

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Racial integration of the Louisiana public school system had a devastating effect on its number of Black teachers. The state has yet to recover from this reduction, as fewer Black college students pursue education degrees. This study reports on whether or not the lack of Black educators has influenced high school students' racial preferences for a teacher. The study's theoretical framework places racial preference within the context of racial identity theory, and filters student response through these lenses. The research project was conducted during the 1999-2000 academic year. It involved 170 Louisiana high school students from four parishes across the state. The student sample consisted of Black, White, and Other participants (self-described) with both genders represented. Qualitative research methods were used for data collection and analysis. Results indicate approximately one-third of students, Black and White, have racial preferences for a teacher. Based on student response, it is believed that exposure to a racially diverse teaching staff may have influenced individual

racial identity, affecting racial preference. Implications for university teacher education programs and public school systems are discussed.

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Characterization of High School Students' Preference for Teacher Race

by

C. Michelle Hooper

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C. Michelle Hooper, Author

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Jesus Christ who taught me the real meaning of absolute truth:

“Jesus saith unto them, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.’”

-John 14:6

I give Him the honor, praise and glory for this research project. Without Him, it would not have been possible.

CHARACTERIZATION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PREFERENCE FOR TEACHER RACE

1. INTRODUCTION

They went by many names—Dunbar, Pinecrest, Southside, Carver, Booker T. Washington. They were found in a variety of locations—deep in the inner-city, on the far side of town, “across the tracks,” or in rurally secluded pockets. They housed some of this country’s most dedicated, hard-working, and unsung shapers of young minds. “They” were the all-Black school systems of the racially segregated South. Many of the old school buildings remain standing today. Having long outlived their original purpose, some serve as adult education centers or supplementary kindergarten facilities, while others have been converted into administrative offices. A few stand empty and abandoned. At times, individuals who reside in these formerly segregated areas still refer to these buildings as the “Black schools.” The mere presence of these structures is a testament to what once was commonplace in the region—a dual school system designed for the exclusive purpose of keeping the White and Black races separate. They also serve as a living reminder of a civil rights effort that challenged the constitutionality of that system. One must look beyond the walls, however, to get the full story.

When the United States Supreme Court ruled that state-mandated segregation violated individuals’ Fourteenth Amendment rights, it was historic. When the all-Black school systems were dismantled and integration of the

formerly all-White schools began it was, in some areas, chaotic. But when the dust settled and the unforeseen results of desegregation became evident, it was tragic. This study addressed one of the myriad issues that stemmed from this tumultuous era, the displacement and subsequent removal of thousands of Black teachers from the public school sector. It examined its lingering consequences, and investigated its potential impact on students in today's educational system. The following discourse is intended to embed this research project within the appropriate historical context. It lays a foundation regarding racial segregation, as it extended to the U.S. public school system, and the subsequent racial integration of the same system.

Origins of Segregation in the U.S.

Dual school systems existed in many states in this country prior to the 20th Century. Most of the Northern states that operated racially segregated educational facilities gradually abandoned the practice due to the high cost of maintaining separate schools. In seventeen Southern states, however, this practice became a legislatively imposed mandate (Jordan, et al., 1982). This *de jure* segregation was largely the result of a U.S. Supreme Court decision handed down just over 100 years ago in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896).

Plessy v. Ferguson had at issue an 1890 Louisiana legislative statute that required railroad companies to maintain separate but equal, accommodations for "the black and white races" (Ducat & Chase, 1983). Under the Separate Car

Law, anyone attempting to occupy a seat reserved for passengers of the other race, faced criminal prosecution. When Homer Adolph Plessy, a biracial Louisiana resident, refused to surrender his seat to a White passenger, the train detective arrested him (Knappmann, 1994). Following State Circuit Court Judge John H. Ferguson's refusal to dismiss the case, Plessy sought remedy in the U.S. Supreme Court citing a violation of his Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendment rights as the basis for his appeal (Ducat & Chase 1983).

In essence, the opinion rendered by the Court in Plessy v. Ferguson laid the flawed foundation upon which an exploitative society operated for the next 60 years (Weinberg, 1999). The high tribunal set forth that a state was within the boundaries of the Constitution when requiring the separation of the two races in places where contact is likely. The justices cited as an example the separate schools that had already been established for white and "colored" children through "valid" state legislative power (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896). In the words of historian B. Schwartz, "The Supreme Court did not lift itself above the engrained prejudices of the day" (1974). In his dissenting opinion, Justice John Marshall Harlan argued that the purpose of the original Louisiana statute in the case was evident — to discriminate and oppress "the Negro," and therefore violated the Fourteenth Amendment. He also warned that the Plessy decision would bring about many violations of the rights of Black citizens, via state enactments, under the guise of "separate but equal" (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896). Justice Harlan's prophetic statements would soon prove accurate.

Technically, the Court ruling merely upheld segregated railroad facilities, but in the coming years, racial segregation became increasingly extensive and systematic. The “separate but equal doctrine” included in the Plessy opinion became the basic assumption of the Jim Crow laws (Schwartz, 1974). These laws, particularly implemented in the southern United States, severely limited the rights of Blacks, but did so in ways that did not obviously violate the Constitution. Although Southern etiquette and custom had kept the races apart socially following the abolition of slavery, such division was now judicially sanctioned.

The Plessy decision had a profound effect on public schools. In 1896, 30 states nationwide had laws on the books supporting separate schools. Justice Brown actually cited the existence of these laws and the fact that they had withstood legal battles as support for his Plessy position (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896). By the time that the issue of separate schools reached the US Supreme Court in 1899, the separation of races in society at large was pervasive. Cumming v. County Board of Education (1899), involved Black parents who challenged the operations of their local county school board. The board, which maintained segregated institutions, had decided to close the all-Black high school. This forced Black students to travel outside of the county for their education. Upon appeal, the case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, where it was dismissed. By upholding the lower court’s decision that the county school board actions were constitutional, the High Court extended the “separate but equal” doctrine to public schools. The Justice who had issued the scathing dissenting opinion in the Plessy case put forth a different perspective in 1899.

Justice Harlan acknowledged in his Cumming opinion, “the distorting impact of public subsidies upon the articulation of civil rights” (Weinberg, 1999, p. 296) and implied that racial segregation was not forbidden by the Constitution (Cumming v. County Board of Education, 1899).

Effects of *Plessy* on Southern schools

Since the conclusion of the Civil War, Northern social societies and political organizations had struggled to uplift former slaves’ educational and business opportunities. The Freedmen’s Bureau and other groups had made significant progress in the region prior to the days of Plessy. These organizations established schools, hired teachers and formed educational associations (Jordan, et al., 1982; Wish, 1964). The 1868 State constitution of Louisiana required public schools to integrate. This was enforced through the Education Act of 1869 (DuBois, 1935; Middleton, 1984). All schools and teachers in the state were expected to comply. This desegregation order was never followed statewide, but notable educational advancements for Black individuals were made during this time. By 1872, 50% of New Orleans’ public schools contained White and Black students. Prior to the Education Act of 1869, many Black children had been denied access to education altogether (Blassingame, 1973). This early desegregation period also created a demand for skilled Black teachers. In 1875, nearly 100 White teachers were fired for refusing to teach Black students in their classrooms (Middleton, 1984; White,

1974), prompting the state to establish higher learning institutes to prepare Black educators.

But the Reconstruction-era governments and social organizations responsible for educational advances throughout the South began to lose ground in the late 1870's. Many White Southerners were opposed to Black educators, integrated schools, and other "Yankee interferences" that raised state and local taxes. As the old-line opposition reclaimed control of their state legislatures, much of the progress that Black individuals had made following the Civil War was impeded or stopped altogether (Jordan, et. al, 1982; Middleton, 1984). Any remaining opportunities extended to Black citizens were further dissolved in most southern areas courtesy of the U.S. Supreme Court, through the Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) and Cummings v. County Board of Education (1899) rulings.

School Segregation in the 20th Century

The dawning of a new century revealed a bleak horizon for Black students and educators alike in America. Although states continued to provide schools for their Black citizenry, few, if any, were truly equal to the White systems. They were almost always truly separate, however, and would remain that way for the next 60 years. During this time, the "second-class" Black systems struggled to educate Black youth. Serving as neighborhood leaders and professional role models, administrators and educators of this segregated system were perceived by parents and students alike as prominent members of the Black community,

(Buxton & Prichard, 1976; Franklin, 1987; Gordon, 1997; Mercer, 1982). To supplement this community support, Black educators in several states (e.g. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Virginia) formed their own teacher associations to better serve the needs of students. Black membership in the already established White teacher organizations was forbidden in most areas. Through united efforts, teachers sought to challenge the injustices in the dual educational structure (Middleton, 1984). The challenges were considerable. In most Southern states, the average expenditure for Black students was less than half that for White students (Jordan, et al, 1982; Middleton, 1984). Reportedly, one parish in Louisiana spent \$43.55 per White student, but only \$2.64 per Black student for the 1935-36 school year (Wesley, 1957). Teacher salaries were also highly inequitable. The *minimum* pay for White teachers in some locations was double the *maximum* of their Black counterparts (Jordan et al., 1982). In addition, Black educators had to deal with the ever-increasing racial bigotry that plagued the nation. Before long, however, the systematic oppression of Black individuals that permeated the South would be called into question.

Segregation is Challenged

With the onset of World War II, the issues of racial persecution, racial injustice, and oppression took center stage. As the United States engaged in European military campaigns to eradicate the evils taking place there, it became

increasingly difficult for U.S. leaders to justify the segregationist practices occurring in their own backyard. During the wartime 1940's, many Black educators left the teaching field to take advantage of employment opportunities in wartime industries. This led to an influx of incompetent, untrained teachers into the Black school systems, making an already desperate situation even worse (Middleton, 1984). The Black community by this time could take no more. Inequitable teacher salaries, limited funding for students, deteriorating school buildings and overall poor conditions prompted a litany of court cases, filed in state courts. Most asserted that the separate but equal doctrine, in place since Plessy, denied Black students the equal protection under the law guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. The issue finally reached the U.S. Supreme Court in 1952.

The now famous case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka I, (1954) actually addressed four cases that originated in the state courts of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. All four lawsuits shared a common legal question—the contention that segregated public schools are not equal, thus violating the Fourteenth Amendment (Ducat & Chase, 1983). In 1954, following a rehearing of the 1952 argument, the Supreme Court agreed with the plaintiffs. The Justices ruled unanimously that “the segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race...does deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities” (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 1954). In this overturning of the 1896 Plessy decision, the Court concluded that a separate but equal doctrine has no place in public education.

In a follow-up rendering (known as Brown II), regarding implementation of desegregation, the Court ordered states to begin complying with the Brown I decision promptly and in a reasonable manner (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka II, 1955). This vague directive allowed some Southern states to prevent the desegregation of their schools for the next 14 years (Kluger, 1976).

Effects of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, (1954/1955)

The delaying tactics employed by some state governors to avoid the federal desegregation orders are now legendary. In Arkansas, Governor Orval Faubus ordered in state militia to prevent a small group of Black students from entering Little Rock's Central High School. Jimmie Davis, governor of Louisiana, closed down the public schools in New Orleans for several months in protest of the orders. In Mississippi and Alabama, defiant state governments enacted a variety of strategic legislation (Bartley, 1969; Dye, 1971). Alabama's governor George Wallace's simple response to desegregation was a simple, "Never!" (Harkey, 1967). Nevertheless, desegregation did occur. In 1965, the federal government created Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The legislation threatened to cut off federal aid to any states refusing to integrate its public schools (Crain, 1967). To avoid sanctions, the final holdout states of Mississippi and Louisiana, began implementing the federal compliance in its remaining racially segregated systems. In some Louisiana parishes, school boards attempted to keep Black male students and White female students from interacting by establishing

schools according to gender (C.D. Johnson, personal communication, February 24, 2000). Other parishes tried to delay the inevitable by offering a “school choice” plan that allowed Black and White students to attend any school in the district (“Education Needs,” 1968). These tactics and others with similar motives were challenged in federal court. By 1971, all Southern school systems were in compliance with the Brown decision (Dye, 1971).

Impact of Desegregation on the Black Educator

After years of legal battles, equal opportunity for Black and White students alike was finally achieved. The dreams of such visionaries as W.E.B. Dubois, Booker T. Washington, Carter G. Woodson, and Mary McLeod-Bethune had been realized—or so it seemed. As the final restraints of *de jure* segregation fell away and the all-Black schools began closing their doors, a startling realization began to emerge. During the period in which the dual school systems were disassembled, the number of school districts generally decreased. But while Black students integrated the formerly all-White schools, few of their former principals, superintendents and classroom teachers did the same (Crain, 1967). In many areas where Black institutions were dismantled, so was one of the Black community’s most valuable resources—its educational leaders. Black teacher associations nationwide rallied together to protect members from the “desegregation fallout” (Middleton, 1984). Despite their efforts, literally thousands of teachers were displaced. Black personnel from all areas of the

field (e.g., classroom teachers, coaches, band directors, administrators, etc.) were pressured to resign, refused new contracts, or were fired outright (Hooker, 1970; Middleton, 1984; Smith & Smith, 1973). While some of the larger metropolitan schools were required to maintain staff quotas, most rural districts were not. In six Southern states, between the years 1968 and 1970, 1072 Black educators lost their jobs. This occurred at a time when an additional 5575 White teachers and administrators were hired. The number of Black principals in North Carolina alone fell from 620 to 170 in just three years (Coffin, 1980; Hooker, 1970; Mercer, 1973).

Of the faculty absorbed into the White school districts, many were not permitted to interact with White students, often out of fear of parental backlash. Instead of receiving teaching assignments, these “crossover” teachers were demoted to positions ranging from hall monitor or textbook clerk to clerical assistant (Buxton & Prichard, 1976; Foster, 1990;1997; Hooker, 1970). In districts where non-White educators were allowed in the classroom, it was not always as the lead teacher. Some schools required Black teachers, regardless of their experience and/or education level, to serve as aides to White teachers. Often, only the “best and brightest” of the educators from the Black school systems were allowed to teach their own classes, free from administrative interference (Culbertson, 1972; Foster, 1990; 1997; Hooker, 1970). Another method used to curtail the number of crossover teachers in the newly integrated systems was the assignment of teaching duties outside of the teaching discipline. For example, an English teacher could be required to teach a math

class, then fired for “incompetence” when she faced difficulties (Hooker, 1970). One explanation given for the exploitation and manipulation of Black educators during this transitional period was the fact that the same individuals who so bitterly resisted school desegregation were now responsible for overseeing the integration process (Braxton & Prichard, 1976). Those educators who were fortunate enough to survive the fallout, faced additional frustrations as their Black teacher associations were forced to merge with the White organizations. While some Black teachers welcomed the union, others saw it as further manipulation since most of the leadership positions within the newly merged associations were held by Whites (Middleton, 1984).

Lingering Effects of Desegregation on the Black Educator

During the early years following the integration of public schools, the number of Black educators continued to decline. As other career opportunities arose, fewer students pursued the teaching profession, further exacerbating the situation. By the 1980's, many considered the Southern Black teacher an “endangered species” (Gordon, 1997; Holmes, 1990; Mercer, 1982).

Most people today view desegregation as a civil rights victory, and in many ways it has been. It equalized teacher salaries, gave Black students access to better-funded school systems, and ended the apartheid system in the South. But the victory was not a bloodless coup. Although the U.S. Supreme Court had the power to eliminate state-mandated segregation, it could not (by its

own admission) eliminate the racial prejudice and attitudes that guided the policy for so many years. As a result, approximately 38,000 Black teachers and administrators in 17 states lost their jobs in the years between 1954 and 1968. (Holmes, 1990). For these individuals, school desegregation was a double-edged sword. Colleges and universities are presently trying to repair some of the damage done to the profession by developing recruitment strategies aimed at minority students. The goal is to create more diversity within teacher education programs. As a new millennium begins, the number of Black students pursuing education degrees remains extremely low (Choy, 1993; Su, 1993). Recent studies of Black classroom teachers revealed that roughly two-thirds of this group do not plan to make teaching a life-long career (Foster, 1994; 1997; Gordon, 1997; King, 1993; Su, 1997). The lack of Black educators is now characterized as a crisis by educational reformers and many see little hope for its resolution (King, 1993). One 1982 report indicated that "the field of teaching is in extreme danger of becoming racially exclusive and elite" (Mercer, 1982). Indeed, current figures show the teaching force in the United States to be almost 90% White (Banks, 1994; King, 1993; Choy, 1993). Louisiana, specifically, has a Black student population of nearly 48%, yet its classroom teaching force is less than 26% Black (Louisiana Department of Education Annual Financial and Statistical Report, 1997).

Alas, this crisis has not gone unnoticed by researchers. Studies cover a wide range of related issues, and include a variety of agendas. Some of the research literature defines the severity of the crisis by illustrating the importance

of Black educators as role models (e.g., Alexander & Miller, 1989; Irvine, 1988; Shade, 1983) or as providers of a culturally relevant pedagogy (e.g., Foster, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Lee-Thomas, 1995). Other studies explore possible reasons for the statistical decline. These include a lack of perceived reward in the teaching profession (Su, 1997), a negative image associated with being a teacher (Gordon, 1997; Foster, 1990; 1994), and the complexity of certification standards and competency exams (e.g., Coley & Goertz, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Dilworth, 1984; Mercer, 1982; Smith, 1988).

