A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WHITE RACIAL IDENTITIES

OF FACULTY MEMBERS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION OF

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION WITHIN THE COURSE,

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN DIFFERENCES

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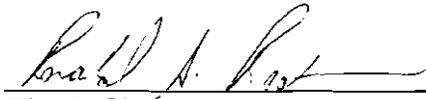Master of Education – Professional Development

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THESIS APPROVAL

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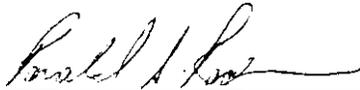   Date

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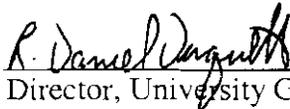This thesis is approved.

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Thesis Abstract

DEPOUW, C.A. <u>A study of the relationship between the white racial identities of faculty members and their implementation of multicultural education within the course,</u> *Understanding Human Differences.* Master of Education-Professional Development, College of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Teacher Education, August 2000, 144 pp. (R. Rochon)

A study was undertaken to determine the nature of the relationship between the white racial identities of faculty members who teach *Understanding Human Differences* and their implementation of multicultural education within that course. Two instructors, one female and one male, were interviewed about their white racial identities and about their positions as small-group instructors for the course. A study of the history of the evolution of race as an ideology was conducted along with the two interviews in order to place white racial identity within a historical framework. Janet Helms' (1995) White Racial Identity Ego Statuses and Information-Processing Strategies were used to analyze the data collected from the interviews. Sleeter and Grant's (1994) five approaches to multicultural education were used to evaluate the *Understanding Human Differences* course. The white racial identities of the faculty members matched the level of multicultural implementation for the course. In other words, the faculty members were both at white racial identity ego statuses in which they were not yet committed to anti-racism as a part of their white racial identities, and the *Understanding Human Differences* course falls within the Human Relations approach to multicultural education, which indicates a low level of commitment to multicultural education within the university.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Context of White Racial Identity

White racial identity is a topic that causes many white people to run and duck for
cover whenever it is mentioned. In America, race itself is likened to a powder keg upon
which the country has been sitting uneasily since its early beginnings. The volatile nature
of race in the United States instills in white people a great desire to avoid acknowledging
that race even exists. Recognizing the existence of race would mean positioning oneself
within that system, would mean seeing oneself as also possessing a racial identity
(Kincheloe, 1998; Kivel, 1995). Most white people are caught in the trap of deliberately
ignoring race and the accompanying white privilege that it affords them, while
simultaneously clinging to those privileges (Fine, 1996; McIntosh, 1990). Since white
racial identity grants to white people power, unearned advantage and dominance in
relation to people of color, discussions of race may cause white people to feel threatened,
accused, guilty, or simply uncomfortable (Sleeter, 1995; Tatum, 1992; McIntyre, 1997).

At the same time, the dualistic thinking that is a hallmark of American white
supremacy prevents the serious examination of the relationships between race and class
(Bell, 1987; Zinn, 1995). Often, white people who avoid discussions of race could be
engaged in such dialogue by making clear how white people are also disadvantaged by
racism. This is, of course, not to imply that white people are oppressed by racism; rather,
they are distracted from possible class conflicts by the scapegoating that racism provides

(Bell, 1987; Bell, 1992; Baldwin, 1962). The use of racism as a means of destroying

economic unity between white and black people was a major motivation for the

perpetuation of race as an ideology. From Bacon's rebellion in 1676 (Zinn, 1995) to the

present-day debates about affirmative action, economic stability has been maintained

through the use of racial divisions. Tom Watson, leader of the Georgia Populist party in

the 1890s, explained the situation thus:

> You are kept apart that you may be separately fleeced of your earnings. You are
> made to hate each other because upon that hatred is rested the keystone of the
> arch of financial despotism which enslaves you both. You are deceived and
> blinded that you may not see how this race antagonism perpetuates a monetary
> system which beggars both (Zinn, 1995, p. 285).

By closing off discussions of white supremacy and white racial identity, white people are

also in many cases acting against their own economic interests. They are often unaware

of this, however, due to the racist socialization that has taught them to identify with

wealthy white Americans rather than Americans of color who share class interests (Bell,

1987).

At the Wisconsin university used in this study, the white faculty members

attempting to teach the general education class, *Understanding Human Differences*, are

not immune to the feelings of most white people when it comes to the subject of white

racial identity. Aside from the previously mentioned motivations for avoidance that most

white people in America share, there are structural dimensions to the course itself that

could possibly contribute to the avoidance of white racial identity as a central topic of

study. For example, one professor, who has been designated as the course coordinator,

designs the curriculum. It is then distributed to other faculty members who have been

selected to teach *Understanding Human Differences* based on little criteria other than their desire to teach the course.

Given the lack of professional development requirements for faculty members wishing to teach the course, most faculty members have not participated in formal study of multiculturalism outside the confines of the *Understanding Human Differences* curriculum. Their limited experiences and lack of study may not prevent an intellectual understanding of the structures of white racial identity statuses as presented within the *Understanding Human Differences* curriculum. However, without undertaking serious historical research, it would be difficult for them to recognize and understand the historical formations of race as an ideology or the accompanying white racial thought patterns. Without an accurate historical context within which to view whiteness and white supremacy, the faculty members are less likely to view racism and white supremacy as a social structure that incorporates economic and political factors as well as the more widely discussed social and cultural aspects.

Also, it will be more difficult for them to link personal and political intersections of racism, and to understand racism as a foundation of America rather than an unfortunate and persistent problem. If we recognize that *Understanding Human Differences* faculty members do not, as a group, seriously study issues of oppression and multiculturalism, we can understand the lack of leadership in challenging white racial identity within their classrooms. McIntyre (1997) indicates that white teachers may hedge around whiteness and white racial identity because they wish to prevent their students from feeling the discomfort or guilt that comes with these discussions, because

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they do not wish to seriously address white racial identity either, or because they simply have too little experience or knowledge to know how to proceed.

Avoiding the central study of white racial identity in relation to racism, however, serves to undermine any progress these teachers hope to make in diminishing prejudice or fostering cultural pluralism. Until the study and deconstruction of white supremacy and white racial identity are incorporated into all aspects of classes such as *Understanding Human Differences*, effects will continue to be analyzed while causes are ignored (Sleeter, 1995; Bell, 1987).

Ignoring the causes of white supremacy ensures its continuance. It also makes misapplication of solutions more likely. For example, the *Understanding Human Differences* course has been described by some faculty members as "education that is 'multicultural and social reconstructionist,'" (Koppelman & Richardson, 1995), meaning that the course's approach is the most comprehensive and institutionally integrated of the five possible approaches to multicultural education listed by Sleeter & Grant (1994). However, the course structure consists of general assembly lectures, weekly small-group discussions, reading assignments outside of class, in-class activities, and a synthesis paper "that documents their [the students'] translation of theory into practice" (Koppelman & Richardson, 1995, p. 146). Students taking the course are also expected to "experience people(s) of diversified backgrounds" (Koppelman & Richardson, 1995). In no way is the course connected to the comprehensive implementation of institutional changes.

In this atmosphere of misapplication and little required professional development, it would be easy to blame the faculty members for any failings that the course may have. However, the single-course approach in and of itself has limited potential for social change (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). Also, the program under question in this study must be considered as one course within a university full of courses, most of whose content are in direct contradiction to that of *Understanding Human Differences* (Banks, 1998). Furthermore, the university and the larger state university system as institutions must be evaluated to determine if they actually desire the realization of the goals of this course or if, as Derrick Bell (1987) suggests, they wish to implement changes which in theory are in the best interests of people of color but which in practice benefit the white people who implemented them.

Statement of the Problem

The question of white racial identity within faculty members is posed with the recognition that higher education is part of the larger white supremacist framework of America. Given the institutional nature of the American white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 1995), we must first acknowledge that institutions, such as educational institutions at all levels, are designed to uphold rather than challenge such a system and to instill the ideology of that system within its students (Apple, 1979). Faculty members are positioned as products of white supremacist educational institutions as well as possible agents for the continued survival of such institutions (hooks, 1994). It is with this knowledge in mind that we examine the white racial identities of faculty members, and the relationship of those identities to the implementation of anti-racism within the

Understanding Human Differences course. It should be clearly understood that the analysis of the responses of the faculty members who agreed to be interviewed is done in order to observe more closely the individual manifestations of institutional characteristics. Therefore, these individuals are examined as people affected by a white supremacist society, not as people who are the sole causes of it. This study was conducted in order to investigate the effects that the white racial identity statuses of faculty members have upon their implementations of multicultural education.

Characteristics of White Racial Identity

Some major characteristics of white racial identity are: fear of people perceived to be non-white, construction of a positive white identity based on the devaluing and negation of blackness, dualistic thinking, economic benefit based upon the system of race, white cultural hegemony, a false feeling of superiority, dominance, unearned advantage, withholding from people of color, an avoidance of or blindness to the realities of race in America, and a reliance on silence when it comes to white participation in racism (McIntyre, 1997; McIntosh, 1990; Kivel, 1995; Kincheloe, 1999; hooks, 1995; Smedley, 1999; Bell, 1987; Baldwin, 1963; Sleeter, 1995). As these are general characteristics of white racial identity, it is fairly safe to assume that most white people socialized within the United States, including white faculty members, possess them (Smedley, 1999; McIntyre, 1997). These characteristics are not distinct or exclusive; rather, they are systemic and interrelated (McIntyre, 1997; Kincheloe, 1999; Fine, 1996).

Unless we address these and other characteristics of white racial identity and deconstruct them, unless we make them conscious, unless we challenge the silence that

supports white supremacy and lends it power, can an honest and accurate discussion of racism and social justice take place? In other words, we must ask if white faculty members can achieve or even properly develop the goals of an anti-racist course without engaging in an ongoing examination of white racial identity in relation to white supremacy and racism. How does the status of the white racial identities of faculty members affect the understanding and implementation of anti-racism within *Understanding Human Differences*?

Need for the Study

Self-knowledge has been proven, as in the case of the instruction of history, to be a catalyst to social and political awareness. Moreover, the prevention of accurate self-knowledge, in many respects, has been a strong political and cultural device used to maintain white supremacy. Given that the majority of students within the *Understanding Human Differences* course are white (Koppelman & Richardson, 1995) and that the examination and deconstruction of whiteness is not at the center of the course, it becomes problematic to claim that the course is "multicultural and social reconstructionist" (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). Social reconstruction cannot take place if the deconstruction of white supremacy and white racial identity is not attempted at the institutional level. If white faculty members, people who are part of the dominant racial group in the United States, do not build their course around the deconstruction and transformation of white racial identity, any educational efforts at multiculturalism will simply reinforce the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy they are supposed to be reconstructing. Subjugated voices may be heard within these classrooms without engaging in the deconstruction of

whiteness, but they will remain within the power parameters of the dominant discourse

(Morrison, 1992).

A recent university evaluation of the *Understanding Human Differences* course

indicated that the goals of the course are "consistent with the objectives of the

Multicultural and Multiracial Women's category" (General Education Committee,

personal communication, August 20, 1999). The committee further stated that the course

incorporated an inquiry-based approach. However, concern about the nature of outcomes

assessment was also expressed:

> The [general education] committee relies on instructors and departments to
> conduct assessment that includes direct measures of student learning outcomes in
> the courses, and to demonstrate that what instructors learn about their course is
> used to improve student learning and teaching. The course review materials [for
> *Understanding Human Differences*] indicate that this kind of systematic
> assessment of student learning outcomes is not conducted for this course. It
> appears that the assignments appended to the course review materials are used
> only for purposes of evaluating students for a grade in the class. Moreover, it
> appears that students' evaluations of the course are the primary means by which
> instructors evaluate the class (General Education Committee, personal
> communication, August 20, 1999).

This study, too, is necessary in order to create space for a critical discourse about the role

of faculty racial identity and its relationship to the implementation of anti-racism within

the *Understanding Human Differences* classroom. The knowledge generated from such a

study could contribute to what instructors learn about this course so that they may

"improve student learning and teaching" and possibly have a greater impact on the

university in general.

Implications

The lack of knowledge about white racial identity and the accompanying near-absence of professional development have great implications for how the role of white faculty members is defined within the multicultural or anti-racist classroom. First, it was obvious that, in the *Understanding Human Differences* course, faculty members were allowed to teach based on their interest in the course rather than upon their knowledge of the subject matter. This is due, in part, to the dismal record of the university in the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. Also, the course is a General Education course, meaning that it is one of the core requirements for all students who wish to obtain an undergraduate degree from the university. Thus, more sections of the course and, therefore, more faculty members, are required.

In terms of professional development, several sources within the university have indicated that funds are available, but faculty members do not take advantage of them. Put together, these aspects of the *Understanding Human Differences* course indicate that the course is curriculum-driven, with little attention to the affects that small-group instructors may have upon their students. Further, while several instructors have indicated concern with the lack of diversity within the *Understanding Human Differences* faculty, the department remains rather traditional in its searches for candidates, thus virtually ensuring that the demographics of the faculty will remain the same.

Looking at the faculty members individually, it was apparent that the two faculty members who were interviewed for this study both understood white racial identity mostly as white privilege. Whiteness was never seen as a disadvantage, even when the

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faculty members alluded to the lack of knowledge that accompanies whiteness. Neither faculty member, although readily admitting to a lack of information about white racial identity and, sometimes, racism in general, were willing to give up their positions as teachers of a Human Differences course unless their positions were required in order to hire a faculty member of color. They therefore illustrate one of the contradictions of whiteness: they understand the problem and recognize what the probable solution should be, but are unwilling to give up what they have in order to work toward that solution.

This is not to say that the two faculty members are not sincere. Instead, it indicates that they have not yet clarified the relationship between whiteness in an institutional sense and their own white identities. Due to their lack of professional development or knowledge about white racial identity, they also do not have the background necessary to critically analyze the curriculum that they are teaching in *Understanding Human Differences.* While they may recognize aspects of the course as problematic, they have not studied enough to choose alternative curricular or pedagogical methods that may prove more effective.

For the Wisconsin university in question, the study implies that, unless faculty members are encouraged and even required to investigate white racial identity as a prerequisite to teaching, they will not study the subject in any depth. The consequence of this gap in understanding is that white supremacy and racism are reinforced, even within a course that claims to be "multicultural and social reconstructionist" (Koppelman & Richardson, 1995). As Alice McIntyre (1997) states, "When our teaching fails to

illuminate the past, present, and future consequences of white racism, we limit the construction of knowledge and privilege the dominant discourse (135)."

Not only is the dominant discourse privileged when teaching fails to seriously address white racism, but students are given yet another example of the hypocrisy that characterizes so much of American society. In a country whose Constitution at one time discussed democracy in the same breath that it designated African Americans to be 3/5 of a person, it is important to provide alternative modeling in which theory and practice are consistent. By talking about racism while removing whiteness from the discourse, students once again receive permission to mouth beliefs upon which they know they will not be expected to act.

Studying the relationship between the white racial identities of faculty members and their implementation of multicultural education is an attempt to disrupt the dominant discourse. By engaging in critical thinking and introspection in regards to white racial identity, faculty members will not only be better able to transform their pedagogical practices, but they will have a working knowledge of the process in which their white students must engage in order to become active in the development of their own anti-racist white identities.

If anti-racism is to be effective, it must be conducted as a personal process located within a larger political process. The individual is never disconnected from the society that surrounds her, and anti-racism acknowledges and investigates this position. The study of faculty white racial identities also may assist in a more complex understanding of whiteness and white supremacy as they are manifested within educational institutions,

and encourage the recognition that individual and conscious racism are not the only ways in which white supremacy is sustained. It is rather through the daily practices of institutions built within the culture of white supremacy that we are all socialized to participate in racism in different ways.

This study should be understood as a desire to improve the state of anti-racist education in general and the *Understanding Human Differences* course in particular. It is only by critical self-awareness that we can maintain the humility necessary to achieve progress in the struggle for a more just society. In critiquing ourselves and centering whiteness within the discourse about white supremacy and racism, we are combating the tendency of whiteness to "de-race" itself in favor of focusing on the people of color labeled as outsiders (hooks, 1995). As Feagin and Vera (as cited in McIntyre, 1997) wrote,

> [I am] not interested in labeling particular white Americans as "bad" or "good," for this name-calling will not lead to meaningful remedial action. The examination of white thinking as racialized, racist, or antiracist is of interest only as it aids the understanding of the system of white racism in the United States (136).

In the same way, this study is not intended to single out faculty members as racist. Instead, the study is intended to clarify the ways in which white supremacy can remain intact even in the face of measures that claim to be social reconstructionist. Based on our socialization as white people, we often are unable or unwilling to differentiate cosmetic from real change. We have been taught to ignore that white supremacy continues through us, that we have internalized it as our white racial identities. By investigating the racial identities of white faculty members, I hope to demonstrate that none of us can

remove ourselves from the larger white supremacist system in which we live. Rather, by

honestly examining that system, we can begin to deconstruct and transform it.

Definition of Terms

Hegemony - The complete domination of one culture over another, such that the
dominant culture is made to appear normal and right (Apple, 1979).

Racial identity - An identity that has little meaning outside a system of race, it is a social
construct based upon the false biological assumption of superiority or inferiority based on
phenotype (Smedley, 1999; West, 1993).

White privilege - The unearned advantages and dominance that white people receive
within a white supremacist society (McIntosh, 1990). White privilege can also take the
form of withholding opportunities from people of color in order to create relative white
privilege (Fine, 1996).

White supremacy - The system of cultural, political, economic, educational, and social
supremacy in which people perceived to be white receive unearned advantage and
dominance over people of color (McIntosh, 1990).

Limitations

One limitation of this study on the white racial identities of faculty members is the

small number of faculty members interviewed. Time and resource constraints made this

necessary, but the lack of a more comprehensive study makes any generalizations about

the white racial identities of the faculty members difficult. Furthermore, some research

has indicated a gender-split in white racial identity: males are more likely to be overtly

racist, while females are more likely to adopt a "colorblind" approach (Carter, 1990;

Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). The small number of faculty members interviewed makes it

difficult to investigate the possibility of a gender-split in any depth.

This study is also limited because it is a study about white racial identity being

conducted by a white researcher (Helms, 1993). Just as the two faculty members are

influenced by white racial identity in the implementation of anti-racist education, so to am I influenced by my white racial identity. There may be aspects of white racial identity that I am not able to distinguish or clarify because I have not yet addressed those aspects within myself.

Summary

White racial identity is flexible and somewhat hard to pin down. It changes with situation and often renders itself difficult to combat because it is such a pivotal and integral part of white supremacy. White faculty members who teach anti-racist or multicultural education must investigate white racial identity and its influence on their pedagogical practices if they are to actively combat the causes of white supremacy rather than its effects.

In undertaking such a study, the larger context of our American white supremacist capitalist patriarchy must be examined and critically discussed. White racial identity is, in part, an institutional creation that cannot be deconstructed if it is viewed as a strictly individual phenomenon. Educational institutions, as part of the infrastructure of white supremacy, also need serious examination and study as the perpetuators and transmitters of American hegemony. As the human medium through which this hegemony is usually distilled, it is important to ask how the statuses of white faculty members' racial identities affect their efforts to combat racism and implement multicultural curriculum. Do the statuses of their white racial identities permit them to effectively critique the *Understanding Human Differences* course? Are they able to develop effective strategies

for change, or do the statuses of their white racial identities limit them to replications of

the same hegemonic practices found in education that does not claim to be multicultural?

CHAPTER II

Review of Research

Race as a Social Construct

Categories of race are not, as has been asserted in the past, biological and therefore immutable (Smedley, 1999). Instead, racial categories have been socially constructed and revised throughout the history of the United States by policies, by laws and by science, among many sources (Bell, 1992, 1996; Haney Lopez, 1996). However, American education and educators have not taught about the social construction of race and its existence as an arbitrary category of dominance and subordination. Without the history of the origin of the ideology of race, support is implicitly provided for the cultural assumption about the biological permanence of race, even though anthropologists have refuted race as a scientific category of classification since the late nineteenth century (Smedley, 1999).

The racial ideology in America can best be described as white supremacist. It is a cultural structure in which belief in the dominance and superiority of whiteness is pervasive and integrated within every aspect of society (Hilliard, 1995; Bell, 1996; Apple, 1979). This cultural structure, called hegemony, is best defined as the dominance of one culture over another in which the dominant culture completely saturates the society in which it is found. Since the dominant culture – in this case, white culture – has made its presence all encompassing, and has established and continues to maintain a power imbalance in its favor, white culture appears normal and therefore right. In a

society in which hegemony exists. cultures other than the dominant culture are considered to be outsiders or inferior. At the same time, part of hegemony is the appropriation of aspects of subordinated cultures by the dominant culture, which then claims credit for those aspects as if the other cultures had made no contribution (Apple, 1979; hooks, 1995).

In a hegemonic society where the dominant culture is normalized. cultural appropriation is imperative to the survival of an unequal hierarchical structure. In order to maintain social control and stability, and thus perpetuate hegemony, the dominant culture's knowledge can be the only knowledge considered legitimate and valid within that society (Higginbotham, 1995; Apple, 1979; hooks, 1995). One of the consequences of the normalization of a dominant culture is that its ascension into the dominant position is made to appear timeless and permanent (Smedley, 1999; Morrison, 1992; Kincheloe, 1999). Immersed in such a culture, it is difficult to imagine a time when the ideology of dominance and hegemony did not exist. Obscured in historical misinformation, the dominant culture is thus protected from questions and critique and taken for granted, much as we flip a light switch without questioning the source of electricity.

<u>History of Race as an Ideology</u>

The underpinnings of race as an ideology first took shape in the conflicts, which extend over 500 years, between the English and the Irish. It was in Ireland that the English first developed the idea of "savages," people who were unable to be civilized and who were therefore damned under the Puritan belief system. The English incorporated subhuman status into the ideology of the "savage," and terrorized the Irish through

violence, theft, and policies of extermination or removal. The often brutal treatment of the Irish was carried over into English policies concerning the native populations of North America.

It is interesting to note that, in the case of the Irish as well as of North American indigenous peoples, condemnation of each group as "savages" unable to be civilized did not occur until the English required a rationale to take the land of the respective group. As Audrey Smedley (1999) writes,

> English takeovers of land from the Irish and the Indians followed much the same methodologies and strategies, and had the same consequences. The forced removal of those who resisted and the justification of such removals in the name of conquest, the presumed "legal" rights of cultivators over nomads, and religious motivations characterized English encounters with both peoples. (85)

The Puritans were able to justify such violent and inhumane behavior by deeming it God's will. Many of the early colonists, when documenting atrocities against indigenous peoples, proclaimed the glory of their work against the indigenous peoples, much like the journal entries of Englishmen who campaigned against the Irish (Smedley, 1999).

The Puritans desired to create an orderly world in which the "religious community would monitor and discipline the extremes of individual behavior. Through hard work, piety, self-restraint, service, and obedience, people could achieve salvation as well as worldly success (87)." These values, however, conflicted with the capitalist and emerging industrial values of individualism, greed, and independence of action. The old Puritan values began to fall away as the new colonists justify their excesses and contradictions with the worship of a God who "favored only them (88)." Thus the basic

elements of the ideology of race began to combine and grow, and were given new

meaning in the English interactions with the North American indigenous populations.

> It was no longer a question of just the one group of savages, the "wild Irish"; now
> there was emerging in English minds a generic, ever more monolithic category of
> savages made up of many groups. Not only did the existence of this category
> buttress the Englishman's sense of his own identity as a member of a superior
> nation, but its contrasting features provided him with a measure of his own worth.
> (Smedley, 1999, p. 88)

Thus the English, in order to develop an identity in the New World, required an opposite,

an "Other" with which to compare themselves. In the remote and often dangerous new

colonies, they needed proof that they were, indeed, still civilized. Indigenous peoples,

and later, Africans, provided this Other on which the English built their new identities

(Smedley, 1999; Takaki, 1993).

The first Africans to come to North America did not come as slaves. There are

signs of Africans visiting South and Central America for hundreds of years before

European contact in those areas (Hilliard, 1995). Records indicate that Africans

accompanied European explorers to North and South America as members of the ships'

crews. Africans, along with indigenous peoples, were also among the people left to

inhabit Roanoke in 1586. Francis Drake formed an alliance with communities of escaped

Africans, who were called Cimarrons, in Panama against the Spanish in the early 1580s,

illustrating that Europeans had not always allied along lines of race (Smedley, 1999).

In 1619, Africans came ashore at Jamestown, Virginia. They had been sold as

part of a "cargo" of people from a Dutch ship, and were considered indentured servants

along with the rest of the people sold. The status of indentured servitude and slavery

tended to overlap in this time period, and were sometimes confused with each other

because of the harsh conditions of both statuses. At this time, however, permanent legal slavery did not exist in the colonies. According to Winthrop Morgan (1975),

> The initial status of blacks was not permanently fixed at the lowest social level. They seemed to suffer no greater debilities than white servants or freed white men. After their terms of service, many blacks gained their freedom and apparently had no difficulty in acquiring property or even voting. Some became landowners or entrepreneurs and commanded the respect of others because of their success. They engaged in trading and other commercial activities and had business dealings on an equal footing with whites. (as cited in Smedley, 1999, p. 97)

The original status of Africans in America refutes one of the strongest tenets of racist ideology – that black people are permanently and biologically fixed at a lower social level than people of other ethnicities (Smedley, 1999; Bell, 1987; Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 1995; Haney Lopez, 1996).

The status of Africans and African-Americans began to change as the "ruling classes...[became] more afraid of a general uprising of the servile classes and landless poor" (Smedley, 1999, p. 97). Slavery as an institution gradually developed through statutes and policies, stripping Africans and African-Americans of rights while deliberately developing a sense of common identity among all classes of people of European descent. As Nash (1992) states,

> In rapid succession Afro-Americans lost their right to testify before a court; to engage in any kind of commercial activity, either as buyer or seller; to hold property; to participate in the political process; to congregate in public places with more than two or three of their fellows; to travel without permission; and to engage in legal marriage or parenthood. In some colonies legislatures even prohibited the right to education and religion, for they thought these might encourage the germ of freedom in slaves....Gradually they reduced the slave, in the eyes of society and the law, from a human being to a piece of chattel property. (as cited in Smedley, 1999, p. 99)

Cultural as well as economic factors determined that the permanent labor class that the wealthy colonial planters deemed necessary to the survival of the burgeoning colonies was to consist of Africans and people of African descent.

For instance, the English, by the sixteenth century, had clearly demonstrated ethnic chauvinism towards most groups of people, European as well as non-European, who were not English. They had established a "pattern of inhumane treatment of non-English peoples" that was indicative of a cultural belief in their "own superiority that already bordered on racism" long before their specific dealings with Africans or with indigenous peoples (Smedley, 1999, p. 101). Furthermore, religious beliefs of the time positioned non-Christians as heathens who were damned and undeserving of God's mercy. Therefore, the English felt little moral conflict between Christianity and the enslavement of Africans. By the time Africans began to convert to Christianity, racist ideology was established enough to provide new rationales (Smedley, 1999).

