

THROUGH THEIR EYES:  
NARRATIVES OF STUDENTS' LIVED SCHOOL EXPERIENCES OF SEGREGATION  
AND DESEGREGATION

by

Kelli L. Gray

---

Copyright © Kelli L. Gray 2016

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

WITH A MAJOR IN LANGUAGE, READING, AND CULTURE

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2016

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Kelli Gray, titled Through Their Eyes: Narratives of Students' Lived School Experiences of Segregation and Desegregation and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Luis Moll Date: 12/16/15

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Carol Combs Date: 12/16/15

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma Gonzalez Date: 12/16/15

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Director: Luis Moll Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Director: Mary Carol Combs Date:

## STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that an accurate acknowledgement of the source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Kelli L. Gray

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this dissertation to the many students of color who, despite a system that has often times failed to support you and help you reach your highest potential, have done so anyway. Your lives stand as a testament to the meaning of resilience and to what is possible.

I want to thank my family. First, my parents for instilling in me the importance of education and for the sacrifices they made so that I might receive a quality education. Next, I want to thank my husband and my children for their many sacrifices and for encouraging me until the end. Without each and every one of you this would not have been possible.

I am also grateful to my committee for their support and encouragement throughout my studies. They have mentored me and pushed me to do and be my best.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not say a special thanks to Dr. Richard Ruiz, whose name does not appear on this dissertation, but should. Dr. Ruiz was my chair until his untimely death in February of 2015. He was the one that suggested I pursue this topic. Dr. Ruiz was a warrior for social justice not only through his scholarship, but also in his day-to-day actions. I am grateful for his example.

Thank You!  
¡Gracias!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| ABSTRACT .....   | 6  |
| POEM .....   | 7  |
| INTRODUCTION .....   | 8  |
| Study Focus: Segregation and Desegregation in Education ..   | 9  |
| Purpose of Study and Research Questions .....  | 15 |
| Study Context and Limitations .....  | 16 |
| Positionality Statement .....  | 17 |
| DISSERTATION ORGANIZATION.....   | 20 |
| Three-Article Dissertation .....   | 21 |
| FINAL REFLECTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH  | 25 |
| REFERENCES .....   | 29 |
| APPENDIX A – SEGREGATED ON SUNDAY. WHY NOT MONDAY<br>THROUGH FRIDAY? .....   | 32 |
| APPENDIX B – CRITICAL CARE: A LEGACY OF BLACK TEACHERS IN<br>BLACK SCHOOLS .....   | 57 |
| APPENDIX C – MAKING RACE AND RACISM VISIBLE: RESPECTING<br>AND VALUING THE VOICES OF EDUCATORS OF COLOR IN TEACHER<br>PREPARATION PROGRAMS ..... | 81 |

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation documents the oral historical narratives of the lived school experiences of eleven participants in school at the passing of *Brown v. The Board of Education*. It is organized as a three-article dissertation where each article examines one topic that surfaced during my research. Article One critically interrogates the idea that integration over segregation is always in the best interest of students. It describes the positive experiences of Black students in segregated schools. Article Two describes the type of care Black teachers in segregated schools showed their students, which had a positive impact on their lives both academically and socially. It is this type of care that is often times missing in classrooms with White teachers in integrated schools. Article Three is a reflection about my journey as a Black, bilingual teacher in a teacher preparation program at a predominately White university. It highlights the importance of Black teacher voices in teacher preparation programs.

## POEM

### Keep A-Plugging Away<sup>1</sup>

by

Paul Laurence Dunbar

I 've a humble little motto  
That is homely, though it 's true,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.  
It's a thing when I 've an object  
That I always try to do,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.  
When you 've rising storms to  
quell,  
When opposing waters swell,  
It will never fail to tell,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.

If the hills are high before  
And the paths are hard to climb,  
Keep a-pluggin' away.  
And remember that successes  
Come to him who bides his time,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.  
From the greatest to the least,  
None are from the rule released.  
Be thou toiler, poet, priest,  
Keep a-pluggin' away.

Delve away beneath the surface,  
There is treasure farther down,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.  
Let the rain come down in torrents,  
Let the threat'ning heavens frown,  
Keep a-pluggin' away.  
When the clouds have rolled away,  
There will come a brighter day  
All your labor to repay,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.

There 'll be lots of sneers to  
swallow,  
There 'll be lots of pain to bear,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.  
If you 've got your eye on heaven,  
Some bright day you 'll wake up  
there,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.  
Perseverance still is king;  
Time its sure reward will bring;  
Work and wait unwearying,—  
Keep a-pluggin' away.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In August of 2014 the Paul Laurence Dunbar Alumni Federation inaugurated the brand new, state-of-the-art, multimillion-dollar Paul Laurence Dunbar High School located on N Street between 1<sup>st</sup> Street and New Jersey Avenue in NW Washington, DC. I travelled to DC and participated in the inauguration activities on August 15, the day the classes of the '50s and 60's were to do their walk-through. The building is absolutely gorgeous with state-of-the-art science labs, classrooms, and a library where replicas of the commemorative United States Postal Stamps of eight of their Faculty and Alumni proudly hang. In addition, the building boasts an indoor swimming pool and the beloved Armory, which had not been included in the 1977 building that sat on NJ Avenue between N and O Streets.

It was here that my mother and godmother between the years of 1954 and 1957 received what many children of color are lacking today, a quality education under the caring and dedicated hands of teachers who understood what it meant to grow up Black in a society where "black" was considered second-class, yet who instilled in these students the pride of being of African descent and the value to "keep a-pluggin' away" despite it all.

This dissertation focuses on their lived experiences and the lived experiences of nine other students studying in Washington, DC at the

passing of *Brown v. The Board of Education*. It is organized around three articles, each examining a theme that surfaced during my research. Each article is presented as an appendix to the dissertation and each is grounded in a theoretical and conceptual framework to support the article's theme.

What follows is a brief introduction to the topic of segregation and desegregation, contextual information to situate my research and the themes discussed in each article, as well as a summary of the three articles. This section of the dissertation ends with some final reflections and ideas for future research.

### **Study Focus: Segregation and Desegregation in Education**

In 1892, Homer Plessy, a Creole of color, deliberately sat in the “white” car of the East Louisiana Railroad. He was arrested and his lawyer took his case all the way to the Supreme Court arguing that Louisiana’s Separate Car Act of 1892 violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments. The US Supreme Court ruling by a 7-to-1-majority vote upheld the Louisiana statute, setting the precedent that separate facilities for Blacks were constitutional as long as they were equal. This separate but equal doctrine quickly spread to many aspects of life for folks of color including education. History tells us that the ideal of “separate but equal” was simply that, an ideal, as facilities for Blacks were always inferior. Eventually the “separate but equal” doctrine for public schools would be struck down on

May 17, 1954 when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Linda Brown in the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. It is important to note that the *Brown* decision did not have any affect on school segregation in DC since the Fourteenth Amendment only applied to states and DC is a federal territory (Stewart, 2013). Instead attorneys James Nabrit and George E.C. Hayes used the Fifth Amendment of the Bill of Rights to defend DC's school children in *Bolling v. Sharpe*, one of the five cases under the umbrella of *Brown*. Nabrit and Hayes used one of the bedrock principles of our constitution – liberty – to question school segregation in DC and to claim that school children in DC were not receiving due process as afforded them under the Fifth Amendment. Although harder to prove than school equality, the attorneys in the *Bolling* case decided to attack segregation head on, knowing that if they were successful it “would be the bullet to the head of Jim Crow” (Stewart, 2013, p. 165). So on the afternoon of December 11, 1953 Nabrit spoke these final words to the Justices hearing the case:

The basic question here is one of liberty, and under liberty, under the due process clause, you cannot deal with it as a quantum of treatment, substantially equal. You either have liberty or you do not. When liberty is interfered with by the state, it has to be justified, and you cannot justify it by saying that we only took a little liberty. You justify it by the reasonableness of the taking. We submit that in this case, in the heart of the nation's capital, in the capital democracy, in the capital of the free world there is no place for a segregated school system. This country cannot afford it, and the Constitution does not

permit it, and the statutes of Congress do not authorize it (as cited in Stewart, 2013, p. 167).

The decisions in the four other cases were announced first, the *Bolling* decision came last. The importance of this was that if desegregation was no good for the states, it definitely wasn't any good for the nation's capital (Stewart, 2013). The court agreed, albeit, with caution.

Although the court has not assumed to define "Liberty" with any great precision, that term is not confined to mere freedom from bodily restraint. Liberty under law extends to the full range of conduct which the individual is free to pursue, and it cannot be restricted except for a proper governmental objective, and thus it imposes on Negro children of the District of Columbia a burden that constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of their liberty in violation of the Due Process Clause (as cited in Stewart, 2013, p. 167).

The *Brown* decision came some 166 years after the first lawsuit was filed in 1849 challenging school segregation on the basis of race (Irons, 2002). Although the decision was clearly long overdue, integration, nonetheless, proved harder in practice than in theory for the states, and DC was no exception. It was a complex undertaking that took longer than anyone had hoped (Ogletree, 2004), and many would say has yet to be fulfilled (Anderson, B., 1994; Anderson, J., 2004; Kluger, 2004; Moll, 2010; Patterson, 2001). Even though many public schools are experiencing re-segregation, which no doubt calls into question whether the promises of *Brown* have been fulfilled,

scholars often do not question the benefits of integration over those of segregation (Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, 2009; Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014); a position I will attempt to challenge in this dissertation in two ways. First, by examining the culturally relevant and sustaining practices of Black educators in all Black educational settings, and second, by highlighting the concealed stories and the stories of resistance of my research participants. By doing this I hope to be able to provide emerging/transforming stories to counter the stock story (Bell, 2010) that Black education in segregated schools was “inherently unequal.”

Every child in the United States deserves a first-class education. Unfortunately, many Blacks as well as other minoritized and low-income families live in a system of “structured inequalities” (Mehan, 2012) in which the very places they live, work, shop, play, and go to school have been structured in such a way as to marginalize them to the periphery of society. In terms of schooling, this structured inequality has manifested itself through disparities in academic achievement<sup>2</sup>. Historically, African Americans have fared far worse than their white counterparts on standardized testing and have been treated unequally and inequitably in schools and classrooms (Banks, 2007; Edwards, Thompson McMillon, & Turner, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Sleeter, 2005).

A great deal has been written about the landmark decision of *Brown v. the Board of Education* of 1954 (henceforth *Brown*), exploring its impact on a variety of topics from K-12 education to higher education and on a variety of communities – Black, LGBTQ, Latino, and Asian. (see for example issues in *Journal of Negro Education* Vol. 63 No. 3, 1994 and Vol. 73 No. 3, 2004; *Equity & Excellence in Education* Vol. 27 No. 1, 1994 and Vol. 37 No. 3, 2004). Similarly, Siddle Walker (2005; 2013) has even explored the teacher activism of Black educators and Black teacher associations in the South in the era before *Brown*. However, besides the information in commercially marketed books, websites, and maybe even history books on historical figures like Ruby Bridges or the Little Rock Nine<sup>3</sup>, not much else has been written, especially in scholarly journals, about the lived experiences of students in school at the passing of *Brown* in 1954 nor about the motivation behind the decision of students to attend recently desegregated public schools or to continue at traditionally segregated public schools. Furthermore, many believe that the promises of *Brown* have yet to be fulfilled (Moll, 2010) and others like Dr. Richard Ruiz (personal communication, October 9, 2014) have even questioned whether or not the promises of *Brown* can be fulfilled while upholding the principles of *Brown*. In fact, at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) conferences I attended in 2013 and 2014, the question of whether or not we should be fighting for the fulfillment of *Brown*,

or would our energies be better spent fighting for the fulfillment of *Plessy v Ferguson* was discussed.

Although the education of students of color is still hotly debated today, to integrate schools traditionally serving White students in 1954 was not a decision to be taken lightly, as many who integrated were met with fierce opposition. Doris<sup>4</sup>, the only Black student in the study who attended Anacostia, an all-White school before 1954, remembers,

My teenage years during that period were not great. The experience itself I don't wish on anyone.