Statement of the Problem

Few studies to date have attempted to identify whether or not the changing demographics among educators have created a racial preference among high school students for their teachers. If students are never given an opportunity to personally interact with a Black teacher, what perceptions do they form regarding this particular group of professionals? As schools begin to re-segregate due in part to the establishment of all-White private schools, and the number of Black teachers decreases, so does the likelihood that a student will have a Black educator during the K-12 years. Studies show that it is not unique for students today to progress through the public school system, even higher education, having encountered only White instructors (Hendrix, 1992; Hooper, 1997). Homogeneous educational experiences (all-White faculties) do little to challenge any racially prejudiced notions students may hold regarding Blacks in

the teaching field. Arguably, limited numbers of Black faculty members may also translate into fewer role models for Black students.

At issue is racial preference, the reason for racial preferences, perpetuation of stereotypes, manifestation of prejudice, environmental influences, among other things. This study set out only to identify whether or not racial preferences for teachers exist among high school students. Any attempt to address all of the complexities associated with this area is beyond the scope of this work. If trends emerged from the data, attempts to define them were made. Therefore, this study served a preliminary function in this research area, a mere corner of the big picture.

Statement of Theoretical Framework

Most research is enhanced through firm placement within a theoretical framework. Discussion of a closely related model or theory can provide deeper insight into the issue at hand. The theoretical framework for this research project is that of racial identity theory. This theoretical construct originated in the field of counseling psychology, and there are several models that support it. The underlying principle of racial identity theory is that how one views him/herself racially greatly affects how he/she views individuals of another race. Since most racial identity theorists believe that Black and White individuals undergo different processes in becoming more racially conscious (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1984, 1995; Rowe, et al., 1994, Ponterotto, 1988), researchers in the counseling field

have developed race-specific models to explain this phenomena. As each model takes a unique approach in describing how people develop a defined racial identity, not all models complement with one another philosophically. It is notable that a researcher's (or counselor's) alignment with one model over another limits conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations to the ideology and perspective of the chosen model.

Although several racial identity theorists were available to me, the works of W.E. Cross (1971; 1995) on Black identity development and Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) involving White racial consciousness were chosen to better inform this study. I believe that the clarity and applicability of each model to this project makes this an appropriate selection.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Racial integration of public schools in the United States brought together groups of people with differing social and cultural experiences. For many students and teachers it was the first time significant contact was made with members of the “opposite race.” Issues surrounding these early cross-cultural encounters gave rise to a multifaceted body of literature. Ethnographies, experimental design studies, psychological measures, commentaries, even predictions, emerged to explore the new racial configurations. With each passing year of the desegregation era, new educational research areas captured the public’s attention. These research areas included attitudes regarding desegregation, individual differences, busing, and minority student achievement. Very few of the emerging studies addressed the impact that desegregation and the subsequent integration had on student attitudes toward their teachers, especially those of a different race. None of the studies reviewed for this project specifically asked students if they had a preference for teacher race.

Immediately following the creation of unitary (fully integrated) schools, much of the literature focused on the desegregation process itself. Some studies reported on general attitudes of students, teachers, administrators, even parents (e.g., Collins, 1979; McConahay, 1978; Stones, 1973). Other researchers conducted ethnographies to gain a better understanding of certain school climates (e.g., Clement, Eisenhart, & Harding, 1979; Crain, Mahrand, & Narot, 1982). The study of individual differences (IQ, achievement, likes and dislikes)

between Black and White students was also a popular research area. As integration efforts intensified, other logistic issues took center stage. Busing programs aimed at achieving racially balanced school districts created a great deal of controversy in some areas, becoming an educational “hot button”. Related studies soon emerged (e.g., Kelley, 1974; Lord, 1975; Weidman, 1975). When it was discovered that families were moving to the suburbs to avoid forced busing, literature appeared in education journals and texts regarding the “White flight” phenomena (e.g., Armor, 1978; Coleman, Kelly, & Moore, 1975; Lord, 1975; Pettigrew & Green, 1976; Rossell, 1975).

Minority student achievement began replacing logistic issues of desegregation as a research focus in the middle to late 1970s. Questions arose with respect to how well the nation’s public schools were meeting the needs of Black (and other minority) students in the multicultural classroom (e.g., Jencks & Brown, 1972; Pettigrew, 1974; St. John, 1975). Some studies specifically examined White teachers’ effectiveness in the integrated classroom (Green & Griffore, 1978), while others investigated White teacher attitudes regarding their minority students (Adenika & Berry, 1976). By this time, the nation’s shortage of Black educators was painfully obvious.

Throughout the following decade, hypotheses were generated that Black students need a culturally relevant pedagogy in order to succeed academically, and it was argued that the White teacher paradigm may be biased against Black students (e.g., Cornbeth & Korth, 1980; Felice, 1981; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Sleeter, 1993). Studies continued to surface that examined a possible

relationship between minority student achievement and the number of minority educators in the nation's public schools (e.g., Carpenter & Fleishman, 1987; Ford & Harris, 1996; Foster, 1990).

Currently, race-related educational literature covers a wide array of topics. The ever-increasing ethnic diversity in the United States has prompted many new research fields. Members of the education profession have even witnessed a resurrection of logistics issues due to the resegregation of some (northern and southern) school districts in recent years (Orfield, et al., 1997; Schofield, 1991). Some Black scholars have recommended a return to the dual school systems of yesteryear in order to restore and improve the Black educational community (as cited in King, 1993).

Given the evolution of educational research in the post-segregation period, it is surprising that so few examinations have been done regarding the effects desegregation has had on student attitudes, with respect to teacher race. Little is known as to whether or not student racial preferences exist. There was once a time in Southern areas when White parents refused to allow their children to be in a Black teacher's classroom (Foster, 1990). Of the few issue-related studies conducted, results indicate that a number of White students themselves had some difficulty adjusting to a Black teacher (Braxton & Bullock, 1972; Clement, Eisenhart & Harding, 1979; Culbertson, 1972). How far has the Deep South progressed in how the Black educator is viewed by the White sector? Where do today's Black and White students stand on these issues? Specifically, do Black and White high school students have a preference regarding the race of

their teacher(s)? It is a topic that needs to be explored. The current amount of literature addressing the issue of students' preferences for teacher race is inadequate.

Closely Related Studies

The literature review for educational research related to students' racial preferences yielded four studies. The following is a discussion of each study's findings.

In their 1972 study, Braxton and Bullock examined the beliefs of White and Black students and teachers in rural Georgia, in relation to teacher impartiality. The initial data collection took place in early spring 1970, prior to the integration of the school district. The second interview session occurred in late fall, 1970, following the elimination of the area's dual school system. When asked, in the spring, if they believed teachers of the "other race" would be impartial come the fall term, 52% of the White students surveyed said "yes", while 59% of the Black students polled said "yes." Participating teachers were asked if they could be impartial to students of the "other" race. Ninety-three percent of White teachers replied in the affirmative, but only 65% of the Black teachers said "yes." (The authors suggested candidness, or even bitterness, due to years of discrimination on behalf of the Black instructors, as possible reasons for the lower percentage.) Eight months later, following integration, students were asked to evaluate their treatment by teachers of another race. Only 27% of the White students in the study believed they were treated fairly, while 51% of the

Black students felt they were treated fairly. The researchers offered that the higher number of White student complaints of teacher bias could be due to the students' negative expectations, or that Black students may accept teacher bias as a way of life. In this second phase of the study, the teachers, who incidentally comprised a smaller sample than in the spring, were asked about discipline problems, rather than how they had actually treated their students. None of the Black teachers reported an increase of discipline problems. Twenty-five percent of the White teachers noted a higher level of classroom incidents and attributed them to the Black students. The researchers noted that of the White teachers who previously expressed they would show impartiality, some might have been simply providing a socially desirable response. Once in the teaching situation, the true stereotypes and prejudices may have surfaced. Braxton and Bullock also commented that cultural and language differences between the two races could be a factor, suggesting that the White teachers in the sample found it harder to adjust to the newly integrated situation. This 1972 study concluded, "the preponderance of negative evaluations expressed by white students of black instructors bodes ill. Teachers who are sharply criticized by their pupils for being unfair may be less effective in the classroom" (p.46). The authors admitted that only time would tell if the attitudes expressed in this study were fleeting, (due to the transitional period of desegregation) or permanent.

Another 1972 study, also conducted in the South, took place in a South Carolina unitary (fully integrated) school. Using the perspective of junior high school students, Packer and Freeze researched how a three-course sequence of

specialized training affected teacher openness. All 30 teachers (20 White and 10 Black) were involved in racial cross-teaching at the time of the study, yet most were new to the integrated classroom. The students participating in the experiment (of which 35% were Black and 65% White) were asked to assess their teachers' openness using the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (Packer & Freeze, 1972). A comparison of the "before and after" data yielded no significant difference in instructional delivery among the teachers evaluated. A notable trend, however, was that "students perceived their Black teachers' *behavior, understanding, unconditional regard, and congruence* as equally well as compared to White teachers. It appears that race did not affect the students' feelings about their teachers"(p.59).

Buxton and Prichard (1976) took a different approach in explaining how students perceive Black school officials. The authors disclosed up front how racial prejudice often pervaded in the mechanics of desegregation. They sought to record the experiences of several Black school principals, using a qualitative method. The majority of the participants reported that the desegregation of public schools greatly damaged the image and authority of Black school officials. One interviewee stated he was forbidden from disciplining White students, while another recalled White teachers and parents who expressed discomfort over Blacks in positions of authority. Several principals described breaches in the chain of command when disagreement arose among the faculty. Rather than discuss problems with the Black principal, White teachers often sought relief directly from the district's White superintendent. Despite the negative accounts,

some participants conveyed a sense of hope for the future. For example, one principal shared the following incident:

I know a superintendent who made the mistake of assigning a white child whose parents were members of the KKK to a black teacher. He was afraid the Klans were going to attack him. He got a call from the mother of the child, and she told him, 'You put my child in that colored teacher's class, and she has learned more under her in three weeks than she learned in three years in that white teachers' room (p.12).

Although the study did not directly measure student perception of Black principals, and the interviewees accounts are naturally subject to bias, it provided insight into how some Black principals in the newly integrated South perceived their own professional image. It also revealed how some White individuals interacted with a Black authority figure.

In her 1995 research project, Katherine Hendrix asserted that despite having a tremendous impact on the American school system, Black professors are seldom the focus of study. Hendrix, a Black university professor, openly discussed her own race and its impact on conducting a survey of college students' perceptions of the influence of race on professor credibility. Representing the field of speech communication, Hendrix based her study on ego-involvement and perceived source competence theories. Six male professors, three Black and three White, were purposefully chosen for the qualitative project. Female educators were excluded to remove the gender variable. The age, teaching experience, and departmental affiliation of the participants also contributed to their selection. Hendrix used three methods to collect data: non-participant observation, questionnaire, and student interview.

This triangulation addressed the research question regarding professor credibility. The in-class observation of the professors' classes helped Hendrix generate questions that were later used in the student interviews. A researcher-designed questionnaire was administered to the several hundred students in the classes, of which only 28 agreed to discuss their responses in an interview. Based on the various forms of collected data, Hendrix discovered that most of the students believed Black professors may find it difficult to establish credibility among students, especially when teaching outside a race-related subject. They also expressed a belief that Black professors probably had to work harder than their White counterparts to achieve academically in Anglicized educational systems. In sum, Hendrix found that Black professors' competencies were questioned more often than that of Whites.

In another study conducted on a college campus, Hooper (1997) asked students to discuss how they viewed their Black high school teachers regarding their credibility and effectiveness as instructors. An open-ended questionnaire was used, designed to capture students' actual experiences with a Black educator, as well as hypothetical experiences. Only a small portion of the nearly 300 participants had ever been the pupil of a Black teacher (at any level of their education). Among this group, most found their Black teachers credible based on their teaching ability and what participants perceived as honesty, expertness, and communication skills. Those participants with no experience as the student of a Black teacher also answered the questionnaire. In large part, they "imagined" Black teachers to be credible based on instructional ability. Several

of these positive (yet hypothetical) evaluations noted that a Black high school teacher would be as credible as any White teacher would. The researcher noted that this type of response aligns closely with the concept of institutional racism, explaining that the respondents assumed a “White standard of credibility” against which they measured the single Black educator.

From the Counseling Field

At the height of the Civil Right Movement in the 1960’s, it became apparent to many researchers in the field of counselor education that studies must be done to address the shifting racial attitudes in the country. Due to this, the counseling field has yielded a great deal of literature related to racial preference. Acknowledging that race is a salient issue in the client/counselor relationship, several studies focused on the question of racial preference of client for counselor (e.g., Banks, Berenson, & Carkhuff, 1967; Bryson & Cody, 1973; Burrell & Rayder, 1971; Cimboic, 1972; Jackson & Kirschner, 1973; Vontress, 1971). Of particular interest was whether or not Black clients could be served effectively by White counselors. The myriad of investigations conducted in this area produced inconsistent findings. Some reports indicated Black clients had no preference for counselor race. Others showed White counselors to be an obstacle to Black clients in the counseling process. Jackson and Kirschner (1973) addressed this issue when they pointed out that many researchers of the time paid no attention to Black self-perception. Instead, they presumed that all

Black individuals possessed the same attitudes and experiences regarding their own racial awareness.

Black Racial Identity Development

Parham and Helms (1981) expounded upon Jackson and Kirschner's assessments. They explored the previous work and discovered that researchers had not distinguished between the clients' "racial self-designation" and their "racial identity." Parham & Helms defined racial identity as "a person's beliefs or attitudes about his or her own race," and racial self-designation as "one's racial group membership" (p.251). Their 1981 study was the first to use racial identity as an independent variable in exploring client preference for race of counselor. Using the Cross (1971) model of Nigrescence, which outlined the stages by which Black individuals develop their racial identity, Parham and Helms found a significant relation between racial identity levels and counselor race preference. Clients with a low self-concept of their Blackness were more inclined to prefer a White counselor to a Black one. Clients who identified more strongly with advanced levels of Cross's Black identity model were less likely to prefer a White counselor. In other words, degrees of racial preference varied among the sample of Black clients. Such within-group differences had not been considered in prior research. Parham and Helms concluded that further investigations into Black clients' preference for counselor race should be accompanied by a "psychological explanation and analysis of Black people's racial attitudes that emerges from a Black rather than a White frame of reference" (p.255).

Following Parham and Helms' suggestion, additional studies using the racial identity concept as an underlying framework began to appear. Drawing upon the early work of Black social scientists (e.g., Cross, 1971; Jackson, 1975; Thomas, 1971), researchers in the counseling field began formulating various aspects of a racial identity theory. In 1984 Helms presented a model, based on racial identity theory, designed to assist counselors in the cross-race and same-race counseling process. Her Black Racial Identity Model was created using Cross' 1971 work on Nigrescence, and from this she developed the Black Racial Identity Scale, designed to measure an individual's level of racial consciousness (Helms & Carter, 1991). In addition to Black identity, Helms focused on the need for a theoretical model that addressed White identity. The result was Helms' White Racial Identity Model (1984; 1990; 1994; 1995). It will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Banks (1981) and Gay (1984) have also developed racial identity models that focus on Black Americans. Both theorists' proposals are stage models, purporting that movement toward racial identity development is a sequential process. Dizard (1970) proposed a three-part typology that describes individual character traits associated with racial identity development.

White Racial Identity Development

One of the first researchers to illustrate how racism is a leading issue in the socialization of Whites in America was Rita Hardiman (1982). By studying the autobiographies of White people who possessed advanced levels of

nonracist identity, Hardiman formulated five White developmental stages (Naivete-lack of social consciousness, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition, and Internalization). The Hardiman model has been criticized for its limitations. Its detractors believe that it lacks support from empirical research and is bound historically to the period in which the autobiographies were written (Sue & Sue, 1999). However, most agree that the model set the stage for development of White racial consciousness.

Helms first introduced her White Racial Identity Model in 1984 and has revisited it upon several occasions (1990; 1994; 1995). To test her model, Helms developed the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS)(1990), which has been used by numerous researchers in the counseling psychology field (Pope-Davis, Vandiver, & Stone, 1999). It was the first instrument generally accepted to measure White identity (Behrens, 1997). Many believe that Helms is the most influential of the leading White identity theorists (Block & Carter, 1996; Sue & Sue, 1999) due to the sophistication and ease of application of her model. In response to critics(Behrens & Yu, 1995; Tokar, & Swanson. 1991) who feel differently, Helms updated her work in 1995. One of the major changes was the elimination of the term “stages” to describe the areas of White racial awareness. She replaced it with the less rigid term, “statuses.” Still underlying Helms’ theory is the notion that White Americans are socialized to believe they are superior to members of other racial groups. To achieve a healthy racial identity, they must successfully progress through two phases of development, each containing three racial identity statuses (Helms, 1995; Helms & Cook, 1999). The first phase

involves the Abandonment of Racism, and contains the statuses of Contact, Disintegration, and Reintegration. Phase Two, Defining a Nonracist, includes the statuses of Pseudo-Independence, Immersion/Emersion and Autonomy. To help the White individual progress through the model, each status has a dominant information processing strategy (IPS). Whenever a White person experiences discomfort due to a race-related issue, they may employ the described strategy to resolve it.

For many years, Helms dominated the field of racial identity theory. Only recently have additional contributions been made to this research area. Sue and Sue (1990); Ponterotto (1988); Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Bordovsky (1991); and Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) are among those who have proposed their own White racial identity models. The Rowe, et al. (1994) White Racial Consciousness model is gaining attention due to the development of the Oklahoma Racial Attitude Scale-Preliminary Form (ORAS-P). Choney and Behrens (1996) created the ORAS-P in order to examine the model's construct validity. Preliminary studies have shown that the ORAS-P and the WRIAS both contain valid psychometric properties (Behrens, 1997; Helms, 1997; Pope-Davis; Vandiver, Stone, 1999)

Counselor Preference Studies

As mentioned earlier, the WRIAS and the BRIAS have been used extensively in recent counseling studies. Most researchers in counseling psychology no longer assume that clients share the same racial identities. More

attention is now paid to within-group differences, especially with respect to client preferences for therapist race. An in-depth analysis of studies that addressed this topic yielded several investigations that informed the current research project. A discussion of two of these studies follows.