The desire for cheap and permanent labor, however, proved to be a major motivation towards the enslavement of Africans. In the late 1620s, the English were involved in the Irish "slave trade," in which scores of Irish people were forcibly taken from Ireland and sent to work on plantations in the West Indies as permanent and unpaid labor. This was part of the English policy of extermination or expulsion towards the Irish, which was later to be applied to the indigenous peoples of the Americas. As tobacco increased in demand and in price, plantation owners required more labor.

> For the English plantation owner, what was needed was a docile workforce over whom he had absolute authority, who could be put to work for no more than minimal keep, and thus who could be treated as property such as livestock. The English attempted to put this kind of system into practice with European labor

> even before the Africans figured significantly into the equation. By the second decade of the seventeenth century, the colonists had already established a plantation system with separate, substandard, and miserable servant housing; poor food; whippings and maimings for punishment; and forced gang labor. (Smedley, 1999, p. 101)

The harsh conditions meant that many indentured servants died before the length of their servitude was completed, thus making it unnecessary to free them or to honor the terms of their contracts. At the same time, England was forcibly removing many poor people and many convicts and sending them to America as indentured labor. By mid-seventeenth century, however, many of the indentured servants were living longer and gaining their freedom. This situation was one of the problems that compelled the English to try to develop a cheaper and more permanent labor force (Smedley, 1999; Takaki, 1993).

The indigenous populations within the new colonies had already proved unsuitable for permanent labor force. They were familiar with the land and could easily escape to nearby allies. Also, the tenuous situations with many indigenous tribes and nations made it politically inexpedient to kidnap or indenture indigenous peoples on a massive scale. European indentured servants proved unviable, since they could escape and easily blend into the free European population. However, the final impetus towards a permanent African labor force, a labor force set aside by color as well as condition, was Bacon's Rebellion of 1676. The rebels had grievances against the government because of "perceived corruption, abuses of power, and unfair taxes" (Smedley, 1999, p. 103). Different factions demanded a host of measures, including more equitable distribution of land.

One of the fiercest demands was freedom from the chattel servitude that afflicted Africans, indigenous people, and poor Europeans alike. "What most frightened planters was that the rebellion brought together several thousand poor, working-class men and women, the majority of the colony's population, including both white and black servants" (Smedley, 1999, p. 103). Production of tobacco required a cheap and servile labor force, and that labor force had ceased to exist with Bacon's Rebellion. The rebellion made wealthy planters recognize the dangers in alliances between poor Europeans, Africans, and indigenous peoples and set out to create divisions in order to maintain social control. Wealthy colonists began to focus on physical differences in the labor force and devised divisions based on those differences. The physical differences were imbued with social meanings in an attempt to protect the wealthy colonists' social, political, and economic interests. Prior to the labor crises in the late seventeenth century, colonists had noticed physical differences, but had not yet attached social meaning to them (Smedley, 1999; Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 1995).

As black slavery solidified and became an institution, it became the source of the mirror images that colonial America needed for its very survival. It was not just an economic institution, but a social one. The Enlightenment promoted the modes of thought that made dualism a necessary component of American identity formation. In order to define democracy, freedom, and individualism for themselves, Americans needed to have a bound and unfree population before them. This enslaved population provided contrast, and therefore meaning and value, to the freedom and democracy upon

which the country was to be founded (Morrison, 1992). Black slavery provided a means

of power and economic gain, and

> Evolved simultaneously as a relationship of dominance and power and as a form
> of conspicuous consumption for the socially ambitious. Europeans of all social
> and economic classes and ethnic identities learned that they had the right to yearn
> for the plantation lifestyle with its comforts, graciousness, elite mannerisms, and
> luxuries. Even if the economic efficiency of slavery declined or was subject to
> question at times, the structural relationships and social functions persisted and
> strengthened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (Smedley, 1999, p. 109)

It was this social function that was to become the predominant value of slavery and

racism to white people in America.

It is important to recognize that there is no intrinsic relationship between slavery

and racism. Slavery existed for centuries before racism ever did. But the development of

race as an ideology in America is related to slavery in that racism provided a rationale for

white Americans who wanted a cheap and permanent labor force but who also professed

belief in democracy and individual freedom. Racism became the means by which white

Americans could resolve the contradictions between their beliefs and their actions,

between the theories of democracy and the reality of an unfree population upon whose

suffering that democracy was built.

As America and slavery grew together, race as an ideology became the foundation

upon which American democracy was built. White identity became impossible without

the comparison of what it meant to be black. As Roediger (1994) explains,

> It is not merely that whiteness is oppressive and false; it is that whiteness is
> *nothing but* oppressive and false…It is the empty and terrifying attempt to build
> an identity based on what one isn't and on whom one can hold back. (as cited in
> Winant, 1996, p. 47; emphasis in original)

Whiteness was a social meaning applied to perceived physical differences and modified

as political, economic and social situations demanded. Thus it evolved, through

legislation, court cases, cultural knowledge and social practice, that to be an American

meant to be white. And as generations of immigrants learned, to be white in America

was to have rights, to belong. To be black was to be considered subhuman. To be black

was to be disenfranchised. To be black was to be at the mercy of whiteness (Smedley,

1999; Haney Lopez, 1996; Takaki, 1993; Morrison, 1992; Bell, 1987).

Social Construction of White Racial Identity

Having been socially constructed does not make race and racial identity any less

real. Instead, social construction provides the flexibility necessary for whiteness to adapt

to cultural, political and economic exigencies. Whiteness, often cloaked as objectivity or

rationality, is elusive and nearly impossible for most white people to consciously define

(Kincheloe, 1999). The difficulty in articulating a definition of whiteness makes white

identity in particular extremely resilient. As Winant (1996) discusses, social construction

gives to white identity its unique staying power:

> Is the social construction of whiteness so flimsy that it can be repudiated by a
> mere act of political will, or even by widespread and repeated acts aimed at
> rejecting white privilege? I think not; whiteness may not be a legitimate cultural
> identity in the sense of having a discreet, "positive" content, but it is certainly an
> overdetermined political and cultural identity nonetheless, having to do with
> socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, ideologies of individualism,
> opportunity, and citizenship, nationalism, etc. Like any other complex of beliefs
> and practices, "whiteness" is embedded in a highly articulated social structure and
> system of significations; rather than try to repudiate it, we shall have to
> rearticulate it (48).

Having been woven into the fabric of our social knowledge makes whiteness and white

racial identity difficult to pinpoint. But it is in the articulation itself in which whiteness

loses some of its power, for part of its strength is derived from the silence and supposed normalcy that surround it. By naming whiteness as a category of racial identity, it becomes dislocated from its unquestioned position of dominance and can then be investigated (McIntyre, 1997; Morrison, 1992).

White Racial Epistemology

Knowledge of the history of the development of whiteness will assist in a better understanding of white racial epistemology. White "ways of knowing" and of looking at the world were developed through the historical events previously described, and are still present within white racial identity today. Epistemology, sometimes described as Positionality, "involves the notion that since our understanding of the world and ourselves is socially constructed, we must devote special attention to the differing ways individuals from diverse social backgrounds construct knowledge and make meaning" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998, p. 3).

Within the system of whiteness, knowledge construction and meaning making were first associated with what would later become racialized beliefs during the period of the European Enlightenment, "with its privileged construction of a transcendental white, male, rational subject who operated at the recesses of power while at the same time giving every indication that he escaped time and space" (Kincheloe, 1999, p. 5). The subjectivity of the white male knowledge construction was hidden behind the veil of neutrality, thus empowering it further by making rationalism seem universal, timeless, and natural.

Reason in this context was "whitened" and subsequent beliefs on human nature and the qualities of different ethnic groups are based upon the idea of rationality. Future encounters with people of color were framed in rationalistic terms – "whiteness representing orderliness, rationality, and self-control and nonwhiteness indicating chaos, irrationality, violence, and the breakdown of self-regulation. Rationality emerged as the conceptual base around which civilization and savagery could be delineated" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998, p. 5).

Our white dominant culture today continues to distinguish between the white rational and the "non-white" irrational in a pervasive and normalized manner. For example, English language descriptions of black include "superstitious, subhuman, crazy, immoral, and tainted/contaminated" (Kivel, 1995, p. 19). Rationalism laid the foundations by which early colonists would

> Resolve the contradictions between their own struggle for political freedom and that of the black men and women they still enslaved. This contradiction was resolved (by both pro- and antislavery whites) by racialism: ascribing certain inherited characteristics to blacks, characteristics that made them unworthy of the benefits of first-class citizenship (Giddings, 1995, p. 416).

These characteristics were rooted in the rationalistic idea that people of color, specifically black people, were irrational, immoral, tainted/contaminated, and subhuman (Kivel, 1995). Hierarchical relations between people of color and white people were inscribed early on through colonization and later between Western multinational corporations and their Third World or "underdeveloped" markets (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998).

These relations have been masked as neutral rather than as hegemonic through rationalism and the "white claim of cultural neutrality based on the transhistorical norm

of reason (Kincheloe, 1999)," which assumes that rationality is not the cultural product of any specific group or time and is therefore free of Positionality. Further, in assuming that rationalism was universal, early white immigrants to North America (sometimes called "settlers") justified the oppression of people of color and colonization as a rational response to the departure of people of color from the norm of rationality. Colonization, therefore, became a "rational response to inequality (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998)."

White dualistic thinking also has its roots in rationalism since rationalism provided the means by which people could be defined by either/or categories such as human/subhuman, moral/immoral, and so on. White identity, then, is based less on the specific ethnic characteristics unique to people of European descent than it is a collection of opposites to negative characteristics ascribed to people of color depending on their deviations from white ideas of rationalism. For example, white morality was defined as the opposite of the immorality of people of color, specifically African-American women and men. Maleness was described as being the opposite of being female (Bowles & Gintes, 1976; Morrison, 1992).

Characteristics of White Racial Identity

Race, as defined in America, is a socially constructed category in which people are perceived to be members of a racial group based on socially agreed-upon phenotypic and cultural characteristics (Takaki, 1993). Audrey Smedley (1999) describes race and racial identity as

> A way of looking at the kaleidoscope of humanity, of dividing it into presumed exclusive units and imposing upon them attributes and features that conform to ideological and social values within the cultures that are defining the races (23).

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Smedley (1999) and Takaki (1993) make the point that race and racial identity are imposed upon societies, and thus, upon the members of those societies. Furthermore, racial identity carries with it the values of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 1995). White racial identity should be understood as being transmitted and reinforced both by society and by the individual. White people are responsible for their actions, but must be viewed within the societal context from which their identities were derived and reinforced. (Smedley, 1999; Takaki, 1993; Morrison, 1992; Helms, 1995)

However, recognizing the realities of white racial identity is more than being able to locate ourselves within the larger white supremacist context. As white people, we must also be cognizant of the origins of racial ideology. We must cultivate the ability to assess the detriments and assets of membership to whiteness as a racial category in every aspect of our past as well as in our lives.

White privilege.

People identified as white in America have received unearned advantage and dominance (McIntosh, 1990) based solely upon the socially constructed system of race. The main purpose for the development of the system of race, and the major function it still serves today, is to provide criteria for access to wealth, psychological affirmation and social standing while simultaneously rationalizing the unequal distribution of those resources (Zinn, 1995). Race continues to exist

> in large part because of its value as a mechanism for identifying who should have access to wealth, privilege, loyalty, respect, and power and who should not. And of course, for some individuals within the high-status race, it is a powerful psychological force, providing scapegoat functions as well as a facile external means of establishing and measuring one's own self-worth (Smedley, 1999, p. 30).

Within this assessment lies an acknowledgement of imbalance of power in America, tipped in favor of those perceived to be white. This power, called white privilege, can take the form of unearned advantage and dominance (McIntosh, 1990), manifest itself through the withholding of opportunity from people of color, or appear as an unrealistic sense of superiority, entitlement and achievement (Fine, 1996). Due to its hegemonic nature, this power is integrated throughout every aspect of American culture and may appear in many seemingly disparate forms (Apple, 1979).

Use of scapegoats.

Accompanying the unrealistic sense of superiority, achievement and entitlement is the use of scapegoats to distract the general population from the true sources of social problems (Bell, 1992). For example, white people who are unaware of the workings of the system of white supremacy are encouraged to focus upon people of color as the causes of their anger and frustration during times of economic hardship, even though the causes of economic hardship may be corporate relocation or downsizing. In order to maintain hegemony – the complete cultural, political, economic and social domination of one group over another - members of our society must be made to assent to hegemonic values, even if those values are often within direct conflict with the interests of most of the people (Apple, 1979).

Socialized to identify with the wealthy white ruling elite, white middle-class and working class people misconstrue their interests and the interests of the ruling elite as being the same. Scapegoating provides a means of facilitating this misplaced identification (Bell, 1987, 1992). Saturated with this message through all aspects of

American culture (including education), most white people no longer need to be forced to support our white supremacist system. They support it of their own volition (Woodson, 1933). Thus, socialization became a way in which social control can be maintained without martial law or other overt forms of institutionalized external control (Apple, 1979).

Other characteristics of white privilege.

Individuals often support policies that are against their best interest for another reason – they believe that they have something to lose by advocating for people of color. The majority of white people in America are caught in the contradiction of denying they have white privilege while refusing to give it up (McIntyre, 1997). The fact that most white people can choose whether or not to acknowledge themselves as racial beings is a privilege that largely goes unnoticed. Instead, white people (those who admit white privilege exists) have been taught that white privilege manifests itself economically, which is sometimes true. Therefore, for poor or working class white people, economic white privilege seems non-existent (Fine, 1996; McIntyre, 1997; McIntosh, 1990).

White privilege is rarely defined in terms of withholding opportunity from people of color so that, no matter how badly off poor white people are, it is certain that there will be people of color subordinate to them (Fine, 1996). White privilege also is not usually defined as the "psychological wage" that W.E.B. Du Bois spoke of, an affirmation of normalcy and goodness reflected in the pervasiveness of positive white images in dominant American culture (Weinberg, 1970). The "psychological wage" of whiteness is a subtle and yet powerful aspect of white privilege. As Randall Robinson (2000) argued

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so persuasively, white people can look about them everywhere in America and see evidence that they are capable, that they can create and build, that they can succeed. To be recognized as agents is to be seen as valuable members of society. Conversely, not to be acknowledged as capable of action or creation is to be rendered impotent and marked as unable to contribute.

Closely linked to the white privilege of affirmation is the ability to ignore the fundamental contradiction of America – that our country was founded upon and continues to thrive because of racism within public policies, institutions, laws, customs and social practices (Bell, 1987). These two privileges are linked because only by ignoring the true history of America can white people continue to have a false sense of goodness and superiority (Fine, 1996; Loewen, 1995). This false sense of goodness and superiority, when examined within the context of the dualism that has formed American racial identity, means that there is also a false sense of badness and inferiority projected onto people of color. Membership within the community of whiteness is thus defined not by possessing "white" characteristics but by *not* possessing "black" ones (McIntyre, 1997; Fine, 1996; Winant, 1996; Takaki, 1993; Haney Lopez, 1996).

During discussions of white privilege, individual white people are often blamed for being white with little regard to the societal context in which these people were formed. Ironically, by engaging in such a critique of whiteness, one of the strongest characteristics of whiteness is reinforced by choosing to analyze an individual without regard to the society in which that individual lives (McIntyre, 1997).

This avoidance tactic, the reliance on individualism, is designed to prevent

awareness of collective racial identity or the recognition of individual positions within an

intricate and unequal social and political context (McIntyre, 1997). By relying on

individualism, white people are not aware that they are, indeed, racial beings. At the

same time, they continue to uncritically accept many cultural messages that encourage

identification with wealthy and powerful white people whose class interests are different

from middle and working-class white people. By limiting discussions to individual

racism rather than collective white supremacy, white privilege and dominance are

maintained and even strengthened.

Another avoidance tactic is for white people to discuss institutional racism as well

as individual racism while never locating themselves personally within the institutions

that are part of their daily lives. People who engage this tactic may critique other

individual white people for racist practices or ways of thinking while ignoring their own

behavior and thoughts. Institutional racism is defined as faceless and distant, detached

from individuals and often portrayed as beyond their control. Institutions are not

discussed in human terms, but in superhuman terms, language designed to intimidate and

subdue while encouraging individuals to rationalize and legitimate their inaction. In this

way, white people can believe themselves to be good people who are dedicated to the

eradication of racism while maintaining their same behavioral and cognitive patterns.

<u>White Racial Identity and the Teaching of History</u>

Socialization within a white supremacist system greatly affects the ability to

perceive the discrepancies between American ideology and practice. Since the rules of

white supremacy most often benefit white people, people identified as white often are unable or unwilling to recognize the hypocrisy inherent in a nation that espouses personal freedom while maintaining a system of racial oppression based upon white dominance (Bell, 1987; Smedley, 1999; McIntyre, 1997; Kivel, 1995; McIntosh, 1990). This is partly due to the fact that white people are taught to view white supremacy and racism as peripheral aspects of American society rather than the central foundation upon which that society was built (Robinson, 2000; Bell, 1992; Smedley, 1999; Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 1995).

Emphasis and Omission

In American public schools, many children are taught the same basic history of our country regardless of specific racial identity. However, this same history has extremely different effects on children based on their racial identities. White children, for instance, learn a history that has been designed to teach them a false sense of destiny, superiority, and entitlement (Loewen, 1995; Fine; 1997; McIntyre, 1997). Children of color, on the other hand, learn history as the detailing of the accomplishments of others, accomplishments often achieved at the expense of people of color. Since history is usually written by the victor, however, what the children of color learn is not the facts of their disenfranchisement so much as they experience the omission or subordination of the accomplishments of people of color in relation to the accomplishments of whites (Loewen, 1995). This leads to a worldview in which whiteness has become centered and elevated, and in which people of color are considered to have contributed very little. W.E.B. Du Bois wrote of the effects of historical omission:

How easy, then, by emphasis and omission to make children believe that every great soul the world ever saw was a white man's soul; that every great thought the world ever knew was a white man's thought; that every great deed the world ever did was a white man's deed; that every great dream the world ever sang was a white man's dream. (Weinberg, Ed., 1995, p. 454)

Historical exclusion and subordination is often coupled with the distorted reporting of events and the hero making of mostly-white, mostly-male individuals (Loewen, 1995; Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 1995; Apple, 1979). White children as well as children of color are encouraged to position themselves as members of racial categories within the context of the history they are taught. Therefore, children do not need to be directly taught that they are inferior or superior; they simply learn whose achievements are held up as contributions to the larger society and whose aren't, and fill in the value judgments themselves (Higginbotham, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1991).

Having been denied accurate and inclusive history, white children have no methods with which to understand racism other than those methods taught to them in their schools. This cycle ensures the continuation of a white supremacist system in which the economic and political interests of white supremacy's beneficiaries will remain intact while presenting a means for these beneficiaries to maintain a belief in their own humanity and goodness. Furthermore, it ensures social control and stability by providing scapegoats for white people who, due to socioeconomic status, are being exploited by white supremacy and need to release their anger and frustration (Apple, 1979; Bell, 1987, 1992).

Contributions of people of color.

White racial identity has played a historic role in the suppression of positive

identities of people of color. Due to the dualistic nature of white racial identity, it is

necessary to devalue the cultures and contributions of people of color in order to maintain

a positive white racial identity (Bell, 1987; Smedley. 1999; Loewen, 1995; Takaki, 1993;

Zinn, 1995). Asa Hilliard (1995), an historian and scholar, provides several examples of

the historic and present devaluation of African American culture and civilization within

and without American education. He focuses on the reclamation of African civilization

and achievements as well as renewed pride in African ancestry. Describing the high level

of respect at which most Europeans and Americans hold Greek and Latin civilization,

Hilliard reveals that both cultures had roots in Egypt and, in fact, exchanged scholars

with Egypt for hundreds of years.

Within this larger dynamic of cultural devaluation and appropriation, teachers and

administrators do not have to be overtly told that students of African descent are inferior;

instead, they simply observe that, as far as they know, these children come from a

deficient or absent culture that has not achieved at the same level as most European

cultures (Hilliard, 1995; Higginbotham, 1995). Believing all people of color to be

inferior is deeply rooted in American culture and therefore in the American educational

system.

Contributions of white people.

In the same way, students of all colors do not need to be told that white people are

considered superior. They need merely read their texts, illustrated with pictures of white

men, filled with stories about the accomplishments of white men, to infer that white people have accomplished a great deal. The false sense of superiority and goodness, of rightness and authority, that is derived from such history supports and reinforces the definition of white racial identity as being "not-black." (Bell, 1987, 1992, 1996; McIntyre, 1997; Takaki, 1993)

Effects of Distorted History

Learning history as a succession of predominantly wealthy white males and their contributions to American democracy, white students are encouraged to believe that the failure of democracy could not be the fault of these men (Loewen, 1995; Zinn, 1995; Takaki, 1993). Misled as to their racial superiority and entitlement through hero-making history as well as other socializing agents within education, white children are prepared and even given little alternative but to blame people of color for the continuity of racism and the effects of racism within their lives. Having been taught no other methods with which to understand racism, these white children will almost inevitably repeat the mistakes of a past about which they were never taught.

This cycle ensures the continuation of a system in which the economic and political interests of white supremacy's beneficiaries will remain intact while presenting a means for these beneficiaries to maintain a belief in their own humanity and goodness. It further guarantees that white people who benefit predominantly from the "psychological wage" of whiteness will continue to support white supremacy against their own class interests (Zinn, 1995; Bell, 1992, 1996). Used to buttress the psychological wage of whiteness, historical omission, emphasis, and distortion also serve as reinforcement to

white racial identity on an individual and an institutional level (Hilliard, 1995; Loewen, 1995).

Whiteness and Educational Institutions

American education is one of the major forces in socializing children into the system of white supremacy. It provides students with preordained racial identities based on overt and indirect lessons about who they are and what value that identity has within the American structure. As Pierre Bourdieu wrote,

> The act of institution is an act of magic...An act of communication, but of a particular kind: it signifies to someone what his identity is, but in a way that both expresses it to him and imposes it on him by expressing it in front of everyone and thus informing him in an authoritative manner of what he is and what he must be. This is also one of the functions of the act of institution: to discourage permanently any attempt to cross the line, to transgress, desert, or quit (Bourdieu, as cited in Fine, 1996, p. 58).

As Bourdieu states, institutions force students to accept racial identities, identities that are valued unequally and often in opposition to each other. Located within a structure of white supremacy, the racial identities imposed upon students are also white supremacist in nature (Hilliard, 1995; Woodson, 1933).

Political Purpose of Education

Education has always had a political purpose in American society. At the inception of the United States, Thomas Jefferson (1786) asserted that, without education, the majority of Americans would not be able to participate in the democratic process. And while part of the purpose of free public education in America is still technically to enable citizens to be part of a democracy, the issue is much more complex. The differences between the ideal of a democratic society and the reality are often stark, and

can be found again and again throughout our history. For example, although Thomas Jefferson supported education as a means to participatory citizenship, his method of education was hierarchical and not intended to alter the class, gender, or racial inequities within the infant democracy of America.

He proposed a system of education in which money determined how long students could go to school since the government would only be required to ensure basic literacy for the majority of students. Those whose families could afford it would then be sent on to secondary and higher education, along with one student who would be chosen to receive a scholarship based on achievement. Not only did this proposed educational system replicate the current social, political and economic framework, it also provided a means of social control to ensure that the system would remain intact. By providing the opportunity, no matter how slim, for a few of the poor (male and white) students to be able to go to college, Jefferson gave poor families enough hope to insure that they would continue to struggle within the proscribed guidelines rather than rebel and create a new system (Jefferson, 1786).

In order to understand how maintenance of the status quo, withholding of opportunity, and inequality are perpetuated within our educational system today, we must understand the social context of that system. John Dewey spoke of history as a means of knowing society. He wrote, "Whatever history may be for the scientific historian, for the educator it must be an indirect sociology – a study of society which lays bare its process of becoming and its modes of organization (Dewey, 1905, p. 155)." Unfortunately, in our American white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, history has been rewritten and

distorted to deceive ourselves as well as those around us as to the real origins of our nation and, by extension, our educational system.

White Racial Identity and Multicultural Implementation

Educators write of the necessity for multicultural education in order to create a more inclusive and democratic society, and yet the forms of implementation for multicultural education are not institutionally integrated (Koppelman & Richardson, 1995). Current efforts to implement multicultural education are at odds with their own ideology; that is, while working towards equity and racial justice. implementation often replicates the structures of white supremacy. Teachers maintain the role of distributor of knowledge and expect passive reception by students. Multicultural knowledge is not infused throughout the curriculum but treated as a supplement or an add-on. Teachers do not come to terms with their own racial identities and the influence their identities have on their classroom interactions. Educators attempt multicultural implementation without any literacy within that body of knowledge (hooks, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1994).

These examples are but a few instances of the contradictions of attempting to integrate multicultural education within a structure of white supremacy. The reason for such continuing inconsistency is, in most cases, the failure of educators to examine and research whiteness and white supremacy within their pedagogical practices when they discuss racism (McIntyre, 1997). All too often, when classroom discussions turn to racism, people of color and their oppression are explored without acknowledging the agents and beneficiaries of that oppression, and the different ways in which white supremacy manifests itself institutionally and individually (McIntosh, 1990).

White Racial Identity Models

Helms Model

Helms (1984) created the WRID (White Racial Identity Development) model in order to better define and clinically assess the different stages of White racial identity. She later revised the model and developed six white racial identity ego statuses and information-processing strategies (IPS): contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudoindependence, immersion/emersion and autonomy (Helms, 1995). The list ranges from deliberate ignorance of racism and racial differences (contact) to a more realistic and healthy racial identity with a commitment to action (autonomy). Marshall (1999) defines a healthy racial identity as having "positive attitudes toward and identification with one's own racial group. Such identification is based on a realistic, unexaggerated, critical understanding of that group, and a genuine, non-hierarchical and non-denigrating perspective of other racial groups (60)."

The defining characteristics of the contact status are satisfaction with the status quo, ignorance of one's participation in white supremacy, and the assertion of colorblindness (Helms, 1995). White people in the contact status try to ignore racial differences and usually assert that "people are just people." In a study on the relationship between racism and racial identity (Carter, 1990), white women exhibited lower levels of overt racism when in the contact status. This is not to say that they weren't racist, but rather that their racism took the form of ignoring color rather than more active racism. Sometimes called "benign neglect" (Balenger, Hoffman, & Sedlacek, 1992), people in the contact status provide evidence for the theory that racism in the United States has

become subtler and less prone to overt expressions of racial hatred with the majority of white Americans.

In the second status, disintegration, the individual's whiteness becomes an important characteristic. Conflicts about personal standards and societal norms about interracial interactions occur, and may cause the individual to retreat into white identity or to over identify with black people as a solution. Unresolved moral dilemmas about race may "force one to choose between own-group loyalty and humanism" (Helms, 1995, p. 185).

