



Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality: Working Through Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen

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This author introduces a framework to guide researchers into a process of racial and cultural awareness, consciousness, and positionality as they conduct education research. The premise of the argument is that dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen can emerge for researchers when they do not pay careful attention to their own and others' racialized and cultural systems of coming to know, knowing, and experiencing the world. Education research is used as an analytic site for discussion throughout this article, but the framework may be transferable to other academic disciplines. After a review of literature on race and culture in education and an outline of central tenets of critical race theory, a nonlinear framework is introduced that focuses on several interrelated qualities: researching the self, researching the self in relation to others, engaged reflection and representation, and shifting from the self to system.

Keywords: critical race theory; culture; epistemology; race; research

Debates, discussions, and perspectives on who can and should conduct research with and about people and communities of color are somewhat common in educational discourse (cf. Banks, 1998; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Tillman, 2002). Tillman, for instance, raised the questions of who can and should conduct research with and about African Americans. Like Tillman, I do not believe that researchers must come from the racial or cultural community under study to conduct research in, with, and about that community. It seems that researchers instead should be actively engaged, thoughtful, and forthright regarding tensions that can surface when conducting research where issues of race and culture are concerned. Moreover, it is important that researchers possess or are pursuing deeper racial and cultural knowledge about themselves and the community or people under study. Where racialized knowledge is concerned, Tatum (2001) wrote,

In a race-conscious society, the development of a positive sense of racial/ethnic identity not based on assumed superiority or inferiority is an important task for *both* White people and people of color. The development of this positive identity is a lifelong process that often requires *unlearning the misinformation and stereotypes* we have internalized not only about others, but also about ourselves. (p. 53)

In other words, some researchers and people of color may have been what I call kidnapped into believing that they are inferior and thus concentrate on negative attributes of people and communities of color. Where cultural knowledge is concerned, what matters in Tillman's (2002) assessment is "whether the researcher has the cultural knowledge to accurately interpret and validate the experiences" (p. 4) of others in a study.

In this article, I introduce a framework to guide researchers in a process of racial and cultural consciousness as they conduct education research. The framework rejects practices in which researchers detach themselves from the research process, particularly when they reject their racialized and cultural positionality in the research process. I argue that it may be necessary for researchers to consider dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen in conducting research. Those conducting studies that have an explicit focus on race and culture, in addition to studies that do not necessarily have race and culture at their core, may find the framework useful. By seen dangers, I mean the dangers that can explicitly emerge as a result of the decisions researchers make in their studies. Unseen dangers are those that are hidden, covert, implicit, or invisible in the research process. For instance, if the researcher is not conscious of dangers that may surface in a study, they are unseen by him or her. Unforeseen dangers are those that are unanticipated or unpredicted in a research project based on the decisions that researchers make in the research process. Specific examples of these dangers will be discussed later in this article, with special attention placed on issues of race and culture.¹

In the process of conducting research, dangers can emerge when and if researchers do not engage in processes that can circumvent misinterpretations, misinformation, and misrepresentations of individuals, communities, institutions, and systems. The proposed framework attempts to guide and assist researchers in working through these dangers. As discussed later in this article, when researchers are not mindful of the enormous role of their own and others' racialized positionality and cultural ways of knowing, the results can be dangerous to communities and individuals of color. In short, I argue that dangers may emerge that researchers can see or cannot see and that they cannot anticipate, predict, or expect in the research process.

This article rests on several interrelated premises grounded in the research, theory, and practice of other scholars:

- People of color historically have been misrepresented, exploited, silenced, and taken for granted in education research (Dillard, 2000; Stanfield, 1995).

Educational Researcher, Vol. 36, No. 7, pp. 388–400
DOI: 10.3102/0013189X07309471
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- Some education researchers have given privileged status to dominant, White voices, beliefs, ideologies, and views over the voices of people of color (Gordon, 1990; Tillman, 2002).
- Researchers' multiple and varied positions, roles, and identities are intricately and inextricably embedded in the process and outcomes of education research (Chapman, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Stanley, 2007).

For these reasons guides and frameworks are needed to (a) contribute to and extend the discourse about researchers' roles, responsibilities, and positionality; (b) assist and empower researchers in the process, production, and outcomes of inquiry; and (c) hold researchers more accountable to the communities and people with whom they conduct research. Consequently, the proposed framework attempts to guide researchers from various racial and cultural backgrounds—White researchers and researchers of color—to deeper levels of awareness and consciousness in conducting education research. How can researchers work through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen in the practice of their inquiry, especially to do justice to issues of race and culture?

The framework and discussion that follow are grounded in two interconnected bodies of literature: (a) research on the color and culture line and (b) critical race theory. These bodies of literature provide an important historical backdrop and lens to help elucidate the complex nature of race and culture in the process and outcomes of conducting education research. The next sections consider these bodies of work.

Research on the Color and Culture Line

Dating back to Du Bois's (1903) and Woodson's (1933) scholarship, a growing and important body of theory and research points succinctly to issues of race (e.g., Gunaratnam, 2003; King, 1991; Lee, Lomotey, & Shujaa, 1990; C. Lewis, 2006; Siddle-Walker, 1996; Tyson, 1998) and culture (e.g., Ball, 2000; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Hilliard, 1992; Howard, 2001; Irizarry, 2006; James, 2004; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002) in education research. In short, this body of literature has provided alternative epistemologies, and methodologies for studying people of color and their multiple and varied identities and experiences. The need to extend what we know and how we know it where people of color are concerned is grounded in a reality that Dillard (2000) convincingly explained: People of color are not White people with pigmented or colored skin. Their experiences are shaped by (among other qualities) their racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage. Cruz (2001) maintained that scholars of color have had to "create and develop alternative spaces and methodologies for the study of their communities" (p. 658) to more fully and appropriately capture and represent lived experiences among populations of color. This body of work is vast in terms of breadth and depth, but for the purposes of this article I will focus on three central and related themes that have emerged from my review of the literature: (a) disrupting and extending notions of normality, (b) disrupting deficit discourses and beliefs, and (c) disrupting and extending the socioeconomic status (SES) rationale.