Bernstein, Wade, and Hoffmann (1987) set out to investigate the connection between students' race and their preferences for counselor race, age, and experience regarding nine potential client issues. At the time, no other study had included these particular variables in a singular investigation. Three research questions were formulated for the project:

1. Is there a relationship between client race and clients' preference for counselor race?
2. Do clients' preferences for counselors of the same race vary by the type of problem to be discussed?
3. What is the relative strength of clients' preferences for counselor race when compared to their preferences for counselor sex, age, and experience?

Students enrolled at a large mid-Western university were asked to complete a Counselor Preference Scale (CPS) that contained 36 items. (The sample was drawn from groups of students who passed by a polling station near the campus library.) Race, age, sex, and level of experience preferences for a counselor were measured. In total, 169 students (undergraduates and graduates) participated. One hundred were women and 69 were men. Seventy-four of the participants were Black and the remaining 95 were White. The CPS offered three responses to each item, categorically: *White counselor preferred*, *Black counselor preferred*, or *no preference*. Overall, a majority of Blacks and

Whites preferred Black counselors for the nine client concerns addressed. The authors postulated that the White students surveyed might have preferred Black counselors due to the large Black population at the university where the research was conducted. Social desirability was offered as a reason as well, especially since a Black female collected data. This illustrates a major weakness with design's study, given that the researchers failed to control for this racial variable.

Helms and Carter (1991) examined whether a client preferred a counselor based on similarities in race, or demographics. The report detailed the findings of two separate studies. The first used a White sample and the assumptions from White racial identity theory, and the second involved a Black sample, with assumptions drawn from Black racial identity models. In the first study, 183 White college students (124 females and 59 males) were asked to complete the 50-item White Racial Identity Scale, a Counselor Preference Scale, and a demographic information sheet. The researchers then sought to determine how the participants' levels of racial identity and their demographic profiles affected their preferences for a counselor. They discovered that, for the most part, the White college students preferred counselors of the same race and gender as themselves. This preference was predicted by their own racial identity attitudes and gender more than their self-reported social class (p. 453). In the second study, the procedure was the same, yet the sample consisted of 76 Black college students (52 female and 24 male) and the Black Racial Identity Attitude Scale was the instrument used to assess racial identity. For these participants, findings showed that their racial identity attitudes "tended to be predictive of their

preference for Black counselors” (p.453). Demographic variables played a significant role in Black men’s selection of White male counselors. Those of a lower socioeconomic level tended to make this choice. There was also a relation between participants who held more advanced (internalized) racial attitudes and preferences for White male counselors. In their discussion, Helms and Carter asserted that the study’s findings might indicate that racial identity is a better predictor of client preference for counselor than demographics. They offered that “ counselor racial characteristics may be superordinate constructs in respondent’s perceptual schemata that may override the effects of other visible characteristics such as gender” (p. 456).

Other Research Applications of Racial Identity Theory

Duncan and Pryzwansky (1993) explored the impact of race and consultant (counselor) orientation style on Black teacher preference for and predictions of effectiveness regarding school counselors. All participants (elementary school teachers) placed high on the Racial Attitude Identity Scale used to measure their level of racial identity. Duncan and Pryzwansky found no significant preference for consultant race (Black or White), but did find that the teachers in the study preferred the “instrumental” consultation style.

Ladany, Brittan-Powell, & Panu (1997) also utilized racial identity as a tool in their examination of “the influence of supervisory racial identity interaction and racial matching on the supervisory work alliance and supervisory multicultural competence” (p.284). Additional studies grounded in racial identity have

addressed the relationship between White racial identity attitudes and racism (Carter, 1990) and possible connections between womanist identity and racial identity development (Parks, Carter, & Gushue, 1996).

Theoretical Framework for this Study

As stated in Chapter One, research projects need a theoretical framework. Placing a topic of inquiry within a previously developed structure may allow the researcher to present the current findings more clearly. Racial identity theory seems the logical choice for a study examining student preferences for teacher race. Study of Black and White racial identity models can provide deeper insight into how students construct a sense of who they are racially. This racial awareness or lack thereof, inevitably affects how they view others. In a study examining racial preference, familiarity with this theory could shed light on collected data. Knowledge of the various stages of racial identity may enable the researcher to more clearly interpret questionnaire responses. The models can possibly inform the researcher of the respondent's worldview, in terms of racial consciousness.

Of the numerous racial identity models that have been proposed, the ones chosen to undergird this study are the Cross model (1995) based on the psychology of Nigrescence, and the White Racial Consciousness model developed by Rowe, et al. (1994). A detailed explanation of each follows.

The Cross Model

Cross' model of Nigrescence was first proposed almost 30 years ago, in 1971. The term Nigrescence refers to the psychological process through which Black individuals go to become aware of their racial identity (Cross, 1995). It has been used over the years to outline adult and adolescent identity development. Empirical research has revealed, however, that the 1971 model is out of step with the ever-changing experiences of most Black Americans. In light of this, Cross revisited his model to fill in any gaps. The following is a presentation of his revisions.

The Cross model consists of five stages, each of which characterize the psychological aspects, beliefs, emotions and behavioral styles of individuals who reside at that particular level of racial consciousness. These five stages are Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment.

One of the major changes Cross made to his original work is the expansion of the Pre-Encounter stage. In his revised 1995 model, Cross assumes that some Black Americans may not require Nigrescence. If they were born into a racially conscious environment, their socialization is perhaps more advanced, thereby lessening the need for rudimentary racial exploration. Cross also acknowledges that some Black individuals are secure in their sense of self, without a fully defined Black identity. For these people, fulfillment may come from other sources like religion or their career, and attention is not given to

Blackness. Given that these other things continue to provide the individual with stability and meaning, a journey through Nigrescence will probably not take place. They will simply remain at the Pre-Encounter stage. Other persons, Cross retains, will most likely travel toward a more Afrocentric identity (1995).

Stage One: Pre-Encounter

The Pre-Encounter stage contains six components that describe people who hold corresponding attitudes. The first component references attitudes toward race. Individuals at this lowest level of Nigrescence may be totally oblivious to racial issues and how they affect them. Others may view their Blackness only as a hindrance, and feel stigmatized by their race. At the extreme, some may despise Black people, Black culture, and everything connected with being Black. Cross explains that these views are actually in line with those of White racists. The second component of the Pre-Encounter stage is miseducation. Individuals in this stage are subject to Eurocentric curriculums that virtually ignore the contributions of Black Americans. Those on the receiving end of this do not challenge these worldviews, and may even adopt them as their own. They may question the abilities of Black professionals and leaders and may view Whites as more talented and basically superior. The Eurocentric Cultural Perspective component illustrates further how socialization in a society that denies the importance of Black art, literature, music, etc. can lead an individual to believe this genre is inferior to the more “classical” forms of expression. These attitudes may push them to choose Eurocentric ideals over

Afrocentric ones, rather than allowing him/her to appreciate them both equally. The fourth element of this first stage of Cross' model is "spotlight" or race image anxiety. This notion depicts a hypersensitivity that Black people at this stage may possess. With this, there is a general discomfort around White people and there is a fear of things that appear "too Black." For example, if a group of Black people talk loudly in public, the person with spotlight anxiety feels as if this reflects on him/her in a negative way, or confirms a stereotype in the eyes of Whites. In its extreme, Anti-Black Blacks believe the White-constructed stereotypes to be true. Assimilation-integration is another factor of the Pre-Encounter stage. Some Blacks may believe that their racial troubles would cease if only they were absorbed into the dominant White culture. They do not challenge White racist outlooks or comments for they do not see the complexities of the race problem. Instead they work to "fit in" and be accepted by Whites. The final characterization of a Pre-Encounter individual refers to their value structure and value orientation. These people may have well-developed value structures, as evidenced by church or political affiliations; but these organizations are not likely to have high race salience, therefore the members' value orientation is considered to be low. Social class does not bind the attitudes held within the Pre-Encounter stage, although this may affect how they are expressed. The variety of possible Pre-Encounter attitudes, shown among the six components of the stage, demonstrates the diversity of the contemporary Black American experience.

Stage Two: Encounter

According to Cross, those Black individuals at the Pre-Encounter stage possess a Pre-Encounter identity that has developed over years of socialization experiences. For them to move into the next stage of Nigrescence, they must encounter something that “catches them off guard” (p.105) and challenges the stability of their Pre-Encounter identity. This could be a single traumatic event or a series of events that occurs over a period of time. The Encounter must profoundly affect the individual for it to propel them into this second stage. An example may be a racist incident that victimizes the individual or exposure to Black cultural/historical materials that awakens his/her emotions. Anger, guilt, and confusion often result as the individual tries to make sense of the challenge to his/her worldview. It marks the beginning of the journey toward Nigrescence.

Stage Three: Immersion-Emersion

The third stage of Cross' model is considered to be the most turbulent one. Black individuals moving into this stage have committed themselves to a personal change. What lies ahead is unfamiliar to them and this transition period may be rather difficult. For some, the Black experience becomes all-important, and they need outward symbols of their awakening (African style of dress, hairstyles, flags). They immerse themselves in the Black culture, preferring Black literature, films, organizations. Some people with Encounter attitudes begin to view all things White as evil and oppressive, and may direct their rage

toward other Blacks, whom they view as “not Black enough.” Cross adds that new converts are often confrontational and blunt regarding their opinions and their early attempts to express their new worldviews “are too often laden with blatantly racist concepts” (p. 108). Often people in this stage engage defense mechanisms that serve as a psychological buffer against any actual or perceived racist situation. Taken to the extreme, deep hatred toward Whites can lead to a fixation at this stage, where the Black identity is based on the elimination of Whites, rather than the promotion of the Black perspective.

As individuals begin to emerge from Stage 3, their emotional turbulence begins to subside. Personal maturity and perhaps interactions with Black individuals who hold higher level racial identity attitudes assist people through this transition. They begin to better understand Black issues and activities and start internalizing them. These things indicate that the new identity is taking root. Individuals who do not successfully work through the Immersion-Emersion stage may become fixated and remain there, or allow the old Pre-Encounter attitudes to resurface and they consequently may regress to the former stage. They may also remove themselves from the Nigrescence process temporarily, choosing to return at a later time, while others feel positive enough about their newly formed identities that they accept this level and turn to other life issues they believe to be more important.

Stage Four: Internalization

People who reach the Internalization stage often are at peace with themselves, as opposed to the inner-conflict of the previous stages. As one internalizes their Black identity, Blackness extends beyond the personal realm. Thinking becomes deeper and more sophisticated and the person is less defensive. Race takes on a much higher importance in daily life and this increasing race salience can manifest itself in a variety of ways. According to Cross, once Blackness is internalized, it lends itself to three specific operations in the daily life of the “internalized” individual:

1. To serve as a psychological defense against a stress-inducing racist society.
2. To provide a sense of purpose, meaning and affiliation.
3. To bridge and make connections with experiences outside of the Black world (especially with White society, friendships, organizations) (p.117).

Stage Five: Internalization-Commitment

Cross states that individuals who reach the fifth and final stage of Nigrescence are dedicated to sharing their personal sense of racial awareness with the rest of the community. Often these people spend a great deal of time and effort organizing projects and functions that demonstrate their level of commitment. For many this level of dedication becomes a way of life.

Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's White Racial Consciousness Model

Upon presenting the White Racial Consciousness Model, Rowe, et al. (1994) questioned several aspects of extant White identity models, especially their basic assumptions. Helms (1995) and others (e.g., Hardiman, 1982; Ponterotto, 1988) grounded their theories in the oppression-adaptive framework that underlies the development ideologies of non-Whites. Rowe and his colleagues criticized this approach as incongruous to how Whites establish a racial identity. They argue that since White identity development does not occur in relation to oppression and stereotypes, that development theory constructed for people of color is inapplicable. According to Rowe, et al., Whites do not require the same type of journey one sees in the Black identity models. Another criticism of the existing models is that they do not address White identity as a specific construct. The statuses and stages presented in other models discuss the White individual's progress in relation to their views of people of color, not the White individual's personal development. Rowe and his colleagues also believe that these models assume that the White individual has no racial identity at all prior to moving through these stages/statuses. Based on these criticisms, Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson created the White Racial Consciousness (WRC) model.

The creators of WRC define White racial consciousness as "the characteristic attitudes held by a person regarding the significance of being White, particularly in terms of what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership" (Rowe, et al., 1995, p.225). The authors explain

that while some attitudes are formed through experiences, observation is more often the source. Whenever an individual encounters an opinion or situation that contradicts a previously acquired attitude or belief, he/she must somehow resolve the incongruity. Following the principles of cognitive dissonance, Rowe and his colleagues believe that how an individual resolves this conflict within their cognitive schema, depends on how they were socialized, their learning histories, and their inborn attributes. The authors purport that White peoples' attitudes regarding non-Whites follow this same process, defining their racial consciousness. In their seven-part model, Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson described the types or categories of White racial consciousness in terms of exploration of racial issues and commitment to some position about racial concerns (1994). The WRC model is unlike Cross' work, in that it is not a stage model that promotes linear progression. It is, rather, a typology that describes racial attitudes that White individuals form over time. The following is a presentation of the WRC model.

Unachieved White Racial Consciousness

White individuals, who are not fully aware of their racial identity, are considered to be "unachieved" in this endeavor. The WCR model places three types of attitudes within the unachieved domain, Avoidant, Dependent, and Dissonant. White people who express avoidant type attitudes simply avoid the issue of race. They typically have low levels of concern for members of minority groups and deny complex racial problems exist. The second type of attitude that

underscores unachieved racial consciousness is Dependent. Whites who hold dependent attitudes base their thoughts and belief systems regarding racial issues on those of a significant, influential person in their lives. Rather than having an opinion of their own, the authors explain, they merely mimic someone else's. Young people's viewpoints often reflect that of their family members, but sometimes adults turn to others for guidance on how to feel about issues.

Dissonant type attitudes complete the unachieved section in the WRC model.

Whites who fit this category are often in transition. They are usually uncertain as to how they feel racially due to a recent event that challenged a previously held belief. There may exist an element of inner conflict as they sort through the new feelings. This cognitive dissonance may encourage the individual to seek more information and could lead to a change in attitude and increased racial consciousness.

Achieved White Racial Consciousness

The four types of attitudes, which typify those who have achieved a racial consciousness, are Dominative, Conflictive, Reactive, and Integrative.

Individuals who believe White Americans are superior to all minority groups express dominative attitudes. Much of their information regarding non-Whites is based upon derogatory stereotypes, and view minority crime levels, poverty and low academic achievement levels as confirmation of the stereotypes. Rowe, et al. (1994) assert that they fail to acknowledge past and present discrimination or historical disadvantage as a culprit. Individuals who hold dominative attitudes

tend to view successful minorities as anomalies. This type of White racial consciousness is sometimes expressed through negative direct behavior, such as verbal or physical abuse. It is also seen in indirect behaviors where minorities are harmed as a result. Some individuals are more passive in their expressions, such as avoiding public association with minorities, unless their own dominant role is apparent. They may view their White attitudes as normal and reflective of “the way things are,” but not racist. Most of the people who hold dominative attitudes react to forced interaction or competition with minority groups with anger, fear and hostility (Rowe, et al.,1994).

The second attitude type within the achieved domain, Conflictive, includes Whites who demonstrate outward opposition to racial discrimination. These same individuals also tend to oppose governmentally sanctioned programs aimed at reducing racial discrimination. The authors believe the basic American values of equality and individualism may be responsible for this dichotomy. The conflictive types are promoters of fairness, but they also believe one should make their own way in life. They may strive to appear nonracist, but more often their real feelings regarding other racial groups include indignation and fear.

Reactive type individuals express attitudes illustrating a reaction to the racial discrimination that White Americans perpetuate. Reactive Whites recognize White Americans’ role in the history of racial injustice and are alert to its ongoing realities. These individuals tend to “explain away” all of the social ills that plague some communities of color as the result of White racism and domination. There is little or no personal accountability assigned to community

members since deviant behavior is viewed as merely a means of survival.

Reactive Whites are often referred to as “well-meaning Whites” and they run the risk of over identifying with the group they are trying to better understand.

According to Rowe et al., their overtures may be interpreted as condescension.

While some Whites supplement their reactive attitudes with active, anti-discrimination efforts, others seem to hold these attitudes in order to relate conversationally with non-White friends, or to intellectualize racial issues with their White counterparts. Reactive type Whites often feel guilt or shame regarding their own racial group membership (dominant society) and may feel anger toward individuals whom they perceive as perpetrators of racism and oppression.

The final attitude type within the WRC model is the Integrative one. Whites who hold integrative racial attitudes have essentially integrated moral responsibility with knowledge of what will actually bring about change with respect to racial issues. They do not operate out of a sense of guilt, and possess an understanding of the complexities and sociopolitical realities that surround racial issues. These individuals are secure in their Whiteness and interact easily with people of color in social situations. Integrative types are fully engaged in the process of increasing their racial consciousness.