Like many students of color at the passing of *Brown*, my mother, Vonciel, was one such student faced with the decision to integrate.

Born in 1939, she grew up at a time in the United States when generally all aspects of life for blacks and whites were segregated. She attended all black schools and in 1954, when given the choice, opted to continue her education in an all black school environment. When asked why she made the choice to study at Dunbar even though Anacostia was closer, she says it was due to the protests she saw. She recalls:

The way they carried on, the whites. They protested, especially in Anacostia where I would have gone. They fought. They were just so mean. I was afraid. I really was afraid.

The injustices so many Blacks experienced during their lifetime, especially in terms of education, and wanting to understand why Black students would

choose to continue studying in an all Black schools, when those schools were considered “inherently unequal” was the impetus for my dissertation research topic.

### **Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

Even though the injustices in communities of color can be analyzed by using a variety of contexts, the focus of my dissertation is the impact of such inequality on education. Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe and understand the decision families made to either continue their child’s education in an all Black school or a school that had traditionally educated white students, but which were now open to Black students due to the passing of *Brown* or in the case of Washington, DC, due to the passing of *Bolling v. Sharpe* of 1954 (henceforth *Bolling*). The following questions and related sub-questions guided this study:

1. What factors influenced students’ and their families’ decision in 1954 to desegregate the public school system or to continue their education in an all Black school environment? What long lasting effect did this decision have on these students?
  - a) What are the benefits of integration?
  - b) What are the benefits of being educated in an all Black school setting?
  - c) Do the benefits of integration outweigh the benefits of segregation for Black students studying in all Black educational settings?
2. How did Black schools serve Black students’ educational, social, and emotional needs and how were these same needs met at a desegregated school?

- a) In what ways were white schools superior to Black schools?
  - b) How is quality defined in educational settings?
  - c) What role did Black educators have in affirming and meeting the educational, social, and emotional needs of Black students?
  - d) Does integration in the current public school system deny Black students equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment?
3. What impact did desegregation have on black and white students attending school at that time?
- a) Is integration always in the best interest of students of color?
  - b) How can the principles of multicultural education and culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogy improve the education of diverse learners in today's public schools?

### **Study Context and Limitations**

The context for this study is a historical one, beginning in 1952 and going until 1958, the last year one of my participants graduated from high school. The context is also the DC schools the participants attended at that time. In all, seven participants attended Dunbar, a historically all-Black high school, two attended Anacostia High School a historically all-White school, but that was integrated in 1954, and two attended Cardozo, a historically all-Black high school. In addition, the context is the District of Columbia in particular, and the northern United States in general.

Often the southern states are the ones talked about or written about in terms of inequalities and injustices for Blacks living in the United States, and

the northern states were seen as safe havens or at least safer or friendlier to colored folk than places like Mississippi, Alabama, or Georgia. However, traditional segregation in the North was just as much of a problem as legal segregation in the South (Irons, 2002).

As mentioned, this study focuses on schools in DC; and thus does not necessarily reflect the experiences of students in other schools, especially those in the south. In addition, I also recognize that I will be relying on the memory of participants who for the most part will be recalling experiences they had almost 60 years ago. However, often experiences such as these can be remembered as if they were yesterday since topics like segregation and integration, which affect participants' lives personally, are hardly ever long forgotten (Ritchie, 2003). In addition, having distance between the event or episode in question and the interview also has its benefits. Through reflection the interviewee can better "weigh the events and sort the significant from the trivial" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 39).

### **Positionality Statement**

In 2010 as part of the Capstone course in my master – certification program at the University of Maryland, I interviewed my mother about her educational experience. It was at that time that I became interested in her alma mater, Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in DC and began to research

this school. What I found excited and shocked me. Here was a school that for years provided Black students with a “first class education” (Steward, 2013), and my mother was a 1957 alumnus.

As an African American mother and educator I have taken great interest in the current (mis) education of students of color, particularly those in the Black and Latino communities. My disappointment, frustration, and anger led me to begin thinking about and researching how the education of these students could be better. Although it is commonly known that Blacks historically have suffered educational inequities and inequalities, what I came across in this research was that many Blacks had positive experiences in all Black settings; not because of the infrastructure or materials, which were more often than not, subpar, but because of the Black educators they encountered in these educational environments and the ways in which these educators taught the Black children in their charge. This information coupled with the information I was learning about Dunbar motivated me to want to learn more, not only for my own children, but for “other people’s children” as well.

Because both my mother and godmother graduated from Dunbar in 1957, and because my godmother is part of the Dunbar Alumni Federation Board, I realized that I could easily access potential participants for my study.

In fact many of the participants in the study are friends of my mother and / or godmother, and some have known me all my life. I recognize that this gives me both an advantage and disadvantage. It gives me an “in” so to speak with the community; however, it can also make making the familiar strange a bit more difficult. In addition, as an African American woman it is a topic that has affected my life directly. I attended public school in Prince George’s County Maryland in the 80’s where bussing was still used to help integrate the schools. Despite the personal closeness I have to my dissertation topic, the topic is an important one to pursue due to the potential it has to add to the current literature on segregation and integration in public school settings.

## **DISSERTATION ORGANIZATION**

The focus of my dissertation is to document the oral historical narratives of the lived school experiences of students during the initial stages of desegregation. The fruits of this documentation were the writing of three articles, each examining a theme that came out in the interviews. I contend that these oral histories have the potential to add to the already existing literature on how to more effectively educate students of color while also providing a counter narrative to the dismal portrayal of the education of Black students during legalized segregation often written about in the literature (Irons 2002; Siddle Walker, 1996). Likewise these oral and life histories give researchers, teacher educators, teachers, policy makers, and others reason to question and reflect on the often unchallenged idea that integration over segregation is generally in the best interest of students of color. Finally and more personally, the oral and life histories of my participants have helped me to reflect on, understand in more nuanced ways, and solidify the importance of my voice as a Black, female educator in helping to prepare pre-service teachers to meet the diverse needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools today. Considering these ideas, the current study is situated within a conceptual framework that sits at the nexus of critical race theory (CRT) and social justice education (SJE). In fact, the overarching question that guided the selection of more

specific theories and concepts within the broad topics of CRT and SJE was: Is integration always in the best interest of students of color? Considering this question, I have chosen three focus areas that together have guided the analyses and writing of this three – article dissertation. These are: 1) experiential knowledge as an important component for understanding the positive impact of segregation on students of color; 2) care as an essential part of the culturally & politically relevant teaching practices of Black educators and 3) storytelling for social justice as defined by Bell (2010) in her Storytelling Project Model. All of these concepts not only relate directly to the experiences of students of color in educational contexts both currently and historically, but also speak to and challenge how we are currently preparing our pre-service teachers. Each article focuses on a specific theme or topic, yet as a set they response to my research questions. In what follows, I briefly foreground each article, its theme/topic, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin it. It is in the three articles where I include examples from my research to support my conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

### **Three-Article Dissertation**

This dissertation has been organized around three articles, each addressing one major theme or topic that was identified in the analysis of my

research data. In terms of theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the three articles are grounded in one or a combination of the following theories: critical race theory, social justice education, or storytelling for social justice.

Using critical race theory as its framework, **Article One** will attempt to question the generally held belief that integration is better for students than segregation. It speaks specifically to research question 2, which deals with how all-Black schools served the needs of Black students and how these same needs were (not) met in an integrated school; and question 3, which has to do with the impact desegregation had on both Black and White students. It will challenge the idea that segregated Black schools were “inherently unequal” and suggest that segregated Black schools benefited Black students. It thus looks to examine research question 1, which has to do with the reasons students and families either choose to continue at all Black schools or chose to integrate public schools. The theories and concepts that will provide the framework for this article is storytelling for social justice, which includes the idea of the counterstory (Bell, 2010; Solórzano, 1997). This article will provide a counterstory to the single story often written about in the literature on segregated schools. It will highlight what Bell (2010) calls concealed stories and stories of resistance by Black students, Black teachers, and Black schools.

**Article Two** will explore the notion of care and how Black educators expressed such care in segregated schools. Black teachers in all Black school environments did not just teach content and skills, but they taught students how to survive and thrive in a segregated world (Foster, 1997; Siddle Walker, 2009). They taught students pride in who they were as African Americans. Care was expressed in the high expectations that Black teachers had for Black students (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Siddle Walker, 2009). Care was shown through Black teachers' commitment to the communities and families of their Black students (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Siddle Walker, 2009). The types of culturally relevant conversations Black educators had with their Black students, such as having to be better and do better was also an important way Black teachers cared for Black students (Foster, 1997). All of these manifestations of care are linked in one way or another to what I consider to be the culturally relevant teaching practices of Black teachers and the funds of knowledge teachers brought to their classrooms. Likewise, the care that many Black educators expressed in their classrooms had a critical perspective to it. Furthermore, I contend that it is this specific type of care that is often times missing in the teaching of Black children in integrated settings today. The purpose of this article is to add to the already existing research on the type of care commonly exhibited by Black educators in segregated settings by highlighting schools in Washington, DC. Furthermore,

I suggest in this article that teacher education programs need to specifically teach about the culturally relevant practices of Black educators if we have any hope of improving the academic performance of Black students in schools today.

Finally, as a way of self-reflection to better understand what it means to be an educator committed to the ideals of social justice and critical race theory in teacher education, **Article Three** is more personal. In this article I turn the spotlight inward and tell my story – the story of a Black, bilingual teacher and teacher educator who dealt with macro and microaggressions while teaching in a predominately white, middle class, monolingual, female teacher education program. I use this story as the context for highlighting the importance of the Black teacher presence and voice in teacher preparation programs.

Collectively, each of these articles will attempt to bring to life the stories of my participants while hopefully adding to the already existing knowledge regarding the education of Black students before and after *Brown* as well as helping us reflect on what truly is in the best interest of Black students today.

## **FINAL REFLECTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

My research participants spoke very positively of their educational experiences in all Black schools. One important characteristic of these all Black environments was the care they were provided by their teachers. Care that not only helped them grow as students, but also as people preparing to live and work in a society that did not value who they were as Black Americans. Adding to the already existing research on Black teaching and Black education, these findings also challenge us to reconsider the single story often told in the literature on the education of Blacks during segregation, and it also challenges us to reconsider the idea that integration is always in the best interest of all students. Furthermore, the findings necessitate our reexamination of how teacher preparation programs currently prepare future teachers. It is important to assess if teachers are truly being prepared to meet the needs of the communities they will serve, and how to specifically address each communities cultural, linguistic, and educational needs within these programs. Likewise it is imperative that programs think about what voices and points of view from educators might be missing, and how best to incorporate these.

There are several possibilities for future research. During the pilot study and during the study's focus group, I had the opportunity to hear from persons who were not included in this study, but nonetheless had been

affected by the issues of integration and segregation. One group were people of my generation who had been affected by busing. It would be interesting to examine the evolution of integration some 20 to 30 years after *Brown* and the influences busing had on student relationships in schools. Another group for future study would be those, like my Dad, who did not go to segregated schools. My Dad went to a school with students who would most likely be currently lumped under the umbrella of white, yet many of whom were poor, European immigrants living in ghettos. It would be interesting to explore the types of relationships teachers at these schools had with students and their families. A third group would be those students of color like my nephew studying in what I consider to be a type of segregated educational setting, yet in well-resourced schools with well-qualified teachers. The question to explore here would be whether this type of segregation makes a difference when categorizing segregation as not being in the best interest of students of color.

As I am currently living and working in Chile, South America, another possible extension of this research to an international setting would be the examination of the social and educational journey of “Afrochilenos” in Chile. In the north of Chile there is a vibrant and very active community of African descendants living in the XV Region of Chile. They have been active socially and politically trying to get the Chilean government’s recognition as

a community. One way they are advocating for this is by incorporating a separate category for Afrodescendants on the Chilean census. One way to extend this political work would be by documenting their experiences in the Chilean educational system. Based on my informal conversations with members of the community, other Chileans, and my knowledge of the national curriculum, very little (if anything at all) has been done to educate Chilean children about African descendants in Chile. Collaborating with the community about possible ideas on how to extend the work they are already doing into an analysis about their educational experiences in Chilean schools could have a tremendous impact on the education of all Chilean children in schools today, and on the Chilean society in general.