Disrupting and Extending Notions of Normality

To an extent, research on the color and culture line has questioned, challenged, problematized, and disrupted dominant and hegemonic notions of what is categorized, conceptualized, and

accepted as "normal" in educational practices (cf. Chapman, 2007; Milner, 2007a; Morris, 2004) and in education research (cf. Dillard, 2000; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Stanley, 2007). The very nature and sources of "acceptable" knowledge construction and representation have been examined, critiqued, and analyzed (Dillard, 2000; Lorde, 1982, 1984; Tate, 1997). Questioning what it means to experience and live in a world that does not necessarily find the views, preferences, and experiences among people of color to be "normal," "acceptable," or "valid" is a recurrent charge for some who engage in research about race and culture (cf. Dillard, 2000; Gordon, 1990; Stanfield, 1995). The dominant and oppressive perspective is that White people, their beliefs, experiences, and epistemologies (Scheurich & Young, 1997) are often viewed as "the norm" by which others are compared, measured, assessed, and evaluated (Foster, 1999). For instance, in terms of practice, students of color in schools on all levels (from pre-K to graduate or professional school) are often placed in remedial courses to "catch up" or "live up" to a norm for which the model is their White classmates. Research suggests that people of color may experience a different type of "normal" life and that excellence can and does emerge in multiple and varied forms: People and communities of color from all walks of life can be and are successful (Morris, 2004). In short, there is value and promise in people who have had a range of experiences in life; *different*, in this sense, does not necessarily mean deficit or deficient (Ford, 1996; Milner, 2007a). In short, along with the authors of this body of work, I argue for a deeper, more contextualized look at race and culture that goes beyond the dichotomy of normal and abnormal.

Notions of normality, where racialized and cultural "others" are viewed as negative, are the results of ingrained systems of knowing. To clarify, Ladson-Billings (2000) explained how epistemologies encompass not only ways of knowing and perceiving the world but also systems of knowing the world. The systems that guide educational inquiry may portray certain groups of people, particularly people and communities of color, in deficit and deficient terms (Ford, 1996; Stanfield, 1995). Ladson-Billings suggested that racialized systems of knowing can make it difficult for researchers and others to interpret or conceptualize a situation in a community of color as normal, particularly when researchers do not understand how systems of knowing can marginalize and objectify people of color. Different from the White majority, in this sense, is often perceived as insufficient or substandard. In sum, one theme from research and theory on the color and culture line is a focus on disrupting and extending what it means to be "normal."

Disrupting Deficit Discourses and Beliefs

Research on the color and culture line also has disrupted and shed light on deficit discourses and beliefs, particularly where people of color are concerned, in the study and representation of people and communities of color. Haberman (2000) stressed that "language is not an innocent reflection of how we think. The terms we use control our perceptions, shape our understanding, and lead us to particular proposals for improvement" (p. 203). Moreover, Dillard (2000) challenged researchers to rethink meanings of constructs in education research, and she conceptualized an *endarkened* epistemology rather than an *enlightened* one—building on the pivotal work of feminist theorist Patricia

Hill Collins (2000). The idea is that epistemologies need to be “colored” and that the research community may need to be exposed to theories, perspectives, views, positions, and discourses that emerge from the experiences and points of view of people and researchers of color.

Clearly, there is a cognitive dimension to deficit discourses. In other words, deficit discourses may surface from the belief systems and thinking of researchers, teachers, practitioners, and policy makers. This body of research highlights the tensions in how researchers have perceived and discussed people of color; it attempts to hold researchers (more) accountable for their views and the ways in which they discuss, act upon, and share them (cf. Ford, 1996; Milner, 2007b).

Disrupting and Extending the Socioeconomic Status Rationale

Research and theory on the color and culture line also disrupts and extends the SES rationale, which is often used to explain issues of injustice, racism, inequity, and oppression—to include issues of race and culture. To be clear, SES does matter and is an important issue to consider in education research. The point in the literature is that SES does not necessarily account for all of the inequitable situations in which people find themselves, both within and outside the field of education. That is, race, culture, and gender, among other factors, may play central and independent roles in how people live and experience life, both inside and outside education (Irvine, 1990; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Weis & Fine, 1996). Because, to some, race is such a taboo topic in education research (see Tatum, 1992, for more on this subject), SES frameworks are often used as analytic tools to construct and deconstruct evidence in research. It may seem inconceivable to some that race, for instance, still has such a profound influence on how people experience and live in the world. Put simply, compelling evidence suggests that people’s situations are shaped by more than mere SES (cf. Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Weis and Fine (1996) discovered that White and African American “poor” and “working-class” men described their experiences in very different ways. The authors considered the different ways in which their participants conceptualized their experiences, writing: “The groups under consideration, White and African American men, lodge critique differently because of their different historic . . . locations that encourage them to experience and see the world in particular ways” (p. 513). Although the participants in the study were all from lower SES backgrounds, their racial and cultural experiences were quite different, which caused them to think and to talk about the reasons for their economic status, realities, situations, and experiences very differently. In her research, Fordham (1993) outlined some of the implicit assumptions associated with race and gender both in higher education and in public schools. She maintained that whereas women (from a more general perspective) had to work harder to be “taken seriously” in the academy, an African American woman in the academy had to disassociate herself “from the image” (p. 22) of being different (or being what some would classify as “loud”). She stressed that African American women often used “silence” and “invisibility” to garner power as well as acceptance. Fordham, like Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Weis and Fine, suggested that it is essential to understand the culture and history of people of color and women in

conducting education research and to understand that SES may be an important but not sufficient consideration in the process and outcomes of conducting research.

Similarly, bell hooks (1994) made it explicit that Black female teachers carry with them gendered experiences and perspectives that have been (historically) silenced and marginalized in the discourses about teaching and learning. In some regards, particularly in more contemporary times, teaching has been viewed as “women’s work,” but female teachers of color and their world-views have often been left out of the discussions—even when race and equity were at the top of the agenda.

In sum, although SES is important to consider and to include in educational study and analyses, race and culture are also important to consider in the study of people, perspectives, experiences, and spaces. Such research can provide a model for other studies that attempt to capture, interpret, explain, and describe varying perspectives and viewpoints in education research. In short, this body of literature has provided research, analytic, and conceptual frames for researchers interested in and concerned about the educational experiences of people of color.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory emerged from critical legal studies when Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced it into education in a *Teachers College Record* article and attempted to advance research and theory where issues of race were concerned.² Ladson-Billings and Tate argued that race was undertheorized in education and that although studies existed in the field of education that examined race, the field suffered from a lack of conceptual and analytic tools to discuss race, operationalize it, and move the field forward. According to Yosso (2005), critical race theory “draws from and extends a broad literature base of critical theory in law, sociology, history, ethnic studies and women’s studies” (p. 71). Solorzano and Yosso (2001) asserted that critical race theory “challenges the dominant discourse on race and racism as it relates to education by examining how educational theory and practice are used to subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups” (p. 2).

