

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Amanda Ekabutr for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in College Student Services Administration, Education, and Ethnic Studies presented on May 16, 2019

Title: The Experiences of Student-Athletes from Marginalized Communities Through Critical Dialogic Spaces

Abstract approved:

Larry D. Roper

On top of time demanding athletic and academic constraints, Division I student-athletes must balance many social identities, that include their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, religious affiliation, etc. This study attempts to fill the gap by providing student-athletes with marginalized identities a platform to (1) offer their own narrative on the dimensions of their identity, including athletic identity and (2) describe the ways in which intergroup dialogue, when applied as a framework for critical dialogic spaces, might support a sense of belonging, closer community within their team, with other student-athletes, and provide perspective between student-athletes, staff, and faculty. In addition to intergroup dialogue, the researcher employed critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and intersectionality (Carastathis, 2016), to help the reader understand how student-athletes' experiences are shaped. The results of this study can help athletic programs create programming to better support student-athletes from marginalized communities.

©Copyright by Amanda Ekabutr
May 16, 2019
All Rights Reserved

The Experiences of Student-Athletes from Marginalized Communities Through Critical
Dialogic Spaces
by
Amanda Ekabutr

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of the Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

Presented May 16, 2019
Commencement June 2019

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies thesis of Amanda Ekabutr presented on May 16, 2019

APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing College Student Services Administration

Director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Amanda Ekabutr, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout my thesis work, there were many people who were vital in my process, growth, and success in graduate school. I first want to say thank you to the participants of this study, Tyra, Pickle, Avah, Julia, Myah, Marcus, Young Mo, Jerome, Aquaman, and Max. I appreciate the participants for helping me bring my thesis to life. These participants have helped me showcase my passion and love for serving student-athletes. I would also like to give a special thank you to my mother, Lumjuan Ritdej. My mother is my motivation and when I graduate, so does she. I would not be the proud Thai hardworking woman, if it wasn't for her. My mother has made so many sacrifices to raise me and I am forever grateful. I also can't forget to say thank you to my number one supporter, best friend, and amazing boyfriend, Kyree Hart. Kyree has been there for me through my stress, tears, self-doubts, late night phone calls, attitudes, and continues to love and support me through it all.

I also want to thank Larry Roper, my major advisor, for giving me hope and guidance throughout the thesis process. Larry's positive attitude, knowledge, and simplicity has helped reassure that I am more than capable of completing this thesis. I would also like to acknowledge my committee members: Robert Thompson, Michael O'Malley, and Allison Hurst for supporting my time in the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies program. I appreciate their guidance and hope to give the same support I've received from them, onto other students. Another person I would like to thank is Natchee Barnd. Natchee has helped me grow and has willingly listened to me vent for hours. I appreciate everyone in Oregon State's Student-Athlete Development department, because if it wasn't for them, I would not be able involved with amazing programs, like Real Talk.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Topic of Study.....	1
1.2 Research Statement.....	2
1.3 Professional Significance.....	3
1.4 Defining The Terms.....	3
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	7
2.1 Athletic Identity.....	7
2.2 Racial Identity.....	9
2.3 Theoretical Framework.....	12
2.4 Critical Race Theory (CRT).....	12
2.5 Intersectionality.....	13
2.6 Intergroup Dialogue (IGD).....	14
Chapter 3: Methods.....	19
3.1 Positionality.....	19
3.2 Methodology & Methods.....	19
3.3 Interview Questions.....	21
3.4 Recruitment & Sampling.....	23
3.5 Participant Eligibility Criteria.....	24
3.6 Transcription & Coding.....	24
Chapter 4: Findings.....	25

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
4.1 Individual Stories.....	28
4.2 Tyra.....	28
4.3 Pickle.....	31
4.4 Avah.....	34
4.5 Julia.....	41
4.6 Myah.....	45
4.7 Marcus.....	51
4.8 Young Mo.....	54
4.9 Jerome.....	57
4.10 Aquaman.....	64
4.11 Max.....	68
4.12 Common Themes.....	71
4.13 Authenticity.....	71
4.14 Sense of Belonging.....	73
4.15 Welcoming and Engaging Dialogue.....	74
4.16 Stigma.....	78
4.17 Personal Development.....	80
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	82
5.1 Research Statement.....	82
5.2 Methodology Review.....	83
5.3 Summary of Results.....	84

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
5.4 Implications.....	85
5.5 Limitation.....	86
5.6 Recommendations.....	87
5.7 Incorporate Intergroup Dialogue.....	88
5.8 Coaches.....	90
5.9 Athletic Administrators.....	91
5.10 Faculty and Academic Advisors/Counselors for Student-Athletes.....	91
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	92
Bibliography.....	95

Chapter 1: Introduction

Topic of Study

Statistically, less than 2% of NCAA student-athletes will continue playing sports professionally after college (NCAA, 2018). The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) promotes student success by noting that college sports equip student-athletes to succeed academically, develop transferable skills, promote well-being and prepare student-athletes for life beyond their sport (NCAA, 2015). However, a big challenge amongst Division I student-athletes is being able to balance the many different, complex roles and identities that they carry socially, academically and athletically (Adler, 1987). To name a few factors, student-athletes experience social isolation and social evaluation, as compared to their non-student-athlete peers (Bimper, 2014). Student-athletes tend to be the face of the university and are gloried to a “celebrity” status. This status can create the development of the gloried self, by others treating student-athletes as objects, rather than individuals (Adler, 1989). This “celebrity” perception is then perpetuated through their objectification, monetization and engagement with the media, fans, donors and the public. “Individuals thus become initially alienated from themselves through the separation of their self-concept from the conception of their selves held by others” (Adler, 1989 p. 299).

A student-athlete’s athletic identity naturally supersedes their other identities because they’ve been heavily immersed in their sport from games, traveling, practices, workouts, meetings, watching film, and fan engagement (Williams & Shropshire, 2017). In addition to practicing and competing at the highest collegiate level, student-athletes are microscopically reflecting on the “looking glass” self (Cooley, 1902). According to Cooley (1902), the “looking glass” self is the development of one's self and identity through face-to-face interactions and how

they view themselves within society. Therefore, I wonder what institutions are doing to help student-athletes create a strong sense of identity through face-to-face interactions?

For this research, I will specifically look at Oregon State University's student-athlete development program, also known as Everyday Champions (EC). EC provides many different programs and workshops that work towards cultivating and developing student-athletes holistically, both professionally and personally. EC offers several diversity and inclusion programs to attend to the need of the various identities' student-athletes hold. Regardless of race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, socioeconomic status or religious affiliation, EC cultivates spaces to nourish all aspects of a student-athlete's identity. For this study, I will focus particularly on one diversity and inclusion program, Real Talk. Real Talk is a student-athlete led program that was established in Fall of 2017. This program was derived from a similar program that was led by African-American football student-athletes called Thursday Night Sounds that existed between the late 90's to early 2000's.

Real Talk's initiative is to bring together student-athletes from underrepresented populations to discuss a variety of topics that will work towards building bridges across racial, political and cultural avenues, while also discussing real-time relevant topics and pertinent issues (Oregon State University, 2018). This program strives for an inclusive space where student-athletes from all backgrounds are welcome.

Research Statement

As my research relates to the experiences of student-athletes who hold marginalized identities in critical dialogic spaces, particularly as it relates to Real Talk, my research questions are as follows:

1. What factors present challenges for student-athletes who hold marginalized identities at a predominately white institution (PWI)?
2. What are the experiences of student-athletes who hold marginalized identities in a critical dialogic space like Real Talk?
3. How can we better form and cultivate dialogic spaces to attend the needs of student-athletes who hold marginalized identities?

Professional Significance

Most literature available on the topic of student-athletes with marginalized identities mainly focuses on African-American athletes. Little has been written about Latino, Asian, or Native American student athletes (Rogers, Benson, Person, 2001). Furthermore, literature is unavailable when it comes to talking about student-athletes with marginalized identities as its own community.

Therefore, this study will use African-American student-athlete literature as a foundation to understand what student-athletes with marginalized identities experience. In addition, this study will attempt to fill the gap by providing student-athletes with marginalized identities a platform to (1) offer their own narrative on the dimension of their identity, including athletic identity and (2) describe the ways in which intergroup dialogue, when applied as a framework for critical dialogic spaces, might support a sense of belonging, closer community within their team, with other student-athletes, and provide perspective between student-athletes, staff and faculty.

Defining The Terms

Marginalized

One of the most dangerous forms of oppression that can show up as racial oppression, is marginalization. “A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination” (Adams & Blumenfeld & Castañeda, Hackman, Peters, & Zúñiga, (2013). If the system labor cannot or will not use you, you become *Marginal*. Marginalization is the process of not allowing specific individuals or groups a voice, identity or place in society. Individuals and groups can be marginalized based on race, gender, sex, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and/or religion (Adams & Blumenfeld & Castañeda, Hackman, Peters, & Zúñiga, (2013).

Race-Based Privilege

Privilege can operate and show up on many different levels - personally, interpersonally, culturally, and on institutional levels. McIntosh (1998) describes White privilege “as an invisible package of unearned assets that I could count on cashing in each day but about which I was meant to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks” (p. 207). Privilege is mainly provided to those of the dominant group (ex. White, heterosexual, Christian, middle to upper class, and English speaking). Unlike target groups (groups that are objects of oppression), people in dominant groups see themselves as persons rather than their stereotypes, due to their privilege (McIntosh, 1988). Furthermore, McIntosh (1988) illustrates two types of race-based privilege, unearned entitlements and conferred dominance. Unearned entitlements are things or resources that are only available to some people based on their social group membership. Examples of this in higher education are students feeling safe on a college campus or feeling their voice matters and is valued. In addition, McIntosh (1988) illustrates that unearned entitlements become unearned advantages when they are restricted to only certain groups. For dominant groups

unearned advantages can create a competitive nature that members of the dominant group stray from giving up, yet alone acknowledge (Johnson, 1997). In substitute, dominant groups believe privileges can be earned and that you have to work hard to acquire them.

As explained by McIntosh (1988), the second type of privilege is conferred dominance, which exists when one group has power over another. McIntosh also explains that conferred dominance and unearned entitlements give White people an unfounded advantage in society, solely based on the color of their White skin. Through social constructions of dominance and privilege conferred dominance exists and reinforces the disadvantages people of color have experienced. “White racial dominance that can override any class advantage a person of color might have” (Johnson, 1997, p. 27). Common examples of conferred dominance in higher education is buildings named after White men and seeing mostly White students in authoritative leadership positions in organizations.

Oppression

Oppression is a multifaceted system and uses social power to benefit privileged group members. Oppression can be operationalized by privileged groups in order to maintain three dimensions (a) contextual dimension, (b) conscious/unconscious dimension and (c) applied dimension (Adams, Blumenfeld, Castañeda, Hackman, Peters, & Zúñiga, 2013). At an individual level oppression is maintained by attitudes and behaviors of individual persons. These attitudes and behaviors can be conscious or unconscious, but both are effectively damaging.

Institutionally, major institutions such as family, government, business, education, the legal system, and religious organizations participate in operationalizing and maintaining oppression through laws, policies and practices. With comparison to conscious and unconscious attitudes and behaviors at an individual level, at an institutional level oppression is enforced both

intentionally and unintentionally. Then there's societal and cultural norms and patterns which influence and bind how individuals and institutions justify social oppression.

Brave Space

Instead of using the term safe space, I will use *brave space* to focus on increasing the safety and visibility of marginalized communities (Ali, 2017). Safe space is more so focused on the well-being of a person, where brave space also understands balancing the need to explore topics such as race, and racism, which may be uncomfortable for some people, but is important for everyone to discuss. For a brave space there are five elements; (1) challenging each other's opinions but accepting them with respect (2) understanding the effects of impact versus intention and engaging in dialogue that acknowledges the emotional effects of another person's well-being (3) participants are allowed to choose whether they want to challenge a conversation (4) respecting each other's ideas, thoughts, feelings, perspectives, and opinions (5) engage in dialogue to understand and not attack (Ali, 2017).

Critical Dialogic Space

Critical means a conscious effort to examine how life experiences are meaningfully connected to group identity, and how these identities exist in structures that afford members of different groups privileges and disadvantages (Sorenson, Nagda, Maxwell, & Guri, 2009). This does not mean that people are critical of one another when engaging in dialogue but is more so focused on participants using a critical analysis lens to better understand how the intersection of identity may impact themselves and other groups with regards to systems of inequality. According to Sorenson, Nagda, Maxwell and Guri (2009), making identity salient with a critical analysis allows students to reflect on how to consider their own perspectives and the perspectives

of other students. In addition, identity salience creates a multicultural approach to improve intergroup relations and argues that we live in a color-blind society where inequalities exist (Sorenson, Nagda, Maxwell, & Guri, 2009).

According to Baxter (2004) *Dialogic* is the relation “between self and other, a simultaneity of sameness and difference out of which knowing becomes possible” (p.109); thus, placing a high emphasis on the interactions individuals and groups members have and among each other. This can be done through active listening, asking questions, and sharing personal stories regarding similarities and or differences. The goal of dialogic communication is not to present one’s opinions to simply hear others engage in discussion or to defend ones perspective (debate), but the goal is to strive towards understanding through the exploration of others experiences, identifying one’s own and others assumptions and reappraising one’s perspectives in light of these dialogic exchanges (Sorenson, Nagda, Maxwell, & Guri, 2009 p. 16).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the literature review, I will examine athletic identity and racial identity and the outcomes critical dialogic spaces provide for students with marginalized identities. I will utilize critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), intersectionality (Carastathis, 2016) and intergroup dialogue (IGD) (Zuniga & Nagda & Chesler, 2007) as theoretical frameworks to help explain to the reader how multiple intersecting identities shape a student’s experiences and the way they choose to communicate with others.

Athletic Identity

Student-athletes commit a great amount of time to their sport and the majority of their Division I collegiate experience is dedicated to their identity and role as an athlete. Athletic identity is a social role or an occupation of how one views oneself within that context, whereas self-identity is how one chooses to view oneself holistically, and a social identity is how the self is viewed by others (Beamon, 2012).

Academically, there's a pervasive stereotype of the Black "dumb jock" (Edwards, 1984; Morris & Adeyemo, 2012). Sports sociologist Dr. Harry Edwards (1984) disapproved the African-American community from participating in sports because he believed sports only placed a high emphasis on African-Americans athletic abilities. Therefore, the Black "dumb jock" stereotype further perpetuates the intellectual inferiority that is placed on African Americans by white faculty members and students (Beamon, 2014). This creates the false narrative that African-Americans only attend and "belong" to a PWI if they play a sport (Beamon, 2014).

When a student-athlete chooses to nurture one identity (athletic identity) they tend to experience high rates of identity foreclosure, especially minority males in football and basketball (Beamon, 2012). Identity foreclosure is the commitment to an identity before meaningfully engaging and exploring other options (Marcia, 1966). Due to time demanding athletic and academic schedules it is difficult for student-athletes to explore and devote time to identity exploration. As a result, students are foreclosed on their athletic identity, leaving their personal identity outside of their sport disregarded. Therefore, athletic identity influences the self-perceptions of Black athletes (Bimper, 2014). In Singer's (2008) qualitative study on African-American student-athletes, the author indicated that time demands physically, psychologically

and emotionally prevent them from placing priority of being a student first, then athlete second.

The following is a quote from student-athletes:

“You got to study; you got practice; you are tired and the average college student is you know, two classes a day and maybe has a job. But after about, I don’t know, depends on what time their classes are, but if they have classes in the morning then they are done for the rest of the day. They have time to do their homework. Their body is not tired”

(Singer, 2008).

“...we are here to play a sport, but we also go to school so they try to collaborate those two and try to say student-athlete; we want to be students first because time is so demanding and what not” (Singer, 2008).

Due to athletic time constraints, student-athletes are devoted in developing their athletic identity, and these quotes reveal the position in which African-Americans consider “athlete-students” a more appropriate term (Harrison & Bimper & Smith & Logan, 2017).

Racial Identity

Previous studies have shown that athletic identity and racial identity work simultaneously and overlap one another (Bimper & Harrison, 2011). According to Omi and Winant (1994) race is fluid and is historically situated and socially constructed by society at micro (how a person’s individual reactions with others) and macro levels (social structures and common ideologies of a society). For Black athletes, there have been many studies discussing the unique athletic experiences Black athletes face due to their race. Black male student-athletes are overly represented in collegiate athletics. Between 2007 and 2010, Black males represented 2.8% of undergraduate students on college campuses, but 57.1% of the football teams and 64.3% of

men's basketball teams (Harper & Williams & Blackman, 2013). Harper (2016) also revealed that in the 2014-2015 academic year that Black women represented 3.2% of undergraduate students, but 55.3% of women's basketball teams across Power 5 conferences. This shows the lack of Black representation in the classroom but large representation in revenue generating sports, which places more focus on the labor of Black athletes and less on their academic success.

