

attachment and school leaders and teachers can respond in the ways described throughout

this chapter.

## Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, there are four main areas for additional research. First, further study

of students' voices could ask similar questions in other school communities in Colorado

to unveil the current face of racism and/or other student needs. Second, building on the

research presented here could lead to an increased understanding of the sociopolitical

context of learning for H/Ls and offer additional insights and recommendations for

school leaders, school counselors, and classroom teachers to support H/L students in

more equitable ways. Additionally, research could lead to more insights into racial

harassment in anti-bullying programming as well as ways to include marginalized voices

in teacher, school counselor, and school principal preparation programs in the U.S..

Fourth, while the poetic analysis supported the answering of the research questions, further analyses and interpretation could include the creation of the students' experiences of being racialized and my own as composite counterstories (e.g., Yosso et al., 2009). This could help bring CRT into other analytic discourse, keeping race at the center of conversations that lead to social justice for students in schools.

## Conclusion

As my analysis has shown, voices of Hispanic/Latino middle and high school students are important to the discussion of race in schools, and particularly when educational outcomes are discussed. While many continue to utilize a color-blind theory (Rist, 1974) in the creation and implementation of school-based policies and practices, CRT scholars invite us to look to CRT to analyze school inequities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). School operations, school reform, policy, planning, and implementation must be inclusive of all cultural identities including race. Listening to voices of students who at many times do not have full access to educational opportunities can guide reform of educational policy and practice to change the discrepancies in achievement reporting. Addressing the social construction of race, the sociopolitical context of education, which includes examining the culture of power (Delpit, 1988) that exists within school policy, practice, and people to better include and support Hispanic and Latino students is what is necessary.

Responding to the students' voices invites us to act responsibly on behalf of all students. CRT scholars reify the need to be intentional and relentless in moving the work forward. "It is the refusal to remain silent, in and of itself, that gives strength and empowerment in a society determined to cling to established habits of repression"

(Taylor, 2009, p. 12). To borrow from Alvarez (2004a), hearing the students' voices about their experiences with race invites us all to take up the pen and share what we know about education in America. We must rise and act on it. "Moreover, racial and ethnic discrimination, whether overt or subtle, significantly undermines the opportunities and motivation of all students who are the victims of discrimination to pursue ambitious educational goals" (Banks et al., 2007, p. 174). Now that we know, we must act.

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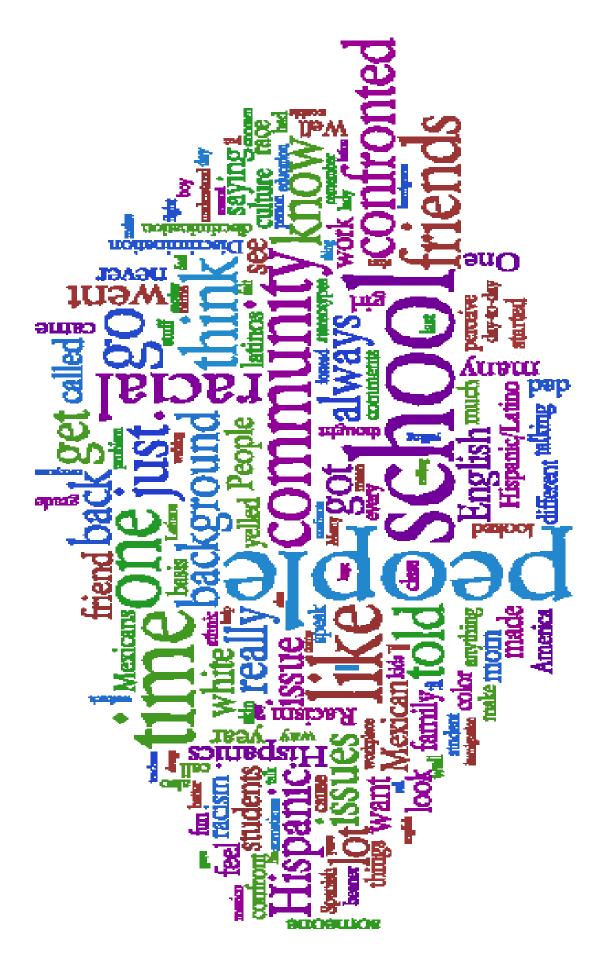
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**APPENDIX A:**

**Pilot Study Wordle™, February 2010**

**APPENDIX B:**

**Pilot Study Poem**

María L. Gabriel
EDRM 705 Spring 2010
April 13, 2010

**Every day**

I
My friends and I
A friend
My sister
My sister's friends
My brother
My brother's wife's family
My friends in California
My mom
My mom and I
My dad and I
My Aunt
My uncle
My grandfather
My grandma
My boss
Me and a lot of people I know

