TOWARD A CONSTRUCT OF BALANCE: GRADUATE EDUCATION FACULTY

AND THE NAVIGATION OF DIFFICULT DIALOGUES ON RACE

by

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Dedication

To my husband, personal chaplain and co-scholar; to my son; to my mother: Your tireless display of *real* love is something I can only hope to practice, and to model in my own life personally and professionally. Thank you for being my greatest friends.

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want to say a huge thank you to my family at home in Jamaica, and those abroad. What an amazing legacy to be a part of! You are always cheering, encouraging and 'loving' me into what is positive and meaningful about this life. I carry you wherever I go, and my writing is just a small part of what you've helped me do—my part of the race to make a tiny mark in my corner of the world. I only have one hope (as mom would say), "may all who come behind me, find me *faithful*."

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ABSTRACT

Graduate faculty often engage in the work of facilitating students on issues of race and racism in their diversity related courses. Yet, this task remains extremely difficult for many of them. At the same time, while the literature is rife with student experiences of race talk in the graduate classroom, fewer studies have focused exclusively on the instructor's personal experience. With over 60% of American universities requiring their students to enroll in a diversity course, and with the recent upsurge in race-focused conflict within society, the need for authentic conversations on race remains critical. By extension, the need for skillful facilitators can only be expected to increase.

As such, the purpose of this multiple case study was to describe the experiences of eight graduate education faculty navigating difficult discourses on race in their diversity-related courses. The study employed a qualitative research design to include in-depth interviews, critical incident reflections and analytic memos, for rich insights into each case. Positionality served as a guiding theoretical perspective. Findings from the study indicated that faculty members have largely been engaged in balancing diverse strategies used to work through difficult race talk, and that these are undergirded by three key elements: *duality, intentionality* and *sustainability*. As a result, a framework has begun to emerge, toward reflecting a construct of balance for faculty navigating difficult discourses on race.

CHAPTER I

Introduction to the Study

"What do you want me to do? It's not *my* fault!" she retorted at the course instructor. Her cheeks reddened, a tear emerged and a voice filled with anguish pierced the tense silence of a classroom that, just three weeks earlier, had been buzzing with excitement about the creative possibilities of becoming more culturally responsive in teaching and course planning. But neither she, nor her colleagues felt prepared for such a surge of negative emotions all at once...emotions of anger, frustration and fear that resulted from discussions on the social construct of race and its links to perpetuated inequalities…she couldn't accept this. She glared around the room for support, with a heightened feeling of threat, based on the sudden awareness that by virtue of her skin color, she could be labelled as part of the dominant culture on which much of the historical responsibility for racial inequality was placed. A colleague spoke up "look...let's just not do this; let's focus on teaching here...that's what I came for and that's all I'm gonna do." Eyes turned to the 'all-knowing' diversity course instructor, who, with a grimace, glared blankly across the room. *What would she do?*

The aforementioned scenario, involving students' responses to discussions of race and privilege in an education course, is one that I observed shortly after arriving in the United States for graduate study. I recall leaving the session despondent about the future of our classroom discussions, since the articles we explored about race so often evoked visibly uncomfortable feelings in both my White and minority peers. Still, our course instructor facilitated several controversial discussions professionally through the end of the semester, while maintaining a "straight face" even at some of the sharpest accusations

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of bias hurled at her. As I began to process my own feelings of discomfort as an immigrant student suddenly thrust into a minority category in my new and racialized U.S home, I became conscious of the fact that I too, would eventually want to teach diversity classes and facilitate on issues of race – an obviously difficult discourse. More frequently too, I began to ask myself about how my instructor might be processing her own feelings in the face of contentious "race talk" (Pollock, 2004), while at the same time trying to mediate a space, 'safe' enough for all of us to continue authentic dialogue. The range of studies that I have since encountered about dialogues on race at the graduate level only served to heighten my interest in conducting research that probes not only those tensions or struggles graduate students may encounter, but also those instructors may experience and work through.

Overview of the Problem

Many faculty in U.S graduate fields of education engage adult learners in discourses centered on race given (a) ever-increasing racial and ethnic diversity in adult and higher education, (b) race-based inequities and persistent racism in education and society, and (c) their responsibility to prepare culturally responsive learners (Adjei & Gill, 2013; Banks & Banks, 2004; Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008). However, racial discourses remain very "difficult" for faculty and are often risky territory for them (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Manglitz, Guy & Merriweather, 2014; Merriweather, Guy & Manglitz, 2012; Quaye, 2012; Ray, 2010; Ting, 2003). This problem consists of three key dimensions.

First, race itself is often considered a *taboo topic*, because it is a concept rooted in a painful part of America's history. That there is something inherently difficult about race

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talk when compared to other classroom topics of difference, is a theme echoed throughout the literature by researchers and practitioners alike. A participant in Quaye's (2012) qualitative case study of how faculty facilitate constructive race talk for example, illuminates this theme well:

> The minute you bring up race, it's like this cloud descends in the classroom. Everybody gets tense, everybody gets nervous, and people start looking at one another. When I facilitate dialogue, I am up in front saying "Something changed in this classroom. Can you feel it? Can you feel how it's different in here? (Quaye, 2012, p.554)

Second, intense levels of student resistance meted out to faculty, and varied tensions faculty themselves experience have been widely cited as elements that are characteristic of difficult dialogues on race in post-secondary classrooms (Alexander-Floyd, 2008; Kwon, 2011; LaDuke, 2009; Young, 2003). Concerning these elements, Dr. Bonnie TuSmith, co-editor of the text *Race in the College Classroom*, explained that even when students appear "politically correct" as they begin to talk about race, brewing beneath their words is "an emotional Molotov cocktail -- shot through with resentment, fear and rage, that when it explodes, more often than not backfires on the faculty member presenting the material" (Hamilton, 2002, p.3). Consequently, faculty who teach on race related issues commonly experience fatigue, frustration and associated stress (Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta & Frey, 2009; Manglitz, Guy & Merriweather, 2014; Sue, 2013; Ting, 2003). Recent research has also continued to indicate that faculty experience a strong sense of fear and exhibit reluctance as it relates to teaching on issues of race (e.g. Bigatti et al., 2012; Sue et al., 2009).

Third, the difficulty of race talk for faculty is compounded by limited empirical research that focuses exclusively on the instructor experience. A dearth of literature on

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race-related classroom experiences does exist. However, while students' experiences of difficult discourses on race are frequently reported, fewer studies have focused exclusively on the instructor experience (e.g. Quaye, 2012; Medina & Mix-Brown, 2009; Sue et al., 2011). Researchers Sue et al. (2011), prior to their own work on instructors of Color and race talk, observed, for example that: "to date no published research has addressed specifically how [instructors] perceive and react to difficult dialogue on race, the internal struggles they experience and the strategies they employ" (p. 338). Ray (2010), in her chapter on teaching race in adult education commented that, "much of the adult education literature that speaks to addressing learners' needs and issues neglects to articulate the needs of the adult educator especially as they relate to issues of race" (p.78), leading to the proverbial question "what about me?"

In seeming agreement, scholars in the field of adult education recently dedicated an entire edition of the *Adult Learning* journal to the pedagogy of race in order to "facilitate much needed dialogue among adult educators about the realities of teaching race" (Bowman, Merriweather & Closson, 2014, p.80). In it, the editors emphasized that though research suggests faculty of Color for example, need to be informed by "deliberate praxis" for both effectiveness and sanity sake, very little scholarship is available to help them do this (p.83). Adult education has long prided itself as a field dedicated to social justice. If teaching on race and racism is critical to education and society, but faculty fear, or are intimidated by its difficulty, there seems a clear need for more empirical work specifically concerning how such difficulties might best be worked through, from the perspectives of those educators of adults who have engaged in this work over time.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of graduate education faculty who have navigated difficult discourses on race in their diversity-related graduate courses. As navigation means "to ascertain one's position, and…find one's way through" (Oxford, 2015), this study goes beyond looking at expert-recommended teaching strategies, to examining the lessons faculty have learned in simultaneously working through personal tensions and the diverse classroom challenges often associated with race talk. Gaining such an understanding is important to helping others alleviate similar concerns and to developing policies that support meaningful faculty development initiatives for teaching on race and racism.

Subsequently, the central research question that the study aimed to answer was: *How do graduate education faculty navigate difficult discourses on race in their diversity-related courses?* Since it is widely cited that a large part of the difficulty of classroom race talk involves emotional and identity tensions for all involved, I also wanted to find out: *How do faculty handle personally challenging emotional responses that they experience during difficult dialogues on race?* And: *How do faculty see the navigation of difficult discourses as relating to, or impacting their identities*?

Theoretical Perspective

My research is heavily influenced by an interpretivist paradigm. I embrace that much of who we are equals the sum total of our respective experiences in nuanced contexts; subsequently how we interpret the world is a key basis for knowledge construction that can critically inform the way we live and interact. Participants in this study then, are key constructors of experiences in navigation that might inform or shape

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research and policy. Their combined knowledge construction might lead to patterned strategies helpful in informing similar practitioners. Glesne (2011) noted that for interpretivists:

> What is of importance to know then is how people interpret and make meaning of some object, event, action perception etc…accessing the perspectives of several members of the same group about some phenomena can begin to say something about cultural patterns of thought and action for that group. (p.8)

In line with interpretivism, positionality theory is critically linked to individual interpretation of self and context. As such, this theory was used as an overarching perspective for the current study. According to Kezar and Lester (2010), positionality theory focuses on the multi-situatedness or multiple positions held by individuals, how these positions influence the way people make meaning, and contexts within which multiple identities shift and change. Everyone speaks or acts from a certain place or "position" (Hall, 1990). The theory was particularly useful because of the diversity evident amongst my participants (to be highlighted next). Details of positionality, and its alignment with case study research are discussed in Chapters two and three.

Overview of Methods

This study was designed and conducted using qualitative inquiry and multiple case study methodology. Yin (2003) outlines that a case study is applicable when: (a) the study's focus is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) manipulation of participant behavior is not possible; and (c) the study focuses on contextual conditions because they are relevant to the phenomenon. A case then is "a phenomenon of some sort bounded by a certain context…in effect [it is] your unit of analysis" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.25). In this study of eight participant-educators, each represented my unit of analysis. Since context was critical to understanding the way each made meaning of teaching race, I

incorporated data collection instruments such as interviews, critical incidents and analytic memos, with a view to documenting insights on participants' classroom environments and any background experiences that they have perceived to be influential to their engagement of difficult dialogues.

The study described the experiences of racially and ethnically diverse education faculty who have taught on issues of race in diversity-related courses for three years or more, and who have experienced difficult dialogues on race. As mentioned earlier, several adult educators recently issued an urgent call for more attention to be given to the pedagogy of race. This call is no less apparent across higher education settings (contexts which increasingly serve adult learners, particularly at the graduate level), given the persistent challenges of race talk diverse instructors (e.g. Haltinner, 2015; Sue, 2013). One meaningful way to address this was to look at the work of those who have consistently facilitated adult learners in diversity focused courses - across multiple fields of education. Much of the responsibility of education faculty is to "produce racially literate graduates who possess the ability to articulate and analyze the critical roles race and racism play in producing educational inequities" (Bryan, Wilson, Lewis & Wills, 2012, p. 135). As such, I felt their perspectives concerning race-focused teaching over time would be invaluable.

My goal in using a multiple case study design was to provide rich insights into instructors' experiences. Since I needed participants who have been directly involved in navigating difficult moments surrounding racial discourses in their classrooms, I used criterion based purposive sampling in the form of snowball or chain sampling (Patton, 2002). Creswell (2008) describes this kind of sample as "information rich", and the idea

as "intentionally select[ing] individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (p.214). Saldana's (2009) codes to theory model guided my analysis strategy in examining individual cases, and in describing patterns and themes across cases.

Definition of Terms

The following key terms sometimes vary in meaning across the literature, or have been used interchangeably with others. As such, I have provided operational definitions that clarify their meanings in this study.

1. Adult: "Persons may be considered adults when they have taken on the social, psychological and/or economic roles typically expected of adults in their cultures and collective societies" (Hansman & Mott, 2010, p.14).

2. Cultural Identity: The sense of interconnectedness that an individual may have with a particular cultural group and its shared symbols, meanings, values and behaviors. Aspects of culture may include, but are not limited to race, class and gender (Banks, 2006, p. 132).

3. Difficult Classroom Dialogue: "…occurs when differences in perspectives are challenged or judged to be offensive-often with intense emotions aroused [although] it can also brew in silence" (Young, 2003, p.348). For this study, the terms *difficult dialogue* and *difficult discourse* are used interchangeably.

4. Diversity-Related Course: "…refers to the study of one or more groups that have been historically marginalized on the basis of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, religion, age, immigration, and /or geopolitical power." (Green River College, 2015)

5. Emotional Response: A physiological response to stimuli; for example "fear as an emotional response to the encounter of a mountain lion" (Dirkx, 2008, p.12)

6. Ethnicity: Cultural orientation – belonging, often based on for e.g. customs, group membership and geographic region (Adelman et al., 2003)

7. Identity: "…a label, really, for the collection of influences and effects from immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems." (Olsen, 2008, p. 139).

8. Navigation: A skill involving accurately determining one's position in order to plan and find one's way through (Oxford, 2015).

9. Personal Identity: The various meanings attached to an individual by her/himself, and by others. This largely includes one's concept of self (Lauriala & Kukkonen, 2005)

10. Professional Identity: One's professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences within a skill based, educational or vocational arena (Schein, 1978).

11. Race: Although this may also be interpreted as "human grouping …according to overt biological characteristics" (Mitchell & Salsbury, 1999, p.22); this study defines race as "a social construct…the result of social and historical processes" (Anderson & Collins, 2007, p.5).

12. Racism: An attitude, action, or institutional structure that subordinates a person or group because of color. It is the visibility of skin color--and of other physical traits associated with particular colors or groups--that marks individuals as 'targets' for subordination by members of the white majority. Specifically, White racism subordinates members of other groups primarily because they are not White in color (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1970, p. 5).

