

# RACE DIALOGUES IN TEACHER PREPARATION: BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION

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## *Abstract*

This article describes a multicultural instructional activity used within a Master's of Teaching program in the Northwest to engage pre service teachers in critical self-reflection concerning their understanding of the historical construction of race in the United States of America. The goal of the instructional project was for participants to become aware of their racial dispositions and biases, and consider how teachers' perspectives influence teaching and learning. The instructors-researchers used three films within the series, *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, as curriculum to engage pre service teachers in critical self-reflection concerning the issues of race. The article describes the teaching strategy, narrative data collection, and critical narrative analysis. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT), the authors provide a critical narrative analysis of the pre service teachers' reflections on viewing the films.

*Keywords:* Critical Dialogue, Critical Race Theory, CRT, Pre-service, Racial Ideology, Racial Privilege, Racial Guilt, Teachers, Race, Racism

## BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION

This article describes a multicultural instructional activity used within a Master's of Teaching program in the Northwest to engage pre-service teachers in critical self-reflection concerning their understanding of the historical construction of race in the United States of America. The goal of the instructional project was for participants to become aware of their racial dispositions and biases and consider how teachers' perspectives influence teaching and learning. The instructors-researchers used three films within the series *Race: The Power of an Illusion*

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## INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education continues to be a central topic in public school education and in teacher education programs. It is not uncommon to include multicultural education, diversity, or cultural competence courses in teacher education programs. We have taught in four different programs in the Midwest, Pacific Northwest, and Southern United States of America. In each place the education programs included coursework around the topic of multicultural education, diversity awareness, or cultural competence. It has been our collective experience that within multicultural education curricula, it is still difficult to engage pre-service teachers and colleagues in conversations about race.

Central to this project was the attempt to engage pre-service teachers in race dialogues by using the race film series *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. The idea for using the race films came from Glenda. After experiencing race dialogues through the Multicultural Center on her university campus in the Midwest, Glenda realized how powerful such conversations are for self-critical reflection and change. The videos are documentaries, which provide historical and scientific evidence to both substantiate the social creation of racism and the institutional maintenance of racism through governmental policies and practices. The first video "The Difference Between Us" examines race through the lens of science. The video challenges the idea that there are four basic racial groups, White, African-American, Hispanic, and Asian, based on physical characteristics. The setting of the examination is a high school science class, which allows pre-service teachers to connect to their profession and think about how they can play a role in deconstructing racism through education. The second video "The Story We Tell" presents racism through a historical lens, showing how racism was used to support social inequity in the United States that is still present today. This video is instrumental to engage viewers in the process of understanding that White privilege was established through social patterns. Finally, "The House We Live In" is a major eye-opener to help pre-service teachers clearly see how racism-supported economic gain for White-Americans and has resulted in the continued and growing socioeconomic gaps visible among today's schoolchildren. Pre-service teachers are engaged to consider where they fit in the configuration and how they will teach for equity.

Glenda decided to conduct race dialogues in her critical reading class in the Midwest and later began to use the film series to take the conversation deeper

(Moss, 2008). When Glenda moved to a Northwestern community, she invited Anita to allow her to conduct similar race workshops with pre-service teachers in the diversity self-awareness class. Glenda and Anita invited Larry to work with them to frame the narrative analysis of the data through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) for evidence of the central tenets of CRT. Specifically, this paper describes our use of three films to engage participants in critical self-reflection concerning issues of race, our data collection, Critical Race Theory's tenets, and our critical narrative analysis of the pre-service teachers' reflections on viewing the films. The authors hope that other teacher educators will engage with them in the work of deconstructing race as a static fabric of the United States of America by engaging pre-service teachers in race conversations to understand how the concept developed (Cochran-Smith, 2000) and the economic impact on social class.