Indeed, scholars in education have recognized the promise and utility of critical race theory in education, and their work has made meaningful contributions to what is known about race in education (cf. Duncan, 2005; Lynn, 2004; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Tate, 1997). For the purposes of this article, I elaborate on three central tenets or features of critical race theory, although others exist:³ (a) the ingrained nature of race and racism in society and thus in education and education research; (b) the importance of narrative, counter-narrative, and the naming of one’s own reality in education; and (c) the centrality of interest convergence in education.

Ingrained Nature of Race and Racism

One tenet of critical race theory is the postulation that race and racism are endemic, pervasive, widespread, and ingrained in society and thus in education. From a critical race theory perspective, race and racism are so ingrained in the fabric (Ladson-Billings, 1998) of society that they become normalized. Individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds may find it difficult to even recognize the salience, permanence, effects, and outcomes of racism because race and racism are so deeply rooted and embedded in our ways and systems of knowing and experiencing life. In

short, because race and racism exist in society, they also are present and prevalent in education and in the research and practice of education. People in society make up the education system, and thus education research and practice are also infiltrated with matters of race and racism. Lopez (2003) explained that “rather than subscribe to the belief that racism is an abnormal or unusual concept, critical race theorists begin with the premise that racism is a normal and endemic component of our social fabric” (p. 83). Further, to be “American” and “normal” are often equated with Whiteness “both outside and inside the United States” (Jay, 2003, p. 3). Critical race theorists attempt to expose racism and injustice in all its forms and facets; they attempt to explain the implicit and explicit consequences of systemic, policy-related racism; and they work to disrupt and transform policies, laws, theories, and practices through the exposure of racism.

Importance of Narrative and Counter-Narrative

A second tenet of critical race theory in education is the importance and centrality of narratives and counter-narratives,⁴ or stories—particularly stories “told by people of color” (Lopez, 2003, p. 84). From critical race theory perspectives, knowledge can and should be generated through the narratives and counter-narratives that emerge from and with people of color. Critical race theorists argue that narrative and counter-narrative should be captured by the researcher, experienced by the research participants, and told by people of color. Critical race theory’s advancement of the narrative and counter-narrative centralizes race for the knower and for the known. In other words, race and racism are placed at the center of the narrative and counter-narrative in critical race theory.

Thus, as Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explained, “A theme of ‘naming one’s own reality’ or ‘voice’ is entrenched in the work of critical race theorists” (p. 57). Solorzano and Yosso (2001) explained that critical race theory in education works to “challenge . . . dominant ideology” (p. 2) and to centralize “experiential knowledge” (p. 3). Emphasis and value are placed on knowledge construction, on naming one’s own reality, and on the multiple and varied voices and vantage points of people of color. Communities of color are empowered to tell stories often much different from the ones that have been portrayed in the past (Chapman, 2007).

Dixson and Rousseau (2005) described the importance of voice and narrative in their review. They wrote that voice concerns “the assertion and acknowledgement of the importance of the personal and community experiences of people of color as sources of knowledge” (p. 10). Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1998) wrote that “the use of voice or ‘naming your reality’ is a way that critical race theory links *form* and *substance* [italics added] in scholarship” (p. 12). Indeed, the stories of those considered by the dominant culture (and others) to be at the bottom—in many instances, students of color and researchers of color—“illustrate how race and racism continue to dominate our society” (Bell, 1992, p. 144). Such narratives need to be told but often have been dismissed, trivialized, or misrepresented in education research.

Interest Convergence

A third tenet of critical race theory in education is interest convergence. According to Donnor (2005), interest convergence is “an analytical construct that considers the motivating factors . . . to

eradicate racial discrimination or provide remedies for racial injustice” (pp. 57–58). Bell (1980) insisted that “Whites may agree in the abstract that blacks [and other people of color] are citizens and are entitled to constitutional protection and that racial segregation is much more than a series of quaint customs” (p. 522) yet still believe that injustice can be “remedied effectively without altering the status of whites” (p. 522). People in power are often, in discourse, supportive of research, policies, and practices that do not oppress and discriminate against others as long as they—those in power—do not have to alter their own systems of privilege; they may not want to give up their own interests to fight against racism, confront injustice, or shed light on hegemony. Power and interests are connected. Delpit (1995) explained that “those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence” (p. 24). Quite often, those in power are not interested in having to negotiate or question their own privilege to provide opportunities to empower people of color or to “level the playing field.” Ladson-Billings (2006) maintained that it is unfair and inconceivable to expect all students to finish their education in the same place (at the same performance level) because some students—such as African American and Latino/a students and students from lower SES backgrounds—do not begin their education in the same place. In other words, how can society and educators expect students to arrive at the same place when they do not begin their education at the same place?

Lopez (2003) explained that “Whites will tolerate and advance the interests of people of color only when they promote the self-interests of Whites” (p. 84). Moreover, he goes on to assert that “racism always remains firmly in place but that social progress advances at the pace that White people determine is reasonable and judicious” (p. 84). By way of an interest convergence example, Ladson-Billings (1998) explained:

Originally, the state of Arizona insisted that the King Holiday was too costly and therefore failed to recognize it for state workers and agencies. Subsequently, a variety of African American groups and their supporters began to boycott business, professional and social functions in the state of Arizona. When the members of the National Basketball Association and the National Football League suggested that neither the NBA All-Star Game nor the Super Bowl would be held in Arizona because of its failure to recognize the King Holiday, the decision was reversed. (p. 12)

Ladson-Billings’s analysis of the state’s reversed decision exemplifies the concept of interest convergence. The state of Arizona did not want to lose revenue; it wanted to increase revenue and was willing to compromise and negotiate to satisfy its interests. In this sense, the interests of Blacks (and others) who supported and advocated for the Martin Luther King holiday converged with the interests of the state that supported and advocated increased revenue. The sacrifice that is necessary for real social change is to take place is often painful. Taking serious strides toward racial, social, and economic justice is often too difficult for people in power in our country (and possibly the world) because it means that they may have to give up something of interest to them: their systems of privilege and their experience of life (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 2000). The problem is that many worry about how change can threaten their own interests, position, status, and privilege (Bell, 1980) and perhaps the systems of

privilege and interests that their children, grandchildren, and future generations may reap in the future. As Gordon (1990) asserted, it is difficult for a group of people to critique and work to change and transform the world when the world works for that group of people. Thus, as Bell maintained, “The interest of blacks [and other people of color] in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites” (p. 523).