13. Race Talk: Referring to talking about race in the classroom (Pollock, 2004).

Defining Difficult Dialogues on Race

Specific characteristics that define the nature of difficult discourses on race have emerged from the work of counseling psychologist Derald Wing Sue; such a definition is, to my knowledge, the only one of its kind to date. As a culmination of several years of his own research with other investigators and, in the same vein as Young's (2003) work on difficult dialogue, Sue (2013) concluded that:

> Difficult dialogues on race a) are potentially threatening conversations or interactions between members of different racial and ethnic groups, (b) reveal major differences in worldviews that are challenged publicly, (c) are found to be offensive to participants, (d) arouse intense emotions such as dread and anxiety (for White students) and anger and frustration (for students of Color) that disrupt communication and behaviors, (e) are often instigated by racial micro aggressions, and (f) involve an unequal status relationship of power and privilege among participants. (p.2)

In line with his findings over time, several educational researchers who write on diversity-focused teaching, have found that racial dialogues often include high levels of intense emotions (e.g. Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008), offend participants (e.g. Tatum, 1992), and are a threat to an amicable learning environment (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 2006). As such, I find Sue's (2013) description useful and meaningful for the purpose of defining difficult dialogues on race in this study.

Researcher Influences and Assumptions

I am a Black, foreign-born PhD candidate who has taught courses in global education and multicultural education courses in the United States. For the past several years, I too have joined the difficult discussion on race both as an advocate for myself (automatically placed in a 'minority' category in a racially normalized society), and for other minorities here. From stereotypical remarks made regarding my educational

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achievements to tensions in negotiating my own Black identity, experiences in the U.S have taught me that "race [really] matters" (West, 1993).

As an adult educator, I am passionate about two areas: racial and ethnic diversity, and instructional design. This study allows me to merge both interests by (a) exploring ways in which racial diversity issues might be facilitated despite their widely cited difficulties. My initial interest in the subject of this study stemmed from two critical incidents, one of which was mentioned in this chapter's introduction. The other occurred at a conference just after I had shared some thoughts about my dream to inform policy and practice through an investigation of difficult racial dialogues as educators of adult learners experience them. As I moved away from the round table, a fellow doctoral student (and educator for over 10 years) grabbed my arm and with tears in her eyes said "thank you, thank you, thank you for doing this…they never talk about how *we* feel during professional development!"

I had not fully decided on my topic at that point in time, but her words resounded with me as I had found myself trying to negotiate my own tensions and others' expectations of me – first as a Black immigrant – then, as a Black instructor facilitating multicultural classes. Notwithstanding, reflection on my own experiences as a mentee of both Black and White faculty involved in diversity work, subsequent reviews of the literature, and strong, supportive responses to my ideas elsewhere cemented the fact that this was an area of study that needed attention.

Consequently, I approached the study with three working assumptions, namely:

- A specific investigation into difficult classroom discourses on race will be relevant and valuable to adult educators in higher education.

- Participants in the study would be willing to disclose authentic and

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truthful accounts of their experiences with difficult classroom dialogues on race, although responses might vary by race.

- Emotional and/or identity tensions form a natural part of an instructor's reaction to difficult dialogues on race.

Concerning biases, as an immigrant woman of Color, I realized that I may have the tendency to favor or illuminate the ways in which study participants similar to myself might view dialogues on race and racism. In addition to this, literature I have reviewed on racial dialogues in post-secondary settings feature either White students as the most challenging to work with, or faculty of Color as the most negatively affected. Since my goal was to use a racially diverse sample, I was cognizant of the possibility this knowledge could cause me to be more sensitive toward faculty of Color even though the experiences of White faculty could potentially prove just as stressful and as important to learn from.

Significance of the Study

The current study has a variety of potential benefits for research, policy and practice surrounding the teaching of race and the handling of difficult dialogues on race in graduate classrooms.

For Knowledge Base and Future Research

Literature surrounding the teaching of race in adult and higher education indicates more studies are needed on instructor experiences (Bowman et al., 2014; Perry et al., 2009; Sue, 2013). Although some valuable work exists in this area, several studies that include the instructor experience are framed within the context of investigating multicultural or diversity courses in general (e.g. Kwon, 2011; Ting, 2003), so that the

data often speak to challenges with diversity as a whole, not race in depth. Second, a significant portion of the work on instructors and race talk is conceptual, or uses auto ethnographic methods (e.g. Tummala-Narra, 2011; Gnandnass, 2014); this limits the engagement of multiple perspectives. Third, perspectives of experienced faculty are not frequently explored; as such there is little detail on how faculty may have worked through the challenges of difficult race talk over time.

The current study is expected to add dimension to the research literature by providing descriptions of race talk navigation, from graduate faculty who are racially diverse, and who are experienced. Participants like these have tremendous potential value since their experience over time offer insights into a wider range of experiences and identities from which to learn.

For Policy

Well over 60% of learners in higher education are currently required to complete a diversity-related course as part of their academic program (American Association of Colleges, 2015). As well, campus racial climate and institutional factors often matter as it relates to how faculty carry out discussions on race (Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Poon, 2013). For administrators and policymakers trying to be supportive of faculty teaching on issues of race, this study might prove valuable in two ways. First, the inclusion of racially diverse faculty may assist policy makers in better understanding how instructors' self-defined identities, and their classroom contexts shape difficult dialogues on race and vice versa. These insights, viewed from a positionality perspective, might help policy makers tailor faculty development initiatives for addressing race talk more effectively. Second, since the study explores how faculty handle challenging emotional responses, policy

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makers may glean the kinds of support mechanisms that might be put in place to help faculty handle them.

For Practice

It is understood that challenging personal responses arise for both student and instructor during race talk, to include emotional and identity tensions (Sue et al., 2009; Sue et al., 2011; Manglitz, Merriweather & Guy, 2012). As well, it is understood that facilitating racial dialogues effectively, has the potential to elicit positive learning outcomes in students (Gayle, Cortez & Preiss, 2013; Mayo, 2010; Wang, 2008). Although much is reported about instructional strategies for handling students, what seems less apparent is ways in which faculty manage to navigate their own tensions and that of students, or how they have done so over time. Since the study's use of *navigation* alludes to a wide variety of strategies (not just instructional) might be suggested by faculty, a multiple case study like this is critical in its openness to such insights. By extension, this should help to inform novice educators and graduate faculty in training with a view to improving practice in a more holistic way.

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Chapter Summary

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This multiple case study described the experiences of eight multi-ethnic education faculty who have navigated difficult dialogues on race in their diversity-related graduate courses. It also examined how they have handled emotions, and how they perceive that navigating race talk has impacted, or related to their identities. Limited research has been conducted exclusively on the instructor experience in this context. Some examples include the work of Pasque, Chesler, Charbeneau & Carlson (2013), Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera & Lin (2009), and Sue et al., (2011). Scholars have pointed to the

need for additional work concerning approaches to teaching race focused content

(Bowman et al., 2014; Kwon, 2011; LaDuke, 2009; Sue, 2013; Ting, 2003; Wright,

2011). Undergirded by a positionality perspective, this study's findings may be source of

critical information for faculty development initiatives and for practice.

This document consists of six major chapters. Chapter one has included an

introduction, overview of the problem, the study's key components, its significance, and

the researcher's biographical information. Chapter two reviews literature on salient

issues surrounding graduate faculty experiences with teaching on race and racism, while

the study's methodology is detailed in Chapter three. Chapter four presents the individual

case findings of the study, with a view to providing rich *case narratives* for each

participant, and as a first step in multiple case study. In chapter five, cross case findings

are shared. A synthesis of findings appears in Chapter six, with a discussion of the

findings, as well as conclusions and recommendations for both practice and further

research. Finally, the study culminates with a researcher's reflection on the dissertation

journey. References and appendixes are also provided.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of extant literature related to the experiences of graduate faculty with difficult dialogues on race in graduate courses. Literature included is drawn from the closely related fields of adult and higher education, with a view to obtaining a greater understanding of elements characterizing difficult racial discourses, and of how instructors have worked through facilitating them. In addition, the review includes an explanation of the theoretical perspective undergirding the study.

Three significant factors influenced the organization of the review. First, empirical studies focusing exclusively on the instructor experience are much fewer in number than those focusing on the student experience. Subsequently, the current study is situated within the context of graduate fields of education but several instructor-focused studies from counseling and psychology have been included, because relevant research on faculty exists in those graduate fields. Second, because many variables drive the teaching/learning transaction (Johnson-Bailey, 2002), arguably, faculty encounters with difficult dialogues are multifaceted and involve their own perceptions and responses, as well as their students'. Given this, I include an examination of those studies that use graduate students as participants and that provide substantial descriptions of instructor-student interactions in difficult dialogues on race. Third, many of the descriptions concerning difficult dialogues on race are embedded within teaching and learning in multicultural or diversity courses–courses which include other aspects of difference.

What I have included from a mix of empirical and conceptual works, reflects only those clearly delineated findings on race talk in particular.

To locate scholarly material, I searched within online databases for adult and higher education journals, such as *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Adult Learning*, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* and the *Journal of Higher Education*, to name a few. In addition, I searched databases of diversity related journals such as *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* and *Multicultural Perspectives* manually and electronically. Texts that detail how university instructors have experienced teaching race, are also included.

Eight major sections constitute this literature review: (1) Why Classroom Dialogues on Race Still Matter, (2) Race Talk in America, a Difficulty Rooted in History, (3) How Language and Jargon Add Complex Dynamics, (4) Emotions in Teaching and Learning About Race (5) Identity in Teaching and Learning About Race (6) Student Resistance, (7) Approaches to Handling Difficult Race Talk, and (8) Positionality as a Suitable Theoretical Perspective. Findings from the review indicate that discussing race and its related issues remain critical to adult and higher education; that because of its inherent nature, the race topic poses unique challenges to dialogue; and that student resistance and instructor tensions are the key challenges associated with difficult dialogues on race. Moreover, while students' resistance and, by extension, instructors' pedagogical responses to them are rife in the literature, few studies have begun to unpack how instructors' own personal tensions that arise during race talk are countered or are handled. As well, few studies have begun to explore how, in the face of these tensions, they navigate the dynamics that are unique to a classroom experiencing difficult

dialogues on race. I conclude the literature review with a look at the implications of its findings for the current study.

Why Classroom Dialogues on Race Still Matter

That "race matters" is a common idea echoed by many scholar-practitioners in adult and higher education. Many contend we live in a racialized society, and by extension, categorize, interpret or perceive through the lens of race. Hence, inequalities continue to persist in diverse post-secondary settings (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Sheared, Bailey, Scipio, Peterson & Brookfield, 2010; Tierney, 2014). Notwithstanding, the prevalence of racially motivated crimes within the past three to five years and the mention of social movements ranging from Black Lives Matter to All Lives Matter, have again reignited race talk, and it's associated contentiousness in both social and educational circles. Because race is considered a "contentious subject" (Isaac, Merriweather & Rogers, 2010), the reality of a racialized America still struggling with systemic inequity, for example, may seem the most obvious reason to continue talking about race. Beyond this, however, researchers point to critical reasons for intentionally engaging in classroom dialogues on race in adult and higher education. This section addresses the most commonly cited ones, under the themes *Increasing Racial Diversity*, *Influential Race Construct* and [*In*]*visible' Race Talk*.

Increasing Racial Diversity

The population of racial minority students has increased steadily over time in adult and higher education settings. (Alfred, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Researchers note that such a trend underlines the need for increased multicultural and/or interracial competence between and among diverse student and

faculty (Kumi-Yeboak & James, 2011), and that addressing race related issues within the classroom is critical to the development of such competencies (Bryan et al., 2012; Diem, Ali & Carpenter, 2013). In the opening chapter of her text *Adult Education in a Multicultural Society,* Beverly Cassara, for example, outlined that by the year 2020, racial minorities would double on United States college campuses and called for adult educators to be mindful of their role in helping to facilitate inter-racial dialogue and understanding (Cassara, 1990). Almost 20 years later, Bowman's (2009) research would outline, college diversity courses are becoming even more necessary since "by 2023, more than half of U.S children under 18 years old will belong to a racial or ethnic minority group" (p.182).

In addition, immigrants in the U.S currently represent approximately 12% of the total population and the National Center for Education Statistics (2011) projects a 14% increase of non-resident aliens or immigrants on college campuses by 2018. Evidence of growing racial diversity over time remains a key basis on which diversity researcher-educators call for the teaching of matters surrounding race in adult and higher education settings. Further, they highlight the fact that despite this growth, a relative lack of diversity in colleges and universities and completion disparities between Whites and minorities are still glaring; present day dialogues on race then, remain relevant (Fletcher & Tienda, 2010; Tierney, 2014).

On the basis of this increasing racial and ethnic diversity, references to racial discourses as limiting and subsequent calls for an expansion of the discourse to include mixed race and foreign born perspectives, have also been on the rise (Alfred, 2008; Brooks & Clunis, 2007; Butterfield, 2004; Fries-Britt, Mwangi, & Peralta, 2014; Johnston, 2014; Murray-Johnson, 2013). Researchers contend that the once essentialized

meanings of Blackness, and the meaning of race in general are being transformed, given the prevailing increase of Black immigrants in the U.S (Benson, 2006; Kretsedemas, 2008). They note that this is as a result of (a) the multiplicity of factors that make up the immigrant's "Black experience" and (b) the blending of both ethnicity and race in the Black immigrant's definition of self or cultural group.

Influential Race Construct

Scholars agree that as a social construct, race heavily influences varied dimensions of adult and higher education. Inside the classroom, an adult educator's racial positionality will often affect power dynamics, levels of inclusion, student perception and other key elements of the teaching/learning transaction either positively or negatively (Alfred, 2008; Howard, 2006; Johnson-Bailey, 2002; Housee, 2008; Ray, 2010; Tisdell & Perry, 1997; Tatum, 2007; Waring & Bordoloi, 2013). Ethnic and cultural components often associated with racial identity, are regarded as factors that could influence the adult learning experience in a variety of ways (Alfred, 2002; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007).