The third status is reintegration, in which the individual idealizes her own socioracial group, engages in stereotypical thoughts about people of color, and experiences feelings of fear and anger toward people of color (Helms, 1995). In this status, the individual accepts the implications of being white or remaining segregated from blacks. When a white person is in the reintegration status, racial factors may also greatly impact decisions.

By accepting the fact that he or she is white, the individual moves into the pseudo-independence status. At this status, the individual intellectually deals with issues of racism but has not yet developed an emotional attachment. The individual may make a commitment to "help" people of color and engage in deceptive tolerance of other groups (Helms, 1995). Tolerance is deceptive because it is selective. The individual is not yet ready to emotionally invest in anti-racist actions. He or she interacts with only a few people of color, but as the interactions increase, he or she is more likely to move to the immersion/emersion status.

The fifth status, immersion/emersion, is characterized by a search for personal meaning within an understanding of racism, as well as an investigation of the ways in which white people benefit from whiteness. An individual in the immersion/emersion status is ready to redefine whiteness and may begin to choose anti-racist activism (Helms, 1995).

The final status, autonomy, is signified by the internalization of a positive white identity and an understanding and respect for racial similarities and differences. Internal standards are now used for self-definition. The individual seeks out cross-cultural experiences and may be active in resistance to racism and injustice. An individual in the autonomy status is characterized by flexibility and complexity (Helms, 1995).

Rowe and Bennett Model

Rowe and Bennett (1994) have developed an alternative measure of attitudes held by white people toward people of color. These attitudes are divided into two major categories: unachieved white racial consciousness and achieved white racial consciousness. Attitudes listed under unachieved white racial consciousness are attitudes in which internalization of identity, exploration of identity or commitment to identity, are missing. These three attitudes are called avoidant, dependent, and dissonant. The attitudes listed under achieved white racial consciousness require some exploration or consideration of racial issues. The four attitudes are dominative, conflictive, reactive, and integrative. Rowe and Bennett's alternative model is similar in many aspects to Helms' white racial identity ego statuses and information processing strategies. One noticeable difference is that Rowe and Bennett make room for the possibility of a white

person who has not internalized a racial identity, while Helms' contact status describes a white person who has a racial identity but who refuses to acknowledge it.

Multicultural Implementation in Education

When white students are not accustomed to placing themselves within the dynamics of racism, it is natural that they should be uncomfortable or resist discussions about racism. Tatum (1992) names three major sources of resistance that she has experience from students when attempting to teach about racism. They can be identified as the taboo associated with discussing race or racism, the socialization of students to think of America as a just society and a land of opportunity, and the denial of personal prejudice or impact of racism on students' lives even though those students can recognize the impact on the lives of others. These forms of resistance allow students to perpetuate racism while remaining ignorant of its continued existence, and prevent dialogue or democratic learning from taking place. Silence, denial, and avoidance are three characteristics of "white talk" listed by McIntyre (1997) as ways in which white supremacy maintains itself in white people even when racism is being discussed.

If students view America as a just society, by necessity they must be fairly ignorant of American history. If not ignorant of history, they most likely engage in victim blaming in order to remedy the cognitive dissonance between their knowledge of history and the present social, political and cultural state of affairs (Higginbotham, 1996; Loewen, 1995). One ingredient to the maintenance of white supremacy in America is the historical amnesia of its citizens (Loewen, 1995) and/or the deliberate obliteration of the reality of our country's history. Under our system of white supremacy, our schools,

while focusing primarily upon European and white American history, do not teach even *that* history accurately, and very little is taught of about the histories of people of color.

Incomplete or supplementary implementation of multicultural education is therefore tied intimately to the development of white identity and the transmission of white supremacist culture because it participates in miseducation. Incomplete implementation sends the message to students and to educators that ignorance of other cultures as well as the dominant white culture is acceptable. At the same time, such an approach to multicultural education maintains a low standard of professionalism for educators.

Multicultural Illiteracy

In an informal survey in one of her classes, Ladson-Billings (1991) attempted to measure the knowledge of her students in regards to people of color. She found that, while students of color as a group performed better than white students, only a few of her students did not suffer from multicultural illiteracy (Ladson-Billings, 1991), which she defined as an absence of basic familiarity with the histories, accomplishments, and events relevant to people of color. Furthermore, students who took the survey and were studying to be teachers demonstrated the least amount of knowledge about people of color.

In teacher education, multicultural illiteracy is not often addressed in a holistic manner. Instead, single-session workshops or training seminars are used to facilitate cross-cultural interaction, understanding or communication (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992). These single-session or single course solutions often focus on the least complex aspects

of multiculturalism (Marshall, 1999). Social reconstruction has long been a goal of multiculturalism (Banks, 1995; Sleeter & Grant, 1994). In order for social reconstruction to take place, multicultural education needs to be fully integrated within every aspect of educational institutions (Banks, 1995; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1992; Carter, 1990; Tatum, 1992; Rowe & Bennett, 1994). These single-session or single-course solutions will not promote lasting change. They serve instead to marginalize and simplify multiculturalism while simultaneously avoiding the discussion of whiteness or white supremacy.

Student retention and integration of learning becomes a low priority within the single-session or single-course framework. More importantly, such fragmented attempts do nothing to create social change or to deepen understanding. Instead, white students are again centered within the institutional discourse and allowed the privilege of choosing whether to see themselves as racial beings or not.

Approaches to Multicultural Implementation

Although the single-session or single-course solution enjoys a great deal of popularity in the current educational system, there are many other possible approaches to multicultural education implementation. Sleeter (1993) compiled five categories that are most commonly used to describe educators' approaches to multicultural education. They are: Teaching the Exceptionally and Culturally Different; Human Relations; Single-Group Studies; Multicultural; and Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist. Many teachers new to multicultural education are attracted to the Teaching the Exceptionally and Culturally Different approach, mainly because of its high academic expectations and its focus on students as the problem rather than the institution. The Multicultural and the

Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist approaches, which are implemented much less

often, are the only approaches that meet the criteria of all five dimensions outlined by

Banks (1995): content integration, knowledge construction process, equity pedagogy,

prejudice reduction, and creating an empowering school culture and social structure. The

following is a brief outline of the five approaches named by Sleeter (1993).

<u>Teaching the exceptionally and culturally different approach.</u>

The goal of the first approach, Teaching the Exceptionally and Culturally

Different, is to help students of color, students of low socioeconomic status, and/or

special education students to achieve, to become more literate in mainstream white

culture, and to succeed in today's American capitalist society. By choosing to

concentrate on the "exceptional" or culturally different students rather than on the

societal structure that does not recognize, incorporate or validate those exceptions or

differences, this approach makes no critique of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy

(hooks, 1994) and instead tends to blame the victim.

Proponents of this approach usually see few changes as necessary within the

dominant group or are unwilling to participate in making those changes. "Advocates

generally support much of the dominant discourse about the United States – that it is a

free country with limitless opportunity, that its history is one of progress, and that only a

few changes are needed to extend the American Dream to everyone (Sleeter, 1993)."

This is an ahistorical tradition based within the larger American culture, a culture that

tends to blame people of color, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered (LGBT) people, or

other disenfranchised and excluded groups for their own exclusion rather than participate in an informed and critical examination of white American culture.

Human relations approach.

The second approach to multicultural education is the Human Relations approach. When describing the Human Relations approach to multicultural education, "getting along," "tolerance," "interactions between individuals and groups," and "learning to resolve differences between individuals and groups" are some of the definitions provided (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). The main focus of Human Relations is to attempt to reduce prejudice and stereotypes among all people, including white people and people of color, men and women, people of differing sexual orientations, people of different socioeconomic backgrounds, and people of differing abilities. In order to reduce stereotyping and prejudice, Human Relations attempts to educate students as to their common humanity as well as to train them to acknowledge and respect differences (Sleeter, 1993). However, research (Henderson-King & Kaleta, 2000) has shown that Human Relations is limited in effectively reducing prejudice and stereotypes since it discusses racism and prejudice at an individual rather than institutional level and is usually limited to a single-course experience (Tatum, 1992).

When speaking of multicultural education from this standpoint, all groups are considered on an equal footing; that is, no groups are excluded and prejudices are given equal weight, no matter whether the prejudice is racist, sexist, heterosexist, classist or discriminatory on the basis of ability. Everyone is included as the target audience and seen as individuals rather than as members at different levels of privilege, oppression, or

power within the larger societal structure (McIntyre, 1997). Cultural and social interactions at the interpersonal level, rather than on the level of institutional and societal power relationships, are the focus of Human Relations courses.

Single-group studies approach.

The third approach to multicultural education is Single-Group Studies. Sleeter & Grant (1994) describe the motivation behind Single-Group Studies as a desire to reduce social stratification and to raise the status of the group with which they are concerned. Unlike the two previous approaches, Single-Group Studies confronts the inequalities that exist among groups. Advocates want to increase the power and equality of the group and attempts to provide information about the groups' historical and present experiences of oppression from the perspective of that group in order to encourage social action on behalf of that group. African-American Studies, Women's Studies, LGBT Studies, and Latino/a Studies are a few examples of groups currently represented by the Single-Group Studies approach.

This approach was created in the 1960s and 1970s as alternatives to the traditional curriculum, which was mainly reflective of white male achievement, experiences, and beliefs. A great deal of scholarship about the particular histories, oppressions, and achievements of groups has been generated from Single-Group Studies. In fact, the first two approaches to multicultural education depend somewhat on this scholarship (Sleeter & Grant, 1994).

Single-Group Studies of various groups that are victims of discrimination because of their unique cultural characteristics are necessary to create awareness within students

of oppression and discrimination, especially students who have never felt institutionalized oppression or discrimination first-hand. However, limiting the focus of multicultural education to the study of various groups while simultaneously ignoring the agent of the oppression these groups experience is ineffective (Winant, 1996; Fine, 1996). This approach allows students to draw a distorted conclusion about the causes of oppression while at the same time perpetuating the absence of a critical analysis of the social constructs of whiteness, white privilege and white supremacy (Higginbotham, 1995).

Multicultural approach.

The fourth approach, the Multicultural approach, reconstructs processes (such as tracking, ability grouping, and segregated seating patterns) that have not produced high achievement for all students and have replicated the larger social inequities that exist within American society. This approach includes the creation of a diverse teaching staff and the elimination of such traditional teaching roles as women teaching home economics or men teaching math. Unlike the Human Relations approach, the Multicultural approach does not lend equal truth to all positions. Some perspectives are more correct than others, and diversity is not synonymous with "anything goes" (Sleeter, 1993; Gay, 1994). The Multicultural approach desires to change the school as well as the curriculum, promoting equality and democracy at every level, and synthesizes Single-Group Studies in order to create a new curriculum. Good practice in multicultural education is thus defined under the three main categories of institutional and programmatic principles, personnel

principles, and curriculum and instruction principles (Zeichner, K.M., Grant, C.A., Gay, G., Gillette, M.; Valli, L., & Villegas, A.M., 1998).

Multicultural and social reconstructionist approach.

The fifth approach, the Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist approach, builds mostly upon the Single-Group Studies and the Multicultural approaches. Students are taught to analyze inequality and oppression in society, and then are assisted in developing skills for social action (Sleeter, 1993; Gay, 1994). The Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist approach begins by addressing the inequality and oppression across groups, focusing on the interrelatedness of issues within and among groups as well as the role of dominant white culture in perpetuating inequity and oppression among other groups. By studying inequality and oppression – themes often eliminated or silenced by dominant groups – the Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist approach holds true to concepts of democracy and equality (Sleeter, 1993) while challenging traditional beliefs about democracy; namely, that is has been working for all people when, in fact, it has never worked for large segments of the American population, especially people of color.

However, white supremacy has always benefited from traditional American views of democracy. It is in the study of white identity formation within the context of a white supremacist society that we can begin to understand why certain approaches to multicultural education are implemented more than others, and why Banks (1995) is correct when he states: "Many school reform efforts fail because the roles, norms, and ethos of the school do not change in ways that will make the institutionalization of the

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reforms possible (17)." Inherent in white identity formation within a white supremacist

society is the inability to recognize difference in a relational rather than hierarchical

sense, as well as educators' extreme deficit in knowledge relating to people of color. To

begin to understand why institutional reforms are not implemented more often, white

identity formation must be understood.

Handicapped by multicultural illiteracy (Ladson-Billings, 1991) and dualistic

thinking, only a small percentage of the educators who attempt to implement

multicultural education actually achieve multicultural education in its five dimensions as

defined by Banks (1995): content integration, knowledge and construction process,

prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social

structure. Instead, what is most visualized when discussing multicultural education is

actually the most basic level of multicultural education - education aimed at prejudice

reduction or moderate content integration. Unless institutional change takes place in

conjunction with curricular and teaching changes, the highest level of multicultural

education integration is not taking place and social reconstruction will not be achieved

(Sleeter & Grant, 1994).

The *Understanding Human Differences* Course

The white faculty members interviewed for this study teach sections of the course,

Understanding Human Differences. The course is therefore being examined in order to

determine which approach to multicultural education best defines it. It is important to

provide a context within which the white racial identities of faculty members can be

understood, as well as the effects of those identities within an educational setting.

Description of the Course

Understanding Human Differences is a general education course at a Wisconsin university with a population of approximately 8,900 students. The course consists of general assembly lectures and small-group discussions. Four general assembly lectures are currently offered, along with sixteen small-group sections. There are ten faculty members who facilitate small-group sections for the course. Of these ten faculty members, one person is an American Indian male, three people are white females, and six people are white males. The students who take the course are also predominantly white and from communities in which they have had little sustained contact with people of color. Under the current structure of *Understanding Human Differences*, all small-group instructors, including the female and male subjects, receive a curricular guide from the course coordinator. (Koppelman & Richardson, 1995)

The course was originally designed to meet requirements set forth by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The *Understanding Human Differences* syllabus states that the course includes preparation in human relations that includes the "development of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors which can be translated into learning experiences for students." The syllabus also states that the course fulfills the following DPI Administrative Code on Human Relations standards:

1) The development of skills and techniques which will build competence in interpersonal and intergroup relations;

2) An analysis of the forces of prejudice and bias, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination in American life and the impact of these forces on the experiences of the majority and minority groups; and

3) Assessing the ways in which prejudice and bias, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination can be reflected in language, instructional materials, classroom activities, teacher-student interaction, and evaluation instruments.

While the course still meets the aforementioned DPI Human Relations standards, it has been redesigned for all students, not just for students who plan to teach. The course objectives for all of its students are:

1) To explore conflicts stemming from the interaction of groups and to develop interpersonal awareness and skills for resolving those conflicts

2) To develop an appreciation of the differences between individuals and groups

3) To clarify the nature and function of prejudice and discrimination based upon group identification

4) To challenge students to reassess their attitudes toward devalued groups in our society and toward individuals within those groups

5) To develop knowledge and awareness of some of the contributions and concerns of diverse cultural, racial, and economic groups in the United States (Koppelman, course syllabus, September 2000)

These course objectives comprise the conceptual framework within which the course curriculum has been developed by the course coordinator (Koppelman, course syllabus, September 2000).

The course subject matter is divided into three main categories: individual differences, group differences, and directions for social change. The following topics are covered under the heading of individual differences: personal values and moral reasoning; prejudice, bias, and stereotyping; analyzing language for cultural biases, communication and conflict, and the role of culture and gender; and the relationship between prejudice and discrimination. Each week, one of these topics is addressed at the general assembly lecture and then in small-group discussions. (Koppelman, course

syllabus, September 2000) After individual differences, group differences are discussed.

As with the topics that comprise the category of individual differences, one group

difference topic a week is discussed in general assembly lecture and again in small-group

discussion. The following topics comprise the category of group differences as defined

by the course: sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism and homophobia, and ableism.

Finally, under the category of directions for social change, diversity and cultural

pluralism are discussed.

The schedule of topics for individual differences, group differences, and

directions for social change has not changed since at least the fall of 1993, which was the

earliest syllabus available to the researcher. Readings for the course have been modified

from year to year. (Koppelman, course syllabus, September 1993, September 2000)

Given the nature of the course structure and its objectives as well as its status as a single

course, the *Understanding Human Relations* course can best be described as a Human

Relations approach to multicultural education (Sleeter & Grant, 1994).

Summary

Whiteness as an identity is a social rather than a biological construct. Race as an

ideology was utilized by early white Americans to ensure economic, political and social

power, and to create the social stability necessary to maintain that power. Racism also

became the rationale by which white people in America could resolve the conflict

between their democratic ideology and the fruits of slavery upon which that democracy

depended, and a means by which they could develop a unique American identity. Racial

categories combined different ethnicities into broader racial groups and assigned arbitrary

social meanings to those racial groups based on phenotype and pseudo-scientific categories. Racial identity, therefore, is membership within a larger racial category based on perception rather than biological evidence (Smedley, 1999; Haney Lopez, 1996).

After Bacon's Rebellion of 1676, in which African, indigenous, and poor European people united to promote class interests, wealthy planters instituted laws to disenfranchise people of African descent, and encouraged poor and working class people of European descent to develop "white" identities in which they equated the interests of the wealthy planter elite with their own based on racial similarity. African or "black" people became the Other against whom the white people became united (Smedley, 1999; Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 1995; Bell, 1987; Bell, 1992; Loewen, 1995).

Today, white racial identity is maintained and reinforced by the continuous interplay between individuals, the larger white racial group within which the individual perceives herself to be a member, and the greater white supremacist society, including the institutions that represent and comprise that society. It is a flexible and powerful social entity upon which our society is founded and maintained. White racial identity feeds upon the creation of the Other in order to exist; it requires the presence of a bound people in order to define freedom, images of dislocation in order to claim America as home. Without the designation of people who are not white as inferior, whiteness ceases to be superior, thereby negating the purpose of the creation of a white racial identity. (Smedley, 1999; McIntyre, 1997; Morrison, 1992)

White racial identity also possesses its own epistemology, including dualistic thinking and a reliance on rationality, which has falsely been labeled as objective. These

ways of knowing have become normalized through white racial hegemony, thereby

allowing white people to proclaim themselves normal and right. Rationality, first widely

known during the Enlightenment, has been misrepresented as existing outside of time and

space, thus solidifying the white mythology of normalcy and objectivity.

White privilege is the characteristic most often associated with white racial

identity. White privilege is the unearned advantage and dominance that white people

have as a result of participation within a white supremacist system (McIntosh, 1990).

Other characteristics of white privilege include victim blaming, a belief in "zero-sum" or

finite resources, the use of scapegoats, avoidance, denial, and withholding of opportunity

from people of color.

Attempts by researchers to identify the statuses of white racial identity is fairly

recent in the field of psychology. Janet Helms first developed a White Racial Identity

Development model in 1984. Since then, she has modified her model, which is now

entitled the White Racial Identity Ego Statuses and Information-Processing Strategies

(1995). The six statuses of white racial identity as defined by Helms (1995) are: contact,

disintegration, reintegration, pseudoindependence, immersion/emersion and autonomy.

Contact is the status in which the individual exhibits the least awareness of her racial

identity. Through study and experience, the individual may progress to more developed

statuses, the most advanced of which is autonomy. Other researchers have developed

similar models of the statuses of white racial identity, based in part upon Helms' work.

A contributing factor to the formation and reinforcement of white racial identity is

the distorted teaching of history. Through emphasis and omission, white students are

taught a false sense of superiority at the same time that students of color are taught to feel inferior. The contributions of white people are magnified, purified, and sometimes invented in order to protect the interests of white supremacy. Conversely, the contributions of people of color are minimized, attributed to white people, or omitted entirely to further promote the belief in people of color as outsiders and as people who do not contribute to the larger American society. An African-American woman recalls how she was made to feel inferior through the omission of the contributions of people of color:

> To make a "victim blaming" attribution, teachers did not have to say that black Americans were lazy, ignorant, or savage – although that would surely do the trick. Instead, victim blaming was subtly encouraged in classes where images of America as the land of freedom and opportunity were juxtaposed with the black experience, without any reconciling of the contradictions through a structural explanation. Students then relied on prevailing myths and stereotypes to explain the black "anomaly." (Higginbotham, 1995, p. 476)

In relation to education, whiteness has always had a political purpose. From the times of Thomas Jefferson and John Dewey to the present, education has been a means to participation within American democracy. Multicultural education, therefore, is a way to ensure the rights of citizens within a democracy by attempting to educate as many students as possible for participation. Further, multicultural education, when implemented as education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist, takes into account the social context within which education is located, and works to transform society even as it transforms individual students. There are five approaches to multicultural education, the least comprehensive of which is Teaching to the Exceptionally and Culturally Different. The second approach is the Human Relations

approach; next is the Single-Group Studies approach, and fourth is the Multicultural

approach. The most comprehensive approach is the fifth, education that is Multicultural

and Social Reconstructionist.

The Wisconsin university at which this study took place offers a multicultural

course entitled *Understanding Human Differences*. This course is part of the core

curriculum required of all undergraduate students, and has existed in its present form

since 1991. It teaches students about human differences in three main categories:

individual differences, group differences, and directions for social change. Each category

contains several topics, including prejudice and bias, racism, sexism, classism,

stereotyping, heterosexism and homophobia, and ableism. Every week one topic is

addressed, both in general assembly lecture and in small-group discussion.

While a few instructors at the university have determined the approach of the

course to be education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist (Koppelman &

Richardson, 1995), by definition (Sleeter & Grant, 1994) a single course cannot be

multicultural and social reconstructionist. It is more accurate to define *Understanding*

Human Differences as incorporating the Human Relations approach.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

In this study, I investigated the effects of the white racial identities of faculty members on the implementation of multicultural education. In other words, I wished to understand the white individuals who occupied the social roles of university educators within the larger culture of white supremacy (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999). Therefore, critical theory research seemed best to fit my research objectives. I used semi-structured interviews to collect my data.

One dynamic I wished to challenge with my research was the power inherent in being a faculty member in a classroom. The reversal of positions of power involved in a student researcher interviewing faculty subjects was an attempt to redefine this power relationship. My hope was to offer a critique of white racial identity from the position of those affected by the white racial identities of faculty members – the students. At the same time, my white racial identity created power similarities between the subjects and myself that should not be ignored.

Patricia Hill Collins refers to this as the "outsider within" positioning of research. As a white student, I could work within a particular research model or paradigm as a member of a predominantly white college community. However, I ran the risk of being marginalized or excluded because I occupy a subordinate academic position, and because

I attempted to represent interests that may have been rival to the interests of the faculty interviewees (Smith, 1999).

The use of critical theory in this study is an attempt to engage in subversive discourse, a discourse that empowers non-traditional critique of institutional practices. The meaning of discourse can best be described as

> What can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations. (Ball, 1990, p. 4)

As a student, my research project empowered me to engage in discourse that may not have been heard had I voiced my critique through a different medium. Conversely, my white position of dominance allowed me the institutional access with which to critique the whiteness in which the subjects and I share.

Subjects

The subjects, one male and one female, are faculty members within the School of Education at a medium-sized Wisconsin university. Both identified themselves as white and middle-class, and both grew up in the Midwest. The average age of the two subjects was 50 years old. The two faculty members who were interviewed had taught *Understanding Human Differences* for at least one semester prior to participating in this study. One subject's academic concentration is early childhood education, and the other subject's is educational media.

Setting

The Wisconsin university at which these interviews took place is located in a city of roughly 50,000 people. The city's population is comprised of people of Hmong,

African, Latino, Indigenous and European descent, with people of European descent as the majority. Several American Indian reservations are located near the city as well. The university itself is predominantly white, both in its student body and in its faculty composition (Koppelman & Richardson, 1995).

This particular setting for research on the white racial identity of faculty members was chosen because, as a long-time student at the Wisconsin university in question, I have had the opportunity to become familiar with the community and with the university. This familiarity has allowed me to assess the *Understanding Human Differences* course and to develop a hypothesis as to why it is not as effective as I believe it could be. However, my position as a student at this university allows me to recognize the limited effectiveness of any one course in providing a knowledge base that is often directly contradicted in other courses in which students participate.

Methods of Data Collection

I conducted a single semi-structured (Leedy, 1997) interview with each faculty member comprised of a fair mixture of open- and closed-ended questions. The interviews were both about an hour in length. The female subject's original interview tape did not record properly; with her permission, we conducted a second interview using the same questions as in her first session. Both subjects were briefly shown a list of interview questions within the presence of the researcher, but were not given their own copies in order to maintain the authenticity of the interview responses.

Research and Design

The interview questions were generated with several goals in mind. The first was simply to find out how the faculty members taught *Understanding Human Differences*. Did they encourage student inquiry and discovery, or was the approach more traditional? Were they given the power to stray from the pedagogical guidelines of the course coordinator? Second, to determine if the faculty members had a working definition of oppression and had thought about it in relation to whiteness. Third, to find out if the faculty members positioned themselves within American white supremacy, and if so, where? Fourth, to see if they examined their pedagogical practices in relation to whiteness. Did they recognize the relationships between pedagogy and socialization into white supremacy, even in situations in which social justice and oppression were being discusses? And fifth, to gain an understanding of how they learned about and studied oppression and whiteness – if they received information solely due to their positions as *Understanding Human Differences* faculty members, or if they had engaged in study outside the parameters of the course.

Instruments

The interview questions (Appendix A) were developed within the context of the goals described in the previous section. The interview was semi-structured, which means that there were a variety of open-ended as well as closed-ended questions (Gall, et. all, 1999; Leedy, 1997). Before the interviews, 27 questions were developed as the foundation of the study. During the course of each interview, however, questions were added if the subject was unclear about a topic or revealed an area related to whiteness that

had not been included within the 27 original questions. The full text of the female

subject's interview can be found in Appendix B. The full text of the male subject's

interview can be found in Appendix C.

Administration Procedures

For each interview, the subject and I arranged a time in which we could meet

within the School of Education building. I reserved a conference room to obtain privacy

and to maintain the confidentiality of the interviewee. Although two one-hour sessions

had been arranged for each subject, only one session was needed for the male faculty

member. The female faculty member also finished her interview questions during the

first session, but needed to come back for the second session due to technical problems

with her first interview tape.

Data Analysis Processes

In order to analyze the data collected from the faculty interviews, I developed a

coding system based on the characteristics of white racial identity. Some of these

characteristics emerged from the interview data, and some were informed by the research

of McIntyre (1997) and Helms (1995). I separated the characteristics into several larger

categories and divided the different interview responses based upon a code assigned to

each category. Some responses fit more than one category, and were labeled accordingly.

The main categories were:

1. Whites as dualistic

2. "White" equals power and privilege

3. Avoidance

4. Defining racism

5. Interrupting "white talk" (McIntyre, 1997; Helms, 1995)

After I examined the responses, I compared the categories with Helms' (1995) white racial identity ego statuses and information-processing strategies. Helms' lower-level statuses are largely comprised of white racial characteristics such as dualism, avoidance, whiteness as equal to power and privilege, and denial. As an individual moves to higher-level statuses, she engages in struggles with white racial identity and begins to identify herself as a member of a white racial group. In the final status, autonomy, the white individual has accepted her white racial identity, understands her racial identity as located within a larger white supremacist society, and has committed herself to the process of anti-racism. I attempted to place the subjects within statuses based upon their responses, which strongly represented the characteristics of avoidance, white as equal to power and privilege, dualism, denial, and the lack of a firm commitment to anti-racism.