According to the models' creators, its design allows for movement between the statuses and subsequent types of White racial consciousness. This mobility results from one's life experiences. The authors assert that in order for a White individual to move from the unachieved status to one of the achieved

status attitudes, cognitive dissonance needs to occur. How this manifests itself among the four achieved status types depends upon subsequent life experiences. Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson also believe that movement among the four achieved status attitudes is not likely unless a conflicting experience prompts a search for resolution. This search may lead the individual to adopt a new set of beliefs, characteristic of a different attitude type. For example, a dissonant experience may cause an individual who formerly demonstrated integrative attitude type characteristics to adopt racial attitudes that are more reflective of the dissonant type of attitudes.

Pertinence of Racial Identity Theory to this Study

A common theme that runs throughout the newly emerging racial consciousness literature is the importance for counselors to “know thyself” prior to engaging in the multicultural counseling process (e.g., Helms & Cook, 1999; Sue & Sue, 1999; Ridley, 1995; Ivey, 1995). One could also propose that before a researcher examines the racial attitudes and preferences of others, that he/she first address his/her own racial identity consciousness. By placing this study within the framework of racial identity theory not only will I, as the researcher, be more self-aware, but I will also be better prepared to construct meaning from the research data. Open-ended surveys are designed to elicit attitudes, preferences, and general thoughts regarding certain issues. Knowledge of the Cross and WRC models will enable me to shed light on the responses.

The purpose of this research project is to determine whether or not racial preferences exist among Louisiana high school students regarding the race of their teachers. This study will in no way attempt to measure student racial identity, nor to apply the two previously discussed models in a systematic way. Rather, acquaintance with the models will enable me to loosely characterize the analyzed responses. Racial identity theory provides a set of recognized themes and terminology that can make data analysis and supposition more meaningful. The current study is also an exploration of the high school setting to see if future use of the psychometric instruments (i.e. ORIAS, WRIAS) currently offered by counseling psychologists is warranted in this research area. Helms (1995), considered a pioneer in racial identity development by her peers, believes that racial identity theory would indeed be useful in exploring the racial component of the teacher-student dyad.

3. METHODS

I designed this study to ascertain whether or not a selected sample of Louisiana high school students have a racial preference regarding their educators. Using an open-ended questionnaire, I posed questions that asked for characteristics that describe an effective classroom teacher, if a teacher can effectively teach a student of another race, whether or not a personal racial preference for teachers exists, and how other students may feel regarding teacher race. Participants indicated, through written response, their attitudes concerning these issues. Two “yes” or “no” questions completed the survey design, asking students if they had ever been the student of a Black or White teacher.

Subjects

The participants in this study were high school students attending one of four Louisiana public schools specifically chosen as a data collection site. The subjects were classified by their school districts as sophomores, juniors, or seniors at the time of survey administration (the 1999-2000 academic year). They ranged in age from 15 to 21 years old. All respondents in the study were volunteers. They received no extra-credit toward their academic work nor were they offered a tangible reward of any type for participating in the study.

Obtaining the Sample

The sampling logic employed was that of purposeful sampling (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). This type of sampling is done “to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon being studied” (p. 217). I sought high school students whom, due to the demographic realities of their school districts, may be information-rich sources regarding the research question. Using the Annual Financial and Statistical Report (Louisiana Department of Education [LDOE], 1997a), I determined which of the 66 school districts in the state had the highest Black student population, the highest White student population, and the most racially balanced (integrated) student population. These 66 districts are located within the 64 civil divisions of the State of Louisiana known as *parishes*. To determine the possibility of students having had a Black or White teacher I also studied the racial make-up of each school’s teaching staff. My statistical report search yielded five school districts for each of the desired student population categories. In many cases, the racial configuration of the schools’ faculties mirrored that of the student population.

I first contacted the parishes that best represented the racial outline of each category. Addresses, telephone numbers, and names of administrators of each site were obtained from the Louisiana School Directory (1997b). After confirming the accuracy and currency of the information, I mailed a letter to the superintendent of each school, requesting permission to conduct research in

his/her district. See Appendix A. Several stages of the approval-seeking process followed.

After two weeks, I placed follow-up telephone calls to each parish that had been mailed the introductory, approval-seeking letter. Ten school systems were included in this initial contact group. It was comprised of four predominately Black parishes, four predominately White parishes, and two racially balanced parishes. Two superintendents in the group denied the request immediately, leaving eight school districts to contact. Despite repeated attempts to contact two additional superintendents, my calls were not returned, so these schools were also dropped from consideration. All six remaining administrators on the initial list of selected schools expressed interest in the research project, and requested that a packet containing a copy of the survey and informed consent forms be mailed to them. Following this second stage of seeking access to the data collection sites numerous telephone exchanges took place between school administrators and myself. Over the course of these interactions, two more gatekeepers denied access to their parishes. Four school administrators eventually granted permission for the research project to take place.

The next stage involved gaining access to at least one high school within these school districts, since the superintendents' approval (in all cases but one) was conditional. The administrators clearly explained that the principals of each high school also had to grant permission for the survey to be administered. The largest of the four remaining parishes, located near the city of New Orleans, is predominately White. Although the assistant superintendent of schools granted

permission (see Appendix B), not one of the seven high school principals in the parish agreed to participate in the study. Reasons given for the refusals included lack of available classroom time, unwillingness to participate in research of any kind, and fear of community backlash due to the nature of the investigation.

After further rounds of negotiations with the other three school systems, I eventually obtained the purposeful sample used in this study. It should be noted that all names of the participating parishes, towns, high schools, and school personnel have been changed to provide anonymity to the research subjects. The use of pseudonyms also allows for free discussion of research procedure, analysis, and results. The original three data collection sites included predominately Black Riverside High School in Gold Parish, predominately White Central High School in Somerville Parish, and Lewis High School in Lexington Parish.

Data Collection Sites

Riverside High School (HS) is located in an isolated rural community of less than 3000 residents. The Gold Parish region had, at one time, one of the highest slave populations in the State of Louisiana. In 1850, the census records reported 8138 slaves among the total parish population of 9038 (Fontenot & Ziegler, 1987). The area today is still largely agricultural, and has a severely disadvantaged economical base. Nearly 64% of all Gold Parish children live

near or below the poverty level, the highest concentration of poverty in the State. (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1999). Riverside is one of two high schools in the Gold Parish School District. Of the Riverside student body, roughly 98% are Black. Most of the White children in the area attend local private schools. Despite the predominately Black student population, Riverside has one of the most racially integrated faculties in the state.

Central High School (HS) is also situated in a small, rural community. The town of Central came into existence as a logging camp around the turn of the 20th Century. Many European immigrants and their families settled in the area to take advantage of the boom in the timber industry. When the forest products market began to decline over the years, the town's population did as well, but some of the immigrant groups continued to live in the settlement. Their British and French cultural traditions became firmly established within many Somerville Parish communities (Louisiana Folklife Program, 1987). Several of these traditions still exist because the groups have remained relatively isolated. Despite the rich cultural diversity and employment opportunities of the surrounding metropolitan areas, many Somerville Parish residents prefer to live in the cohesive, homogeneous communities that began over 100 years ago. Central HS has the smallest student enrollment of the eight secondary schools in Somerville Parish. It has a 100% White student body, and there was only one Black teacher in their K-12 system during the 1999-2000 academic year.

Lewis High School (HS) is the largest of the original three data collection sites and is one of three high schools in Lexington Parish. In 1997, Lexington

reported a parish-wide White student population of approximately 2280 and a Black student population of nearly 2240 (Louisiana Department of Education, 1998). That same year there were 155 White teachers and 124 Black teachers in the school district. Lewis is located in the town of Fanfare, which has approximately 4200 residents. According to a recent narrative (Dundy, 1991), Fanfare has always been a “culturally complex” community. Included in its town history is a post-Civil War government that was predominately Black. During the Reconstruction era, the town’s large number of Black voters elected Black Fanfare residents to positions such as sheriff, school board member, and election commissioner. When federal troops left Lexington Parish in 1877, however, all Blacks were removed from their official positions and the White power structure was restored. Another historical footnote occurred in the late 1960’s, when the Lexington Parish schools finally desegregated. According to Fanfare residents, Fanfare chose to integrate only by gender. The idea, supposedly, was to keep Black male students from associating with White female students (C.D. Johnson, personal communication, February 24,2000). Continuous court battles brought about actual school integration around 1971. Despite the history of racial strife, Black and White Fanfare residents coexist today. According to Dundy (1991), differences are more accepted here than in other heterogeneous towns in the State.

What I did not realize until the day of data collection, is that the “coexistence” of Fanfare residents is no longer a truly integrated one. Despite what school statistics may indicate, the schools in Lexington parish are not

racially balanced. The high school campuses have in fact re-segregated over the last several years. The creation of all-White private academies, and the exodus of White students from Lewis to the parish's remaining two secondary schools have resulted in an 85 -90% Black student population on the Lewis HS campus. According to one Lexington Parish administrator, many White parents in the local community simply prefer to keep their children apart from their Black peers, resulting in an ongoing "White flight" (A. B. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2000).

The unexpected racial configuration of Lewis HS prompted a search for a truly integrated high school campus. In response I modified the original research design to include a fourth data collection site. Sierra High School in Douglass Parish met the necessary criteria. Approximately 550 Black students and 645 White students attended Sierra during the 1996-97 academic year. It's teaching staff is 65% White and 35% Black, making it more racially diverse than most Louisiana high schools of the same size (LDOE, 1997a). Sierra is located near three state-supported universities, one of which is a historically Black college. The town's resident population approaches 21,000 (Parish Profiles, 1997).

Research Instrument

I collected data using a self-designed, two-sided survey questionnaire. Part A of the survey contained demographic questions to identify the gender, age, grade level, and race of each respondent. The racial identification section

used descriptors suggested by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects (1997). Part B of the questionnaire contained a total of six questions. The first four were designed using an open-ended format to elicit unrestricted student response. The final two questions merely requested a “yes” or “no” response.

I sought input from a variety of Black and White individuals during the survey design process. Their perspectives and suggestions contributed to my choice of racial terminology and phrasing of questions included in the research instrument, and affirmed my decision to use high school-age participants.

The members of this informal, quasi-Delphi panel included two Black females who currently teach in a public middle school, and a White female who is a former high school teacher. It also consisted of two male university professors, one Black and the other White. All of these individuals currently live in, or have at one time resided, in Louisiana.

I spoke with each of these educators (either face-to-face or by telephone) on an individual basis, over the course of several weeks. The two university employees and the former classroom teacher advised me on the nomenclature used in the questionnaire. The terms “Black” and “White” were decided on rather than “African American” or “European American” due to the general acceptance of the former terms in the research area. The educators I consulted expressed the opinion that “Black” and “White” was most appropriate since respondents may view other terms as too political or too academic.

The two teachers who work with middle school students reviewed the survey for age-appropriateness. As middle school teachers, they offered that the open-ended nature of the questionnaire would be best suited to secondary level students. They expressed that middle school students may not possess the writing skills needed to convey their thoughts. In their opinion, high school students could better articulate their views using the open-ended format.

I wanted a survey that would allow for interaction between the respondents and myself. According to Bateson (1984), the words of a survey respondent convey information regarding their social world. Since the students in this study were selected primarily due to their specific social world context, the research instrument had to somehow access their perspectives. Bateson also contends that “no discussions of clarification regarding the researcher’s knowledge needs can occur between him and the informant. It must be communicated through the wording of the questions” (p.20). To ensure, therefore, that the survey would indeed yield the desired information, I conducted a pilot-test. See Appendix C.

Using a group of approximately 30 Black and White high school student volunteers from my home parish, the survey was tested for any obvious flaws. After completing the survey, the test subjects were asked to fill out an evaluation form containing questions regarding the clarity and overall presentation of the survey. The data I collected from this group of volunteers assured me of the questionnaire’s potential concerning response rate. The test subjects left very few questions blank. The provided responses were of adequate length and most

addressed the issues at hand (two or three included meaningless, off-subject comments). No one returned a negative evaluation form regarding the wording of any questions nor was the terminology used in the questionnaire challenged. After closer scrutiny of the survey's format, I made a personal decision to move the "Yes" and "No" questions to the end of the questionnaire, for simplicity. No other changes were made to research instrument following the pilot test. See Appendix D.

Federal policy requires that an Institutional Review Board (IRB) examine any university-affiliated research that involves human subjects. Prior to the pilot testing procedure, the University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects approved each item on the survey used in this study. See Appendix E. No revisions to the content of the survey were made following this approval. I also followed proper university protocol in gaining approval for the informed consent forms used in this research project. See Appendices F and G.

Procedure

Prior to the day data was collected from each site I took measures to ensure procedural consistency between the participating schools. Numerous telephone conversations took place with each campus principal to secure class times, the names of the classroom teachers involved, consent form status, and to finalize dates for survey administration. Each principal agreed that a sample could most easily be obtained among students taking a required course.

Classroom English teachers cooperated by setting aside instructional time to allow for the distribution of the questionnaire.

On the agreed-upon dates, I visited each school to administer the questionnaire. On each occasion, the building principal escorted me to the appropriate English class containing the potential research participants. The principal then introduced me to the classroom teacher and the students, and the data collection got underway. Following the first class meeting at each school, the principal returned to his/her job duties. I was then left alone, returning to the classroom for subsequent class meetings on my own accord.

Following the proper introductions, but prior to actual survey distribution, I collected informed consent forms and gave instructions for survey completion. Special attention was given to the fact that the survey instrument was two-sided, with demographic questions on the front side, and actual survey questions on the reverse. I also reminded students to refrain from placing their name anywhere on the survey. The last instruction given before administering the survey was for all respondents to “be honest and not worry about a right or wrong answer.”

While the participants filled out the survey, I secured all signed consent forms in sealed brown envelopes. I also told the students, as they read and signed their consent forms, that their anonymity would be carefully guarded. This follows the line of thought of research methodologists Meredith Gall, Walter Borg, and Joyce Gall (1996), who offer that surveys requiring self-disclosure may pose a threat to some people. They suggest the researcher should attempt to

minimize any risk of injury by assuring the anonymity and confidentiality of collected data. The completed surveys collected from participants were also secured in sealed envelopes, completely separate from any identifying data. I later secured all envelopes containing consent forms and surveys in a locked file cabinet in my home.

Following the administration of the survey, which took an average of fifteen minutes, participants were debriefed as to the purpose of research and the role their participation played. I conducted this debriefing at all but one of the data collection sites. At Central High School, the debriefing was left to the discretion of the classroom teacher. I informed all participating instructors of the purpose of the research prior to survey administration.

Data Analysis

Individual datum was collected only from those who chose to be involved in the study. No records were kept of non-participants. I collected a total of 170 surveys from the four sites. Of these, 54 were from Riverside HS, 29 from Central HS, 35 from Lewis HS and 52 from Sierra HS.

Part A of the survey requested demographic information from the participants. In order to tabulate this data, I sorted the surveys according to school. Due to the importance of each campus' geographic location and racial configuration, I conducted my analysis by considering each school a separate

data set. For each set, I documented the respondents' race, gender, and age and grouped them accordingly.

In Part B of the questionnaire, students were asked to answer four open-ended questions and two questions requiring only a "yes" or "no" response. To codify the written responses, I created sets of categories for each of the first four questions. I then carefully analyzed the responses to each question and placed them under the constructed categories which best described them. The first four questions were as follows:

1. What qualities, in your opinion, are needed to make any teacher effective in the classroom?
2. Do you believe a teacher is less effective if their race is different from that of their students? Why or why not?
3. If given the opportunity to choose, would you prefer a Black or White teacher? Explain your choice.
4. How do you think other students may feel regarding the race of their teacher?

Question One: What qualities, in your opinion, are needed to make any teacher effective in the classroom?

I placed this question on the survey to direct students toward the subject of teachers, prior to addressing racial preference. How the students answered the first question would hopefully indicate their level of seriousness regarding the survey, and perhaps lend credibility to the remainder of their responses.

Other research projects (Brown, Tomlinson, & Fortson, 1996; Hooper, 1997) and the pilot testing of this survey enabled me to develop three categories

that describe common teacher characteristics. After reading each answer, I classified the quality or qualities it contained beneath one of the following headings:

- Personal Traits
- Performance as an Educator
- Knowledge/Education/Experience

The “Personal Traits” category includes statements that describe the individual attributes of a teacher. Examples included, “understanding,” “honest,” and “patient.” The “Performance as an Educator” category contains qualities that refer to teaching skill and effectiveness. It included responses like “knows how to get students interested,” “explains things,” and “is organized.” The “Knowledge/Education/Experience” category describes answers that refer to a teacher’s professional training. Examples included “has a teaching degree,” “knows subject well,” and “has taught before.”

Closer examination of the responses prompted the construction of three additional categories:

- Student-Centered Response
- Hard to Classify
- No Answer

The “Student-Centered Response” category was created due to the large number of responses that referenced students and student behavior as one of the “qualities” that influence teacher effectiveness. For example, one student answered the question with, “having students who want to learn.” Another such

answer read, “Students putting forth effort and working.” I placed all responses that mentioned students as an aspect of teacher effectiveness under the “Student-Centered Response” category. The “Hard To Classify” grouping contains responses that were vague, and therefore problematic. If an answer did not address the question or was difficult to categorize, it became a part of this category. Examples included, “Not to talk about Black or White,” and “All my teachers are great to me.” The last category, “No Answer,” was developed to denote non-responses.

Question Two: Do you believe a teacher is less effective if their race is different from that of their students? Why or why not?