It is in these three tenets of critical race theory and in the research and theory about race and culture that I have situated seen, unseen, and unforeseen dangers in conducting education research. Such dangers arise particularly when researchers do not consider, negotiate, balance, and attend to the complex nature of race and culture in their research. With discussions of these two bodies of theory and research established, I now shift to a discussion of examples of racialized and cultural dangers that can show up in conducting education research.

Dangers in Education Research

In this section, I discuss dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen in (a) color- and culture-blind research in P–12 educational settings, (b) color- and culture-blind policy and document analyses, and (c) teacher education research. Although I focus on three different sites where dangers manifest, it is important to note that dangers can and do materialize in a number of other research contexts. The ideas and examples may be transferable to other research disciplines, approaches, contexts, and sites.

Color- and Culture-Blind Research in P–12 Educational Settings

The research literature suggests that, in practice, student learning opportunities may be hindered when teachers fail to consider their own and their students’ racial and cultural backgrounds in their P–12 work and instead adopt color- and culture-blind beliefs, ideologies, and practices (Johnson, 2002; A. E. Lewis, 2001; Milner, 2007a).⁵ In Audre Lorde’s (1982) view, individuals who adopt color- and culture-blind ideologies believe they can overcome and “conquer it [racism and discrimination] by ignoring it” (p. 81). Moreover, color-blind and culture-blind teachers often do not possess the racial and cultural knowledge necessary for pedagogical success with highly diverse students,⁶ especially students who are often placed on the margins of teaching and learning. Researchers have found that cultural and racial conflicts, incongruences, inconsistencies, and mismatches exist between teachers and students in the classroom that can limit students’ learning opportunities (Banks, 2001; Ford, 2006; Foster, 1997).

Similarly, in education research, the adoption and practice of color-blind and culture-blind research epistemologies and approaches can potentially lead to the dangers of exploitation and misrepresentation of individuals and communities of color. For instance, sociologist Amanda Lewis found in a 2001 study that many teachers and adults refused to discuss or acknowledge the ever-present social and institutional race-related matters in their mostly White school. When a student of color, Sylvie, brought up racist experiences, the teachers in the community ignored her concerns and rationalized that she was “playing the race card” (Lewis, 2001, p. 788). The adults in the context adopted a color-blind approach to their work and lives. Multicultural researcher

James Banks (2001) explained that “a statement such as ‘I don’t see color’ reveals a privileged position that refuses to legitimize racial identifications that are very important to people of color and that are often used to justify inaction and perpetuation of the status quo” (p. 12). For the adults in the Lewis study, the idea was that issues of race and culture were not important in the learning environment because most of the students, teachers, and parents in the context were White. From a critical race theory perspective, race and racism are endemic and ingrained in education—even in mostly White contexts. Critical race theorists assert that issues of race should be placed front and center in research. Moreover, from a critical race theory perspective, Sylvie offered a counter-narrative to what Stanley (2007) called the “master narrative” (p. 14) in the school and community.

What would have surfaced in the results of the Lewis study had the researcher told only one side of the story, particularly the story of the dominant group? From a critical race theory perspective, counter-narratives are needed to interrupt and disrupt voices of the dominant group. Indeed, Sylvie needed to name her own reality. Thus an epistemology of color- and culture-blindness in the Lewis (2001) study could have resulted in dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. I share here dangers that may surface for the researchers, for the readers or consumers of the research, and also for the communities or participants in the research. Ultimately, I argue that researchers may need to be mindful of these dangers for all groups involved (the researcher, the consumer of the research, and the research participant). For instance,

- An obvious and seen danger is the adults’ avoidance of *racialized* issues in the study. Without interrogating their systematic beliefs about race and its irrelevance or unimportance, it would be difficult for them to understand or be exposed to Sylvie’s experience.
- An unseen danger might have occurred if the researcher had adopted a color- and culture-blind epistemology and approach to the research and thus neglected to study and to share Sylvie’s point of view about the goings-on in the learning environment and community. Consumers of the research study would be privy only to a storyline that silenced the voices of those in the minority. The danger would be in what was not reported, based on what was not seen and what was not privileged in the study.
- Had Lewis not “heard” or reported Sylvie’s story, an unforeseen danger might have emerged. Moreover, had Lewis studied only Whites in the school, practitioners such as teachers and principals who read the Lewis article might have developed beliefs about what happens and what is essential to consider in mostly White contexts. For instance, readers of the research might come to believe that diversity training and race- and culture-oriented professional development are not necessary in mostly White schools or that race does not matter in such contexts. These dangers are often unforeseen where matters of race and culture are concerned in the research process.

In sum, seen, unseen, and unforeseen dangers may show up when researchers and educators adopt and implement a color- and culture-blind approach in their research of P–12 educational sites.

Color- and Culture-Blind Policy and Document Analyses

Dangers can also surface in policy and document analyses. According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), critical race theory can and should be used to analyze policy and policy-related materials and documents. For instance, race-conscious policy analyses (cf. Anderson, 2007; Linn & Welner, 2007) are important in studying the special education and gifted education referral processes. Gifted education researcher Donna Ford (2006) maintained that over the past 20 years, little progress has been made relative to demographic changes in gifted education: Black and Hispanic students tend to be grossly underrepresented in gifted education programs and overrepresented in special education (Artiles, Klingner, & Tate, 2006; Blanchett, 2006; O'Connor & Fernandez, 2006). The unacknowledged prevalence of race and racism makes it difficult for researchers to become aware of disproportionate representation, which is often inherent in policies that schools use to place and track students.

In short, the research suggests that when researchers do not “see color or culture” or at least acknowledge that race matters in their analyses of policy-related documents, there may be “ignored discriminatory institutional practices toward students of color such as higher suspension rates for African American males” (Johnson, 2002, p. 154). In terms of school office referrals, disciplinary referral data reveal a disproportionate number of African American students and students from lower SES backgrounds who are referred to the office for disciplinary problems (Ford, 1996; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). Overwhelmingly, the findings in the literature are straightforward in the sense that most disciplinary referrals originate in the classroom, and more times than not, the referrals are disproportionately for students of color and students from lower SES backgrounds. Davis and Jordan (1994) analyzed data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, administered by the National Center for Education Statistics. The researchers employed a two-stage, stratified, random sample of 25,000 eighth graders in 1,000 schools across the country. Davis and Jordan reported a connection between discipline and Black male achievement in middle schools. They asserted: “The time teachers spend handling disciplinary problems is time taken away from instruction; Black male achievement suffers as a result” (p. 585). Clearly, when students are not in the classroom because of disciplinary approaches and policies that take them out of the classroom, such as in-school and out-of-school suspension and expulsion policies, they suffer academically.