## BUILDING A CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Aggregated over two years, the composition of the pre-service teachers included: 24 White pre-service teachers, 3 Asian pre-service teachers, and 3 Latino/a pre-service teachers. Two local full-time Latina teachers (female) joined our class for the first workshop, and one African American principal (female) joined our class for the second year we conducted the workshop to ensure the presence of educators of colour for the workshops. We believed that having non-White participants was a critical component to engaging White pre-service teachers to become conscious of their whiteness and how that whiteness is defined by privilege. For example, the third film "The House We Build" showed how housing loans after World War II advantaged White people to become home-owners and how zoning laws further worked to the advantage of White people gaining home equity while people of colour were disadvantaged. Based on the same film, the average wealth among White people was eight times more than accrued wealth among African Americans (Race: The Power of an Illusion, 2003). Pew research statistics from 2009 show that gap grew to nineteen to one by 2009 (Rakesh, Fry, Taylor, 2011). These can be hard ideas for White teaching candidates to face, especially if they perceive they achieved their social status through their own hard work. These are important educational experiences for becoming self-conscious and aware of biases that may impact perceptions of PK-12 students.

Anita and Glenda were involved in an exploration of experiential learning theories (Lee, Moss, & Coughlin, 2011; Zijdemans-Boudreau, Moss, & Lee, 2013) at the time and introduced race dialogues as experiential learning to afford pre-service teachers the opportunity to gain knowledge and sensitivity about themselves through dialogues about race as a social construction. Candidates reviewed the PBS website and read suggested articles on the website prior to view-

ing the films during the daylong workshop. The event with pre-service teaching candidates involved using a diversity study circles (DSC) framework (Moss, 2008)—an approach designed to foster dialogue on race with the goal of critical self-reflection in response to interfacing with diverse multicultural experiences—in conjunction with the PBS documentary series, *RACE: The Power of an Illusion* (2003), the aforementioned set of three videos that challenges assumptions about race and look at the “underlying social, economic, and political conditions that disproportionately channel advantages and opportunities to white people” ([http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-about.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-about.htm)).

The format of the day’s event involved alternating between the three films segments and critical dialogue. A discussion after each 60-minute film segment provided an opportunity for participants to share responses, talk about thoughts or feelings that came up during the viewing, and contribute personal experiences. We took field notes and participated by sharing our personal experiences and facilitating the open dialogue to ensure everyone had a chance to talk. Discussion continued through a shared lunch hour and informally at the end of the all-day workshop. Pre-service teacher participants were asked to write a personal, reflective response after the event. Throughout the rest of the 18 month-long program, the experiences of the workshop became a point of reference for the community of pre-service teachers to explore issues of racism and develop anti-racist pedagogies.

The role that community plays in emancipatory pedagogies is grounded in the work of communication theorists such as Freire (2003/1973), Habermas (1981), Rorty (1989), and Foucault (1980). We could draw on any number of critical pedagogues (Freire, 2003/1973; Giroux, Landshear, McLaren, & Peters, 1997; Kincheloe, Burszty, & Steinberg, 2004; McLaren, 1989; Shor & Pari, 1999) to discuss the complexity of translating theory into practice by teachers. When asked by reviewers why we chose to draw heavily on Peter Murrell (2001, 2002), we realized that it is because Murrell is African-American and specifically provides teachers with an examination of the complexity of translating critical pedagogy into practice to address the needs of African American students. Murrell, an African-American theorist, challenges teachers to move past “resolve” to changed practice and presents an African-Centered Pedagogy to promote achievement among African American children. Critical Race Theory, begun by African Americans in the legal field (Bell, 1995), seeks to make people conscious of the dynamics of racism and patterns that emerged during the Civil Rights movement. Although discriminatory racial patterns toward African Americans, Chinese, Japanese, Native Americans, and Latino(a)s are clearly documented in history, we realize that we were especially concerned with engaging beginning teachers to understand how racism was socially constructed during slavery and sustained throughout American history. We are concerned by the continued disparity in

achievement among African American children across the United States. Therefore, our project focused on racism with regards to teaching African Americans.