Dialogue on the race construct has also proven to benefit learners in adult and higher education. Research has shown that in-class discourses along lines of difference, and in particular racial difference, have served to promote transformational learning and growth (Bryan et al., 2012; Closson & Rhodes, 2011), enhance critical thinking skills (Gayle, Cortez & Preiss, 2013) and provide diverse educational benefits (Johnston, 2014). Curriculum content is also impacted by race. A major, but perhaps less overt determinant of inequity and reproduction of the status quo, curricula often show power and privilege in terms of whose voices are dominant and whose are relegated to the

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margins, with regard to resource materials selected (Banks, 2014; Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Outside the classroom, race has impacted areas ranging from student advising and student affairs to the general campus climate. Since, for example, academic advising is key to student retention and persistence, student advisors must be able to communicate across racial difference and facilitate this well (Priest and McPhee, 2000). As such, intentional efforts to create authentic dialogues across adult and higher education settings have proven to increase student and faculty retention and satisfaction; in fact, an absence of this has proven detrimental to learners, staff and faculty alike (Blanding, 2007; Kwon, 2011; Poon, 2010; Tatum, 1992, 2003). Teaching or dialoguing about race intentionally then, is a critical way of bridging gaps around intercultural competence, and is a discourse that "cannot be left to chance" (Hurtado, 2005). Tatum's (1992) conclusion on this matter seems a statement still echoed in the current literature:

> It has become painfully clear on many college campuses across the United States that we cannot have successful multi-racial campuses without talking about race and learning about racism. Providing a forum where this discussion can take place safely over a semester, a time period that allows personal and group development to unfold in ways that day-long or weekend programs do not may be among the most proactive learning opportunities an institution can provide. (p.23)

Arguably one of the most telling studies on the multi-faceted influences of race as a construct is Johnston's (2014) content analysis of the applications of race within higher education research entitled *What's the Use of Race*? In his examination of prominent higher education research journals, Johnston found that the race construct permeated an expansive number of studies in higher education to include studies on access and achievement, identity development, dynamics among college students and policies, specialized programs and campus climates. Often, multiple applications of race were

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used in each study. For instance, of the 261 articles examined, 77% used race and or

ethnicity to describe their sample characteristics and 32.6 % used a race construct to

describe the demographic profile of the state institution or particular program being

studied. Race was also used to determine how a particular study may have been

influenced, as a tool for comparison (i.e. with different racial or ethnic groups) and as a

control variable. Implicit in Johnston's (2014) central argument and critique on how race

is used in higher education research, is the need to continue race related dialogues in

adult and higher education toward eradicating racial stereotypes. As he notes:

> Focusing on higher education research is especially important given the ways in
> which racial applications in education research may perpetuate stereotypes related
> to intelligence and race (e.g. Hernstein & Murray, 1994), potentially limiting both
> scholars' and practitioners scope of how education can and should be improved to
> eliminate racial disparities. (p.18)

[In]visible Race Talk

Ironically, race talk has been considered both highly visible, yet painfully

invisible in varied circles. There has been strong visibility across the literature

concerning race-related topics, and in general, there has been a recent surge of race

related topics in U.S media. Yet, many in the field of adult and higher education have

indicated authentic discourses on race remain invisible, and outline that they are both

limited and limiting. I have used the term *limited* to refer to inadequate scope in

discussing all the issues related to race, while I use *limiting* to refer to inadequate scope

in discussing the construct of race. According to Sheared et al. (2010), "limited

attention is being given to the role race and racism play in how and why underserved

individuals come to be in their present economic, political and social conditions" (p.4).

Similarly, Blanding (2007) contended that "when it comes to discussing race, it's clear

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that in classrooms around the country, including school[s] of education, more work needs to be done (p.1)." More recently, others have described the limited conversation around effective race pedagogies, and offered suggestions for this in a U.S contemporary society that remains racially charged (e.g. Bowman et al., , 2014; Haltinner, 2015).

Limited attention to race is described by scholars like Bryan et al. (2012) as "the silencing of race" in their qualitative study on doctoral students' reactions to racial dialogues. This means racial dialogue manifests through the intentional avoidance of race as a subject in adult and higher education classrooms. Other scholars concur with this notion (e.g. Johnson-Bailey, 2002; St Clair & Kishimoto, 2010; Sue, 2013). As well, some added the use of color-blind ideologies as an avoidance mechanism (e.g. Johnson-Bailey, 2002; Neville, Yeung, Todd, Spanierman & Reid, 2011). Reasons for the limitations placed on race talk within adult and higher education, seem consistent. They include the following: (a) the painful or controversial nature of the race in a U.S context (Isaacs, Rogers & Merriweather, 2010), (b) the embrace of a post-racial myth by some, given events such as the election of America's first Black president (Adjei & Gill, 2013), (c) the prevalence of separate diversity courses (instead of race issues being taught across the curriculum) that may -downplay some of the real issues of race and racism (St Clair & Kishimoto, 2010); and the assumption that learners at the graduate level enter their programs with a certain level of racial literacy (Bryan et al., 2012).

Given the prevalence of arguments over time in defense of intentional racial dialogues at the post-secondary level, it is clear that race based conversations are critical

for the development of culturally competent individuals, continued sensitivity, and

progress towards change regarding educationally based racial inequities. In any

substantial exploration of how to talk about race effectively however, unpacking the

historic characteristics and perceptions associated with its difficulty seems a likely and

important first step.

Race Talk in America: A Difficulty Rooted in History

As early as 1903, noted African American scholar and activist W.E Dubois

declared that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the "color line"

(Dubois, 1903, p.17). This notion, has been echoed in various ways by many

contemporary scholars. They note the problem stems from the reality of a painful past in

which the construct of race enabled unequally classifying individuals, and led to racism.

Further, these actions enslaved persons of Color physically and psychologically through a

wide range of inferior labels, while establishing Whiteness as the benchmark standard

and norm (hooks, 2003; Orelius, 2013). The construct of race remains engrained.

According to Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey (2008), for example:

> Although race is socially constructed and is not the only positionality that
> categorizes or affects the social order, it is an important factor in the rankings that
> regulate societal hierarchy. The effects of how race and ethnicity are viewed in
> the world are embedded in our educational fabric (p. 46).

"Teaching about race in college settings began in the 1960s and 1970s when

Ethnic Studies and other race-specific programs emerged as a response to the absence of

histories and perspectives of people of color in academia" (St Clair & Kishimoto, 2010,

p.18). Since then, several race based pedagogies and approaches to teaching have

included the broad field of antiracist pedagogy; multicultural education (Banks, 1992);

social justice education rooted in critical theory (Giroux, 1983) and culturally responsive

pedagogy (Gay, 2000), among others. These approaches often consist of race related terms used to encourage and facilitate more authentic, historically based content, as against politically correct dialogues on race.

According to Sue (2013) in his article *The Psychology of Race Talk*, the idea of talking about race brings a number of hard realities to the fore, given its painful history. These include the fact that race talk "violates the politeness protocol…academic protocol and color-blind protocol" (p.666). He explains that because of the discomfort experienced during conversations about race, individuals tend to approach it superficially, being careful not to be labelled insensitive or to be isolated. Since by nature race talk is often discouraged and seen as "taboo" (Sue, 2013; Tatum, 1992), violating these "conversation conventions" can have negative consequences. In the academic classroom, Sue also contends that race talk is often discouraged because (a) assumptions exist that discussing emotions are not part of classroom practice, (b) that "dialogues on race should be purely intellectual exercises," since "facts," more than opinions tend to be valued, and (c) more than facts and content, real feelings/tensions associated with thoughts and beliefs on race and racism are likely to emerge.

Like Sue, other researchers attending to the psychological dynamics of race talk concede that race talk is intensely intellectual and intensely emotional, so that one never knows what will happen as an outcome; as such polite avoidance is often an avenue that is taken in the classroom (Tummala-Narra, 2009; Young, 2003). The discourse remains uniquely challenging since both the cognitive and emotional facets of an individual are engaged (Manglitz, Guy & Merriweather, 2014). One such complexity seems related to the terminologies and/or jargon used in race talk.

How Language and Jargon Add Complex Dynamics

Part of the discomfort of race talk is often grounded in the content of most diversity or social justice oriented courses (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Bryan et al., 2012; Closson & Rhodes, 2011; Lund, 2010; Pasque et al., 2013). As an extension of being steeped in a painful history, ideas and concepts that form part of race talk are often painful, offensive or uncomfortable for many White students and students of Color (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Sue, 2013). Frequently used concepts include for example, *White privilege:* "an invisible package of unearned assets that [Whites] can count on cashing in each day but about which [they are] meant to remain oblivious" (McIntosh, 1997, p.291); or something that Whites can benefit from because of a historical perception of Whiteness as the norm (Lund, 2010)—and *colorblindness*: a belief system that does not see or judge individuals by the color of their skin…the dominant lens through which Whites understand race" (Mojab, 2008, p.106). As well terms like race and racism (already defined in Chapter one), are commonplace.

In considering the above named concepts, Whites for example, may come to a personal awareness of a *privileged* positionality against the backdrop of racism as a system of advantage; students of color may grapple with being silenced in the process or deciding whether or not reliving the experience is even necessary. Compounding this dynamic in a classroom discussion are understandings of the terms themselves. For example, Johnston's (2014) content analysis of 261 higher education research articles, uncovered that race and ethnicity and culture are often "used interchangeably or without clear definitions" (p.4). He also highlighted the power of implicit biological meaning that undergirds the notion of race. He noted that while most scholars and practitioners in the

academy agree that race is a social construct, the concept of race as biological seem to be reinforced by research and practice, based on the use of racial group boundaries and the importance of distinguishing racial identity for both practitioner and student. In line with Johnston's (2014) findings, Cho (2013) also found that students still struggle with the concept of race as a social construct.

In addition, the terms racism and prejudice have been used interchangeably. According to Tatum (2003), defining racism as prejudice (i.e. a biased judgment or opinion that is based on negative stereotypes), is a common feature of college classes that teach on race. She, however, makes the distinction that racism moves beyond everyday individual prejudice to include those who orchestrate systems of power. In addition to this, scholars have found that there are often differences in the way some Whites view the definition of racism when compared with persons of color, so that there are sometimes "competing definitions" (Emerson, 2010, p.11). Whites often perceive racism as "intended, individual acts of overt prejudice and discrimination [while] persons of color regard it as prejudice plus power, so that while anyone can be prejudiced, only the dominant culture can perpetuate racism through the power they possess" (Emerson, 2010, p.12; Tatum, 2003).

Given the focus on the difficulty inherent in classroom race talk so far, and the focus of the literature review on varied aspects of difficult race-based dialogues in the classroom, an important point must be highlighted before moving on. Not all race-focused teaching experiences presented in the literature have included "difficult" dimensions, though most have. One such example is Closson and Rhodes' (2011) work, *Reflections on a Positively Deviant Course on Race and Racism*. These scholars found

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that they encountered a "unique environment," in which several factors influenced the success of the course. These included the "classroom climate, learner expectations and cognitive and emotional learner outcomes" (p.1). This chapter's later discussions on student resistance do appear to give credence to the link between this kind of environment and reduced resistance.

In general however, literature on teaching race in adult and higher education settings is consistent concerning the points made in this section. First, ideas and concepts framing race talk are inherently challenging for all students, because of the historical context within which race in America is based. More often than not, it appears more challenging for White students who 'represent' the dominant culture upon which the blame for the construct of race, and related racism has been placed historically. As Leonardo and Porter (2010) put it, "critical race pedagogy is inherently risky for Whites" given the history of race (p.139). Second, key terms that are used interchangeably could contribute to varied [mis]understandings between and among classroom dialogue participants. The seemingly painful history behind race as a topic, and of its related concepts, also serve to illuminate intangible elements like emotions and identity tensions that are constant companions to race talk in the classroom. As such, the next two sections provide a general overview of emotion and identity, as well as their perceived relationship to teaching and learning during difficult dialogues on race.

Emotions in Teaching and Learning About Race

The discussion started slowly, with students dancing around the issue with tepid responses. Halfway into the class, however, a white student named Deborah broke the niceties… "I don't think these issues are as racially based as they are made out to be," she said. As Elmore [the instructor], who is also White, settled in for a

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spirited discussion, he was instantly brought up short. "You have no understanding of the issues these people face," cut in a Latina woman named Helen. "You have chosen your identities . . . people of Color have no such privilege; we carry our identities wherever we go.

Immediately, another Latina student named Jessica jumped in with even stronger words. "You don't understand. You can't possibly understand. You will never understand," she said. "This happens all the time in classes here. Issues of racism get pushed aside in favor of things White people like to talk about." "In the space of a few moments, my whole life (at least my life as a teacher) passed before my eyes," Elmore later wrote in a case study exploring the incident…it felt very bad — bad like sick-in-the-pit-of-your-stomach bad; bad like I-want-outta-here bad." (Blanding, 2007, p.1)

The vignette above describes several emotions apparent in a race focused graduate education course. As the author and class professor documented, negative emotions such as anger, frustration and sadness are often present in race talk, and affect both student and faculty. While incorporating negative emotions that may arise from touchy topics like race, remains undesirable for many (see for e.g. findings from Pasque et al., 2013), over time, researchers have increasingly called for attention to the positive role emotions might play, citing their strong potential as tools for adults' growth, transformation and change (Cherniss, 2000; Dirkx, 2008; Knight-Diiop and Oesterreich, 2009). As well, research on emotions and its relationship to teaching and learning is still much needed in post-secondary education (Trigwell, 2010; Van Aacken, 2013). The first part of this section provides a historical overview.

Overview of Emotions and Education

Historically, expressions of emotion have been considered a necessary outsider to the teaching and learning experience, as early and more traditional theorists placed an extreme emphasis on the cognitive, rational and logical spheres of intelligence as more acceptable in formal educational environments. Later, things began to change. For

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example, Goleman (1995), building on the non-cognitive and emotional intelligence work of Salovey and Mayer (1990), explored the role and nature of emotions in his seminal text, *Emotional Intelligence*. In it, he theorized that high levels of emotional intelligence carry with it skills that are critically beneficial: identifying one's own emotions and that of others, harnessing emotions and applying them appropriately to solve tasks, and managing and regulating one's own emotions. Cherniss (2000), in a critical summary of historical research on emotions, outlined that "there is research suggesting that emotional and social skills actually help improve cognitive functioning" (p.5). Further, in support of Goleman's notions, she explained that the value of emotional intelligence for success lay both in one's ability to know how and when to express it—and how to control it.

A growing number of adult education scholars have also highlighted the importance of emotions in adult learning contexts. These include emotions as a core feature in contemporary adult learning theories (Merriam, Cafarella & Baumgartner, 2007) and the inextricable link between emotions and adult learning (Brookfield, 1996; Jarvis, 2006; Dirkx, 2008). Scholars also deem emotions as critical to having a more holistic understanding of learning through experience (Yorks & Kasl, 2006); to the "expansion of consciousness and integration of personality" necessary for transformational learning (Dirkx, 2008); and to helping adults make meaning of the world (Nusbaum, 2001; Solomon, 2007). In practice, tapping into students' emotional expressions may help instructors find deeper meaning, while "envisioning alternate solutions for the future" (Lipson-Lawrence, 2008). A fairly recent qualitative study on adult educators in community college settings for instance, found that emotions in the classroom were intentionally stirred by faculty to (a) enhance the learning environment,

(b) influence learners' energy levels, (c) make class content more memorable, and (d) incite deeper understanding of class content (Van Aacken, 2013). An acknowledgement of emotional expressions as part of learning has been a valuable tool in helping students work through group processes (Smith, 2008) and in setting the stage for students to be prepared for difficult conversations on multiculturalism (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008).