“It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (Dubois, 1903).

In this quote, Dubois eloquently (1903) explains how Black people experience a *double consciousness* when trying to position themselves as both being a *Negro* and an American in society. Double consciousness specifically focuses on race relations in the United States, and reveals the complexity of maintaining multiple identities. Therefore, Bimper and Harrison (2011) reveal how multiple identities contribute to how someone identifies themselves. Student-athletes are commonly defined by their sport and are more likely to identify themselves on how others recognize them. For instance, there is evidence that Black male football players reported a higher internal focus on sports, and feelings that others view their athletic identity most salient (Harrison, 2011).

Then there's the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) which defines racial identity as, “the significance and qualitative meaning that individuals attribute to their membership with the black racial group within their self-concepts” (Sellers, 1998 p.23). This

model was integrated by Cross's (1971) Nigrescence Model that was primarily used to describe the unique experiences of becoming Black in the United States (Cross, 1971), but this model is also used to investigate other groups identities. In contrast to Cross's eight racial identity clusters and four stage Nigrescence Model (Cross & Vandiver, 2001), the MMRI has four dimensions that help answer how important race is to an individual's view of one's self, and what it means to belong as a member of their racial group at a particular period of time (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). The four dimensions are salience, centrality, regard, and ideology. "Race salience refers to the extent to which one's race is a relevant part of one's self-concept at a particular moment or in a particular situation" (Sellers, 1998 p.24). Sellers (1998) explains how race salience can depend on the context of the situation and can vary depending on the context of individuals and situations.

Furthermore, race salience can be different for two people of the same race and reveals how an individual behaves and reacts in certain situations. In contrast to race salience, race centrality is stable and refers to how an individual perceives race as their core self-concept (Sellers, 1998). When an individual feels positively about their black race then they are showing positive regard towards their race. Regard can be shown through a private and public sector of how individuals feel positively or negatively towards being African-American and towards other African-Americans (private) (Sellers, 1998). Public regard is defined as how individuals positively or negatively view African-Americans (Sellers, 1998). Lastly, is the fourth dimension, ideology. Ideology is a collection of ideas that determine how a member of a race interacts and views society (Bimper&Harrison, 2011).

Within MMRI's racial ideology, there are 4 dimensions: assimilationists, humanists, nationalists and oppressed minority ideologies: 1) An assimilationist ideology is aware of

similarities between other African-Americans, and their status as an American and works to enter mainstream culture as much as possible. It's important to note that this does not mean individuals disregard their African-American identity, but they place a greater emphasis on African-Americans being agents for social change in society; 2) A humanist ideology focuses on the similarities between all humans and views everyone as a part of one race – the human race; 3) A nationalist ideology highlights the uniqueness of being Black; 4) The oppressed minority ideology looks at similar experiences African -Americans face and the experiences between other minority groups (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged from critical legal studies (CLS) (Ladson-Billings, 1998) where legal scholars began to recognize how racial oppression has been embedded in American society. However, the law continues to perpetuate racial stratification rather than working to deconstruct oppressive systems and structures (Beamon, 2014). CRT has been commonly used in education (ex. Critical race feminism (CRF), Latino/a studies, Native American studies) and sports research (Bimper&Harrison, 2011; Beamon, 2014) to focus on the portrayal of issues of race, law and power. In addition, critical race theory is used as a framework to challenge the notion that “the civil rights struggle represents a long, steady, march toward social transformation” (Ladson-Billings, 1998 p. 10). Therefore, critical race theory is a theoretical and interpretive lens that centers race and racism, and examines existing power structures that uphold the presence of racist policies and oppressive systems (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

According to Ladson-Billings (1995) racism is deeply embedded in the U.S and CRT is helpful when examining the different racial inequities within the education system (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The CRT has five core tenants that are utilized to frame this study; 1) the importance of storytelling for people who hold marginalized identities, as it relates to the experiences of race and racism; 2) Interest Convergence, which highlights how the majority/dominant group (white people) only address racial issues, only if it is beneficial for them; 3) race is socially constructed; 4) Differential racialization highlights how dominant groups racialize different minority groups at different times; 5) Story telling in which marginalized voices are centered and authoritative (Cooper, 2016). “voice-of-color thesis holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, Black, Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their White counterparts matters that the Whites are unlikely to know” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p 7-9).

Each tenet serves to provide a platform to empower people of color’s voices and experiences while also dismantling white supremacy thinking and practices within social structures (Cooper, 2016). For this study, tenet 1 and tenet 5 will be used because student-athletes responses have been qualitatively measured on how race and racism have impacted their life experiences and through tenet 5 student-athlete’s have voiced their experiences with racism.

Intersectionality

Derived from Black feminist theory, intersectionality theory provides a framework for understanding how students experience more than one social identity simultaneously, and how the intersection of marginalized identities can create unique experiences for each student (Carastathis, 2016). Similar to critical race theory, intersectionality theory is fluid and has tenets that have

adapted and developed over time. Scholars have also highlighted how different tenets can be salient depending on the context of an individual's social environment, and their experiences.

Significantly, social identities influence the experiences of students on campus environments (Linder, 2016). In previous studies most analyses have centered the lived experiences of people from dominant groups without discussing how power plays a role, therefore intersectionality scholars have emphasized the importance of centering marginalized experiences at the core of analyses (Crenshaw, 1991).

According to Dill and Zambrana (2009) intersectionality theory looks at how systems of domination play a role in understanding systems of oppression through structural hierarchies, and symbolism that influences social consciousness. Intersectionality aims to challenge and change institutional practices and research that have "othered" marginalized groups, denied subordinated groups a voice and privileged certain perspectives over disadvantaged groups through social processes that legitimate the status quo. Intersectionality is a vital concept in understanding and dismantling the inequality perpetuated by social, political, and economic power structures. (Romero, 2018)

"Intersectionality theory was created to examine the intersections of multiple marginalized identities, specifically race, class, and gender, as illustrated in the historical overview of intersectionality theory" (Linder, 2016 p. 72). Researching student-athletes who hold marginalized identities must utilize intersectionality to consider the multiple social identities student-athletes hold. Intersectionality emphasizes the importance of lived experiences as a way to understand oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dill & Zambrana, 2009).

Intergroup Dialogue (IGD)

“Intergroup interactions are complicated and messy, and most students, particularly whites, enter higher education with little exposure to people different from them” (Sorenson, Nagda, Maxwell, & Guri, 2009 p.12) As a result, IGD courses started in the 1980’s as a way to help educate students on how to build effective communication skills, experience intergroup conflicts, and create relationships between diverse groups and discuss historical and structural inequalities minoritized groups face (Zuniga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). As a pedagogy and theoretical framework intergroup dialogue is grounded in research and theory in fields of education and psychology (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007).

Intergroup dialogue brings together participants of two or more social identity groups to engage across differences and explore the roles and experiences of different social identity group members, while examining how power, privilege, and oppression structures these experiences: developing constructive skills for engaging across differences: and identifying ways to challenge group inequalities and promote social justice (Zuniga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002).

In addition, intergroup dialogue is led by two experienced facilitators who identify with the different social identity groups (Ex. one male and one female) and provide “a face-to-face facilitated learning experience that brings together students from different social identity groups over a sustained period of time to understand their commonalities and differences, examine the nature and impact of societal inequalities, and explore the ways of working together toward greater equality and justice” (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007 p. 2).

Over the years, research has provided direction on understanding how to promote diversity while supporting and improving students from diverse populations. However, there is one challenge intergroup dialogue faces. According to Sorenson, Nagda, Maxwell, and Gurin

(2009) intergroup dialogue primarily focuses on a single identity (race, gender, etc.), nevertheless, they provide students a basic framework for exploring other identities, as well as how identities intersect with one another to influence an individual's perspectives and experiences in society.

Studies of college students involvement in IGD programs reveal positive effects in preparing students engagement with diverse groups (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Thompson, Brett, & Behling, 2001). It has been demonstrated for college students that using dialogue as a foundation for diversity education has a significant effect on developing student's perspective-taking skills (Hurtado, 2005). Hurtado's (2005) study was guided by a theoretical framework for intergroup dialogue (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Nagda et al., 2009; Nagda, 2006; Sorensen et al., 2009)

The Critical-Dialogic Theoretical Framework for Intergroup Dialogue (IGD)

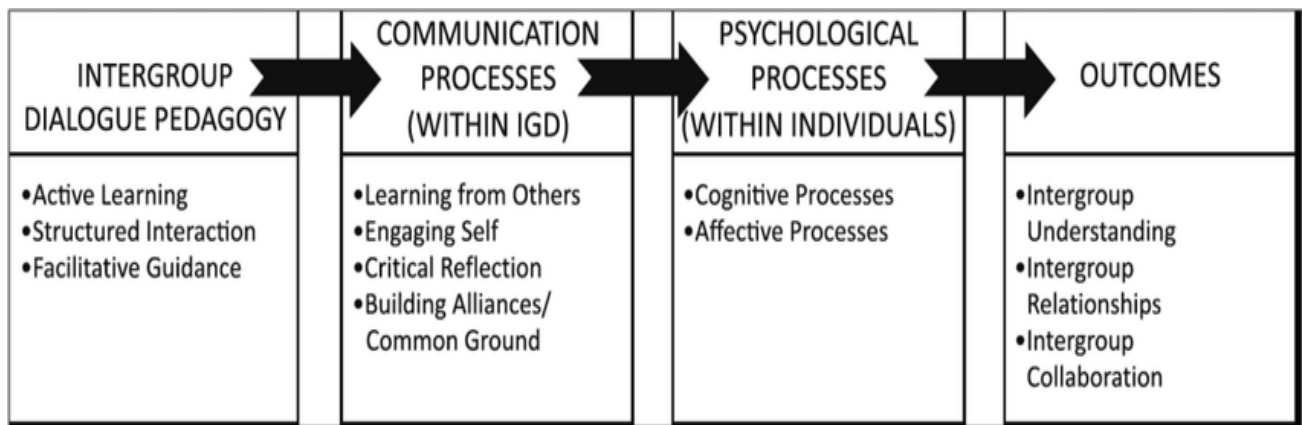


Figure 1. (Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga, 2009).

In Nagda's (2006) collaborative study, nine universities were evaluated on how race, ethnicity and gender effected gender intergroup dialogues. In reference to Figure 1, researchers highlight a relationship between IGD pedagogy and communication processes within IGD which

then influence psychological processes. Lastly, represented as outcomes, are three goals of intergroup dialogue: (1) *intergroup understanding* of their own social identities and the social identities of others (personal and social identity awareness) and the role social structures play in relation to power and privilege (2) *intergroup relations* using emotions to bridge differences with people of different social identities through communication (3) *intergroup collaboration* to strengthen individuals to promote social justice (Nagda et al., 2009; Zúñiga et al., 2002). In addition to the goals, presented as outcomes according to Nagda (2006) IGD has three pedagogy features:

1. *Active and engaged learning*: which can include readings, educational and experiential activities, writing assignments, and questions to stimulate reflection, critical analysis, and dialogue.

2. *Structured interaction*: As mentioned earlier, IGD intentionally brings together an equal number of students from at least two identity groups for even representation. “Balancing identities helps prevent students from reproducing inequality within the dialogue by providing members of some groups more “air time” and a greater presence within the room” (Sorensen, Nagda, & Maxwell, 2009 p. 19). Usually IGD classes will meet weekly over a span of ten to fourteen weeks for two to three hours.

3. *Facilitated learning environments*: Two cofacilitators, one from each identity group (ex. one male and one female), work together to guide intergroup dialogue by asking questions, asking for clarification, paraphrasing and summarizing. Both facilitators foster and model dialogic communication and strive to provide an inclusive space for all participants.

Following IGD pedagogy is communication processes, which refers to processes that occur among individuals; specifically, how individuals speak and listen to each other within critical dialogic processes. (Gurin et al., 2013; Nagda et al., 2009; Sorensen et al., 2009). Communication processes influence self-reflection about experiences and reflection of social structures of power and inequality (Thakral, Vasquez, Bottoms, Matthews, Hudson, & Whitley, 2016). Next is Psychological processes, which highlights processes that occur within individuals cognitive involvement and affective positivity (Gurin et al., 2013). Cognitive involvement has been defined as developing students' identity exploration and critical thinking skills. When experiencing positive interactions and emotions when interacting and communicating differences with others has been defined as affective positivity (Gurin, Nagda, & Sorensen, 2011; Gurin et al., 2013; Sorensen et al., 2009).

Most recently, Thakral, Vasquez, Bottoms, Matthews, Hudson, and Whitley's (2016) study revealed that IGD had a positive impact on 112 freshman students (a) intergroup understanding, (b) intergroup relationships, (c) intergroup collaboration and action, and (d) perceived relevancy of diversity in higher education.

Real Talk's program uses intergroup dialogue as a framework to bring together student-athletes from different social identities and backgrounds to engage in dialogue across different experiences and social identities. IGD courses usually have an equal number of students from each social identity group and usually meet weekly for about two to three hours. However, Real Talk meets bi-weekly for an hour and attendance is voluntary. In addition, participants are not required to disclose their social identities. Intergroup dialogue allows a space to have discussion about different opinions and perspectives as well as provide students the opportunity to learn how to communicate effectively across different perspectives, while also influencing positive

relationships and understanding. Unlike a debate (one party trying to convince another on whether they are correct or not), dialogue emphasizes thoughts and feelings. Dialogue builds a relationship between participants through engaging the heart and engaging the mind (Huang-Nissen, 1999; Romney, 2003).

Chapter 3 Methods

Positionality

As a former student-athlete who holds marginalized identities (Asian woman) and serves as a graduate intern for Oregon State's student-athlete development program, I believe I was positioned well to engage in research with student-athletes who hold marginalized identities that actively participate in our student-athlete development programs, specifically Real Talk. However, holding some of the same social identities as my research participants and co-facilitating a critical dialogic space like Real Talk does not make me or my research process immune to potentially causing harm to the study's participants or community (Chadderton, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2014).

In this study, my position aims to use theoretical and methodological frameworks, specifically critical race theory, intersectionality, and intergroup dialogue (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Sorenson, Nagda, Maxwell, & Guri, 2009) that account for the influence of privilege and oppression of research, and provide a platform for student-athletes with marginalized identities to have a voice and the opportunity to express themselves outside of their athletic identity. In addition to this study, I am conscientious of how research can be exploitative (Tuck & Yang, 2014), therefore I have positioned myself to avoid causing harm to marginalized communities, and engage the participants in my research study.

Methodology & Methods

Critical Race Methodology

Aligning with critical race theory, critical race methodology aims to center race and racism, and examines existing power structures that uphold the presence of racist policies and oppressive systems (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). In addition, critical race methodology acknowledges how the intersections of race, gender, and class impact people's lived experiences and the different racial inequities within structures of power and privilege (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Critical race methodology also aligns with my desire to utilize a desire-based framework to approach research with student-athletes with marginalized identities, as it "deconstructs the ideology of White supremacy, while simultaneously empowering the voices and experiences of people of color" (Cooper, 2016 p. 269). Therefore, it is essential to utilize a critical race methodology lens to conduct my research with student-athletes who hold marginalized identities.

Counter-Storytelling

Counter-Storytelling is one of the tenets in critical race theory that I utilized to conduct my research because it allowed me to center the voices of student-athletes from marginalized communities to express their experiences from participating in a critical dialogic space and challenge the identity stereotypes surrounding student-athletes of color. Instead of combining all of the participant's stories, I will individually tell each participant's narratives to honor each of their voices and lived experiences.

Collaborative Research

To stray away from the researcher/researched binary (Jourian & Nicolazzo, 2016), I utilized a collaborative research methodology in an effort to dismantle any power inequities. At

the end of each initial interview I asked each participant if they had any further questions regarding the study, and if they had any recommendations or suggestions about improving a critical dialogic space, such as Real Talk. The recommendations or suggestions from participants were then incorporated into my suggestions for future research regarding attending to the needs of student-athletes from marginalized communities in the discussion chapter of this thesis. After each initial interview, I followed up with each participant through email attaching their interview transcription to invite any feedback or thoughts within five days. This allowed each participant to remove any responses, words or phrases that they did not want to be a part of the study. As mentioned earlier, literature is unavailable when it comes to talking about student-athletes with marginalized identities as its own community, therefore each participant's story is not a representation of the whole student-athlete community, but is a representation of diverse voices from student-athletes who identify with marginalized communities.