At the end of their course work, Anita explained our IRB-approved project, Narrative Analysis of Pre-Service Teachers' Perspectives on Race Dialogues, to the pre-service teachers. Anita explained to the pre-service teachers that we wanted to analyze their narrative reflections. All of the pre-service teachers who had participated in the workshop signed consent forms, and we analyzed their narratives through the lens of the CRT tenets to advance our concern that multicultural education must become transformative by engaging learners in critical awareness of racism. During analysis, we were looking for connections to the tenets of CRT, but emergent themes of racial ideology, racial privilege, and racial guilt dominated. The emergent themes may provide texts for other teacher educators and pre-service candidates to engage in critical dialogue and recognize patterns that have been a kind of hidden curriculum throughout society.

## THEORETICAL FRAME: EXPLORING CRITICAL RACE THEORY AS A LENS FOR NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

The CRT movement began in the field of legal scholarship and studies race, racism, and power (Bell, 1992). Legal scholars such as Bell have been instrumental in raising critical questions concerning the lack of social change to bring about equity. Bell (2003) convinces us that we are on the right track to create space for White pre-service teachers to learn about the historical construction of race and recent experiences of racism as told by people of colour, living in the same community. Only in understanding the differences in treatment encountered at grocery and department store check-outs can White pre-service teachers begin to think about White privilege as a commodity (Levine-Rasky, 2000), work through the pain of change (Rich & Aaron, 2004) and begin to think about what it means to develop “culturally responsive” teaching practices (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lecompte & McCray, 2002).

A well-established body of knowledge labeled Critical Race Theory (Bergeron, 2003; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Phillips, & Thomas, 1996; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixon & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Parker & Stovall, 2004; Stovall, 2005; Yosso, 2005), as well as our own experiences teaching in public schools and preparing classroom teachers inspired us to push forward with a project to engage with our teaching candidates in race dialogues. We believe these conversations are important to the advancement of anti-racist teaching practices. Dixon and Rousseaus (2005) described “whiteness as property” and showed how “tracking can be viewed as one of the current means through which the property right of whiteness is asserted in education” (p. 8). The concept of whiteness as closely connected to capital (McLaren, 1995) and an outcome of racism is an

uncomfortable conversation but important in building educational communities of change in a multicultural society. While education policies have deconstructed tracking, classroom and social practices continue to leave visible evidence that racism is alive. This project created space for a small educational community to engage in critical change conversations.

Critical Race Theory was first theorized for the education field by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995). Crenshaw, Gotanda, Phillips, and Thomas (1996) first coined and theorized the term Critical Race Theory when they organized workshops to address the racial politics in the United States. The six tenets of CRT, detailed by Abrams and Moio (2009), are as follows:

1. **Endemic Racism:** Rather than accepting racism as abnormal or individualistic, CRT asserts that racism is an ordinary, everyday occurrence for people of colour. It is deeply embedded in the social fabric of American society, permeating our social structures and practices. Because racism is ordinary and embedded, its structural functions effect on our ways of thinking are often invisible, particularly to people holding racial privilege. In turn, this “invisibility” maintains racism.
2. **Race as a Social Construction:** CRT maintains that race is a contrived system of categorizing people according to observable physical attributes that have no correspondence to genetic or biological reality. Although, CRT regards race as a social construction, it fully acknowledges the force of its meaning and implications.
3. **Differential Racialization:** Dominant social discourses and people in power can racialize groups of people in different ways at different times, depending on historic, social, or economic need. For example, various Asian American groups were viewed as benign, if not favorable, when a large, inexpensive labor force was needed. Over time, when the financial independence and success of Asian American groups appeared threatening to the national economy, these groups were demonized in popular discourse and excluded from citizenship by law. Today, after a third reversal in racialization, Asian Americans are considered a “model minority.”
4. **Interest Convergence/Materialist Determinism:** Racism brings material and psychic advantage to the majority race, and progressive change regarding race occurs only when the interests of the powerful (i.e., the White majority) happen to converge with those of the racially oppressed.
5. **Voices of Colour:** The dominant group’s accounting of history routinely excludes racial and other minority perspectives to justify and legitimize its power. This silencing of alternative experiences serves to minimize and obscure the interplay of power and oppression across time and place. CRT advocates a rewriting of history to include the lived reality of oppressed groups from their perspectives and in their own words. Bringing

these narratives into account challenges liberalist claims of neutrality, colour otherness, and universal truths.