John Dirkx, recognized scholar on emotions and their relationship to adult learning, noted that "adult learners most likely experience strong emotions around areas of conflict" (Dirkx, 2008, p.9). It is not surprising then that the literature found for this review featured negative emotions as an element that usually preceded or fueled discourses on a topic like race (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Merriweather, Guy & Manglitz, 2012; Ray, 2010; Sue, 2013; Wang, 2008; Young, 2003). After several years of research on race talk in graduate courses, Sue (2013) concluded that emotions such as fear, anger, guilt and despair continue to confound both students and faculty. As Froyum (2015) put it, "studying racism itself invokes unique emotions to manage" (p. 82).

While researchers agree that race talk is inherently emotional—and even a necessary component of diversity oriented courses, they have also echoed the need for practitioners to facilitate emotional expressions in such a way that they provide important benefits such as student growth and racial literacy (Gayle, Cortez & Preiss, 2013; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Wang, 2008). For example, in their study of a graduate course aimed at engaging teachers' understanding and challenging of personal, educational and social inequities, Knight-Diop and Oesterreich (2009) encouraged a pedagogy of

discomfort and a pedagogy of challenge (both emotionally laden). Though they found maintenance of the status quo evident in participants' responses, these researchers concluded that "emotions serve as sites of struggle and contestation, and possibilities for changing the status quo of inequities" (p. 2679).

But acknowledging and utilizing emotions is not only beneficial for adult learners. Manglitz et al., (2014) contend that educators of adults engaged in cross racial discourse, need to develop emotive capacity—a term they describe as "the ability to hold one's own emotional responses, while listening to others who are just as emotionally laden" (p.113). These researchers concluded that since both learners and facilitators will inevitably experience challenging emotions during racial discourse, cognitive or intellectual capacity is insufficient. Thus, educators of adults have a two-pronged responsibility: their emotive capacities must be increased or strengthened in order to respond to students appropriately and they must acknowledge their own emotional selves in cross-racial discourses. Developing emotive capacity in instructors means developing mechanisms to confront silence, negotiate tension and anxiety, and deal with issues of privilege in themselves and their adult learners (Manglitz et al., 2014). Similarly, Wang (2008) posited that the "double role" faculty play as both participant and observer "is not possible without intellectual complexity and emotional sustainability" (p.15).

Although increasing attention is being paid to incorporating emotions as a natural part of racial dialogue, some facilitators reject this. Qualitative findings shared by researchers Pasque et al. (2013) discussed five categories describing how faculty dealt with managing emotions in race talk, as part of their findings. Three of the five included avoiding or shutting down emotionally laden discourse altogether. For scholars like

Manglitz et al. (2014), some of those actions would equate to "diminished emotive capacity" on the part of the instructor, and maintenance of the status quo. Still, scholars like Trigwell (2010) point to findings that may support the need for the development of emotive capacity in the first place. Based on their study of 175 Australian university teachers, findings suggested "systematic relations between the ways teachers emotionally experienced the content of teaching, and the ways they approached their teaching" (p. 617). Hence, when teachers experience positive emotions like pride and excitement, they tend to take more of a "conceptual change/student focused approach" (p. 616); conversely, when teachers experience anxiety or embarrassment for example, they are more likely to approach teaching through "transmission/teacher focused methods" that they feel provide more "safety" for them.

Instructors' Troubling Emotions

Having probed research on emotions in the teaching and learning of adults in general—and research on its potential role, challenges and benefits, personal reactions that instructors themselves have struggled with are now discussed. Since studies show that the most problematic instructor reactions have been emotions that they found troubling (e.g. Roberts, 2002; Sue et al, 2009; Sue et al, 2011; Wang, 2008), *from a faculty perspective, what does the literature say about the kinds of emotions instructors find challenging during a difficult discourse on race?* This section provides a synopsis. As part of the discussion, I have also summarized those associated factors that fuel them.

In Sue et al.'s (2011) study titled *Racial Dialogues: Challenges Faculty of Color Face in the Classroom*, researchers used consensual qualitative research (CQR) to explore the perspectives of eight faculty of Color on the challenges they faced in

facilitating difficult dialogues on race in their graduate classrooms. Although faculty subject areas varied widely, strong convergences existed in light of the findings on emotional reactions, labelled as "typical" (p. 335). These researchers found that several "powerful" and challenging emotions were evoked in instructors of color that challenged during difficult race dialogue. These included indecision about whether or not to talk about race, worry about the consequences of bringing it up, and worry about the potential reactions from students of Color and White students. Earlier in this chapter, references were made to the inherent difficulty of the race topic because of its history, and to the potential challenge of student resistance as a consequence. As such, Sue et al.'s (2011) findings that faculty experienced worrisome emotions seem consistent with this. In addition to anxiety and worry however, these researchers emphasized that instructors experienced a wide range of emotions including "anger, frustration, grief and shock" (p. 336) when they witnessed a micro aggressions in the classroom directed towards them or students of color.

Some of the examples of the micro aggressions that fueled faculty reactions included White students expressing beliefs that affirmative action was *the* vehicle through which all students of color entered college settings, or noting repeatedly that a Black student was "so articulate" (Sue et al., p. 335), thereby implying a rarity in brilliance as it relates to Black students. Micro aggressions were also described as moments when students would directly challenge instructors' authority by "blurting out counter responses" or "question their position of authority" (p.336) during instruction. Interestingly, faculty of Color described their White colleagues' thoughts that they were

"oversensitive" to these occurrences as a micro aggression in itself, leading them to feel invalidated and misunderstood.

Sue et al.'s (2011) findings concerning instructors' troubling emotions during race talk are evident elsewhere in the literature. However several studies found only share brief vignettes as it concerns race specifically; many instead describe challenging emotions relative to multiple forms of oppression (e.g. class and gender) that form part of a diversity related course. Tummala-Narra (2009), for example, felt a strong sense of anxiety and sadness in multicultural classes while engaging both students of dominant and minority cultures who believed racism was only experienced by certain ethnic minorities. Kwon (2011) and Ting (2003) in counseling and psychology respectively, found that multicultural educators of Color experienced many emotionally charged moments ranging from anger to despair concerning topics of race in their classrooms.

Troubling emotions are not unique to faculty of Color. A previous and related study to Sue et al.'s (2011) work on faculty of Color, was conducted by Sue et al. (2009) on the perceptions and reactions of White faculty to difficult dialogues on race. In this study, eight White faculty members from a private university participated in a study using CQR methods. Researchers found that White faculty experienced disappointment, uncertainty, anxiety and fear during discourses on race. Disappointment occurred when instructors had to face the reality that they were incapable of successfully facilitating students in dialogues on race; uncertainty surfaced since they were usually unsure of what exactly might obtain in the process of difficult race dialogue. In combining addressing emotions of fear and anxiety in their discussion of White instructors' reactions, Sue et al. (2009) found that instructors were anxious because they were

reluctant and fearful to undertake the responsibility of facilitating the kinds of strong emotional reactions students might display. In line with this, research on White instructors' emotional responses over time has indicated they were fearful of the following most times: "appearing racist" (cautious in saying anything that might offend persons of Color or place them in a category of being against minorities) , "realizing their [own] racism" (uncovering any inherent biases and/or prejudices), "confronting White privilege" (considering meritocracy a myth), and "taking personal responsibility to end racism" (coming to terms with the reality of racism and feeling compelled to act in some way) (Sue, 2013, pp. 668-670). This 'fear factor' is rife in the literature on race, but has been more specific to discussions and findings concerning White students, rather than instructors (e.g. Asher, 2005; Garrett & Segall, 2013; Guy, 2009; Howard, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998; La Duke, 2009; Tatum, 1992).

Findings from Sue et al. (2009) and Sue (2013) seem consistent with other researchers like Quaye (2012), who found that fear was a dominant theme in his study of White graduate faculty teaching on race issues. Sue found that while one instructor, for instance was fearful and worried both about the potential injury of race content and dialogue to Whites, and about possibly worsening the wounds for persons of color during race talk; another was fearful and worried about White students developing a "helping attitude" (p.112) concerning persons of color or feeling like they were being attacked by an instructor of the same race.

Research on the challenging emotions faculty experience during race talk in adult and higher education has remained an area of interest. Scholars have referenced such far-reaching consequences as "emotional labor," (Perry et al., 2009; Smith, 2004), "racial

battle fatigue" (Fasching–Varner, 2015) as consistent experiences for faculty of Color, for example. But research on instructors appear far less, when compared to research conducted on challenging emotions that students experience during race talk. Consequently, while a plethora of studies exist concerning how faculty might manage students' emotional challenges, research exploring how faculty might handle their own challenging emotions in practical ways, remain very few and far between. If, as scholars have shown, emotions are critical to both teaching and learning—and an inevitable part of a difficult discourse on race, the apparent lack of empirical research exclusively on instructors, points to the need for much more work to be done concerning those strategies that can help instructors navigate their own emotions, and build emotive capacity. One instructor's reflection on this might begin to shed light on a possible explanation—that of unpreparedness:

> Much of our learning about college teachers comes from our experience as students; many of us received little or no modelling of managing emotionally intense classroom situations when we were students. We also learn about the place of emotions in discourse through growing up in a family. In many families, emotions were either suppressed or expressed in unhealthy ways. (Weimer, 2014, p.3)

Though faculty often experience similar types of challenging emotions, the causes of these emotions tend to vary depending on their racial identities. As earlier indicated for example, fear is often experienced by faculty of Color and White faculty. However, while the acute awareness of micro aggressions may be a major factor driving fear for faculty of Color, White faculty may struggle with a fear of hindering, rather than helping students of color in the discourse. As discussed thus far, race and its associated discourse

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is highly personal. Subsequently, the negative emotions faculty struggle with are often directly linked to who they are–that is, to their identities.

<center>**Identity in Teaching and Learning About Race**</center>

Overview of Identity and Education

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) asserted "a major hurdle of identity is resolving a definition of it" (p.176). In their critical review of research on identity and teaching in education, they also concluded that identity is often dynamic and shifting for an instructor. As well identities are linked in critical ways to emotion (Dirkx, 2008; Zembylas, 2003), agency (e.g. Flores & Day et al., 2006), and course social and cultural context (e.g. Olsen, 2008). Notwithstanding tensions and connections between the personal and professional selves of a teacher in forming identity exists (e.g. Wenger, 1998). Accordingly, the current study embraces instructor identity as multi-layered, between the personal, cultural and professional--and often context dependent (Olsen, 2008). As Gee (2001) outlined, " identity suggests a kind of person within a particular context; while one might have a core identity, there are multiple forms of this identity as one operates across different contexts" (p.99). In addition, clearly, identity is a key component of adult learning and development in nuanced ways (Merriam, Cafarella & Baumgartner, 2007).

While the scope of the current study does not allow for an intensive discussion of tensions in the literature surrounding identity, chapter one has provided relevant operational definitions—namely, the personal, professional and the cultural. In this section, ways in which identities have played a part in teaching and learning about race

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are highlighted. Given the focus of the current study, like the previous section on emotions, much of this section is dedicated to the instructor perspective or experience.

So far, the literature echoes that race has remained a controversial subject, often resulting in "spirited discussions across all levels of education" (Isaac, Merriweather & Rogers, p.10). Much of this has to do with how it how it impacts individuals personally. Because race is rooted in identity, it is particularly personal (Garrett & Segall, 2013; Orelius, 2013; Sue, 2013). In general, students of Color may be more inclined to talk about race and see an avoidance of it as invalidation of their lived experiences (Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009); conversely, Whites often see talking about race as "opening a can of worms" since they often feel blamed for racial injustices discussed (Sue, 2013, p. 667). As such, people tend to be more comfortable discussing it privately. In addition to this, media coverage of conflict between Whites and persons of Color has continued to be extensive, keeping racial issues 'up close and personal' e.g. in the popular cases of Rodney King, Troy Davis, and Trayvon Martin (Orelius, 2013)—and more recently, Michael Brown.

Not surprisingly then, race-focused courses almost always challenge students' self-concept (Littleford, Ong, Tseng, Milliken & Humy, 2010). In a mixed-methods study of 340 university faculty, Bigatti et al. (2012) found solid evidence of how race talk affects students' identities. As part of the findings, faculty noted that they had "reason to anticipate backlash to multiculturalism from some students [because] Whites are more likely than racial minorities to associate multiculturalism with exclusion, and, to the extent… [they] see racism as a "zero-sum game" in which progress toward equality for minorities must mean increased prejudice toward Whites" (pp. 79-80). Like a domino

effect, this caused faculty to be far less inclined to teach multicultural courses that included difficult topics like race. Alongside major studies like these, a qualitative study conducted by Watt et al., (2009) also provided useful examples of how White students connected race talk to their identities. For example, one White participant in their study journaled the following personal reaction:

> Some people feel guilty because we came as Whites and conquered this land. This is the disadvantage to being White. We are often accused of being the only ones who have committed atrocities. It is as if being White makes me somehow guilty for all the wrongs Whites have committed. I say any race without sin can feel free to cast this stone. All races have committed atrocities against others. (p.97)

Concerning students of color, Tuitt (2011) observed that sometimes Black students in particular felt pressured to become "native informants," or ambassadors speaking on behalf of their race—a situation that signalled identity tensions.

Instructor Identity Tensions

Flores and Day (2006), in their critical review of research on of contexts that shape teachers' identities, contend that "identity is influenced by personal, social and cognitive response" (p. 220). Although it is evident that faculty struggle with identity tensions in race talk – especially racial identity, seemingly, empirical work in this area is still lacking. For example, not much research has addressed issues like whether the racial/ethnic background of an instructor influences student evaluation (Littleford et al., 2010). Noticeably, a significant portion of the work found surrounding race talk and instructor identity was auto-ethnographic or conceptual; as well, most related to faculty of Color.