When I was in kindergarten
In elementary school
In school
On campus
In Spanish class
About the dress code
Accusing us of something we didn't do in school
We were standing there at lunch
We were hanging out
We were waiting in the line at the movies
We were shoppping
We were in a store
We were at Safeway
We were at Wal-Mart
They just keep following them
In a restaurants
Put in the back of a restaurant
Driving home from dinner
At the hospital
In everything, community, school, workplace, etc.
Every day

By the police
This old guy
The guy
A White man
This one white lady
This lady
A teacher
The staff
The teachers
My teachers
Students on campus
Some students in my class
The managers
A cashier
This girl
My sister's friends
These people
They

They think we are all mean
People think we're mean or dumb
Get looked down upon
Looked down on as much as not graduating and amounting to nothing
Afraid of Mexicans
Hating Hispanics
     Stereotypes
"Most Hispanics don't have money to spend on little things like glasses"
I am Puerto Rican but as school people call me Mexican
Saying that we should go back to where we came from
 "All the Mexicans should go back to Mexico"
 "GO BACK TO MEXICO"
Get called names all the time
Racial comments
Racial slurs
 "Beaners!"
"Wetback!"
 "Spic!"
     Experience some prejudice
Being judged because he was Mexican
Tell me that I suck because I am Latina
The boy told me that his parents didn't like me because I was Hispanic
Treated badly
Labeled
Singled out- some teachers treat me unfairly
Got bullied

Look at me funny because of my accent
Made fun of because they couldn't speak English
Make fun of immigrants
 "Immigration is coming!"
"We are in America, speak English!"
 "Speak English because this is America not Mexico you dirty beaners"
Tease us for being darker-skinned then them
People threw stuff
         Discrimination
Caught by the cops just because he was a different race
Got stopped and punched by the police
Stopped for speeding- he went through a lot
I was the only one ticketed
Put in the back to cook at McDonalds
Wasn't given a job because he was Dominican
Not moving up as quickly in the work place
Exclusion
         Racism

I didn't say anything
That bothers me
I was very upset
We felt so bad
Was down
It was difficult to go through that alone
It hurts how people make fun of us!
It makes me sad
That makes me really sad
It made me cry
I felt really mad
My mom started crying
We just talked to the school principal
She told her back "I'd rather be a wetback than a cracker"
Stood up to them
Got mad and took matters into her own hands
I yelled and told him that he doesn't know what we go through!
I almost got in a fight
I started fighting with them
I stood up for them

**Every day**

**APPENDIX C:**

**Focus Group Protocol**

**Focus Group Protocol**

**March 9, 2011**

*Please circle the words that best define you.*

Grade:  8      9      10      11      12      Gender: M      F

*Please fill in the blanks.*

Age _____ Race or Ethnicity _____

*We will talk about the following questions in the focus group, but feel free to begin to write your thoughts first. Please respond openly and honestly to the following questions:*

1. From the information you heard (described experiences), how have your experiences been similar or different?

2. What would you like to add that would describe *your* personal experiences in schools?

3. Based on your personal experiences, what do you disagree with that you heard in the described experiences?

4. What changes would you suggest for schools to keep the described experiences from happening to others?

**APPENDIX D:**

**Focus Group Posters and Themes**

## Slide 1

**María Gabriel**

*Question Asked:*
"Describe a time when you or someone you know confronted an issue based on their race or ethnicity."

### 4 years of data: 2006 to 2009; 105 responses

| Descriptors/Nodes | Sources |
|---|---|
| The experience | 94 |
| Who it happened to | 60 |
| Who reacted to race | 48 |
| Where | 40 |
| When | 50 |
| What was happening when experienced | 18 |

| Who | # of Experiences |
|---|---|
| Student | 34 |
| Family Member | 22 |
| Other (friend) | 22 |

| Where | # of Experiences | Type of Experience | # of Experiences |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community | 27 | Did | 51 |
| School | 19 | Said | 62 |