Interview Questions

Each initial interview had the same amount of questions and were framed in alignment with the tenets of critical race methodology, intersectionality, and intergroup dialogue. I attempted to do so by asking open-ended questions that allowed participants to empower their voices to interrupt labels and challenge stereotypes that are placed on student-athletes from marginalized communities. The interview questions are also framed using an intersectional approach to consider how each participant's social identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation may have impacted their experience in a critical dialogic space like Real Talk. Since Real Talk uses an intergroup dialogue framework, each participant will be asked questions in relation to the three goals of intergroup dialogue, (1) *intergroup understanding* (2) *intergroup relations* (3) *intergroup collaboration* and the outcomes related to

each; active and engaged learning, structured interaction, and facilitated learning environments (Nagda et al., 2009; Zúñiga et al., 2002). For a fluid and organic conversation within the interview, I utilized a semi-structured framework, and asked follow-up questions for a better understanding of the student-athletes experiences from Real Talk (Museus, 2011). Some of the questions and follow-up questions include:

- 1) Tell me about your experience as a student-athlete who holds a marginalized identity at Oregon State University.
- 2) How did you find out about Real Talk?
- 3) What was your first time or any time at Real Talk like?
 - a. As a student-athlete with your gender, what was your experience like in Real Talk?
 - b. As a student-athlete with your race and ethnic background, what was your experience like in Real Talk?
 - c. As a student-athlete with your sexual orientation, what was your experience like in Real Talk?
 - d. As a student-athlete with your religious affiliation, if you have one, was your experience like in Real Talk?
- 4) In your own words, how would you describe Real Talk?
 - a. Has Real Talk helped you? If so, in what ways?
- 5) Is there anything you would change about Real Talk?
 - a. What do you like about Real Talk?
 - b. What do you not like about Real Talk?
- 6) Why do you come to Real Talk?

- a. What are some benefits of Real Talk? Have you been able to build relationships within Real Talk? If so, tell me more.
- 7) Throughout this interview I have asked questions regarding your identity, is there anything else you would like to touch on, or any last comments questions or concerns?

Recruitment & Sampling

I recruited participants for my study from Oregon State University's Everyday Champions Student-Athlete Development program, Real Talk. At Real Talk, I made an announcement inviting anyone who would like to participate in the study to reach out to me personally or through email. From the six participants who reached out, I utilized snowball sampling to inquire if the participants had any recommendations on who else may be interested in the study. Through snowball sampling I was able to interview four other participants. In addition, I created a flyer and utilized social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. As a current co-facilitator of the program, this resulted in gaining participants who I have been acquainted with since the program initially started, which helped ease the researcher to researched binary (Jourian & Nicolazzo, 2016). Participants were comfortable to participate in the study and I was able to gain trust with the participants. The rigor of one's research relies on the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Clemens, 2011). According to Clemens (2011), there are four general types of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. However, as a graduate student and intern for Student-Athlete Development I maintained professional relationships with all 10 participants. As a result, the professional relationships allowed participants to engage in a way that may have been different for someone who was not involved in Student-Athlete Development and Real Talk.

While recruiting, I experienced a few challenges. One challenge was scheduling an interview time that was most convenient for some participants, and due to their time demanding athletic schedules, they were unable to meet. Through snowball sampling, I was able to interview a different participant. Another challenge I experienced is that participants may have held information about their experiences because they assumed that as a co-facilitator of the program, I already knew the participants experiences from the program. Therefore, I continued to ask follow-up questions on their experiences regarding their athletic and racial identity, and if they had any feedback based on the findings from their interviews.

Participant Eligibility Criteria

For this study, participants had to meet the following specific requirements.

- Be 18 years of age or older
- A current and/or post graduate Oregon State student-athlete
- Hold a marginalized identity (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation etc.)

Transcription and Coding

After I finished interviewing all 10 participants, I transcribed and coded each interview. Rather than using a software, I transcribed each interview to become familiar with the participants responses to find connections and common themes. Each transcription took about an hour and thirty minutes to two hours to transcribe. After transcribing each interview, I reviewed each participants audio recording and made sure the transcriptions matched verbatim. Then I emailed each transcription to each participant and gave them five days to give feedback or remove any words or phrases that they did not want to be a part of the study. After that, I began

the process of coding. “To codify is to arrange things in a systematic order, to make something part of a system or classification, to categorize” (Saldana, 2013 p.10). While using classified reasoning, coding helps group and organize similarly coded data into categories.

I started the coding process by utilizing a general inductive approach for analyzing and evaluating the qualitative data. Inductive analysis refers to approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher. After, I utilized vivo coding to enhance and honor the participant’s voice. Vivo coding refers to a word or short phrase from the language that participants used for themselves (Saldana, 2013). This form of coding gives meaning to the participants words that are pulled from the transcripts (Saldana, 2009). Using vivo coding helps voices that are often marginalized create a deeper understanding for the person’s culture and their lived experiences (Saldana, 2013). Based on the vivo codes, I then used open concept coding. Open concepts are abstract representations of events, or interactions and they allow researchers to group similar information to better understand the data (Saldana, 2013). For example, one participant expressed when they communicate with faculty they stick to their athletic identity, I labeled this concept as Athletic Identity Saliency because their Athletic Identity is most salient when communicating with faculty. However, it’s important to understand that concepts can be classified different based on the researcher and what the research is focused on. I started with 38 open concept codes and reviewed each transcript three times and combined codes that were too similar. With the final set of codes, I was able to sort them into categories. The categories emerged into five common themes with three to four themes under each theme. All transcribing and coding were done by hand and no software were used. With a qualitative

analysis, I was able to provide context, understanding, depth, and comparison (Clemens, 2011) which helped align my desire to honor each participant's voice.

Chapter 4: Findings

This study is about the experiences of student-athletes from marginalized communities who attend Real Talk, and aims to understand the challenges they face and the benefits of attending a critical dialogic space like Real Talk. In this study five participants who self-identify as male and the other five who self-identify as female shared their experiences with me as participants in this study. Due to the small population, I will not identify the individual participant's sport affiliation. However, in aggregate, participants from this study participated in the following sports: Football, Gymnastics, Soccer, Rowing, Track & Field, and Softball. All participants come from different racial and ethnic backgrounds such as: Black/African-American, White, Mexican, Native American, Portuguese, and Pacific Islander. The variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds include participants who identify as bi-racial and multi-racial. To protect the participants anonymity, Black and African-American will be used interchangeably. In addition, each participant chose their own pseudonym.

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Add'l Salient Identities</u>
Tyra	Black/African-American	Female	Heterosexual, Middle Class
Pickle	White/Mexican/Native American/Portuguese	Female	Bi-Sexual, Working Class
Avah	Black/African-American/White	Female	Heterosexual, Middle Class, International Student
Julia	Black/African-American	Female	Heterosexual, Working Class
Myah	Black/African-American	Female	Heterosexual, Christian, Middle Class

Marcus	Black/African-American	Male	Heterosexual, Christian, Middle Class
Young Mo	Black/African-American/Hispanic	Male	Heterosexual, Christian, Working Class – Middle Class
Jerome	Black/African-American/White/Native American	Male	Heterosexual, Christian, Working Class-Middle Class
Aquaman	Pacific Islander/Samoan	Male	Heterosexual, Christian, Lower Class
Max	Black/African American	Male	Heterosexual, Christian, Middle Class

The table of social identities listed above, reveal the pseudonym each participant chose, their race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, and religious affiliation. All answers from participants are listed in the table, exactly how they were expressed in the interview. As mentioned earlier, there are a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds that include participants who identify as bi-racial and multi-racial. Specifically, there are two participants who are bi-racial, and two participants that are multi-racial. Five of the participants identify as Black/African-American and one participant identifies as Pacific Islander. For social class, five participants claimed they are a part of the middle class, two participants claimed they are from working class, two participants claimed they are between working and middle class, and one participant claimed they are from the lower class. However, none of them verbalize that social class was a prominent feature in their experiences in Real Talk. With regards to religious affiliation, four participants stated they do not have a religious affiliation, all of which identified as female, while the other six participants identified as Christian, five males and one female.

Although all participants meet the criteria requirements for this study, each participant carries diverse social identities that influence their unique lived experiences. To honor and

embrace the voices and experiences of the participants, I curate and share each participant's narrative and end the chapter with five common themes. The five common themes consensually emerged amongst the participant's transcriptions. To preserve the privacy of the participants, other identifying information may change for their anonymity.

For each narrative, I will begin with an introduction and bold any emerging themes. After each theme, I will provide a supporting quote/quotes that gives agency to the participants voices and honors their exact words. Furthermore, each individual story will highlight the experiences of student-athletes with marginalized identities who attend Real Talk. What follows are the ten individual stories that will be presented in the same order as the table listed above.

Individual Stories

Tyra

Introduction. Tyra is a current undergraduate student-athlete who plays a Division I sport at Oregon State University and is currently majoring in Kinesiology. Tyra comes from a middle-class family, and is highly involved in the Real Talk program, and the Black community on campus. Some of Tyra's most salient identities as a student-athlete is being a Black/African-American woman. With her marginalized identities as a Black/African-American woman, Tyra's experienced some challenges at Oregon State University but has been able to feel comfortable and supported through Real Talk. Attending a predominately white institution, Tyra stated she feels pressures of assimilation, but that Real Talk provides a space where she can be her holistic self and relieve the pressures of assimilation.

Holistic Authenticity.

“Um being a student-athlete here at Oregon State, it can be challenging sometimes, because on a day to day basis through my personal experience I’m not surrounded by people who are Black, and being around the majority, I feel I am forced to assimilate myself so that I can be accepted, but coming to Real Talk helps take that pressure of assimilation off of me. And being able to express how I feel in the setting I’m in is nice and knowing that I’m not alone in those feelings.”

Through Real Talk, Tyra has been able to feel comfortable expressing her thoughts and emotions without the fear of being disrespected or disregarded by others in the room.

Brave Space.

“I like how Real Talk is a safe space, and people can ask questions without worrying about being judged and saying the wrong thing, and you’re able to develop a better understanding of situations you didn’t know about before.”

In addition, Tyra has gained new perspectives and life skills in Real Talk, and apply them to real life situations.

New Perspectives.

“Real Talk has helped give me perspective and open me to new ideas. I know when I came into Real Talk I was very closed minded on a lot of ideas towards other people and other races. Uh...what else...it has definitely shaped me as a student. For me it’s a lot about being open minded and getting a better understanding of different perspectives around me, and being able to communicate with other people in different situations, whether its formal or informal that may involve race or anything else in any kind of setting because hearing other people address situations themselves I’ve learned

everything doesn't have to be an "attack", it can just be a polite conversation, and that it doesn't have to always be direct confrontation. Just finding ways on how we can educate others and educate ourselves."

"Real Talk has helped me share my opinion and gain perspective on other people's opinions as well. Being a minority uh... we often develop our own ideas of people of different races or ethnicities and so to be able to hear from people of actual different races and ethnicities is eye opening. Kind of helps you step outside of your comfort zone and helps you learn."

Tyra has also been educated through various topics discussed in Real Talk.

Education Awareness.

"Um most recently, I would say before winter break...uh we talked about holidays and there was somebody who worked at the Native American Long House and she talked about the history of Native Americans. I don't know, I knew a little bit about it from school, and I was able to ask questions, and wondered how come we didn't learn about this stuff, about what is currently happening to the Native American people. So, I thought it was really cool to learn something new."

Through dialogue and intergroup relations with others of similar social identities, specifically race and ethnicity, Tyra has been able to gain a sense of belonging and community with other students of color with similar lived experiences.

Sense of Belonging/Community.

“I come to Real Talk because I enjoy being around people who are not like me and also people who are like me, because I feel like in my day to day life I’m surrounded by a bunch of people who don’t look like me, so It’s nice to see people I don’t get see all the time.”

“If there was no Real Talk I probably would not have met as many people of color as I have. Being a student-athlete you’re busy all the time, you’re tired and you don’t want to go out. So meeting people can be a bit challenging.”

As a Division I Black/African-American female student-athlete, Tyra has experienced some challenges being on a predominately white sport.

Black/African-American Female Student-Athlete Identity Experiences.

“I will say my Freshman year one of my teammates were singing a song and used the n word, and a lot of my teammates looked at me and I felt like I had to say something and be aggressive about it, because that’s what they looked at me to do, and I’ve already voiced my opinion about that.”

Pickle

Introduction. Pickle is a current undergraduate Division I student-athlete at Oregon State University and is majoring in Human Development and Family Services. Pickle comes from a working class family where her mom was a cosmetology instructor and her dad worked in a grocery store until she was about 13 years old. Some of the identities that were most salient in shaping her experience as a student-athlete and in Real Talk are her race and ethnicity as a multi-racial, White, Native American, and Portuguese student-athlete. Having many different

intersecting social identities has helped Pickle bring a different perspective to Real Talk and look at situations from an intersectional lens.

Brave Space.

“It was a space where they could express how they felt and talk about certain topics that usually wouldn’t get discussed, and I think just the openness of how diverse the whole environment is.”

“I felt everyone is pretty open and accepting and it was just nice to hear other people’s perspectives on certain topics.”

“...conversations are pretty open and we are all in a circle and everyone is really respectful and it seems like they are actually listening to you and if you want to get something off of your chest and off your back, everyone is listening to you and respects your words and your opinions.”

Through dialogue in Real Talk, Pickle has been able to experience how others feel and learn about what others go through.

Build Empathy.

“I don’t know just a place where people and diversity and culture are expressed through their feelings and their experiences. And everyone is willing to hear about those things and just hear about what other situations people go through. It’s pretty cool.”

“I feel like with Real Talk and the people who go there I feel like there is more of an openness and um...I think it’s a place where people can understand each other, and I

think without Real Talk there just wouldn't be that. Like oh we talked about this during the day and like oh I wonder what this person is going through."

Through Pickle's narrative she mentions a stigma was going around that Real Talk is only for minorities, specifically black students. However, Pickle states that she was unaware of the stigma until she heard people talking about it, but she doesn't believe in the stigma. After I asked, "Do you feel topics in Real Talk are only about Black culture?" Pickle disagrees that Real Talk topics are only for Black culture.

Stigma.

"There was a stigma that it was only for Black Cultured people or people who were a part of that race, but I never got that intention when I was in there so I didn't think that it was, and I didn't even know Real Talk had that stigma until I attended Real Talk and somebody mentioned it. So I was like what?"

"I don't really know where it came from, but I think most of the people in there consider themselves as African-American or Black but I think it's important for everybody in a certain race or class to express how they feel about certain topics or certain experiences."

"No not at all, um I know there was one, we were talking about politics and it might've been Trump but no, it's not like that every time. Even if there is a topic about Black culture I think it's important for other's to listen too because that is a minority culture. So, I feel everyone should and want to learn."

Pickle is multi-racial and comes from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, Pickle is able to engage in different topics and be open-minded to the thoughts and feelings of others who

may not come from a diverse background or have similar lived experience as her. Pickle is open and willing to listen to other people's perspectives with a positive mindset.

New Perspectives.

“I think it has benefited me because I come from a diverse place anyways like where I grew up and a lot of people have not and hearing about where other people have come from it's cool, and I like understanding each side of where people grew up and it's good to know about.”

Avah

Introduction. Avah is a current student-athlete and plays a Division I sport at Oregon State University as a Junior. Growing up Avah has always been very athletic and involved in several sports like track and field, basketball, and volleyball. However, Avah has been competing in her current sport since she was eight years old. Avah also comes from a middle-class household, where both of her parents' coach different sports. With regards to her citizenship, Avah has dual citizenship and is considered a domestic student. However, there are certain things that still apply to her as an international student-athlete that would not apply to a non-international student-athlete. Through her narrative, Avah's most salient identities are being an international, bi-racial, Black/African-American and White female. With her diverse social identities' Avah has been able to bring new perspectives and unique lived experiences to Real Talk. Through Real Talk, Avah has been able to make connections to her life and her upbringing.

Connections.

“I feel like I bring something different to the table because I am an international citizen, so I have like a different perspective because I'm from a completely different

country and it's cool to bring that spin on it, I also I identify as being mixed race in a predominately white country, so like going to Real Talk I've actually learned a lot more about myself than a lot of other places just because the more we talk about things, like microaggressions, I realize oh wow I've been dealing with that my whole life and I didn't even notice."

"So that was really cool, and I actually left and thought like wow that is really cool. That was the first time I really spoke about what it was like growing up for me and that's when I started realizing all these microaggressions. Like whenever someone asked to touch my hair because they didn't have that, it just made me make so many connections like from my life and ever since then I thought it was really cool and have been wanting to go back and talk about more things. So, I would say my first experience was really positive..."

Real Talk provides a space where Avah is not only is able to make connections to her life, but allows her to voice her diverse experiences as a bi-racial, female student-athlete. In addition, Avah has gained new perspectives on different topics and challenge her own thinking.

New Perspectives.