In her conceptual piece on personal experiences teaching race, Nichole Ray (2010) sounded an alarm to the challenge of student resistance that often channeled her

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own identity tensions. In it she flatly questioned: "What happens when *I* am accused of being racist?" (p. 78). Elsewhere in adult education, Guy (2009) outlined the ever-present dynamic in teaching race between himself as an African American professor and his students who are often predominantly White. Although he examined this dynamic as an issue of "ethics," his reflection and line of questioning do point to multiple identity tensions in facilitating classroom dialogues on race. After sharing vignettes on some students' resistances during race talk, he probes:

> For an African American male who teaches predominantly white women graduate students … does my male privilege work at odds with my racial identity? In addressing problems of racial inequality, where should I draw the line between my teacher's authority and my commitment to helping learners see tough issues in new and liberating ways? Whose experience should guide the curriculum? I confess that it can be tempting at times to let a majoritarian viewpoint "sit there," as it were, even if I realize that it needs to be challenged. (p.48)

Guy's (2009) acknowledgement of competing identities of gender, race and other elements is similar to Quaye's (2012) findings from a qualitative study investigating how White faculty facilitate racial discourses. In it, his White male participants for example, recognized the benefits of 'natural' authority and respect he received from teaching his White students, simply because they shared the same skin color. Conversely, he noted challenges in working with students of color who felt at times that he did not understand their experiences. According to Quaye (2012), this instructor "recognized the difficult line between using his authority and decentering himself" (p.113) with White students, while at the same time coming to terms with the ways in which His skin color might alienate him from students of Color.

Instructors of Color often struggled with what Sue et al., 2011 categorized as the "expert syndrome"--an experience where faculty felt burdened with the "intellectual

pressure of dealing with expectations that faculty of Color have special expertise in facilitating a difficult dialogue on race" (p. 335). According to faculty of Color (specifically those in predominantly White institutions), feeling this kind of pressure coerces them into adopting another identity–that of the "token" instructor of color–and increases their levels of disappointment in themselves as teachers when difficult dialogues on race become unproductive (Grosland, 2011; Kwon, 2011; Nganga, 2013; Ting, 2003). Nganga (2013), for instance, noting that identity tensions are characteristic of courses dedicated to social justice topics like race, reflected on her experiences with identity tensions:

> I have had to constantly evaluate my authority as a teacher and question my sharing of that authority. I have dealt with the fear of not being seen as the expert in the field … even as I embrace Paulo Freire's liberatory and dialogic pedagogy whereby teachers and students share power and authority in the classroom. (p.27)

Elsewhere, an often cited study by Perry et al. (2009) found that Black faculty maintained specific teaching approaches during race talk, as a means of countering pushback concerning their credibility as academicians.

Other identity conflicts as perceived by instructors of color included negotiating tensions between instructor and minority identity - in taking sides with marginalized students of Color (e.g. Sue et al., 2011) and negotiating tensions between "the need to belong [with students] and the need to experience [self] as an instructor" (Tummala-Narra, 2009, p. 330). Those who teach issues of racial diversity are intensely involved in negotiating spaces between their own struggles and tensions and those of their students (Tisdell & Perry, 1997; Sue et al., 2011).

The struggles between one's own identity as an instructor, and diverse students in a race focused discourse might not only affect instructors, and stop there. Scholars

suggest effective race-focused facilitation involves faculty being open enough to admit

that their positionality or identity tensions in the discourse may influence how race is

discussed (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey , 2008; Douglas, 2014; Johnson-Bailey, 2002;

Ray, 2010) One keen example of this is Ross-Gordon's (1993) confession as a scholar-

practitioner in her early research work on multicultural education:

> Despite my self-proclaimed identity with other persons of color, I knew little
> about other groups other than my own. My educational experience, monocultural
> or at best, bi-cultural professional networks and ingrained habits of "good"
> scholarship perpetuated in me the same ignorance I criticized in others. (p. 50)

Although Ross-Gordon's reflection was not made in the context of a difficult

discourse on race, educators involved in diversity work echo very similar sentiments;

they advise that a display of who educators really are, invites their graduate students to

come alongside them on the journey, instead of encouraging them to create additional

silos or hierarchical power structures in the classroom whether or not they are of the same

racial and ethnic background as the instructor. As Quaye (2012) found in his study of

White instructors teaching race,

> …participants understood that facilitating constructive discussions about racial
> issues began with understanding themselves—their racial identities, assumptions,
> biases, strengths, and limitations as educators. Reflecting on their racial identities
> was a means to encourage white students in their courses to do the same. (p.114)

Reflection like this is often necessary for critical reflexivity (Brookfield, 2005),

but is often difficult – carrying its own emotional dichotomy somewhere between

"exhilaration and terror" (Talvacchia, 2003, p. 1). To encourage graduate students to do

the work of critical reflexivity towards transformation and action in race related

discourse, educators must model this engagement in the work themselves (Douglas,

2013; Guy, 2009; Nganga, 2013; Wang, 2008). To this end, the literature suggests that educators who facilitate difficult dialogues on race must reflect on, and respond to questions like these: "How do we take on challenges to our own assumptions? Do we insist on our own vision, or are we willing to shift positions in the process?"(Wang, 2008, p.15).

As suggested in the introduction to this chapter, emotional and identity tensions are not only unique to instructors – it is widely understood, and far more documented that students experience it too, and that these tensions often manifest in the form of student resistance. The next section will detail the most often cited difficulty faced by faculty in teaching race: student resistance. An exploration of this section will complete the discussion on the complex dynamics instructors face, and again underscore the need for the current study's investigation of how experienced faculty have managed to navigate them.

Student Resistance

Across the literature, scholars concede that student resistance to difficult discourses on race proves most problematic (Alexander-Floyd, 2008; Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Garrett & Segall, 2013; Pimentel, 2010; Tatum 1992, 2003, 2007). According to Kohl (1994), student resistance may be defined as the act of "not learning…involve[ing] effort and often rejection…occurring most often in the face of challenges to one's personal and family loyalties, integrity and identity" (p.4). Scholars have used the term resistance as it is employed to describe instances in which White graduate students in teacher education resist learning about race or race related issues (; Evan-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Garett & Segall, 2013), but I find Kohl's (1994) work

helpful in understanding the concept of resistance at its core, and thus, how it might be evoked by "contentious" topics like race in diversity related courses.

Though he writes in the context of schooling, his working definition is also useful here because (a) the literature review on resistance includes adult learners of color, and so a more general definition is warranted and (b) it provides a distinct contrast to uses of "resistance" elsewhere in the literature, for example as a term describing diverse students rejecting dominant school cultures embedded in the curriculum and elsewhere (Dinkelman, 2009), describing ways in which individuals act based on perceived unjust policies (Beatty, 2011) or describing resistance that is determined solely by instructor race (e.g. Perry et al., 2009). Much of the literature outlines more of a description of what resistance might look like, as against a general definition and such descriptions are, for the purposes of this study, more critical in illuminating my discussion on *forms* of student resistance.

In education, the problem of resistance to race and privilege discourses is extensive in the K-12 education literature, particularly as it relates to racial discourses that take place in pre-service teacher training programs (e.g. Banks & Banks, 2004; LaDuke, 2009). This may be largely attributed to the growth of multicultural education (Banks, 1992) as a theory, framework and movement toward educational equity in public schools, and the subsequent emphasis placed on issues of race and other cultural markers in the classroom. However, studies rooted in other fields of education have also found resistance to be a distinct challenge in classroom race related discourses. Such findings include the work of Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey (2008), Manglitz, Johnson-Bailey & Cervero (2005) Guy (2009) and Tisdell and Perry (1997) in adult education; byMildred

and Zuniga (2004) in social work education; by Watt et al. (2009) and Burton (2014), in counseling and Tatum (1992, 2003), Young (2003) and Sue et al. (2009, 2011) in psychology.

Bigatti et al. (2012) found that "the most frequent response from faculty regarding barriers to multicultural teaching was their anticipation of student resistance" (p. 84). Findings from this study are congruent with Ting (2003) and Kwon (2011), for example, whose qualitative inquiries into the experiences of multicultural educators of color revealed that student resistance was a frequently cited and central component of teaching on issues of race. A closer look at the literature revealed that researchers are varied in characterizing resistance although their overall ideas are the same. For example, Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey (2008), conclude that in discussions of race, students either "sing along, deny or resist" (p.50), making resistance a category of its own. While Gay and Kipchoge Kirkland (2003) also use resistance as a stand-alone category, Tatum (1992), in her seminal study *Talking About Race, Learning About Racism: The Application of Racial Identity Theory in the Classroom*, uses denial as one of her three *sources* of resistance. Elsewhere, Garrett and Segall (2013) seem to agree with scholars like Pitt and Britzman (2003) in emphasizing that "resistance is not only a form of refusing knowledge, but is part and parcel of learning difficult knowledge" (p.8).

In general, I have found that studies featuring race dialogue also feature resistance in some way. These studies also show that students often manifest their resistance to racial discourses by either becoming silent or "shutting down" or becoming defiant or defensive in verbal and written expression. Arguably, these broad categories could prove to be an apt description of any subject matter that a group of students might be displeased

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with or resistant to. As such, I have found it necessary to also integrate those sources or factors that influence patterns of silence, as well as patterns of verbal and written expression as part of the discussion.

Silent Resistance

According to findings from Sue et al.'s (2011) qualitative study of faculty of Color and dialogues on race, "the most frequently observed reaction was silence when difficult dialogue was about to occur" (p.336). These researchers' findings are congruent with scholars in education such as Gay and Kipchoge Kirkland (2003) who earmark silence as one of their top four categories of resistance, Ladson-Billings (1996) who regards silence as a tool used to "shut down dialogic processes in classroom discourses on race" and Bryan et al. (2012) who conclude that "silences and detours around the topic of race [are] often found in conversations about race in education settings" (p.132).

In the field of adult education, scholars and practitioners have also highlighted the 'sound' of silence as a potent theme in race related dialogue and one that has been both commonplace and challenging for instructors teaching on matters of racial difference (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey 2008, Closson & Rhodes, 2011; Tisdell & Perry, 1997). Tisdell and Perry (1997), for example, found that in an adult education graduate classroom on difference, "in large group discussions the voices of the more traditionally marginalized students, especially the students of color…tended to be in the foreground, [while] the White women students as a group (with one exception) were quite quiet, and tended not to claim much air time in the large group" (p. 3). Although these researchers' observations also allude to the intersection of race and gender in race talk, the findings are no less telling concerning the frequency of silence in dialogues of race. Just over ten

years later, Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey (2008) found that once discussions of race and privilege arose, silence would be one of the main defaults for students, part of "the many guises of resistance and denial" that are of extreme challenge (p. 50).

Silence in the face of classroom racial discourse has also been observed as a default reaction in other graduate education classrooms. LaDuke's (2009) ethnographic case study of a graduate level teacher-training program provides vivid examples. In observing a graduate multicultural education class of 24 White teachers one Latino teacher, and a Latino course instructor, LaDuke found that as racial discourses progressed over time, several students would give only "occasional responses to the content" or simply "rely on a small group of students to engage in discussion with the instructor" (p.43) – even in small groups. Similarly, findings from Sue et al.'s (2009) qualitative research study on White faculty perceptions of difficult dialogue, and Sue et al.'s (2011) study examining faculty of Color and the challenges they faced with difficult race dialogues, included faculty perceptions of students' silences, as a common reaction.

In the case of White faculty, most descriptors were, "lack of verbal participation, blank looks [and] silence" (Sue et al., 2009, p.1100). Likewise, perspectives from faculty of Color in Sue's (2011) study frequently mentioned silence followed by avoidance, and ignoring racial topics. Elsewhere, others describe that silence occurs as "students tune out during conversations about race" (De Koven, 2011, p.154). Often, "feelings are heating up, but there is a lid of polite and deadening silence over them" (Young, 2003, p.48) or the quiet in the classroom becomes "deafening" (Kwon, 2011, p.18).

Why Silence? Silence as a form of resistance is a salient theme throughout the literature but ideas behind 'why' students might choose to be silent are varied; these

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explanations are often based on whether the student is White or a person of Color. As an added dimension to the discussion, I also include voices of those researchers who suggest that student silence in the face of difficult dialogues on race may be for reasons other than resistance.

Several researchers indicate that White students resist through silence because authentic dialogues on race challenge elements of privilege based on their racial identity or positionality (Alexander-Floyd, 2008; Guy, 2009; LaDuke, 2009; Piscatel, 2010; Sue, 2005, 2013; Sheared et al., 2010; Waring & Bordoli, 2013). Researchers also note that White students grow silent because they believe they do not have the required knowledge to comment on racial issues, be it cultural or historically rooted (Bryan et al., 2012; Garrett & Segall, 2013; LaDuke, 2009), or out of fear of offending or being misunderstood (Sue & Constantine, 2007; Sue et al., 2010; Tummala-Narra, 2009).

Conversely, in referring to students of color researchers emphasize the fact that their display of silence could be as a result of one or more of the following: (a) not wanting to deal with/being tired of dealing with the issue of race as part of their lived experience (Sue et al, 2009; Sue, 2013), (b) not wanting to be used as an *example minority* in a predominantly White class or to educate their White peers on racial realities (Tatum, 1992; Tuitt, 2011), (c) "frequently reporting acts of racism toward them and not being believed by their White counterparts" (Quaye, 2012, p.542) or not being "validated" (Sue et al., 2011 and, (d) perceived racial micro aggressions preceding or during the race dialogue itself (Sue et al, 2009). The idea that "the racial reality of White America is not the racial reality of people of color" (Sue & Constantine, 2007, p. 110), seems to give credence to the general trend in the literature that the responses of each

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might, more often than not, be different. Young's (2003) description of the White and 'other' perspective is useful in capturing the idea of what rationales could obtain based on student silence:

> Many European Americans feel guilty for the legacy of oppression or defensive over their historical privilege-and even when they acknowledge their White privilege, they do not know what to do about it…on the other hand, most people of color must navigate a daily tide of racial projections. In subtle and obvious ways, members of other cultural groups question their worth and judge them to be less qualified, tokens or a commodity. Thus it is understandable that it seems safer to avoid race related topics. (pp. 349-350)

The literature seems to suggest then that silence as a reaction to difficult dialogue by students of color reflects another kind of resistance in racially charged discourses–and not necessarily one that rejects racial realities (as resistance is traditionally understood by many). Although reasons for silence as a tool of resistance in students of color are consistently similar in the literature, reasons for silence as resistance in White students vary. Wang (2008), for example, describes White students' displays of silence as their "flight from difficult knowledge" (p. 12), not wanting to say anything that would offend a minority ethnic group or finding a hiding or detached 'place' by refusing to respond directly to the content verbally. Sue et al (2010) found that "overall professors appeared to impute different meanings from their observations of withdrawn student behavior, ranging from the students being interested to the students being fearful of actively engaging in the dialogue" (p.1100).