6. **Antiessentialism/Intersectionality:** CRT acknowledges the intersectionality of various oppressions and suggests that a primary focus on race can eclipse other forms of exclusion. For example, the marginalized race, sexuality, and class of a poor, gay, African American person presents a far more complex social location than any single aspect of his identity alone. In fact, CRT theorists contend that analysis without a multidimensional framework can replicate the very patterns of social exclusion it seeks to combat and can lead to the essentializing of oppressions (Abrams & Moio, 2009, p. 261-262).

We believe that teachers grounded in the dominant culture need to enter into relationship with people of colour (scholars, teacher educators, K-12 classroom teachers, community members, parents, and students) to learn within this very community, which Murrell postulates is foundational for achievement among African American children. This was a different way of thinking for some White pre-service teachers who came into the program with a missionary mentality that often hides White supremacy attitudes. Critical inquiry methods in teacher education foster critical communities of learning and provide the foundation for shifting from a monocultural system of teaching practice to a multicultural one. We believe it to be a moral imperative that teacher education programs follow the lead of Bell and his predecessors such as W.E.B. Dubois, and become critical actors. Knowing that racism has been part of the structural framework of public education in the USA is not enough. Knowing that desegregation has led to re-segregation through privatization agendas is not enough. Knowing is not enough. Teacher educators must engage candidates in the field through critical pedagogies that raise moral consciousness and lead to action. Subsequently, after collecting pre-service teachers' narrative reflections on their experiences with the race films and race dialogue, we analyzed their narratives through the lens of CRT.

## INQUIRY METHODS AND DATA SOURCE

We used narrative methods for data collection and analysis. Drawing on Polkinghorne's (1995) narrative configurations, we collected pre-service teachers' narratives and analyzed them through the lens of Critical Race Theory. Polkinghorne distinguished between analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. Analysis of narrative allows the researcher to begin with narrative data, categorize data within the narratives, and analyze to learn conceptual knowledge. Narrative analysis begins with categorized data, and uses analysis to produce a narrative that contains practical knowledge for practice. Data Collection for this study primarily in-

cluded students' survey responses to viewing each video and engaging in critical dialogue.

We introduced race dialogues as experiential learning to afford pre-service teachers the opportunity to gain experiential multicultural knowledge and sensitivity through dialogues about race as a social construction. Following each film in the series *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, students discussed the issue of race as it related to stereotyping, policy making, housing, economic development, education, and the impact of race on the daily lives of each participant. The goal was critical self-reflection in response to interfacing with the documentaries and engaging with peers. We participated by sharing personal experiences and facilitating the open dialogue to ensure everyone had a chance to talk. We stressed the role of listening for understanding (Burbules, 1993; Isaac, 1993; Jenlink & Carr, 1996) to model openness to new ways of thinking about race. Candidates were asked to do a supplementary activity involving reviewing the PBS website and articles, as well as to write a personal response after the event. Throughout the rest of the 18 weeks' program, the experiences of the workshop became a point of reference for exploring the question of "What now?" Becoming aware of racism in society and in our dispositions is not enough. Awareness is a beginning point, but teachers must move beyond awareness and take action to create more equitable learning experiences for all students.

## **ANALYZING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' NARRATIVES THROUGH CRITICAL RACE THEORY**

During the analytical process, the pre-service teachers' narratives were analyzed using CRT as a framework. We observed evidence of three of the six CRT tenets: (1) Endemic Racism, (2) Interest Convergence/Materialist Determinism, and some evidence of (3) Race as a Social Construction. Although the CRT tenets remain the focal point of our analytical framework, to assist in the structure of the analysis, substantive categories emerged (i.e., ideology, privilege, and guilt) that served to further exploit the interrogation (where disappointment and disbelief collide).

### *Racial Ideology*

Racial ideology is a body of ideas reflecting the learned social needs of other individuals, groups, classes, and/or cultures. Additionally, it's fixed on race and is transferred through interacting in the environment. As with racial ideologies, endemic racism is ever-present in society (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) and subsequently in schools. The analysis revealed participants could not demonstrate the ability to conceptualize the institutionalized properties of racism.