"I'm like itching to go or I'm like alright let's go! What are we going to talk about? I just love hearing other people's views and sharing different views because everything can mean different things."

"Real Talk has been able to give me other perspectives and views on a lot of topics that I never even talked about before, because a lot of it was like taboo or whatever. People didn't want to make me feel uncomfortable. So I always feel like I can say anything in

Real Talk like I can just say how I feel and get the respect from my peers. So that's why I love it."

"There's just so many different perspectives and I think that it's really important that today in this day and age we need to listen to people and listen to different perspectives and see where people are coming from. I feel like everyone needs to go to Real Talk and it should be like mandatory because I honestly feel so many people would just benefit from having conversations..."

"I think that Real Talk should be some type of class and make it a mandatory thing. Especially in this day in age we can't just limit ourselves to thinking one way and to have different perspectives."

"Like...I have walked out of Real Talk like I just totally have a new view on that particular thing, because I was so stuck in my own ways and like stuck in my own judgements and after that I was like hmmm...interesting. I just feel like I had my own ah ha! Moment."

In addition, Avah has been able to feel comfortable and respected when she comes to Real Talk. Avah is able to feely express how she feels and not feel judged.

Brave Space.

"It's just a really safe space to talk and yeah there might be a topic where like it gets a bit awkward and everyone's like okay whose going to start this conversation but when we do it's like everyone starts bouncing off each other and I think that's important because people that go and don't really speak up they are still there and absorbing the information."

“So I feel if Real Talk wasn’t here, I would definitely feel like I lost a part of my voice because I feel like that’s a really good place to express how I feel and create change... So yeah I feel like a lot of peoples voices would be like you know lost, and we wouldn’t really have a space to talk... That’s the biggest thing for me about Real Talk because it has helped me know how to use my voice in a space where I didn’t feel judged and you know criticized for feeling the way that I felt.”

As a bi-racial African-American and White female, Avah has been able to gain relationships and feel a sense of community with student-athletes, female student-athletes, and student-athletes of color. Avah doesn’t feel alone in her feelings.

Sense of Belonging/Community.

“It’s like I’m not the only person that has like experienced racism. Um you know just that feeling to belong, and it’s not always about race it’s just about the struggles of the student-athlete or whatever it is. I don’t know I just think it has really helped me broaden my view on a lot of different topics and things, and I’ve always wanted to be really accepting of other people and knowing where everyone comes from and knowing what they’ve gone through. It’s also interesting talking to people I’ve never talked to before and like the light of you on a certain topic. It’s like wow that person has real things to say, otherwise I probably wouldn’t have spoken to these people. I probably would’ve just walked by and said hey. Like what’s up and going on about their day. Like if you know more about them and that person and where that person comes from you will gain more respect from everyone and it just makes it a really inclusive environment. Especially because a lot of the people that go are student-athletes, and being a part of that community we need to stick together and I feel we definitely need to build relationships

with my fellow student-athletes. Even the ones that I did know before Real Talk. I think just talking about these things helped us connect on like a deeper level and that has definitely benefited me I would say.”

“Just as a female in general I think it’s been really good to hear different perspectives on what it means to be a female athlete and a male athlete. Like the girls will sometimes stick together in a way and there has been a lot of things that we have agreed on, have been like, well maybe we should fix this or do this or whatever it is.... I definitely feel like it’s jumped since with the female athletes, because even though we’re in all different sports or might not talk to each other all the time, when someone says something it’s like hey! Me too! So it’s cool to be able to relate to different people like that.”

“I started to like meet other athletes outside of just passing them by and thinking oh you’re just on the basketball team.”

“For the first time I feel like the majority, like for the White people that don’t go to Real Talk I feel like a lot of us that go are like minority we feel like Yeah! We’re empowered! Let’s do this! Let’s change the world you know.”

“...saying something that you’ve been hesitant to say and then saying it and having someone saying they’ve felt the same way. It’s like oh my gosh okay, so you don’t feel so alone in that. Don’t get rid of Real Talk. I love Real Talk so much!”

On top of feeling a sense of belonging and building community with others, Real Talk has provided a space for Avah to be educated on different topics.

Education Awareness.

“I also love that we get a lot of people in that like the one lady from the Native American long house, that was really cool because I didn’t know behind the story about Thanksgiving and there’s a lot of things we talk about like politics and like gun control.”

Avah feels a sense of comfortability and embraces her diverse social identities. Real Talk provides a space where she is able to be her holistic and authentic self.

Holistic Authenticity.

“I feel like I can be a spokesperson for both races. Before coming to school here yet alone Real Talk, I had to question alright am I white or am I black? I didn’t feel that cohesive, I was thinking if I was acting Black, I felt I was somewhat disrespecting all of my white family members, but then if I wasn’t immersing myself in Black culture then I’m completely dismissing my dad’s side. So when I came here I can be both, like why do I even have to be both. Like why do I need a label?...So that was something that really hit home because like in Real Talk if we’re talking about different things I’ll often talk about my family, and sometimes my mom feels guilty because she married a black man and has two mixed race babies and if people look at us funny. Like my mom sister and me we could be walking, and they would think we were adopted. I feel a lot of empathy for her because If I just birthed two people and people would think. “oh they’re not mine”. I would think how dare you and think that that was really disrespectful. So in that sense I can see both sides of the spectrum. I haven’t experienced some of the hardcore racism that some of my black peers have experienced, but then I also understand from my white side the guilt that can come from my white privilege. I’m half, so I’m like mom or dad, mom or dad, but no I feel like I’ve been able to embrace both sides which is really

cool explaining to my peers. Again, coming from somewhere else I'm like different plus different. I don't know it's really cool haha."

"I think I'm just a lot more comfortable and from talking about it I've been more comfortable. Instead of just sitting there with all these thoughts and feelings. Like hmmm I don't know what I am. I can also feed off of other people's energy. Especially since I didn't really know who I was before coming here... These conversations have helped me discover who I am and what I believe in."

Throughout Avah's narrative a theme that emerged was the stigma about Real Talk only being for minorities, but Avah rejects that idea and really encourages inclusivity and for everyone to attend.

Stigma.

"...like one of my friends asked do you have to be black to go? Because there were a lot of black people there. Like it was a black student-athlete club haha. But then then the more we kept talking we didn't just talk about race we talked about the student-athlete community and with the world and America and it was just really interesting talking about those kinds of things."

"I think with this whole stigma around that Black people only go to Real Talk it's good that people are starting to go that are not of color because like honestly a lot of the times those are the people that need to learn more about it and talk about different things. Especially if they haven't been in an environment where there is a lot of culture and diversity."

"I just think it's important that we try to include as many people as we can."

“Coming to Real Talk you kind of learn about how do I go about this topic or how do I go about this topic and not offend anyone. It goes both ways, not just like black people and black people but like white people and black people. And understanding white privilege and that guilt that’s attached to it, like “it’s your fault because you were born into it.” Like no, it’s not their fault because they had nothing to do with it. I feel like it should be a mandatory thing or like everyone should come at least one time.”

Julia

Julia was a former Division I student-athlete at Oregon State, and identifies as a Black/African-American female, who came from a working class. Growing up, Julia’s parents didn’t have the best relationship and they didn’t have many education opportunities. As a result, Julia and her family moved around a few times. Julia became highly involved in sports, and used sports as an outlet to get the next level and pursue her education. Attending a predominately white institution Julia experienced a few challenges. Many of which were discussed through dialogue at Real Talk, where Julia feels she is having a voice.

Having a Voice.

“My experience in Real Talk, I feel I just recently started to have a voice. I used to sit back a lot and see what other people had to say. I still liked to hear what everyone else had to say. I guess I was afraid that I wasn’t going to be able to I guess back it up or something. It’s a really weird thing in my head. I didn’t want to say too much because I didn’t want to sound crazy or you know, I held my tongue a lot and listened to what other people had to say, and I think from listening so long, its allowed me to be more comfortable to say what I think and feel about certain situations.”

“When Real Talk came along it was better because I was at least able to be in an environment like that. Um later on be able to voice how I feel about different issues.”

“I would say Real Talk has given me more of a voice, I think a lot of things have helped give me a voice but I feel Real Talk has been a part of that too and just because... if you're going to be in those spaces and going to just listen and you're going to take in a lot of information of how people are feeling and it's like if I'm constantly coming to these meetings, I feel it's my turn to speak up because all of those people have spoke up before. So I think that's important, like taking it on and paying forward.”

Some of the challenges Julia experienced in a predominately white sport is not being able to connect with people who understand her lived experiences as a Black/African American female. Before Real Talk, Julia was grappling with athletic time demands, and trying to find a community that understands and empathizes with her experiences. Through Real Talk, Julia explains that she has been able to feel supported, gain community, and feel a sense of belonging with others with similar identities and similar lived experiences.

Sense of Belonging/Community.

“It's because there are people there who look like you and they understand and most of us hold the identity of being a minority or being a student athlete so we can all relate to each other in some type of way. And that's why it's more comfortable because sometimes it's hard to have friends who are outside of athletics because they don't understand or have friends who are not a minority, so they can't empathize because they're not going to be able to understand how you really feel. It makes it more comfortable and I feel I'm less

judged, like if I were to talk to my non-athlete friends they wouldn't understand that lifestyle you know."

"I would say it's helped me because we didn't have anything like Real Talk within the athlete community, which is hard because I mean we have the Black Cultural Center but I wasn't able to come because of the times and the conflict of times with athletics. Like I can't miss athletics to come to the Black Cultural center and dive into how I feel about being black on campus and being an African-American student-athlete in my sport. I didn't have the resources to be able to dive into those things, and when Real Talk came along it was better because I was at least able to be in an environment like that."

"I think the experience has been good I haven't had any bad experiences with everyone. I think we're all on a pretty good page of all being minority student athletes and we all need to stick together so I think we all have similar experiences."

"I think another thing is even though I wasn't going for a chunk of time I still knew there was still support there. Like people who would be there for me. That was still a level of comfort for me. I think back when there was no Real Talk, I was in the process of managing how I felt on a daily basis, being in a sport where it's predominately white and being around people who don't understand and those who think they understand. But you just don't get it, and I don't want you to think I don't like you, but I want somebody who I can relate to, because you have people who you can relate to."

"...yeah it has helped me build connections, it helped me build a connection with you. Haha. I think with faculty and students but not as much students but more so faculty from before."

As a Black/AfricanAmerican female student-athlete, Julia has been able to look beyond her athletic identity, and understand that she is more than an athlete through the conversations she has in Real Talk.

Identity Development.

“I think that’s important because we get caught up in ourselves as being athletes and kind of losing ourselves and our identities so it’s important for us to come back and know that we are more than just an athlete just you know your sport or whatever. So when we come into these spaces and we have topics about something like how you went to the Black Student-Athlete Summit it was nice for you guys to go down there and bring it back to us.”

In addition to exploring outside of her athletic identity, Julia has been exposed to different educational topics that are normally not discussed in the classroom.

Education Awareness.

“Like conversations about music videos and how women are portrayed and even answered questions about Martin Luther King Jr. and I think these conversations are important because they aren’t talked about enough. Like the regular basis, so creating a space where its comfortable to talk about it is important.”

Julia emphasizes the importance of engaging in dialogue and gaining new perspectives to challenge one way thinking.

New Perspectives.

“My biggest reason for coming to Real Talk is to hear and talk about the topics and hear the perspectives on different issues. It’s like we think there’s only one way to go but there are different perspectives.”

Julia strives for inclusivity and would like for more people to attend Real Talk so she can hear different perspectives. Julia actively invites other student-athletes and faculty to attend Real Talk.

Inclusivity.

“I think faculty should come at Real Talk, I think they have a different perspective than us and have been able to see more. Like social justice and being in the athletic community. I actually try to invite faculty, and...for any faculty of color its more prominent to invite them to Real Talk, so I think it’s good for faculty to come”

“I want to see more athletes at Real Talk, I know there’s already some there, but I think seeing more people to come would be nice. I don’t know why that is or if it’s like because of study hall. I think more perspectives from student-athletes so it would be a bigger discussion...Real Talk should not be just for athletes because then we won’t get different perspectives.”

Myah

Introduction. Myah is a current Division I Oregon State student-athlete and is currently a part of the College of Public Health and Human Services. Myah is mixed race but identifies as predominately Black/African-American. Myah also identifies as a heterosexual, Christian female, and comes from the middle class. Myah’s most salient social identities discussed in her narrative are being a Black/African-American female student-athlete. The first theme that

emerged amongst her narrative is feeling a sense of belonging and community because she is able to be around other student-athletes and student-athletes with the same racial and ethnic identity.

Sense of Belonging/Community.

“Being an African-American in Real Talk you’re surrounded by those of different backgrounds and some who identify as African-American and bringing us all together in one circle talking about how we feel around campus is nice. It’s nice to know how other people feel because they feel the same as we do. And that’s where great ideas come from and collaboration come from. I love every minute of it.”

Another theme that emerged from Myah’s narrative is that Real Talk is a brave space and is comforting. Myah feels welcomed and feels that Real Talk provides a space where she and other student-athletes can express their emotions, perspectives, and say whatever they want.

Brave Space.

“It is so comforting and it is so welcoming. It’s like having that first bite of good ol Southern gumbo. It’s so cozy. I have no idea how else to describe how comfortable it is.”

“I feel Real Talk is welcoming for everybody, everyone is giving hugs, everyone is saying hey what’s up, laughing, smiling and sharing stories. Everyone is oh man, being at Real Talk makes me emotional because I’m so passionate about what’s happening and passionate about social justice and to be around people who feel the same is so so refreshing. I’ve never felt no unwelcoming presence at Real Talk.”

“Real Talk is a time to just let it all hang out. Like, if you’re feeling some type of way in the media or about the university or anything outside of where we find Real Talk. We have time to just let it all out.”

With the pressures of maintaining an athletic identity, student-athletes are unable to embrace and nourish other identities. However, when Myah comes to Real Talk she is given the opportunity and freedom to be her holistic and authentic self.

Holistic Authenticity.

“Normally with others we usually have other student-athletes in here and yeah I see them and their roster, I know they’re on the team, but when I get to talk to them at Real Talk I get to see another side of them. It’s nice to see them and not just the athlete. That’s what I mean by connecting with others it’s really just taking off that athlete mask and seeing who they are, how they grew up and what brought them up in the sport. And how they perceive Oregon State, and how they are a student not just a student athlete.”

“What I like most about Real Talk is that everyone is their true selves when they come to Real Talk, like yes everyone understands that they have this platform and identity of being an athlete but they are also human, and when we have people come into Real Talk they come in as their own genuine self. Like they don’t feel like their opinions will get out, and we respect and trust each other. Everyone is just there to be their true authentic self.”

“So I’d be lying if I said I’m always my authentic self but Real Talk provides that space for you to be your authentic selves. And the way that the standards that are already placed on us, Real Talk lets you know that it’s totally okay to be your authentic self.”

“I feel I have my black girl magic identity, not just being African-American but I’m also part Scottish I’m Native American part Latina I just feel like all of those are all brought to the table and me being a woman. I don’t come into Real Talk like Oh I’m just a track athlete like no I am a woman of color pursuing a career field that is predominately white male. There’s so much to me than being just an athlete and I think Real Talk provides me that space to let me.”

“I feel outside of Real Talk I’m not able to share those identities, because I can probably say this for athletes too because we have fans around us all day, doesn’t matter if its faculty, students, family or friends, so we always have to put up a front like yeah we’re athletes we’re strong and everything is fine in our world. But no there’s a lot of us going through things up there like mentally and high anxiety, but once we step out the cameras are rolling, and we have to stick to being the strong person that we are.”

“I feel without Real Talk there would be a disconnect, because usually when we talk to faculty we stick to our athletic identity. Whereas Real Talk, we can show who we are outside of athletics.”

Another theme that emerged through Myah’s narrative is becoming aware and educated through the different topics that Real Talk covers. As a student-athlete with a very busy schedule, Myah is able to be “woke” and up to date on what is going on today’s society.

Education Awareness.

“I come to Real Talk because I know that every time I go to Real Talk I gain something new every time, my knowledge in social justice and around the world has been exceptionally enhanced.”

“Um Real Talk is a time to connect with others and gain perspectives on other people’s views and a great time to broaden your horizons and widening your ideas. It’s informative and educational and its raw.”

“We talked about police brutality and interracial relationships and wait I think we talked about Predominately White Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. I honestly if I could describe it, I was jaw dropped and from there I have to keep going and hearing peoples’ different perspectives.”

“Because the topics that we talk through we really dive into them and like for example, when we talked about colorism we really dove into the history of it and how celebrities who do it, and there were other people who shared their story about colorism and I remember how someone said that a kid went up to him and said that he was dirty because of the color of his skin, and like the memes about team dark skin team light skin. Colorism like that. A lot of people shared their different stories, and interracial relationships. That was a really big one because everyone talked about their past relationships. Like for me my mom is white and my dad is black, and I got to talk about that.”