In the case of LaDuke's (2009) ethnography, students also stayed silent or were reluctant to respond to statistical, historical or culturally related conversations that had to do with persons of color, contending that they could not adequately speak to it since it was not their lived experience. LaDuke's findings are congruent with Gay and Kipchoge

Kirkland's (2003) conclusion that students disengage during race related conversation because of their "perceived ignorance surrounding the topic" (DeKoven, 2011, p.156). Still, according to Ladson-Billings (1996) "to conclude that silences in a multicultural or race focused classroom were due to lack of knowledge could falsely dismiss the possibility that these silences were intentional acts of resistance or defiance" (p. 86).

Other scholars have been careful to note that factors influencing behavior could include possible deep rooted emotional, personal or social issues (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; LaDuke, 2009), poor facilitation strategies (Pasque et al., 2013; Quaye, 2012; Sue et al., 2010), faculty belief in ignorance as an appropriate excuse for silence (Garrett & Segall, 2013), student socialization in program cultures that are usually silent on conversations about race (Bryan et al., 2012) and a wider societal "silence" on race (Young, 2003; Sue, 2005). In addition, scholars like Asher (2005) and Quaye (2008) note that part of the difficulty for students of a dominant culture that leads to resistance is the fact that they often come across focused material on racial inequality and privilege for the first time in a college setting. To their point, Garrett and Segall (2013) counter that using lack of knowledge as an excuse is, in itself, a strategy with no real depth or authenticity, since race and its issues are all around us in American society.

Interestingly, little credence has been explicitly given to silence as part of the process through which White students, in particular, may be processing new information – even in studies that report this silence as an initial stance by these students, and changes or transformational results by the end of the class. Given findings and conceptual viewpoints thus far, tensions apparent in the literature on resistance through silence in race talk seem encapsulated by Guy (2009) in reflecting on his own classroom practice:

I recall numerous occasions when students have sat silently in response to a critical point I or someone else makes in the class about race. Although not all silence is resistance, it often feels that way when teaching issues of race. This result raises several questions. How much should I respect the right of students to not engage in discussion? Am I justified in interpreting silence as resistance and the exercise of unmerited privilege? (p.46)

Verbal and Written Resistance

Scholars investigating both students' and instructors' race dialogues concede that the challenge of verbal and written resistance makes teaching race far more cumbersome (Bigatti et al., 2012; Kwon, 2011; Nganga, 2013; Sue, 2013; Tummala-Narra, 2009). For instance, concerning White faculty members' observations of a racially diverse graduate classroom, Sue et al. (2009) found that in some cases things "just spiraled downward [since] there were some very hostile, volatile discussions… [and] students, white students left the room" (p.1100). In their subsequent study featuring faculty of Color, they also found that strong verbal expressions of resistance would prove a "roadblock" to constructive dialogue. As one professor shared,

…intense feelings would result in monologues where one student would simply state his or her position without responding to the other person. The other student, in turn, would restate his or her previous position without regard for the stance of the other. (p.336)

Kwon (2011) and Ting (2003) found that personal attacks were frequently experienced by multicultural educators of color) in predominantly White institutions. In their dissertations examining faculty of Color and their experiences in multicultural classrooms, these scholars found that over time, students have participated in name calling, labelling instructors "racist," "white hater," "sticker" and "slave master" in class and on their evaluations (Ukpokodu, 2002, p.29 as cited in Kwon, 2011, p.18). They have

also accused the instructor of not being objective. As indicated by one of Ting's (2003) participants: "there were lots of challenging questions in this classroom discrediting what I felt, discrediting what they read, and discrediting what I had to say. Like saying "This is your bias," and "How do you know?" (p.67). Kwon's participants also found that students felt their instructors were "against them" (p.101) and personally attacking them. Similar to these researchers, Perry et a. (2009) found that African American faculty constantly struggled to maintain credibility. These kinds of examples are typical across the literature, indicating that alongside silence, graduate students often manifest resistance to racial content and discourse by challenging the course instructor and colleagues with defensive and/or aggressive statements in both verbal and written form. Such studies continue to highlight the idea that racial positionality of the instructor is a key factor in determining student reactions to difficult dialogues on race. Over the course of three years, Watt et al. (2009) conducted a qualitative study of White graduate students and the way they expressed resistance throughout dialogues of difference. The participants were counseling educators, and using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methods, the researchers categorized their findings with the use of eight domains. Of the eight, the top three (namely denial, deflection, and rationalization) were deemed "general", meaning that these three were found in all but one participant response; in addition, these three largely included detailed student reactions to the race and racism component of dialogues on difference. These three domains appear echoed throughout the literature in varied ways. Hence, I find them (and their associated definitions) useful for discussing patterns of verbal and written resistance.

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Denial and Rationalization. According to Watt et al. (2009) denial involves "arguing against an anxiety provoking stimuli by stating it doesn't exist" (p.97); they also define rationalization as "supplying a logical or rational cause, as opposed to a real reason" (p.97). I have selected to combine these domains because though most scholars elsewhere do report denial as a common student reaction, rationalization often seems to follow that denial as part of the reaction, or rationalization and denial seem to work in tandem. For example, adult educators such as Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey (2008) found that resisters from both the dominant and minority cultures used both domains in their verbal responses. These scholars outlined stated that White students qualified their position of denial by noting for example that "my family never owned slaves" or "everyone knows that minorities and women have all the rights," while students of Color retorted "That was then. This is now. Give it a rest" (p.50).

Regarding White students, the literature is rife with critical incidents of denial. Blanding (2007), in his reflection on a critical classroom incident within a school of education, recounted a White student making comparisons between himself and persons of color: "[their] experiences are a lot like my experiences growing up as a White working class kid in a place where we were treated like trash" (p.1). In other cases, students pointed to reverse discrimination in their denial of the systemic nature of racism only against minorities. Guy (2009), for example outlined one of his White student's counterarguments:

> There are Black magazines…there are hundreds of Black organizations ...the Black only contests. What do you think would happen if there was a White Miss America contest? Or a Whites-only club? Al Sharpton would be all over that!! It's completely acceptable and alright for Black people to have all of these exclusively black things, but Whites would be seen as bigots and racists if they did. (p.46)

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LaDuke (2009) also alluded to White students' use of denial as resistance, and using the reverse discrimination logic. As one participant in his case study of a 15 week multicultural education course contended, "golf pro and tennis ho' parties make fun of rich White kids-it's the same thing" (p.40).

One vivid example of denial originates from Tatum's (1992) well-known study investigating resistance in college settings. This researcher found that White students frequently used disclaimers such as "I'm not racist myself but I know people who are, and I want to understand them better" (p.8). Tatum asserts that this kind of denial negates any personal connection and is a strong source of resistance. Similarly, in her reflective essay, Baszille (2004) found that as an African American instructor, White students complained about and countered her use of "we" to indicate her own personal identity connection to injustice (she used "we" to refer to Africans who were enslaved). In their journals, these students complained that she was wrong to use "we" since "she was not and had never been a slave" (p.162).

Similarly, a 2010 CQR study entitled *Racial dialogues and White trainee fears: Implications for education and training* found that many White graduate students denied responsibility for race and became "defensive when generalities were made about the prejudicial attitudes of Whites in classroom situations (Sue, Rivera, Capodilupo, Lin, & Torino, 2010). "White people this and White people that" (p.209), one graduate student responded in frustration.. The researchers noted too that one participant stated "societal problems are out of my hands" (p.210). They noted that this line of reasoning was used by many White students as a way to distance themselves from any personal responsibility for the perpetuation of racism (Sue et al., 2010).

Deflection. Watt et al. (2009) describes deflection as "taking out impulses on a momentarily less threatening target... [and as] a defense mode wherein substitution is used as a means to avoid self-reflection" (p.97). According to several researchers, in instances like these, students often attempt to move the discussion from a central focus on race to other societal issues that they feel may be impacting a given situation (Bryan et al., 2012; Sue, 2013). Others observed that while rejecting the notion of race as a social construct that gave some privilege over others, students diverted blame to issues of socio-economic status or class (Asher, 2003; Ray, 2010; Wang, 2008).

LaDuke's (2009) participants shifted conversation to class or economics without acknowledging intersections or the relevance of race in a class context. Sue et al.'s (2010) participants shared that their White students often deflected blame to students of Color with for example, a statement like "I don't know what they want" (p. 360), while Cho (2013) in reflecting on her practice of attempting to help students understand race as a social construct, observed students' defensive reaction that could be labeled deflection. Cho's (2013) students would use the conceptual focus on race to attempt a minimization of racial realities with varied counter arguments including: "if race is not real, then are racism and all of its atrocities not real either" (p. 234)? Elsewhere, researchers have documented students' use of deflection by way of blaming another person, an institution or a system for racial inequity. In so doing, they would taking the focus off of themselves or off of the impact those sources may have had on their own perceptions (Blanding, 2007; Guy, 2009; Sue et al., 2010; Watt et al., 2009).

In Bryan et al.'s (2012) study of 20 doctoral students across varied programs in a school of education, they found patterns of deflection (which they term "diversion and

"avoidance") in the participants' accounts of their experiences - and interestingly, in the very focus group discourses they used to gather data. Their examination of the impact of "race talk" in the doctoral classroom led them to conclude that "although race talk avoidance often results from the desire of others to sidestep the issue, it also manifests through patterns of talk that develop while in the process of attempting to address race" (Bryan et al., 2012, p.132). The researchers later observed that:

> …the sessions themselves contained problematic characteristics of discourse… In particular, several participants continually diverted the conversation away from race by either sharing an incident and then stating how the issues it illuminated, "were not really about race," or by conflating race with terms like "diversity" or "culture." (p.134)

Though the participants for this study included both White students and students of Color, there was no mention of what race was associated with students whose perceptions were shared as part of the data, and so a discussion of any comparisons with other studies is not possible in this case. However, in highlighting students' use of more general terms like "diversity" to deflect from issues of race, Bryan et al. (2012) pointed to multicultural scholars like Sleeter (1995) who contended that these diversions were part of a larger mechanism to silence discourses on race. Such a position has also been taken by researchers like St Clair and Kashimoto (2010) who argue that using broad terms like diversity and multicultural education equals a "ghetto-isation" of racial issues and deflects the focus from necessary and authentic race talk in university classrooms. While researchers' claims about reasons behind deflection and avoidance in the literature add dimension to the discussion on difficult dialogues on race, it also provides evidence of additional influences to student resistance, beyond the scope of the classroom.

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'Extracurricular' Influences

Given the aforementioned patterns of resistance through spoken and unspoken avenues, the literature is consistent in its explanation of what classroom related causes might be. However, researchers also indicate that factors outside of classroom context and positionality may fuel resistance. Among the extracurricular barriers to healthy racial discourse in adult and higher education classrooms, and that compound the problem are (a) a polarized political society (Anyon, 2005), (b) stereotypes in the media perpetuating certain roles for certain ethnicities and races (Ladson- Billings, 1998; Wang, 2008), and (c) lack of support for race talk based on program, administrative or campus culture (Bryan et al., 2012; Poon, 2010; Roberts et al., 2012).

Elsewhere others allude to the myth of meritocracy, wherein many White students have come to associate America as a land that is just for all once an individual works hard (Sue, 2005; Tatum, 1992) and "dominant culture projection", a concept describing how Whites' may use their lives as a template in looking at others'(De Koven, 2011). Finally researchers also cite the reality of college settings as more monologic than dialogic in nature (Placier, Kroner, Burgoyne, & Worthington, 2012), which sets up challenges for true dialogue on difficult topics like race.

This section provided an in-depth look at *student resistance*, by far the most dominant category concerning classroom challenges in facilitating difficult dialogues on race. As such, "resistance is likely to be an enduring feature of classes that focus on teaching about race and racism" (Alexander-Floyd, 2008, p.183). As well, resistance is further compounded by those visibly displayed emotions that threaten a classroom climate negatively (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; DeKoven, 2011; Quaye, 2012;

Sue, 2013; Wang, 2008). Most often, these responses are influenced by a number of factors surrounding learners' fears, assumptions and perceptions of themselves and others (Sue, 2013; Young, 2003). Researchers have also cited racial micro aggressions (Sue et al., 2011) and inappropriate teaching/facilitation strategies (Pasque et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2009; Quaye, 2012) as key influences. Seemingly, the plethora of research available on the issue of student resistance in the classroom only points to the need for continued work to be done concerning how to handle it. The next section explores the most prominent approaches suggested by the literature.

Approaches to Handling Difficult Race Talk

So far, the literature review has explored what appears most prevalent in research: challenges faced by faculty during race talk, and the nature of the difficulty of race talk in adult and higher education. This section highlights several key strategies used to counteract classroom challenges involved in difficult racial discourse. Earlier, one key strategy was alluded to in the section on identity. Researchers have increasingly called for faculty to be acutely self-aware of how their positionality influences race talk, as a means of fostering trust and participation in their students (e.g. Quaye, 2012). Other strategies outlined here do not reflect the plethora of individual instructor teaching strategies that may obtain in teaching race, given the limitations of a dissertation document. Instead, I include those broad approaches recommended for faculty who struggle with discourses on race.

Setting the Stage for Race Talk

As reiterated in the chapter so far, race talk "can create a politically charged atmosphere, with supporters and resisters of specific issues becoming

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polarized…[hence], the instructor must be prepared for emotional discoveries made in the classroom" (Roberts & Smith, 2002, p.291). Prior preparation and creating a level of expectation in students does not necessarily eliminate problems such as resistance but scholars contend that it enhances the overall focus and progress of the class, while acting as an important 'cushion' for course instructors, since they will not always be caught off guard in moments of tension (Asher, 2005; Douglas, 2014; Quaye, 2012; Tatum, 1992; Wang, 2008). Growth and change on a personal and societal level have been at the heart of theorists advocating for racial and ethnic diversity education (Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Howard, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tatum, 1992). Since adults must have a clear context for their learning (Merriam, Cafarella & Baumgartner, 2007), and diversity courses are sometimes an "add-on" (LaDuke, 2009), clear goals are even more relevant.Faculty, then, are also encouraged to create a teaching/learning environment that consists of clear goals for content, growth and change through racial discourses.