For Question Two, I developed six categories that best described the various natures of the analyzed responses:

- Yes
- No
- No/Conditional
- Don't Know
- Hard to Classify
- No Answer

The “Yes” and “No” categories are self-described. The “No/Conditional” category is actually a subset of the “No” classification. I created it to organize responses that placed a race-related condition on the belief that a teacher is not less effective if their race is different from that of their students. Responses like, “No,

as long as they are fair to both races,” or “No, unless the teacher is racist,” were housed under the “No/Conditional” heading. The “Don’t Know” category was developed to include undeclared responses, such as “I really cannot answer this question,” or simply, “I am not sure.” The last category, “Hard To Classify” served the same purpose here as it did in all of the survey questions analyses, which was to classify responses that did not fully address the question, or that confounded the researcher. Again, the “No Answer” category denoted non-responses.

Question Three: If given the opportunity to choose, would you prefer a Black or a White teacher? Explain your choice.

I asked Question Three to allow students the chance to express a racial preference for a teacher. Seven categories were needed to classify the responses I received. They are as follows:

- White
- Black
- Either
- Either/Conditional
- Don’t Know
- Hard To Classify
- No Answer

The “Black” and “White” categories are self-descriptive, indicating a racial preference on behalf of the student. The “Either” classification was designed for

the responses that dismissed the race issue or that stated a choice was not necessary for the student. In other words, that they had no preference regarding their teacher's race. Examples under this category included, "Either way I would try to learn," and "Black and White teachers know about the same thing." A fourth category, "Either/Conditional" includes responses that expressed no preference for teacher race, unless the teacher demonstrated racial bias. Examples of these conditional types of responses included, "Either one, as long as they treat me the same way as any other student," or "Whichever, but if they have a problem with race, they should not be here." The remaining three categories listed the same type of responses as in Questions One and Two.

Question Four: How do you think other students may feel regarding the race of their teacher?

Individuals may feel more at ease discussing the feelings of others rather than their own because it takes the focus off of their personal viewpoints. Instead, it allows them to offer opinions as an observer. This was my rationale for including Question Four on the survey. I hoped that it would foster open communication between the respondents and myself regarding their classmates' racial views. For the responses to this final open-ended question I developed six categories.

These included:

- Either
- Either/Conditional
- Race a Factor

- Don't Know
- Hard To Classify
- No Answer

All of the six categories, but one, were used to analyze the data in previous questions and have thus been described in the preceding paragraphs. The five previously used categories served the same categorization function in Question Four. The "Race a Factor" category, however, is unique to this question. I placed responses that mentioned teacher race as a factor in their fellow students' preferences or feelings under this heading. Examples included, "There are some students who feel discrimination from some of their teachers," and "They want teachers of their own race."

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Demographics

The 170 participants in this research project were adolescents attending a Louisiana public high school during the 1999-2000 academic year. All were enrolled in 10th Grade, 11th Grade, or 12th Grade-level English classes at the time of survey administration. The schools involved in the study were Riverside High School, Central HS, Lewis HS, and Sierra HS. Cooperating classroom teachers elicited volunteers for the research project from the pool of students who attended their classes throughout the course of the school day. At Riverside, 54 of the classroom teacher's 75 students answered the survey. Twenty-nine of the 92 students enrolled in the Central teacher's classes participated in the study. Lewis had a response ratio of 35:48, and at Sierra HS it was 52:110. The participants in this study submitted complete demographic information, allowing me to use all 170 surveys in the data analysis. See Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characterization of survey participants.

	Riverside (Black)	Central (White)	Lewis (Resegregated)	Sierra (Integrated)	Total
RACE					
Black	52 (96%)	0	32 (91%)	26 (50%)	110 (65%)
White	2 (4%)	28 (97%)	3 (9%)	21 (40%)	54 (32%)
Other	0	1 (3%)	0	5 (10%)	6 (3%)
GENDER					
Male	23 (43%)	13 (45%)	15 (43%)	21 (40%)	72 (42%)
Female	31 (57%)	16 (55%)	20 (57%)	31 (60%)	98 (58%)
AGE					
15-16	30 (55%)	29 (100%)	1 (3%)	11 (21%)	71 (42%)
17-18	23 (43%)	0	30 (86%)	39 (75%)	92 (54%)
19-21	1 (2%)	0	4 (11%)	2 (4%)	7 (4%)

See Appendix H for a more detailed illustration of demographic relationships.

Student Responses

Results indicate that in general, the participants approached the questionnaire and its content seriously. The non-response rate for each question was low. Responses were thorough and often thought provoking, although some were difficult to categorize due to their vagueness.

Question One: What qualities, in your opinion, are needed to make any teacher effective in the classroom?

As explained in Chapter Three, I included Question One to focus student attention on teachers, before introducing the racial component. Although this study did not concentrate on teacher effectiveness as its primary research question, this inquiry yielded notable student comments. The participants listed

several traits, that in their opinion, a teacher must have to be considered effective in the classroom. Evidently students were aware of the qualities they desire in a teacher and were able to convey this information. Since I asked students to name *qualities* they believe are needed to make a teacher effective, most completed surveys contained multiple responses. The response totals (340) exceed the number of surveys that were analyzed (170). Table 2 shows student response to Question One. A complete list of the responses, from which I created the classification categories, is included for each data collection site. See Appendices I through L.

Table 2. Student Responses to Question One.

	Riverside	Central	Lewis	Sierra	Total
Performance as an Educator	40 (42%)	44 (69%)	34 (57%)	55 (46%)	173 (51%)
Personal Traits	34 (35%)	17 (27%)	19 (32%)	54 (45%)	124 (36%)
Knowledge/Education/ Experience	6 (6%)	3 (4%)	5 (8%)	7 (5%)	21 (6%)
Student-Centered Response	9 (9%)	0	2 (3%)	2 (2%)	13 (4%)
Hard to Classify	5 (5%)	0	0	1 (1%)	6 (2%)
No Answer	2 (2%)	0	0	1 (1%)	3 (1%)
Total	96	64	60	120	340

Due to the purpose of Question One, I did not codify the responses in relation to the race, gender, or age of the respondents; therefore this information is not presented. Nonetheless, several responses from Riverside prompted a closer examination of that data set. Nine students from this predominately Black

school gave the opinion that students and/or student behaviors are central to teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Four students from Lewis and Sierra provided similar answers. All 13 of these “student-centered” responses came from Black participants. A second notable finding is that despite the intent of the question, race neutrality, some students included a racial referent among their list of teacher qualities. This was often written as a part of teacher fairness and/or caring qualities.

Question Two: Do you believe a teacher is less effective if their race is different from that of their students? Why or why not?

Sixty-five percent of the respondents wrote they do not believe difference in race diminishes teacher effectiveness. See Table 3. Many chose to answer the question by referring to one or more of the teacher qualities they stated in response to the first question. For example, one 17-year old Black female from Riverside who wrote, “Teachers should be caring and aware of what’s going on with students” for Question One, wrote, “No, as long as they are there for the students” for Question Two.

Students who placed a racial condition on their “No” responses indicated that a teacher’s race does not hinder their teaching effectiveness unless they exhibit racist behaviors toward students. The majority of this type of answer came from students at Lewis, the resegregated school.

Table 3. Student Responses to Question Two.

	Riverside	Central	Lewis	Sierra	Total
Yes	9 (16%)	7 (24%)	6 (17%)	8 (15%)	30 (18%)
No	40 (74%)	19 (65%)	21 (60%)	31 (60%)	111 (65%)
No/ Conditional	2 (4%)	1 (4%)	6 (17%)	4 (18%)	13 (8%)
Don't Know	1 (2%)	0	0	1 (2%)	2 (1%)
Hard to Classify	1 (2%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	7 (13%)	11 (6%)
No Answer	1 (2%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	3 (2%)
Total	54	29	35	52	170

Riverside, with its racially integrated faculty, reported the highest percentage of “No “ responses. The highest percentage of “Yes” responses, indicating that a teacher *is* less effective if of a different race than his or her students, were from Central students, who have the least experience with teachers of another race.

Question Three: If given the opportunity to choose, would you prefer a Black or White teacher? Explain your choice.

Question Three provided students a chance to express a racial preference for a teacher. Results indicate that most of the students surveyed had no racial preference. See Table 4.

Table 4. Student responses to Question Three.

	Riverside	Central	Lewis	Sierra	Total
White	3 (6%)	10 (35%)	4 (11%)	10 (19%)	27 (15%)
Black	10 (18%)	2 (7%)	7 (20%)	9 (17%)	28 (15%)
Either	35 (64%)	15 (52%)	18 (51%)	30 (58%)	98 (58%)
Either/ Conditional	3 (6%)	1 (3%)	3 (9%)	2 (4%)	9 (5%)
Don't Know	1 (2%)	0	1 (3%)	0	2 (1%)
Hard to Classify	0	1 (3%)	2 (6%)	1 (2%)	4 (2%)
No Answer	2 (4%)	0	0	0	2 (1%)
Total	54	29	35	52	170

When a preference was stated, it usually fell along racial lines. For example, 25 of the 28 responses that showed a preference for a Black instructor came from Black participants. White students accounted for 21 of the 27 respondents who chose a White teacher. This delineation was most evident among the Sierra students, where the student body is racially balanced. Central, the all-White school, had the highest percentage of students who preferred a White educator. Lewis, the “resegregated” school, had the highest percentage of students who preferred a Black educator. The predominately Black school (Riverside) had the lowest number of students to indicate a personal preference for teacher race. Of the 55 students who chose either a Black or White teacher, all but three offered an explanation for their choices.

Question Four: How do you think other students may feel regarding the race of their teacher?

When the race issue was not personalized, and students were allowed to comment on the feelings of others, student responses were more open. In

Questions Two and Three, the majority of respondents stated that race did not negatively impact teacher effectiveness and that they had no personal racial preference for teacher(s). For Question Four, however, most indicated that race does play a role in how *other* students feel regarding their teacher(s). Refer to Table 5.

Again, responses from Riverside indicated a low salience for race among students, while 79% of Central students addressed the racial issue. There were more vague answers given for this question than any other. Question Four also yielded the highest number of undeclared (“Don’t Know”) responses.

Table 5. Student responses to Question Four.

	Riverside	Central	Lewis	Sierra	Total
Either	19 (35%)	3 (10%)	14 (40%)	10 (19%)	46 (27%)
Race a Factor	15 (28%)	23 (80%)	13 (38%)	30 (58%)	81 (48%)
Don’t Know	10 (18%)	3 (10%)	4 (11%)	8 (15%)	25 (15%)
Hard to Classify	8 (15%)	0	4 (11%)	4 (8%)	16 (9%)
No Answer	2 (4%)	0	0	0	2 (1%)
Total	54	29	35	52	170

Question Five: During your school years (public or private) have any of your teachers been White?

All 170 participants answered “Yes” to Question Five.

Question Six: During your school years (public or private) have any of your teachers been Black?

Of the subjects in the study, 163 (96%) circled "Yes" for Question Six. Seven participants had never experienced a Black educator. All seven attended Central High School.

Discussion

Riverside: The Predominantly Black School

The message Riverside students seemed to share through their written responses was one of general respect for teachers, regardless of race. The school had the lowest percentage of students to indicate a personal racial preference. It also had the fewest responses describing teacher race as a factor for fellow students. Riverside participants' only real preference appeared to be for the teacher who was willing and able to teach them. Some students chose not to comment on teacher qualities. Instead, they expressed that if a teacher was ineffective in the classroom the fault may lie within the student. As I read through the surveys from Riverside, I wondered what might have influenced these students to view teachers with such high regard. Why does race appear to be less of an issue here than at the other schools in the study? Perhaps Cross' (1995) Nigrescence model and other supportive literature can offer a few suggestions.

Like the majority of all students sampled, Riverside students believe certain personal characteristics and teaching attributes are needed for teacher effectiveness. One 15-year-old Black female wrote that a teacher needs, "...a good attitude, comprehension, and good communication skills." Another female student wrote, "A good education, kindness, responsibility, and knowledge, and of course care about students." One 19-year-old female, who apparently had no suggestions, stated simply, "All my teachers are great to me." According to Gordon (1997), for many families in working class communities, it is possible that school personnel are the only professionals they will interact with on a regular basis. For this reason, in times past, teachers held a special place in the community, much like that of a doctor or lawyer. In fact, Black communities, prior to desegregation, especially valued their teachers as role models who instilled in their students a desire for success by setting high standards, and helping students achieve them (Comer, 1988). In many ways, the Riverside area resembles a segregation-era community. It seems to have suffered less from the desegregation fallout than some Louisiana regions. Perhaps then, the old community attitudes regarding teachers continue at Riverside, as seen in the following comments:

"...that they care, have respect (but we have to also have respect for them), and to teach us to do what is right."

-16 year old Black female

"To stand in class and teach the objectives of what we have to learn in order to survive in the real world."

-17 year old Black male

Surprisingly, several students, mostly male, seemed to take personal responsibility for teacher effectiveness, appearing almost in defense of educators. This could be the result of a high-level of respect for teacher authority. Or it could be that students misread the question. Examples included,

“If you are not doing what you are somepossed [sic] to do in class.”

-17 year old Black male

“I think if the students really act bad to get on the teachers nerves.”

-16 year old Black male

“I would say by the students not doing the work to put forth effort and I would say by students just not careing [sic] about what they do.”

-15 year old Black female

“Nothing, because it is not the teacher, it is the students who are not effective in the classrooms.”

-15 year old Black male

Exploring specific reasons for this student-centered approach to a question about qualities of teacher effectiveness is beyond the scope of this paper, but I believe it warrants future study. The triangulation of, through student interview for example, may shed light on why some respondents interpreted Question One as they did. I should also note at this point that fourteen students indicated teachers should be more fun and make learning more interesting. One male student indicated, “I think that they should be serious, but laid back. If they are too serious then some students may be afraid to answer the question due to the teacher’s response.” Another male student who wrote, “A teacher should

have a little fun in the classroom and not be so serious all the time,” echoed this sentiment. It seems that along with their unique views on teachers, Riverside students share the perspective of students everywhere, the desire for school to be more enjoyable.

Riverside students, more than any other in the sample, indicated that race is not a prominent issue at their school, with teachers or students. The racial component, as it appeared on the survey questionnaire, did not seem to matter. Perhaps some students felt uncomfortable discussing such a serious topic (even in written form) with a stranger. Since no relationship or camaraderie was established between the respondents and myself prior to survey administration, some students may have provided only “safe” or socially desirable answers. According to Terrell and Terrell (1984), some members of underrepresented populations expect racial discrimination from Whites based on historical precedence. Therefore, some students may have felt a “cultural mistrust” toward me since I am White, and this may have prevented them from sharing their actual views regarding the issue of racial preference. The Nigrescence model offers an alternative explanation for the responses from Riverside.

Cross (1995) states in his Black racial identity development model that low salience attitudes toward race are indicative of individuals who have not actively explored their racial identity. They are Pre-Encounter persons because nothing significant has occurred to alter their preexisting identity. It appears that many Riverside students may possess the attitudes that Cross describes in his Pre-Encounter stage. It is possible that these students have not engaged in activities

that have challenged their racial identities. Riverside is an isolated, and in many ways segregated community with a high Black population. There are several Black teachers and administrators in the district, and the student-teacher relationships are close ones. There may be few extant racial preferences for teachers because as individuals, the students have given the issue little consideration. According to Cross, the idea of being Black and the Black experience may never be of high-level importance to these individuals. If other things in life, like family, church, and/or careers provide meaning and fulfillment, then they may not need to explore their racial identity (Cross, 1995). Examples of possible Pre-Encounter attitudes include,

“It really doesn’t matter what race the teacher is. Experience with certain things link the teacher and student together. You can’t label an experience “Black” or “White.”

-15 year old Black male

“It doesn’t matter about the color or creed anymore. This is about everyone pulling together to make things better.”

-17 year old Black male

“I come to school to learn, not choose what colors my teachers are.”

-16 year old Black female

The three individuals who expressed a preference for a White teacher were Black, although two White students were in the sample (neither of whom expressed a preference). Cross suggests that some Pre-Encounter persons tend to overemphasize the abilities and talents of Whites. I believe further

investigation into these individuals' worldviews is needed before any meaningful assertions can be made.

The Nigrescence model explains that if a Pre-Encounter individual experiences something that challenges their worldview, their outlook and attitudes regarding race may undergo a change. Not every Riverside student response demonstrated Pre-Encounter characteristics. Some had definite preferences for a Black instructor and explained why.

"I want a Black teacher. I feel more comfortable with my own race."

-17 year old Black male

"Black. That's my race an[d] I would feel good knowing that my teacher is my race."

-15 year old Black female

"Sometimes I be saying we should have a Black teacher because half of them [don't] understand where we are coming from. The White teacher be acting funny sometimes."

-16 year old Black female

"Black. They can relate."

-16 year old Black male

"Black, Cause that teacher can give us more information about life for the people [of] my color because she [has] been through those things."

-16 year old Black female

Of course, without a closer look, one can only guess as to how or why these students seem to be more racially conscious than their classmates. This would require quantitative measurement and in-depth interview, which is beyond the scope of this project. It is important to note, however, that these students do

have several Black teachers on staff, and their principal is a Black male. The classroom teacher who cooperated in the survey administration, however, is White. Perhaps some students answered the question using a specific frame of reference. It is also possible that these students have experienced situations that have prompted a closer examination of personal racial identity. There were no additional comments on their surveys, however, that indicated this.

The analysis of Riverside student responses left many lingering questions in my mind. Among them was how increased and prolonged contact with the outside world will affect their racial attitudes. Will experiences in integrated situations provide “encounters” that will challenge their racial perspectives and respective identities? If so, how will this affect their racial preferences for authority figures, such as teachers or college professors?

Central: The All White School

When asked what qualities are needed to make a teacher effective in the classroom, most Central students were specific in their responses.