Having determined a white racial identity ego status for each subject, I compared the levels of their white racial identities with the level of the Human Relations approach to multicultural education. Human Relations, like the racial identity statuses of the faculty members, is fairly low within its implementation continuum. Therefore, a faculty member who has a disintegration status may not have enough knowledge about multiculturalism to critique a Human Relations approach. At the same time, the reliance upon a Human Relations approach to multiculturalism will not provide enough information to assist in the attainment of a more advanced white racial identity status.

After relating the white racial identity statuses to the level of multicultural

implementation, I checked the results of the comparison and the subjects' responses

against my hypothesis.

CHAPTER IV

Results and Discussion

It was my hypothesis that faculty members with white racial identity ego statuses

of contact, disintegration, reintegration, or even pseudoindependence would have a more

difficult time critiquing the use of a Human Relations approach to multicultural education

than when in the immersion/emersion or autonomy statuses. It is only in the

immersion/emersion and autonomy statuses that the faculty member would understand

oppression and whiteness in such a way that they locate themselves as white participants

within the matrix of white supremacy. Furthermore, it is only at the immersion/emersion

and autonomy statuses that the faculty member would make and solidify a serious

commitment to social justice and a reformation of whiteness.

Results of White Racial Identity Questions

The two faculty members' responses fell mainly into two categories: avoidance

and dualism. However, the female faculty member also interrupted "white talk" several

times during the interview, and both faculty members attempted to define racism at least

once.

Whites as Dualistic

Dualism was heavily represented in the responses of both faculty members. A

tenet of whiteness from the inception of race ideology, dualism allows white people to

continue to identify themselves as good, free, or moral based upon a comparison with

others who are portrayed as bad, enslaved or bound, or immoral. Dualism also is used to avoid responsibility for racism. When white people as a group are indicted as racist, a white person may choose to identify as an individual. When a white person's individual culpability seems unavoidable, that person may choose to shift blame by identifying as a member of a larger group. Individualism also can be used to portray oneself as being normal or "unraced" as a white person, which, in comparison, makes people who do possess racial identities – people of color – appear abnormal.

Response of female subject.

The female subject, when asked how she defines racial identity, gave this answer:

> Well, I think that it's often defined for us. And I say that, again, speaking from the dominant racial group. The only time, you know, I think about racial identity is when I'm asked about it, quite often. So things like the census, you know, where you have to choose a group – that sort of thing. And so for, and I am obviously only speaking for myself, for me as a white person, racial identity doesn't come up in terms of being Caucasian much in my life. Now what I have done in my adult life is to sort of investigate my European heritage a little bit – the fact that I'm German and my family is, both sides were heavily German and what that means and where they came from and that sort of thing. So sometimes I would say that that's even stronger, going back in history to my European heritage, is stronger than what I identify with right now. I think that for many other people who are in non-dominant groups, racial identity becomes a significant piece of their life because, umm, they are operating with that identity against this larger powerful group every day of their life, every moment of their life. And so I would guess that, for people of color, racial identity plays a much more significant role in their lives than it does in mine.

Several aspects of whiteness are articulated within this response. First, she acknowledges the institutional aspects of whiteness by saying that white racial identity "is often defined for us," even as she relinquishes agency in the creation of her own definition of racial identity. Then, instead of answering the question of how she defines racial identity, she chooses to discuss when or if she thinks about racial identity. In this sense, it becomes

clear that it is difficult for her to generate a personal and working definition of white racial identity. At the same time, she self-identifies as being a "member of the dominant racial group." This represents an aspect of dualistic thinking in which whites do not perceive themselves as possessing a racial identity in the same way that people of color do. It is a way to obfuscate through admittance, since the subject identifies herself as part of the dominant racial group, but does not elaborate on what that racial identity means to her.

Her response then shifts to focus on her European heritage, an avoidance that denies racial identity's importance even as it is being discussed. As she states, "Sometimes I would say that that's even stronger, going back in history to my European heritage, is stronger than what I identify with right now." In other words, although she intellectually understands that she possesses a white racial identity, she feels a stronger attachment to her ethnic identity. The underlying understanding is that dominant identities, such as a white racial identity, do not have to be made conscious in the same way as the identities of people of color because dominant identities do not face oppression from a more powerful group. Ethnic identities, on the other hand, do not appear to hold the same power implications as racial identities; therefore, it is psychologically safer to identify as Norwegian or German than it is to identify oneself emotionally with whiteness.

The last part of her response addresses the importance of racial identity to people of color as opposed to white people. She states:

> I think for many other people who are in non-dominant groups, racial identity becomes a significant piece of their life because, umm, they are operating with

that identity against this larger powerful group every day of their life, every moment of their life. And so I would guess that, for people of color, racial identity plays a much more significant role in their lives than it does in mine.

What is interesting to notice is that whiteness, while critiqued as dominant and as exercising power over non-dominant groups, is never de-centered. In fact, it is solidified because people of color are portrayed as having the "fixed gaze" upon the dominant or white group, thereby implying that racial identity is the response of people of color to oppression. It is their focus upon the dominant group that has made them dualistically develop racial identities, even though historical evidence would state that it was the European fixation on phenotype and difference that gave birth to the ideology of race and created whiteness as a social construct. Simultaneously, the subject extricates herself from a location within racial identity by blaming the dominant social group for the important role that racial identity plays within the lives of people of color while she remains an individual.

Response of male subject.

The male subject's responses were more overtly dualistic than those of the female subject. When asked if teaching *Understanding Human Differences* caused him to change anything about himself, he replied by telling this story:

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I think - and I tell this story in the class - when I was in graduate school just almost thirty years ago, Anchee Yang [*not real name*] – remember her name or put it in the tape here. Anchee was a student from China that came to [graduate school] and was getting a master's degree in [education]. And she was taking classes – and again, she was probably the only one – there were a couple of Asians, Indian, Nigerian students in mostly a male, white program – but all of the students spoke English except Anchee. She was very, didn't have a very good command of the language. And so she would be in the labs late at night and I would help her with a project. And then the next night I'd see Jim and I'd say, "How'd it go? Did you finish that last night?" And he'd say,

"Well, I didn't finish until 11pm because by the time I finished with Anchee's project, I got to mine." And so, Anchee got a lot done for her by men that were helping her because she was having difficulty with her notes in class and really couldn't do the assignments.

And I'm finishing my Ph.D. and I'm applying for a job with [community college] in the U.P. and I'm a finalist. And I get the list and it's like, "You're a finalist, the other candidates are....Anchee Yang." She was a finalist for this job. And I thought, "OK. I'm a white male. I'm gonna be disadvantaged...I've got a Ph.D. I'm from the United States. I'm born and raised here, pay taxes, my parents pay taxes, and here's a person that came over here from China, no affiliation, got her degree here, and is gonna get this job or is a fat candidate. I couldn't believe it – that there were two Ph.D.s and a master's degree person for this director's job. She got the job. And I was angry for twenty years. Anytime it would come up, I'd think, "You know, this quota system is giving this woman a job because she is able to put down 'Asian' on a sheet and they're gonna be able to put down 'female.' She can't even speak. How can she do this job?" I mean, I never thought about when I was helping her that I was gonna help here get a job and stay in America. I thought she was gonna go back to China and help them.

But after I started teaching the course in Human Relations, and especially – I'm gonna refer to Peggy McIntosh again about white male privilege – I thought about how I got to where I was. And I got my job in [education] because one of my fraternity brothers had a job in the lab school, and when he graduated, he asked if I wanted it. So, because I knew a guy and he knew the director of the [education] program, I got the job. And then, I wasn't even a [education] minor. Getting ready to graduate and I'd worked there for a couple of years and the professor that was chair of the department said, "What are you gonna do?" And I said, "Well, I'm not sure." He said, "You ought to go to [graduate school] and get your Ph.D., get a master's degree in [education]. You've got, you've worked here for us..." I said, "Boy, a Big 10 school is expensive." He said, "I'm sure I can get you a grad assistantship." "Okay."

So here I was. I go to [graduate school], walk in with a grad assistantship [the department chair] got for me....it's like, how did she get hers? I got it because I was a white man and I knew white people, males, people in power. There weren't any women – there was one woman – and all the rest were men in the department. So I got an advantage because of my gender, because of who I knew, and so....My committee, my graduate committee – the professors that I had. I had a whole bunch of things going for me that Anchee didn't. And so, if she got one break that she didn't deserve, I got a whole bunch I didn't deserve, I mean I got by basic...So I started to let go of that.

Now it's like, not only have I let go, it's like, well, I'm sure she's not there

anymore. I'm sure she moved on. She went back to school. She did some other things. It's not the end of the world to have probably not the most competent person doing a job. It's not against the law to hire, to not hire the best candidate. You can get in trouble for discriminating against people but you can't get in trouble for not hiring the most qualified candidate. And a lot of that is people's judgment…But, in the whole scheme of things, you know, you get somebody that's not the best candidate here, you know, there're still not very many role models…You know, we just need to, again, it's a long answer to my fair play answer about Human Relations. It's like, you just have to talk about justice, you know. You don't have to love people, you don't have to like them, you just have to be fair. You just have to be fair and try to have a level moral path here to go, and that's kind of my goal and my view.

The underlying theme of this story is the dualistic division between "us" and "them;" between those of us who are white and those of us who aren't, as well as between those of us who are male and those of us who aren't. This theme is expressed in several ways. In the first paragraph of the story, it was made clear that the male subject viewed the woman from China as possessing a deficit. He felt that she "got a lot done for her by men that were helping her because she…really couldn't do the assignments." Her Chinese ethnicity intertwined with her femaleness to make her a direct opposite to him.

This direct opposition carried over into how the male subject felt about the Chinese woman's professional capabilities. He spoke fluent English; she "didn't have a very good command of the language." It is implied that he did not need help in the lab the way that she did, that he accomplished things by himself. He had a Ph.D.; she had a master's degree. He believed that, as a white male, he "was gonna be disadvantaged" while she could get a job because she was "able to put down 'Asian' on a sheet and they're gonna be able to put down 'female.'" Every positive characteristic that he attributed to himself was matched by a corresponding negative characteristic in her. Not

only was he competent and independent, but he was also at a disadvantage because of his whiteness and maleness. In other words, he positions the Chinese woman as privileged.

When he reevaluates his feelings about this occurrence after reading Peggy McIntosh's (1990) article about white privilege, he interprets it only in terms of male privilege. He identifies as male, not as white. In his recognition of privilege at the end of his response, he maintains racial superiority even as he admits his previous sexism. Since whiteness stays invisible, even after citing McIntosh's article on white privilege, the discrepancies between the male subject and Anchee are perceived as biological racial inequality. The invisibility of whiteness protects the male subject from having to overtly name race as the reason he perceives the Chinese woman as subordinate or inferior. Furthermore, by allowing whiteness to remain hidden, the blame for those differences falls to Anchee, who "naturally" and therefore permanently possesses inferior attributes. Thus, his realization of male privilege absolves him from his former sexist beliefs even as Anchee remains an unworthy person.

He does not acknowledge the racism inherent in his assumptions about her qualifications or in his thoughts that she'd take the help he gave her and "go back to China and help them." Instead, he recognizes himself as possessing privilege just as he has previously attributed privilege to her. Seeing privilege in this way allows him to "forgive" her for getting the job for which he still doesn't feel she was qualified. At the same time, he can forgive himself for possessing male privilege because he has used his experience with Anchee Yang to create an example of female and racial privilege. He has alleviated the responsibility of being a member of a dominant group by assuming the

status of the oppressed. This can be rationalized through his insistence on the need for a

"level playing field," removed from historical context and the realities of power

inequalities, a need which he feels was not met in his interaction with Anchee Yang.

"White" Equals Power and Privilege

When discussing white privilege, both subjects referred to Peggy McIntosh's

(1990) article, "White privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," which was provided

for them as part of their readings for *Understanding Human Differences*. Therefore, it is

not surprising, given the paucity of the information provided them, that their definition of

privilege consists solely of the unearned advantage and dominance of whiteness. Neither

subject mentions withholding (Fine, 1996) as another characteristic of white privilege.

Withholding is an important aspect of white privilege of which to be aware

because it makes clear that white privilege is simply holding people of color below poor

and working class white people at many levels. The poor and working class white people

do not possess privilege in terms of advantage or dominance in relation to the larger

society; instead, they measure privilege by making sure that at least some people have a

harder life than they do. Withholding illustrates that white people are also deceived by

white privilege; that race is used as a scapegoat for class issues that would be seen but for

the poor and working class white people's pursuit of privilege. In other words, whiteness

is not always an advantage. Sometimes it serves to blind white people to their own best

interests.

Both subjects, regardless of gender, perceived white racial identity as equivalent

to power and privilege, and were unable to name any drawbacks to being white. Some

characteristics of whiteness as power and privilege include a false sense of superiority, stability, or safety; white racial bonding or the "seduction of sameness" (McIntyre, 1997); and a portrayal of white individuals as powerless to act in the face of such a powerful white supremacist system.

Response of female subject.

The female subject understood that white people in a white supremacist society receive privilege and unearned advantage. She also was able to locate herself within that structure as an individual who received privilege. However, when described by her, whiteness and privilege seemed to have no weaknesses or drawbacks. When asked if she thought there were any limitations to white privilege, she responded:

> Oh, that's a good question. Are there any limitations to white privilege? I'm not sure how to answer that question, Christin. I've not run into any limitations, you know, and if there are, they maybe only exist in places where white people are the minority, you know, and so not being in those kinds of situations very often in my life, I wouldn't see it as being negative. It's always worked for me. You know, I can't think of a time when it didn't work for me, quite frankly.

The female subject believes that white privilege is only threatened in places where white people are the minority, although whiteness has maintained dominance in places like South Africa and in some American southern states where people of African descent clearly outnumber people of European descent.

This statement deserves further exploration of its subconscious underpinnings. If white privilege only exists in places where white people are the majority, it can be seen as majority-rule rather than systematic oppression based upon power inequalities. In fact, it becomes less malignant because it becomes more universal; it becomes something that may naturally occur when one group is larger and has dominance over other groups.

Racism ceases to be a uniquely colonial and European phenomenon located within a specific context. It becomes free of historical and geographical constraints. White people again are implicitly absolved of responsibility for white privilege because they are beneficiaries of a process that is human rather than American or European; a process that is the result of human nature rather than racist ideology derived from the systematic murder, disenfranchisement, and oppression of Indigenous and African peoples.

White racial bonding, a characteristic of "white" as being privilege and power, occurred in two ways during the interview. The subject indicated that she wished to maintain her students' comfort in order to facilitate participation when discussing racism in her *Understanding Human Differences* class. When asked what she does in her teaching to try and help her students reach the goals she has set for them, she replied:

> ...I try and let them know that this is not me, you know, the wonderful model of tolerance and understanding and all of those other things, but that this is me, a person still working through it. And that seems to help. The other thing is I try and keep it fairly light. Not humorous, but not so that anyone feels as if their opinion is going to be jumped on or that they're going to become the target of the entire rest of the class. So if somebody does say something, you know, that I consider to be really racist, umm, you know, I try to say to them, "Wow, you know, well, that's just a completely different way of saying it than I would have thought of." And we all, everybody sort of goes whew [exhales]....

Not every attempt to make students comfortable should be viewed as white racial bonding, of course. But it is important to differentiate good pedagogy from a reluctance to make students experience tension, frustration, or struggle. Learning does not take place when students are not challenged or are allowed to maintain positions in which they remain at the center.

In this response, white racial bonding is taking place between the female subject and her students, not because she wishes them to remain comfortable, but because her reasoning for doing so does not challenge white supremacy and therefore leaves it intact. For example, she talks of trying to put students at ease so that they don't feel as if "their opinion is going to be jumped on or that they're going to become the target of the entire rest of the class."

What she describes seems to go one step further than simply preventing her students from being attacked. Her students are protected from the momentarily loss of membership or solidarity with the rest of the predominantly white class. She diverts attention from problematic statements made by students and allows the racist or sexist student to avoid direct consequences or challenges to their statements. Power and privilege are thus strengthened and whiteness is allowed to remain at the center even as it is continuously shoved to the periphery of class discussion.

When a student does say something racist, she tries to say to them, "'Wow, you know, well that's just a completely different way of saying it than I would have thought of.' And we all, everybody sort of goes whew [exhales]..." By saying "we all" and then "everybody" when talking about who exhales in relief, she indicates that she, too, is glad to diffuse the tension and release the racist or sexist student from the focus of the class. The teacher and the students are united in their discomfort, and in their desire to address racism and at the same time being allowed to feel good about themselves as white people.

A second form of white racial bonding took place between the subjects and myself during the interviews. There were several instances in which I found a subject's

statements to be problematic. Yet, when they used verbal or physical cues indicating that they expected affirmation, I gave it to them. For example, when the female subject was asked if her gender assisted in the formation of her racial identity, she responded:

> Has [being female] affected my white identity? I don't think so. I might question that again if I were a white male because we tend to just keep those two pieces together a lot in our discussions about diversity and so on, is white male, white male, white male. We very seldom say white female, you know, in terms of white females also being a part of the problem because of that female piece of it. So we aren't separating that very well, I don't think. Does that make sense to you?

To which I answered, "Oh yeah, Yeah. It makes a lot of sense to me." In reality, it did not make sense to me. I felt that, while acknowledging that the separation of gender and racial identities was a problem in accurately addressing whiteness, she maintained that separation within herself. But rather than withhold positive feedback, I agreed with her statement verbally and also projected body language that affirmed her statement. I reacted in this way partially because I feel that racial and gender identities do intersect and influence one another. However, the main motivation for my agreement was that, in the coded form of communication between us as two white women, affirmation was expected and I acquiesced without critically asking why.

Response of male subject.

The false sense of superiority, stability or safety inherent in the belief that "white" equals power and privilege was apparent through many of the male subject's responses. His responses were also interlaced with stories of white racial bonding much more overtly than in the responses of the female subject. For instance, when asked what steps he had taken in his personal life to address privilege, he told a story about his attempts to fairly distribute funds within his department. Later in the same answer he stated:

> I think….seems like if you're in the driver's seat, you have more of an
> opportunity to take care of yourself and people like you. So it's like, you take
> care of your friends. What good are friends if they can't help you when you need
> help? And so, from that regard, I think it's harder for people to, that are not in the
> driver's seat, to get there. And you hate to…you don't want to do anything that
> makes it look like you're giving somebody a handout….

While at first I interpreted this story as his attempt to avoid answering the

question, his response is an indirect answer. His way to address privilege in his life is to

try to use it fairly and to help his friends. The fact that helping one's friends with

privilege is a direct contradiction to the rules of fair play did not seem to occur to him.

Rather, fair play seemed a way to justify the use of privilege and to dismiss the power

inequalities between white people and people of color. If he is adhering to rules of fair

play, then any discrepancies between his life and the lives of people of color or women or

other non-dominant groups is the result of his personal qualities or their flaws.

This response, then, displays not only the false sense of superiority that comes

with whiteness; it also illustrates white racial bonding between the white male subject

and his friends. He states, "What good are friends if they can't help you when you need

help?" Friends, in this instance, appears to be code for "white people" in light of the next

sentence: "And so, from that regard, I think it's harder for people to, that are not in the

driver's seat, to get there." People in the "driver's seat" and "friends" are considered to

be one in the same. Friendship, then, is determined by the person's ability to assist in the

accumulation of privilege or power, assistance that would be much more difficult for a

person of color to render.

Furthermore, the male subject alludes to the assistance of friends in accruing

benefits and then removes himself and other white people from his narrative. When he

says that he thinks "it's harder for people to, that are not in the driver's seat, to get there,"

he has shifted agency for not "getting there" onto people of color. Even though the

response began with a discussion of cultural differences between Europe and America,

thus implying the social construction of difference, by the end of the response white

power and privilege have ceased to be social constructs and have become natural. By

reasoning that friends help one another, the male subject is making white racial bonding a

universal occurrence, one that exists outside the social, political, cultural, economic or

temporal contexts of America. The portrayal of white power and privilege as a natural

system also supports the beliefs of many white people that they are powerless to act in the

face of white supremacy.

<u>Avoidance</u>

Avoidance is one of the most commonly exhibited characteristics of white racial

identity. It allows white people to remain comfortable or to maintain a positive self-

image by turning away from the realities of race. Some components of avoidance are:

- to shift focus from the white self onto the "Other"

- to continue to participate in racial myths

- to place responsibility for oppression upon people of color through victim blaming

- to position whiteness as normative, objective, or simply "human"

- zero-sum thinking, in which opportunity and societal benefits are thought to be finite
  and therefore constitute a loss to white people if redistributed

- an insistent focus on the effects rather than the causes of social problems

Another way to define avoidance is to say that it is a way to escape asking difficult

questions, to which one doesn't want to know the answers.

Response of female subject.

The female subject was thoughtful and direct during her interview sessions, and

only engaged in avoidance in a few of her responses. One such instance occurred when

she was asked about the Wisconsin university in which she teaches. The question read:

"Do you think that [the Wisconsin university] is a comfortable atmosphere for you

personally to address white racial identity?" She replied:

> Oh, I think it's real easy for me to exist here. You know, this is a white middle
> class midwestern institution, yeah. It's just real easy for me to be here. Now,
> does that serve us well is an entirely different question. Umm, the change in
> population at the university in the twenty years I've lived here has not been
> enough or good. It still looks very much the way it did twenty years ago, quite
> frankly. And, you know, I see more international students than I see American
> students of color, and I think maybe we have reached out beyond our border,
> which is wonderful and brings richness. But I don't know that we have reached
> out in our own community in the same way, in our own state, in our own region,
> in the same way.

Although she was asked if the university atmosphere was receptive to attempts to

address white racial identity, she responded as if she had been asked if the atmosphere

was comfortable for her to *possess* white racial identity. In this response, it is important

to note the difference between an atmosphere that allows an individual to be white and an

atmosphere that provides an opportunity to think about, challenge, and critique whiteness.

Response of male subject.

In contrast to the female subject, virtually every response given by the male

subject incorporated one or more of the characteristics of avoidance. When asked a

question about how he related to an aspect of white racial identity, he would typically tell

a story to elaborate, thus removing himself as the primary subject of discussion. He had

difficulty in articulating responses in which he related directly to white racial identity.

Instead, he needed to talk about an "Other" in order to discuss himself. For instance,

when asked if he thought his white racial identity affected how he related to students, he

had this to say:

> Yeah, I do. I think that white males just have an advantage over almost anybody
> else and I think that it....I'm not sure this is part of the....I'll tell a story here. We
> had an interview with a candidate two years ago for a special Ed position and we
> didn't know he was black until I picked him up at the airport. And when we
> looked at the....we offered him the job. And, the....at that time, the interim dean
> called and checked on, checked with different employers. And kind of as an
> aside, they didn't really come out and say this in so many words because nobody
> wanted to be identified at the university, but that the implication was that his
> student evaluations weren't as high as the other people in the department. I think
> if you're a minority person talking about issues that anger a majority of white
> folks, they're not going to give you as high a student evaluation as someone that's
> singing kind of the party line. And so I think that, from that perspective,
> minorities will have a harder time.

> I think that, if you're in the majority, your skin color is the same as the majority
> of the people you're teaching, you're going to have an advantage – another
> advantage – in terms of student evaluation of instruction, in terms of maybe....I
> shouldn't say respect, but it seems like there's more respect for males than there is
> for females. And you can see, when you look across the country, there are not
> that many university chancellors that are female. There aren't that many....never
> been a female president of the United States....and so, from those issues. Never
> been a black, only one Native American vice president. So I think that all those
> things have an implication that advantage a white person.

Aside from avoidance, dualism and "whiteness" as equivalent to power and

privilege are two other categories of white racial identity characteristics that are present

within this response. The male subject invokes group membership to avoid individual

responsibility for an analysis of his white racial identity in relation to his students. This

shift between individual and group membership is a common aspect of dualism, and

allows the white individual to continuously reposition him- or herself in order to avoid identifying with white racial characteristics that are perceived as bad. The flexibility of dualism permits a critique of whiteness while allowing the individual white person to continue to believe that he or she is not a racist person.

Whiteness as equivalent to power and privilege is a second theme that intersects with avoidance. The male subject believes that he has an advantage in relating to students because he is white and male, and receives privilege from those two identities. He further chooses to believe that his students give him evaluations based upon this privilege and states that it "seems like there's more respect for males than there is for females." Another way to examine the student evaluations the male subject receives is to focus upon the shared whiteness of the majority of students with their instructor. They may be appreciative that their instructor allows them to remain comfortable in a Human Relations class rather than teaching in a way that makes them feel frustrated, upset, or guilty. White racial bonding may be a more appropriate explanation for his students' evaluations than white male privilege, since it is not that the students give him unearned advantage or dominance so much as they are able to identify with and possibly empathize with him.

The male subject, while avoiding an individual discussion of whether or not his white racial identity affects how he relates to his students, investigates several other relationships. He discusses how his students relate to him, how the university where he teaches related to a black candidate for a special education position, how the black candidate's students may have related to him, and how the black candidate may have

related to his students and other "white folks." While the approach is sometimes circuitous, the male subject does eventually attempt to articulate how he relates to his students, even though that articulation is indirect.

It is obvious that white male privilege is an important part of his definition of white racial identity, and that he believes white male privilege to influence his interactions with students. He attributes the lower student evaluations received by the black special education candidate to his blackness, saying that if

> You're a minority person talking about issues that anger a majority of white folks, they're not going to give you as high a student evaluation as someone that's singing kind of the party line.

He assumes that a black candidate will not "sing the party line," but will be talking about "issues that anger a majority of white folks," simply because the candidate possesses a black racial identity. In contrast, it is implied that people who receive higher student evaluations *are* "singing the party line." We can assume that this second group of people is white, because they have not been identified as possessing racial identities.

Two characteristics of the dominant group emerge from this response: white privilege and white racial bonding. While the black candidate is assumed to speak against racism, to talk "about issues that anger a majority of white folks," white people are not obligated to speak against racism and it is, in fact, assumed that they don't. Racial identity in this sense appears to be biological rather than social. In other words, it is assumed that black people will challenge racism because they are black, and white people will uphold racism because they are white. This construct leaves little room for an understanding of the possible effects of racist socialization upon people of color, and

exhibits little faith in the possibility of the development of an anti-racist white racial identity.

Defining Racism

Both subjects' responses were informed by their desires to develop working definitions of racism, and to determine what racism means to them personally and as members of a racial group. It could be inferred from the responses of the two subjects that they felt rather passive in creating a definition of racism; that is, at different times they both indicated that race and racial identity were things that were defined for them, rather than by them. Even so, the struggle to understand racism and racial identity clearly marked the answers throughout both interviews.

Response of female subject.