In addition, the data shows the ease with which struggles related to racism might be discounted as common to all human beings. One White participant stated,

There are many things that we do not question in life and just go by what we think is right or by what others tell us is right. Watching this series emphasized to me that I need to look deeper into things and not take things just as they may appear. The most important insight of that second class to me was written in my journal. What I learned most from that day is that we all have things we struggle with or problems in our lives, they may not be the same problems or struggles, but we all have them.

Looking at this statement through the lens of CRT's definition of endemic racism (Crenshaw, 1995), we wonder what problems in this White pre-service teacher's life is on the same level as the racism viewed in the documentary films. It shows what might be a difficulty with recognizing the deeper struggle for someone who is a victim of racist practices. The struggle of being Black compounds whatever struggles the White pre-service teachers perceive they have in common with Black human beings. How do we talk about the unique disadvantages that result from racist practices toward Black human beings when it permeates society and is accepted as the norm? If pre-service teachers compare this to the universal human struggle, how can they see the uniqueness of the struggle of racism and address it in its uniqueness?

### *Racial Privilege*

Hidden may be White human beings' unawareness in regards to race privilege. Race privilege theorizes that White humans' social benefits exceed the commonly experienced benefits of non-White humans under the same social, political, or economic circumstances (Banks, 2012; McIntosh, 1989; Rothenberg, 2005; Wellman, 1993). CRT works toward the ideals of civil liberties for all, while analyzing how racism and racialized societies affect the lives of oppressed people. Therefore, we asked our pre-service teachers, who were mainly White, to be aware of who benefits from unearned advantages in the classroom. We provide another one pre-service teacher's narrative as an example of how the films helped him to recognize his unawareness to the ways that racial privilege had contributed to his "success." The pre-service teacher's awareness shows the value of the race films and dialogue curriculum as a pedagogy for understanding racial privilege.

*It was long taught to me that although in yester years many minorities suffered in our country, today we all have equal opportunities. That just isn't so. I didn't really have any understanding for the ripple effect, all the way up to the present, that deeply seeded and carried out discrimination has, and still does, effect minority populations.*

And, another pre-service teacher stated,

*I have definitely taken being white middle class for granted without even realizing it. I guess I've always had advantages without even knowing it. I always thought that I had been a hard worker and done the right thing to succeed... Before this class I never really thought about why things are the way they are. I always thought that I was a good person so I was doing everything I could to be positive towards other races and cultures.*

Viewing this pre-service teachers' awareness through the lens of CRT shows how the endemic nature of racism can become visible and the system of advantages based on race is illuminated. Prior to the race films and dialogue, privileging Whites was an invisible form of racism. It was not viewed "as abnormal or individualistic," but rather "deeply embedded in the social fabric of American society, permeating our social structures and practices" (Abrams & Moio, 2009, p. 249). Furthermore, some pre-service teachers found race privilege to be indistinguishable from the conventional means of treatment. They often misperceived race privilege with a form of civil liberty instead of understanding race privilege as an invisible system of unearned advantages and benefits (McIntosh, 1989) given to them by other individuals, based on their white skin. Concluding, the socio-psychological construction of race makes it difficult for the pre-service teachers to fully acknowledge race privilege. However, viewing the films may have allowed the pre-service teachers an introduction to becoming self-aware of their biases, in regards to their race privilege and their race privileged experiences.

### *Racial Guilt*

A couple of White pre-service teachers openly acknowledged that they found the day challenging and hesitated to fully engage because they felt they could not relate. Based on their narratives and discussions, we conclude racial guilt overcame the pre-service teachers. Particularly during the viewing of the films, the pre-service teachers may have experienced and internalized feelings of guilt for the racist treatment experienced by Black people; both historically and currently. Their narratives further expressed their innocence to racism but found it difficult to articulate their compassionate policies regarding the ethical treatment of Black people. CRT contends that race and racism is a social manifestation that operates with the ideology that whiteness-over-colour dominance serves an important psychological and material function. Based on the definition of Interest Convergence/Materialist Determinism, CRT emphasizes that racism advances the interest of the White majority, leaving large segments of the society little incentive to eradicate racism. As the pre-service teachers experienced the film, they unconsciously experienced the unintended consequences of racism; in this case, White guilt. In doing so, they struggled to make sense of the duality of strong emotions (e.g., sadness and anger) while emphatically denying personal responsibility for being recipients of unearned social, political, or economic assets.