“Someone who respects every student in the class, someone who can create a comfortable environment, and as far as the actual teaching goes, someone who does a lot of examples, discusses things with the class, and someone who is willing to work one on one with a student.”

-16 year old White female

“A teacher needs to be strict, but fun. The teacher should also be consistent in his or her style of teaching. This means that a teacher shouldn’t make us work real hard for a few days and then not make us do anything. The teacher should make learning fun.”

-15 year old White male

“A teacher should be concerned with the students learning, not just their grade. A teacher should be mentally [sic] close to their students. Teachers must interact with students. Good leadership skills are important.”

-15 year old White male

Central students appeared to take a strong interest in effective classroom instruction, and most of them clearly articulated their views. I believe that some students may have written more had the space on the questionnaire allowed it. Central is a high achieving school, recognized by the state for its above-average standardized test scores. Perhaps this emphasis on achievement has heightened student awareness of quality instruction. Not all responses were elaborate, but most were quite detailed.

In a community as small as Central, it is easy to learn a great deal about students’ environmental influences and histories through casual conversation with school personnel. I learned, for example, that the students in my sample who were native to the area had experience with a Black teacher during their elementary school years. This teacher is Mrs. Smith-Jones, a veteran among Central’s teaching staff and the only Black educator in the district. Fifteen of the 19 students who indicated on their surveys that they did not believe a teacher’s effectiveness is hindered by race (Question Two), also had been the pupil of a Black educator (Question Five). Due to the low student turnover in the Central

school system, this Black educator was probably Mrs. Smith-Jones. For example,

“I had a Black teacher in 3rd grade, and learned just as much as any other kid.”

-15 year old White male

“Just because you’re white, doesn’t mean that you can teach a subject better than someone else. Some of my best teachers have been of different races.”

-16 year old White female

It is possible that this elementary school experience gave these students a positive frame of reference. According to school personnel, Mrs. Smith-Jones is well respected in the community as an outstanding instructor. Some parents contact the school prior to a new academic year to ensure she will be their child’s teacher. Reflection upon Mrs. Smith-Jones may have influenced their statements. Additional “No” responses to Question Two mentioned teaching ability rather than race as the determinant of teacher effectiveness. This may again be due to the stress put on academic achievement at this particular school. Examples included,

“If a teacher knows how to teach, it doesn’t matter what color they are.”

-15 year old White male

“God created everyone equal. Racism is a big issue, but I don’t look at the color of skin. I look at personality and the passion of their teaching, and their teaching ability.”

-15 year old White female

It is always a possibility that some of these students looked beyond the race factor in order to present a socially desirable response. Some individuals find it difficult to reveal their true feelings, even anonymously. Some Central participants, however, had no trouble sharing their views. Despite experience with a Black teacher, seven students felt the Black /White student-teacher relationship to be less effective than a homogeneous one.

“In a small town with all the students of the same race, it would [be less effective]. If a White man or woman goes into a school with all Black students, I think that what they say will be less effective.”

-16 year old White male

“In a way, yes!” You could not be able to understand everything they say. And they may be racists.”

-16 year old White female

“Sometimes yes. If the students are racial, they may not respect the teacher of a different race.”

-16 year old White female

One student response was particularly notable, due to its aggressiveness.

“In our school, there are no blacks. We don’t like blacks and our one black teacher doesn’t get along with students.”

-16 year old White male

Ironically, this student indicated on Question Five that he had never been the pupil of a Black teacher. Upon what information did he base his opinion? According to Gordon Allport (1954) this is a classic example of stereotyping, where a person’s exaggerated belief “is sustained by selective perceptions and

selective forgetting” (p.191). Whenever individuals live in a secluded environment, with little or no racial diversity, stereotypes like this are seldom challenged.

Forty-one percent (12) of Central participants expressed a racial preference for their teacher, the highest of all four schools in the study. All but two of the students, who stated a preference, chose a White teacher. The explanation students gave for their choices ranged from family beliefs to desire for sameness to fear of racism.

“I want a White teacher. Way I was brung [sic] up.”

-15 year old White male

“White. They have the same racial background as I do.”

-15 year old White female

“I would prefer a White teacher. I am not racist, but they may be.”

-16 year old White female

“White, so if we talked about race in the classroom, I wouldn’t feel intimidated.”

-15 year old White female

In ways, these preferences for a White teacher seemed to indicate a fear of the unknown. Perhaps for some of these students, experience with a Black elementary teacher is not relevant to their current perspectives, because they seem to feel uncomfortable with the idea of having a Black teacher. The justifications provided point to a basic desire to maintain the status quo in the

Central community. These students apparently prefer their all-White environment. One 16-year-old White female stated this succinctly,

“I prefer a White teacher. I can relate to a White teacher more. Nothing racial, I just would rather talk to a White teacher.”

One 15-year-old White male was more blatant in his response.

“I’m White and I don’t want NO Black trying to tell me what to do.”

According to Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson’s White Racial Consciousness (WRC) model (1994), young teenage attitudes often mirror that of a dominant family member. These “dependent type” views are not truly owned by the young person. Perhaps the racist views of certain Central residents have impacted these students. White supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan operate in and around the area. According to district personnel, some students and their families claim membership in these organizations. On data collection day, I noticed racist graffiti on school desks in the cooperating teacher’s classroom. If this is the situation, these “dependent” feelings may lessen as the students mature and are less influenced by the significant others in their lives. Rowe, et al. believe this will not happen, however, until the racial attitudes are internalized, or “owned” so that future experiences can impact them. For the students who have already internalized racial attitudes, their racial identity development has begun, according to the WRC model. Statements that indicate clear preferences for things White may indicate “dominative type” attitudes, which is an achieved

racial status. The WRC model suggests that only an experience that causes true cognitive dissonance can further change these individuals' racial perspectives.

The two students who expressed a preference for a Black instructor appear to be exploring their racial consciousness. Their openness to a new classroom experience is indicative of the "dissonant type" attitude.

"I've always had white teachers. I'd like a black one, just to see what it's like, I guess."

-15 year old White male

"They can tell us how they feel about how they were treated."

-16 year old White male

Seventeen Central students did not express a racial preference for a teacher. A preliminary look at many of their responses shows an emphasis of teacher skill over skin color. This emphasis appears to merely illustrate an unbiased attitude toward classroom teachers. When looked at from the perspective of the WRC model, however, it may indicate something else. Some of their comments seem to follow the WRC model's description of unachieved White racial consciousness. Examples include,

"Black or White teacher should not be the question. It should be good teacher or bad teacher."

-16 year old White male

"No preference as long as they do their job in teaching me. I don't look at their race."

-15 year old White female

“I don’t want that choice.”

-16 year old White female

Rowe and his colleagues may label these opinions as “avoidant type” attitudes. White individuals, unlike minorities, can choose how racially aware they want to be. Central students’ racial attitudes go largely unchallenged due to their homogeneous surroundings. Their classmates, teachers, and neighbors are almost all White. If they choose to remain in the community, their racial attitudes may never reach an achieved status. Contact with the outside world, however, may provide dissonance, as one student noted in her response to Question Three,

“Either. Our school has one black teacher and no black students. Actually, I would rather more black teachers and students to be here, so we’ll know how to interact with them in the future.”

-15 year old White female

When asked how their classmates may feel regarding teacher race, far fewer participants downplayed the race factor. Twenty-three (nearly 80%) of the 29 students who took the survey indicated that teacher race is an issue for other students. Some answers clearly criticized the racist attitudes of classmates. One 15-year-old White female student wrote,

“A lot of kids from my community are very racist. Most of them couldn’t handle a black teacher, simply because they’re ignorant.”

Most of the statements, however, were brief and lacked detail. I repeatedly came across the following responses:

“They would prefer a White teacher.”

“Some students may be racist toward the teacher.”

“Some students would have a problem with it.”

Like a few of the responses to Question Three, one comment to Question Four referred to a fear of reprisal from a Black educator. A 16 year-old White male offered, “Some may think that a Black teacher may be harder on white students because of past racism.” Another student expressed that a fellow student may feel insulted if he or she “had to have a Black teacher.” These comments are reminiscent of statements made by Whites during the school desegregation process (e.g., Culbertson, 1972; Foster, 1990; Harkey, 1967). It is as if the racial attitudes of some Central students have been suspended in time, reflective of a bygone era. Further exploration is needed to determine how widespread these particular attitudes are.

Lewis: The Resegregated School

Despite the demographic similarities to Riverside participants, Lewis High School students live in a somewhat different environment. The town of Fanfare, where Lewis is located, is less geographically isolated than Riverside, has a larger population, and is more racially integrated. These factors contribute to the

daily life experience of the average Fanfare resident, and may also influence the worldviews of students who attend Lewis High School.

Like Riverside, the majority of Lewis participants indicated that teachers do not lose their effectiveness if of a different race than that of their students. Their responses, however, included more detailed explanations than those offered by most Riverside students. Several Lewis students referenced their surrounding world in their answers. An example is the private school issue. Many Louisiana parishes established all-White private academies immediately following desegregation, and most of these private schools have remained racially exclusive. Lexington Parish has at least one of these academies. Evidently, this school and the reasons for its establishment are not lost on the Lewis student population. Gold Parish, of which Riverside is a part, also has all-White private schools, but only one Riverside student referenced them in their responses. In addition, as I mentioned earlier in this paper, most White students who attend public high schools in Lexington Parish do not attend Lewis. This background knowledge sheds light on some student responses to Question Two. For example,

“They are here to teach us no matter what color we are. If they were racis[t] they shouldn’t have come to a majority of black students in a public school.”

-17 year old Black female

“I think if any teacher teaches at a public school, they should like all students, meaning Black or White.”

-18 year old Black female

A second notable finding, within the Question Two responses, involved what appear to be descriptions of “encounter” experiences. No Riverside participants wrote comments on Question Two that so closely resembled this element of the Cross (1995) model. Those who did offer such statements reserved them for Question Three, which asked for a racial preference. Several Lewis students, however, seemed to answer Question Two with specific incidents in mind.

“For use [sic] Black students a white teacher can’t relate [to] us so [that] we can learn.”

-18 year old Black male

“In a way, yes. Some of them have snappy attitudes just by you asking a question on something you don’t understand.”

-18 year old Black female

“Sometimes. Just last year I got suspended because a teacher said I cussed her out. I put it on Jesus that I didn’t, and they still gave me the year [of suspension].”

-18 year old Black male

“Yes, because some White teachers are racist, and they treat white students better than they treat blacks.”

-18 year old Black female

It appears that these students encountered a situation that caused them to examine their racial attitudes more closely. The Lewis sample included mostly seniors, ages 17-19, and this might account for the heightened awareness.

An increased maturity level is evident among certain Question Two responses that explained why a teacher is *not* necessarily less effective because of racial differences. Several answers seem to indicate careful student thought.

“Depending upon the “cases,” the student may be effective if and only if the teacher allows it. The teacher will be that child’s example if he/she does not let race interfere. If that teacher follows what is in number one [Question One], she/he would see that race doesn’t play the crucial role, feelings do.”

-18 year old Black female

“I do not think a teacher is less effective if their race is different from that of their students because we are not learning the color of skin, but what will make us successful in life. But if the teacher is racist, it would make her less effective because she would treat one group of students different and the other group would [have] the tendency not to do any work.”

-18 year old Black male

“Yes and no. Yes because some teachers don’t care as much or try as hard to help students that are not their own race. No because some teachers are able to relate well with and teach all students, no matter what race.”

-17 year old Black female

Eleven Lewis students stated a racial preference for a teacher in Question Three. Of the three White students in the 35-member sample, two indicated a preference for a White teacher. They expressed that White teachers are easier to understand, seem to give students more assistance, and explain the work better. The two Black students who stated a preference for a White teacher offered the same reasons. Those in the sample who chose a Black teacher wanted an instructor whom they believe could relate to them more effectively.

They stated that Black teachers want Black students to do well and hold them to a higher standard than White teachers do. In their words,

“They will explain it to me in a way I know I will understand, not give me an example of something I don’t know what is.”

-18 year old Black male

“A black teacher will want me to do better and try to push me to do better, knowing what blacks went through in the past.”

-18 year old Black male

“If I am trying to explain myself I feel a Black teacher would understand me faster than a White teacher.”

-18 year old Black male

According to Cross (1995), responses of this nature go beyond the Pre-Encounter stage. There is not enough evidence to know where these students actually are in their racial identity development, but they appear to be conscious of their Blackness and how it plays into their education. This points toward the Encounter and/or Immersion-Emersion stages of the Nigrescence model. Perhaps the racial configuration of Fanfare and the resegregation of the Lewis campus have forced some students into racial encounters. Students who did not express a personal racial preference or indicate a problem with teacher race, still gave specific examples as to why race may be a factor for *other* students. For example, one 18-year-old Black female wrote, “Some black kids don’t like there [sic] white teachers just because they might fuss at them. They think whites just don’t like blacks, period.” School personnel at Lewis admit to the racial tension and bias that exists in the parish. Cross believes that such environmental factors

can set the stage for an individual's identity change (1971; 1995). It is possible that this is what we are seeing in several Question Two, Three and Four responses.

The majority of the students at Lewis did not express a racial preference. Most stated either race of teacher would do as long as they have teaching ability. A few participants shared the belief that there are no racial problems at Lewis High School, and that the school is like a family. Perhaps the integrated faculty, a Black principal, and an assistant principal who is a lifelong resident of Fanfare provides students with an educational setting that has an adequate racial balance, contributing to a higher level of racial understanding. I should note that the cooperating classroom teacher involved in this study is Black as well. But it is also possible that Lewis students who hold low salience views toward race are operating at Cross' Pre-Encounter stage of Black racial identity development.

It is apparent, however, that not all students are satisfied with their teachers at Lewis; and the data collected from the school indicates that they make this dissatisfaction known, at least to their classmates. Simply stated, there are students at Lewis who seem to have begun their journey toward developing a racial identity. Questions remain as to which factors specifically contributed to this racial awareness, but I suspect the racial reconfiguration of the parish schools may be partly responsible for it.

Sierra: The Racially Balanced School

Participants from Sierra High School were evenly divided in their responses that pertained to the qualities they believe make a teacher effective. Racial preferences for a teacher, when indicated, fell along racial lines. Many Sierra students provided justifications in their responses regarding teacher race that reflected past and/or present experience with Black and White teachers. These respondents offered answers that seemed more developed and informed than those collected from other schools. Why is this so? What factors have contributed to Sierra students' worldviews? Several things come to mind.

When asked to name qualities that teachers need to be effective in the classroom, Sierra participants gave equal emphasis to teaching performance and personal teacher characteristics. Responses to this question obtained from the other schools were more heavily concentrated in one category or the other. Perhaps Sierra students believe the qualities within each category to be equally important. This may be due in part to their larger school campus. They have a wider selection of course offerings, and this varied curriculum undoubtedly includes teachers with differing abilities and traits. Exposure to this variety may have convinced students that a myriad of qualities is needed for teacher effectiveness, due to the differing nature of each course and its subject matter.

Although Question One was intended to focus student attention on the subject of teachers, a few Sierra students included a racial referent in their answers. These students mentioned the willingness to work with students of all

racism, treatment of students based on behavior and not race, and the presentation of equal opportunities, as qualities needed for teacher effectiveness. There is no way of knowing whether or not these sentiments entered into the students' minds without undue influence. They may have read the entire survey prior to answering the first question. If the participants' thoughts were automatically directed to race, it may indicate a high salience for this issue. Notably, these students all mentioned race as a factor in their responses to the subsequent survey questions.

The fact that all Sierra students in the sample have been the pupil of a Black educator, and that the Sierra high school faculty is 35% Black reinforces the idea that these students are "speaking" from experience with both White and Black educators. A closer look at student responses revealed that this exposure to teachers of both races has not affected all students equally. I also found a relationship between some students' responses to Questions Two and Three that I did not observe among the surveys collected elsewhere.

Only eight (or 15%) of the 52 Sierra participants stated that a teacher's race could make them less effective in the classroom. Five White students, two Black students, and one self-described as Other were among these eight. Judging by their responses, these students may have had a specific incident in mind when they answered the question. Their opinions were not necessarily accompanied by a racial preference, however. Examples included,

“Not every teacher is racist, but their [sic] are some that are. The majority of teachers do show favoritism.”

-17 year old Black female (no preference)

“They just tend to give more slack to their own race.”

-17 year old White male
(preferred White teacher)

“Yes because some teachers are very racist and do [sic] to that they give the student of there [sic] color more attention.”

-17 year old Black female (no preference)

“Yes ‘cause you don’t relate to them as well.”

-16 year old White male
(preferred White teacher)

“Sometimes it matters because some teachers are racists.”

-17 year old White female
(preferred White teacher)

Like the other schools in the study, the majority of Sierra students responded that racial difference between teachers and students does not make a teacher less effective in the classroom. Sierra students provided more detailed explanations, perhaps due to their racially diverse educational experiences.

“No, because when people interact with people of another race it helps both parties learn more.”

-16 year old Black female
(preferred Black teacher)

“No because I feel that we can teach each other one thing are [sic] another.”

-19 year old Black male (no preference)

“No, because race is not an issue. I have seen White teachers who really cared about me, and what I thought, black also. So race is not an issue, only if you make it one.”

-18 year old Black male (no preference)

“I don’t believe that the race have nothing to do with it. Mostly all the teachers I have had are really fair.”

-17 year old Black female (preferred Black teacher)

“Not at all. I’m a black male and of all of the teachers I’ve had, my favorites were White, so race isn’t the issue.

-17 year old Black male (no preference)

“I personally do not feel that a teacher would be less effective, but some students do. It really just depends on the class.”