To the female subject, racism is something that "is defined for us" in terms of identity, and is the source of white privilege and power. Racism also withholds opportunity from and disadvantages people of color, and creates stereotypes about them. However, the larger societal structure that houses racism is not critiqued. She understands the institutional aspects of racism, but in ways that still portray the institution as something basically good that has gone awry. Racism is not defined as an integral part of the viability of American institutions. This is clear when she discusses the structure of the *Understanding Human Differences* course as well as the operations of the university. She commends instructors in other departments, whose approaches to multiculturalism include more multicultural information while allowing the institutional structures to remain intact:

> I do think that there is an atmosphere here in which many of the faculty members that I know and respect thread diversity issues into everything they teach. So I know many people in the English department who use writing from people of color or writing from, you know, homosexuals or, you know, so that when they're having their students read,...they're not just reading white male authors.

The female subject discusses individual racism as well. However, understanding the institutional aspects of racism may have reinforced a distancing mechanism of whiteness in which white racial identity becomes something she possesses but does not have to think about too often. When asked what she considers to be her racial identity, the female subject responds:

> I consider my racial identity to be white, but it's not an identity that I have a close association with. I don't think about it often. And, you know, I think that's probably because it's the dominant race. And so I don't have to identify racially very often. Umm, if I do, it tends to be in those more negative ways, how it has affected me to be white. But it's just not really an identity that is real strong in terms of my own identification of it.

It is only when whiteness is disrupted, when she finds a challenge to the belief that whiteness equals power and privilege, that she must identify racially. By saying she does not have a close association with white racial identity, she does not deny the existence of racism, but rather her membership as a racial being. This response provides some support for the assertion that she may position racism as a problem of people of color rather than a problem that stems from white supremacy, no matter how sympathetic she may be to the eradication of that problem.

This assertion receives further support from the fact that the female subject first came to understand racism during her childhood, which paralleled the African American

Civil Rights movement. She spoke of the impact that having teachers of color had on her, and the role that it played in the development of her racial identity:

> It played a significant role, because it came right on top of the Civil Rights movement. Then I went to junior high school and had this exposure and I do believe that helped me form ideas that I still work from today about peace and justice and tolerance and understanding because of those events sort of piggybacking.

She saw the struggles of African Americans in pursuit of the realization of civil rights, which formed the basis for much of her understanding of racism as an adult. At the same time, this focus upon the struggles of African Americans did not teach her to place herself within the discourse of race, but rather as a person who wished to help to eradicate this problem for people of color.

The female subject also indicates that, as a child first learning about race, she understood that "the difference not only was skin color but had something to do with poverty." From this statement, we can determine that she understands the intersections of race and class. Earlier in her interview, however, she makes it quite clear that she separates being female from being white in terms of her own identity. It may be that the seeming discrepancy is simply an indication that identities are only made conscious or public when they have possibly negative consequences for the person or group so identified. Studied in this light, it makes sense that being of color, being poor, and being female are all identities that can be claimed, even while white racial identity occupies a position with which there is no close association.

<u>Response of male subject.</u>

The male subject's definition of racism relies heavily upon the beliefs that color is a handicapping characteristic and that whiteness is equal to privilege and power. He also feels that racism is a unique form of oppression that is bigger than other forms discussed in the *Understanding Human Differences* course:

> Oftentimes there's an "ism" a week, you know, it depends upon what the "ism" is. And I think that, because you give it once a week, you think that each "ism" is equal. It's kind of like you got four deans and they should all be equal, but it seems like there's always one deal that's more equal than the others, and I think that's the same thing when I look at this particular course. I think that being, not having white skin is a bigger "ism" than being old or maybe having only one leg. I think that it's something that you can't ever change. You can't hide. It's there. It's out front. It's in your face. And so I think it's a bigger "ism" than other "isms."

Why the male subject positions racism as a bigger "ism" is linked closely to the idea that being white is normal or universal.

At first glance, it appears that the male subject is interrupting white talk by locating sexism and ableism within a structure of white racism. But instead of stating that white supremacy is an encompassing social structure, he actually positions "not having white skin" as being a great detriment, a handicap equivalent to "being old or maybe having only one leg." The system of white supremacy does not withhold opportunity from or exert dominance over people of color in this definition. Instead, color itself is the limiting characteristic.

Racism is further defined dualistically as giving privilege, power and affirmation to white people and as being a stigma or burden to people of color. Implicit in this scenario is the belief that whiteness is the central frame of reference for both groups.

Whiteness is so powerful that neither white people nor people of color can avert their

gazes. The male subject states:

> I think the pressure of being a minority has to weigh on your psyche. You think
> about it every day that you didn't get this opportunity maybe based on the
> pigmentation of your skin rather than on the quality of your brain and the strength
> of your character, things that Martin Luther King talked about. It just is
> outrageous to me.

The male subject finds it "outrageous" that opportunities are withheld based upon skin

color, and feels that the "pressure of being a minority" is a heavy weight for people of

color to bear. Racism makes being of color joyless and difficult, and that is the only

aspect of the experiences of people of color that is articulated. It is true that racism is

psychologically as well as physically oppressive for people of color. However, it is

equally true that cultures of resistance exist within communities of color, that spaces live

within the cultures of people of color that do not fixate upon white people as the center of

the world.

Interrupting "White Talk"

"White talk" is interrupted when whiteness is honestly addressed without a

reliance on dualism, privilege and power, or avoidance. By disrupting the dominant

discourse of "white talk," white supremacy can be critiqued and possibly reconstructed.

The female subject was the only subject who attempted to interrupt "white talk."

Response of female subject.

The female subject attempted to interrupt "white talk" in her interview responses.

She recognized the privilege that accompanies whiteness in a white supremacist system,

and also was able to understand that whiteness is more than privilege and can sometimes

limit white people intellectually and socially. When asked if she thought her racial

identity was relevant to the way that she teaches, the female subject replied:

> Oh, I'm sure it is. I'm sure it is. I think it's relevant in that it probably limits me.
> It probably limits me because my own background was so limited. I probably
> bring that forward with me, and even though I have worked toward being a more
> open-minded person, a person who has more diverse experiences and
> relationships in my life, I would guess that my whiteness is still very much a part
> of who I am in that classroom – how I operate. You know, I think about that and
> I think that probably is the case.

In this response, "white talk" is interrupted because the subject does not attempt to avoid

the question, but addresses her whiteness directly and personally. Further, she positions

her teaching in relation to her white racial identity and honestly assesses the affects of her

whiteness on her classroom effectiveness.

Results of Questions about Education

Both subjects seemed happy with the overall content of the course, but made

suggestions such as heavier emphasis on student inquiry and an increase in the amount of

input that instructors had in curriculum development. Furthermore, both subjects spoke

of the need for more faculty of color in general in reference to the *Understanding Human

Differences* course. When asked what they believed the role of education to be in the

United States, both subjects replied that education was a means to uphold and perpetuate

the status quo of American society.

However, the subjects disagreed when asked whether other classes at their

university help or detract from the goals of *Understanding Human Differences*. The male

subject responded:

> I think because they don't help, they detract. It's the old idea of if you're not part

of the problem you're…no, if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. And I think that's true here.

In contrast, when asked about university support, the female subject replied:

I do think that there is an atmosphere here in which many of the faculty members that I know and respect thread diversity issues into everything they teach. So I know many people in the English department who use writing from people of color or writing from, you know, homosexuals or, you know, so that when they're having their students read in [English class], they're not just reading white male authors.

In accordance with the structure of *Understanding Human Differences*, all small-group instructors, including the female and male subjects, receive a curricular guide from the course coordinator. Therefore, their implementation of multicultural education is limited by the structure chosen by the course coordinator. Neither subject, however, seems to disagree with the Human Relations approach to multicultural education. They offered critiques and suggestions for improvement, but improvements designed to strengthen the effectiveness of the current course rather than to change the approach.

Based upon the information provided within the interview responses, it seems most accurate to position the female subject predominantly within the disintegration status, even while acknowledging that she exhibits aspects of the pseudo-independence status as well, but to a lesser degree. The male subject can best be described as occupying a reintegration status.

CHAPTER V

Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

After analyzing the interview responses of the female and male subjects, it

became clear that both were confused and sometimes contradictory in their

understandings of racism and white racial identity. Both subjects agreed to be

interviewed in order to learn more about themselves as white people, and also hoped that

their participation would assist them in the development of more effective anti-racist

pedagogy. After analyzing their interview responses, I believe that the female subject is

predominantly in the disintegration status, while the male subject is in the reintegration

status.

Reproductions of Whiteness

One of the most interesting aspects of the interviewing process was recognizing

characteristics of whiteness within the research structure. For example, when I first

began to interview the subjects, my analysis of their answers clearly reflected a "good

white/bad white" dualism, in which I positioned myself as a good white researcher

interviewing bad white faculty members. As I reflected upon this, I came to realize that

the temptation to define myself through the denigration of others was based upon fear of

seeing myself in them. It was only by clearly demarcating difference that I could be sure

to distance myself from their "bad white" identities. However, the differences between

the interviewees and myself was socially constructed rather than anchored in truth, since I

possessed the power to define them within my research and therefore also had the power to define myself in opposition to them.

My ability as a researcher to position subjects as subordinate to me indicated that the structures and characteristics of white supremacy remain intact, even within interactions between people who are members of the same racial group. Once I became conscious of this, I worked hard to look at the subjects as fellow members of a community rather than as people separate from me. In this sense, I began to interrupt the dominant discourse that had almost reproduced itself in allowing a different version of whiteness to privilege itself through the domination of others. The flexibility and complexity of white supremacist thought processes such as these made it clear that unless whiteness is exposed and made conscious on a consistent basis, it is being supported and perpetuated through habit.

Obstacles to an Anti-racist White Racial Identity

It was apparent from the responses of both subjects that they did not have the support of an anti-racist community in their struggles with racial identity. As individuals who engaged in little professional development in relation to the *Understanding Human Differences* course, both were fairly isolated from the ideas put forth in contemporary multicultural education, critical theory, and critical race theory literature. They lacked the immediate feedback that they would receive as members of a group of people critically thinking about race. The differences in power, experience and knowledge between the subjects and their students preempted any possibility of effective critique within their classrooms.

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The reliance on the individual rather than upon an individual as a member of a larger community is evident in many aspects of the course. The course coordinator develops the curriculum on his own and then disseminates it to the small-group instructors. The male subject also indicated that, while meetings for all of the instructors are sometimes held, they are poorly attended. This alienation of individuals engaged in the investigation of racism and oppression discourages white people from strongly committing to anti-racism.

Fear of loss of membership.

White people, in many cases, inherently understand that they will lose membership within their white racial group if they fight too vigorously against racism. And even though many white people perceive themselves as individuals as opposed to members of a racial group, they also subconsciously understand that they do, indeed, possess membership. Furthermore, while white people may not consciously derive an identity from the dualistic comparison of people of color, much of their identity is comprised from such relationships.

Making social justice a solitary pursuit threatens the basis of such dualistic comparisons, for the white person no longer has a white racial group to form a frame of reference. It reinforces the belief that they will no longer have that group membership because no other group membership has been provided to fill in the space left by silent racial bonding. This can be discouraging to white people who would like to challenge their membership within white supremacy, but hold back because they know of no other membership with which to replace it. Loss of group membership is an especially strong

deterrent because many of the aspects of white racial identity remain unconscious, thus leaving faculty members and other white people unable to articulate the source of many of their fears.

Arrogance of whiteness.

Many of the responses of both subjects, especially those that equated whiteness with privilege and power, demonstrated a subconscious arrogance that comes with being white. When the male subject discussed white male privilege, he didn't simply reveal the unearned advantage and dominance that he possessed because of his social identities; he also indirectly revealed his belief in the timelessness of such privileges. Time and again, agency was reserved for white people in many of the male subject's stories. White people were portrayed as competent and intelligent, as in his story about the Chinese woman within his graduate program. "Being in the driver's seat" was a coded phrase he used to describe membership within the dominant social group, a phrase that indicates power and action at the same time that it implies the inaction of others.

It was difficult for both subjects to provide any instances illustrating disadvantages of whiteness. The example that both subjects gave was a possible loss of power when whites were in the minority. The subjects defined white privilege or disadvantage in physical or economic terms, and did not investigate the psychological, intellectual, or moral repercussions of their whiteness in any depth. While both subjects talked about the importance of representation in terms of role models and opportunity, they seemed unaware of the extent to which whiteness had affirmed and shaped them psychologically.

For example, both possessed an unreasonable confidence when asked if they

thought they should teach *Understanding Human Differences*. The two subjects admitted

that they had engaged in little professional development and that the main reason they

were teaching the course was because they expressed interest to the course coordinator.

Yet both felt comfortable in continuing to teach the course. However, both said that they

would give up a section or their positions as an instructor if a person of color was able to

take their place. I believe that their confidence is connected to the denigration of

multiculturalism as a discipline as well. No instructor would be willing to teach calculus

with no formal background within the discipline and little professional development.

Yet, within educational institutions throughout the nation, multicultural education seems

to be a discipline for which it is alright to remain relatively unprepared. Either the

instructor is overly confident in her abilities, or she underestimates the difficulty and

value of the discipline. Both explanations stem from the arrogance of whiteness.

Whiteness as a product.

Throughout the interviews, both subjects defined white racism predominantly as

something that was physically spoken or acted out. The female subject described

students who said "something really racist," while the male subject identified possibly

racist situations as those in which people, because of phenotypic prejudice, "weren't fair"

in the distribution of resources. Both exhibited a strong understanding of racism as

something quantifiable or concrete. This attitude indicates a partial misunderstanding of

the nature of whiteness. In keeping with American white supremacist capitalist ideology,

whiteness is defined as a product rather than as a process. It is understood to be a series

of overtly racist actions consciously undertaken by a racist white person, rather than thought and behavioral processes that exist within every member of a white supremacist society.

White people may believe that, as long as they avoid producing racist products such as racist language or overtly racist behavior, they are not racist. They do not make a connection between their whiteness and their participation in the ongoing processes of racism, such as the purchase of clothing produced from the exploited labor of people of color, the use of electric power that is produced by policies of environmental racism, or the consumption of food picked by underpaid migrant workers. When whiteness is viewed as a product rather than a process, white people do not have to acknowledge the psychological wage of which Du Bois spoke. Instead, they gauge the benefits of whiteness as they would stock dividends or interest from a bank account.

Moral implications of whiteness.

In a white supremacist system, members of all racial groups have their identities imposed upon them to some degree through socialization. People are inundated with value systems that serve the best interests of the society, but may not serve the individual. For example, in America it is acceptable and sometimes even commonplace to have a discrepancy between theory and practice, between what we say and what we do. Since this hypocrisy is institutional and has been present since the inception of the United States, many Americans perceive it as normal. Its very normalcy makes it virtually invisible within the framework of race ideology. Hypocrisy thus comprises the contradiction that is America, a racist nation that believes in freedom and democracy.

Both subjects revealed varying degrees of contradiction between their beliefs and practices. For example, the male subject adhered to an ideal of "fair play" throughout many of his responses. He also spoke of "being in the driver's seat" and using that position to help one's friends. He did not, however, recognize the contrast between his two positions. The female subject stated that being white made her feel a certain "onus of responsibility...towards other people." At the same time, she stated,

> I don't have to identify racially very often. Umm, if I do, it tends to be in those more negative ways, how it has affected me to be white. But it's just not really an identity that is real strong in terms of my own identification of it.

Therefore, while she feels responsibility towards others because of her whiteness, that responsibility is extremely limited because she does not think of the source of her feeling too often. Again, a contrast between beliefs and practice is evident.

As members of America who were socialized under the system of white supremacy, it is only natural that hypocrisy, denial, avoidance, and other less than desirable traits have been socialized into our thought and behavioral processes along with other aspects of white supremacy. White supremacy, therefore, inhibits its participants from becoming good and moral beings. For if you are white and do not take an actively anti-racist stance in American society, can you be considered a moral being? And yet avoidance, denial, dualism, and the false sense of white superiority would have white people believe that they are indeed good and moral people. The responsibility for the development of a system of morality is thus circumvented, and white people are able to believe themselves good and, at the same time, are not required to act as they believe good people do.

<u>Lack of serious study.</u>

Another source of white supremacist strength is the rewriting or obliteration of history. In order to discuss racism and white supremacy critically and accurately, a comprehensive and inclusive historical background is required. A person can be told that race is a social construct, but until she reads the historical events that led to the creation of race as an ideology, it is difficult to really understand what social construction as a concept means. Historical knowledge also facilitates a deeper investigation of racism by discussing it in conjunction with other aspects of society such as classism, sexism, or heterosexism. The pervasiveness and invidiousness of race becomes clearer when seen as a matrix of oppressions.

For the female subject, she understood the importance of historical knowledge and the lack of historical accuracy within her own early educational experiences. She grew up during the Civil Rights Movement, but her education did not reflect the political changes of her times. She recalled,

> I don't remember an instance of being taught anything about black history, anything about Native American history other than the Thanksgiving story, which, of course, is so warped [laughs], you know, and we celebrated Columbus Day and it was just very Anglo-centered. My entire education was.

In contrast, when the male subject was asked if his education helped to shape his racial identity, he simply stated, "No." Throughout his interview responses, he indicated little historical awareness outside his personal experience. As indicated by the female subject, an "Anglo-centered" education is literally what it says – an education designed to center Anglos or white people. Such an education makes it difficult to decenter whiteness based

solely on an awareness that whiteness exists, for without study, there is little knowledge of other options.

Strategies for combating racism also change as a result of thorough historical knowledge. For instance, critical race theory acknowledges that race as an ideology was partially constructed and institutionalized through law. Therefore, people who study critical race theory do not rely on legal changes for liberation from racism, but have developed alternative strategies as a result of their research.

Suggestions for the *Understanding Human Differences* course

One conclusion to draw from this study is that the deconstruction of white racial identity is difficult and complex. Furthermore, it is an undertaking that white people should not attempt alone. By the nature of their socialization, white people have been taught to think and behave in conscious and unconscious ways that are designed to uphold and perpetuate white supremacy. In order to interrupt and possibly transform this socialization, white people must attempt to desegregate themselves experientially and intellectually. Many different models of resistance to oppression exist, and white people can learn from people of color, feminists, womanists, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered people and other communities who have developed strategies of liberation.

At the same time, white people are not oppressed. They must be careful to learn in humility and as part of a community rather than in the colonizing and overpowering ways of dominance. Therefore, white people must de-center themselves as they begin the deconstruction and transformation of their white racial identities.

In the *Understanding Human Differences* course, white people will never be able to de-center themselves as long as the faculty members and students are predominantly white. It is arrogant to think that educators are immune from the characteristics of avoidance, privilege, dominance, and denial that are present within other white people. Therefore, in order to improve the diversity of the course as well as its content, more faculty of color should be recruited and retained. This is not to say that all people of color are anti-racist and all white people are unable to be anti-racist. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that, if we wish to create a more just and democratic society, the demographics of the faculty should reflect that ideal. If white faculty members are allowed to remain relatively comfortable with the lack of diversity within the body of faculty, they reinforce and perpetuate the American value of hypocrisy. For it appears foolish to encourage students to become active in the pursuit of social justice, only to have faculty members avoid such activism on behalf of a more inclusive faculty.

Also, the structure of the course should be revised from its current hierarchical form and transformed into a more democratic model. As many activists have said, "We must be the change we wish to see." And if we wish to live in a truly democratic society, then our courses should reflect that in every aspect, not just in the curriculum. Small-group instructors should be hired who have a working knowledge of the subject matter, and they should be allowed to fully participate in the development of course curriculum and structure. Having one course coordinator may be expedient in our current capitalist model of education, but it is a replication of the dominant/subordinate relationship between so many people in our white supremacist society.

Finally, *Understanding Human Differences* is clearly inadequate to properly discuss all the different aspects of oppression and social justice. While it is unrealistic to believe that the course can immediately be replaced with education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist, the course should be revised in order to gradually work toward that goal.

Conclusions

White racial identity does affect the ways in which faculty members implement multicultural education. Their subjectivities are formed by their positions within American white supremacist capitalist patriarchy and their pedagogical practices reflect this. This is not an indictment of individual faculty members, but rather an acknowledgement of their locations as white individuals within an institutional structure. It is only by the further study of these locations that we can hope to better understand the ways in which white supremacy manifests and reproduces itself within each and every one of us. One of the ironies of whiteness is that white people can only become anti-racist by admitting that we are white racists. By this process, we begin to decolonize ourselves as white people. We can then work towards liberating ourselves from the role of oppressor, and thus liberate others from the oppression we knowingly and unconsciously inflict upon them.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you consider your racial identity?

2. How do you define racial identity?

3. Do you think your education assisted in the formation of your racial identity? In what way?

4. Do you think that there are any aspects of your socialization that assisted in developing your racial identity?

5. Do you think your racial identity is relevant to the way in which you teach? How so?

6. Do you think your racial identity affects how you relate to students? To our educational institution?

7. When did you first recognize that you were white?

8. Do you address white racial identity with the students in your *Understanding Human Differences* class? If so, in what way?

9. Do you think there is such a thing as white privilege? If so, how do you define white privilege?

10. As a faculty member, do you think you receive benefits for being white? If so, what are those benefits?

11. As a faculty member, do you think there are disadvantages to being white? If so, what are those disadvantages?

12. What do you think the current role of education is within the United States? What should its role be within a real democracy?

13. How would you describe the social context of multicultural education nationally? Locally?

14. How do you feel about the way that the curriculum is developed for *Understanding Human Differences*?

15. Do you think that professors have the proper amount of control over curriculum development for their sections? For the course as a whole?

16. What are your goals for *Understanding Human Differences* students?

17. What are some means by which you assist students in achieving those goals?

18. What are your goals for yourself when teaching *Understanding Human Differences*?

19. How do you assist yourself in achieving those goals?

20. Has teaching *Understanding Human Differences* caused you to change anything about yourself personally? Professionally? Why? Please explain.

21. What professional development have you done to prepare to teach *Understanding Human Differences*?

22. Why do you think you should teach *Understanding Human Differences*?

23. Why do you think you shouldn't?

24. Has the university as an institution provided support for *Understanding Human Differences* faculty? If so, do you think *Understanding Human Differences* faculty receives enough college or institutional support?

25. How does being white bring a unique perspective to *Understanding Human Differences*?

26. How does being white prevent you from better understanding certain aspects of *Understanding Human Differences*?

27. Have you made any efforts to create institutional change through *Understanding Human Differences*? If so, please give examples. If not, why not?

Interview with Female Faculty Member

Date: May 12, 2000
Time: 11am
Place: conference room, School of Education building

C: *Christin DePouw*
F: *Female faculty member*

C: Okay, so, just to like get us back in what we were talking about – I'm studying the effect of white racial identity of faculty members on how they implement multicultural education. Umm, and my first question is, what do you consider to be your racial identity?

F: Okay. Umm, I consider my racial identity to be white, but it's not an identity that I have a close association with. I don't think about it often. And, you know, I think that's probably because it's the dominant race. And so I don't have to identify racially very often. Umm, if I do, it tends to be in those more negative ways, how it has affected me to be white. But it's just not really an identity that is real strong in terms of my own identification of it. I tell you, last night, we just did the pie chart thing that Koppelman does, and umm, the only person who wrote down racial identity was a person of color. All of the white people, including myself, did not write that down as a part of our pie chart, a part of our identity.

C: What do you consider to be your strongest identity?

F: Being female. I think being female and the issues that go with that – being feminist. And also, when I did my pie chart, the other thing that came up as a big piece of it was the relationships in my life – being a partner, being a grandmother, being a mother. So, probably half of my pie chart was covered with issues of being female and issues of being related to other people.

C: How do you define racial identity?

F: Well, I think that it's often defined for us. And I say that, again, speaking from the dominant racial group. The only time, you know, I think about racial identity is when I'm asked about it, quite often. So things like the census, you know, where you have to choose a group -that sort of thing. And so for, and I am obviously only speaking for myself, for me as a white person, racial identity doesn't come up in terms of being Caucasian much in my life. Now what I have done in my adult life is to sort of investigate my European heritage a little bit – the fact that I'm German and my family is, both sides were heavily German and what that means and where they came from and that

sort of thing. So sometimes I would say that that's even stronger, going back in history to my European heritage, is stronger than what I identify with right now. I think for many other people who are in the non-dominant groups, racial identity becomes a significant piece of their life because umm, they are operating with that identity against this larger powerful group every day of their life, every moment of their life. And so I would guess that, for people of color, racial identity plays a much more significant role in their lives than it does in mine.

C: Do you perceive white racial identity to be positive or negative?

F: That's a good question. A lot of, like I said, a lot of times when it comes up, it's in that negative sense, and umm, you know, what the white group has been responsible for in terms of discrimination and oppression and so on. I don't feel bad about being white. I mean, you know, that's not something umm, that I've taken in. I do feel a certain level of responsibility. I do feel a certain onus of responsibility, maybe, toward other people. But, you know, an interesting thing, I think, is that, with all the talk of white male dominance in this country, as a female, I have maybe separated myself from that, you know, because of the big male piece of it for me. And so when they say "White males do this and white males do that," I don't identify with the male part, certainly, but I also, I don't think, identifying very closely with the white part of it a lot of times. And so, you know, there is an awful lot of reflection on the issues of power and how white people came to power that are negative sorts of issues, but I don't see it as something that works against me in most situations. I mean, obviously it's a privilege in most situations.

C: Do you think that your gender assisted in the formation of your racial identity?

F: I don't know if my gender assisted in that. It's almost as if I see those identities as sort of separate categories. And, like I said, I identify a lot more strongly with the female part of it, with being a female. And see, I think that goes back to the non-dominant situation because I know that being a female in our society brings with it discrimination, brings with it some baggage, umm, you know, of oppression. I think my identity with that has been stronger. Has it affected my white identity? I don't think so. Umm, I might question that again if I were a white male because we tend to just keep those two pieces together a lot in our discussions about diversity and so on, is white male, white male, white male. We very seldom say white female, you know, in terms of white females also being a part of the problem because of that female piece of it. So we aren't separating that very well, I don't think. Does that make sense to you?

C: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It makes a lot of sense to me. What do you think assisted most in the formation of your racial identity?

F: Probably just the fact that I grew up in a situation where we were pretty much all of the same racial identity. I grew up in a very small neighborhood in which all the children – there were no families of color – all the children were white. Probably the major differences between us were religious beliefs and that, even, was within Christianity, so it was the Catholics and the Protestants and, you know, that kind of

discrepancy. But, umm, at the same time I lived in this little white neighborhood at the edge of the city of Madison. And so there was this larger pool of people who were, in fact, pretty diverse. And, umm, I was curious about that as a child. Didn't have a lot of exposure to it, umm, other than observation and awareness that other people existed. I think, really, just being in a very white, ahh, neighborhood and just living this very kind of Anglo life was the way I formed that identity. Everything I saw around me was white. Everything in the textbooks, all my teachers – everything around me was that racial identity. And so I just never questioned it. I didn't, I didn't think about that. People of color were just those "others," you know, in my early recollection.

C: Do you think your education played a part in any of this?