Similarly, Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson (2002) analyzed disciplinary documents of 11,001 students in 19 middle schools in a large, urban Midwestern public school district during the 1994–1995 academic year. Skiba et al. reported a “differential pattern of treatment, originating at the classroom level, wherein African American students are referred to the office for infractions that are more subjective in interpretation” (p. 317). In other words, if an African American student “talks back” or “mouths off” to a teacher, the teacher may interpret this behavior as completely disrespectful and intolerable. However, students may be behaving in this way because of peer pressure—not wanting friends to see them as weak. Disrespect or malice may not be at the core of the students’ actions. The Skiba et al. study pointed out that students of color received harsher punishments for misbehavior than did their White counterparts. In another set of studies, Skiba, Peterson, and Williams (1997) reported that “even

in a district with a high proportion of African American students, African Americans were referred to the office significantly more frequently than other ethnic groups (p. 313).

From a research perspective, there are unforeseen dangers in policy analyses that ignore racialized and cultural patterns. Without a direct focus on the racialized and cultural practices of teachers and administrators in referring students to the office or to special education, dangers could materialize that would make it difficult for policy changes to occur—changes that could benefit learning and achievement among students of color. Indeed, dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen may surface when researchers adopt color- and culture-blind policy and document analyses. Some examples follow:

- A seen danger can emerge if policy or document analyses did not critically examine data in terms of racial patterns. Stated differently, what if researchers blamed students alone for their suspensions and expulsions and refused to critically examine the policies and procedures of the teachers, administrators, school, district, or state in terms of racial disproportionality and disparities?
- An unseen danger is the role that teachers and administrators play in the referral process. Teacher and administrative voices and practices are unheard and unseen in many documents—they or their patterns of practice often are not included in the documents under analysis. Thus there are unseen dangers in what is not seen, the absence of such data and the absence of such analysis. The blame, again, is placed on students; the teacher and administrative data are missing, unseen. What roles and responsibilities do teachers and administrators have in the cultural tensions that may emerge in the classroom and school? What policies are in place to protect students from being abused by systems that blame them (solely) for all of what happens in the classroom and school community?
- An unforeseen danger may be the development, maintenance, and implementation of policies under which students continue to be suspended and expelled on the basis of color- and culture-blind policy analyses. Undersubstantiated generalizations, misnomers, stereotypes, and biases may occur from reading the findings from such studies and analyses. Readers may assume that certain groups of students are troublemakers and that stricter policies are needed to reprimand and “control” certain students and to “correct” their non-compliance. Some groups of students may thus be treated like prisoners, as Noguera (2003) explained. Thus students of color are often misunderstood, exploited, abused, and targeted for not being just like their administrators and their teachers’ own biological children.

In sum, seen, unseen, and unforeseen dangers may show up when researchers and educators take a color- and culture-blind approach to policy and document analyses.

Teacher Education Research

In addition to dangers that can emerge from color- and culture-blind P–12 classroom or school research and from color-blind policy and document analyses, dangers can surface in teacher education research. Because teacher educators often serve the dual role of providing instruction to teachers and to studying their own

teaching practices and the learning of teachers, dangers can show up in complex ways.⁷ I will discuss these experiences and dangers of practice and inquiry concurrently. Although the importance of studying race and culture in teacher education is well documented (Kailin, 1994; King, 1991; Sleeter, in press), the nature of that study can be dangerous. The demographic divide rationale is present in much of the literature that makes a case for the preparation of teachers for the diversity they will face in P–12 educational contexts (cf. Gay & Howard, 2000; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). These demographic divide data include gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. Citing data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2003), Zumwalt and Craig wrote: “Although the student population is increasingly diverse, 1999 to 2000 data indicate that public school teachers were predominantly White, non-Hispanic (84%). Of the remaining proportion, 7.8% were African American, 5.7% Hispanic, 1.6% Asian American, and .8% Native American” (p. 114). Never before have public school teachers in the United States been faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of so many diverse learners, yet the teaching force is White, monolingual, and middle class.

One danger in teacher education is an overemphasis on the education of White teachers and a neglect of the education of teachers of color. Quite often, teacher education programs are tailored largely to meet the needs of White female teachers (Gay, 2000); teachers of color, as well as male teachers, are often left out of policies, procedures, planning, courses, curriculum, and instruction of content. Where curricular materials were concerned in her study, Agee (2004) explained that “the teacher education texts used in the course made recommendations for using diverse texts or teaching diverse students based on the assumption that preservice teachers are White” (p. 749). Thus the curriculum and instruction in teacher education, in large measure, mirrors that of public schools (Dixon, 2006). In teacher education, curricula and instruction are often tailored to meet the needs of White teachers; in public schools, curricula and instruction are often designed to meet the needs of White students. From a critical race theory perspective, the interests of White teachers take precedence over those of teachers of color, which is a danger in conducting teacher education research. In other words, the interests of White teachers and teachers of color often diverge rather than convergence in teacher education research. Researchers privilege the experiences, needs, and interests of White teachers, and teachers of color are often ignored.

In addition, many teachers in the teacher education classroom refuse to participate in discussions about race and culture. The result can be what Ladson-Billings (1996) called “silence as weapons.” For an African American teacher educator, discussions about race and culture can be silently interpreted as the professor’s “putting forth a particular political agenda” (Ladson-Billings, 1996, p. 79). Such silence can result in a danger that is unseen—or in this case, unheard. Similarly, in my own teaching and research, despite my best efforts to provide space where race and culture were at the top of the curricula and instructional agenda in teacher education, I observed preservice teachers shut down completely during class discussions—particularly when the topic was race and racism in the P–12 classroom (Milner, 2007b). This silence, albeit counterproductive, can also be perceived as a danger that is seen and can thus be attended to in the teacher education

classroom. That is, the teacher educator actually can see the lack of engagement among the teacher candidates and can work to address their silence and lack of engagement. However, the most important unseen danger is in what is not stated in the classroom—that is, when silence ensues during discussions.