-17 year old White female (preferred White teacher)

Notably, Black students most often provided the seemingly insightful responses. It is possible that the White students in this sample have given little thought to this issue outside of the completion of a questionnaire. Rowe, et. al (1994) put forth in their discussion of White racial identity that Whites can choose their own level of racial awareness. Few White Americans have explored what it means to be White in a White-dominated society. Blacks Americans, on the other hand, along with other underrepresented socioracial groups, do not have

this option (Cross, 1995; Helms, 1995) because mainstream society forces awareness upon them (Sue & Sue, 1999). Evidently, the Black students whose words appear above have given thought to their cross-cultural, student-teacher relationships. Many of the White participants from Sierra, apparently have not.

Despite the positive experiences that some Black students shared regarding White teachers, none of them stated a preference for a White teacher. In fact, several went on to express a preference for a Black teacher in Question Three. But like their Question Two responses, they explained their statements. There was only one White student response that fit this racial awareness pattern.

“Black, because they relate more to how I’ve been raised and my culture.”

-16 year old Black female

“Black, because not to be prejudice or on the judgemental [sic] side. But I think I can relate to someone that is of my decent.”

-17 year old Black female

“I think I would go with a White teacher simply because our backgrounds would most likely be more similar than that of a black teacher. However, if both teachers are qualified, it wouldn’t really matter to me.”

-17 year old White female

The phrasing of statements like these especially when considered with the Question Two responses, indicates that these Black students may have higher levels of racial identity. None of their responses alluded to an over identification with either race, which is a characteristic often seen within the Pre-Encounter, Encounter, and first part of the Immersion/Emersion stages of the Cross model. Instead, I detected elements of the Emersion part of the third stage. The

responses appear controlled and based upon reason rather than emotion. The White female who preferred a White teacher, seemed more racially conscious as well. She acknowledged the racial issue and attempted to explain her feelings. According to the White Racial Consciousness model, she may have an achieved racial status, or is actively working on one.

Eight White students, in addition to the one discussed above, stated a preference for a White educator. Three of these students answered in Question Two that teachers *are* less effective if of a different race than that of their students. Their comments included the opinions that “they” (apparently Black teachers) are difficult to relate to, are racist, and give students of their own race more latitude. For Question Three, they wrote,

“I would choose a White teacher b/c [because] in my experience White teachers tend to do a lot better job plus they relate to their students.”

-17 year old White female

“White. Black teach[ers] like to act “Black.” When I think back all my good teachers have been White.”

-16 year old White male

“White. Because I am White and their [sic] wouldn’t be any chance for prejudice.”

-17 year old White male

Apparently, these answers are based upon student experience (or perception thereof) with Black and White educators, but a seemingly unexamined one.

Despite the likelihood that most of these students’ educators have been White, they cited negative (or potentially negative) experiences with a Black teacher as

reasons for preferring a White teacher. Surely not all of their White teacher experiences have been positive. Could it be that one or more of their Black teachers are/were simply poor instructors, and these students have equated this with race? I wonder how they view their less effective White teachers? Perhaps they receive less scrutiny? The others who chose a White teacher gave little justification for their selection. Three gave none at all. Those who did indicated that Whites have superior teaching skills and are more appealing than Black teachers.

Unlike the students from Central who live in rural isolation with little or no cross-cultural interaction, Sierra students attend a racially integrated school located in a mid-sized college town. Despite these differences, I observed the same type of racial attitudes among White participants from both schools. According to Rowe, et al. (1994), Whites who hold “dominative type” racial attitudes may or may not have interaction with members of other racial or ethnic groups, yet share common viewpoints. Most often, they consider the White majority culture superior to all others and believe that non-White traditions are merely deviations from the White norm. The White Racial Consciousness model offers that only an experience, which causes cognitive dissonance within the individual, will promote change in these individuals’ belief systems. Carter and Rice (1997) who studied initial encounters between children and members of targeted groups, found that if a first encounter with a stereotyped group reinforces the negative generalization existent in the child’s mind, the stereotype would remain. The authors believe that if the child is not open to the encounter

experience they can actually prevent it from challenging their schema, thus warding off cognitive dissonance. By manipulating the situation, the child may come away from the encounter with an “affirmed” stereotypical perspective regarding the targeted group (Carter & Rice, 1997). Perhaps then, some White Sierra students have chosen to lock in “dominative type” attitudes, possibly based on manipulated encounters with only a few Black educators. Without increased contact with Black teachers, their present racial worldviews may continue and even deepen. One student wrote on his survey that he has had ten times the amount of White teachers as Black teachers. Another shared that he preferred a White teacher because he has not had a Black teacher in the last five years. Still another revealed that only about 10% of Black teachers at Sierra teach electives and that she would “love” to see more Black educators at her school. Worldviews cannot be challenged unless these statistics change.

Over half of the Sierra sample did not illustrate a racial preference for a teacher. The explanations provided ranged from the simplistic and naïve to the well phrased and insightful. In short, surveys collected from this racially diverse school, not surprisingly, yielded diverse responses. While some of the answers read much like those I observed from Riverside and Central, knowing these students attend a racially integrated school seemed to give them more meaning. I feel this way despite the threat of cognitive manipulation described in the preceding paragraph. When students have an experience to draw upon, they have a broader frame of reference. How they view this experience and how it

affects their racial identity development or consciousness is unique to the individual, but the exposure must be present.

Finally, Sierra students followed the trend set forth by the three other schools when they answered Question Four. Thirty (58%) of them expressed that while race may or may not be a factor in personal teacher preference, it is for at least some fellow students. More Black participants felt this way than did their White counterparts. Several respondents stated that other students would want a teacher of their own color or race because it would allow the students to be more “comfortable” and better relate to the teacher. Others wrote that a same race student-teacher dyad would reduce opportunities for prejudice or racism. Many comments were quite interesting. Some of these are included below.

“Sure, some are not gonna like the teacher b/c [because] of their race, but that’s just today’s society! Everyone has their own opinion even if it’s not right.”

-17 year old White female

“Most people I know are cool w/ [with] who ever they get. People that act differently have not only that problem, but others they need to take care of as well.”

-16 year old Black female

“Some prefer Blacks and some prefer Whites and others it doesn’t matter. We need teachers that care about all races. It’s the child you want to help, not their skin color.”

-17 year old Black female

“Some people will always think that a teacher don’t like them because of their color. But it’s not like that. I am black, and my teacher might like me more than another black student just by the way I act.”

-18 year old Black male

“Many feel like me [preferred a White teacher, stating Black teachers like to act “Black”]. But I believe many will lie and say that it doesn’t matter.”

-16 year old White male

The statement mentioned directly above reminds me, as a researcher, that no research instrument or study design can ever access everyone’s innermost feelings. Therefore, any and all analyses, observations and recommendations must be done with caution. Several Sierra students chose to be cautious in answering Question Four. They reserved opinion regarding their classmates’ racial views by stating that they can not speak for others, or that they simply do not know. One student wrote, “Only God knows how they really feel.” These noncommittal comments came from Black, White and “Other” (self-described as Asian American) participants.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General Comments and Implications

I conducted this study to determine whether or not Louisiana high school students have racial preferences for their educators. Due to the fallout of desegregation and more recent trends in education, the number of Black teachers in Louisiana has dropped dramatically. The result is a teaching force that is mostly White, despite the fact that almost half of Louisiana's public school students are Black. This translates to public school students of both races receiving instruction from fewer Black educators with each passing academic year. I wanted to know whether or not this demographic change among teachers has created a racial preference among students. If so, what role does the geographic location and racial configuration of their schools play in this choice? Finally, I hoped to examine student opinion through the lens of racial identity in order to gain a better understanding of the students' worldviews.

What I observed is that there *are* students who prefer one race of teacher to another. In most cases, this preference is for a member of their own race. It appears that White students more often have this preference than do Black students. In this study, 23% (25) of the 110 Black participants chose a Black teacher, while 39% (21) of the 54 White participants chose a White teacher. Most of these White students have had little or no experience with a Black teacher, but preferences still exist. Without ever having had a Black high school teacher, some stated they would not like him or her. These students have

unchallenged views that may never change without meaningful interaction with the unknown. I stress meaningful because well-known researcher of racial prejudice Gordon Allport (1954) states that brief and casual contact with members of an “out-group” can actually increase prejudice. Therefore, significant opportunities for White students to experience a Black educator must improve. Otherwise stereotypical thinking that leads to unfounded racial preference may result. As I mentioned earlier, this may already be the situation with some White Sierra students.

I believe that the racial configuration and geographic location of a school does affect student perspective on racial issues. Children and adults tend to normalize the traditions and viewpoints that surround their upbringing. The content of their daily life experiences undoubtedly influence their belief systems, which in turn help define their racial identity development. Students who attend schools where their own race predominates tend to have levels of racial consciousness that differ from those who attend more heterogeneous schools. Racial integration forces some students to address the issue of race due to increased levels of cross-cultural interaction. Students, who see only same race individuals each day, seem less likely to examine what role race plays in their personal identities.

Helms and Cook (1999) define culture as “the values, beliefs, language, rituals, traditions and other behaviors that are passed from one generation to another” (p.21). Many social change agents hold to the idea that you must first understand a situation and its cultural context before setting out to change it. By

viewing student comments within the framework of racial identity development and racial consciousness, I believe that I have gained a better, albeit limited understanding of the world in which some of these students live. It is to my advantage that I am personally acquainted with the unique Black and White Southern cultures, having been born and raised in the region. But despite this cultural entrenchment and acquired knowledge of racial identity theory, as one student wrote, only God knows how other individuals truly feel about racial issues.

I also obtained evidence that the student perspective is valuable and that students can be credible sources for information. The adolescents who participated in this study approached the questionnaire seriously. Education is a serious issue for most students and they seem to appreciate the opportunity to have input into what affects their future. The responses I received to Question One alone illustrates the need for more investigation into what students want from their instructors, race aside.

The fact that some students have a racial preference for their teacher has many implications for teacher education programs and for public school systems. In today's teacher education programs, there is an ongoing attempt to attract Black college students to the teaching field. Despite a variety of strategies, their representation in these programs remains low. Many who do choose to teach, do not stay in the profession more than five years (Su, 1997). If a teacher education program concentrated more specifically on the racial identity development of Black student teachers, perhaps it could improve teacher job

satisfaction and subsequently increase retention rates. It is incorrect to assume that because a teacher is Black, he or she will automatically relate to each and every Black student they teach (Montecinos, 1994). In addition, not all Black teachers are accustomed to working with White children and/or adolescents. An awareness of racial identity development among Black student interns may allow for a better understanding of the various racial attitudes they will undoubtedly face in today's classrooms. This realization may enable these future classroom teachers to effectively address racial issues with both White and non-White student populations. Through the possession of a personal racial awareness, the teacher could also develop curriculum that would enable students to examine their own racial identities. This may lead to the type of meaningful interaction that is needed to challenge White student stereotypes, and contribute to the development of Black student identity (depending on the student's present racial level).

Each year more and more White females are graduating from predominantly White teacher education programs (Goodlad, 1991) and entering racially integrated classrooms where they are expected to serve the needs of all students. Often these teachers were raised in predominately White suburban areas, attended predominately White schools, and have had little interaction with members of underrepresented socioracial groups prior to entering the teaching field (Sleeter, 1993). They may bring into their classrooms little knowledge or understanding of non-White cultures. This lack of cross-cultural understanding may lead to racial conflict with students of different races and/or preferential

treatment of White students (Sheets, 1996). If these White teachers were introduced to racial identity theory during their teacher training, they may be more effective in a racially diverse classroom. First, White teachers would become better acquainted with themselves and how their own racial identity affects their views of others. Through this, the White teacher may come to understand why some students prefer a teacher of their own race, and even attempt to improve relations with their non-White students. Otherwise, these teachers will struggle to understand the different cultural backgrounds of their students and perhaps misconstrue certain attitudes and behaviors they encounter. As with Black teachers, if these educators become more racially conscious, they too could develop lessons that incorporates elements of racial identity development.

Study Limitations

Personal limitations

It is usually not until a researcher completes his or her study, that the weaknesses of the project's design, and other limitations become apparent. My study is no exception. Due to the nature of my study, and its target population, however, I was aware of several limiting factors from the beginning. These included the difficulties that surround the use of minors as participants, the reluctance of gatekeepers to grant access to students, and in general, the controversial nature of the research question. The latter issue was of particular concern given the racial climate of the State of Louisiana.

The university human subjects requirement regarding the use of minors as research subjects limited the number of participants to those students whose parent or guardian provided informed consent. Though research ethics must prevail, I will never know the opinions of those students who did not have a signed consent form on the day of survey administration. This may be a reason why graduate-level research involving student subjects is often conducted within private schools, where parental/guardian consent is often easier to obtain, or on the college level.

Gaining access to a public school campus is not a simple endeavor. Recall Appendix B. Much depends on the personality and willingness of the primary gatekeeper, usually the district superintendent. Several school administrators denied my request to conduct research in their schools because they felt uncomfortable with the topic of racial preference. Those who did not have a personal aversion to it cited the attitudes of their surrounding community as reason for turning down my request. Due to this, the parishes that may be in the most desperate need of racial identity examination were not included in this study. The logistics of the school day also limited access to certain campuses. Several superintendents were willing to cooperate in the project, but denied access due to upcoming statewide standardized testing. In Louisiana, the LEAP test is a high-stakes exam and for certain school districts, its preparation takes precedence over most things, especially data collection. In hindsight, I realize that fall is probably a better time to conduct public school research, since most standardized testing is done in the spring.

The very nature of this research project proved unsettling for some individuals. Not only did this limit my access to certain schools, but also to certain people. Race and racial preference is not a popular topic of conversation for most people. While some of the individuals I encountered throughout the duration of my research were supportive and understanding, others were obviously confused or seemed disgusted that a White Southern woman was involved in this type of work. Since I lived in a small and rurally isolated parish while I conducted this research, I had few people with whom I could discuss my study and its progress. This limited my contact base and prevented the networking that occurs so often between educational researchers and administrators and/or educators in the field.

Other Limitations

This study was qualitative in that student-constructed responses were used to address the research question. It also contained semi-quantitative elements due to the codification of analyzed responses and the percentages derived from them. Therefore, the results from this study can not be generalized beyond the four Louisiana schools from which data was collected.

The lack of a racial identity scale for measurement of racial identity is another shortcoming of this study. Even though it was never my intent to use this type of instrument here, I must note how it would have improved the project. It would have removed some of the researcher bias that I undoubtedly included in this investigation, by clearly assessing student levels of racial identity

development and attitude types. The data could have then been used to predict student preferences for teacher race.

The open-ended questionnaire that I did use in this study may have limited the effectiveness of data collection in some cases. By providing only a certain amount of space for students to record their answers, I may have unwittingly silenced some of them. They may have had more to say yet omitted important statements due to limited available writing space.

The interpretations and characterizations of responses regarding racial identity was limited to the perspectives and ideologies put forth by the authors of the models to which said responses were compared. William Cross and Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson represent only two of the ever-growing number of racial identity models extant in the field. Were the data analyzed through the lenses of a different racial identity model (e.g., Helms White Identity or People of Color Models), the conclusions drawn and recommendations offered would most likely differ from those presented in this study. By placing this research project within the confines of Cross' Nigrescence model and Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's White Racial Consciousness Model, the discussion was limited to their definitions of racial identity development.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study included many interesting elements. These results generated ideas and point to the necessity of future research. There are certain racial attitudes students hold that need to be measured through tested

and validated psychometric instruments. Researchers need to obtain quantitative data of student racial identity to learn where they are developmentally, and how this affects their racial views toward teachers. This information could then be used to design qualitative studies to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. Methods including student interviews and case studies may work best in this setting. Special efforts should be made to penetrate resistant areas so that a variety of students can be sampled. This may only be possible through federal grant programs or with the cooperation of state educational agencies.

Another element that warrants additional research involves the comments provided by several students to Question One, which asked for qualities that contribute to teacher effectiveness. Recall that several respondents answered this question with statements that referred to students and/or student behavior. It was as if these students took the responsibility of teacher effectiveness upon themselves. Studies, preferably qualitative, should be done to determine why students felt this way. Since only Black students answered from this perspective, there may be a cultural aspect that needs to be explored.

The manner in which the remainder of the sample addressed Question One illustrates willingness on their behalf to discuss the qualities they want present in a classroom teacher. For researchers involved in teacher education, it is important that they realize the significance of adolescents as information sources regarding effective high school instruction. Most students in the classroom today know what they want in a teacher and from the educational

process. By obtaining their views and incorporating them into a teacher education curriculum, educators can provide future instructors with authentic information that will help them meet student needs. The only way to keep this type of information current is to periodically revisit the original source, high school classrooms.

As an extension of the topic of racial preference for teacher, research in situational preference may be valuable. It is possible that some students would be more or less open to a Black/White student and teacher relationship if the course was less structured than that of the traditional math or English class. For example, if the course involved close proximity between teacher and student, both physically and psychologically, the student may have different preferences.

Finally, a longitudinal study that examined student racial identity development and racial consciousness could shed light on how certain environmental and psychological factors affect this realm of certain individuals. It would be especially valuable to trace the movement of high school students beyond their public school years to determine how their racial identities have changed, or remained the same. In conjunction with the racial identity focus, the study could measure individual racial preference for teachers and later professors, or other authority figures.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Approval-Seeking Letter Sent to Louisiana School Superintendents

January 6, 2000

Mr. John Doe, Superintendent
Louisiana Parish Schools
Post Office Box 000
Anytown, Louisiana 70000

Re: Research Project

Dear Assistant Superintendent Doe,

My name is C. Michelle Hooper. As a part of my doctoral program at Oregon State University, I am conducting a research study to examine student preferences for teacher race. Although I am officially an OSU student, I have lived in Winnfield, Louisiana for the past year and a half. Since I am a native Southerner, I wanted to conduct my research in the region of the country I call home. This study is aimed at determining what characteristics students believe make a classroom teacher effective and how (if at all) this is affected by any preferences students may have regarding the race of their teacher.