F: Oh, I think my elementary, my early education – probably all the way through high school – played a pretty significant part because it was so limited. You know, my exposure was so limited when I think about it. And not just limited in terms of the diverse group that I went to school with but the curriculum, you know. I didn't learn, you know, it wasn't even a time when we learned about Martin Luther King, you know, because that was just happening when I was a kid. You know, and so, the Civil Rights movement and so on, you know, was not something we studied in school. It was something that was being lived at the time I was in grade school. I don't remember an instance of being taught anything about black history, anything about Native American history other than the Thanksgiving story, which, of course, is so warped [laughs], you know, and we celebrated Columbus Day and it was just very Anglo-centered. My entire education was. Now I have to say that when I started junior high school was the first time – seventh grade – the first time that I was fully integrated with a group of children of color. And that was the first time I had teachers of color as well. And that did, it played a significant role, because it came right on top of the Civil Rights movement. Then I went to junior high school and had this exposure and I do believe that helped me form ideas that I still work from today about peace and justice and tolerance and understanding because of those events sort of piggybacking. But even when I went to junior high and we had this, this very diverse group of students, we still were not learning, you know, African literature, you know, anything other than sort of the white Anglo-Saxon view of the world, which, you know, I look back now and it was awful for me. It had to be even worse for the children of color. You know, who did they identify with? You know, there was nothing there for them to identify with.

C: Do you think that your students today have, umm, a catalyst...it sounds like the Civil Rights movement was a catalyst for you to understand these issues better. Do you see anything providing that sort of, umm, catalyst for your students?

F: I don't see any event or political, necessarily, political issue for my students right now. I wish they were more political because politics was a big part of my background. You know, went from Civil Rights to Vietnam and so on, so you know, there was just a lot of political activism. Umm, but what I do see is that some of my students in *Understanding Human Differences* feel as if they have dealt with these issues all their lives and feel as if the issue of diversity has been something brought up to them from way

back. Now, whether that is an accurate perception or not – I would doubt that it is, because still a lot of our students are first-generation college coming from rural areas – but the city kids, kids coming to us from Milwaukee and Green Bay and Minneapolis and places like that, do tend to sort of say to me sometimes, "You know, isn't this a done deal? Isn't this an issue we should be over?" And so there may be some influences in their life where, if they live in certain areas of the country, especially urban areas, diversity has been a part of their life, and so they have had friends of color and teachers of color, which I didn't have, and that might be a catalyst for them, just the fact that they're immersed in an environment that's more diverse. An event – I don't think so. And the kids who've never had the experience – just, they have no frame of reference. They really struggle for a frame of reference.

C: How – well, I suppose I should ask if it is or not [laughs] – do you think that your racial identity is relevant to the way that you teach?

F: Oh, I'm sure it is. I'm sure it is. I think it's relevant in that it probably limits me. It probably limits me because my own background was so limited. I probably bring that forward with me, and even though I have worked toward being a more open-minded person, a person who has more diverse experiences and relationships in my life, I would guess that my whiteness is still very much a part of who I am in that classroom – how I operate. You know, I think about that and I think that probably is the case. My middle-classness is probably very apparent. I mean, you know, all of those, kind of, roles that I have played. And certainly, I do not know what it is to operate as a person of color in this, in this world. And that's something I cannot put myself, I cannot put myself there. You know, I can put myself in a minority in other ways. You know, traveling, I can put myself in a language minority or umm, you know, I can put myself in, in those kinds of minorities temporarily but it doesn't, I know it doesn't give me the full picture and understanding.

C: Do you think it's possible to have a non-racist white identity?

F: Boy, that's a really loaded question [laughs]. Who wrote that question? [laughs]. Umm, I'd like to say 'yes' but I doubt it. I really seriously doubt it. For every time I think that I'm doing well, I catch myself making really stupid errors or jumping to really stupid conclusions or assumptions. And, you know, I think it's really hard to take a person my age, in their mid-forties, who's been raised in this very white-dominated society and be rid of that. I think we can try very hard and I think that, umm, we can move forward toward being less racist, but I don't know that we'd ever get rid of it.

C: Umm, do you think that your identity affects how you relate to students?

F: I'm sure it does. I'm sure it does. Again, because my experience is limited, I'm sure that it is…a limitation that may not help my students of color in the same way that it does my white students. You know, not that I would intentionally not offer the same kind of assistance, but it may be that my students of color don't feel as comfortable coming to me as my white students might with issues related to class. I most likely still come from a

very white point of view in terms of my presenting material. So, yes, I think it affects the way I teach and the kind of teacher I am and who I am and I think it's just an integral piece and that probably is a very limiting piece.

C: Do you think that, umm, your racial identity affects how your students relate to you?

F: To some degree...to some degree. Umm, like I said, the way students, I think, wouldn't think twice about it. It's sort of that Peggy McIntosh thing that you can depend, on this campus, going into a classroom and most often seeing someone of your color teaching the class. And so, for the white students, I think it's just a very natural sort of "oh, here we are and so on..." For the students of color, it's also...they know that they're gonna be facing white instructors more than people of color and, umm, my guess is that that does create a level of – not distrust, that's way too strong a word – a level of difference between us that maybe makes them feel a little less comfortable approaching me that first time. I'm hoping that, after we have, you know, that first conversation, that we get to a point where we, you know, where we are better at it. But it may stop them from coming the first time.

C: When did you first recognize that you were white?

F: Mmmm...I was pretty little. You know, when I think back on it now, I was probably, you know, kindergarten, first grade, five, six years old that I really started recognizing, you know, the difference in skin color and how that was affecting certain people. Most of the black – African American – people in Madison at the time that I was about that age were living in one small section of town. It was the poorest section of town. It was called "Hell's half-acre." I mean, you know, there was just a lot associated with that area of town and it was an area of town that white people didn't spend a lot of time in. And so, you know, I remember being five, six, maybe seven years of age and recognizing that there was this difference, and that the difference not only was skin color but had something to do with poverty. You know, that was the other piece of it, and that was an early recognition.

C: Umm, do you address white racial identity with your students in the *Understanding Human Differences* class?

F: I do in terms of, of the issue of how we have sort of naturally operated from our privilege without thinking about it. So I address it from that point of view, that all of us are guilty of - again, going back to the McIntosh essay – all of us are guilty of making those assumptions of having those perceptions of the world, umm, and so I address it in that way. I don't address it as "What has your white racial identity meant to you? How does it affect your life?" in that sort of direct manner in the same way that you're asking me these questions. I don't pose those questions to them. And it may be something that I need to rethink because, you know, 99% of the students in *Understanding Human Differences*, many sections of *Understanding Human Differences* are white kids. You know, there are some that have students of color.

C: Do you think the *Understanding Human Differences* curriculum addresses white identity, umm, like you would like to see it addressed?

F: Probably not. Probably you need to beef that up a little bit because we tend to say, especially in the second half of the course where we kind of pull out the groups and we look at the groups, we tend not to pull the white group out and say, "Let's look at this as a group and what does this, what has this done? And who are we? And what is our racial identity? What makes it up?" What we tend to do is keep bouncing white racial identity off the other groups. And so it might behoove us to do that because I think a lot of students struggle with being white and what that means and should they feel ashamed? I see a lot of students really struggling with the issue of not liking the fact that they're white because of all the baggage that comes with it. And so they, they sort of struggle, umm, at the same time that they begin to recognize the privilege. So we probably could do a better job of addressing that.

C: How do you define white privilege?

F: Oh. I think it's just the day-to-day advantages that I have in my life and have always had. You know, I am not judged racially in my life at all. I might be judged as a female – if I make an error – I might be judged as a female, as being stupid or emotional or all of that crap that goes along with being female. Very seldom have I...I can't remember a time, really, that I've been judged for making an error and saying, "Oh, that's because she's white." You know, when does that ever happen to me? Never. Umm, it is just this moving through the world and not having to consider, umm, if I could go, you know, I can make an appointment or walk in to any hairstylist and not worry about it. I might not get a haircut I like, but they can cut my hair. You know, and they can dye my hair and they can, you know, do all of those things. It's, you know, not being tailed in the store. It's not, you know, it's all those little things that make up this, this really heavy burden that people of color are carrying around with them all the time that I don't have to, I don't have to carry that with me. My burden is very light in comparison.

C: Do you think there are any limitations to white privilege?

F: Oh, that's a good question. Are there any limitations to white privilege? I'm not sure how to answer that question, Christin. I've not run into any limitations, you know, and if there are, they maybe only exist in places where white people are the minority, you know, and so not being in those kinds of situations very often in my life, I wouldn't see it as being negative. It's always worked for me. You know, I can't think of a time when it didn't work for me, quite frankly.

C: Umm, as a faculty member, do you think you receive benefits for being white?

F: Oh, yeah. I think I got the job. I mean, you know, I think that being white has helped me professionally all the way along. You know, and just...people expected me to be white from my application, I walked in, I'm this nice white girl. Yeah, I think it's

helped a lot. You know, I look around campus and I don't see many people of color in my position and so I have to assume that being white has helped me professionally in a lot of ways.

C: As a faculty member, do you think that there are disadvantages to being white?

F: As a faculty member...probably not. There's a lot of feeling right now, I think, among faculty about, you know, closing down searches for lack of diverse candidates and, you know, Affirmative Action stepping in and closing searches and things like that and I think there's a lot of feeling among white faculty members that that's going too far or it's, you know, it's just, let's find a qualified candidate and get on with it. I hear a lot of that kind of stuff. And so, I think maybe that backlash, umm, is a disadvantage. I think that some of the white male faculty members in particular are feeling kind of pressured. You know, and they're feeling as if they are not as valuable, maybe, or they are not being looked at as closely. It will be interesting to ask some of the white male candidates who are coming in how they feel about applying for the jobs knowing that we're desperately seeking to diversify the staff and, you know, what they feel like, coming in as a white male, what their chances are. You know, I wonder if they're aware or how they're feeling about it. I imagine they're aware.

C: What do you think the current role of education is within the United States?

F: What it is or what it should be [laughs]?

C: [laughs] What it is.

F: Oh, I think a lot of it is, is maintaining the status quo. I think a lot of education has always been maintaining the status quo and, umm, I still see that as being a prevalent theme when I go out into the schools and, although I'd like to say it's something different from that, I think that's pretty much it. And producing...I think we still have very kind of product-oriented focus in education where we are producing a product to send out into the world rather than, you know, working to produce a person who can make good decisions and make changes in the world. I think we're just sort of trying to get kids ready so that, you know, this whole push for technology. It's like, "Oh, God, you gotta start 'em on those computers really early because their life is gonna be computer-bound." And I'm thinking, "Well, not all these children will make that choice." You know, and not all of them have access, you know, all of those issues. We're still looking at producing, I think, that worker, you know, and I think that's a carry-over from when I was a kid, you know, when we were producing factory workers – kids who were punctual. You know, my report card always had tardy things on it, you know, not only absent, but tardy, and that was a direct relationship to, you know, punching the clock as an adult.

C: Umm, what do you think the role [of education] should be?

F: I think the role should be to produce people who can think for themselves and who question what's going on and who are ready to do many diverse things. They're not, they're not narrowly focused on a field, but that they see themselves capable of moving between several fields easily. People who are adaptable much more than my generation, I think. We have a very hard time with change. And I'm hoping that we produce – there's that "producing" – I'm hoping that we encourage our students to become people who are more comfortable with change than we were and more tolerant of changing conditions and not so afraid of that. I see people my age and older as being afraid of change a lot of times and I think, you know, ultimately we need people who can move through lots of different groups and be successful. I think that's really what we should be working toward. Whether we are or not…I still think we lock step them a lot. You know, when I went to college, when I got my undergraduate degree, I still had elective choices. You know, I was able to take something like 9 or 12 credits of electives and that could be anything on campus. These kids have no options like that. We tell them exactly what they have to do to get in and out of here and they have to make that decision when they enter. They have to know what they're gonna do. Well, geez, when I started undergraduate school, I was sort of like, ahh, just in college. Let me figure it out, you know. That's pretty much the way I felt about it [laughs].

C: That just reminds me of me, too [laughs].

F: Yeah, yeah.

C: How would you describe the social context of multicultural education in our country?

F: Meaning what? Can you…?

C: Umm, like, the, the environment, the atmosphere, umm, how it's being received?

F: Mmmm, okay. Umm, I see teachers being real interested in being better at it. Umm, whether that's because they're being asked to, whether that's because their classroom demographics are changing or whether it's because they're truly committed to it, I'm not sure. But I do see teachers have a high interest, and many of them have a high interest out of passion- believing it's right. Umm, now, is that making a difference in the classroom? In some places. In some places. I see some really wonderful things being done and communities being built among children based on respect and understanding and, umm, I think that there is room to expand the multicultural education component for all children. Whether there is training and commitment – not only on teachers' parts, but administrators, districts, school boards, superintendents, all the way up and down that line – umm, I think it takes some leadership to say we are going to be committed to this. Now let's figure out how we're gonna do it so that everybody can be on board. Of course, there's always resistance, too. Always. You know, I go out and do this schtick with in-services on getting rid of Christian holiday celebrations in the public school because I think it's wrong. And I've been doing this for probably, oh, ten years. And boy, I'll tell ya, people just get in my face about what I'm taking away from the Christian children in

the schools and why do we have to keep bending to the needs of the minority when we're the majority and those are the questions that keep coming back, you know, at me when I go out and do this, uhh, presentation. So there's still a lot of feeling that, oh, that issue of sort of a reverse discrimination and, you know, white people are getting the short end of the stick now and, you know, that whole, all of those fallacies.

C: Umm, what do you think the atmosphere is locally?

F: Mmmm. Again, I think you have pockets of people who are very committed. I have yet to see an entire district take it on and say we will become a district in which this is our driving force. And it would be wonderful if somebody did that. Now, obviously, La Crosse would be the best district because they probably have the most diversity. So it would be wonderful if they took the lead, you know, took the leadership there. But I think that's what it's gonna take. I think it's gonna take almost a mandate, you know, almost a complete district saying we will make this our priority. We will become a district in which every teacher, every school, every building, has this as their main focus, you know, in order to prepare children for the future. I don't see that happening here. I see some really good teachers doing some good things and then I see other people not touching it.

C: Umm, how do you feel about the way that curriculum is developed for *Understanding Human Differences*?

F: I think that the individual small group instructors probably need to have more input and that it probably needs to be more fairly shared or.... I think there needs to be more feedback, really. As I look at the small group instructors, several of us have sort of small specialties within this larger field of diversity and understanding human differences and that some of that could be fed into lecture. Umm, I think some of the lecture material is a little dated, umm, and so I think some of our younger faculty members in particular would have much newer information and could probably help. As a general rule of thumb, the students seem to respond well to the class, which makes me believe that the curriculum, umm, does hit them at an appropriate level sometimes. But I think, umm, there should be more of a feedback and also a possibility of, umm, using some of the small group instructors for lecture at times, you know, if they have a specialty area. So a special Ed instructor doing the lecture on ableism would make a lot of sense to me.

C: Do you think that the, the structure of the course – and I'm talking about, like, within and without, outside the classroom – do you think those reflect the ideals trying to be put forth by the curriculum?

F: I'm not sure. I don't teach any other gen Ed courses. This is the only gen Ed course I teach. So it's significantly different from my juniors and seniors who are committed to a field and, you know, so on. So, umm, my experience with gen Ed is a little limited. It probably could be more inquiry-based than it is. I'm not exactly sure how, how that would be accomplished. I don't have a problem with the delivery right now – to have this large lecture and then to come into the small groups and sort of digest that and

pick it apart and relate it, you know, through experiences and videos and so on. Umm, so I don't have a problem with the format of it, umm, but there probably…there may not be enough questioning of students to the point of what difference they are going to make. You know, how are they going to change their own behaviors? And that's something that I'm trying to build in. I don't do it well enough in small group. It's something I'm trying to build into small group better is to always be at that question: that if you believe thus-and-such…. what you just said…how will you act on it? How does that look in action? And I do talk to them about, you know, what opportunities are available on campus, what opportunities are available in [this city], what opportunities are available in their hometowns in which they could make a difference. But I don't do enough of that, I don't think, enough of that kind of challenge, you know, how does this look in action is that question.

C: What are your goals for the *Understanding Human Differences* students?

F: To get them to talk about it, first. Just to get them to talk about it. Umm, to raise their awareness. You know, we have this kind of diverse group in that they have had different kind of experiences coming to class. Some have had many experiences with people who are different from them and some have had none. And so, awareness, just raising awareness, umm, getting them to talk about the issues a little bit. Umm, I really would like to see them get a little more passionate about it all and at the same time, I remember myself at eighteen and nineteen. You know, I didn't say much in class. I could be real passionate down at the bar about the same subject, you know, but in class… Umm, so just trying to get them to talk about it, think about it more than at a surface level, get them beyond the statements of "something needs to be done about this." And, you know, so I guess it's, you know, talking about it, thinking about it, being aware, and then personalizing it. For me, those are the pieces I would like to see. Am I always successful with them? Umm, I don't know.

C: What do you do with your teaching to try and help them reach those goals?

F: I try and use myself as an example a lot of times. I try to relate it to my own personal life. I'm a storyteller, and so, I find that if I relate to them stories about when I've made errors, judgments, assumptions, umm, those kinds of things, that when I open that door and say I've made this mistake or I continue to make this mistake, that it seems to relax them a little more to share that they have done the same. Now, they don't always share it in small group. They often share it in their journals. The essay we read about street harassment and the women being harassed on the street, many of the men will admit in their journals to having taken part in that behavior, and you know…. obviously. I mean, that's an obvious thing for most of us, but for these kids to admit that, I think, is an important piece. I'd like to hear him say it in class because I think it would be important for the other males in particular – and the females – to hear this male voice saying, "I've done this and I'm sorry. I was wrong. I didn't realize." Or "I did know and I didn't care." You know, whatever it is. Umm, so, you know, I really try to let them know that none of us are finished products. Umm, that we all have work to do and try to share with them the things that I'm still working on, maybe some of the things that I have

gotten past and how I got past those things. Umm, but I try and let them know that this is not me, you know, the wonderful model of tolerance and understanding and all of those other things, but that this is me, a person still working through it. And that seems to help. The other thing is I try and keep it fairly light. Not humorous, but not so that anyone feels as if their opinion is going to be jumped on or that they're going to become the target of the entire rest of the class. So if somebody does say something, you know, that I consider to be really racist, umm, you know, I try to say to them, "Wow, you know, well, that's just a completely different way of saying it than I would have thought of." And we all, everybody sort of goes whew [exhales], you know, and then the comments that come tend to be a little more "Why do you think that way?" rather than "What are you thinking?" They tend to be more...than if I got right on it, and I also try not to be the first commenter. I try and get the students to talk to each other or at least comment to each other without my voice in between. That's a real struggle – that piece of it.

C: What are your goals for yourself for teaching *Understanding Human Differences*?

F: Well, to continue to be better informed. To continue to read and, you know, know more about the issues and, you know, just continue to educate myself, but also to get better at my own relating skills with these young students. To really try and reach them early, get that conversation started early, umm, make them feel comfortable in that environment so that they are willing to talk about things at a little more deep level. You know, that really is one of the things that I struggle with.

C: Has teaching *Understanding Human Differences* caused you to change anything about yourself personally?

F: Oh, sure. It keeps the issues alive. You know, I've always felt real passionate about the issues that are covered in *Understanding Human Differences*. That's been part of my life. But teaching it just keeps it right up there, you know, and it does cause me to read more and to do more, umm, study, so that now in conversation I have new statistics. I mean, you know, I have new things to share, and it isn't just, "Oh, there she goes again, you know, on her liberal bent and so on." It has refreshed me and kept those issues newer, more alive for me.

C: Umm, how about professionally?

F: Oh, I think there's been a direct correlation. I've always taught what's called "anti-bias curriculum" in Early Childhood, which is multicultural plus another element. I've always taught that in my curriculum class, but once I started teaching *Understanding Human Differences* again, I got inspired to take that out to the community, so now I've been teaching a multicultural ed course for teachers working with preschoolers and early primary kids called "Starting Small," and it's based on one of the Teaching Tolerance programs, which was called Starting Small. And so it had a direct relationship. That course has grown out of being in *Understanding Human Differences* again.

C: What professional development have you done to prepare for teaching *Understanding Human Differences?*

F: Very little. Very little, other than what I have chosen to do for myself. You know, quite frankly, I attend events. I became an ally. I started picking up on some of those pieces again, but it hasn't been a lot of professional development in that very classic sense. Umm, [the course coordinator] keeps all of us inundated with reading materials and he has this library – and it's a very good library – in his office. And so there is a lot for me to learn and a lot of access to materials, but in terms of being with other instructors and so on.... I'd like to see more of that, even just with the small group instructors.

C: Do you know what professional development the course coordinator does?

F: Meaning [the course coordinator] in this case?

C: Yes.

F: Well, I just know that he, you know, he's involved at national levels with several multicultural organizations. He writes for newsletters and so on. You know, I know that he stays involved because this is his field. This is his baby. So, you know, and I wrote a [UW] System racial and ethnic studies grant – that's how I got the Starting Small materials and so on. You know, so I have done some things like that, but [the course coordinator] mainly through presentation and writing, I think, has been his involvement, and at a more regional to national level.

C: Why do you think you should teach *Understanding Human Differences?*

F: Why I should?

C: Uh huh.

F: Oooh. Well, I think they need female instructors. I really...I just do. Umm, I'm in a department where I'm only one of two women in the entire department right now, so I think the female voice needs to be heard. Umm, I tend to have good rapport with students in general and I think that has to do with being kind of a common sense person. Uhh, maybe a little more realistic, a little less highbrow. You know, I don't think that in *Understanding Human Differences*, they need to be inundated with fear. I think what they need first is that awareness and that talking about it and I think I'm good at that. I think that students relate to me quite well. Umm, I might like to see more of the small group stuff done in teams and it would be really nice to be teamed with a person of color or teamed with a male so that there would be some differences among us, too.

C: Why do you think you should not teach *Understanding Human Differences?*

F: I do think my white identity does limit me. Umm, my sort of middle class, Midwestern.... you know, I think that does limit me to, ahh, probably to more of an extent than I realize.

C: Do you think that [the university] as an institution provides support for *Understanding Human Differences* faculty? And that could be financial, umm, ideological support....

F: Well, I think the fact that the course moved from an education majors-only course to a gen Ed course says there's, there is some support. Umm, whether that's [this university] or institutional, I think that really was an institutional decision, that all the institutions would have at least six hours of coursework in minority studies. And, umm, I do think that there is an atmosphere here in which many of the faculty members that I know and respect thread diversity issues into everything they teach. So I know many people in the English department who use writing from people of color or writing from, you know, homosexuals or, you know, so that when they're having their students read in [English course], they're not just reading white male authors. Umm, you know, and so I see that attempt across campus on the part of passionate people. So I think there's support among the instructors - financial support, I'm not sure. There probably could be more, although they've done a fairly nice job of trying to bring in speakers and so on, umm, who represent more diverse views.

C: Umm, do you think that this, [this university] is a comfortable atmosphere for you personally to address white racial identity?

F: Oh, I think it's real easy for me to exist here. You know, this is a white middle class Midwestern institution, yeah. It's just real easy for me to be here. Now, does that serve us well is an entirely different question. Umm, the change in population at the university in the twenty years I've lived here has not been enough or good. It still looks very much the way it did twenty years ago, quite frankly. And, you know, I see more international students than I see American students of color, and I think maybe we have reached out beyond our border, which is wonderful and brings richness. But I don't know that we have reached out in our own community in the same way, in our own state, in our own region, in the same way.

C: Have you made efforts to create institutional change through *Understanding Human Differences*?

F: Not through *Understanding Human Differences*. No. No. I haven't made any...just trying to think if there's been anything. No.

C: And, umm, last question: Do you think students have a way of continuing in the process that they start in *Understanding Human Differences* once they get out of that class? Do you think the university provides them with that?

F: Yeah, that's a good question. Again I go back to them not having any room in their programs for choice. That bothers me a lot because I think if they had room to take elective credits, that they would, and I think they might continue in this vein – some of them. So if they had, you know – I'm talking about the education majors right now, who are so lock-stepped by classes – that if they had room, I think they might take [the] course on GLBT issues, you know, or they might take a course from Women's Studies or they might take a literature course on, you know, literature and victims and, you know, I think they might do that if they had room to. But we don't provide the room for them to do that kind of exploration. Now in terms of whether it's supported – I do think that thread is picked up again in several different places because of those individual instructors who are committed to it, because what happens is when I see my juniors and seniors...For example, I give them an assignment where they can develop a fictional childcare center, umm, and they can develop what kind it's going to be and the name for it and everything. Almost, you know, almost 75% of them, when they're developing the artwork for the logo, include diversity. Just very naturally do it. When they write their teaching philosophies, they talk about meeting the needs of individual children, working with families, being part of a community, and see, I think that's the thread that has moved through their education, so that in *Understanding Human Differences*, they're just becoming aware of that. By the time they get to their 400-level courses, it's a part of their thinking. And so that makes me believe that it's been reinforced somewhere else along the line.

C: And, just, I guess, also, do you have any, umm, additional comments or anything that you'd like to say before we wrap it up?

F: Well, just that when I was being trained as a teacher, there was no requirement for a course like this. Then when I came back as a graduate student, the requirement had become a requirement for education students. So I took this course as a graduate student from [the course coordinator] when he was still really new at it. He was a small group instructor. And so, the growth over time in the course, I think, has been good at some levels. I think it's probably time now to really reevaluate the course, umm, to look at who the small group instructors are, and to try and develop a base of strength in the small group instructors, umm, and maybe even try to do some.... oh, I don't know, not tracking of students, but, you know, maybe able to say to students, "You know, if you want an emphasis within this course on issues relating to African Americans, this might be an instructor or these two instructors we would suggest or...," you know, that we might take on some specialties within the general course, umm, or some sort of reconfiguration where we draw, maybe, some more strength out those small group instructors. But I love teaching it. I really enjoy it, and I enjoy being with these students a lot. It's great. Great fun. A great challenge.

Date: April 28, 2000
Time: 8:45am
Place: conference room, School of Education building

C: *Christin DePouw*
M: *Male faculty member*

C: I guess the first thing I should do is kind of explain my premise for my thesis. I want to examine the relationship between professors' white racial identity and how they teach multicultural education, specifically *Understanding Human Differences*, simply because that's in front of me and I'm most familiar with that. Let's see. So, my first question would be, what do you consider to be your racial identity?

M: Anglo. White.

C: And how do you define that? What does that mean to you?

M: My parents and grandparents are white, as far back as I know. I have Native Americans somewhere back. My great-grandfather's name was Crow, Benjamin Crow. He was, I think, part of the Crow Indians so I'm not sure how far that goes back, but I'm a little bit Native American.

C: Do you think that your education helped you to develop your racial identity at all?

M: No.

C: What do you think helped you to develop your racial identity?

M: My community and my family.

C: Do you think that...let's see. So, how many times before *Understanding Human Differences* have you really been conscious of your racial identity?