An example of an unforeseen danger occurred when a preservice teacher met with a teacher educator and declared that she had decided that she wanted to teach in a private, mostly White school because she wanted to teach in a P–12 community where parents actually “care” about their students. Apparently, the preservice teacher misinterpreted discussions about parental involvement in communities where some students of color attend schools: The teacher inferred from the course that parents in urban schools simply do not care about their children. Such a student response is an unforeseen danger that was certainly not anticipated or predicted in the development or enactment of the goals and expectations of the course curriculum or the discussion; it is a danger of teaching and researching race and culture in teacher education that is unforeseen. In sum, dangers in teacher education practice and research can take many forms:

- A seen danger in teaching and researching about race and culture in teacher education is teachers’ resistance (Tatum, 1992) and silence in the face of important information about racism, injustice, and inequity. For instance, seen dangers may be teachers’ silence in discussions of racism in the P–12 classroom, especially when the teachers believe they are being forced to think in a certain way (cf. Ellsworth, 1989).
- An unseen danger is the perpetuation of negative stereotypes about certain groups of students and their situations by teacher education researchers. Reifying and solidifying negative stereotypes about certain groups of students is a danger, one that is often unseen by teacher educators and researchers (Milner, 2007b). Teachers may exhibit racist behaviors in their classrooms based on their “learned” beliefs and assumptions (B. Cross, 2003) about P–12 students that they actually learn in the teacher education classroom through instruction that has the best of intentions. Teacher education researchers cannot see the racist beliefs, but they are there; these beliefs may manifest themselves in the teachers’ actions in their P–12 classrooms with their students.
- Unforeseen dangers in teacher education teaching and research may surface when teachers misinterpret the needs and patterns of culturally and racially diverse students and conclude that the students are incapable of learning or that the students’ parents do not care about their children. Teacher educators do not foresee these misinterpretations when they develop the goals and expectations for the course, nor are they necessarily able to study these matters in order to address them.

Now that I have outlined examples of some potential dangers—seen, unseen, and unforeseen—the discussion can shift to an introduction of a framework that can assist researchers in working through such dangers.

A Framework of Researcher Racial and Cultural Positionality

In this section, I outline a framework for researchers to guide them in working through seen, unseen, and unforeseen dangers

in the practice of their inquiry: researching the self, researching the self in relation to others, engaged reflection and representation, and shifting from self to system. It is important to note that the qualities and features of the framework are not linear; they are interrelated.⁸

Researching the Self

A first feature of this framework is the importance of researchers' engaging in evolving and emergent critical race and cultural self-reflection.⁹ Critical race theorists (cf. Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Parker & Lynn, 2002) and other racially and culturally sensitive researchers and theorists (cf. Gordon, 1990; Tillman, 2002) assert that scholars may need to critique current situations to change and transform the world. I argue that researchers in the process of conducting research pose racially and culturally grounded questions about themselves. Engaging in these questions can bring to researchers' awareness and consciousness known (seen), unknown (unseen), and unanticipated (unforeseen) issues, perspectives, epistemologies, and positions. Understandably, some researchers may recognize the importance of racial and cultural introspection during the process of research but may not know where to begin. The framework assumes that researchers may find it difficult to engage in this type of reflection, especially among scholars who historically have adopted color- and culture-blind ideologies, beliefs, epistemologies, and practices in their quest to be objective in their inquiries. Thus the framework has been developed to assist researchers with a wide range of experiences in working through tensions of race and culture in their research, both those with less and more experience. Indeed, Cornel West (1993) explained that it is difficult to work for emancipation on behalf of others (and to work to solve problems with and on behalf of others) until people (or in this case researchers) are emancipated themselves. Moreover, as Dillard (2000) suggested, each time a researcher engages in research, he or she is (re)searching himself or herself all over again, in addition to studying something or someone else. In what types of questions can researchers engage to work through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen? Here are some possibilities:

- What is my racial and cultural heritage? How do I know?
- In what ways do my racial and cultural backgrounds influence how I experience the world, what I emphasize in my research, and how I evaluate and interpret others and their experiences? How do I know?
- How do I negotiate and balance my racial and cultural selves in society and in my research? How do I know?
- What do I believe about race and culture in society and education, and how do I attend to my own convictions and beliefs about race and culture in my research? Why? How do I know?
- What is the historical landscape of my racial and cultural identity and heritage? How do I know?
- What are and have been the contextual nuances and realities that help shape my racial and cultural ways of knowing, both past and present? How do I know?
- What racialized and cultural experiences have shaped my research decisions, practices, approaches, epistemologies, and agendas?

Researchers' engaging in this process of reflection regardless of their particular study could bring to their consciousness explicit,

hidden, or unexpected matters, which can have a bearing on an entire research study. The nature, depth, and meanings of (and answers to) the questions posed above may change, evolve, and emerge as researchers come to know themselves, their situations, and their experiences in a new, expanded, or different way. That is, the answers to the questions may change, but the charge to question—to engage in processes that reject the exploitation, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation of people and communities of color—remains the same.

Researching the Self in Relation to Others

A second feature of the framework is for researchers to reflect about themselves in relation to others—in this case, the communities and people involved in their research studies—and to acknowledge the multiple roles, identities, and positions that researchers and research participants bring to the research process (Aldridge, 2003; Chapman, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Tillman, 2002). By way of reminder, Banks (1998) and Tillman (2002) stressed that researchers' development of cultural knowledge is critical in the research process. In their view, who conducts research with people and communities of color matters less than what the researchers know about the people and communities under study. From a critical race theory perspective, the researchers' interests can overshadow the interests of those participating in research. Interests are negotiated in this second feature of the framework in pursuit of what critical race theorists call interest convergence. Issues of power are understood to be relational, and researchers understand the tensions inherent in their own interests and power in relation to the people and communities under study. The nature of reality or of our truths¹⁰ shapes and guides our ways and systems of knowing and our epistemological systems of knowing (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Questions for researchers to consider include the following:

- What are the cultural and racial heritage and the historical landscape of the participants in the study? How do I know?
- In what ways do my research participants' racial and cultural backgrounds influence how they experience the world? How do I know?
- What do my participants believe about race and culture in society and education, and how do they and I attend to the tensions inherent in my and their convictions and beliefs about race and culture in the research process? Why? How do I know?
- How do I negotiate and balance my own interests and research agendas with those of my research participants, which may be inconsistent with or diverge from mine? How do I know?
- What are and have been some social, political, historical, and contextual nuances and realities that have shaped my research participants' racial and cultural ways or systems of knowing, both past and present? How consistent and inconsistent are these realities with mine? How do I know?

Truth, or what is real and thus meaningful and “right,” for researchers and participants, depends on how they have experienced the world. Researchers can acquire evidential truth in research when they value and listen to the self, to others (Nieto, 1994), and to the self in relation to others (Milner, 2007a).