“Our schedule is get up go to class, work out, go to class, work out again and do homework then maybe be on your phone. Its not like we all just watch CNN all day. So we may not always be in tune with the world and that is what Real Talk brings to student athletes, just life and perspective and knowledge.”

Through dialogue and intergroup communication, Myah has been able to build connections and build relationships with others, and gain a deeper understanding of who student-athletes are outside of their athletic identity.

Building Connections.

“You’re my favorite that I like connected with. Seriously we had a conversation um about like each other’s upbringing, and like how I was taught and how I was raised, and I just feel like I just connected with you so much more with that. And when I first met you I was like oh she’s just a graduate student and she’s just here for the funzies and here for her thesis, and I had no problem with that. I was like Yes Queen get that, run that back! Run that check on sight like duh, but the more that I got to know about you and the more about where you’re from and your relationships, I look at you and I’m like dude this lady is freakin cool. No seriously you’re a phenomenal woman. Like seriously you are amazing and if anyone has anything different to say you can send them my way, but no I loved getting the chance to know you, but yeah one of my favorite connections. I’ve also been able to get to know other athletes from other sports. Like getting to know them has been like phenomenal.”

“If I didn’t have Real Talk, I wouldn’t really know what was going on in the world, It’s not like I wouldn’t be woke, but I feel I would have a harder time getting to know the student-athlete outside of the athlete themselves. I think I would have a harder time staying in connect with what else is happening around the world and connecting with student athletes on a deeper level.”

Myah explains that she has been able to develop her personal skills through a space like Real Talk.

Personal Development.

“I feel like through Real Talk, I’ve actually gained more interpersonal skills and more communication skills. So when I mean connecting with others I mean just having the right words to start the conversation.”

Myah brings up the stigma that Real Talk is only for Black people but Myah rejects the stigma and gives attention to how Real Talk is inclusive.

Stigma.

“Yeah there’s this stigma that Real Talk is only for Black people, which I am totally not for.”

“I don’t know what it is we just talk about different things and it’s a place for minorities, but I think the majority thinks like oh well, that’s not for me, but no its for you too. Like just because you walk into a room and there’s a room of different races doesn’t mean, it’s not for you. Like maybe that’s your chance for you to know how it feels to be a minority for a little bit. Like maybe you can change your perspective on it. Real Talk is a great way for us to get to know each other, we talk about how it is being a student-athlete at Oregon State and other things around the world.”

“We have students of the university and faculty and staff that come to Real Talk”

Marcus

Introduction. Marcus is a former Division I student-athlete at Oregon State who is currently studying Speech Communication, and identifies as a Christian, Black/African-American male. Marcus comes from the middle class and is highly involved with the Black community on campus and other organizations. As a former student-athlete, from a marginalized community, Marcus's most salient social identity in his narrative is being a Black/African-American male at a predominately white institution. The following themes highlight his experiences from Real Talk. One theme in particular is feeling a sense of belonging, because he is able to gain community with others who have marginalized identities and can speak with others about similar lived experiences.

Sense of Belonging/Community.

“I think Real Talk has been a great space for me personally and I feel they have been pertinent to me whether on purpose or not on purpose. Uh I think it's cool to come into a space and talk to people who looked like me and who have similar stories and similar experiences to what I have.

“Well student-athletes because that's who it's geared towards, student-athletes and their allies. Student-athletes of color and student-athletes who aren't of color which is nice to see.”

At a predominately white institution, Marcus explains that Real Talk is a place where people who feel silenced can come together and use their voices.

Having a Voice.

“Real Talk is a place for people to come who usually don't have a voice on a predominately white campus.”

In Real Talk, Marcus has been able to engage in authentic conversations because people are open and honest and can say however they feel. Through these conversations, Marcus has gained new perspectives and utilized dialogue in Real Talk as a way to problem solve for solutions.

Authentic Conversations.

“It’s just raw. People would just say whatever they want to say. I mean we’ve had some instances where people would make judgements but for the most part I feel that people are really open and honest.”

“Man, you hear a lot of diverse perspectives on things, I feel we learn a lot and find solutions to problems, and I always feel I have a good conversation with someone at Real Talk.”

Marcus’s involvement with Real Talk has allowed him to develop personal and professional development skills and learn how to carry himself. Marcus has developed communication skills, collaboration skills, and leadership.

Personal Development

“I think Real Talk has helped foster my leadership skills and presentation skills and helped me work on collaborating with people more. It’s also taught me how to lead in a respectful manner and a lot of skills I have learned from Real Talk.”

The last theme that emerged from Marcus’s narrative is the stigma that Real Talk isn’t welcoming. Marcus has actively done outreach to be inclusive and reject the stigma. As a student of color, Marcus has been in uncomfortable situations where his marginalized identity was not represented. Therefore, Marcus feels that white student-athletes can put more effort in being

inclusive and participate in a program like Real Talk. For the white students who do come to Real Talk, Marcus gives positive recognition to them for consistently participating.

Stigma.

“I think there is a stigma that it isn’t welcoming. I think that’s with any new space, I feel a lot of people are nervous to take a chance. That’s unfortunate because us as people of color we always have to take chances and be in situations where we are uncomfortable and aren’t represented. So for you to take an hour out of your day on a Thursday night to be in a space where you are the minority. It’s not that big of a deal.”

“I mean even white people come and there are white people that come on a regular basis, and I give kudos to them, but I also know other people like I’ve talked to and said y’all should come, but no one came. So it’s like alright y’all talk about you want to be inclusive and we’re trying to be but then you guys don’t want to show up.”

“I say hey guys, I’m the president kind of leader of Real Talk with blank and blank and it’s not the quote on quote black space. Anybody can come theres food, fun and fellowship.”

“I just think that better attendance would be nice. Just a more diverse group like what we were just talking about.”

Young Mo

Introduction. Young Mo is a current Division I Oregon State student-athlete majoring in Public Health. Young Mo identifies as a Black/African-American and Hispanic male who came from a middle to working class, Christian household. Young Mo’s parents are still married, his dad is full Mexican and works as a Biology teacher, and his mom is full Black/African-American

and works as a nurse. Growing up, Young Mo was highly involved in many sports such as football, wrestling, and track and field. Coming from a racially diverse area, Young Mo is open to diversity and other's perspectives because he was raised around people from many racial and ethnic backgrounds. Young Mo's most salient identities in his narrative are being a bi-racial half Black/African-American and Hispanic male student-athlete. The first theme that emerged in his narrative regarding his experience in Real Talk is feeling a sense of belonging and community because he was able to be in a space with other student-athletes, and student-athletes who looked like him, that he normally wouldn't speak to outside of his sport.

Sense of Belonging/Build Community.

“I thought it was just real cool that it was geared toward minority athletes and I saw a lot of people that look like me, so I thought it was cool and there were other people as well and not just minorities.”

“...just basically being able to express myself and see other athletes because like were not always together and we usually stick to our sport, so it's nice to see them and interact with them. It's just another way to connect with them which is really cool.”

“...yeah, I didn't really know many of the football players or even basketball players before Real Talk, and once I started going and seeing them more often I was able to get more comfortable and speak to them outside of Real Talk. So I definitely have gained a lot of relationships for Real Talk.”

In addition to the theme sense of belonging/community, Real Talk serves as an outlet for Young Mo and has been something for him to look forward to outside of school and athletics.

Outlet

“Um It’s given me another outlet and something to look forward to every other week outside of practice and school and I like going because it’s fun and I like it’s because it’s just another outlet in my life and just another opportunity.”

“I feel it is a huge outlet for me and I feel a lot of other people feel the same way, and if it were to be gone we would be losing that and I feel a lot of people benefit from it and can benefit from it. Yeah so I would just be really sad if it were to ever go so I hope the opposite happens.”

Young Mo describes his experience in Real Talk as a safe environment where there is welcoming dialogue and no one is judging about expressing how they feel.

Brave Space.

“I would describe it as a safe environment and that it’s a lot of fun. It’s a safe environment for us to talk and like connect.”

“Um I would say it’s a safe space because it’s ran by people who are like close in our age group. Doors are closed and no one is judging, and no one is like over bearing like we all listen to each other’s opinions no matter what.”

“yeah, it’s welcoming for everybody, I’ve never seen anyone leave feeling discouraged and It’s always welcoming and there’s always food, and I don’t know everyone’s usually happy to be there.”

In Real Talk, Young Mo has engaged in dialogue about diverse topics that pertain to his identity as a student-athlete and a student-athlete with a marginalized identity.

Diverse Topics.

“We talk about like social problems that are currently going on or something that might have happened over the weekend, like police brutality or diversity and other things like mental health that pertain to us as student-athletes and minority student-athletes.”

“I remember the NCAA Diversity week and we all wrote on our signs on what we wanted to do and that was really cool. Yeah that was real cool there was a lot of people that day.”

Young Mo hopes to have Real Talk grow and for more people to participate in the program, outside of those who regularly attend.

Inclusive.

“Um I feel like we can just make it grow more, I feel like we see the same faces which is good but I think we can make it even bigger and maybe even do events and interact with each other outside of the Beth Ray Center and get closer.”

Jerome

Introduction. Jerome is a current Division I Oregon State student-athlete majoring in Psychology, and identifies as a multi-racial Black/African American/White, and Native American, Christian Male. Jerome grew up in a middle-working class household. Jerome’s dad worked in a hospital as a surgery preparation technician, and his mom worked as a hair dresser. Throughout Jerome’s life struggles and adversities, Jerome has a great support system. In his narrative, Jerome’s most salient identities are being a multi-racial Black/African-American, White and Native American, male student-athlete. With his diverse racial background, Jerome has been able to see situations from multiple lenses. With Real Talk, Jerome has gained new perspectives.

New Perspectives.

“In Real Talk I’ve been able to see like both sides. So, it’s just like allowed me to have different perspectives and allowed me to be a lot more open minded to other peoples’ opinions in Real Talk.”

“Like being a male, I’ve been able to get a women’s perspective. There’s a lot of things that women understand that I wouldn’t necessarily understand. And like I don’t know it’s just really allowed me to get the other sex gender’s views on certain topics.”

“I just like going and hearing knowledge from other people and giving my input because you know I like talking to other people and talking about things that are relevant, I be like talking to my teammates like what are we even talking about. This conversation has like no substance. I like having substantial conversations and talking with people who come from the same thing but also have different perspectives than I do.”

In Real Talk, Jerome feels safe to ask questions that he normally wouldn’t ask others. Jerome is able to say whatever is on his mind, and receive opposing views but in a respectful manner from others.

Brave Space.

“I think another thing is that Real Talk has allowed me to ask questions that I wouldn’t necessarily be able to ask someone like on the street you know what I mean? Because it really provides like a safe space.”

“I’m usually always keeping it real so when I was talking, I was just saying whatever was on my mind and everyone was cool with it. You know and like yeah, some people have

disagreed about my point but yeah... I've always been open minded to what they had to say as well. I feel that respect is a big thing because everyone respects what you'll have to say."

"In my own words I would say that it's a safe space where you can talk about anything really."

"It's been a healthy relationship where we can just grow and learn and we can talk about things that you might not feel comfortable talking to anybody about, and when you have this safe space you know that no one is going to talk smack about you like when you leave you know."

Another emerging theme for Jerome's narrative is feeling a sense of belonging and having a community outside of his sport and being a student.

Sense of Belonging/Community

"Without Real Talk I would feel like a hermit, I don't know I'm not like an introvert, but I feel like I would never leave the house. Like when I go home on Thursdays I'm just like alright. Like last week's Real Talk my mom came in town for my birthday or whatever and I was sitting on the couch or whatever. And I was like wait what time is it?! She was like oh it's 5:50, I was like hold up, hold on I gotta go. Like what you mean!? Mom you're going to have to wait like one hour, just wait one hour. It just definitely gives me something to do and makes me feel like I belong to another community."

As a Division I student-athlete, Jerome is engulfed with his athletic identity, but when he comes to Real Talk he is able to feel like he can be his holistic self, and can disspell the "dumb jock" stereotype.

Holistic Authenticity.

“We have such a packed schedule with like football and like class and everybody’s so busy. But then you just get to have this one hour and be who you are. And just learn and talk and things like that, that’s why I love it.”

“I feel like Real Talk allows us to show that we’re not just dumb athletes. Not that I have that perception of us and athletes, but it just really shows that there are so many smart athletes that are so not that stereotype and it’s a really good thing to see.”

“Like I’m not just a football player or student-athlete, like I’m involved in Real Talk and it allows me to see other different perspectives and from non-student athletes as well...”

Throughout Real Talk Jerome has become educated on different topics regarding holidays and the female student-athlete perspective. From exposure to those diverse perspectives Jerome has left Real Talk questioning his way of thinking on certain topics.

Educational.

“I feel I’ve been educated on a lot of things when it comes to topics surrounding women.”

“We talk about societal issues, little things like Valentine’s day and like holidays, just hot topics that are going on. Um I think we’ve also addressed both sides of epidemics, like I know there’s been times where I’ll feel one way about a certain thing and had a completely...like Thanksgiving I’m thinking Thanksgiving is like one of the best things ever until I learn the real thing, now my perception of it has completely flipped. Not saying that Thanksgiving is a bad holiday because of course it’s for friends and family

but like from the Real thing that happened I'm like oh damn. You know what I mean. Like things like that, it's in the title. You know? You just come keep it real."

Racism has been prevalent in Jerome's narrative, and has been specifically tied to his identity as a Black male student-athlete.

Black/African-American Male Student-Athlete Identity Experiences.

"I've had White women walk down the street and cross the street when they see me walking. Yeah you hear about things like that happening but then you actually see it. Like I'm not calling the lady racist, but it's a whole another thing when you actually experience it."

"Like one time I got pulled over and the White officer asked, "Is this car yours?" Well hold on yeah what are you trying to say, I didn't really know what was going on until I like got home and was like wait, I was just racially profiled, and because I'm a bigger guy I had two other cars box me in as if I was going to run away. Like no, I just dropped off a friend and I'm just trying to get home now."

"...like I've had a lady call the cops on me in my own neighborhood, saying that I was selling drugs to my mom. So I was like wow, we got served because some white lady said I was selling drugs, but I had my ID on me like I just live right up the street I can even take you to the house."

"Here at Oregon State I was accused of stealing food out of the dining hall. Like first of all, I'm a scholarship athlete, like I don't have a reason to steal, my meals are paid for. Like there's no reason for that. My coaches were then notified that I was accused of stealing and they looked through all the tapes, and I wasn't even there that day, so It's a

lot, those are just some of the challenges that I think a lot of people in general don't understand what it means to be a male of color in society.”

Real Talk has been able to provide a space where Jerome can build relationships with student-athletes from his sport, other sports, non-student-athletes, and staff.

Building Relationships.

“There are times where I've had a completely different perceptions about someone before going into Real Talk and then coming out like, “Oh you're hella cool what's up, and then we start talking and helps us make connections. Like we don't get to really hang out with people from other sports.”

“I feel like we are connected, like I wouldn't really be how we are now, like I wouldn't be like how I would be without others if it wasn't for Real Talk. There's just so many people I've been able to see who people are and what they are about. I've been able to connect with a lot more people in the student-athlete community and even the non-student athlete population as well. There are so many people that just come through and you just see that it's so different.”

“So you want to hear something funny. For the longest time I didn't know who one person was, and she would always say, “Hi and how are you doin?” I would always just say, “Heyyyyy” and I didn't even know she was a student-athlete and I would see her sometimes at like the dorms or whatever, but I didn't know who she was. I would say were pretty good friends now. I feel I can go to her, and talk to her about some things and lift her up. There's just so many people I've learned to appreciate. Like this one person she said something and I was like, “Mannnn I don't know about you, like you be saying

some crazy stuff.” But now she’s like came to Real Talk several times and it’s like she has a great perspective on things.”

“There’s just so many people I wouldn’t know if I didn’t go to Real Talk.”

“Okay I’ll say that there’s been like some guys that are a freakin like just saying stuff just to say stuff and he doesn’t take things serious but then when he comes to Real Talk, I like understand now why he says those things. Like I was just thinking about how you hear more about people’s backgrounds. For example, Like... you’re not just this guy that you front about to the football team, like you actually have a side that is genuine you know. Like that’s what’s up. Also, like I’ve had teammates come up to me in the locker room the day after Real Talk like, “Yo, you said some really good things at Real Talk the other day.”

Another theme that emerged for Jerome is that Real Talk creates an outlet for him to feel like he can get away from the stress and expectations that athletics and academics brings. Real Talk has been able to help Jerome be around others who understand him.

Outlet.