**Notes:**

1. This poem was downloaded from the web at <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/187/lyrics-of-lowly-life/3655/keep-a-plugging-away/> and appears, in part, in the Armory of the new Paul Laurence Dunbar High School building. It was published in 1913.
2. See for example National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2013 report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).
3. Ruby Bridges was the first black child to integrate an all-white elementary school in Louisiana. The Little Rock Nine were a group of nine African American students who enrolled in Little Rock Central High School in 1957, but were prevented from entering the building by the Governor of Arkansas, who deployed the Arkansas National Guard to block the entrance to the school. They were eventually allowed to attend the school after President Eisenhower intervened on their behalf sending the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division of the US Army to protect them and escort them into the school. Instead of starting school on September 4, 1957, they started on September 25, 1957.
4. This dissertation uses the participants' real names.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. (1994). Permissive Social and Educational Inequality 40 Years After Brown. *Journal of Negro Education*, 63(3), 443-450.
- Anderson, J. (2004). Crosses to bear and promises to keep: The jubilee anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. *Urban Education*, 39(4), 353-379.
- Banks, J.A. (2007). *Educating citizens in a multicultural society*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Bell, L.A. (2010). *Storytelling for social justice: Connecting narrative and the arts in antiracist teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Edwards, P.A., Thompson McMillon, G., & Turner, J.D. (2010). *Change is gonna come*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Foster, M. (1997). *Black teachers on teaching*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Hanushek, E.A., Kain, J.F., & Rivkin, S.G. (2009). New evidence and Brown v. Board of Education: The complex effects of school racial composition on achievement. *Journal of Labor Economics* 27(3), 349-383.
- Irons, P. (2002). *The broken promise of the Brown decision*. London, England: Penguin Books.
- Kluger, R. (2004/1975). *Simple justice: The history of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's struggle for equality*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dream-keepers: Successful teachers of African American children* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mehan, H. (2012). *In the front door: Creating a college-going culture of learning*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

- Moll, L.C. (2010). Mobilizing Culture, Language, and Educational Practices: Fulfilling the Promises of Mendez and Brown. *Educational Researcher*, 39(6), 451-460.
- Nieto, S., & Bode, P. (2012). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Ogletree, C.J. (2004). *All deliberate speed*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Orfield, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2014). Brown at 60: Great progress, a long retreat and an uncertain future. Retrieved from <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>
- Patterson, J.T. (2001). *Brown v. Board of Education: A civil rights milestone and its troubled legacy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ritchie, D.A. (2003). *Doing oral history: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Siddle Walker. (1996). *Their highest potential: An African American school community in the segregated South*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Siddle Walker. (2005). Organized resistance and Black educators' quest for school equality, 1878-1938. *Teachers College Record*, 107(3), 355-388.
- Siddle Walker. (2009). *Hello professor: A Black principal and professional leadership in the segregated South*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Siddle Walker. (2013). Tolerated tokenism, or the injustice in justice: Black teacher associations and their forgotten struggle for educational justice, 1921-1954. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 46(1), 64-80.
- Sleeter, C.E. (2005). *Un-standardizing curriculum: Multicultural teaching in the standards-based classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Solórzano, D. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical Race Theory, Racial Stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 24(3), 5-19.

Stewart, A. (2013). *First class: The legacy of Dunbar, American's first black public high school*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books.

## APPENDIX A

### **Segregated on Sunday. Why Not Monday Through Friday?**

I don't know what would have happened to me  
had I been in an integrated school.  
Maya Angelou, 1989

I remember hearing some years ago that the 11 o'clock hour on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week. I was reminded of this statement while reflecting on the interviews I conducted for this article, the conversations I have had, and the literature I considered. As a person who has attended church most of her life, I have had the privilege of attending services at Baptist churches, non-denominational churches, Catholic churches, Episcopalian churches, and Presbyterian churches. As a child and teenager I attended and was a member of an Independent Baptist church that had a majority white congregation. Currently I am a member of a Progressive Baptist church with a majority Black congregation. Although there is much thought and research on the integration and (re)segregation of our public schools (see for example the website for the Civil Rights Project housed at UCLA at <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>), we seem not to challenge or talk much about the segregation of our places of worship.

Many would agree that we all worship the same God, yet the ways in which we worship this Supreme Being are different. Yet, few would say that

the kind and quality of the worship service I experience in the Black church I currently attend is somehow “inherently unequal” to the kind and quality of worship I experienced as a child and teenager in the majority white church I attended then. Indeed, I would suggest that many would say that we choose our churches based on the doctrine we believe in, but also based on our worship needs. That is, certain styles of preaching and singing may appeal to each of us differently, and thus meet our spiritual needs in different ways. I enjoy Black gospel music, a more animated preaching style, and being able to participate in the “call and response” discourse style most often seen in a Black church. Thus, if we have come to accept, to some degree at least, the segregation of our worship houses, recognizing that they meet our needs in different ways, could we also entertain the idea that all Black schoolhouses also meet the needs of our Black students in different and even positive ways? Furthermore, could we entertain the idea that maybe integration as it is currently practiced may not be meeting the needs of Black students, and, unfortunately in many cases, has been to their detriment?

This article critically challenges the commonly held notion that integration is in the best interest of all students and that segregation – as stated by the Justices that spring day in 1954 in the *Brown* case – is somehow “inherently unequal” for Black students studying in all Black educational

environments. This article asks the question posed by W.E.B Du Bois in 1935, “Does the Negro need separate schools?”

In addition, this article is a critical reflection on a question posed to me by my adviser, Dr. Richard Ruiz: Is it possible to fulfill the promises of *Brown* while at the same time upholding the principles of *Brown*?

The promise of *Brown* was to provide Black students with an education equal to that of White students through the integration of public schools. However the irony of integration is that in many classrooms around the United States education has been anything but equal for many Black and Brown students.

Due to his untimely and sudden death in early 2015, Dr. Ruiz and I never had the opportunity to critically and deeply analyze his question, it nonetheless has stirred me to ask hard and unpopular questions about the benefits of integration and to examine more closely the benefits that segregation afforded Black students like those who attended Dunbar.

This article tells the counter narratives of my study participants. Narratives that speak truth to the benefits of segregated schooling. These narratives lay a basis to critically explore the (im)possibility of being true to both the promises and principles of *Brown*. They call into question the uncritical and unchallenged view that segregation is “inherently unequal.”

And finally they question the widely held belief that Black students are somehow served better in integrated schools than in segregated ones.

My theoretical framework is taken from critical race theory (CRT), more specifically the tenet on the importance of experiential knowledge. Likewise I use Bell's (2010) idea of storytelling for social justice to discuss the danger in only considering one version of a story.

### **Methodology**

The type of interview chosen for this research is the oral history interview. Although similar to other types of qualitative interviews, such as the ethnographic interview, there are, however, some differences. The oral history interview focuses more on the historical events of the time being studied through the first-hand knowledge of specific individuals who were involved in the event, in this case the segregation and desegregation of schools (Ritchie, 2003). Through the oral history interview, I asked participants to recall and reflect on their experiences in high school between 1952 and 1958. These schools were either all Black schools or schools that were experiencing desegregation due to *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and *Bolling v. Sharp* in 1954 (relevant for DC). High school students at these schools had to maneuver the social, emotional, and educational stress of desegregation. This study describes these lived school experiences while documenting the reasons why students and their families decided to

desegregate or continue studying at an all Black school. This study is also ethnographic since I attempted to understand the participants' values, beliefs, and attitudes that 'pushed' them in one educational direction versus another. Finally, the unit of study for this research is the case – or more specifically the multicase – a group of students studied at a particular time in a particular region of the country.

### **Context and Participants**

All participants in this study were students who were entering or in high school in 1954 in Washington, DC. Students in this study either attended Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, an all Black high school well known for its academic rigor and for its historic stance in the community and nation, Anacostia High School, an all white high school before integration, but which after *Bolling* and *Brown* opened its doors to Black students, or Cardozo High School, another all Black school in the District. As will be discussed, Black participants in this study recall very positive experiences at all Black high schools. However, as the majority of participants in the study attended Dunbar and because of the school's historical importance in Washington, DC and the nation as an academic powerhouse for educating Black students, it is important to pause here and note that Dunbar's

academic excellence was an important reasons why Black families choose to send their children to this school even after the decision in *Brown and Bolling*.

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, founded in 1870, was the first public high school for African Americans in the United States and the first public high school for any student, Black or White in the District of Columbia (Portlock, 2012; Stewart, 2013). Dunbar was instrumental in the education of many prominent African Americans. The school boasted a faculty comprised of many historical “giants”. For example, a few of its graduates have been Sterling Brown, poet and pioneer in the appreciation of African American folklore and literature; Nannie Helen Burroughs, who helped to establish the National Association of Colored Woman; Charles R. Drew, known for his pioneering work in blood banking and blood transfusions; Robert H. Terrell, the first African American judge in DC, and one of Dunbar’s principals. In addition to outstanding graduates, Dunbar has also had distinguished faculty. Anna J. Cooper, the fourth African American in the United States to earn a Ph.D., served as one of Dunbar’s principals. Mary Church Terrell was one of the first African American women to earn a college degree and was the first president of the National Association of Colored Woman, was a faculty member. Carter G. Woodson, the Father of Black History month and the founder of the Journal of Negro History, was also on Dunbar’s faculty. Another important quality of Dunbar’s faculty and principals is that an

unusual number of them held Ph.D. degrees. Teachers with advanced degrees thus positioned Dunbar as the nation's best high school for African Americans during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Portlock, 2012; Stewart, 2013). Many prominent figures in education, law, sports, medicine, the military, and politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century call Dunbar their alma mater. The school stood as an example of how to effectively prepare African American students for career or college.

My unit of study is the case. That is, I will attempt to describe and analyze a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, my study can be characterized by being both a single case study with subcases and a multisite case. My focal high school is Dunbar and most of my participants attended this school (case study with subcases). However, two participants attended another all Black school in DC and two participants attended an integrated school thus, making the study a multisite case study (Merriam, 2009). My hope is that by including a few cases from other school sites, I may see greater variation across cases, thereby making the interpretation a bit more thorough and compelling as well as “enhancing the external validity” of my study (Merriam, 2009, p. 50).

To select my sample group, I used purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002, as cited in Merriam, 2009) based on two criteria. First, participants in this

study were high school students studying in Washington, DC in 1954. Second, in the case of the African American participants, they were students who either studied at an all Black school, such as Dunbar, or attended Anacostia, an all white high school before desegregation in 1954. Originally, I had only planned to interview Black students who formally attended DC high schools, thus almost all of my participants are African American. However, due to networking to find participants (explained in greater detail below), a white female Anacostia graduate was included on the list of potential research participants. The white female participant was a student who attended an all white school prior to 1954 and continued at this school even when Black students started to attend. It should be noted that all schools were technically subject to desegregation; however, it seems that even after the *Bolling* decision, Dunbar continued to be all Black; although two of my participants recall seeing two white students for a brief period at Dunbar. So, all-white schools were integrated with Black students rather than White students integrating all-Black schools. In fact, Dunbar to this day continues to serve a mostly African American student body.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

I documented oral histories of students' lived experiences at school during the era of *Brown/Bolling*. These oral histories were gathered primarily

through two qualitative methods: interviews and a focus group; however I also reviewed artifacts such as yearbooks and other print materials and attended the inauguration activities of the new, state-of-the-art Dunbar school building in the summer of 2013.