To clarify, there is a filtering that occurs when, for instance, people read a mystery novel or when they listen to the local news about the goings on in a particular community. People typically put on their filters or their interpretive lenses to separate fact from fiction or to disentangle the implicit biases inherent in the presentation of ideas, stories, philosophies, and experiences. Academic knowledge construction and deconstruction involve similar filtering: Multiple and varied perspectives about the same phenomena can bring about understandings that advance a field or discipline or that present dangers to individuals and communities in a field or discipline (Banks, 1998). Where issues of race and culture are concerned, researchers may be faced with the inordinate task of representing themselves and others in conflicting ways.

For example, the life world for an African American researcher may be filled with situations of racism, profiling, and injustice—thus enabling or disabling that researcher's efforts to understand and to interpret the particulars of a situation with research participants in a way that is quite different from that of a researcher outside the group. In this sense, it can be advantageous or disadvantageous for the researcher to be of the same or similar race and culture as research participants. Thus the second feature of this framework suggests that researchers think about themselves in relation to others, work through the commonalities and tensions that emerge from this reflection, and negotiate their ways of knowing with that of the community or people under study.

Engaged Reflection and Representation

A third feature of this framework is what I call engaged reflection and representation: researchers and participants engage in reflection together to think through what is happening in a particular research community, with race and culture placed at the core. From a critical race theory perspective, narratives and counter-narratives actually can contribute to policy, research, and theory (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Morris, 2004; Parker, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Moreover, from a critical race theory perspective, interests can be negotiated, validated, and understood in this feature of the framework. What is most central to this feature are representation and shared perspectives. In terms of representation, both researchers' and research participants' voices, perspectives, narratives, and counter-narratives are represented in the interpretation and findings of a study. In this sense, one voice or narrative is not privileged over another. In cases of disagreement as to the interpretation of what is occurring in a research study, researchers' and participants' narratives are both presented as point and counterpoint or narrative and counter-narrative. Such an approach, where narrative and counter-narrative are both represented in the findings of a study, can actually add a layer of evidence to complement what is known. The point is that researchers and participants in a study may interpret an experience or an interaction in very different ways, depending on the life worlds, phenomenologically speaking, of those conducting and involved in the research.

By way of example, consider two different interpretations of the same classroom interaction. Irvine and Fraser (1998) described an interaction between a student and teacher by borrowing James Vasquez's notion of "warm demanders" to refer to teachers of color "who provide a tough-minded, no-nonsense, structured, and disciplined classroom environment for kids

whom society has psychologically and physically abandoned" (Irvine & Fraser, 1998, p. 56):

"That's enough of your nonsense, Darius. Your story does not make sense. I told you time and time again that you must stick to the theme I gave you. Now sit down." Darius, a first grader trying desperately to tell his story, proceeds slowly to his seat with his head hanging low. (p. 56; quoting Irene Washington, an African American teacher of 23 years)

A researcher and a participant in a research study may interpret the classroom situation above very differently. A researcher observing the interaction between Irene Washington and Darius might interpret or conceptualize the interaction something to this effect:

The teacher is horribly mean to and uncaring about the student. She does not demonstrate care for the students because she yells at Darius, the student, and makes him feel as if his story is not good enough. Moreover, she silences Darius, and he is not able to share his story. Teachers similar to Irene Washington need to be educated to honor the voice and perspectives of students regardless of what the students produce.

In short, the researcher might criticize upon the teacher's approach and believe that the teacher has it all wrong in terms of educating Darius and possibly his classmates. If the teacher were interviewed, however, she might insist:

Because I care deeply for all my students, I understand quite well the necessity to help Darius learn. I must help Darius understand how to develop his theme to help him succeed in the classroom. I understand that what happens in my classroom has great consequences for what may happen to Darius outside the classroom. If Darius does not learn, he may end up in obliteration (drug abuse, prison, or even death). I want to prepare Darius to be successful because I believe education will be his ticket to success.¹¹

Obviously, the hypothetical researcher and teacher conceive and interpret the classroom situation differently. Engaged reflection and representation suggest that it is the researcher's responsibility to listen to the voices and perspectives of those under study (in this case, for the teacher to talk through a researcher's observation) to provide compelling, fair evidence. In situations where the researcher and participant disagree, it is critical for the researcher to report both the narrative (in this case, the researcher's interpretation of a classroom interaction) and the counter-narrative (the teacher's explanation) or vice versa.

Such an approach can be essential in the study of people and communities of color because it prevents the researcher's voice from overshadowing the voice of the researched, and vice versa. Indeed, the conflicting interpretations between a researcher's system of knowing and the participant's way of knowing can be an asset: There are lessons grounded in the different ways in which the teacher and researcher interpret the situation. The tensions in the interpretation and explanation are forms of data in themselves and can be beneficial and useful to consumers of the research. Readers learn something about how different people understand, interpret, live, function, and are represented in society. Engaged reflection and representation are connected to what Lorde (1984)

declared as “learning how to take our differences and make them strengths” (p. 112).

Shifting From Self to System

A fourth feature of this framework is the suggestion that researchers contextualize and ground their personal or individualistic, new and expanded consciousness to take into consideration historic, political, social, economic, racial, and cultural realities on a broader scale. Shifting the process of inquiry from the more personalized level to consider policy, institutional, systemic, and collective issues is important in this framework. In the practice of research, researchers take into consideration, for example, how history and politics shape their racialized and cultural systems of knowing and those of the research participants. From a critical race theory perspective, issues of race and racism need to be situated in the broader context, not just on an individualized or personal level. Lopez (2003) wrote that “racism is perceived as an individual or irrational act in a world that is otherwise neutral, rational, and just. . . . It positions racism at the individual level and ignores other ways in which it functions in society” (p. 69). Thus several questions can prove helpful as researchers shift from the self to the system:

- What is the contextual nature of race, racism, and culture in this study? In other words, what do race, racism, and culture mean in the community under study and in the broader community? How do I know?
- What is known socially, institutionally, and historically about the community and people under study? In other words, what does the research literature reveal about the community and people under study? And in particular, what do people from the indigenous racial and cultural group write about the community and people under study? Why? How do I know?
- What systemic and organizational barriers and structures shape the community and people’s experiences, locally and more broadly? How do I know?

Shifting from the self to the system allows researchers to work through the danger of rejecting the permanence and pervasiveness of race and racism because they, individually, do not see themselves as racists or contributors to injustice, inequity, or oppression. If on an individual level racism does not seem to exist or to occur, it may be unlikely that the individual researcher will research the salience of race and racism in what Rios (1996) called the cultural context and ultimately work to fight against it because racism is being perceived at the individual rather than the systemic and institutional level.