M: Hardly at all, hardly at all. I think when you're in the majority, you don't even think about it. It's like the white male privilege article Peggy McIntosh.... I think that most men don't think about the advantages that they have or their identity as being male and I think the same thing happens if you're white. You just don't even think about it. It's not an issue.

C: Do you think that your gender and your racial identity are related?

M: Yes. I think so.

C: In what way?

M: Ummm, I mean just in terms of the advantages that a person is given, not given but to just have because of your gender and your race.

C: Do you think that your racial identity has an effect on how you teach *Understanding Human Differences*?

M: Yeah, I think so. I think that.... I had a grad assistant in another department that wanted to have an experience. He was a black person, and I think just working with him on that class brought forth other ideas that I hadn't thought about just because, you know, the way that particular course is organized, there are topics each week for the fourteen weeks and you develop...you have a lesson plan and you have activities and articles and I pretty much have followed along with the plan each week. I don't deviate very much from the plan, but this particular semester, the fellow was a graduate assistant in a housing unit and he had other kind of activities that he had used in the housing units with RAs [resident assistants]. That, when we'd meet the week before class talking about the next week, we modified some activities and he had other activities that we used. And so there were things that I hadn't thought about simply because it wasn't part of the plan but were good activities. I think that helped students see different issues from another perspective, so I think that was important.

C: Do you think your racial identity affects how you relate to your students?

M: Yeah, I do. I think that white males just have an advantage over almost anybody else and I think that it.... I'm not sure this is part of the. ...I'll tell a story here. We had an interview with a candidate two years ago for a special Ed position and we didn't know he was black until I picked him up at the airport. And when we looked at the.... we offered him the job. And, the... at that time, the interim dean called and checked on, checked with different employers. And kind of as an aside, they didn't really come out and say this in so many words because nobody wanted to be identified at the university, but that the implication was that his student evaluations weren't as high as the other people in the department. I think if you're a minority person talking about issues that anger a majority of white folks, they're not going to give you as high a student evaluation as someone that's singing kind of the party line. And so I think that, from that perspective, minorities will have a harder time.

I think that, if you're in the majority, your skin color is the same as the majority of the people you're teaching, you're going to have an advantage – another advantage – in terms of student evaluation of instruction, in terms of maybe.... I shouldn't say respect, but it seems like there's more respect for males than there is for females. And you can see, when you look across country, there are not that many university chancellors that are

female. There aren't that many.... never been a female president of the Unites States....
and so, from those issues. Never been a black, only one Native American vice president.
So I think that all those things have an implication that advantage a white person.

C: Have you tried to address privilege within your life? I guess what I mean by that
is are there any actions that you're taking or anything along those lines?

M: Could you repeat the question?

C: Sure. Have you taken actions to address privilege? I guess what I'm asking is,
like, are you still thinking about privilege and the ways, the different ways in which it
affects your life and, in that thinking, have you figured out any ways to address privilege?

M: I think that, it's like those people that are in power oftentimes keep things pretty
much the same because they don't want to share power or share.... And I think that, for
me, the bottom line is just being fair, trying to be fair in everything that I do, in my
actions. And I think it's hard to do. I think people don't.... you know, it's like. Just travel
ideas [*reference to department allocation of travel funds*]. People just try to be fair across
the board in every respect and I think.... I've tried to do that and I don't know exactly
kind of examples. In education, it's a little easier to be fair than it is in other fields. It's
like, we have...in every school district there's a salary scale. It doesn't matter.... racial
identity doesn't affect your salary. If you've got three years of experience and a master's
degree, it doesn't matter whether you're a male or a female. And so, in education, we
tend to kind of level the playing field.

But then the same problem arises...it seems like.... women take years out to have
children, so they miss those years on the salary schedule. So when they come back and
retire, if somebody were to do a survey and say, "Well, women make less money than
men," well, even in education they do because they've got not as many years of teaching.
So that affects them in a negative way. Issues that I've learned from Europe that is
different here. One area is the child law. I mean, people have children, the men or the
women can get time off to raise their children. It's up to two years in some countries. So
it's not always the female's responsibility just because the women have children. It's like,
it's theirs and if men help out, it's something extra that they're doing, but it's expected of
women. So I think, from that regard, just being able to tell those stories and share ideas
with students that America's a fine country. We have strengths and weaknesses, and not
that some countries are better or worse, but there are other ways of doing things and
there's not a perfect answer. I mean, there are things that Europeans do that aren't quite
as good as the way we do some things here, in my opinion.

But then there are so many other things, especially in the area of, I think equity. I
think....seems like if you're in the driver's seat, you have more of an opportunity to take
care of yourself and people like you. So it's like, you take care of your friends. What
good are friends if they can't help you when you need help? And so, from that regard, I
think it's harder for people to, that are not in the driver's seat, to get there. And you hate
to...you don't want to do anything that makes it look like you're giving somebody a

handout or that they're not...In the ten years that I was chair, I think we hired seven people and six - we offered seven jobs, we hired six people – and of the six that we hired, they were all women. And the one that we offered the job and didn't was a black fellow. But they were the best candidates. It wasn't because I was doing anything special or our committee was doing anything special. It was just fair. They just were the best candidates. So, I don't know that I'd do anything different other than try and be fair in my dealings with folks.

And that's, I think, the same with students. We have....we've given....we started last year a fundraising account in the Foundation. And so far there've been four faculty members that've gone in and done the dirty work of calling and trying to solicit funds - the three department chairs and [another professor] – and I think that may be it....a couple of retired faculty members. And we had - I don't think any graduate students helped do the fundraising – we had a couple undergrads, but all the money that we've given has all gone for students' ideas. Grad students and undergraduate students. We allocated I think $800 to the sixteen students that went on the freedom ride from this fundraising effort, and your project and also a student that went to a racial inequity conference in Boston last year. So I think those are kind of ideas and things that, you know, you want to do things that are gonna help students and, you know, just a matter of fairness and trying to help people that need help. So I guess that's a long answer to that question. Wow.

C: That's okay. Do you think that there are any disadvantages to being white?

M: Well, I can't think of any. I can't think of any. I was thinking of that before, because I think anytime you're in a minority and you stand out, and I'm not sure why I was thinking about this, but a woman came to [this city] about twenty years ago and spoke at our local conference and she was about 6'5" tall. Black woman. And I was kind of her host and sponsor, so anyplace we went, we were really a standout. Would have been a standout in Chicago or New York. But I met her.... almost every year at a convention, we'd have dinner, go to a conference or a session together and I'd see her. And she....the convention was in Philadelphia, and after the conference was over with, her company, her film company had a party, and it was in, kind of downtown Philadelphia. By the time I left to go to the party, it was about midnight and, had my little map out, and I was the only person that was not of color in the whole getting' there, on the bus, and walking. So I felt a little conspicuous, but I didn't...I wasn't afraid or anything. I mean, I wasn't like in my class when we talk about the disadvantages that women have in terms of going out at night. You know, I don't even, didn't even think about it. And almost all the women in my class thought about it. They had to be, just something else they thought about that men, for the most part, just don't even give it a second thought. And I didn't think about it really then other than I thought, "Jeez, I'm alone here." But I wasn't like I wasn't gonna go or I was afraid. So I think, for the most part, I can't think of any disadvantages.

C: What do you think the current role of education is within the United States?

M: Huge roles. I think one of the roles that education has had is pretty much to keep the status quo. I think that's one of the roles that we want to try to inculcate some of our values and standards on children that we teach, just like we do with our own children. And I think that the old adage that we teach the way we were taught and those kinds of things play a way in keeping the status quo. The Dick and Jane, Spot, Zeke, you know, the family, and it takes a concerted effort by people to change that. And I think one of the things [another professor] is doing with his [diversity] course, and it's like, when you look at textbooks, when you look at curriculum materials, you need to have people in the materials that maybe aren't like the folks in Black River Falls. I mean, we need to have Native Americans and we need to have other folks in there and women in leadership roles and other than just, you know, maybe the custodian like you might see in some books.

So I think that, from that respect, the curriculum courses, the things that we do, we need to try and show everybody in the community with respect and not use the traditional roles that you oftentimes see in schools.... that kind of talk about the hidden curriculum, you know, the principal is going to be a white man and if there're minorities, they're doing the...they're the cooks. So we need to show folks in different roles. And in the Human Relations course, it's not just men and women and minorities, but it's people with handicaps or disabilities. Same with ageism – now I'm getting old enough to think about that. So...and I think in the Human Relations course - the *Understanding Human Differences* course we're talking about, *Understanding Human Differences* – oftentimes there's an "ism" a week, you know, it depends upon what the "ism" is. And I think that, because you give it once a week, you think that each "ism" is equal. It's kind of like you got four deans and they should be all equal, but it seems like there's always one dean that's more equal than the others, and I think that's the same thing when I look at this particular course. I think that being, not having white skin is a bigger "ism" than being old or maybe having only one leg. I think that it's something that you can't ever change. You can't hide. It's there. It's out front. It's in your face. And so I think it's a bigger "ism" than other "isms." But I'm not sure that everybody feels that way.

C: What do you think the function of education should be?

M: That's a.... I only have two hours here, huh? Function of education. Wow. Many functions of education. I think if you were to look at the university catalogs and the school districts' philosophy, purpose statements, it's to provide everyone an education so that they can be functioning members of society. We think about reading, writing and arithmetic, but I think the major, one of the messages we want students to grow up to be adults that can preserve a democracy. And so I think that's maybe one of the major reasons why we have free public education. It's....it used to be it was only for the rich and privileged, the ones who could vote and had land. I think that education now is to teach, the purpose maybe, the main, the function would be to be literate members of society that make intelligent choices and decisions. That's the short answer.

C: How would you describe the social context in our country for multicultural education?

M: Could you give me a...kind of elaborate on that question?

C: Sure. I mean the, like, why would it, why is it necessary? What's the atmosphere? How is it received?

M: The social context of multicultural education. Could you read the question again?

C: Sure. Yeah. I guess, how would you describe the social context of multicultural education in our country? I guess what I mean is, try to locate it within our current political situation, our social atmosphere. Like how are people moving? Is multicultural education being embraced? Rejected? A little bit of both?

M: Oh, I think from just what's happening in certain states, I think, in Minnesota now the conservatives or right-wing folks have dropped all the requirements for education to have a human relations course to graduate. It's been rescinded. And I think that's, I think that those folks think that multicultural education is a liberal, left wing plan and so they've been against it. And basically because of apathy by the middle class, that it's been allowed to become law that it's been taken off the books in Minnesota. I think that it's like if you, I think if you have a course, you've got a discreet place you can point to where this is the place where you're getting it. If you say, well, we're all doing it in all of our courses, there's no way to check on that. There's no way to evaluate it. There's no way to have the DPI [Department of Public Instruction] come in and look and look at your syllabus and your materials and your guest lectures and your exams. You know, it's buried in other places. I think that's a problem.

I think that, I think that people have the wrong idea about the definition of affirmative action. I think there are still people that think that affirmative action means quotas. So even in my class I've got people saying they think that affirmative action is wrong and they should rescind it. And it's like, affirmative action really just means that everybody has an opportunity to find out about the job. It's not like, advertise it in the [city's] Tribune. It needs to be in the "Chronicle of Higher Education," it needs to be...everyone has to have an opportunity. It doesn't mean that you're going to hire a minority person just because they're a minority, but they have the opportunity to apply. And so I think that we've got a long way to go, but I think that people.... I don't think that people embrace it that much. I think that, unless it's a law, they just...trying to put food on their table and take care of themselves and it's pretty...things that are important to you might not be as important to other people and I think that you have to be strong to keep up the work.

I think since I've had four daughters, I think about Peggy McIntosh's article about once a week. And when I had two boys, I never thought about it. I've never thought about the advantages they had. I've never thought about sports opportunities, opportunities for sports that women simply don't have. And because of the course I'm teaching I analyze some of that and wonder why there aren't more female superintendents and why...And then when I look at it, well, most of the superintendents were principals, and before that they were kind of like athletic directors or guidance counselors and they had

opportunities to do budgets. They had opportunities to get along with people and interact. Boys learn those things in sports. I mean, they go out one week and lose and then they come back three weeks later and play them again. So you can't hold a grudge. You need to shake hands and get on with life. I think, when women are denied those opportunities to practice those skills, they just don't have them. It's harder to get there.

And it's like, whenever you're the minority, you're looked at, got a whole room full of people, you don't pay much attention, but if there's only a couple people, you pay more attention to them. So I think those are other disadvantages to not being in the majority in a situation. I know, in California and in the southwest, multicultural education, particularly Spanish – Hispanic – is a much bigger issue than it is in other places. I think it's obvious there are more Hispanic people there. They got votes. They're electing politicians and mayors. And so having multicultural social workers and police are a definite result of that. So again, if it's more of a concern for you personally then you're going to spend more time and energy on that particular issue or topic.

C: What do you think about locally?

M: Again, you don't read much in the paper about it, only when the...the stories that you hear from minority people that are in my classes. The man that was, worked with me a couple years ago said he was first in [the city] and was going slow down Third Street and got stopped by the police. It was like, oh, it could only be one reason – because he was black. It was, like, you know, obviously the only reason. So I think that, you think that things are okay because you don't read about lynchings or things like that. Things are okay, there's no Ku Klux Klan in [the city], but I think being a minority in a small percentage is obviously a lot harder for people and I think that it's like anything else. If you don't know about people, then you are suspect of them.

It's, I think, one of the advantages I think of having an international experience. I think if you go to another country and see the people and interact with them, they're just folks. And I think that people kind of clan together and if you're not part of that clan, whether it's a Hispanic clan in Chicago or group or white folks in [the city], they tend to stay together, especially if they haven't traveled much or interacted with people, are a little more standoffish, a little more suspect and we see that in the videotapes that we look at in the *Understanding Human Differences* when they follow people around that are minorities. My students, that are mostly white, say that they've had that kind of experience because they're students. They go into a record shop and if I, as an adult, am in there looking, nobody's following me around the store. But if you're a college student or a high school student, they're looking at you like you're gonna shoplift. So I think people make assumptions based on your age or based on your skin color and it's, again, it's a disadvantage.

And I had that when I was younger, but I don't....right now, when you were asking me earlier, it's like, things are pretty much going my way. I don't get hassled in the stores. I get waited on in restaurants. When I was an undergraduate.... in graduate school, I was probably the closest to being a minority because I had kind of long hair and a beard, but

when I was on campus, that's what everybody had, so I was in the majority there. I go twenty miles outside of [town] and I'm in "redneck" country. You go into a restaurant and I wouldn't get served. I'd have to leave. It's like, obviously they're not going to wait on me here. So, go to a fast food place because the other places weren't going to wait on me, but easy enough to take care of that [motions to shave beard], but you can't take care of this [gestures to skin].

So I think the pressure of being a minority has to weigh on your psyche. You think about it every day that you didn't get this opportunity maybe based on the pigmentation of your skin rather than on the quality of your brain and the strength of your character, things that Martin Luther King talked about. It just is outrageous to me. But that's problems and things that need to be worked on, and hopefully the *Understanding Human Differences* course is a place to start to address that. I'm gonna segue here a little bit.

It always amazes me, after a whole semester of this class, talking about injustice and we see it with men and women and we do it with minorities, with Blacks and students and handicapped folks, that we come to this week.... the thirteenth week of the semester is always kind of the culmination talking about cultural pluralism. You'd think that, the ideal would be that we're talking about a level playing field, fair play, equity, equal opportunities for jobs and for housing, and all of these would be really kind of coming together here. And one of the exercises that I do in the class – I think most of the small group instructors do – is "you have been appointed by the superintendent of schools and the school board to be on a committee to look at holidays," to say which days we're gonna get off and how you're gonna address the diverse community. And in this example, one fourth of the people are Jewish. Fifteen percent have no religious affiliation, the other sixty percent are some kind of Christian denomination. So 40%, nearly half, are not Christian or don't celebrate Christian holidays. They don't have.... And it amazes me when we talk about one of the questions is, we have football games on Friday night. And for the Jewish folks, their Sabbath starts on sundown on Friday and goes to sundown on Saturday. And Jehovah's witnesses, maybe, Seventh Day Adventists also follow that kind of Sabbath. And none of my small groups say we should have, if we have ten football games, we should maybe have three of them on Sunday and seven of them on Friday.

They never come up with that idea of fair play. And it amazes me that, after all this, I think that we're making some progress, and when it comes down to coming up with a solution about Christmas. Yeah, yeah, Christmas – we'll call that a winter break. But Easter – they'll say, yeah, 1 think that's right. We shouldn't have that. We'll do spring break. And then I ask them, is spring break always going to be around Easter? Is it always going to be the Friday and the Monday of Easter? Well, yeah. Well, I said, then it's not spring break. If it's gonna be ten weeks after Christmas or January 1st, you go ten weeks. That's when it is. Easter is the one that changes week by week, but yet, they don't see anything wrong with that. They don't see any...they don't want to change it because it's comfortable, and I think that's part of what the problem is. You're comfortable in the way you do things. It's like, oh, what would we do on Friday night if we don't have a

football game in high school? What about the dance? You can't have the dance on a school night.

People don't want to change because they have a pattern, they're comfortable, and they don't see an advantage for themselves. Even though we try pretty hard to talk about equity and fair play and give examples, and they'll do that on the test, when it comes right down to it in the small groups where they get to talk about it, we don't...there generally isn't someone strong enough...all it takes is one of the five people in each of these groups, six groups, to say something and they can, if they have an interest or a concern, they can sway the group. They can present...but it didn't happen last semester. Not one group. I told [the course coordinator] that probably going to get a pretty poor recommendation...evaluation there because I'm really disappointed in the whole class. That's the only thing I can say. Thirty-one students and not one group said, came up with an idea of fair play here. A fourth-year school population. It's like, well, that's good. You know, pay for that. Normally, I try to be nonjudgmental and not...it's like, every opinion is their opinion. It could be not my opinion and I think some are not as valid or good as the others, but they're still their opinion and I try to not make them feel bad. I try to ask them questions to defend their position or elaborate without being judgmental and that was one of the few times I was pretty judgmental.

C: Do you think other classes at [the university] help or detract from what you're trying to do in *Understanding Human Differences*?

M: I think because they don't help, they detract. It's the old idea of if you're not part of the problem you're.... no, if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. And I think that's true here. The reason I say that is because, in Minnesota, my oldest son was a student at U of M, and every single course he had, every single project, every single assignment, had to do with some form of multicultural education. When he took his history class, they had to write a paper obviously, and they had eight or ten choices, but every one of those choices had to do with some kind of multicultural, diversity question. I remember him coming home working on his paper. He was like, "Dad, the worst you could be is a black woman." He said that - studying different problem areas – black women have the hardest time ever. And he wrote a paper, a slave paper, a paper on slavery, and part of it was from this black woman's perspective that was a slave during the Civil War. And then his English class, had to write a paper. It's like, well, you can't just write one on something...Shakespeare or Charles Dickens. You just can't pick a Charles Dickens. You had certain topics and every one of those had something to do with a diversity topic so you couldn't not get it. And that was a, had to be a university-wide mandate. It wasn't just a, he wasn't in teacher Ed – he was a theater major. But it wasn't just the history department and the English department.

It had to have been from on high. It had to be the chancellor or the president or the dean saying what can we do about diversity education? About bringing these issues to the front, and not just in a sporadic "let one guy who's teaching this course talk about it." Not a [history professor] here and a [education professor] there. This is a unified, university-wide, whether you're an agricultural education major or theater, you are going to have to

take these Gen. Ed courses and in Gen. Ed – I think they called them, it wasn't general education – basic studies at the University of Minnesota. Basically the same thing – you have to have a core. But in that core, every single course had a thread that wove these issues into it. Even the plays they produced - every year there was a play, I think, that they did that had some kind of a theme where there was...on homophobia, or on women's rights or lack of, or there was some theme that broadened these students' perspective.

And of course, people that come to the University of Minnesota, to make a generalization, are pretty confident. You don't pick a Big 10 school unless you think you can do okay there. When you're at a Big 10 school, you generally have faculty members and grad students from across the world, not just mostly white middle class folks that we have at a smaller state school. So I think they're open to these things. They choose that and they're not afraid and so I think it's a different client, different students. Plus I think there's a commitment from the administration to foster that and you have faculty members that are open to that. I think some schools, probably private schools more so than state universities, I would think that...I don't know about Luther college, but I would guess that they're mainly Lutherans and mainly gonna be doing white folk stuff.

So I don't think you're gonna get that, although they do have.... some smaller schools have quite an extensive international education program so that they...I think at St. Olaf's in Minnesota - 90% of the students have an international experience. So it may be in the middle of farm country, you know, but the people that go there obviously are going to spend a semester at least or a year abroad. So if you live in France, you're going to see a different view of things. So I think...no, that would be too critical of smaller schools, but I think that Madison, I think East Lansing, I think Champaign-Urbana, the University of Chicago is going to be different than here.

C: How do you feel about how the curriculum is developed for *Understanding Human Differences*?

M: Well, I think - well, I know this because I was here then - twenty...1979, [the course coordinator] was hired to teach, to be part of the Human Relations course. Before '79, back in the mid-70s, Human Relations was more of a "touchy-feely," kind of feel good, social work, counselor-type course. It was kind of a, it wasn't a rigorous course. There were no exams. There were no...they did blind faith walks and kind of silly things. I thought was pretty silly. And in '79, not [female professor]....[former course coordinator] and [the current course coordinator]and [education professor] were going about redesigning the curriculum for this course. I'm not sure where they got the money, but they got some money and they went to St. Cloud and they went to Mankato and went to a number of different workshops to look at what people were doing. So I think they set the course up '80-'81 with the fourteen weeks and divided the weeks up into different topics.

As far as how it's evaluated now or how the content is now, I don't think that there have been any....well, not since I've been teaching the course we haven't had any meetings or

sessions where "let's sit down and look at the original objectives and goals of the course and are we meeting those goals or are we not meeting those goals?" We haven't done that because it's basically [the course coordinator]'s course. It's like [education professor] and I kind of team to do the [education] course and decide....you know, we will talk with the people in the public schools in [the city] and see what software they're using. We go to conferences and talk with our colleagues and together we dump projects, we add projects, we do different things collaboratively.

I think with the Human Relations course, it's [the course coordinator]'s course. He does the lectures and does the handouts and things. The small group instructors are, I'm not exactly sure how they're determined. I think if a person is interested in teaching the course, they just ask [the course coordinator]if they can teach a section. It's pretty much as simple as that, because that's how I got started. I just said I'd like to....At one time I was doing so much I didn't have a chance to teach the course, but I went to some of the small groups and when an opportunity arose, I said, "Can you put me in?" And he did. And I'm now teaching two sections, and I really enjoy it. But I don't, we have not - and I give him my input on the side, but it's not like once every five years you do a sit-down. And to be fair to [the course coordinator], I wasn't teaching it the last time the DPI [Department of Public Instruction] came, so I don't know what the DPI's role is in looking at course content and evaluating it, so that may have happened the year before the DPI came in, you know, you kind of have to do some things to get ready for it.

So there might have been, maybe every five years, you'll spread out your objectives and goals and your activities and review because that's what we do with the [education] program. It's like, I make a big matrix and it's like, "what are the objectives?" and we put them across the goal for the [education] program. Then we put courses down here and then try to make sure there's and X in every box. So the DPI comes, they'll look and see, "Yep, you're doing this. You're teaching them about integrating technology and this and you're doing this and doing that." And so we revise our courses. We look at the syllabus and see when the last time we did it. We look at what the LX says.

So usually, every five years it's a big....faculty members don't enjoy doing it because it's a lot of work, but I think that's probably what happened....I'm going to guess that that's when that happened before NCATE came in for the course. But it's not an annual ongoing because the instructors change so often. [Education professor] taught for a year or so and then she's leaving. There are a few people that do it continually. [Education professor] does it once in a while and then she's out. This semester, [education professor]'s teaching and I think it was a year ago when she taught one section. So it varies. I think some of the faculty teach every semester like [education professor] and [education professor].

When I look at what [education professor] does, sometimes he's ....the lecture's supposed to be on....the video's a fifty-minute video on American tongues, on different dialects, and I think that week he maybe does a thing on the Holocaust because that's his area of interest. When you look at the broad scope for this week on pluralism, it's like, how does the Holocaust play into the pluralism in Germany in the 40s...30s. So I think that if you

are here doing the small groups, you can modify it a little bit. But again, that's not reflected in the exams be cause the exams are written by [the course coordinator] and the answers are his answers and so about half the course points or evaluation comes from the small group instructors and the way they do their synthesis papers - the two synthesis papers - and their multicultural activities, their tutoring, and then their attendance. That's about half the course.

I tease them a little bit because I think he does way too much on avoidance, victim blame, and denial. I think it's like a fourth of the course. It doesn't really reflect the goals, but I think it's easy to make test questions. And so I do the same thing in my course - I'm asking them this question, but is this really important enough to be scored? Yeah, but I can get real good discrimination and the validity of these questions are...and so, I've talked to him about it and he's modified the test a little bit. And it may be when the DPI comes back again that there'll be a study group or a work group that will sit down and look at what we're doing, what the DPI says, what different faculty members who have been teaching it and want to have input into it can get a chance to do that. Human nature being what it is, you kind of do things the way you feel comfortable doing them and so I think that he's got his transparencies all made and.....

C: Do you think that faculty members have the appropriate amount of control or input into the curriculum?

M: Of *Understanding Human Differences* or...?

C: Yeah, *Understanding Human Differences*.

M: In a broad perspective, we do because in higher education - well, in elementary school or high school - when you walk into that classroom, you can do whatever you want. You've got your lesson plans and you've got the state-approved curriculum for different areas, but the fact is, when you go in there, you can do pretty much what you want. So [education professor] has the opportunity to put in that Holocaust that's going to be way different than mine. [Education professor], when he gets in there, he shows a video on Native Americans that the others of us don't even have. I saw it once because he shared it with me, but otherwise, we don't have an opportunity or we haven't had the opportunity to review. And I think sometimes I'll see something on PBS and I'll get the address down, like I don't know if we need this whole thing, but this is...this content is 1999 or 2000 and it reflects something that we're talking about. The video is made in '93 and the students groan like it was a " do you remember when John Lennon was alive" kind of thing. Like, yeah, I remember that. So we have that opportunity, but I think in terms of a course that's required, a foundational course, we don't really have the kind of planned evaluation and review. But it would be a different mold or model than what we have for everything else because, you know, when [education professor] teaches in a research course, it's his course. Nobody sits down....he doesn't ask me to come in and say, "Can you give me some examples of what they're doing in terms of [area of concentration] research?" Because it's his course.....

.....*Understanding Human Differences* is a broader course because it's required for everybody, I think, but we still don't do it with 303. [Education professor] teaches it, [the course coordinator] teaches it, [education professor] teaches it, I think [education professor], but we don't sit down and say, "what are we gonna do here?" as a group. [Education] program we generally do that because there's usually only two or three of us and it's a lot easier to do. And I know that [the course coordinator] has at least two or three meetings each semester. He tries to do it once a month where the small group instructors get together and voice concerns. He goes over the handouts and the topics and spends time on that and, I think, would be willing to modify it, but last week, he and I were the only ones there. And actually, I had forgotten about it. I just came in early and I saw him sitting in there and I pretended like I was......"Just us?" People have busy lives and they just forget about this. It's not like a class - Monday, Wednesday, Friday - it's usually on a Tuesday morning, but he even....he tries to do a morning and an evening with small group instructors because, with 13 or 14 or 17 sections - 18 sections - it's hard to get people together and so it's difficult to get them together.