To locate potential participants, I first contacted two key informants, my mother, Vonciel, and godmother, Theresa, who both attended Dunbar. Then, using snowball sampling, they in turn contacted other Dunbar graduates or graduates who had attended other DC schools. I interviewed 11 students; 10 African Americans and 1 White American; 9 attended all Black schools and 2 attended integrated schools. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face, via Skype, or email and took place from June 2014 to April 2015. Interviewees were asked demographic questions followed by a set of open-ended, semi-structured questions. Follow-up questions were sent via email to all the participants while others were sent to a specific participant. In addition to the interviews, I also conducted a focus group on June 14, 2014. The focus group questions were based on topics and themes that emerged during the interviews. Once the interviews and focus group were concluded, they were color coded for themes. There were five themes that emerged regularly throughout the interviews and focus group:

1. teachers' expressions of care,

2. students' positive experience in segregated schools,
3. teachers' high expectation and investment in students,
4. the school-home connection, and
5. quality education in segregated schools.

In addition to interviews, I collected or reviewed artifacts including school yearbooks, newsletters, and published articles in newspapers or magazines, and information from websites. Furthermore, I drew information from a DVD produced by a Dunbar Alumnus that documents some of Dunbar's history as well as the building of the new school.

Finally, in August of 2013, I went to Washington, DC to document through photographs, video, and field notes both the current school and the newly constructed school. On August 21, 2013, I attended one day of the five-day dedication ceremony of the newly built Dunbar school. I participated in the guided tours for the alumni classes of the 50's and 60's, which gave me the opportunity to contact and talk to more potential participants.

### **My Tension**

In 2010 I interviewed my mother for a paper I wrote for the capstone course in my master-certification program. I realized during that interview there was more to the story often told about segregated schooling. I wondered why the remarkable work Black teachers did with Black students in

segregated schools was missing from the story of segregation? I also wondered why when given the choice would families choose segregated schooling over integrated schooling? This reflection led me to ask the question: Do Black children need integrated schools? A similar question to the one Du Bois asked 80 years before. In addition I wondered if they do not need integrated schools, what exactly do they need to be successful? Furthermore, I wondered if integration is supposed to be in the best interest of Black children, why are they fairing so poorly in integrated schools?

### **The Danger of a Single Story**

In my view, attending school with people who looked like me and being taught by teachers who had my best interests at heart was a blessing. I doubt that I would have had [these] type[s] of friendships and support in an all white public school environment (Clarence<sup>1</sup>, Black participant, Cardozo High School graduate).

Stories are weaved into the fabric of our lives. We hear and tell stories at least once a day. However, there is danger in a single story. That is, often times there is more than one side to a story. As parents and teachers we know this to be true. How many times have we talked to siblings or students to hear both sides of the story after a conflict? However, often times as educators we offer our students as truth the one-sided story so often times presented in their history or literature textbooks. The story told about desegregation was that Black students would be better off in integrated schools than segregated

ones. But, accepting the normativity of this stock story or of any stock story is dangerous. In fact, there are many times when concealed and resistance stories paint quite a different picture.

Bell (2010) describes four story types in her *Storytelling for Social Justice Model*. The stock stories are those stories that most of us accept as truth. Told by the dominant group, they are put forth as normative or universal. Concealed stories and resistance stories present the other side, however. Concealed stories although invisible or hidden from those in the mainstream are nevertheless told by marginalized groups and represent a powerful critique of the too often taken-for-granted stock stories. Likewise, resistance stories stand as a counterstory to stock stories. These are the stories told by subordinate groups and individuals about their lives and their struggle for a more humane and just society. Resistance stories help us see possibilities in our fight for justice (Bell, 2010).

I, like many, had accepted, uncritically of course, the one-sided story that segregation was not in the best interest of Black students. However, what I came to learn later as I interviewed my participants and listened to their concealed stories and stories of resistance was that students in many segregated schools achieved academically and that their self-esteem and self-worth as Black individuals was affirmed, which contributed to their success later in life. I came to realize that simply stating that an integrated school is a

better option in the education of African American students was not as simple as some made it out to be. In fact, Black, segregated schools played an important role in the lives of Black children and their Black families. As Ladson-Billings (2009) claimed as she recounted her positive experience in segregated schools was that she found her classroom to be a “little like home”. Under the caring and often firm guidance of Black educators, who considered failing not to be an option, Black students thrived. These are the concealed and resistance stories my participants shared, and that I share here.

### **Upholding *Brown’s* Promises or *Brown’s* Principles**

Scholars have claimed that the promises of Brown have been broken or have yet to be fulfilled (Irons, 2002; Moll, 2010). Despite this claim, however, many continue to favor integrated schooling over segregated schooling citing the many benefits for all students involved (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012; Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012). Likewise Orfield and colleagues state that “the consensus of nearly sixty years of social science research on the harms of school segregation is clear: separate remains extremely unequal” (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012, p.6).

Furthermore, these same scholars claim that those that tend to go to schools segregated by race and poverty do not have the skills needed to be successful in college (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). History is clear, Black

schools on many accounts were unequal. But, were they “inherently unequal”? Furthermore, if Black, segregated schools pre-*Brown* were inherently unequal, why would families, when given the choice, choose to continue to send their children to such inferior schools?

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>) defines ‘inherent’ as “belonging to the basic nature of someone or something; involved in the constitution or essential character of something; belonging by nature or habit.” A ‘principle’, is defined as “a basic truth or theory: an idea that forms the basis of something. A ‘promise’ on the other hand, is “a statement telling someone that you will definitely do something or that something will definitely happen in the future.”

It is commonly known that school infrastructure, resources, teacher salaries, and funding at all-Black schools were unequal to those at all-White schools. However, what I posit is that despite these injustices Black teachers at segregated Black schools, like Dunbar, were able to provide Black children with the social and cultural capital needed to succeed.

The funds of knowledge theory (Moll et al.,1992) has been used to describe the cultural and cognitive resources of households usually considered in the field of education as lacking or deficient intellectually and culturally. That is, this theory looks to highlight and reinforce the knowledge students from these households bring to school and how this knowledge can

be leveraged to support and scaffold these students academic growth. However, I apply it here to describe the “accumulated bodies of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133) Black teachers leveraged and utilized in classroom instruction to support Black students in Black, segregated schools. Sadly, though, the funds of knowledge that Black educators brought to their work in segregated schools was lost with integration as many Black educators lost their jobs. In integrated schools White teachers did not have this same “accumulated bodies of knowledge” due to their unfamiliarity with and often times deficit and racist views of the Black community. It was because of this type of education Black children received in Black school environments families chose to continue sending their children to Black schools even after desegregation. When we consider the importance such funds of knowledge had on Black students studying in the wake of the *Brown* decision, it is almost impossible not to reevaluate the idea to favor integration over segregation.

The promise of *Brown* was that Black children and White children would be educated together and thus would receive the same quality of education. In other words, they would be integrated into the school and classroom in meaningful and relevant ways. The principle underlying *Brown*'s promise, no doubt a deficit one, was that segregation was “inherently unequal,” that segregated schools could not be made equal, and so Black children needed to integrate White schools. The distinction between

desegregation and integration is important in understanding the difference between *Brown's* promise and *Brown's* principle.

Desegregation is understood as “placing students of different races and ethnicities in contact with one another” (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012, p. 3). On the other hand, integration is when students of different races and ethnicities are not only in contact with each other, but also are “engage[d] in meaningful, equal status relationships” (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012, p. 3). I take this definition of integration a step further contending that school settings based on “meaningful equal status relationships” would necessarily provide all students with an equitable education, not necessarily an equal one.

This difference between equity and equality is an important one to consider. Using a pair of pants as an analogy, in a class of 20 third graders I give every student a size 8 regular pair of pants. In doing so I have been equal and fair to every student because they all received the same pair of pants. However, in this class of 20 third graders, I have a couple of students who need an 8 husky. I have 2 others who need a 6 and still a few others who could use an 8x. My point is that equality is not always fair, and is not always in the best interest of students. Education should seek first and foremost to provide students with an equitable education; that is, a quality education that meets the students' individual needs, interests, and readinesses.

What I posit here, then, is that the promise of *Brown* was desegregation, while the principle underlying *Brown* was integration. What my participants attest to is that desegregated schooling, while it could be argued, fulfilled the promise of *Brown* – placing White and Black students in contact with one another, fell terribly short in upholding its principle – putting these students in a classroom context where they are in relationships that are meaningful and equal in status and where teachers could leverage their funds of knowledge to support students emotionally, socially, and academically. Something integrated schools did not do. Conversely, segregated schools such as Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Washington, DC did not fulfill *Brown*'s promise, did nonetheless, uphold *Brown*'s underlying principle, namely providing Black children with a quality education in a context of meaningful, equal status relationships and gave students the social and cultural capital to integrate into society and into college life successfully. The question to ask, then, is whether, *Brown*'s promise or *Brown*'s principle, is in the best interest of Black children?

### **Do Black Students Need Integrated Schools?**

“Sink or swim” is a phrase that has often been used to describe the oppressive linguistic classroom environments that many emergent bilinguals experience. This analogy can aptly be applied to the frustrating predicament many Black students are facing in today's classrooms. When studying in

classrooms with teachers who do not know how or are unwilling to support and scaffold Black students learning in caring and culturally responsive ways, these students drown in what I have termed culturally unresponsive classrooms (see for example, Darling-Hammond, 2010). There is no doubt that we live in unequal times, and part of this systematic inequality is the quality of education students of color are receiving.

The Civil Rights Project at UCLA has issued numerous reports detailing the ebb and flow of the struggle to desegregate public education in the United States. Some of these studies suggest that integration brings about benefits for all students (Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003; Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). Similarly, it has been suggested, at least in the state of Texas, that Blacks studying with Blacks has a negative effect on the achievement of these Black students (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2009). However, I would assert that these studies are missing three important perspectives: (1) the voices of students of color like the participants in this study who talk very positively about the benefits of studying in all Black educational environments, (2) an understanding of the importance of the type of education that happened under the care and guidance of Black educators, and (3) an analysis of why in places like Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Washington, DC students did quite well academically despite being segregated. What is exactly “inherently unequal” about Blacks studying

with Blacks? Ruiz (1983) raised these same concerns when he questioned the “greater social good” of public policies like integration.

He makes a powerful argument worth quoting here:

What is wrong with the “separate but equal”<sup>43</sup> doctrine; what is wrong with the naïve notion of integration in Brown; what is wrong with most educational and social policy designed to improve the lot of ethnic groups by equalizing opportunity; is that these ideas have always tended to deprecate the resources which already existed within ethnic communities and individuals. At the basis of enforced separation is the assumption of inferiority rather than the right to voluntary association with familiars; behind “integration” frequently is the paternalistic attitude cited by Levin: “Many blacks reject integration as a solution not because it is identified with false promises but also because it has ideological overtones that are an affront to Black dignity. As Floyd McKissick has suggested, “the view that quality education can only take place in an integrated school seems to be based upon the degrading proposition: Mix Negroes with Negroes and you get stupidity.”<sup>44</sup> (p. 63).

Ruiz’s point is well taken. Do black students need integration in order to achieve academically? And what does it say of studies that show that when Blacks are in classroom environments where the majority of the students are Black that this somehow produces stupidity? Could there be other reasons for such results?

Admittedly, “simply sitting next to a white student does not guarantee better educational outcomes for students of color” (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012, p.8). Instead, it is what comes with these “predominately white and / or wealthy schools” – resources, both economic

and educational – that make all the difference. Indeed, Moll (2010) noted this when commenting on the similarities between the *Mendez* (1946) and *Brown* (1954) cases:

The Méndez and Brown families pursued their lawsuits not simply to integrate their children into schools with White children. Their intent, I believe, was much broader than that: to secure for their children, and by implication for thousands of other children, the same ample educational resources and opportunities that were routinely provided to advantaged White children (p. 454).

We know that Black students can succeed in school when surrounded by other Black students and that Black teachers have played a critical role in this success; we need only check the history of schools like Dunbar or our historically Black colleges and universities. These examples stand as counter-narratives to the ideological idea that Blacks need integration and that Blacks studying with other Blacks some how do not perform academically.