Scheurich and Young (1997) outlined several forms of racism: individual racism, which operates both overtly and covertly; institutional racism; societal racism; and civilizational racism, “out of which emerges epistemological racism” (p. 5). Indeed, understanding individual forms of racism and cultural oppression is important because individuals can change racist systems, institutions, societies, and civilizations. However, as legal scholar Cheryl Harris (1993) explained, it is “the *systems* [italics added] of domination that work against so many” (p. 1791) and can contaminate what is known and how it is known about people and communities of color. Thus this feature of the framework may

help researchers situate their research in a broader context, shifting it from the more personal or individualistic level to broader, more systemic ones.

Conclusions

In conclusion, a recurrent theme of this article is that matters of race and culture are important considerations in the process of conducting research. Such considerations are important for researchers, research participants, and consumers of research.¹² Dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen can surface in policies and practices and in varying contexts—in mostly White contexts, in largely homogeneous¹³ contexts, and in highly diverse settings. Researchers, in particular, are challenged to work through dangers and to reconsider their own and others’ racialized and cultural positionality in conducting research. It is important to note that the presentation of this framework is not meant to suggest that there are not scholars already engaging in the process of racial and cultural introspection in their research, nor is it to suggest that this is the only framework that can assist researchers in the process. Rather, I offer this framework as one that can serve as a heuristic to both novice and experienced researchers interested (and uninterested) in issues of race and culture in the process and outcomes of research.

In terms of research, the framework can be useful to researchers serious about interpreting and representing people and communities of color in ways that honor those communities and in ways that maintain their integrity. In terms of practice, I hope that faculty and students in education research courses and in their own research studies will engage and critique the framework. In particular, the next generation of doctoral students and scholars, among others, can change and advance the research literature in ways that validate and give voice to people who have often been silenced, misinterpreted, misrepresented, and placed on the margins. *How* education research is conducted may be just as important as *what* is actually discovered in a study. Moreover, who conducts the research, particularly what they know, and the nature of their critical racial and cultural consciousness—their views, perspectives, and biases—may also be essential to how those in education research come to know and know what is known. Finally, the framework may be transferable to disciplines and areas of study other than education research. I am hopeful that researchers in education and in other disciplines will consider these important issues and will work to transform the nature and practice of research, one study at a time.

NOTES

¹According to many scholars, race is socially, legally, politically, and historically constructed. The meanings, messages, results, and consequences of race are developed and constructed by human beings. Genetically and biologically, individuals are more the same than they are different. According to Nakkula and Toshalis (2006),

There is no biologically sustainable reason for establishing “races” as distinct subgroups within the human species. . . . Race is a concept created in the modern era as a way of drawing distinctions between people such that some might benefit at the expense of others. (p. 123)

Racism has to do with discrimination based on race. Inherent in racism are notions of power and privilege, and racism occurs both implicitly and

explicitly (Scheurich & Young, 1997). Culture can be defined as a group of people who possess and share deep-rooted connections such as values, beliefs, languages, customs, and norms. Yet culture is not a static concept, “a category for conveniently sorting people according to expected values, beliefs, and behaviors” (Dyson & Genishi, 1994, p. 3). Rather, culture is dynamic and encompasses other concepts that relate to its central meaning. The supplemental categories that make up culture include, but are not limited to, identity (race and ethnicity), class, economic status, and gender.

²Critical race theory is a movement (cf. Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) that grew out of legal studies. In an article published in *Urban Education*, William F. Tate (1994) was the first to employ critical race theory in education as he reflected on his elementary educational experiences in a successful urban Catholic school and considered tensions related to the expression of and responses to his voice in the academy. The movement in education is especially concerned with analyzing policy to shed light on the human condition in education and beyond.

³See the work of Ladson-Billings (1998) and Dixson and Rousseau (2005) for a more exhaustive list of tenets of critical race theory in education.

⁴It is important to note that there is an important and growing body of theory and research that already uses narrative in education (cf. Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; He, 2002; Phillion & Connelly, 2004). A difference between this important body of work and critical race theory’s advancement of the narrative and counter-narrative is the centrality of race for the knower and the known. In other words, in critical race theory, race and racism are placed at the center of the narrative and counter-narrative.

⁵Although not discussed in the previous section on critical race theory, critical race theorists are also skeptical of the color-blind argument.

⁶I understand that every person represents racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity, although White people usually are classified as the norm and others are considered diverse. I understand that there is a great deal of diversity among people from every racial, cultural, and ethnic background. However, for the purpose of this discussion and due to page restrictions, I am defining racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse groups of people as those groups that are not White or European American.

⁷Some teacher education researchers engage in what they may call self-study to investigate their practices in teacher education. Self-study involves teacher educators’ systematic examination of their own practices to improve their work (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1996).

⁸For discussions of racial identity development among adolescents and adults, which may extend and complement this discussion, see the work of W. E. Cross (1991), Helms (1995), Phinney (1989), and Tatum (1992).

⁹My notions of reflection have been inspired by the work of Freire (1998).

¹⁰I understand that there are multiple moral and philosophical arguments about the nature of truth. For instance, supporters of relativism may argue that truth is socially constructed or that there are multiple answers to questions and problems, or multiple truths, depending on the situation. On the other hand, supporters of absolutism may believe and argue that there is a truth that can be discovered. They may argue that there is a correct answer to questions or problems. I argue that it is in the pursuit of truth (whether relative or absolute) that one can come to know and understand situations, experiences, and phenomena more fully.

¹¹Researchers have a range of views about how to address the representation of conflicting, confirming, and disconfirming evidence between the researcher and research participants. There is clearly a range of ways to think about these important issues of representation that deserve continuous examination and discussion.

¹²It is important to note that, among other factors, issues of gender, language, and socioeconomic status (SES) are also critical to consider in discussions such as the one presented in this article. Because of page

restrictions, I focused on race and culture in favor of depth over breadth. It is conceivable that future discussions will include such matters omitted in this article.

¹³I use the term *homogeneous* loosely here to refer to the reality that some schools have less variance than others in SES and ethnic diversity. I realize and acknowledge that there is no such thing as a homogeneous classroom. Even in classrooms where students come from the same SES group and share the same ethnic background, they will have different learning styles, values, beliefs, experiences, and behaviors.

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Manuscript received February 1, 2007

Revision received July 3, 2007

Accepted August 20, 2007