“Like there’s been times where I’ll be stressed with exams, and like I need to like just go to a chill environment. It’s just really allowed me to get away from things for awhile and just be like really go into a space like, “Yo... and people will know where I’m coming from.”

Jerome brings up the Real Talk stigma that Real Talk is only for black people. But, because he comes from different racial background’s he is able to speak on topics from an intersectional

lens. No matter the race, Jerome feels both dominant and minority cultures can educate each other on various topics. Therefore, Jerome feels it is important for everyone to attend Real Talk.

Stigma.

“Like... a lot of the times I feel like someone like you know thinks that Real Talk is like a Black thing to do, but it's not. And think also that you know It's because my mom is white and a lot of the family I grew up with is white. Like I might look at white people differently than like other people of color. Like yeah, I've had some unpleasant experiences, I've been racially profiled and all of that types of stuff. Like...I can't ever be like oh I hate white people because my mom is white, my family is white and I have been shown good by so many different people who aren't like me.”

“I don't know how to change the idea that Real Talk is just for black people, well like people of color. People just think we just like bash white people. Like “white people suck” like that's the outside looking in. Like no there's been so many things I've experienced that a white person hasn't and they have learned from me and I have learned from them.”

Aquaman

Introduction. Aquaman is a current Division I Oregon State student-athlete and is involved with community service and the Asian Pacific Islander community on campus. Aquaman identifies as a Pacific Islander, Christian, heterosexual male. Aquaman comes from a very diverse area and comes from a lower-class household. Aquaman is very family oriented and has had unique experiences through Real Talk. A theme that emerges in his narrative is that you feel you have a voice through Real Talk. Having a voice can show up in multiple ways, and

Aquaman reveals how you can be silent on a certain topic and still have a voice because someone in the room can have similar thoughts and feelings verbally articulate it in a way to speak for others who feel the same.

Having a Voice.

“I liked it, it felt very welcoming. It was a lot of laughter but when we got to speaking on certain topics people really started to share their thoughts on topics and shared how they felt. So I really liked that part and it wasn’t just one person talking it was multiple people talking.”

“Uh I think it’s a safe haven for people to talk about how they feel. I feel it can definitely be a committee that can be brought to authority because it’s more than one voice and is more than one sport.”

“I feel like I can just connect with a lot of people, like a lot of the issues that they have in their live and see it in mine and able to hear people to talk about it and have other people, having that empathy with it. I think is really cool. Sometimes I don’t even have to talk because like the issue that I have will be already discussed and other people can explain it better than I can.”

Another experience through Real Talk is the diversity and inclusion of the program. Aquaman describes the attendance at Real Talk as diverse. Real Talk is inclusive of all student-athletes, students, and staff. The topics at Real Talk are relatable, and Aquaman hopes to have the attendance and program grow.

Diversity & Inclusion

“Softball, swimming, gymnastics, baseball, rowing, wrestling, uh track and field, and people who don’t play sport also go to Real Talk. People who also aren’t even in school, like professionals. It’s very diverse.”

“I like how the topics are connected and not for just people who are African-American but like I can see some of those issues for me like for back home, it effects everybody. Not just people of color but people who are like white or anything. I like how in all of the topics everybody can connect to it on both sides of the field, and that’s what I like about Real Talk.”

“I want it to just get bigger and make it a full on program to where Oregon State can just have a whole building just for Real Talk. Like make it even bigger and that it goes more to than just the athletes here and goes to everything.”

Aquaman built relationships with student-athletes from other sports by listening to different perspectives and feeling comfortable to speak with other student-athletes outside of Real Talk. Real Talk helped provide a space to build relationships with people he never thought he’d be friends with.

Build Relationships.

“I definitely would say it helped make a lot of the student-athletes become closer. A lot of the other student-athletes don’t really get to talk to other student-athletes who are not in their sport. So, when they come to Real Talk you get hear their opinions on life and see different perspectives, and being able to hear different perspectives. Right there you can make a friendship or relationship with someone that you didn’t think you could be friends with.”

“Yeah there was this one wrestler who I connected with and he was cool, I’ll have to figure out his name again. If it wasn’t for Real Talk I don’t think I would’ve ever approached him.”

With the physical demands required of his sport, Aquaman has been able to connect on an emotional level and build empathy with student-athletes and other student-athletes. Aquaman has been able to separate the athletic identity from the student-athlete and learn about who student-athletes are, where they are from, and what they go through inside and outside of athletics.

Build Empathy and Deeper Understanding

“Yeah, just being able to like have this emotion or feeling that I normally don’t get. Just this opening and welcoming feeling for people who are not part of my family or someone I know and being able to discuss problems that I have in my life and being able to connect on a different level than most people would. Definitely has a huge impact especially hearing like people that are on my team and knowing what they’re going through, and thinking back like wow that person’s going through some stuff but that looks like a very happy go lucky person, but then in real life everyone feels harm.”

“Definitely and being able to connect on an emotional level and not just a physical or like a mental level, it’s like full on emotion on how they feel.”

Real Talk has been an emotional outlet for Aquaman to relieve stress, and any thoughts or feelings. Real Talk is something Aquaman looks forward to being a part of.

Outlet

“Um I don’t think anything would be done. A lot of things wouldn’t be the same. You wouldn’t see any cope with student athletics. A lot of people would have bottled up

emotions and I don't think that's good for anybody's life to have something that's effecting them bottled up, and not being able to talk about it. We also live in Oregon with the highest teen suicide rate here, and you never know if you can be impacting someone's life and changing it for the best. So for Real Talk to not be here would be kind of hard to imagine it, and there would definitely be side effects of it."

"It's definitely something I look forward to in my week."

Max

Introduction. Max is a current Division I Oregon State student-athlete who is a Senior and majoring in Digital Communications. Max identifies as a Black/African-American, Christian, heterosexual male and comes from a middle-class household. Max likes to vibe, have fun, crack jokes, and describes himself as a whimsical person. Max has six siblings but knows four of them, and describes his upbringing as being nice because he went outside and rode bikes. In his narrative Max's most salient identities are being a Black/African-American male student-athlete. His first theme that emerged in his narrative is that Real Talk is a fun, comfortable space where you can say whatever you want and not be judged.

Brave Space.

"Its been fun, you know just everyone gives their own opinions. I feel like everyone just gets to say what they want to say."

"Comfortable. I just feel like everyone in there is on the same page. I don't know how to explain it. Like you go in there and just give your experience on things. You can say whatever you want without being side eyed or looked at funny."

“I just showed up I didn’t know what to expect, I knew you guys would have food, and a lot of people Black people in there talking about Real stuff. The first time I went it was fun and I talked a lot so I decided to just keep coming.”

“A fun environment comfortable environment just a social fun event its real fun. You just talk about people’s lives and people of colors’ lives....”

With Max’s identity as a student-athlete he has to be conscientious about what he says because of the reputation and expectations that come along with being a Division I student-athlete.

However, Max comes to Real Talk and feels he is able to say whatever he wants and have a voice. In addition, Max feels like other people who attend Real Talk understand him and are on the same page.

Having a Voice.

“...you got to talk about whatever you wanted to talk about like I said everyone was on the same page and it was a friendly environment.”

“You have a voice. Like it’s fun we play little games to get everyone warmed up and fired up because it’s fun and free food.”

“When I come to Real Talk, I just say whatever I want. I just be chill. I don’t know I just enjoy myself and get to say what I want to say.”

“I can’t always say what I want to say because my sport is very business oriented, like you can’t just say whatever. I got a Twitter and an Instagram, like if I wasn’t a D1 athlete I would probably be on Instagram and Twitter wildin. Like N word this N word that. But since I’m a football player I don’t say that.”

According to Max, a diverse group of people attend Real Talk, from student-athletes to non-student-athletes. Everyone is welcoming and inclusive.

Diverse & Inclusive

“Soccer, football, the gymnasts, and some people that I don’t know that goes. And that’s what I can think of on the top of my head. Its student-athletes and non-athletes that go.”

“...I feel everyone in there is very nice and willing to meet you and branch out.”

Another theme that emerged in Max’s narrative is that Real Talk creates an outlet for him and is something that he looks forward to because it gives him something to do outside of academics and athletics.

Outlet

“I enjoy it and it’s fun to me. Like I be missing it, like this week I’m missing it, it’s something that I look forward to.

“If there was no Real Talk though I would be upset because I wouldn’t have anything to do.”

A lot of the connections and relationships that Max has built would not have happened if it was not for Real Talk. Real Talk has been able to help Max mature and get to know student-athletes on a deeper and non-superficial level.

Build Relationships

“I feel I’ve been able to meet new people, hear different points of views and struggles. I feel I’ve matured more because we talk about real stuff that goes on every day.”

“I’ve been able to meet you, other people, uh more gymnasts, and I know more soccer players and wrestlers and more athletes now.”

“I feel I would’ve been able to meet them, but with Real Talk I feel like I know them. Like their stories and what they’ve been through. So I actually know them instead of seeing them at a party.”

As mentioned earlier, Max has to be aware about what he says or does because of his athletic identity, however his athletic identity has been beneficial for him because his sport keeps him grounded.

Grounded

“I think it’s a good thing I can’t just say whatever I want, because if I wasn’t a football player, I don’t know what I would be saying or what I would be doing. Football keeps me grounded.”

Common Themes

After revealing each participant’s emerging themes and their supporting quotes, I was able to get a consensus of five overarching common themes that best encompassed the participants individual emerging themes. Similar emerging themes were combined to avoid repetition. The five common themes are: Authenticity; Sense of Belonging; Welcoming and Engaging Dialogue; Stigma; and Personal Development. Under each common theme I have placed one or more italicized sub themes.

1) Authenticity: Based on the participant’s emerging themes, authenticity best captured the essence of how participants are able to be their holistic true self in Real Talk. Authenticity is being able to embrace all social identities, this includes but is not limited to race, ethnicity,

gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, citizenship, and social class. Real Talk provides a space where participants are viewed as more than athletes and are accepted for who they are. In addition, being authentic involves showing up in Real Talk in whatever way participants saw fit. From the way participants talk, how they identify, the way they look, the way they feel, their thoughts, feelings and ideas are welcomed and valid because it encompasses who they are. The following subthemes that reinforce authenticity are, *More Than an Athlete* and *Validation*.

More Than an Athlete. In Real Talk, Tyra, Avah, Myah, Jerome and Julia mentioned that they are able to be their authentic selves, and embrace who they are outside of their athletic identity. Specifically, Tyra is able to relieve pressures of assimilation and Avah, Myah, Jerome and Julia are able to see student-athletes for who they are holistically, and view others more than athletes. This captures how Real Talk encourages student-athletes to be who they are and view others as individuals.

Avah stated that Real Talk helped her discover who she is, and as a result, influenced her to embrace her bi-racial identity and be a “spokesperson for both races.” This is an example of how Real Talk influenced Avah to embody both her Black/African-American and White side and utilize her voice to represent bi-racial and or Black/African-American and White people. Myah emphasizes that when you walk into Real Talk you are able to take off your “athletic mask and just let it all hang out”, she goes on to highlight that she is able to embrace her “black girl magic identity”. However, in athletics Myah feels she has to hold herself to a higher standard because her athletic identity is at the forefront of what people see and know about her.

Validation. Jerome expresses that Real Talk has been able to give him a time and space “to have this one hour and be who you are” show others that student-athletes are not the “dumb jock” stereotype. Jerome never believed in the “dumb jock” stereotype, but Real Talk provides a

space to validate that student-athletes are not “dumb jocks”. With Julia, she observed that when you have an athletic identity you “lose yourself and other identities”, and it’s important that Real Talk has conversations about being more than an athlete, because sport is what you do and not who you are. In addition, Avah has been able to make connections to her life experiences and validate the racism she experienced growing up. For example, in Real Talk there was dialogue about microaggressions and it helped Avah realize she had been dealing with microaggressions all her life. This further reinforces that Real Talk provides a space to self-reflect and validate lived experiences.

2) Sense of Belonging: Based on the participant’s emerging themes, sense of belonging became an overarching theme because it captures how participants have the opportunity through Real Talk to foster community and relationships with other student-athletes, and student-athletes with similar marginalized identities, and lived experiences. In addition, participants felt they are accepted and a part of something outside of their time demanding athletic and academic schedules. The following sub themes are Community and Relationship Building, and Involvement Beyond Athletics.

Community and Relationship Building. Tyra, Avah, Julia, Myah, Marcus, Young Mo, Jerome, Aquaman, and Max all spoke about how they feel a sense of belonging in Real Talk because they get to be around other people with marginalized identities. This includes the general student population, faculty and staff who attend Real Talk. Attending a predominately white institution, and having a busy athletic schedule, the participants acknowledge the white space they’re in and express that they are rarely around people who “look like them”. In Real Talk the participants feel a sense of belonging because they are able to be around others who have similar lived experiences and can understand what they are going through and be “on the

same page”. Not only are the participants able to have community with others of marginalized identities but are able to create a closer community with student-athletes. In the participants’ narratives, they express that student-athletes usually stick to their sport because they rarely have the opportunity to branch out and interact with other student-athletes beyond their sport. This further reinforces how Real Talk provides a space and convenient time for busy student-athletes to bridge the gap with other student-athletes.

Involvement Beyond Athletics. Within sense of belonging, Avah, Young Mo, Aquaman, Max, and Jerome “look forward” to Real Talk. Avah expresses that she is “itching” to go. This depicts how participants are anticipating and excited for Real Talk to happen. Young Mo, Max, and Jerome highlight how Real Talk makes them feel a part of something outside of their sport and if there was no Real Talk then they would have nothing to do. Real Talk provides a space that is fulfilling for participants to be involved.

3) Welcoming and Engaging Dialogue: Based on the participant’s emerging themes, welcoming and engaging dialogue best incorporated the framework of Real Talk and its outcomes. Welcoming and engaging dialogue is an open, comfortable, and private space for participants to feel they are able to freely express their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and opinions. Engaging dialogue requires an exchange of diverse perspectives between individuals, and involves active listening, self-reflection, and communication. Engaging dialogue can also involve challenging each other’s perspectives to gain a deeper understanding, but in a respectful manner. The following sub themes are Brave Space, Having a Voice, New Perspectives, and Emotional Connections and Emotional Intelligence.

Brave Space. Tyra, Pickle, Avah, Myah, Young Mo, Jerome, Max, and Aquaman have described their experiences in Real Talk as a brave space. Tyra, Young Mo, Jerome, and Max

state that you can say whatever you want and ask questions "...without worrying about being judged and saying the wrong thing" (Tyra), "no one is judging, and no one is like over bearing like we all listen to each other's opinions no matter what" (Young Mo), "I was just saying whatever was on my mind and everyone was cool with it...like yeah, some people have disagreed about my point but yeah... I've always been open minded to what they had to say as well" (Jerome), and "You can say whatever you want without being side eyed or looked at funny" (Max). This reinforces that Real Talk provides a brave space because it exemplifies the tenets of challenging each other's opinions but accepting them with respect.

Pickle and Avah, express that Real Talk provides a place where you can "...talk about certain topics that usually wouldn't get discussed" (Pickle), and "yeah there might be a topic where like it gets a bit awkward and everyone's like okay whose going to start this conversation, but when we do it's like everyone starts bouncing off each other and I think that's important because people that go and don't really speak up they are still there and absorbing the information" (Avah). Pickle and Avah reiterate that Real Talk creates discussion about topics that may be uncomfortable but emphasize the importance of having the conversations. Myah and Aquaman, reveal that it's a safe place to talk about how you feel no matter the topic, "We have time to just let it all out" (Myah), "I think it's a safe haven for people to talk about how they feel" (Aquaman).

Having a Voice. Julia, Marcus, Aquaman and Max point out that when they are in Real Talk they have a voice. Julia states that she recently started to have a voice because "I think from listening so long, its allowed me to be more comfortable to say what I think and feel about certain situations." This is an example of how Julia would go to Real Talk with the intentions to listen and eventually gained the confidence to speak about how she feels. Marcus also highlights

that “Real Talk is a place for people to come who usually don’t have a voice.” This indicates that Real Talk provides a space for people with marginalized identities to say how they feel.

Aquaman and Max state that “Sometimes I don’t even have to talk because like the issue that I have will be already discussed and other people can explain it better than I can” (Aquaman), and Although Aquaman states he doesn’t have to talk sometimes, he is still able to have a voice through others.

New Perspectives. Tyra, Pickle Avah, Julia, Marcus, and Jerome highlight that Real Talk is a space where you get to bring different perspectives and gain new perspectives. Tyra emphasizes that “Real Talk has helped give me perspective and open me to new ideas...” Pickle brings attention to how Real Talk “...has benefited me because I come from a diverse place anyways like where I grew up, and a lot of people have not, and hearing about where other people have come from it’s cool.” Avah has “walked out of Real Talk like I just totally have a new view on that particular thing, because I was so stuck in my own ways and like stuck in my own judgements and after that I was like hmmm...interesting. I just feel like I had my own ah ha! Moment.” Julia highlights that her biggest reason for going to Real Talk is “...to hear and talk about the topics and hear the perspectives on different issues.”