Due to a myriad of factors, including the reduction of the Black teaching force following school desegregation, today's educators are a relatively homogenous group. A recent study conducted by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education revealed that almost 90% of all teachers in this country are White. It is not uncommon for students to pass through their entire public school experience having had only White teachers. There is a need for research to determine if this lack of minority (especially Black) educators is affecting today's students' racial preferences for teachers.

I am asking a variety of school districts in the State of Louisiana for permission to gather data from their high school students. By participating in the research project, school administrators play an important role in this valuable educational area. I hope to utilize the results of this study to enhance and improve teacher education programs wherever possible.

According to Oregon State University guidelines, no data may be collected from minors without the expressed consent of their parent or guardian. In accordance with this requirement, I have developed take-home parental informed consent forms that have been approved by the university's human subjects committee. These forms are available upon request should you desire to review them. They explain the purpose of the study in as much detail as plausible. Following the collection of the data, the participants will be debriefed in full.

Student participants will be asked to complete a brief, open-ended questionnaire containing six questions. The survey should not require more than 20 minutes to complete. As a former high school teacher, I realize how valuable classroom time is to

teacher and student alike. I greatly appreciate the sacrifices teachers will be making in allowing me into their classrooms. I plan to keep the procedures involved in the data collection to a minimum. Strict standards of confidentiality will be maintained and special precautions will be taken to protect the confidentiality of all student responses.

In order to triangulate my data, I plan to conduct brief interviews with at least five students over the course of the project. Should any student from your campus wish to further discuss their survey answers, they may indicate this anonymously on a detachable form that will accompany the survey questionnaire. From the list of volunteers I will choose one name at random. Using the information he/she provides, I will attempt to make arrangements to meet with him/her on campus within the following month.

I am requesting your approval to conduct this research in your school district in January or February. I am hoping to gather data in several parishes by early March, so that I may complete my dissertation by the end of spring.

I will contact you during the next week or two to discuss my study and, hopefully, obtain your permission to administer the questionnaire in your school district. I am looking forward to working with your administration and teachers. If you have any questions in the meantime, please call me at **(318) 628-1184**.

I am also available to meet with you in person should you wish to discuss my request in further detail.

Sincerely,

C. Michelle Hooper
Doctoral Candidate
Oregon State University

Dr. Joanne B. Engel
Associate Director
School of Education
Oregon State University

Appendix B: Letter Received from St.Tammany Parish School District

St. Tammany Parish School Board

212 W. 17th AVENUE • POST OFFICE BOX 940
COVINGTON, LOUISIANA 70434-0940
PHONE (504) 892-2276 - FAX (504) 898-3267

LEONARD P. MONTELEONE
SUPERINTENDENT

January 13, 2000

DISTRICT	BOARD MEMBERS
10	JOHN C. LAMARQUE, PRESIDENT
7	PATTI YOUNG, VICE PRESIDENT
1	NEAL M. HENNEGAN
2	ELIZABETH B. HEINTZ
3	DONALD L. BURRIS
4	DIANE D. SAMBOLA
5	CHARLES T. HARRELL
6	DONALD J. VILLERE
8	DANIEL G. ZECHENELLY
9	CARMEN H. JOHNSON
11	E. ROTH ALLEN, PH.D.
12	JAMES "RONNIE" PANKS, SR.
13	ROBERT D. BROOME
14	RAY A. ALFRED
15	MARY K. LYNCH-BELLISARIO

To Whom It May Concern:

C. Michelle Hooper is a doctoral candidate conducting research on student preference regarding public school educators. She has permission to contact high school principals to request the voluntary participation of students in completing the survey. Student participation would require parental permission. The decision as to whether or not to meet with Ms. Hooper and/or to participate in the survey is entirely that of the school principal.

Thanks for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,



GAYLE SLOAN

Assistant Superintendent

GS:kr

Appendix C: Pilot-Tested Survey and Evaluation Form

**STUDENT PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRE
(Rough Draft)**

1. During your high school years, have any of your teachers been White?

YES

NO

2. During your high school years, have any of you teachers been Black?

YES

NO

3. What qualities, in your opinion, are needed to make any teacher effective in the classroom?

4. Do you believe a teacher is less effective if their race is different from that of their students? Why or why not?

5. If given the opportunity to choose, would you prefer a Black or White teacher? Explain your choice.

6. How do you think other students may feel regarding the race of their teacher?

Your Evaluation of the Questionnaire

1. Were there any words on the questionnaire you did not understand? If so, please list them.

2. Was it clear to you what each question was asking? If not, please list which question(s) did not make sense to you.

3. Did you have enough space to answer each question?

4. Can you think of any other changes that may help other students answering this questionnaire in the future?

I appreciate your help in designing this questionnaire. It will soon be used in very important academic research for Oregon State University. By answering these questions, you have become a valuable part of this research project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

C. Michelle Hooper
Doctoral Candidate
Oregon State University

Appendix D: Survey Questionnaire

Student Preference Questionnaire

Section A: Demographics

Gender (please circle one)

Male

Female

Age _____

Grade in school _____

Which best describes your racial/ethnic identity? (Please check all that apply)

____ White, European American, Non-Hispanic

____ Black, African-American

____ Hispanic or Latino American

____ American Indian or Alaskan Native

____ North African or North African-American

____ Pacific Islander

____ Asian or Asian American

____ If none of the above apply to you, please use your own description:

____ Decline to respond

**Appendix E: Report of Review by the Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects**



OREGON STATE
UNIVERSITY

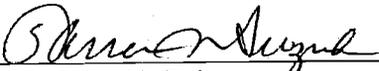
COPY

**Report of Review by the Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects**

TO: Joanne Engel, Education
 COPY: C. Michelle Hooper, P.O. Box 1352, Winnfield, LA 71483-1352
 RE: Characteristics of high school students' preference for teacher race.

The referenced project was reviewed under the guidelines of Oregon State University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The committee has **approved** your application. The approval of this application expires upon the completion of the project or one year from the approval date, whichever is sooner. The informed consent form obtained from each subject should be retained in program/project's files for three years beyond the end date of the project.

Any proposed change to the protocol or informed consent form that is not included in the approved application must be submitted to the IRB for review and must be approved by the committee before it can be implemented. Immediate action may be taken where necessary to eliminate apparent hazards to subjects, but this modification to the approved project must be reported immediately to the IRB.


 Warren N. Suzuki, Chair
 Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects
 (Education, 7-6393, suzukiw@orst.edu)

Date: 08/06/99



COPY

**Report of Review by the Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects**

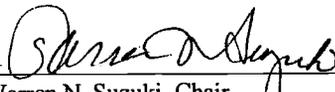
TO: Joanne Engel, Education

COPY: C. Michelle Hooper, P.O. Box 1352, Winnfield, LA 71483-1352

RE: Characteristics of high school students' preferences for teacher race (proposed modification dated 11/23/99 to a project approved on 08/06/99).

The referenced proposed modification to a previously approved project was reviewed under the guidelines of Oregon State University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The committee has **approved** the modification.

Any additional change to the protocol or informed consent form that is not included in the approved application as modified must be submitted to the IRB for review and must be approved by the committee before it can be implemented. Immediate action may be taken where necessary to eliminate an apparent hazard to subjects, but this modification to the approved project, as well as any actual harm or potential risk not previously known by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, must be reported immediately to the IRB.


 Warren N. Suzuki, Chair
 Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects
 (Education, 7-6393, suzukiw@orst.edu)

Date: 12/17/99

Appendix F: Parent/ Guardian Informed Consent Form

Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The _____ Parish School District has graciously agreed to allow educational research, in the form of a written survey, to be conducted in your child's classroom. We represent the School of Education at Oregon State University, and as the researchers administering this survey, we are seeking your permission to allow your child to participate.

Oregon State University strives to ensure the protection of all human subjects involved in academic research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether or not you wish your child to participate in the present study.

Frequently asked questions regarding survey research:

Q: Is this survey a school district requirement?

A: No. Your child's participation is requested, although strictly voluntary. You should be aware that even if you allow your child to participate, they are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Q: What is this study about?

A: In this study, we are interested in learning more about high school student preferences regarding public school educators. The survey questionnaire used is designed to determine what characteristics students believe make teachers effective in the classroom.

Q: How long is the survey?

A: The survey contains six brief, open-ended questions that students will be asked to answer honestly. It should take about 20 minutes to complete the survey.

Q: What about privacy issues?

A: We will analyze and report on the data obtained from the study's participants in a combined form only. So while we are gathering information from your child personally, their answers on the survey are strictly confidential and will in no way be publicly attributable to him or her.

Statement of Confidentiality: After your child completes the survey, the researchers will collect it and his or her answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. Their name will not appear anywhere on the survey. **No** persons except the researchers will **ever** read your child's answers.

Q: Will participation in this research harm my child?

A: This study will not put your child at any physical, psychological, or emotional risk.

Q: Of what benefit is this research to my child?

A: Although this study is not designed to benefit your child directly, we believe that by participating, they will increase their awareness of their preferences and expectations regarding public school educators. In addition, their participation will provide us with information we can use to improve/enhance teacher education programs.

If you would like additional information concerning this study, please contact the _____ Parish School Administration office or Dr. Joanne B. Engel, lead researcher.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joanne Engel, Lead Researcher
100 Education Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331
(541) 737-5989
email: engelj@ccmail.orst.edu

C. Michelle Hooper, Doctoral Candidate

I have read this Informed Consent Form, understand my (and my child's) rights and responsibilities, and hereby agree to allow my child to participate in this research project.

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix G: Student Informed Consent Form

Student Informed Consent Form

The _____ Parish School District has graciously agreed to allow educational research, in the form of a written survey, to be conducted in your classroom. We represent the School of Education at Oregon State University, and as the researchers administering this survey, we are seeking your consent to participate.

Oregon State University strives to ensure the protection of all human subjects involved in academic research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether or not you wish to participate in the present study.

Frequently asked questions regarding survey research:

Q: Is this survey a school district requirement?

A: No. Your participation is requested, although strictly voluntary. You should be aware that you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Q: What is this study about?

A: In this study, we are interested in learning more about middle school/high school student racial preferences for public school educators. The survey questionnaire used is also designed to determine what characteristics students believe make a teacher effective in the classroom.

Q: How long is the survey?

A: The survey contains six brief, open-ended questions which students are asked to answer honestly. It should take about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Q: What about privacy issues?

A: We will analyze and report on the data obtained from this study's participants in a combined form only. So while we are gathering information from you personally, your answers on the survey are strictly confidential and will in no way be publicly attributable to you.

Statement of Confidentiality: After you complete the survey, the researchers will collect it and your answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. Your name is not to appear anywhere on the survey. **No** persons except the researchers will **ever** read your answers.

Q: Will participation in this research harm me in any way?

A: This study will not put you at any physical, psychological, or emotional risk.

Q: Of what benefit is this research to me?

A: Although this study is not designed to benefit you directly, we believe that by participating, you will increase your awareness of your preferences for public school educators. In addition, your participation will provide us with information we can use to improve/enhance teacher education programs.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joanne Engel, Lead Researcher

C. Michelle Hooper, Doctoral Candidate

I have read this Informed Consent Form, understand my rights and responsibilities, and hereby agree to participate in this research project.

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix H: Detailed Demographics of Survey Participants

Appendix H: Detailed demographics of survey participants

Riverside HS	Central HS	Lewis HS	Sierra HS
BM-15=5	WM-15=6	BF-16=1	WM-16=4
BF-15=8	WF-15=7	BM-17=4	BF-16=6
BM-16=5	WM-16=6	BF-17=7	WF-16=1
WM-16=1	OM-16=1	BM-18=7	BM-17=4
BF-16=10	WF-16=9	WM-18=1	WM-17=4
WF-16=1		BF-18=10	OM-17=1
BM-17=9		WF-18=1	BF-17=10
BF-17=8		BM-19=2	WF-17=8
BM-18=3		WM-19=1	OF-17=4
BF-18=2		BF-19=1	BM-18=4
BF-19=1			WM-18=3
			BF-18=1
			BM-19=1
			WF-21=1

BM= Black Male**WM=** White Male**OM=** Other Male**BF=** Black Female**WF=** White Female**OF=** Other Female

**Appendix I: Comprehensive List of Riverside Student Responses to
Question One**

Appendix I: Comprehensive List of Riverside Student Responses to Question One

Better teaching skills-Category 2 (Performance as an Educator)
 Good attitude-Category 1 (Personal Traits)
 Good comprehension-Category 2
 Good communication skills-Category 2
 Know what they are talking about-Category 3 (Knowledge/Experience/Education)
 Good education/smart-Category 3
 Kindness-Category 1
 Responsibility-Category 1
 Caring about students-Category 1
 Teach what needs to be learned for tests-Category 2
 Less aggressive-Category 1
 Presentation of self-Category 1
 Belief in what they say-Category 1
 Being fun-Category 1
 Challenges students-Category 2
 Teach students something-Category 2
 Good personality-Category 1
 Able to express opinion-Category 2
 Aware of what's going on with students-Category 2
 Does not crack jokes/ strictly business-Category 2
 Good nerves-Category 1
 Courteous-Category 1
 Respectful of students-Category 1
 Teaching us to do what is right-Category 2
 Encouraging of student response-Category 2
 In control-Category 2
 Loud voice-Category 1
 Helpful-Category 1
 Variety in teaching-Category 2
 A mixed classroom-Category 5 (Hard to Classify)
 Students putting forth work and effort-Category 4 (Student-Centered Response)
 Students caring about what they do-Category 4
 Nothing- it is the students who are not effective in the classroom-Category 4
 Not to talk about Black or White-Category 5
 Not doing your work-Category 4
 Having students who want to learn-Category 4
 Being shown respect by students-Category 4
 If students act bad to get on a teacher's nerves-Category 4
 Your learning abilities-Category 4
 Teaching real-world information-Category 2
 Standing before the class-Category 2

**Appendix J: Comprehensive List of Central Student Responses to Question
One**

Appendix J: Comprehensive List Central Student Response to Question One

Get up & teach, not just give seat work-Category 2
Explain subject thoroughly-Category 2
Care about individual student learning-Category 2
Care about students-Category 1
Good learning abilities-Category 3
Care about teaching/ want to teach-Category 2
Connect with students on their level-Category 2
Be organized-Category 2
Listen to students-Category 2
Know what they are teaching-Category 3
Make class fun with activities and games-Category 2
Respect students-Category 1
Create comfortable environment-Category 2
Willing to work-Category 2
Consistent with teaching style-Category 2
Nice-Category 1
College degree-Category 3
Honest-Category 1
Knows how to teach-Category 2
Good leadership qualities-Category 1
Fair-Category 1
Allow students free time when work is done-Category 2
Patient-Category 1
Understanding-Category 1

Appendix K: Comprehensive List of Lewis Student Responses to Question One

Appendix K: Comprehensive List of Lewis Student Responses to Question One

Explains lesson to the students-Category 2
 Caring-Category 1
 Listens to the students-category 2
 Allows students time to learn-Category 2
 Smart-Category 1
 Good sense of humor-Category 1
 Polite-Category 1
 Make students feel comfortable in learning environment-Category 2
 Teach student more than test him-Category 2
 Ability to make students listen/ control class-Category 2
 Speak louder-Category 1
 College degree in subject-Category 3
 Give students more activities-Category 2
 Positive attitude-Category 1
 Patience-Category 1
 Has respect for students-Category 2
 Has his/her mind on teaching-Category 2
 Good teaching qualities-Category 2
 Doesn't fuss all the time-Category 1
 A mind to deal with bad teachers-Category 3
 Gives help when its needed-Category 2
 Understanding-Category 1
 Able to relate to many different things-Category 2
 Demanding at times-Category 2
 Be mindful of students abilities and disabilities-Category 2
 I don't have no qualities to make teachers at this school or any school effective in the classroom-Category 4
 Do as you are told-Category 4

**Appendix L: Comprehensive List of Sierra Student Responses to Question
One**

Appendix L: Comprehensive List of Sierra Student Responses to Question One

Strict-Category 1
 Fun to be around-Category 1
 Smart-Category 1
 Relates well to students-Category 2
 Understanding-Category 1
 Fair-Category 1
 Educated-Category 3
 Know about how students think-Category 2
 Have student respect-Category 2
 Knowledge of subject-Category 3
 Unique teaching ability-Category 2
 Know how to get students interested-Category 2
 Makes learning fun-Category 2
 Patience-Category 1
 Stress appearance-Category 1
 Determination-Category 1
 Respects students-Category 2
 Be responsible-Category 1
 Show teaching isn't just about a paycheck-Category 2
 Nice attitude-Category 1
 Creativity-Category 1
 Sense of humor-Category 1
 Explains things-Category 2
 Has discipline-Category 2
 Willing to help-Category 2
 Cares for students-Category 1
 Confidence-Category 1
 Have the qualities of a good friend, with boundaries-Category 1
 Honest-Category 1
 Considerate-Category 1
 Likes teaching-Category 2
 Shows learning has a purpose-Category 2
 Organized-Category 1
 Less homework-Category 2
 Energetic-Category 1
 The way you listen to instructions and do your homework and classwork--
 Category 4