Moreover, an important point to make is that it is not just segregated schools that should cause us pause. It is the poor, segregated schools that are educating mostly Black and Latina/o students that I believe should be our biggest concern. For example, would it make a difference if segregated schools were in wealthy neighborhoods of color with highly qualified teachers, successful peer groups, adequate facilities, and adequate and sufficient learning materials? Or consider the segregated situation that my nephew finds himself in? He goes to an elite, private school on the east coast

with a low student to teacher ratio, seemingly qualified teachers, and a beautiful campus, yet there are just 14 students of color (10.7%) out of the 131 US born students that attend the school (international students excluded), and only 3 African Americans. There are only 2 teachers of color, none of whom are African American (personal communication April 25 & 27, 2015). Even though he is receiving a quality education, do we stop to consider or even talk about what Black students such as my nephew have to give up, give into, or lose as a result? In fact, our success in school is intrinsically linked to our ability to incorporate the values of a white, middle-class society; the same values and knowledge privileged in US schools (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). Yet, how many of my nephew's white classmates are learning about Black history, values important to the Black community, or the discourse style of many young, Black students? Isn't it the quality and kind of segregation that makes all the difference?

What have Black students gained from integration? Many Black teachers lost their jobs when the schools were integrated and it seems that academic performance for Blacks began to decline as well (Foster, 1997). In fact, currently more Black, male students find themselves in special education than programs for the talented and gifted (Blanchett, 2006; Tyson, 2008).

Do Black children need integrated schools? I would have to admit, after careful and critical revision of the literature and based on the ethnographic interviews conducted in this study that, “no”, Black children do not need integrated schools. I would argue, what Black children need, like any child in today’s schoolhouse, are qualified teachers armed with culturally responsive pedagogy and schools that are adequately and equitably resourced; all of this founded on an ethic of critical care (Rolón-Dow, 2005, Thompson, 2004) that is responsive to the needs of each specific child. Indeed, this is exactly what many Black teachers in all Black settings seem to have provided for Black children. This is what Black children need. This is what all children need.

**Note:**

1. All participant names are real.

## References

- Bell, L.A. (2010). *Storytelling for social justice: Connecting narrative and the arts in antiracist teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Blanchett, W. J. (2006). Disproportionate representation of African American students in special education: Acknowledging the role of white privilege and racism. *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), 24-28.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How American's commitment to equity will determine our future*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1935). Does the Negro need separate schools? *Journal of Negro Education*, 4(3), 328-335.
- Foster, M. (1997). *Black teachers on teaching*. New York: The New Press.
- Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield. (2003). A multiracial society with segregated schools: Are we losing the dream? Retrieved from <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>
- Hanushek, E.A., Kain, J.F., & Rivkin, S.G. (2009). New evidence and *Brown v. Board of Education*: The complex effects of school racial composition on achievement. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 27(3), 349-383.
- Irons, (2002). *The broken promise of the Brown decision*. London, England: Penguin Books.
- Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Moll, L.C., (2010). Mobilizing Culture, Language, and Educational Practices: Fulfilling the Promises of Mendez and Brown. *Educational Researcher*, 39(6), 451-460.

- Orfield, G., Kucsera, J., & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2012). E Pluribus...Separation: Deepening Double Segregation for more students. Retrieved from <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>
- Portlock, P. (Producer). (2012). The Dunbar legacy: Building on a solid foundation. (Available from Phil Portluck Productions).
- Ritchie, D.A. (2003). *Doing oral history: A practical guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rolón-Dow, (2005). Critical care: A color(full) analysis of care narratives in the schooling experiences of Puerto Rican girls. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(1), 77-111.
- Ruiz, R. (1983). Ethnic Group Interests and the Social Good: Law and Language in Education. In W. Van Horne (Ed.) *Ethnicity, Law and the Social Good* (pp. 49–73). Milwaukee, WI: American Ethnic Studies Coordinating Committee.
- Siegel-Hawley, G. & Frankenberg, E.(2012). Spaces of Inclusion? Teachers' perceptions of school communities with differing student racial & socioeconomic contexts. Retrieved from <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>
- Stewart, A. (2013). *First class: The legacy of Dunbar, America's first public black high school*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books.
- Thompson, A. (2004). Caring and Colortalk: Childhood innocence in White and Black. In Vanessa Siddle Walker & John R. Snarey (2004) (Eds.). *Race-ing moral formation: African American perspectives on care and justice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Tyson, K. (2008). Providing equal access to “Gifted” education. In M. Pollock. (Ed.). *Everyday antiracism*. New York: The New Press.

## APPENDIX B

### **Critical Care: A Legacy of Black Teachers in Black Schools**

It was a typical summer August day – hot and sunny. My mom and I were preparing to go to the third day of the inauguration ceremonies of the new, state-of-the-art Paul Laurence Dunbar high school building. We picked up Aunt Joan, another Dunbar graduate, and headed downtown.

The third day of the ceremonies was the building walk-through for the classes of the 50s and 60s. I was excited to have the opportunity to attend. As I walked into the new building, the Armory was already filled with alumni. The excitement was palpable. The Armory was abuzz with conversation of old friends catching up. There was a table set up with Dunbar T-shirts and other paraphernalia on sale. As I observed all the excitement, I could not help but be struck by the sense of pride these alumni had in being Dunbar graduates. These students, unlike many Black students today, are part of an undeniable legacy of academic rigor, despite segregation, where students were cared for in such a way that not only were their intellects stimulated and enriched, but their emotional and spiritual selves as well. This new building and the plans to implement new academic programs held hope for giving more Black students a similarly enriched education. I was excited to be part of such a

historic moment; to be part of this new era that was dawning for students, but especially Black students, in the District.

Using the results for my dissertation research, this article identifies and describes the care (detailed below) provided by Black teachers educating in all Black school settings, and suggests that it is this type of care that is needed in many classrooms today.

### **Methodology**

The type of interview chosen for this dissertation research was the oral history interview. Although similar to other types of qualitative interviews, such as the ethnographic interview, there are, however, some differences. The oral history interview focuses more on the historical events of the time being studied through the first-hand knowledge of specific individuals who were involved in the event, in this case the segregation and desegregation of schools (Ritchie, 2003). Through the oral history interview, I asked participants to recall and reflect on their experiences in high school between 1952 and 1958. These schools were either all-Black schools or schools that were experiencing desegregation due to *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and *Bolling v. Sharp* in 1954. High school students at these schools had to maneuver the social, emotional, and educational stress of desegregation. This study describes these lived school experiences while documenting the reasons why students and their families decided to desegregate or continue

studying at an all-Black school. This study is also ethnographic since I attempted to understand the participants' values, beliefs, and attitudes, in their particular social and cultural context that 'pushed' them in one educational direction versus another. Finally, the unit of study for this research is the case – or more specifically the multicase – a group of students studied about a particular topic, at a particular time, in a particular region of the country.

### **Context and Participants**

All participants in this study were students who were entering or in high school in 1954 in Washington, DC. Students in this study either attended Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, an all-Black high school well-known for its academic rigor and for its historic stance in the community and nation, Anacostia High School, an all-White high school before integration, but which after *Bolling* and *Brown* opened its doors to Black students, or Cardozo High School, another all-Black school in the District. As will be discussed, Black participants in this study recall very positive experiences at all-Black high schools. However, as the majority of participants in the study attended Dunbar and because of the school's historical importance in Washington, DC and the nation as an academic powerhouse for educating Black students, it is important to pause here and note that Dunbar's

academic excellence was an important reasons why Black families choose to send their children to this school even after the decision in *Brown and Bolling*.

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, founded in 1870, was the first public high school for African Americans in the United States and the first public high school for any student, Black or White in the District of Columbia (Portlock, 2012; Stewart, 2013). Dunbar was instrumental in the education of many prominent African Americans. The school boasted a faculty comprised of many historical “giants”. For example, a few of its graduates have been Sterling Brown, poet and pioneer in the appreciation of African American folklore and literature; Nannie Helen Burroughs, who helped to establish the National Association of Colored Woman; Charles R. Drew, known for his pioneering work in blood banking and blood transfusions; Robert H. Terrell, the first African American judge in DC, and one of Dunbar’s principals. In addition to outstanding graduates, Dunbar has also had distinguished faculty. Anna J. Cooper, the fourth African American in the United States to earn a Ph.D., served as one of Dunbar’s principals. Mary Church Terrell was one of the first African American women to earn a college degree and was the first president of the National Association of Colored Woman was a faculty member. Carter G. Woodson, the Father of Black History month and the founder of the Journal of Negro History, was also on Dunbar’s faculty. Another important quality of Dunbar’s faculty and principals is that an

unusual number of them held Ph.D. degrees. Teachers with advanced degrees thus positioned Dunbar as the nation's best high school for African Americans during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Portlock, 2012; Stewart, 2013). Many prominent figures in education, law, sports, medicine, the military, and politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century call Dunbar their alma mater. The school stood as an example of how to effectively prepare African American students for career or college.

My unit of study is the case. That is, I will attempt to describe and analyze a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, my study can be characterized by being both a single case study with subcases and a multisite case. My focal high school is Dunbar and most of my participants attended this school (case study with subcases). However, two participants attended another all-Black school in DC and two participants attended an integrated school thus, making the study a multisite case study (Merriam, 2009). My hope is that by including a few cases from other school sites, I may see greater variation across cases, thereby making the interpretation a bit more thorough and compelling as well as “enhancing the external validity” of my study (Merriam, 2009, p. 50).

To select my sample group, I used purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002, as cited in Merriam, 2009) based on two criteria. First, participants in this

study were high school students studying in Washington, DC in 1954.

Second, in the case of the African American participants, they were students who either studied at an all Black school, such as Dunbar, or attended Anacostia, an all white high school before desegregation in 1954. Originally, I had only planned to interview Black students who formally attended DC high schools, thus almost all of my participants are African American. However, due to networking to find participants (explained in greater detail below), a white female Anacostia graduate was included on the list of potential research participants. The white female participant was a student who attended an all white school prior to 1954 and continued at this school even when Black students started to attend. It should be noted that all schools were technically subject to desegregation; however, it seems that even after the *Bolling* decision, Dunbar continued to be all Black; although, two of my participants recall seeing two white students for a brief period at Dunbar. So, all-white schools were integrated with Black students rather than White students integrating all-Black schools. In fact, Dunbar to this day continues to serve a mostly African American student body.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

I documented oral histories of students' lived experiences at school during the era of *Brown/Bolling*. These oral histories were gathered primarily

through two qualitative methods: interviews and a focus group; however I also reviewed artifacts and attended the inauguration activities of the new, state-of-the-art Dunbar school building in the summer of 2013.

To locate potential participants, I first contacted two key informants, my mother, Vonciel, and godmother, Theresa, who both attended Dunbar. Then using snowball sampling, they in turn contacted other Dunbar graduates or graduates who had attended other DC schools. I interviewed 11 students; 10 African Americans and 1 White American; 9 attended all-Black schools and 2 attended integrated schools. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face, via Skype, or email and took place from June 2014 to April 2015. Interviewees were asked demographic questions followed by a set of open-ended, semi-structured questions. Follow-up questions were sent via email to all the participants while others were sent to a specific participant, if I needed clarification about a participant's original response. In addition to the interviews, I also conducted a focus group on June 14, 2014. The focus group questions were based on topics and themes that emerged during the interviews. Once the interviews and focus group were concluded, they were color coded for themes. There were five themes that emerged regularly throughout the interviews and focus group:

1. teachers' expressions of care,

2. students' positive experience in segregated schools,
3. teachers' high expectation and investment in students,
4. the school-home connection, and
5. quality education in segregated schools.

In addition to interviews, I collected or reviewed artifacts including school yearbooks, newsletters, and published articles in newspapers or magazines, and information from websites. Furthermore, I drew information from a DVD produced by a Dunbar Alumnus that documents some of Dunbar's history as well as the building of the new school.

Finally, in August of 2013, I went to Washington, DC to document through photographs, video, and field notes both the current school and the newly constructed school. On August 21, 2013, I attended one day of the five-day dedication ceremony of the newly built Dunbar school. I participated in the guided tours for the alumni classes of the 50's and 60's, which gave me the opportunity to contact and talk to more potential participants.