Marcus accentuates, “Man, you hear a lot of diverse perspectives on things, I feel we learn a lot and find solutions to problems.” Jerome has become more open from attending Real Talk because he is able to see both sides which has “...allowed me to have different perspectives and allowed me to be a lot more open minded to other peoples’ opinions in Real Talk.” All of the participants reveal that Real Talk has helped them gain new perspectives and be open minded to others’ perspectives. As a result, the participants question their own thinking and are able to approach life situations differently from the new perspectives they gained from Real Talk.

Emotional Connections & Emotional Intelligence. Pickle, Myah, Jerome, and Aquaman have been able to gain a better sense of their reality outside of sports, with regards to connecting with someone on an emotional level, because they can empathize, and be aware of what other's go through outside of their sport. Pickle states that "I think it's a place where people can understand each other, and I think without Real Talk there just wouldn't be that. Like oh we talked about this during the day and like oh I wonder what this person is going through." Myah indicates that she gets emotional talking about Real Talk because "Real Talk is welcoming for everybody, everyone is giving hugs, everyone is saying hey what's up, laughing, smiling and sharing stories. Everyone is oh man, being at Real Talk makes me emotional because I'm so passionate about what's happening."

Jerome reveals that "...there's been times where I'll be stressed with exams, and like I need to like just go to a chill environment. It's just really allowed me to get away from things for awhile and just be, like really go into a space like, Yo... and people will know where I'm coming from." This is an example of how Jerome utilizes Real Talk as an emotional outlet. Aquaman describes the emotional connections he's gained. "Yeah, just being able to like have this emotion or feeling that I normally don't get. Just this opening and welcoming feeling for people who are not part of my family or someone I know and being able to discuss problems that I have in my life and being able to connect on a different level than most people would." Aquaman later explains that he's been able to connect with his teammates on a deeper level "... being able to connect on an emotional level and not just a physical or like a mental level, it's like full on emotion on how they feel," he then goes on to state that if there was no Real Talk "A lot of things wouldn't be the same. You wouldn't see any cope with student athletics. A lot of people would have bottled up emotions and I don't think that's good for anybody's life to have

something that's effecting them bottled up, and not being able to talk about it." Similar to Jerome, Aquaman supports that Real Talk is also an emotional outlet for student-athletes.

4) Stigma: Another overarching theme from the participants responses is the idea that Real Talk shames and disapproves white student-athletes from participating in the program, and that Real Talk only discusses topics relevant to student-athletes with marginalized identities. Real Talk's initiative is to support student-athletes from underrepresented populations. However, it is an inclusive program and student-athletes from all backgrounds are welcome. The following sub theme of Diversity & Inclusion highlights Real Talk's initiative.

Diversity & Inclusion. Pickle, Avah, Myah, Marcus, Young Mo, Jerome, Aquaman, and Max bring up the stigma that Real Talk is only for people of color, but the participants reject the stigma and want Real Talk to grow in attendance. The participants embrace diversity and inclusion and want student-athletes of color, white student-athletes, students, faculty and staff to attend. Pickle states, "I don't really know where it came from, but I think most of the people in there consider themselves as African-American or Black but I think it's important for everybody in a certain race or class to express how they feel about certain topics or certain experiences." Similarly, Avah states, "...it's good that people are starting to go that are not of color because like honestly a lot of the times those are the people that need to learn more about it and talk about different things. Especially if they haven't been in an environment where there is a lot of culture and diversity." Pickle and Avah encourage white people to attend Real Talk because it's beneficial for everyone to express how they feel, regardless of race, and bring awareness to the experiences of student-athletes from marginalized communities. Myah declares that she is "totally not for" the stigma that Real Talk is only for Black people, "I don't know what it is we just talk about different things and it's a place for minorities, but I think the majority thinks like

oh well, that's not for me, but no its for you too...." This supports Real Talk's initiative that it is inclusive of student-athletes from all backgrounds to bring their perspectives and learn from each other.

Marcus actively reaches out to white student-athletes to increase the attendance at Real Talk, however he explains, "I've talked to and said y'all should come, but no one came. So it's like alright y'all talk about you want to be inclusive and we're trying to be but then you guys don't want to show up." Marcus is frustrated and states "...as people of color we always have to take chances and be in situations where we are uncomfortable and aren't represented. So for you to take an hour out of your day on a Thursday night to be in a space where you are the minority. It's not that big of a deal". This reveals how Marcus doesn't feel supported by the white student-athletes he invited and feels that White people have the privilege to opt in and out of uncomfortable situations, whereas people of color do not.

Young Mo hopes to, "...make it grow more" and see "different faces" attend. Aquaman expresses, "I like how the topics are connected and not for just people who are African-American but like I can see some of those issues for me like for back home, it effects everybody. Not just people of color but people who are like white or anything." This indicates that Real Talk discusses diverse topics that are relatable for those outside of the Black/African-American culture.

Jerome questions, "I don't know how to change the idea that Real Talk is just for black people, well like people of color. People just think we just like bash white people. Like "white people suck" like that's the outside looking in. Like no there's been so many things I've experienced that a white person hasn't, and they have learned from me and I have learned from them." This is an example of how Jerome embraces his multi-racial identity to emphasize that

both white people and people of color can learn from each other because everyone has their own unique experiences.

5) Personal Development: Personal Development is the last emerging theme amongst the participants. It involves developing competencies such as, self-reflection, improving awareness, becoming educated about diverse topics, interpersonal communication, intergroup collaboration, and conflict resolution.

Competencies. Myah, Tyra, and Marcus stated that through Real Talk they have been able to develop themselves in different ways. Myah emphasizes, “I feel like through Real Talk, I’ve actually gained more interpersonal skills and more communication skills. So when I mean connecting with others I mean just having the right words to start the conversation.” This is an example of how Myah has the ability to construct conversations and interact with others through the dialogue she’s engaged in at Real Talk. Tyra proclaims, “...it has definitely shaped me as a student...being able to communicate with other people in different situations...because hearing other people address situations themselves I’ve learned everything doesn’t have to be an “attack”, it can just be a polite conversation, and that it doesn’t have to always be direct confrontation. Just finding ways on how we can educate others and educate ourselves.” Hearing how people address similar experiences in Real Talk has helped Tyra become open minded to approach different situations from a new perspective. Marcus expresses, “I think Real Talk has helped foster my leadership skills and presentation skills and helped me work on collaborating with people more. It’s also taught me how to lead in a respectful manner and a lot of skills I have learned from Real Talk.” Marcus’s statement exemplifies how he’s been able to develop his leadership, collaboration and presentation skills through Real Talk.

Education Awareness. Tyra, Avah, Myah, and Jerome have been able to improve their awareness and be educated about diverse topics through Real Talk. In Tyra's interview she expresses that she was able to talk about holidays and learn about the history of Native Americans. Tyra states, "I don't know, I knew a little bit about it from school, and I was able to ask questions, and wondered how come we didn't learn about this stuff, about what is currently happening to the Native American people. So, I thought it was really cool to learn something new." Similarly, Avah states, "I didn't know behind the story about Thanksgiving and there's a lot of things we talk about like politics and like gun control." From Real Talk Julia highlights, "...conversations about music videos and how women are portrayed and even answered questions about Martin Luther King Jr. and I think these conversations are important because they aren't talked about enough. Like the regular basis, so creating a space where its comfortable to talk about it is important." Jerome expresses, "I feel I've been educated on a lot of things when it comes to topics surrounding women," and "...talking about societal issues, little things like Valentine's day and like holidays, just hot topics that are going on... Thanksgiving is like one of the best things ever until I learn the real thing, now my perception of it has completely flipped..." Tyra, Avah, Julia, and Jerome reveal they weren't educated about certain topics but Real Talk provided a comfortable space to allow them to ask questions and gain a deeper understanding about the history of specific marginalized groups that normally aren't discussed. Myah emphasizes, that every time she goes to Real Talk her "...knowledge in social justice and around the world has been exceptionally enhanced." Myah has been able to talk about "...police brutality and interracial relationships...Predominately White Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities." Myah describes Real Talk as, "informative and educational and its raw."

Chapter 5: Discussion

For the final chapter of this thesis, I will briefly review the research statement and methodology used in the study. In addition, this chapter will provide a summary of the research findings. After, there will be recommendations for higher education and athletic administrators on how to best support and serve student-athletes from marginalized communities. Finally, this chapter will provide suggestions for further research.

Research Statement

A big challenge amongst Division I student-athletes is being able to balance the many different, complex roles and identities that they carry socially, academically and athletically (Adler, 1987). Student-athletes experience social isolation and social evaluation, as compared to their non-student-athlete peers (Bimper, 2014). As a result, student-athletes become glorified to a “celebrity” status and are treated as objects, rather than individuals (Adler, 1989). “Individuals thus become initially alienated from themselves through the separation of their self-concept from the conception of their selves held by others” (Adler, 1989 p. 299). A student-athlete’s athletic identity naturally supersedes their other identities because they’ve been heavily immersed in their sport from games, traveling, practices, workouts, meetings, watching film, and fan engagement (Williams & Shropshire, 2017).

Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap by providing student-athletes with marginalized identities a platform to (1) offer their own narrative on the dimension of their identity, including athletic identity and (2) describe the ways in which intergroup dialogue, when applied as a framework for critical dialogic spaces, might support a sense of belonging, closer

community within their team, with other student-athletes, and provide perspective between student-athletes, staff and faculty. As such, the research questions of this study were as follows:

1. What factors present challenges for student-athletes who hold marginalized identities at a predominately white institution (PWI)?
2. What are the experiences of student-athletes who hold marginalized identities in a critical dialogic space like Real Talk?
3. How can we better form and cultivate dialogic spaces to attend the needs of student-athletes who hold marginalized identities?

Methodology Review

This research was examined utilizing critical race theory as a lens, which aims to center race and racism, and examines existing power structures that uphold the presence of racist policies and oppressive systems (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This study also used an intersectional lens to acknowledge how marginalized identities can impact a student-athletes lived experiences. Researching student-athletes who hold marginalized identities must utilize intersectionality to consider the multiple social identities student-athletes hold (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dill & Zambrana, 2009).

Another framework utilized for this study is intergroup dialogue (IGD) to determine the similarities and comparisons a critical dialogic space like Real Talk has on student-athletes with marginalized identities. Intergroup dialogue involves participants from two or more social identities to engage across differences and explore the role and experience of different social identity group members, while examining how power, privilege, and oppression structure these experiences: developing constructive skills for engaging across differences: and identifying ways to challenge

group inequalities and promote social justice (Zuniga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). Therefore, the theoretical and methodological frameworks align well with the aims of this study to honor the voices and lived experiences of each participant.

Summary of Results

To honor each participant's voice, experiences, and narrative in Real Talk their narratives were presented individually to highlight the unique experiences and themes that are specific to the participant. After individually sharing each participant's counter narrative, there was a consensus of five common themes that best encompassed each individual's emerging themes. The five common themes are Authenticity, Sense of Belonging, Welcoming and Engaging Dialogue, Stigma, and Personal Development.

Real Talk provides a space for the participant's to be their true holistic self and discover and validate that they are more than their athletic identity. Sense of Belonging became a common theme because it allowed participants to feel a sense of community with others of similar lived experiences, and as a result, helped participants gain relationships with other student-athletes, students, faculty, and staff in Real Talk. In addition, Real Talk is accepting and gives participants something to look forward to outside of academics and athletics. Considering student-athletes have time demanding athletic and academic expectations, Real Talk is convenient for student-athletes to participate.

With Welcoming and Engaging Dialogue participants are provided a brave space, to use their voice and feel respected and not judged by their peers. The participants gain new perspectives, increase their emotional connections, and emotional intelligence with others. Furthermore, participants acknowledge a Real Talk stigma exists but are active in promoting diversity and

inclusion to increase the attendance of Real Talk for student-athletes and others of all backgrounds to feel welcomed. It is heavily emphasized from the data that Real Talk is not a space only for people of color, and white people are more than welcome. Lastly, Real Talk personally develops participants' leadership, interpersonal communication, critical thinking, presentation, and collaboration skills. Equally important, Real Talk educates and improves awareness about diverse topics. A few topics discussed but not limited to, is race, holidays, police brutality, interracial relationships, PWI's, HBCU's, music videos, and social justice.

Implications

From this study, the power of dialogue can help athletic administrators and coaches understand how to structure group situations and be conscious about creating opportunities for student-athletes to develop personal and professional skills. Through this study, we understand the potential of student-athletes being together and the positive outcomes from engaging in critical dialogic spaces. If you are a coach, what does it mean if student-athletes are able to talk with others about difficult situations? This means student-athletes are able to be closer with their teammates, and other student-athletes. Through these spaces, student-athletes learn to problem solve through conflicts and gain diverse perspectives. This can impact how individuals and the team perform inside and outside of their sport.

If a student-athlete engages with other student-athletes and develops awareness of other's unique experiences, it can better prepare student-athletes to engage with others outside of their sport. As a coach or athletic administrator if you are looking to strengthen team dynamics and relationships amongst student-athletes, and bridge the gap between student-athletes, students, faculty, and staff, student-athletes should be encouraged to attend programs that utilize intergroup dialogue as a framework. To personally address any problems, coaches and athletic administrators

need to be conscious about managing those spaces. Coaches and athletic administrators must be aware that social identities intersect and influence a student-athletes experience. Coaches and athletics administrators must also be mindful about how student-athletes from marginalized communities experience the campus, athletic department and local community.

Additionally, there is a need to ensure that people on staff have knowledge about intergroup dialogue and how to structure and sustain dialogic spaces. In addition, there needs to be awareness about diversity systems and oppression.

Limitations

As a co-facilitator, I knew all of the participants prior to the study. This can be a limitation because it can affect the way the participants responded to my questions. The participants may have answered questions in a way they assumed I wanted them to. However as mentioned, I was able to build trust with the participants over time before the study. With comparison to intergroup dialogue, another limitation of this study is that Real Talk does not require participants to disclose their social identities before participating, and attendance in Real Talk can vary and is on a voluntary basis. Therefore, Real Talk has a group of people from different demographics, which can create an uneven amount of representation and voices from social groups. Whereas, intergroup dialogue strategically places an even number of people from different social identity groups to prevent one-sided dialogue. Another limitation of this study is the participants social identities are very diverse which can make it difficult to narrow and create generalizations based on their social identities.

I also feel I could have done a better job at incorporating aspects of intersectionality and digging deeper to reveal how specific social identities influenced the experiences of the

participants, such as social class, sexual orientation, and religion. For example, for participants who expressed they come from a lower class, or feel they belong between social classes I could have asked participants to further explain why they chose that social class, and how it impacted their experiences and perspectives, along with their sexual orientation, and religious or non-religious affiliation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are collaborated from some participant's responses on how critical dialogic spaces like Real Talk can improve and support student-athletes from marginalized communities. After all, student-athletes from marginalized communities should have the opportunity to give recommendations on how to best serve their needs, and the needs of other student-athletes. In addition, I will provide recommendations for athletic departments.

The first recommendation emphasizes the inclusivity of the program. Aquaman wants to "connect with other branches and other schools...with clubs and branch off with donors...and having public speakers inside and outside of athletics...I think if we have team meetings or have people come present to each sport about the program like advisors to come and talk about Real Talk. I think it would be a really big thing to have." This recommendation emphasizes doing outreach and involving other organizations inside and outside of athletics to participate in Real Talk. In order for coaches and athletic administrators to understand the importance of critical dialogic spaces facilitators can present the outcomes and benefits of a critical dialogic space like Real Talk, and influence coaches and athletics administrators to encourage their student-athletes to attend similar programs. Another recommendation is from Avah, who recommends involving and collaborating with other populations, and cultural centers. Collaborating with cultural centers

allows student-athletes with marginalized identities to understand the support and resources they have outside of athletics.

In addition, Jerome recommends that flyers and social media announcements should “maybe put like the topic that you guys want to talk about. So it doesn’t create the idea that it’s just racial injustice.” Although conversations in Real Talk aim to center race, racism and discuss oppression and privilege, Real Talk discusses a variety of hot topics that welcome people of all backgrounds to share their perspectives and experiences on the topic. Julia also provides a recommendation to provide a description of what Real Talk is so everyone can have a clear understanding of the program. It’s important for any critical dialogic space to highlight its initiative and to always emphasize diversity and inclusiveness. Next, are the following recommendations for athletic departments.