Before looking at an example reflection we think it is important to look at the use of “White majority” within CRT’s definition. The number of people who actually fit in the category of “White majority” is no longer numerically the majority in the United States. It seems to us that literally in the beginning years of the USA, citizenship was based on colour of skin, gender, property, and education. For over 90 years, most Black human beings were viewed as property. After the Emancipation Proclamation, for the next 100 years, racism was clearly visible through Jim Crow legislation. Glenda is old enough to remember the separate water fountains in grocery stores, separate entrance and waiting room at the doctor’s office, balcony in movie theatre for Black human beings, separate spaces on public buses, restriction in restaurants, segregated neighborhoods, and issues around “separate but equal schools.” Our pre-service teachers are too young to have experienced that kind of blatant discrimination. Also, living in the Pacific Northwest, maybe some pre-service teachers experienced more integrated living. One pre-service teacher reflected,

*I did find it very hard to talk about the issues during class because I don't have a lot of experience with them [issues]. I'm from the white upper middle class. I went to private school, and while I have a broad cultural friend base, I haven't seen how these issues affect people for the most part. I do not know their perspective and I didn't want to speculate... What I liked about the class was it made me think more. What I didn't like is that I don't think I personally have done anything wrong and it made me feel like I had.*

Maybe this pre-service teacher’s experience is an anomaly. Maybe his “broad cultural friend base” is an economic anomaly to the statistic that on the average White human beings in the USA have eight times more wealth than Black human beings. Maybe this scenario is unique in that the pre-service teacher is in an upper middle class with diverse people in upper middle class as recognized by having the capital to go to a private school without issues of race.

As researchers, we discussed how the narrative statement by the pre-service teacher sounded like the White candidate could not see racism from his dominant position. We also wondered where his feelings of accountability came from and how pre-service teachers learn to understand such feelings. This pre-service teacher points out that he struggles with his position of beneficiary of historically constructed privilege while not understanding why he is accountable today for this ongoing privilege since he sees no visible evidence that he is contributing to maintaining the status quo by not taking action. Under what conditions do pre-service teachers experience feelings they consider are the result of being wrongly positioned? Some pre teachers expressed gratitude for the opportunity to broaden their perspectives on race. One stated,

*With this unit about race, I enjoyed doing the research before attending class. I looked at the website especially. This class really made me think about dif-*

*ferent things that I had never put into that particular context before. I grew up in a small town with little diversity and small amounts of racial awareness. The movies we watched were rather boring, but the conversations that stemmed from them were moving. As a whole class we talked about life experiences, personal situations and biases, and what diversity looks like in the classroom. It was hard for me to contribute to the conversation just because it was hard for me to relate to some of the issues that were brought up.*

Again, viewing the pre-service teachers' narratives through the lens of CRT raised our consciousness as to how easy it is for pre-service teachers to disassociate from critical conversations by continuing to live within the norm of racism that penetrates society, hidden, privileging the dominant White population. CRT explains that the lived experiences of minorities communicate a presumed competence (Crenshaw, 2011) to speak on and about race and racism. For pre-service teachers who experienced a new awakening, some expressed a desire to commit to change and become a part of the solution. One pre-service teacher stated,

*Race – The Power of an Illusion. That was a powerful experience for me. I was distraught by the topic, struggled with guilt, and was overwhelmed by the hugeness of it. Yet even while struggling with all that I felt optimistic. I determined more than ever that day to be part of the solution.*

And, another pre-service teacher stated,

*I think the role of teacher carries a certain amount of power, and if used properly, we can be part of the change.*

These responses represent a common theme that most of the pre-service teachers had not understood the origins of race as a social construct, or the extent to which the historical dynamics of race, power, and privilege have negatively impacted African American, Native Indian, and White populations in the United States. Many pre-service teachers shared bits (e.g., small units of information) of historical racial events, personal accounts and inquiries, but as a group, they failed to identify the social significance of institutionalized ideologies, privilege, and guilt associated with racializing the races. After viewing the race films, the pre-service teacher's deficient knowledge regarding race and racism emerged as an action of normalcy. They could not interpret their thoughts and/or actions as anything other than a normal way of existing.