There are three primary reasons for advocating goal explanation as a critical approach to reducing a challenge like student resistance. First, (though this argument is contested) scholars note that simply by virtue of socialization, many persons of the dominant culture would not have had or been able to have the lived experience that traditionally marginalized students would have(Asher, 2005; DeKoven, 2011; Quaye, 2008, 2012) Second, given an increase in multi-ethnic international students in our classroom, the construct of race and understandings of it in the context of the United States may appear more complex to foreign students–particularly those from a majority culture (Fries-Britt, Mwangi, & Peralta, 2014; Murray-Johnson, 2013).

Third, spending time on clarifying goals is a valuable opportunity to encourage classroom dialogue that goes both ways–that is, not only encouraging the dominant culture to engage in self – reflection on issues of racism, but also encouraging minority cultures to be mindful of varied perspectives and their own racial identity development in the process (Tatum, 1992, 2007). One of the most powerful questions in the literature on teaching racial diversity has been asked by Ross-Gordon (1991) in her article on how Multicultural Education had emerged and progressed. She asked "to what extent does the discourse on racial diversity inform actual adult education practice?" (p.54). As practitioners note, very often, White students walk away from a racial discourse, resistant, with the thought pattern that instructors and the marginalized are blaming them personally for racial inequity (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; DeKoven, 2011; Quaye, 2012; Sue, et al., 2010). These scholars allude to the fact that this might be lessened if time was spent expanding on the goals of the course, for example, reinforcing the 'bigger' reason or goal for content and self – examination–that of reducing societal inequities–not just laying out the painful history and teaching race 'for race sake.' The focus on linking content and goals in this way could lessen the popular notion that dominant cultures believe they are being personally targeted (Tatum, 1992).

In addition, scholars have found that having authentic discussions on the nature of the content exploration before delving into it, may help students understand how emotions play a role when they do manifest in the classroom as a result of racial dialogue (Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey, 2008; LaDuke, 2009; Salas, 2002; Wang, 2008). Roberts and Smith (2002) flatly outline for instance, that educators need to apply the "no pain, no gain" adage early on so that students are clear on the level of reflective work that

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must be done to obtain growth and change in these courses. In fact, some several scholars have critiqued the notion of "safe space" in classroom dialogues on race -when safety is thought of in the traditional sense; they contend that such classroom contexts are uncomfortable by nature, necessary to disrupt myths that create social inequity and should be characterized as such (Garrett & Segall, 2013; Guy, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Mae, Cortez & Preiss, 2013). Further, scholars assert that for some students of color who have vivid lived experiences of being marginalized, the classroom has never been a place of safety in the traditional sense (Closson & Rhodes, 2011; Quaye, 2008); neither will it be that way for students of the dominant culture since "pedagogies that tackle racial power will be most uncomfortable for persons who benefit from that power." (Leonardo & Porter, p.340)

Setting the stage for authentic dialogue is a strategy well supported in the literature. In facilitating courses on the psychology of racism for instance, Tatum (1992) reported success based on extensive pre-planning and setting of ground rules and guidelines of what to expect as part of "creating a safe climate that will help eliminate anxiety and encourage confidentiality and mutual respect" (p.18). In like manner, Quaye (2012) and Closson & Rhodes (2011) found that explaining ground rules and prefacing race talk with guiding goals help to decrease the instances and/or non-productive outcomes of difficult dialogues on race. Finally, other practitioners highlight the fact that course preparation is pivotal and could involve having students be a part of the planning process and ensuring that students are clear on both the structure and nature of the class (Mildred & Zuniga, 2004; Quaye, 2012). Without clarifying clear goals and expectations

before and throughout racial discourses, using strategies linked to reflection for personal growth and change appear more difficult.

Re-Positioning Emotions

It has remained clear throughout this review that emotions such as anger, guilt, frustration or fear, among others most often trigger resistance to many discourses on race. Although adult education scholars like Dirkx (2008) reference these as "negative emotions," several researchers and practitioners have labeled emotions such as these a necessary and natural occurrence in teaching on issues of race, and a potential growth tool when used appropriately (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey; Quaye, 2008; Sue, 2013; Wang, 2008; Young, 2003).

Consequently, it seems the literature indicates a need for practitioners to move their perception of emotions as a problematic issue to the fore as an important meaning making tool. Racial discourses and content carry with it painful histories, but are to be explored for authenticity. By carefully positioning emotions as a naturally occurring 'guest' among our classroom activities or discussions, difficult dialogues that occur will prove transformational for students must take place (Wang, 2008; Young, 2003). As Roberts and Smith (2002) remind educators, "emotions are a natural part of social life and should be no different in the classroom" (p.291).

Studies featuring the intentional use of emotions in classrooms involving race talk have proven beneficial to students (e.g. Closson & Rhodes, 2011 mentioned earlier and Piscatel, 2010).Advocates of the intentional use of emotions have contended that educators who welcome, rather than dismiss challenging emotional reactions in cross cultural dialogue can lessen the threat of resistance by allowing them to see emotions as a

natural part of the process. For instance, Grosland (2011) in her dissertation entitled *We Better Learn Something: Antiracist Pedagogy in Graduate Education* investigated the experiences of students in a race-based course with the use of a qualitative methodology and in depth interviews and observations for collecting data. She found that both White students and students of Color displayed visible emotions of anger, sadness, guilt and frustration when the instructor used content like movies to elicit reflection; although she found students of color to be less emotional, all the students reported feeling a strong sense of authenticity in learning and "connecting [to issues of race] beyond the intellectual" (Grosland, 2011, p.152). These findings are congruent with the work of Van Aacken (2013) for instance, who found that in general, instructors intentionally use emotions to engender a deeper and more lasting understanding of class content. Grosland's (2011) study also alluded to the transformational potential in using emotions for educators themselves. On completion of the study, she noted that,

> Due to this experience writing on emotions, I am better at understanding emotions, as well as my own, and am not so guarded. I also feel more robust in my writing, am committed to working harder to try to connect with others, and to permit myself to cry in reflection; all the while not allowing others or myself to use emotions as an excuse to not be more antiracist. This emotional data spoke to me …personally and professionally. (p.152)

Emotions should be repositioned as a teaching and learning tool; time should be taken to process its occurrences and most importantly, it should be reinforced as part of the nature of discourses on race and other areas of difference (Wang, 2008). . Failure to do so may negate the possibility of transformative learning experiences in teaching diversity, and fostering team collaboration in such environments. These include using students' experiences and critical reflection through personal narratives, open, small

group discourses and articulating and acting on assumptions (Cranton, 2003; Merriweather et al., 2012; Tatum, 2007). Without this re-positioning as well, teaching issues of race and diversity training runs the risk of appearing aloof from reality, superficial in exploration and harboring resistance (Cargile, 2010; Knight-Diiop & Oesterreich, 2009; Closson, Bowman & Merriweather, 2014).

Moving Forward With Nuances in Mind

Any discussion of effective approaches to race talk emerging from the literature must also be mindful of the nuances involved in how faculty approach it. Here, I highlight discussions around the extent to which difficult dialogues on race should be confronted, and around the role faculty racial identity might play in the way they approach these difficult dialogues. Despite the calls for ways to approach difficult race talk, research does suggest that instructors may benefit from the opportunity to choose whether or not they confront these discourses. A fairly recently concluded study of 66 instructors commenting on racial conflicts in the classroom was conducted to find out how instructors pedagogically handle classroom race related conflicts (Pasque et al., 2013). The researchers used five themes to reflect how faculty approached conflict situations about race: "not in my classroom"–where faculty stated there was no conflict from racial dialogue; "let's not make a scene"–where they avoided discourse altogether; "taking control"–by using authoritative strategies, "reactive usage"–by turning conflict into a learning opportunity and "proactive usage"–where faculty deliberately strategized to illicit potentially conflicting scenarios.

Having established the themes, Pasque et al. (2013) concluded that "silencing or controlling classroom conflicts may have similar effects – both positive and negative

[and]…there is no one correct or best way to deal with all racial conflicts, overt or covert" (p.11). For these researchers, data seemed to indicate that the decision will depend on the nature of the conflict, classroom context, instructor skill and personal and professional goals. These findings seem to be in line with findings indicating that faculty may decide not to engage race talk because they fear poor evaluations, isolation, and exhaustion or may have to undertake extracurricular coping strategies (Kwon, 2011; Ting, 2003). Still, what is critical to informing the current study in particular is the fact that Pasque et al's. (2013) findings were followed by an extensive discussion, detailing the need for faculty development initiatives that prepare educators to deal with situations of conflict in facilitating discourses on race. They asserted that this was necessary because,

> …when handled well, classroom conflict can create the dissonance essential for significant learning, permit new and different voices to be heard, clarify important differences, raise issues to a level and place where they can be seen and addressed, and provide students with models for creative engagement and problem-solving. (p.14)

Another nuanced perspective concerning approaches to race talk, has to do with faculty racial identity. Scholars have suggested pedagogies unique to Black faculty and White faculty. Perry et al. (2009) conducted a qualitative research study with Black university faculty and found that they had to take deliberate approaches in teaching that could counteract White students' resistance. Since students often denounced the credibility of Black faculty, these researchers found that faculty engaged in "disarming" and "depoliticizing" for example; hence faculty would make race talk less personal by citing scholarly evidence and/or references regularly, or minimizing student opposition by being inclusive of all students opinions. As well, faculty used "anticipatory teaching"

as a countermeasure, by asserting their credentials and academic experiences. Scholars like Closson et al. (2014) would concede to this, adding that their lived experiences and review of the literature combined, suggest Black faculty need a unique approach, given their unique challenges in teaching race. However, they add that such a pedagogy should be "liberatory," "thoughtful and engaged," "revealing the authentic self," and lined with "risk taking" (pp. 85-87).

In a similar vein, White scholars have suggested a need for an acute awareness of their race, and how it might positively influence an approach to facilitating discourses on race (e.g. Baumgartner, 2010; Brookfield, 2014; European-American Collaborative for Challenging Whiteness (2010). Brookfield (2014), for example, noted that White faculty must model the struggles and tensions they face through the use of authentic narrative or storytelling in the classroom. With an understanding that race talk is nuanced in several ways, the review will conclude next with an explanation of positionality theory, and its relevance as an overarching perspective used for the current study.

Positionality as a Suitable Theoretical Perspective

As a newer theoretical construct (meaning post 1990), positionality theory does not appear to be used extensively throughout the published literature in education, though positionality as a *concept* has been more widely referenced. For example, scholars in education often refer to the way one is "situated" or "positioned" as a clear influence to what one says or how one thinks and operates; positionality in this sense is often referred to as shifting multiple identities surrounding race/ethnicity, class and/or gender, among others (e.g. Alfred, 2010; Johnson-Bailey, 2012; Takacs, 2002). This section provides an overview of what positionality theory and its related concepts are, benefits and challenges

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of the theory in research, and suitability of positionality as a theoretical lens to the current study.

Defining Positionality Theory

Positionality theory primarily concerns itself with the multiple positionalities of an individual (Alcoff, 1988; Kezar, 2000, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2010; Takacs, 2003). The theory is often considered an advancement of Harding's (1991) standpoint theory. Thus a brief discussion of how it evolved is included at this point. Arising from post-modern feminist thought, standpoint theory essentially outlines that a standpoint is a place or view from which people see the world, and by which people are influenced to operate. That women are traditionally considered a marginalized group is one of its most important ideas. For example, Harding (1991) argued women's perspectives (and that of other marginalized or oppressed individuals), could challenge the status quo, and help to create a more objective account of the world.

Several key research findings, beliefs and assumptions have been derived from the use of standpoint theory. In leadership studies for example, women have been assumed to have a more collective approach, whereas men would take a more hierarchal approach (e.g. Ferguson, 1994). In several cross-cultural fields, Eastern conceptualizations of leadership have been found to be more collective and holistic in contrast with Western approaches, which tend to be more individualistic and hierarchical (e.g. Cox, 1993). Different groups then have perspectives or views that are unique, based on their cultural and/or power differences. In the words of Sprague (1995):

> One's standpoint (whether reflexively considered or not) shapes which concepts are intelligible, which claims are heard and understood by whom, which features of the world are perceptually salient, which reasons are understood to be relevant and forceful, and which conclusions credible.

Scholars have contended that standpoint theory has obvious merit in helping to create an understanding of diverse groups and worldviews. However, several note that the theory has remained limited, largely because it "tended to look at one aspect of a person's experience, e.g. gender and associated power conditions" (Kezar, 2002, p.96), instead of the multiple aspects of identity that determine one's position.

According to Kezar (2002), two dominant assumptions of positionality theory have provided ways in which we can more fully understand how individuals operate and make meaning of their experiences—namely that:

- Positionality resists a fixed, static, essentialistic view…within positionality theory, it is acknowledged that people have multiple overlapping identities. Thus, people make meaning from various aspects of their identity including social class, professional identity and so forth (Longino, 1993).

- Positionality assumes that power relations can change. Social categories are fluid and dynamic; affected by historical and social changes. Therefore, the term constructing beliefs is used by researchers and scholars within this tradition. (p.97)

As a third assumption, positionality theory emphasizes context as a major tenet, and one that remains critical to understanding individual perspectives and experiences. A useful example would be Collins' (1993) work on the *outsider-within* position in Black feminist thought. Positionality may look different, depending on individuals' local context, or literally, where they are situated (Alcoff, 1998; Kondo, 1990; Kezar & Lester, 2010). For example, "a senior leader may be in a position of power and authority at work, but acquiesce in a domineering relationship at home" (Kezar & Lester, 2010, p.168). In a

classroom situation, positionality advocates would contend that identities inform and are informed by an individual's position in the learning environment (Acevedo et al., 2015).

Concerning the theory's assumption on power, positionality carries an extended view. Like traditional perceptions of power, the theory does articulate that power relates to influence and to persuasion. However, advocates of positionality theory believe "the positionality of the individual is also laden with power, and all people in all positions can access some form of power" (Kezar and Lester, 2010, p. 167). These scholars cited a useful example in explaining this. They observed that female leaders in a male dominated organization are often found to have less powerful roles than men (e.g. in the work of Martin, 2003). Within positionality theory however, power may be socially constructed. It does not simply shape people, but people can shape power relations as well (Kondo, 1990):

> Power relations can be altered when people come together to acknowledge norms or ideologies that are socially constructed, and infused with power…[consequently] the positionality model incorporates agency, and that people are not merely responding to context and power, but that they actively shape the within which they work, think and live. (Kezar and Lester, 2010, pp. 167-168)

Benefits and Challenges of Positionality in Research

Positionality theory has been observed as beneficial in fields ranging from leadership and cross cultural studies to education. Perhaps the most sustained line of research using the theory comes from Adrianna Kezar in the field of leadership. Of the dozens of articles she has written, several include focused and longitudinal studies with positionality as a central framework. For example, she has investigated tensions between multiple leadership beliefs and a single organizational perspective (Kezar, 1998, 2000);

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context and how it shapes leadership beliefs (Kezar, 2001, 2002) and the complexity of identity in shaping leadership styles (Kezar, 2000).