### **My Tension**

As I look back and see myself amidst so many successful Dunbar graduates, I realize I was at that place taking in that moment because of questions that haunted me. As a Black educator I was troubled by the statistics put out by the NAEP that consistently showed Black and Latino

students' tests scores in reading and math to be lower than white students. I was troubled that pedagogical theories such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Funds of Knowledge, and Multicultural Education had been around for more than twenty years but marginalized students, the same students these theories targeted trying to give teachers a better understanding about ways to make these students successful in the classroom, were seemingly having little affect in changing classroom practices for these students. I was unsettled that schools such as Dunbar with a legacy of adequately preparing students for career and college did so within a segregated context under unequal conditions, and desegregated schools could not do the same. I was unsettled. The facts were unsettling. The voices of my participants were unsettling, yet enlightening.

### **Critical Care in Segregated Schools**

All of my participants were in their 70s and retired. In terms of education, I had participants who had no college education to those with graduate degrees, including one participant who had an Ed.D. Although diverse in education and former careers they were consistent in their perception on their education from elementary through high school. As David<sup>1</sup> recalls, "I think from grade 1 to high school, I had a good education." All of the Black participants agreed. Vonciel's<sup>1</sup> characterization of her

educational experience is representative of other participant's description.

She states:

I think it was excellent. I loved my teachers. They were compassionate. They were like your mom. They were, you know, loving and compassionate. They were kind.

The idea of teachers being loving, kind, and compassionate, is one of the major themes I identified in my analysis, and it is one of the elements I have identified as key to the academic success of Black students within segregated schools. I sum this characterization up in the word care. The care that Black teachers had was based in the historical and social context of the times and, as Rolón-Dow (2005) claims, was based on racialized contextual factors in the teacher-student relationship. Thus care, when dealing with communities of color, cannot be color-blind.

As members of the community, Black teachers understand what students needed to succeed in school and in life in America. The care they exhibited encompassed the whole child and was grounded in a critical understanding of being Black in America. David expressed this idea well when he recalled the no-nonsense policy in terms of discipline Black teachers had. He said, "those teachers knew from day one you had to prepare yourself to be and live in America."

The view that society often has and transmits of all-Black educational institutions is based, most often than not, on a deficit view of these schools,

teachers, and students. What I think we are missing and what the participants in my study draw our attention to are the assets and resources these teachers had and provided to Black children. Black teachers in many segregated schools were able to leverage their funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) about what it meant to be Black in American society to successfully prepare students to live, work, and study in America. Not only did they teach in ways that helped students acquire strong academic skills, but cared for them by supporting them emotionally, socially, and intellectually. It is what Valenzuela (cited in Cammarota and Romero, 2006) calls “authentic caring.” Teachers demonstrate authentic caring by taking a genuine interest in their students’ whole being; by making an emotional and human connection with their students (Cammarota and Romero, 2006). Similarly, Noddings (2005) explains that “a caring relation is, in its most basic form, a connection or encounter between two human beings” (p. 15). She goes on to suggest that both the carer and the cared-for have to contribute to the relationship in specific ways in order for the encounter to be called caring. She further expresses that the “state of consciousness” of the carer is defined by two components: engrossment or attention and motivational displacement. Engrossment is characterized by “a full receptivity” (p. 16). That is, my attention is fully and completely centered on the other and their needs. Noddings (2005) considered this to be essential in any caring relation.

Motivational displacement happens when my energies are spent to advance the project or purpose of the other. Thus for Noddings (2005), in a truly caring encounter there is sacrifice of one's self or one's needs in favor of the other's needs and interests. It is important to point out that Noddings' (2005) emphasis is caring as relation instead of caring as an individual virtue. She sees caring as a way of being; not as a set of behaviors. The final idea I would like to consider from Noddings' (2005) relational ethic of care is that for a caring encounter to be considered relational and for the encounter to be considered complete the cared-for must in some way receive the caring, recognize that it has been received, and then respond. There must be some type of reciprocity. Such reciprocity feeds back into the carer's engrossment, thus completing the encounter.

Within the context of segregation Noddings' (2005) concept of care has relevance and importance. First, my participants in many of their interviews attest to a sense of being cared for. Their response to this act of caring was to engage in the teaching and learning process; in essence to perform academically. Dunbar was renowned for producing students who went on to do great things for society (Portlock, 2012; Stewart, 2013). This was possible, in part I believe, because of the caring relationship between teachers, students, and their families.

The connection between a sense of being cared for and how that sense affects academic outcome should not be overlooked. Many students today claim that schools and teachers do not care (Noddings, 2005), and for many their response has been to disengage from school. Using the National Assessment of Educational Progress as a reference, it is clear that something is awry with the education of our nation's Black, Latino, and poor students (<http://nces.ed.gov/>). They have high dropout rates and many are unprepared for college (Orfield, Siegel-Hawley, & Kucsera, 2011).

Care is a fundamental element to successfully educating Black children. However, it is important to point out, that the type of care these study participants talk about has particular characteristics. It is equally important to highlight that the type of care described by my participants is intrinsically linked to race and is based on racialized contextual factors, such as segregated schools. Understanding care and how race operates to influence it is essential.

I have identified three important characteristics of care in segregated schools. First, the care exhibited by Black teachers seems to be all encompassing. It considered the whole child. Care, as expressed in these all Black, segregated settings, was the concern for and the commitment to the cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical well being of students. Second, the type of care expressed by many Black educators during

segregated schooling was grounded in a critical stance. That is, these teachers understood that “society is stratified (i.e., divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines” (Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2012, p. xviii) one of which being race. And third, the care exhibited by Black teachers was embodied by these teachers’ culturally relevant pedagogy.

The participants in this study talked about teachers having their best interest at hand. One participant, Marlene, talked about a teacher seeing students as his children. These teachers’ connection to their students is not surprising as they were part of the Black community, and they saw their commitment to Black students as a way of uplifting the race – their race. The notion of teachers connecting to their students and their students’ community is prevalent in the literature on effectively educating students of color (Frederick & View, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll, González, & Amanti, 1992; Rolón-Dow, 2005; Siddle Walker, 1993).

Besides teachers caring for the whole child, another essential component of care in these segregated schools was a teacher’s political stance vis-à-vis a society and educational system where winners and losers had already been determined. As previously mentioned, study participants talk about caring in terms of how their Black teachers prepared them for an unjust society and the ways in which their teachers nurtured not only their

intellect, but also their identity and self-esteem as Blacks. This point cannot be over emphasized. In the literature on the ways to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, building caring relationships with students and then using this information as a foundation for critical and culturally relevant pedagogy is common and has been shown to have a positive impact on learning. (See for example, Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Garza, 2009; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Gutiérrez, 2002; Siddle Walker, 1993, 1996). In fact, Ladson-Billings (1995) talks about these same characteristics in her study of successful teachers of African American children. She states,

...their common thread of caring was their concern for the implications their work had on their students' lives, the welfare of the community and the unjust social arrangements. Thus, rather than the idiosyncratic caring for individual students (for whom they did seem to care), the teachers spoke of the import of their work for preparing the students for confronting inequitable and undemocratic social structures (p. 474).

Clearly, the successful teachers of African American students studied by Ladson-Billings (1995) incorporated a critical stance to their pedagogy and a care that focused not only on the individual student, but also on the community. Indeed, theorizing teachers' practices from a critical lens, she states, "a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy would necessarily propose to do three things – produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who demonstrate cultural competence, and develop students who

can both understand and critique the existing social order” (p. 474). This notion of critique and informed action to transform schools and society are essential characteristics of a critical perspective (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2009; May & Sleeter, 2010; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012).

It is important to note that although culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in some classrooms has become static, simplistic, and has seen a dulling of its political edge or its omission all together (Ladson-Billing, 2014; Sleeter, 2012), CRP has always been about developing sociopolitical consciousness in students. Like critical pedagogues using culturally relevant pedagogy in today’s educational system, Black educators in segregated schools had political clarity about their work. Beauboeuf-LaFontant (1999) asserts that common in the literature on culturally relevant teaching in regards to African American students is the notion that successful teachers with African American students are ones who are “knowledgeable about Black culture and supportive of its norms” (p. 704). She points out that another notion implied within this same literature is the “political understanding of education held by these educators” (p. 704), and it is this understanding that makes them sensitive to and supportive of students of color struggle against racism and oppression. Beauboeuf-LaFontant (1999) posits that to teach marginalized students, it is not enough to be culturally

similar to or understand them. Essential to the successful education of such groups of students is the “politically relevant teaching” successful teachers bring to bear when teaching students of color. That is, these teachers understand the “political, historical, social, as well as cultural” contexts of traditionally marginalized students (p. 704). Underpinning a teacher’s politically relevant teaching is her political clarity. Bartolomé (1994) describes political clarity as

the process by which individuals achieve a deepening awareness of the sociopolitical and economic realities that shape their lives and their capacity to recreate them. In addition, it refers to the process by which individuals come to better understand possible linkages between macro-level political, economic, and social variables and subordinated groups’ academic performance at the micro-level classroom. Thus, it invariably requires linkages between sociocultural structures and schooling (p. 178).

In sum, politically clear educators’ pedagogy is relevant because they take into account the “political experiences of inequity and disenfranchisement of their students” (Beauboeuf-LaFontant, 1999, p. 705). Such political clarity was characteristic of many Black teachers teaching during the Jim Crow Era in the South and in segregated schools in the North (Foster, 1997; Frederick & View, 2009).

Finally, it is important to contextualize the type of care seen in segregated schooling. Race, like other personal qualities such as language, gender, and class, must be taken into account when considering how to

effectively educate students of color. Research by Rolón-Dow (2005) holds race as an essential component within the notion of care. She highlights three characteristics of what she calls critical care. It

- is grounded in a historical and political understanding of the circumstances and conditions faced by minority communities,
- seeks to expose how racialized beliefs inform ideological standpoints,
- translates race-conscious historical and ideological understandings and insights from counternarratives into authentic relationships, pedagogical practices, and institutional structures that benefit [students of color] (p. 104).

Because race then and now affects the daily lives of students of color and their communities, it cannot be ignored by our schools or by our classroom teachers. Schools and teachers alike must begin to re-conceptualize classroom practices that will better meet the needs of Black students. One way to begin to do this is by examining the pedagogical practices of Black teachers in segregated schools.

### **A Final Reflection**

I do think Black teachers educating Black students there's a stronger sense of understanding; more of I want you to be the best you can be so I'm gonna help you get there. You asked about what made the difference. I think it's just the compassion that they had for education and the fact that they wanted to see their students excel and helped you with resources to get you to where you wanted to be. Rather than tell you you're not college material, but makin' you feel oh, yeah you are college material and I'm gonna help you get there. And that helps you build pride. (Theresa, Black participant who studied at Dunbar)

I think all three Black schools that I attended were excellent Black schools. (talking about teachers) They would just interact with us. Recess they would be with us and they didn't have to be. They helped us with our studies if we needed it. They were just excellent teachers, They stayed after school and everything. A lot of these new ones don't have the time. (Joan, Black participant who studied at Dunbar)

What I didn't have the entire time I was in high school was the feeling that the teachers there cared about me. That they had my psychological and social well being in mind. I was a nuisance. I had no support system. None at all. I had that when I was at a Black school. I had it from the teachers. I had it from the students. I had none of that during my time at Anacostia (Doris, Black participate who studied at Anacostia)

The sentiments captured in these quotes reveal the difference between experiences of care in segregated schooling and those in integrated schools.

My participants were unanimous in describing the quality of care they received in segregated schools. A quality of education not necessarily defined by tangible resources like books and infrastructure, but a quality of education defined by the intangible, the care they received by compassionate Black educators. Voices like the participants in my study often times go unheard and unheeded by teacher educators today. It is my belief that if we want to make any real and significant improvements in the academic performance of Black and Brown students in schools today it is imperative that teacher educators and preparation programs consider how Black teachers in

segregated schools leveraged their funds of knowledge to support and scaffold students to academic success.