That's what I was saying about the DPI. When the DPI comes in, it's like we've got to do this now. So then you make time for it. You don't visit student teachers the third Friday of each month because that's gonna be when the group's gonna get together and hash out the goals. Have they changed? Do we need to do something different? What works here? What doesn't work? What can we try better? So that's usually when that happens, when there's a group coming in, whether it's NCATE or DPI or whatever. We also, the university also has internal audits. Programs.... I forgot what it's called. Not the audit committee, but there's a committee made up of the general faculty that's a senate committee and I remember one year, they did the [education] program. They did the honors program. They did history. And they usually do about five a year on a rotating basis. And they make recommendations. They say....kind of like doing a research, you know, what things are you proud of? And they'll kind of highlight the good things, and a couple things they might make suggestions for change.

And so there's like three different review mechanisms and again, people say one thing and still not do it. We had a course that was...the elementary program required a course and the secondary didn't because they said they were doing it in their methods course. And of course they weren't. And they wrote it on the paper but then if you said, "Look on the syllabus. When were they doing this activity?," it wasn't there. So that's, I think....some programs will say, "Yep, we're doing this in multicultural education." It's like, "We're doing it in all our courses." And then say, where? And you look in the syllabus, you know, it's like....you need to see right here a power point. You need to see that there's a report on this or there's a lecture or somehow part of the exam that relates to that content. And it's difficult for outside auditors to come in and find that sometimes. I know, just talking about the [education] program, the [education] program, I have to use the same lingo that they're using. So if they're coming from the [auditing association], we'll talk about classification of materials rather than cataloguing. It's a word game, but you have to make sure that you're saying in all your courses how you're doing this. Well, that's a long answer to your question about that course. Can we make it in two hours? I don't know.

C: Oh, yeah.

M: Okay.

C: What are your goals for *Understanding Human Differences* students?

M: Well, my major goal is that they would have a sense of fair play, that they would see that they may or may not have advantages or disadvantages, but that you can't just pick yourself up by the bootstraps. That's an easy answer. And if it costs a little bit of money to do certain things, we ought to be willing to do that. I had a minority student in the class angry about the handicapped week. He said, "You know, I'm black and it doesn't cost anything to be fair, to give me a job or give me opportunities. It doesn't cost anything for Hispanics, to just be fair. But this business with disabilities, it costs a lot of money to put ramps in. Costs a lot of money. Who's going to pay for that? You got a disability, well, maybe we don't have ramps here, you should go someplace else." An example of thinking about himself. He wasn't handicapped, I mean, he was black and he was concerned about that, but he wasn't concerned about the wheelchair people to the point of speaking out against it. You know, some people....a lot of times in my classes it's just quiet. "Oh, yay. Here's [the male subject] talking about chirping stoplights. Well, I'm not blind and I don't care about them. I don't think we should spend money putting chirps on all of the stoplights in [the city] if it's gonna cost us money."

So I think it goes back to the idea that if it's not me, I don't care. I care a little bit, thanks, but I'm not going to spend any time or energy on it. And that's....it always amazes me that....I can understand their apathy if they're white and they talk about blacks like "I'm not black, I'll never be black. I don't care about this." But when we get to the disabilities topics, it's like....and we have examples of these big strong husky football players and are riding a motorcycle and they're a paraplegic. Tomorrow it could happen to you. You could have MS tomorrow and be in a wheelchair. But they're young and healthy and eighteen and they just don't' care. I mean, they may care and it's hard for me to tell that just from the small groups, but when you read their papers, nobody picks that out. Nobody says anything. Nobody ever does the handicapped topic unless their brother or sister or aunt is in a wheelchair. Then they may, but it's all relative.

I think if they take it when they're juniors or seniors, thinking about getting a job. They're thinking about their personal lives and who their dates are for the weekend, if their car's gonna start. So on the relative scale of importance, it's not all that important to them. So I feel kind of like I wish that I could see people moving miles and I have to be satisfied if they move an inch or two, because that's all I'm getting. I'm not getting miles.

And I think that, from time to time, I've seen people move just in their questions in the beginning of class and then some of the things that they've written and others, I think, will kind of make fun of the topics, even in the papers. It's like, "Well, I've learned a lot in this course and you can bet I'm never gonna hold the door open for a woman again." That kind of comment. Or "We need to really help...." and they'll make some kind of flip

comment. And I don't know if they do that for every instructor, but because I don't criticize their ideas and put them down, it's like "it's your idea." I'll write "good point" if I think it's a good point and I won't say anything like "you really believe that?" I mean, I put my hand behind my back. It's like, "you can't possibly mean that, could you?" And I try not to do that when I say things like "could you give an example?" or "how would this work?" and occasionally I'll do something that maybe is not as strong as I'd like to have worded it, but I had a female student saying in one of her synthesis papers that, before she took this course, she thought she had life pretty good, "but now I've learned that I'm only going to make 70 cents on the dollar. Now I've learned that I've been disadvantaged because my parents both had to work and I didn't have a stay-at-home mom or a stay-at-home dad." So I wasn't sure if she was being, you know, I wasn't quite sure what her point was in terms of making fun of the course or that she thought she could be president or she thought that she could go anyplace she wanted to and that there were no disadvantages to being a woman. I wrote on there, "what are your chances of being president of the United States? And let's look at history - just look at the data. If half the population are female, shouldn't we have 50% of the senators be female. If 10% of the population is black, shouldn't we have 10%....I mean, just by pure statistics, shouldn't that happen? And if it isn't, why?" So, they make one little statement and I've got the whole side of the page. Then I feel guilty that I've written this and I think, "It's their idea. You shouldn't be so critical of their idea." But I just want them to think at the end of the semester in their final paper, they ought to be having a little different idea. So then I beat myself up because it's like, "Well, you obviously didn't do a good enough job on this because they're still picking out this 'holding the door' business as the most important statement in McIntosh's article. You didn't understand the major message. You didn't get the theme here."

C: What are your goals for yourself when you're teaching *Understanding Human Differences*?

M: I think I've probably alluded to many of them here in my talk. I think the goals are the idea of fair play and equal justice. I mean I think that's the....I don't think that I try and say that we should give special advantages to women or minorities or handicapped folks. We ought to just – they ought to just have a level playing field. We ought to be as concerned about people in a wheelchair, if we're walking, as we do of anyone else. And if we have to give up a little bit to make that, we should do that. We shouldn't complain about having one urinal three feet....two feet off the floor and one four feet off the floor because you can use both of them. The handicapped person can't. That ought to be not a complain or a concern. It ought to just be fair. We ought to try and reach equity. That ought to be our goal. And so, for me, that's what I try and... inculcate those values and ideas to the students, that it's tough to give up something. You read some of these articles and people in power don't want to take a pay cut to give a pay raise to us. It's like, "I'm the one making this happen. I'm the president of this and I ought to get a million dollar bonus and not share it with the workers." And I've had business people in there say things like that. It's like, "The business one has everything to lose. He's taking a chance with his money or her money and these are his workers and if they don't want to come in, they don't have to." So it's difficult to try and get that idea across.

And I think it was easier to do it when the course was an upper-division course, when it was 475/675. We had graduate students in there and we had undergraduates who were at least junior status or seniors and have had a few courses. And here, it's almost like we have freshmen and sophomores and they're still like high school students. They won't talk in class. They haven't had the experience of living in a dorm with, the opportunity to have a multicultural experience. In this class, people have had a couple of Native Americans in their class or maybe one Hmong in their whole town. So they have no stories to tell. If there was a gay or lesbian person in town, they didn't know about it. And now, they're chalking out here so they know somebody in their dorm, especially if they're a junior or senior, they have had some opportunities, but when they're freshmen and sophomores, they really don't have much of a time. It's almost like we need to do two courses – we need to do one freshmen/sophomore level and then one a senior level where you can see what they've done or what their ideas are for what they can do or how they might be involved to affect change.

C: Does teaching *Understanding Human Differences* cause you to change anything about yourself?

M: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I think - and I tell this story in the class - when I was in graduate school just almost thirty years ago, Anchee Yang [*not real name*] – remember her name or put it in the tape here. Anchee was a student from China that came to [graduate school] and was getting a master's degree in [education]. And she was taking classes – and again, she was probably the only one – there were a couple of Asians, Indian, Nigerian students in mostly a male, white program – but all of the students spoke English except Anchee. She was very, didn't have a very good command of the language. And so she would be in the labs late at night and I would help her with a project. And then the next night I'd see [fellow student] and I'd say, "How'd it go? Did you finish that last night?" And he'd say, "Well, I didn't finish until 11pm because by the time I finished with Anchee's project, I got to mine." And so, Anchee got a lot done for her by men that were helping her because she was having difficulty with her notes in class and really couldn't do the assignments.

And I'm finishing my Ph.D. and I'm applying for a job with [Michigan community college] in the U.P. and I'm a finalist. And I get the list and it's like, "You're a finalist, the other candidates are....Anchee Yang." She was a finalist for this job. And I though, "OK. I'm a white male. I'm gonna be disadvantaged...I've got a Ph.D. I'm from the United States. I'm born and raised here, pay taxes, my parents pay taxes, and here's a person that came over here from China, no affiliation, got her degree here, and is gonna get this job or is a fat candidate. I couldn't believe it – that there were two Ph.D.s and a master's degree person for this director's job. She got the job. And I was angry for twenty years. Anytime it would come up, I'd think, "You know, this quota system is giving this woman a job because she is able to put down 'Asian' on a sheet and they're gonna be able to put down 'female.' She can't even speak. How can she do this job?" I mean, I never thought about when I was helping her that I was gonna help here get a job and stay in America. I thought she was gonna go back to China and help them.

But after I started teaching the course in Human Relations, and especially – I'm gonna refer to Peggy McIntosh again about white male privilege – I thought about how I got to where I was. And I got my job in [education] because one of my fraternity brothers had a job in the lab school, and when he graduated, he asked if I wanted it. So, because I knew a guy and he knew the director of the [education] program, I got the job. And then, I wasn't even a [education] minor. Getting ready to graduate and I'd worked there for a couple of years and the professor that was chair of the department said, "What are you gonna do?" And I said, "Well, I'm not sure, Don." He said, "You ought to go to [graduate school] and get your Ph.D., get a master's degree in [education]. You've got, you've worked here for us..." I said, "Boy, a Big 10 school is expensive." He said, "I'm sure I can get you a grad assistantship." "Okay." So here I was. I go to [graduate school], walk in with a grad assistantship [the department chair] got for me....it's like, how did she get hers? I got it because I was a white man and I knew white people, males, people in power. There weren't any women – there was one woman – and all the rest were men in the department. So I got an advantage because of my gender, because of who I knew, and so....My committee, my graduate committee – the professors that I had. I had a whole bunch of things going for me that Anchee didn't. And so, if she got one break that she didn't deserve, I got a whole bunch I didn't deserve, I mean I got by basic...So I started to let go of that.

Now it's like, not only have I let go, it's like, well, I'm sure she's not there anymore. I'm sure she moved on. She went back to school. She did some other things. It's not the end of the world to have probably not the most competent person doing a job. It's not against the law to hire, to not hire the best candidate. You can get in trouble for discriminating against people but you can't get in trouble for not hiring the most qualified candidate. And a lot of that is people's judgment. It'd be hard to say I wouldn't hire a master's degree person before the person has ten years, you know, no experience in ten years, a bachelor's degree versus Ph.D. You know, why get a college degree if you can go to TC [technical college] for six months and be a nurse? It's like, why do that? There's gotta be some advantages. But, in the whole scheme of things, you know, you get somebody that's not the best candidate here, you know, there're still not very many role models.

Now I've got four daughters and it's like, you know, I don't think [university chancellor] is as good a president as the last one. But, you know, we now have a female that other college students can look up to and there are role models out there. You don't have to be a man to be president. You don't have to be a male to be superintendent of schools. You know, I think, I was on the CESA board for many years and there were, there's only 26 superintendents. There's only one female. You know, she'd come to all these meetings and, of course, they're gonna play golf afterwards. She's not a golf player. So she gets excluded from some of these things because it's a white male bastion, you know, and how do you break into that, you know? And so, she has a crusty old, you know, she's like...she talked like an old sailor. She didn't...she fit in with them, but it's like, she had to do that. She couldn't have been, if she'd have been a priss or you know, been this, she'd have been a whole lot different, but she did things to make herself be a part of that group. But she was the only one. Going it alone has got to be...if there was another

female superintendent, it would have been easier, but when you're the only person....and she retired and they hired a male. So, I think that it's not, I think it's good that you have role models for every group. You know, you can be president in a wheelchair –Franklin Roosevelt. You know, we just need to, again, it's a long answer to my fair play answer about Human Relations. It's like, you just have to talk about justice, you know. You don't have to love people, you don't have to like them, you just have to be fair. You just have to be fair and try to have a level moral path here to go, and that's kind of my goal and my view.

C: What professional development have you done to prepare for teaching *Understanding Human Differences*?

M: Ummm. Haven't gone to any conferences. Interested in going to some, but it's like...My major field is in [education], so, and I've only gone to one convention in the last, since '91. I went last, this year to the [education conference] and I went to that basically because we were looking at hiring somebody and I needed to get out there and get my flyers out and try and meet some folks. And I know [another professor] and [the course coordinator] both went to the NAME conference – National Association for Minority [sic] Educators. And I think that would be something that all of the Human Relations instructors should go to just to see what the topics are and to listen to presenters and speakers and see what's happening. But normally, a [education professor] is going to go to something that's gonna do with the Holocaust education, and that's partly gonna help him in teaching the course. For me, coming in kind of late in my career, and just a portion of what my job responsibilities are, I'm not going to get the kind of money that it would take to go to some of these conferences and conventions, but I think just doing readings on the side, having conversations with people like [the course coordinator] and [education professor] and [education professor] and... [education professor] has been a real asset, I think, to our program.

He has asked important questions. Again, I think, again, for me, I think of, when I think of minority education, I think of blacks period. I don't...and I think of Hmongs. I don't, I don't, you know, I don't think of Native Americans. You know, it's like, you know, they're quiet. They don't say much, they don't raise a lot of...so you don't pay attention to them. You just don't think about it. And so I think just [education professor]'s presence here is important to the faculty and for our students. Just having the displays, I think, get people's attention and, "This is outrageous. I can't believe this," you know. So I think in terms of professional development activities, things that cost money, no, I haven't done very much in terms of conferences, conventions, but the Native American workshops that we've had, the program that you put on here a couple months ago, you know, is where I first heard [education professor] speak, you know, and he had his films about, you know. So I think those are the kinds of activities that are local that we need more of that don't cost a lot of money but are an awareness and that's really we need a more kind of awareness of what the issues are and possible solutions so those are....

C: Okay. Why do you think you should teach *Understanding Human Differences*?

M: Oh, me personally because I think it just helps me grow. I think that I've, I think I've always felt I was kind of a liberal person, but each year I teach this course I feel like I'm getting, where I was ten years ago, it's like I've moved from, like, if here is right wing and here is left wing, I figured I was over here but now that I've, when I look at where I am here I was really over here and now I'm over here and next year I think I'm here and I'm really still here and I'm getting closer [indicates believing closer to left than actually is, but getting closer as time progresses]. So I think that just reading the articles, listening to the discussions in class, ideas that students have, have just helped me. I think that, maybe if I only had four sons or one son, I'd be different, but I think I've been more aware because of my daughters coming up here. I've spent more time looking at books and we...Jack and Jill. You know, it's like, Jack fell down. Well, she gets her own bucket. She doesn't need to go help Jack. He can help himself. So we have a lot of "Father Gander." You know, instead of Mother Goose we have Father Gander. So we look for books with women as heroes – strong women. And I think we do the same thing with multicultural.

When we look for books and materials, we don't just get the standard Wonder bread kind of stuff. We're looking for the diversity. And, you know, I started the international program in Innsbruck in '86 when I wrote a grant, and so I think taking my children to Europe and taking our students to Europe, they get to see how people do things differently. You know, my kids play on the street with kids from Hungary, you know, and nobody speaks the same language, you know, they're little kids but they're playing. They're throwing little balls back and forth and they're interacting. And so it's important for me because I can see my daughters, you know, will, you know, pick up [African American child], you know. It's like, they aren't like looking at him funny because he's different, because there are no black kids in our school, but they've been playing with Asian kids and kids that got turbans on their heads and kids that don't have turbans on their heads. And so, it's like, they're just kids if you don't see them as minorities. And I think that's going to help. I'm doing things, I think, globally, but yet I want it to happen in my family. And so I think that's important, to take them to different places and to see and interact with different cultures and see that, you know, Austria is not better or worse than France or the U.S., it's just different. They do things a little differently there. And it's, there's a wide range of acceptance and tolerance. And so, for me, maybe not a huge goal, but it's something that my wife and I work on, to provide those opportunities for them. And we, you know, we get them involved in sports, we get them involved in things that are only girl things like gymnastics and we get them involved with soccer and hockey where they have boys and girls playing together. And we try and have a balance. It's like, we do the school stuff, we do the sports stuff, and we do piano and violin and plays and theater. So we're trying to do a, you know, the education, the cultural, and then also the family kinds of things in sports. And so, those are the three kinds of legs that we work on with our children.

C: Is there any reason why you think you shouldn't teach *Understanding Human Differences*?

M: Ahh, boy. Well, I can't think of any. Um, other than if there were minorities that were interested in teaching it that would be, you know, I think I'd step back if we had twenty people of color or different than the, and I were keeping them out because I was teaching it. Then, again, I'd look at my fair play and say, "Well, I don't need to teach two sections. I can teach one section if we have somebody else here. We should let our students have an opportunity to be taught by other people that they don't normally see…the white men in this class." I think in the *Understanding Human Differences* right now, just [education professor] and [education professor] are the only two women. Nope, [education professor] is teaching. Oh, and [education professor] this semester, too, she's leaving. So, umm, there, you know, I think [the course coordinator] tries to have, recruits people from different multiethnic backgrounds, but I think he winds up, you know, when you look at the pool, that's what you've got. You know, and so, umm, again, it's difficult because you can't hire a, he's not hiring a full-time person to teach. So you've gotta take people within 50 miles of [the city] and so you're basically looking at white Norwegian. You know, you don't have an opportunity to pick so many, but I think that any time that there is an opportunity, he's tried to broaden that group, which, I think, is good.

C: Do you think that [the university] provides sufficient support for the *Understanding Human Differences* faculty?

M: Umm. In terms of their education or in terms of…?

C: Well, like, in…financially, for what they want to do in the classroom. Like, I guess whatever you would deem as…?

M: Probably…I think that, I don't think that they say, "Here's a pot of money that you can spend." But I think that there is a pot of money to spend. I think that if I were to find a videotape that I think would be important in the class and I said, "[the course coordinator], we'll need $250 to buy this." I think there would be money to do that. I don't think that, umm, I don't think that we've maybe had the training, the in-service training, that maybe should happen. I think that, umm, you know, it's like, kind of like I don't know how they do the writing emphasis courses, but somebody's paying [education professor] and [English professor] to run these little workshops and to train people to be writing emphasis instructors. And I think that same model could happen for that, umm, the multicultural, you know, category that, you know, whether it's [professor] and Racial and Cultural Minorities or *Understanding Human Differences* or, you know, the courses that are in that category. Maybe once a year there ought to be a one-week staff development or a three-day staff development would be, might be appropriate to look at objectives and goals and to pay people to go to some of these conferences. But I think that, I think there's always money there but you just have to ask. If you don't know enough to ask, then you don't get it. If I'd have gone to [the course coordinator] and said I really want to go to this NAME conference because I think it's important, but I'm not on the agenda so I didn't even know, I didn't know about it until last year when [education professor] was there because [education professor] was going and [the course coordinator] was going. I mean, it was in San Diego, but it must be in Chicago some year or Cleveland. It doesn't always have to be that far away. But I think that, if we wanted to

do something like that, I think there's money in the School of Ed. The deans have a contingency fund and the Provost has a contingency fund so I think that, umm, it's nice not to be a contingency. It'd be nice if it were built in.

It's like, this is what it's going to take and here's the resources to do it. Education has other, other problems. The course, *Understanding Human Differences*, is the one course that is kind of a moneymaker in terms of having 30 students in a small group and a large group lecture because the methods classes stop at 20. So, if the university averages 25, we fall behind in science methods. We fall behind in this methods. We fall behind in, you know, we don't fall behind in [Education] 303, but clinical experiences, we lose credits. And so, with the *Understanding Human Differences*, we're barely, we're still not at the university average of number of students and so the university would say, "Well, it's your bed and you make it," you know, it's... you need the money, you come up with it. And then you have people fighting for resources. Like, "Well, reading is more important. We should really be, if people can't read, then they can't do anything. So we should be funding [reading education professor] half time to help people read. We should be funding...," you know, everybody's got their little pet project, and so it depends upon what you're the most interested in, where you put the resources. And so, umm, it's not a bad idea. It's probably a good idea to have some kind of staff development and training for people, but, ahh, the problem's always in, what is it, the ideas are easy, it's doing them that, the details are the ones that kill you. Trying to find time that everybody's available and, umm, but it's, I think it's always easier to bring in speakers but it's hard to do the, the one-time, the one shot deals. You know, it's like an awareness kind of activity, but you need to do the awareness and then you need to do the goals and objectives and review and see where you are and make new plans of being kind of a continual process rather than a one shot deal. So...

C: Do you think being white helps you or hinders you in understanding aspects of *Understanding Human Differences*? Like, the subject matter.

M: Oh, I think, umm, being white in most cases –I've already alluded to – is an advantage because I don't, I haven't had some of these issues personally, but I think I can sit back and see, when I look at myself and then see situations with people with disabilities, it's like, umm, you almost have to be compassionate. I don't know how you could not be compassionate when you see a black man told that the apartment's not available to him and not have some pangs about this injustice all the way through housing and jobs and the way we're treated in stores. So, again, I think that, if I had, if I were a minority, I think I'd be able to tell more stories. And I think sometimes students like to hear the stories. And then, then, even my articles and they, some of the female authors, the people who were in there, "Uhh, just another busybody lesbian feminist complaining about her story." You know, and so they get tired of that. So I don't know if they'd be angry if they listened to a person every week coming in telling them how tough life is, you know. And so, because they tell me that in their articles, like, you know, "Life's a bitch. Somebody held a door open for you." You know? That's what they, they miss some of the bigger, bigger picture. So I don't know that, umm, I think, I think it would be good...I think my students enjoyed having, umm, I can't think of his name. I want to say

John or Josh, that was in my class, because he had more stories to tell. I mean, every, almost on every issue, he had a story to relate to something that happened to him or to a friend of his. So I think having people other than white males in the class is, would be a definite advantage. So.

C: Oh, I just completely spaced out on what I was going to ask you. Umm, have you made any efforts to, umm, create institutional change through *Understanding Human Differences*?

M: Can't think of any, no. I'm not, I'm just trying to think of how we, institutional changes. I think the, the fact that the *Understanding Human Differences* is a, one of three or four courses that all of our students have to take is a real step in the right direction for the university. In terms of changing other policies...umm, institutional policies. Because I'm teaching the course or through the course...?

C: Yeah, through the course.

M: Umm, hmm. I think just, I think by way of the multicultural activities the students have to do – the ten hours of multicultural activities – is a way to, kind of supported other institutional offerings like the clothesline project and others because it gets people there. You know, it's like, if it weren't part, weren't a requirement, probably most people wouldn't go down on that Thursday night. Especially at the end of the semester, we get people to go to things, maybe because it's not what they would want to go to, but they're running out of topics and so they'll go listen to the transgender woman talk on a Thursday night because they've only got, you know, the project's due next week. They need to turn that in. So, I think that we've supported, because of this course, we've supported other, umm, issues that relate to the course that I don't think people would go listen to – Martin Luther King day speakers or to the Native American powwow or go to the disabilities week workshop or the clothesline project. And so, I think the course in itself, because of that requirement, umm, and our seventeen or eighteen sections with 30 students, you know, at least we're hitting 300 people or so a semester that are going to be in the attendance out here listening to these topics and hopefully becoming more aware of, changing, modifying their behavior as a result of that. So it's not, umm, it's not like I, uhh, we have, the people in the course have gone and said, "We need, umm, a Native American advisor to," you know, we haven't done any...I don't know that we've done anything like that, but we've been supportive of the multicultural activities office and others, umm. Yep.

C: Umm, do you know of any support for students after they've taken *Understanding Human Differences* and completed it, umm, any support for these students to continue this process of learning about these issues?

M: Umm...

C: And I guess I mean institutionally. Sorry...

M: Institutionally. No, I think that, umm, that they'd have to almost do it on their own. I mean, I think there are graduate courses. I know that Kent has an advanced...intercultural communications course that he does. I think, there are a number of courses out there, but a student would have to either come back and ask me about it or they'd have to look in the catalog and see, "Oh, I see [professor] doing a course on intercultural communications. I wonder if that's something I'd be interested in doing," or, umm, but I don't think there's a sequence. We don't have a scope and sequence, where this is, you know, *Understanding Human Differences*, we don't have a 305 and a 405 where you could build on that and get a concentration. I think people maybe take this course and are interested in might look at the women's studies minor, you know, be interested in that. Or they may, umm, find courses in the sociology department to take or the minority studies minor or do some things in...again, you'd have to look to find [professor]'s course. You wouldn't find it in a page in the catalog. These are courses that have a, an ethnic or cultural or pluralistic flavor, you know. And, umm, again, I can talk about Minnesota. My son there, it's like, you can make your own major there. I mean, you can, you, there's a "design your own curriculum" kind of thing. So if you were interested in these topics, you could go to an advisor and put together a scope and sequence of an area that you're interested in and get a degree. And so, it's, we don't really have that. Maybe it's because, based on our size. You know, we're too small to do that, maybe. Not enough students. So. Okay?

C: Well, thank you. Umm, and, before we head out, is there anything that we didn't talk about enough or any additional comments that you'd like to make?

M: Nope, I don't think so. I think it's, uhh, good questionnaire. It's interesting that some of your questions are things that I haven't addressed and it's like, umm, again, for me personally, it's like, next year I think I'm going to try to go to the NAME conference. I think the idea of doing in-service and staff development...I've done a couple things, but it's probably not enough for me. It's like trying to balance, you know, four children and my international programs and the graduate program and [education] and, uhh, working with the deans now in these past two years, but it's like, next year could be my year to spend a little more time on some of these issues in terms of in-service staff development activities. I think the question about institutionalizing change, umm, just sparked a couple of ideas here that, umm, when I get together again with the Human Relations I might talk about those issues. And if you hadn't asked the question, I wouldn't have thought about it. So I thank you for that.

C: Okay. Thank you.