## Slide 2

# Themes in "Did"

| Did | F | M | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Discriminated Against | 26 | 8 | "We noticed the staff only confronted colored kids about the dress code, never the Caucasian kids." |
| Excluded | 9 | 3 | "The guy would not sell me a ticket because I was Latino." |
| Judged | 6 | 3 | "One of my friends was being judged because he was Mexican." |
| Labeled | 5 | 2 | "My friends get called names all the time and it makes me sad that we are always getting stereotyped." |

| Did | F | M | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Racial Comments | 22 | 8 | "...that guy turned and yelled 'beaners' with anger, like hating Hispanics." |
| National Origin | 11 | 2 | "A problem I had confronted was when a student at my school thought it was funny to make fun of immigrants." |
| "Go back..." | 6 | 2 | "A white student made the comment of all Mexicans, illegal or not, should go back to Mexico." |
| Language | 5 | 1 | "My teachers said I couldn't do the work because I talked Spanish." |
| Skin Color | 4 | 0 | "...we were picked on and called black because of our skin color. They would tease us for being darker skinned then them." |
| Income | 1 | 0 | "...My teacher answered the student saying, 'Most Hispanics don't have money to spend on little things like glasses." |

## Focus Group Questions

- Of what you heard, how has your experience been similar or different?
- What have you experienced in **schools**? Is there more to know? More to hear?
- Based on your personal experiences, what do you disagree with that you heard in the described experiences?
- Are there changes you'd suggest for schools to make to keep these kinds of experiences from happening?

**APPENDIX E:**

**Approvals for Human Research**

# Colorado State University
*Knowledge to Go Places*

## NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

**DATE:** June 09, 2010

**TO:** Brantmeier, EDWARD, 1588 School of Education

Gabriel, Maria, 1005 Graduate School, Timpson, William

**FROM:** Barker, Janell, CSU IRB 2

**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Poetic Analysis- 2 Phases

**FUNDING SOURCE:** NONE

**PROTOCOL NUMBER:** 10-1937H

**APPROVAL PERIOD:** Approval Date: June 08, 2010          Expiration Date: June 07, 2011

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: Poetic Analysis- 2 Phases. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

Janell Barker, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1655 Janell.Barker@Research.Colostate.edu
Evelyn Swiss, IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381 Evelyn.Swiss@Research.Colostate.edu

Barker, Janell

Page: 1

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Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office
Office of the Vice President for Research
321 General Services Building - Campus Delivery 2011
Fort Collins, CO
TEL: (970) 491-1553
FAX: (970) 491-2293

## NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

**DATE:** January 31, 2011

**TO:** Timpson, William, 1588 School of Education

Gabriel, Maria, 1005 Graduate School, Lehmann, Jean

**FROM:** Barker, Janell, , CSU IRB 2

**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Poetic Analysis- 2 Phases

**FUNDING SOURCE:** NONE

**PROTOCOL NUMBER:** 10-1937H

**APPROVAL PERIOD:** Approval Date: January 31, 2011       Expiration Date: June 07, 2011

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: Poetic Analysis- 2 Phases. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

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Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

Janell Barker, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1655 Janell.Barker@Colostate.edu
Evelyn Swiss, IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381 Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu

Barker, Janell

*Janell Barker*

**Colorado State University**
*Knowledge to Go Places*

Barker, Janell

Includes:

Amendment approved to conduct Phase II of the study. PIs will recruit up to 15 participants for three focus groups. The above-referenced project was approved by the Institutional Review Board with the condition that the attached consent form is signed by the subjects and each subject is given a copy of the form. NO changes may be made to this document without first obtaining the approval of the Committee. Subjects under the age of 18 years old must obtain parental permission. NOTE TO PI: Please submit the introductory letters and consent/assent forms in Spanish as an amendment prior to recruitment.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Approval Period:** | January 31, 2011 through June 07, 2011 |
| **Review Type:** | EXPEDITED |
| **IRB Number:** | 00000202 |

**Colorado State University**
*Knowledge to Go Places*

Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office
Office of the Vice President for Research
321 General Services Building - Campus Delivery 2011 Fort Collins, CO
TEL: (970) 491-1553
FAX: (970) 491-2293

## NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

| | |
|---|---|
| **DATE:** | May 17, 2011 |
| **TO:** | Timpson, William, 1588 School of Education |
| | Swiss, Evelyn, Gabriel, Maria, 1005 Graduate School, Lehmann, Jean |
| **FROM:** | Barker, Janell, , CSU IRB 1 |
| **PROTOCOL TITLE:** | Poetic Analysis- 2 Phases |
| **FUNDING SOURCE:** | NONE |
| **PROTOCOL NUMBER:** | 10-1937H |
| **APPROVAL PERIOD:** | Approval Date: May 17, 2011       Expiration Date: June 07, 2011 |

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: Poetic Analysis- 2 Phases. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

Janell Barker, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1655 Janell.Barker@Colostate.edu
Evelyn Swiss, IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381 Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu

Barker, Janell

*Janell Barker*

**Colorado State University**

*Knowledge to Go Places*

Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office
Office of the Vice President for Research
321 General Services Building - Campus Delivery 2011 Fort Collins, CO
TEL: (970) 491-1553
FAX: (970) 491-2293

Barker, Janell

Includes:
The amendment is to upload the Spanish translations for the file and final versions of the focus group protocol and recruitment.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Approval Period:** | May 17, 2011 through June 07, 2011 |
| **Review Type:** | EXPEDITED |
| **IRB Number:** | 00000202 |

**APPENDIX F:**

**Parent Permission for Focus Groups**

February 2011

Dear Parent,

My name is María Gabriel and I am a doctoral student from Colorado State University in the School of Education. I am writing this letter of invitation to you because we want to study the experiences of Hispanic students in public middle and high schools. By learning from our students' experiences we can improve schools and better support our Hispanic students, so they will have a better chance of high school graduation. Having met your child this fall, I believe they have a lot to share to contribute to this research. We would like your permission to include your child in our study. The second page of this letter includes a consent form you can use to provide your permission.

While 80% of the students attending the schools in the school district are White, there are 20% of students from diverse backgrounds. Over the years students have shared stories about the way their race and ethnicity impacts their experiences in our schools. To learn more and create opportunities for change to better support our students, we are inviting your child to participate in one 1 hour focus group.

A focus group is a small group setting of 5-7 students who will respond to questions I ask. While the school district is aware and supportive of this research, the focus groups will take place at a Community Building. Here are a few things you should know to consider participation.

- The focus group will take 1 hour and will be audio-recorded.

- Your child will need to have their own ride and/or transportation.

- Your child's participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to allow their participation in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty to your or your child.

- While there are no direct benefits to you or your child, we appreciate your child's willingness to share, and we believe that when youth have their voices heard they often feel connected to others, become empowered to learn more and do well in school.

- Your child's individual responses will not be connected to their names, the name of their school, or the school district.

The only people with access to your information will be: myself as co-principal investigator; my dissertation advisor, Dr. Timpson, and a member of my dissertation committee who is the methodologist for the project. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's participation in this research, please contact me, María Gabriel, at 970-613-5775 or maria.gabriel@colostate.edu or Dr. William Timpson, School of Education, at 970-491-7630. If you have additional questions about this research, you can contact Janell Barker at Colorado State University's Research Compliance Office at, 970-491-1655.

PARENTAL SIGNATURE FOR MINOR (Consent Form)

Parent's permission for their child to participate (for students under 18 years old).

As parent or guardian I authorize _____ (Student's name) to become a participant for the described research. I allow my child to participate in this research project and agree to the use of any audio taped clips may be used for educational purposes.

I understand all information shared by my child is strictly confidential and I will not have access to this information unless deemed appropriate by the researcher. The nature and general purpose of the project have been satisfactorily explained to me in the letter of invitation to participate and the permission/consent form, and I am satisfied that proper precautions will be observed.

As parent/guardian, I will allow my child _____ (print name) to be a participant in the research study.

Student's name:_____

Student's date of birth: _____

Parent/Guardian name printed: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

☐ Please check this box if you DO **NOT** want your child to participate in the research study.


Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Thank you!

Sincerely,


María Gabriel            Dr. William Timpson
PhD Candidate            Professor
Co-Principal Investigator      Principal Investigator

**APPENDIX G:**

**Invitation to Participate in Focus Groups**

Would you like to share your experience of being a Hispanic student in your school?



If you would like to talk about your experience, please join us for a small group conversation on **Wednesday, March 9, 2011** at the Community Building, Meeting Room #1.

Please join us at 2:15-3:15 p.m.

Completed and signed permission and consent forms are required to participate!

Thank you for your interest in my study!

Questions: Call María, (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email: maria.gabriel@colostate.edu

# APPENDIX H:

## Tree Nodes used as Codebook

## Tree Nodes

| Name | | Sources | References | Created On |
|------|---|---------|------------|------------|
| How it was handled | | 44 | 45 | 7/24/2010 10:29 AM |
| The experience | ▣ | 94 | 100 | 7/24/2010 11:09 AM |
| What was happening when experience took place | ▣ | 18 | 18 | 7/24/2010 10:15 AM |
| When | | 39 | 39 | 7/24/2010 9:19 AM |
| Where | | 40 | 42 | 7/17/2010 10:25 AM |
| Who it happened to | | 60 | 62 | 7/17/2010 10:04 AM |
| Who reacted to race | ▣ | 48 | 48 | 7/24/2010 10:00 AM |