**Note:**

1. All participant names are real.

## References

- Bartolome, L.I. (1994). Beyond the methods fetish: Towards a humanizing pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(2), 173- 194.
- Beaufoeuf-Lafontant, T. (1999). A movement against and beyond boundaries: “Politically Relevant” among African American teachers. *Teachers College Record*, 100(4), 702-723.
- Boykin, A.W., & Noguera, P. (2011). *Creating the opportunity to learn: Moving from research to practice to close the achievement gap*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Cammarota, J. & Romero, A. (2006). Critically compassionate intellectualism for Latina/o students: Raising Voices about the silencing in our schools. *Multicultural Education*, 14(2), 16-23.
- Darder, A., Baltodano, M.P., & Torres, R.D. (Eds.). *The critical pedagogy reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Duncan-Andrade, J., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from theory to practice in urban schools*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Foster, M. (1997). *Black teachers on teaching*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Frederick, R.M., & View, J.L. (2009). Facing the rising sun: A history of black educators in Washington, DC, 1800-2008. *Urban Education*, 44(5), 571-607.
- Garza, R. (2009). Latino and White high school students’ perceptions of caring behaviors: Are we culturally responsive to our students? *Urban Education*, 44(3), 297-321.
- González, N., Moll, L.C., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. New York: Routledge.
- Gutiérrez, R. (2002). Beyond essentialism: The complexity of language in teaching mathematics to Latina/o students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 39(4), 1047-1088.

- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74-84.
- May, S., & Sleeter, C.E. (2010). *Critical multiculturalism: Theory and praxis*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Orfield, G., Siegel-Hawley, G., & Kucsera, J. (2011). Divided we fail. Segregation and inequality in the Southland's schools. Retrieved from <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>
- Portlock, P. (Producer). (2012). The Dunbar legacy: Building on a solid foundation. (Available from Phil Portluck Productions).
- Ritchie, D.A. (2003). *Doing oral history: A practical guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2012). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Siddle Walker, E.V. (1993). Interpersonal caring in the "Good" segregated schooling of African-American children: Evidence from the case of Caswell County Training School. *The Urban Review*, 25(1), 63-77.
- Siddle Walker, V. (1996). *Their highest potential: An African American school community in the segregated South*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Sleeter, C. E. (2012). Confronting the marginalization of culturally responsive pedagogy. *Urban Education*, 47(3), 562-584.

Stewart, A. (2013). *First class: The legacy of Dunbar, American's first Black public high school*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books.

## APPENDIX C

### Making Race and Racism Visible: Respecting and Valuing the Voices of Educators of Color in Teacher Preparation Programs

Understanding who we are and how that influences what we do can be a powerful and empowering process.

Like many, I never gave much thought to segregated schooling. I just accepted the bleak picture of the inadequate schooling of African Americans before the landmark decision of *Brown v. the Board of Education* (hitherto *Brown*) in 1954. I had accepted, uncritically of course, the picture that had been painted of segregated schooling as truth. This all changed in 2010.

In June of 2010, I entered a Master's – Certification (MCERT) program at the University of Maryland in College Park. My focus was teaching English as a second language. During my student teaching I was confronted with the reality of the treatment of English learners (EL) in today's schools. This reality was especially hard during my student teaching in high school. I saw first hand how schools systematically worked to oppress and push out ELs, especially Latino males. I saw the frustration of ESL teachers worn down by the constant struggle to obtain equitable opportunities for their students. Although years earlier I had been introduced to the idea of liberatory education (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994), my student teaching posts triggered

serious and critical thinking about issues of social justice for emergent bilinguals. After receiving my acceptance letter to start a Ph.D. program at a large, public university in the Southwest, I remember a colleague in the MCERT program questioning my decision to go to Arizona as it had an infamous reputation for oppressive laws and practices against bilingual education and toward emergent bilinguals. I remember telling my classmate that although the state had some clearly racist and oppressive laws, I did not believe I would face these same macro and microaggressions at the university. I was wrong.

In order to fund my Ph.D. program, I was given undergraduate courses to teach in both the early childhood program and the elementary education program. Unfortunately, after teaching for two and half years in these programs, I left that teaching post due to the micro and macroaggressions I experienced as a result of my attempt to teach from a critical lens. This expository essay, told through an autoethnographic inquiry lens, chronicles my process in coming to understand how who I am impacted in powerful ways, who I became as an educator, and how my dissertation research on segregated schooling deepened these understandings. I conclude the chapter by turning my attention to teacher education programs and the importance of including the voices of educators of color as pre-service students learn culturally relevant and sustaining ways to meet students' linguistic, cultural,

and educational needs. Including the voices of faculty of color can help move students to a place of critical compassionate intellectualism (Camarota & Romero, 2006), through which students will be able to form emerging/transforming stories as critical educators, countering the stock stories they were told. My hope is that by creating new stories, transforming stories, they can foster the same critical compassionate intellectualism in their own classrooms.

The conceptual and theoretical framework for this article is grounded in critical theories. My personal story, reconstructed from a collection of narrative-type papers I wrote throughout my doctoral program I call my “Goin’ for Broke” series, will be based on critical race theory (CRT), specifically the tenet “the centrality of experiential knowledge” (Solórzano, 1997, p. 7) and framed using Bell’s (2010) framework of storytelling for social justice. Within this narrative I briefly reflect on and analyze how my experience teaching mostly white, female pre-service teachers helped me rethink my role and responsibility as a Black educator preparing teachers to teach students of color.

Two concepts were important in this analysis: King’s (1991) idea of dysconscious racism and hooks’ (1989) description of revolutionary feminist pedagogy. I suggest that pre-service teachers must grapple with, understand, and ultimately come to terms with their dysconscious racism (King, 1991).

What I advocate for in this article is that the voices of educators of color within these teacher preparation programs can be a tremendous asset as white students reflect on their own dysconsciousness and white privilege.

### **Goin' for Broke**

From 2011 to 2013 I wrote a series of papers I titled my “Goin’ for broke” series. These papers documented my journey and reflections about being a Black, Spanish-English bilingual educator teaching in a teacher preparation program that prepared mostly white, female, monolingual pre-service teachers. I wrote these papers because I was convinced that as educators we have a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure that all students succeed, and that in light of the miseducation of many Black, Latino, and Latina students it was time for teachers everywhere to “go for broke”; that is, to “[do] whatever it takes to shine the brightest lights on educational inequities experienced by poor children, African American and other children of color, children identified with disabilities, and children affected by the intersection of all these issues” (Blanchett, 2009, p. 385).

In the fall of 2011, my first semester in the Ph.D. program, I taught my first class, a literacy course for pre-service teachers who were getting their endorsement in either bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL). I taught a curriculum course to a similar group the next semester and

then moved into teaching social studies. All of these courses were either for students in the early childhood or elementary education programs. As I learned and read more about social justice and critical pedagogy and began to understand the failures of our current education system for Black and Latino communities - the communities I generally focused on in my own reading and research - I felt an obligation to take a more critical approach to the way I taught. As most of the pre-service teachers in the program were white, female, monolingual, and middle class, I felt a responsibility to these teachers' future students to bring a critical lens to my work in the classroom. Initially, I was unsure about how to do this and struggled to find a balance between what students expected to see in a social studies methods course and my commitment to teaching from a social justice perspective. What also made this marriage of ideas difficult to balance was that I often felt alone in this quest, especially with how to deal with student resistance. Even though there were young, assistant professors working in the teacher preparation program who were committed to issues of social justice, most were not folks of color, and they were not part of my immediate cohort instructional team. Within my cohort instructional team there were colleagues who claimed to work from a critical lens and who claimed to be concerned with issues of social justice and multiculturalism; however, they adhered to a more liberal form of multiculturalism instead of working from the theoretical lens of

critical multiculturalism (May & Sleeter, 2010). I later found an ally in the university community – the community liaison for the early childhood program, a Mexican American woman who had a deep understanding of social justice and who worked from a critical lens. During my last semester working in the program she often accompanied me in the classroom and was someone with whom I could discuss student resistance. She was a wonderful support. I also found allies in a few other educators in the department, but unfortunately there was never a critical mass out spoken enough to affect the kind of change I thought the program needed.

### **Microaggressions and My Presumed Incompetence**

In 1969, Pierce described what it meant to be Black and living in the United States at that time. He stated, “[t]o be black in the United States today means to be *psychologically terrorized, politically tyrannized, socially minimized, and economically ignored*” (p. 303). In 1970 he coined the term “microaggressions.” These “offensive mechanisms” (Pierce, 1969) or “racial microaggressions” (Pierce, 1970) are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007). Furthermore as Pierce suggested in 1969 and other scholars since then (see for example Smith et al. 2007; Franklin et al., 2014) dealing with these seemingly

innocuous comments or behaviors in fact cause psychological and physical harm to people of color; what some scholars call racial battle fatigue. Racial battle fatigue describes the “social-psychological stress responses (e.g., frustration; anger; exhaustion; physical avoidance; resistance; verbally, nonverbally, or physically fighting back; and coping strategies)” and is “the result of constant physiological, psychological, cultural, and emotional coping with racial microaggressions in less-than-ideal and racially hostile or unsupportive environments (campus or otherwise)” (Smith et al., 2007, p. 552 & 555 respectively).

Forty-Five years later since Pierce’s description of what it meant to be Black and live in the United States, I would suggest that this is still what it means today to be Black living, working and being schooled in the United States. Likewise, for many Black educators teaching in universities today social minimization – being considered “insignificant” and “irrelevant” – is a daily occurrence.

The title of the book edited by Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González and Harris (2012), *Presumed Incompetent*, expresses exactly how I regularly felt during my two and half years teaching in the teacher preparation program at my university. The fact that I taught from a critical lens, made several of my undergraduate students uncomfortable, and they complained about the content of the course and the way that I presented it as well as

questioned my competence around such issues. One day students were sharing some of their experiences in their cooperating teachers' classrooms and one student commented on an incident with an "oriental student." When I mentioned that that term should no longer be used to talk about people, the student responded stating that her cooperating teacher used the same term, and then asked if the use of the term was something I considered to be inappropriate or something others as well considered inappropriate. It seemed that my explanation was unconvincing, and so I consulted with a new assistant professor I was getting to know, who worked from a critical lens, and who happened to be Korean and asked if she would come to class and give a presentation on some of the issues on how the Asian and Asian American communities are labeled in the United States.

Although situations like the one described above were frustrating and disheartening, they were tempered at times by the comments and support of students of color in the program who often had just the opposite reaction. They identified with the social justice topics discussed and were glad that I was willing to discuss them; although a couple of students specifically told me that they would not speak up in class because they did not want problems from their white classmates. After my advisor, a Mexican American man committed to issues of social justice and a long time professor in the department, explained to me that he had been summoned to meetings

convened by university administrators to talk about student complaints, I decided to discontinue my graduate teaching assistantship in the program. The meetings about how I organized and conducted my classes were convened without my knowledge and input and when my advisor asked if they had talked with me about these complaints the response he received was about how difficult it was to talk to me. Not only was I presumed incompetent by students, staff, and faculty; in addition, I was perceived to be an angry Black woman with whom it was difficult to talk. My decision to stop working in the program was influenced more by the micro and macroaggressions experienced at the hands of faculty then by those from students. I remember my advisor, telling me “they don’t understand what you are trying to do.” I knew he was right, but I did not understand at that time why he was right. Eventually the department came to a tacit realization that microaggressions were pervasive in the teacher preparation programs, and the Department Chair convened what would later be known as the Equity and Social Justice Committee (ESJC) to help guide explorations of adequate and compassionate responses to the everyday aggressions experienced by students, faculty, and staff of color in the department. However, by the time I graduated in 2015 there still had not been real and sustained change in the department. The reason I believe there was not the kind of change I had hoped for was because although at our program and department meetings

and in the ESJC committee meetings many faculty and staff paid lip service to the ideals of social justice and multiculturalism, they adhered, nonetheless, to liberal multiculturalism while I sought critical multiculturalism.