Historically, it has been easy to see how African Americans and Native Americans have been negatively impacted economically and in terms of where they have been allowed to live. White Americans have also been impacted as seen by the pre-service teachers' feelings of guilt. The sense of guilt sometimes results in White Americans disconnecting from the issue of racism, claiming separation from the historical events that oppressed African Americans and Native Americans. Others pre-service teachers embraced their connection to racism, recognizing the ways they benefited from these historical events. Overall, the responses revealed a be-

gining depth of critical thinking particularly with respect to how personal awareness can potentially impact working with diverse PK-12 students; however, CRT suggests that if this critical thinking does not produce an action, then its intent is seemingly null and void (Crenshaw, 2011; Zuberi, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

Pre-service teachers' narratives reflected a range of responses from feeling offended and guilt-ridden to a heightened awareness and accountability to take positive action as teachers. The pre-service teachers' narratives followed a pattern of identifying race privilege, followed by lack of awareness of their dominant racial status, to finally admitting to not knowing how to see past their own choices they've made to accept unearned privileges without addressing the need to work for equitable changes. CRT would want pre-service teachers who are positioned with privilege to become aware of ways to problem solve issues of privilege as they surface in classroom and schools.

The films did prove to be a valuable curriculum for race dialogue as a source of multicultural education within the framework of CRT. Zuberi (2011) argues that CRT is one effort toward "racial redemption" (p. 1586), or deconstructing the concept of race. The goal is for all human beings to see diverse features as normal to being human without assignment to issues of class. In other words, it is normal for human beings to have different shades of skin, and this has nothing to do with intellectual ability, social status, or moral character. This concept is hard to promote in a nation where President Abraham Lincoln agreed with Judge Douglas that slaves were "not" his "equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment," (as cited in Zilversmit, 1971, pp. 41-42) during the first Lincoln-Douglas debate in which Lincoln stated his racial disposition:

I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the White and the Black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary... (as cited in Zilversmit, 1971, p. 41-42)

Nowhere in the USA curriculum do PK-12 teachers address the foundational acceptance of racism in American society. We have yet to know of an eighth grade social studies teacher to talk about Lincoln's racial perspective. It was evident that the pre-service teachers in this project had not purposefully been exposed to nor engaged in discussions on issues of race in their K-12 educational experi-

ences. However, the narratives did express how the films had effectively challenged pre-service teachers' assumptions and made them think deeply about their future interactions with students from diverse backgrounds. We have identified five curricular and pedagogical values of the films and suggest a few instructional practices that teachers can implement in K-12 classrooms.

### **CURRICULAR AND PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF THE FILMS**

1. Race films document the construction and maintenance of racism in the USA
2. Race films document sources of racial domination and oppression
3. Race films address policies and procedures that marginalize groups based on race
4. Race films provide a lens for pre-service teachers to examine their personal biases and conceptions of race
5. Race films provide a narrative text that draws the viewers into the historical and progressive presence of race in the USA

### **SUGGESTED CLASSROOM PRACTICES FOR RACIAL JUSTICES**

1. Allow PK-12 students to bring their cultural backgrounds into the classroom to Democratize the learning environment.
2. Use *Judicious Discipline* (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Gathorcal, 2004)
3. Provide classroom experiences that are equitable to all the learners (Delpit, 1995; Delpit & Dowdy, 2002)
4. Use African-centered pedagogy (Murrell, 2002).
5. Promote dual language programs in schools
6. Allow ESL students to use their heritage language at school
7. Engage with PK-12 students in designing and conducting projects that actually address social issues in their community. (See *Rethinking Schools* publications for ideas) (Au, 2009)

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