Incorporating Intergroup Dialogue

As discussed in this study, Real Talk’s format was informed by intergroup dialogue which helps educate students on how to build effective communication skills, experience intergroup conflicts, and create relationships between diverse groups and discuss historical and structural inequalities minoritized groups face (Zuniga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). Intergroup dialogue should be incorporated as a framework in student-athlete development programs because it reveals positive effects in preparing students engagement with diverse groups (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Thompson, Brett, & Behling, 2001). As evidenced by the positive impact that participation in this study had on ten participant’s identity development, incorporating this model into student-athlete development programs has the potential to lead and better support student-athletes from marginalized communities.

Through intergroup dialogue I recommend practitioners be mindful of the principles, process, and people when utilizing intergroup dialogue as a framework. For principles, the program should focus on creating a welcoming and inclusive climate that invites diversity and multiple perspectives. With multiple perspectives participants must commit to active listening, open mindedness, sharing, and storytelling. However, participation in the dialogue is voluntary. For a constructive environment, it is necessary for participants to explore conflict and gain new perspectives to challenge one way thinking. In addition, it is important to educate participants on understanding systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

In relation to the process, intergroup dialogue must be facilitated, and monitored. Facilitators must provide context on the topic and allow one person to speak at a time. This gives space and balance for participants to use their voice to reflect on the process, content, and facilitation of the dialogue. This can influence participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives.

Lastly, is being mindful of the people. Understand that participants' knowledge is shaped by their social identities. Therefore, there will be different experiences, thoughts, and opinions among participants. However, participants should be fully present, and aware of the possibility of having difficult conversations. I encourage facilitators to cultivate a brave space by encouraging participants to be comfortable in conflict. I recommend facilitators to reiterate the effects of impact versus intention and to engage participants to acknowledge each other's emotional well-being. Also, participants are allowed to choose whether they want to challenge a conversation, but should respect each other's ideas, thoughts, feelings, perspectives, and opinions.

Coaches

Coaches should recognize that race matters, and that systems of power, privilege, and oppression exist. I encourage coaches to create a culture and environment that is inclusive by educating themselves and participating in diversity and inclusion trainings that discuss intersectionality, and critical race theory. As a coach, it is important to educate yourself on privilege and how your privilege effects marginalized communities. Regardless of your intention, be conscientious of the impact you can have on student-athletes from marginalized communities. In addition, representation is so important. Therefore, it is vital to increase the representation of people of color in athletic departments, for both coaches and athletic administrators. From this study, student-athletes felt a sense of belonging and community with others of marginalized identities. This can prevent student-athletes from feeling isolated and allows them to discuss topics with others who may have similar lived experiences. Equally important, coaches should collaborate and be involved with cultural centers as Avah mentioned. Coaches should utilize staff from cultural centers to present and incorporate visiting cultural centers during recruiting visits.

Furthermore, coaches need to step back from their privilege and listen to the voices of student-athletes and practice ally-ship. This can help coaches build rapport with their student-athletes and show them they care and want to understand how their social identities shape their experiences. In addition, coaches should use their privilege to uplift and bring light to the voices of marginalized student-athletes. Student-athletes are more than athletes and should be treated as such.

Athletic Administrators

Athletic administrators, like coaches should educate themselves and participate in diversity and inclusion trainings that discuss intersectionality, and critical race theory. Critical race theory can help gain a better understanding of systemic racism and how student-athletes from marginalized communities are affected by cultural perceptions of race inside and outside of their sport, since many athletic administrative positions are overrepresented by whites (Lapchick, 2012). Trainings should also include discussions around implicit and explicit bias and how bias shows up in the athletic department. This training should challenge biases that coaches and athletic administrators have and provide de-biasing strategies.

Coaches and athletic administrators should also be involved with student-athlete development programs and workshops. Critical dialogic spaces allow administrators to build relationships with student-athletes. This will help athletic administrators and coaches know who student-athletes are outside of their athletic identity. I also recommend that athletic administrators facilitate streamlined communication between the student-athlete development department, and academic department to create awareness of the experiences and barriers student-athletes from marginalized communities face.

Faculty and Academic Advisors/Counselors for Student-Athletes

Faculty and Academic Advisors/Counselors for student-athletes should be aware of their position in academics and work to understand how their interactions with student-athletes can perpetuate the Black “dumb jock” stereotype (Edwards, 1984). The dumb jock stereotype can negatively impact student-athletes academic success and internalize the idea that you can’t be a smart student-athlete. Therefore, faculty members and academic advisors/counselors should hold themselves accountable to work with and advise student-athletes to be involved outside of their

sport. Through organizations, clubs, community service, and other extracurricular activities, student-athletes can discover other passions and pursuits. In addition, advisors should support student-athlete's major choices and not choose classes for them. This will help cultivate a positive relationship within the higher education process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it's obvious from the data that dialogic spaces can be transferred to student-athletes and can challenge athletic administrators to create such spaces for the holistic development of student-athletes. Dialogic spaces challenge the negative stereotypes and pressures that are placed on student-athletes. Equally important, student-athletes are able to be their holistic selves and embrace who they are. In addition, critical dialogic spaces support student-athletes to develop and embrace their overall identity, create a sense of belonging, challenge their critical thinking skills, and develop communication skills to improve intergroup relations amongst student-athletes, staff, and faculty.

In my role as both the researcher and the co-facilitator of Real Talk, here are my suggestions for those wanting to create a space like Real Talk with the five common themes. First, you must have two co-facilitators with different social identities (ex. one male and one female, or one person of color and one white person, etc.) facilitating the critical dialogue. Co-facilitators with differing social identities allow student-athletes with similar identities to feel comfortable to voice their experiences, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. After, facilitators must verbally state ground rules to create a brave space. This involves everyone being open minded to the unique experiences of others, and the willingness to understand diverse perspectives. Both facilitators must embrace diversity and inclusion and understand how to guide dialogue and only share when necessary. Facilitators should showcase characteristics of

confidence, understanding, and are able and comfortable to facilitate difficult conversations. Another observation is allowing the conversation to flow organically. However, facilitators should ask open ended, reflective, and probing questions to come up with solutions, and action items. In addition, facilitators need to embrace silence and be comfortable in it. Silence is a sign of reflection, gathering of thoughts, and observation.

Outside of flyers, social media, and face to face interactions, facilitators should encourage participants to bring people. Buy-in from the student-athletes and word of mouth has been essential to the attendance and success of Real Talk. Student-athletes from marginalized identities want White student-athletes to attend so they can bring awareness to their unique experiences and the challenges they face, as well as hear perspectives from different social identities. Therefore, it's important to reiterate and heavily emphasize the diversity and inclusion of the program and encourage all student-athletes to attend. I have observed that it is helpful to personally invite student-athletes, rather than making an open invitation announcement.

Another observation is the athletic identity is a foundation for student-athletes to gain community with each other, and the marginalized identity creates a community of understanding with others of marginalized identities. This is an example of how being around others with similar identities creates a sense of belonging, community, and understanding.

Furthermore, critical dialogic spaces require informed, knowledgeable, and committed staff to listen and care for the student-athlete voice. Student-athletes from marginalized communities have unique experiences that athletic administrators must be cognizant about in order to implement programs that best attend to their needs. By doing so, athletic administrators and student affairs educators must acknowledge and examine the intersections of dominant and subordinated identities through intersectionality (Dill, McLaughlin, & Nieves, 2007; Linder,

2015). Understanding the intersections of multiple subordinated identities, and how race, racism, privilege, and oppression shape the experiences of student-athletes warrants increased attention amongst athletic administrators. Therefore, it is imperative that each institution provides effective and beneficial student-athlete development programs that incorporate critical dialogic spaces around topics that center race, racism, and examine existing power structures that uphold racist policies and oppressive systems.

Bibliography

- Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W. J., Castañeda, C. R., Hackman, H. W., Peters, M. L., & Zúñiga, X. (2013). *Readings for diversity and social justice*. New York: Routledge.
- Adler, P., Adler P. A. (1989). "The Gloried Self: The Aggrandizement and the Constriction of Self." *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 52(4), 299-310.
- Adler, P., Adler, P. A. (1987). "Role conflict and identity salience: College athletics and the academic role." *The Social Science Journal*, 24(4), 443-455.
- Ali, D. (2017). NASPA Policy and Practice Series. Safe Spaces and Brave Spaces. Research and Policy Institute. *National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)* Issue 2.
- Armstrong, K., Jennings, M. (2018). Race, Sport, and Sociocognitive "Place" in Higher Education: Black Male Student-Athletes as Critical Theorists. *Journal of Black Studies* 49(4) 349-369.
- Baxter, L. (2004). *On Dialogue*. New York: Routledge.
- Beamon, K. (2012). "I'm a Baller": Athletic Identity Foreclosure among African-American Former Student-Athletes." *Journal of African American Studies*, 16(2), 195-208.
- Beamon, K. (2014). Racism and Stereotyping on Campus: Experiences of African American Male Student-Athletes. *Journal of Negro Education*, 83(2).
- Bimper Jr., A. (2014). Game changers: The role athletic Identity and racial Identity play on academic performance. *Journal of College Student Development* 55 (8), 795-807.
- Bimper, A., Harrison, L. (2011). Meet Me at the Crossroads: African American Athletic and Racial Identity. *National Association for Kinesiology and Physical Education in Higher Education*. 63(3), 275-288.
- Cooper, J. (2016). Excellence Beyond Athletics: Best Practices for Enhancing Black Male Student Athletes' Educational Experiences and Outcomes. *Equity and Excellence in Education*. 49(3), 267-263. CT: Routledge
- Gurin, P., Dey, E. L., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72, 330-367. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17763/haer.72.3.01151786u134n051>
- Gurin, P., Nagda, B. A., & Zúñiga, X. (2013). *Dialogue across difference: Practice, theory, and research on intergroup dialogue*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Huang-Nissen, S. (1999). *Dialogue groups: A practical guide to facilitate diversity conversation*. Blue Hill, ME: Medicine Bear
- Johnson, A. G. (1997). *Privilege, Power, and Difference*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Ladson-Billing, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.

- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just What is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. Madison, WI: Routledge, 11(1), 7-24.
- Brown, T.N., Jackson, J.S., Brown., Sellers, R.M., Keiper, S., & Manuel, W.J. (2003). There's No Race on the Playing Field: Perceptions of Racial Discrimination Among White and Black Athletes. *Journal of Sport Social Issues*. 27, 162-183.
- Carstathis, A. (2016). Intersectionality: origins, contestations, horizons. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Chadderton, C. (2012). Problematizing the role of the white researcher in social justice research. *Ethnography and Education*, 7(3), 363-380. doi:10.1080/17457823.2012.717203
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299
- Cross, W.E. (1971). The Negro-to-Black conversion experience. *Black World*, 20, 13-27.
- Cross, W.E., Vandiver, B.J (2001). Nigrescence theory and measurement: Introducing the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS). *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, (2), 71-393.
- Clemens, R., William T. (2011) Qualitative Research and Public Policy: The Challenges of Relevance and Trustworthiness. *Center of Higher Education Policy Analysis*, Los Angeles:CA
- Cooper, J. (2016). Excellence beyond athletics: Best practices for Enhancing Black Male student-athletes' educational experiences and outcomes. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, Storrs, CT: Routledge 49(3), 267-283.
- Cuyjet, J., Howard-Hamilton, F., Cooper, L., Linder, C. (2016). Multiculturalism on Campus: Theory, models, and practices for understanding diversity and creating inclusion. *Sterling: VA Stylus Publishing, LLC*.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, Jean. (2001). *Critical Race Theory An Introduction* (Critical America). New York: NYU Press
- Dill, B. T., & Zambrana, R. E. (2009). Critical thinking about inequality: An emerging lens. In *Emerging intersections: Race, class, and gender in theory, policy, and practice*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. (1-21).
- Du Bois, W. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press John Wilson and Son.
- Edwards, H. (1984). The Black Dumb Jock: An American sports tragedy. *College Board Review* (131), 8-13.

- Gurin, P., Dey, E. L., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review*, (72), 330–367.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17763/haer.72.3.01151786u134n051>
- Harper, S. (2016). Black male student-athletes and racial inequities in NCAA Division I College Sports. *Center for the Study of Race & Equity in Education*. Philadelphia: PA
- Harper, S., Williams, D., Blackman, W. (2013). Black male student-athletes and racial inequities in NCAA Division I college sports. *Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education*. Philadelphia: PA
- Harrison, L., Bimper, A., Smith, M., Logan, Alvin. (2017). The Mis-Education of the African American Student-Athlete. *The National Academy of Kinesiology*. (6), 60-69
- Harrison, L., J.r., Sailes, G., Rotich, W.K., & Bimper, A. (2011). Living the Dream or Awakening from the Nightmare: Race and Athletic Identity. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 14(1), 91-103.
- Lapchick, R. (2012). The institute for diversity and ethics in sport. *The 2012 Racial and Gender Report Card: College Sport*. Orlando:FL
- Marcia, J. (1966). Development and Validation of Ego-Identity Status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Buffalo: New York 3(5), 551-558.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege: unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Wellesley College Center for Research on women: New directions for student services*, (123), 13-21.
Retrieved from Education Research Complete database.
- Morris, J. E., & Adeyemo, A. O. (2012). Touchdowns and honor societies: Expanding the focus of black male excellence. *The Phi Kappa Delta Kappan* 93(5), 28-32.
- Museum, S.D. (2011). Generating Ethnic Minority Student Success (GEMS): A Qualitative WOMXN OF COLOR AND STUDENT SUCCESS Analysis of High-Performing Institutions. *The Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 4(3), 147-162.
- Nagda, B. A. (2006). Breaking barriers, crossing borders, building bridges: Communication processes in intergroup dialogues. *Journal of Social Issues*, (62), 553–576.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2006.00473.x>
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (2017), “How Student-Athletes Feel About Time Demands,” accessed February 25, 2019
https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2017GOALS_Time_demands_20170628.pdf
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (2018). “NCAA Recruiting Facts,” accessed February 25, 2019,
<https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/Recruiting%20Fact%20Sheet%20WEB.pdf>
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (2015). “The Value of College Sports,” accessed February 25, 2019, <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/value-college-sports>

- Omi, M., Winant, H. (1994). *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960's-1990s*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Oregon State University. (2018). "2018-2019 Academic Planner" Retrieved from Oregon State 2018-2019 Academic University Planner.
- Romney, P. (2003). *The art of dialogue: Animating democracy*. Retrieved September 8, 2005, from http://www.americansforthearts.org/animatingdemocracy/resource_center/resources_content.asp?id=215
- Rogers, A., Benson, M., Person, D. (2001). "Female Student Athletes and Student Athletes of Color." *John Wiley & Sons, Inc.* (93)
- Romero, M. (2018) *Introducing Intersectionality*. Polity Press, Medford:MA.
- Saldana, J. (2009). *Coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Saldana, J. (2013) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers (Second Edition)*. SAGE Publications. Thousand Oaks:CA
- Sellers, R. M., Smith, M. A., Shelton, J. N., Rowley, S. A., & Chavous, T. M. (1998). Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity: A reconceptualization of African American racial identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2(1), 18-39.
- Solorzano, D.G., Yosso, T.J. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44. Doi:10.1177/107780040200800103
- Sorensen, N., Nagda, B., Maxwell, K., Gurin, P. (2009). Taking a "Hands On" Approach to diversity in higher education: A critical-dialogical model for effective intergroup interaction. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 9(1) 3-35.
- Singer, N. (2008). Benefits and detriments of African American male student athlete' participation in bigtime college football program. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 43(4), 399-408.
- Thakral, C., Vasquez, P., Bottoms, B., Matthews, A., Hudson, K., & Whitley, S. (2016). Understanding Difference through dialogue: A first-year experience for College Students. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* Illinois, CHI: 9(2), 130-142.
- Thompson, M. C., Brett, T. G., & Behling, C. (2001). Educating for social justice: The program on intergroup relations, conflict, and community at the University of Michigan. In D. Schoem & S. Hurtado (Eds.), *Intergroup dialogue: Deliberative democracy in school, college, community and workplace*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (99–114).
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2014). *R-words: Refusing Research*. In D. Paris & M. T. Winn (Eds.), *Humanizing research: decolonizing qualitative inquiry with youth and communities*. SAGE. Los Angeles:CA

Williams, C., Shropshire, K. (2017). "The Miseducation of the Student-Athlete How to Fix College Sports," *Wharton Digital Press*. Philadelphia:PA

Zuniga, X., Nagda, B.A., & Sevig, T.D. (2002). Intergroup dialogues: An educational model for cultivating student engagement across differences. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 35(1), 7-17.

Zuniga, X., Nagda, B.A., Chesler, M., & Cytron-Walker, A. (2007). Intergroup dialogues in higher education: Meaningful learning about social justice. *ASHE Higher Education Report Series*, (32)(4). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.