May and Sleeter (2010) state that the focus of liberal multiculturalism is “on getting along better, primarily via a greater recognition of, and respect for, ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic differences.” They go on to say that “[l]iberal multicultural education may be easy to implement but this is only so because it abdicates any corresponding recognition of unequal, and often untidy, power relations that underpin inequality and limit cultural interaction, however well meaning” (p. 4). On the other hand May and Sleeter (2010) explain that critical multiculturalism “gives priority to structural analysis of unequal power relationships, analyzing the role of institutionalized inequities, including but not necessarily limited to racism” (p. 10, emphasis in original). “Central to critical multiculturalism is naming and actively challenging racism and other forms of injustice, not simply recognizing and celebrating differences and reducing prejudice” (Berlak & Movenda, 2001, p. 92 as cited in May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 10). I assert that some faculty and staff held a more liberal view of social justice and multiculturalism, and most likely one of our major differences was in the “naming and actively challenging racism and other forms of injustice” (Berlak & Movenda, 2001, p. 92 as cited in May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 10).

Although I was no longer teaching in the teacher preparation program, I continued to reflect on my own practice as I was interested in continuing to provide future students with a space where they could begin to reflect upon some of their taken-for-granted concepts of society and education. I desired a pedagogy that had “political power” and that was “radical” (hooks, 1989). I wanted a space where students could be transformed and experience “education as the practice of freedom” (Freire, 1970/1993).

One notion that resonated with me was hooks’ (1989) idea of a feminist classroom as a place:

“where there is a sense of struggle, where there is visible acknowledgement of the union of theory and practice, where we work together as teachers and students to overcome the estrangement and alienation that have become so much the norm in the contemporary university. Most importantly, feminist pedagogy should engage students in a learning process that makes the world “more rather than less ‘” (p. 51).

Although I did not necessarily see myself as a feminist, hooks’ characterization of a revolutionary feminist pedagogy was representative of the work I desired to do with students.

She describes revolutionary feminist pedagogy as having the following characteristics:

- A pedagogy that relinquishes ties to traditional ways of teaching that reinforce domination,

- A pedagogy that focuses on the teacher-student relationship and the issue of power,
- A pedagogy whose standard of valuation differs from the norm,
- A pedagogy that defines the terms of engagement,
- A pedagogy that constantly tries new methods, new approaches, and
- A pedagogy taught by revolutionary feminist. (hooks, 1989, p. 52-54).

Guided by these characteristics, I began to rethink the teacher-student role in the classroom, desiring to give students more of a voice in the construction of the class. This was challenging due to university constraints; however, this approach allowed me to reflect on how schools, and in this case a university, are simultaneously “sites of both domination and liberation” (McLaren, 2009, p. 62) and what my role would be in negotiating spaces of liberation for my students. These ideas came together quite nicely during my last semester teaching. I was offered the possibility to teach a course that specifically addressed issues of race, language, and culture in education. Students in the course came from a variety of disciplines across the university. Most of the students were White, but I also had two female students who identified as Black, one male student who identified as Black, and several students who identified as Latino/Mexican/Mexican American/Chicano. As students had elected to take the course I did not get the push-back from students I had experienced in the teacher preparation

program, and I was able to see first hand how the school can be “a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment and self-transformation” (McLaren, 2009, p. 62); not just for my students, but for me as well.

### **The Role of Race and Racism in Teacher Education**

Racism is “the major stumbling block in preparing teachers for success with African American students” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 465).

Furthermore, when considering how racist ideologies can have a negative impact on students, one essential component of any teacher preparation program must be to get students to examine race and racism and its impact and influence on the lives of students of color both inside and outside of school (see Milner IV, 2015).

Cammarota and Romero (2006) describe the silencing that happens in schools by the enactment of power through the curriculum, racist ideologies, and pedagogy. This silencing has a detrimental effect on students of color and may lead to their dropping out of school or their checking out of school mentally. To counter the silencing imposed by such institutional power, they put forth a pedagogical trilogy Cammarota and Romero (2006) call “critically compassionate intellectualism” (p. 18). This pedagogical approach brings together the essential elements of critical pedagogy, authentic caring, and social justice curriculum. They suggest that implementing these components simultaneously in the classroom will better prepare students of color to be

active participants in developing a truly democratic society, and one in which the students thrive academically.

Likewise, Solórzano and Yosso (2001) working within a critical race theory in education framework suggest that racial stereotyping can cause teachers to have low expectations of students of color, segregate students of color to separate schools or separate classrooms within schools, “dumb down” the curriculum for students of color, and have the expectation that students of color will occupy lower level jobs.

Understanding these possible consequences when future teachers are not encouraged to confront issues of race, racism, and White privilege led me to address these topics in my classes. This entailed significant changes in the curriculum. These changes, as mentioned, were met with resistance from students and from faculty and staff in the program. Many students insisted on a more color-blind approach to working with students of color, than reflecting on the role race or social class plays in education.

Although experiencing resistance is not uncommon for educators working within an antiracist framework (Ladson-Billings, 2009), getting students to think critically about what King (1991) describes as dysconscious racism is challenging, but necessary if students of color are to ever receive an equitable education.

King (1991) describes dysconscious racism as “the limited and distorted understanding [some] students have about inequity and cultural diversity – understandings that make it difficult for them to act in favor of truly equitable education” (p. 132-133). She goes on to say that it is “a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness (that is, not unconsciousness) but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness” (p.135). She asserts that dysconsciousness is “an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given” (p. 135). What these definitions highlight is that this type of thinking is limited, distorted, and uncritical which allows students to readily accept what they know to be true. Furthermore when confronted about their dysconsciousness students feel attacked; their identity challenged; common reactions expressed by students in my classes. King (1991) affirms that “[a]ny serious challenge to the status quo that calls this racial privilege into question inevitably challenges the self-identity of White people who have internalized these ideological justifications” (p.135). So, what is to be done?

King (1991) asserts that students need the opportunity to not only analyze racism from a structural, cultural, or individual level, but classes also

need to “address the cognitive distortions of dysconscious racism” (p. 140), for example understanding that there are multiple ways of reading and making sense of the world. If teaching programs do not tackle both these issues, she believes students will not be able to “distinguish between racist justification of the status quo (which limit their thought, self-identity, and responsibility to take action) and socially unacceptable individual prejudice or bigotry (which students often disavow)” (p. 140). If we want students to truly consider the changes needed in society and education then such ideologies must be challenged. King (1991) maintains that if we want what she calls “liberatory, social-reconstructionist educators” (p.142) then teaching preparation programs have to provide students with the tools to “adequate[ly] understand how society works as well as the “opportunities to think about the need for fundamental social change” (p. 142).

To address the issue of dysconscious racism and move her students to a more liberatory social-reconstructionist perspective, King (1991) uses a pedagogy that is transformative, critical, and liberatory in nature. She attempts to provide her pre-service students a context where they can “consider alternative conceptions of themselves and society” (p. 134).

Although pedagogies such as King’s or Cammarota and Romero’s are not new, many teacher preparation programs continue to do an inadequate job in preparing teachers to work with linguistically and culturally diverse students

(Darling-Hammond, 2010; Howard, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner IV, 2015; Nieto, 2009). In fact, I would contend that when teacher preparation programs choose not to teach their students to examine their own dysconscious racism, these programs become accomplices in the violation of Black and Brown children already perpetrated on them by the educational system.

### **Respecting and Valuing the Voice of Educators of Color**

One of the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) is “the centrality of experiential knowledge” (Solórzano, 1997, p. 7); specifically the lived experiences of people of color as told through methods such as storytelling, family histories, narratives, testimonios, or biographies (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Their knowledge and experiences are seen as critical, legitimate, and valuable. Although CRT was originally used to examine issues of race and racism in legal studies, it and its tenets can be a crucial tool in analyzing, understanding, and teaching issues of race and racism in education (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

The voices of educators of color are essential in education because they often provide counterstories to what Bell (2010) has called the stock stories, or the normative stories, students have been told throughout their educational studies. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) posit that counterstories are

“tool[s] for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege” (p. 32).

My voice as a Black educator and mother was silenced by university administrators, and thus my counterstories and those of my community were also silenced – counterstories of resilience, resistance, and liberation; counterstories that could speak truth to the relationship between racial oppression and white privilege; and counterstories that disrupt the presumed universality of the dominant stock stories. When Black educators and other educators of color are not included in teacher preparation programs an important voice in understanding privilege and oppression goes unheard.

As for me, my experience as a Black teacher educator in a predominately white department has pushed me to think deeper about my role and place in teacher preparation programs. My commitment and resolve to teach for social justice is unwavering and even firmer thanks to my doctoral studies, my dissertation research on the important role Black teachers played in the lives of students in segregated schools, and my teaching experiences. The journey has not been easy. Educating for equity is not easy. It takes a great deal of time and effort on the part of teachers; however, the building blocks for how to do this well have been thoroughly researched (see Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2009, among others). Thus there is no excuse for why

every teacher completing a teacher preparation program should not have the knowledge, skills, and strategies to meet the diverse needs of all students. Teacher education programs and the colleges of education that house them must become the change they want to see in their students. There is variety in how programs model the culturally responsive and activist approaches they hope to see in the nation's P-12 classrooms, but programs must become more proactive in how they train teachers for classrooms that are becoming more Black and Brown.

Teacher preparation programs must recruit and retain educators of color as their lived experiences and the experiences of their communities will help White students on their journey to understanding their own dysconscious racism and becoming more critically compassionate in their intellectualism. These are the steps programs must take to pay more than just mere lip service to educating for equity and begin to put into place the elements of "powerful teacher education" grounded in the ideals and principles of teacher education for critical social justice. Our students' lives depend on it.

## References

- Bell, L.A. (2010). *Storytelling for social justice: Connecting narrative and the arts in antiracist teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Blanchett, W. J. (2006). Disproportionate representation of African American students in special education: Acknowledging the role of white privilege and racism. *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), 24-28.
- Cammarota, J., & Romero, A. (2006). Critically compassionate intellectualism for Latina/o students: Raising Voices about the silencing in our schools. *Multicultural Education*, 14(2), 16-23.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How American's commitment to equity will determine our future*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Dixson, A. & Rousseau, C. (2005). And we are still not saved: critical race theory in education ten years later. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 7-27.
- Franklin, J. D., Smith, W. A., Hung, M. (2014). Racial battle fatigue for Latina/o students: A quantitative perspective. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 13(4), 303-322.
- Freire, P. (1970/1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Gutiérrez y Muhs, G., Flores Niemann, Y., González, C. G., & Harris, A.P. (Eds.). (2012). *Presumed incompetent: The intersections of race and class for women in academia*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- hooks, bell (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress. Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Howard, G. R. (2006). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- King, J.E. (1991). Dysconscious Racism: Ideology, Identity, and the Miseducation of Teachers. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 60(2), 133-146.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dream-keepers: Successful teachers of African American children* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68.
- May, & Sleeter, C. (Eds.). (2010). *Critical multiculturalism: Theory and Praxis*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- McLaren, P. (2009). Critical pedagogy: A look at the major concepts. In A. Darder, M. P. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Milner IV, H. R. (2015). *Rac(e)ing to class: Confronting poverty and race in the schools and classrooms*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Nieto, S. (2009). Bringing bilingual education out of the basement and other imperatives for teacher education. In A. Darder, M. P. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres(Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pierce, C. (1969). Is bigotry the basis of the medical problems of the ghetto? In J.C. Norman (Ed.), *Medicine in the Ghetto* (301-312). New York: Meredith.
- Pierce, C. (1970). Offensive mechanisms. In F. B. Barbour (Ed.), *The Black '70's* (pp. 265-282).
- Smith, W. A., Allen, W. R., & Danley, L. L. (2007). "Assume the Position...You Fit the Description": Psychosocial Experiences and racial battle fatigue

among African American college students. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51(4), 551-578.

Solórzano, D. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical race theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 24(3), 5-19.

Solórzano, D. & Yosso, T. (2001). From racial stereotyping and deficit discourse toward a critical race theory in teacher education. *Multicultural Education*, 9(1), 2-8.

Solórzano, D. & Yosso, T. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271-286.