Concerning how an individual's positionality related to construction of leadership beliefs in a community college, the researcher found that several patterns emerged at the group level. For example, while faculty held views of leadership focused on their classrooms and facilitating students, staff held more bureaucratic views of leadership. Yet, findings also indicated that beliefs varied by individual. As such, Kezar (2002; Kezar & Lester 2010) has concluded that both individual leadership beliefs, and patterns that showcase group generalizations are necessary to foster more complex interpretation of leadership in a given context. They have found positionality theory as a useful lens through which to examine group and individual patterns, as well as the overlapping identities that influence each.

In education, both the concept and theory of positionality have been used, and directly linked to classroom practice (e.g. Acevedo et al., 2015). For example, Taylor, Tisdell and Stone-Hanley (1997) used the then emerging notion of positionality to examine their approaches to critical pedagogy and social justice education. The researchers found that had similar group patterns such as their theoretical foci or an emphasis on engaging students in a holistic way. Still, individual differences in positionality concerning race, class and gender—combined with personality--shaped nuances between them in teaching. For example, they varied in comfort level concerning self-disclosure in teaching and writing. These scholars noted the work also helped them identify strengths and limitations of their own power as faculty, and the role it plays in teacher-student relationships (Taylor, Tisdell & Stone-Hanley, 1997).

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For Acevedo et al. (2015), positionality was important in understanding what role experience had in a learning process. These authors drew from their work at an Integral Teaching Fellowship Program, where they created a learning community in which both students and faculty "interact[ed] and co-create[d] knowledge beyond their habitual or institutionally imposed positionings (p.28)" As such, traditional hierarchical and expert views of the instructor were disbanded and a collaborative community emphasized. At the conclusion of their work, Acevedo et al. (2015) cited a key benefit: "Positionality acknowledges complex differentials of power and privilege while simultaneously identifying the value of multiple ways of knowing and being that arise from our multiple identities" (p.43).

Despite its openness to examining multiple layers of identity, tensions in using positionality theory exist. Researchers have found that demonstrating multiple layers that affect an individual in context and converting such research into practical implications might prove challenging (Kezar & Lester, 2010). Others have noted that coping with change when positionality theory is applied to practice can be hard, since classroom roles and relationships become extremely multidimensional (Acevedo et al, 2015).

Based on its essential tenets, uses across the literature, and current literature review for this study, positionality was a useful lens for the current study in describing faculty experiences with difficult dialogues on race. First, the study's participant pool is diverse in racial and ethnic background, and lived experiences, though their teaching context is diversity-focused with frequent emphases on race. Earlier, this review highlighted that dynamics surrounding difficult race talk for the instructor often vary based on racial identity (Sue, 2013) and/or gender (Ray, 2010); these dynamics may also

affect a sense of professional identity (Kwon, 2011; Ting, 2003). As such, some scholars have recommended pedagogies unique to racial identity (e.g. Bowman et al., 2014 for Black faculty, and Brookfield, 2015 for White faculty). Since positionality theory stresses intersecting identities, the theory granted an opportunity to look at multiple identities of each case (instructor), the ways they intersected with each other and how they shaped race talk. At the same time, since using the theory has often unearthed group patterns in varied studies, it also aligned well with the study's purpose of describing patterns in navigation across multiple cases.

Second, empirical work framed with positionality theory often uses case study methodology. As well, Kondo (1990) asserted that local rather than macro context is important to the researcher using positionality theory so that an individual in a specific context may be investigated first – as a starting point to identifying dominant practices. Consequently, a study that uses the theory effectively would use case studies, life history or narrative research to bring participants to life, rather than leave them as "generalized abstractions" (Kezar & Lester, 2010, p.168). Likewise, this study sought to illuminate each case in context first, then to identify patterns across cases, and to use rich, detailed descriptions of cases, to bring each to life. As an extension of the discussion on how positionality theory has complemented the current case study research, further examples of its relevance are captured in the methodology chapter.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature surrounding difficult discourses on race across adult and higher education classroom settings. In sum, researchers have outlined that challenges arising from dialogues on race transcend education levels,

subject areas, and in several cases, racial. This review indicates that though both students and instructors who are of Color, and those who are White, displayed resistance and emotions that fueled negative classroom energy, they did so in different ways. Of note here is the fact that most studies reporting on student resistance were conducted with White students and/or faculty of Color as sample, and a predominantly White institution as research setting. Fewer studies were found that explicitly involved White faculty or learners of color. In addition, some studies found that instructors' reactions to their students and to the difficult dialogue in general, varied based on different factors.

The findings of the review have informed my study in several ways. First, race remains a central and important component of teaching on matters of difference, based on evidence suggesting perpetuated educational inequity and the fact that there were such a plethora of sources available to that end. Despite this, surprisingly little empirical work has been done on issues that graduate educators, rather than students, personally face, specifically in difficult dialogues on race. This confirms the relevance of the current study, and its potential to add valuable insights to an area of research that is lacking.

Second, if we argue in adult education that race needs to be more developed at the theory level (Johnson-Bailey, 2010), there needs to be more preparation of educators to facilitate or at least start authentic dialogue with graduate students poised to affect change in various adult education environments. A study examining how experienced graduate faculty navigate all that a difficult discourse on race entails, might add dimension to the collective discourse on pedagogies and strategies for race talk. Ultimately, theories surrounding race-based pedagogies might be critically informed with extensive insights.

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Third, part of Sue's (2013) conclusion from years of research with instructors' challenges was that all instructors engaged in "a great internal struggle involving balancing personal values and beliefs with attempting to be an objective educator" (p.668). While many other studies have investigated either student initiated challenges or instructor challenges, the current study aimed to add an understanding of an "in between" navigation space--how instructors navigate multiple elements of a difficult discourse, given the reality of their personal reactions.

Fourth, clearly identities and positionalities matter in the process of race talk, and most studies found articulated perspectives of either White faculty or faculty of Color. This study's use of racially and ethnically diverse participants, with positionality theory as a lens, may grant opportunities to learn from alternate perspectives—for example, from perspectives of faculty who engage in difficult dialogues on race, but are foreign born.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter details the qualitative case study methodology used to conduct the current study. The purpose of the study was to describe the experiences of graduate education faculty who have navigated difficult discourses on race and racism in their diversity-related courses. "Education faculty" refers here to faculty who may have diverse specializations but who have taught diversity-related courses within a College or School of Education. Three research questions guided the study: *How do graduate education faculty navigate difficult discourses on race in their diversity-related courses? How do graduate education faculty handle challenging emotional responses during a difficult dialogue on race?* And, *how do faculty see the navigation of difficult discourses as relating to or impacting their identities*? The chapter outlines the rationale for the qualitative design used, research design, sample, data collection methods and data analysis process that informed the study. Following these discussions, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, delimitations and limitations are discussed. I conclude the chapter with a summary.

Rationale for Qualitative Case Study Methodology

As a research design, a central goal of qualitative inquiry is "to understand and represent the experiences and actions of people as they encounter, engage, and live through situations" (Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). As a method, case study research focuses on illuminating both a phenomenon and its context; the goal being, to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003, 2009). Given this, a qualitative case study methodology was appropriate for

my study for two key reasons. First, I aimed to describe how experienced adult educators—namely graduate faculty in education fields, navigate or work through difficult discourses on race. In this sense, my interests are heavily aligned with the nature of qualitative inquiry as a whole – and the descriptive nature of case studies – which includes illustrating the complexities of a situation (Merriam, 1998, pp.30). Second, the literature has indicated a wide array of factors might contribute to difficult dialogues on race. Hence, examining each of my participants as well as her/his contexts had to form a central part of the study. Using a case study approach has allowed me to do this given (1) its flexibility (multiple data collection methods are recommended for use in order to add depth to each case), (2) its emphasis on probing issues in detail and (3) its emphasis on investigating contemporary phenomena within participants' broader context, rather than within a controlled environment (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). The next section elaborates on my rationale for using a qualitative case study methodology by situating the methodology within my epistemological and theoretical frames.

<center>**The Qualitative Research Design and Positionality Theory**</center>

As outlined in chapter one, my work is framed within interpretivist paradigm. Subsequently, my approach to examining experienced faculty as cases, in the context of navigating difficult race talk, is one that views them as the authors and constructors of important knowledge generated during the navigation process. Thomas (2011) would agree, noting that case study seems a natural partner to interpretive inquiry. Given an interpretevist way of knowing, positionality theory has been a useful lens through which to look at the experiences of graduate faculty participants in the current study. As detailed in Chapter two, the theory posits three essential tenets: intersecting identities, power

relations and local context (Kezar & Lester, 2010). This theoretical frame complements a qualitative research design well for three reasons.

First, by nature, a qualitative research design allows for the collection of intense and/or detailed participant views within a natural setting (Creswell, 2008; Patton, 2002). In the current study, participants and their unique contexts were central to answering the question of *how* they navigated difficult discourses on race. As such, I conducted in depth interviews with each participant in order to (a) investigate the navigation of difficult dialogues on race from an individual instructor perspective, and (b) facilitate descriptions of contextual settings that might have influenced their approach to navigation. The latter included for example, descriptions of classroom and/or campus settings. Since positionality theory stresses multiple positions of the self in context, a qualitative research design worked well in providing the kinds of "thick, rich descriptions" (Merriam, 1998) needed to describe participants and their experiences.

Second, since studies probing instructors' personal experiences with difficult classroom dialogues on race are few, and there appears a need for more empirical data concerning this, my goal was to invite experienced and racially diverse graduate faculty to participate in the study, with a view to describing how they have worked through these discourses over time, and to illuminate patterns that may exist. The emphases here were on *experienced* and *diverse*. Subsequently, a purposive sampling strategy, commonly associated with qualitative research designs, was the most appropriate in order to locate individuals who were diverse in race/and or ethnic background, and who were known to have had substantial experience in teaching race, and in reflecting on how they made meaning of their practice. As outlined by Patton (2002), purposive sampling involves the

recruitment of specific types of participants that have knowledge of a particular phenomenon.

Third, since individual perspectives and experiences concerning difficult dialogues on race were expected to be varied, and since according to positionality theory individuals hold multiple positions that shift contextually, I expected that participants' sharing of their experiences might suggest new pathways for the study itself, during the course of data collection. Qualitative research designs lend themselves to much flexibility (Creswell, 2008; Patton, 2002), and as such it was appropriate for use in this study. In the process of data collection for the current study, emerging insights did encourage my focus on an additional research question that might shed new light on the phenomenon in future research.

Case Study Research

> A case study design is employed to gain an in depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights from case studies can directly influence policy, practice and future research. (Merriam, 1998, p.19)

The quote above summarizes my reason for using case study. Led by an interpretivist paradigm and closely aligned positionality theory where individual and local context are interdependent and inform reality, I believe that case study was an important choice in order that I might describe the depth and scope of my participants' experiences navigating difficult discourses on race, and the context/s within which that process takes place.

Case study research can take multiple forms, ranging from single to multiple and from layered to bounded. As well, cases or units of analysis may be people, processes or

institutions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995; Thomas, 2008; Yin, 2009). I conducted a multiple case study for the current study, and each participant represented a unit of analysis within a unique context. According to Yin (2009), a multiple case study allows the researcher to explore comparisons and contrasts within and between cases, is best used to respond to "how" and "why" questions, and has as its major strengths, the ability to capture real world contexts - and to repeat the procedures on multiple cases - also known as "replication logic". This kind of replication enhances the validity of the study's findings. As such, I gathered data from participants individually, using very similar procedures for each. I then analyzed individual transcripts and reported individual case findings in what I call a *case narrative*. The goal of doing this was to provide an extended and descriptive profile of each participant, and key themes surrounding their navigation of race talk. Once that was complete, I analyzed the individual case findings, in order to describe collective patterns that formed results of a multiple case study of how they navigated difficult discourses on race, how they handled emotions and how they perceived identity in the process.

In terms of specific approaches to the case study, I found Thomas' (2011) typology of case study designs very useful in explaining my work. This scholar examined case study methods and approaches from well-known experts on the subject including de Vaus (2001), Merriam (1998), Stake (1995) and Yin (2003, 2009) in a detailed text. From the examination, he identified four broad categories case study researchers can use to inform their work: subject, purpose, approach and process (Thomas, 2011). Each category consists of a definition, rationale and associated characteristics. According to Thomas, one should determine the kind of case to be explored, the ultimate goal or why,

how it is to be approached and how it might be structured. Based on Thomas' (2011)

typology, I framed the study as follows:

Table 1: Components of the Current Case Study

Subject *What kind of case?*	Purpose *Why?*	Approach *How?*	Process *Structure?*
A "Key" Case "provides a particularly good example…a classic example"(p.77)	An "Instrumental" Case "a tool – a means to an end" (p.98)	An "Illustrative" Case "…drawing a picture…getting inside the problem" (p.119)	A "Multiple" Case Study "examining the nature of similarities and differences between cases " (p.14)
Experienced faculty who are known for teaching race and facilitating difficult dialogues on race	Trying to understand something with the intention of possibly making it better – in this case, navigating difficult race talk; a "best practice" agenda	Illuminating what could go wrong, why –and possibly shed light on promising solutions	More focus on collective patterns across case; less on individual cases Focus on the phenomenon, of which the case is a good example

One other key feature of case study research informed the way I conducted the

study: Yin's (2003, 2009) use of "propositions" and Stake's (1995) use of "issues" – both

terms used interchangeably (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Propositions or issue statements might

be used to inform an initial conceptual framework. Ultimately, the framework may be

adjusted based on the findings of the case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The proposition

made for this study was based on findings from the scholarly literature along with my

professional observations and experiences with diversity related courses. It outlined that

educators of adults in graduate settings face three primary and unique challenges in

facilitating difficult discourses on race, that they struggle to "navigate" these challenges

simultaneously, and that empirical work on how faculty have navigated their personal

challenges are lacking. This proposition influenced the study's initial conceptual framework prior to data collection, as illustrated below in Figure 1:
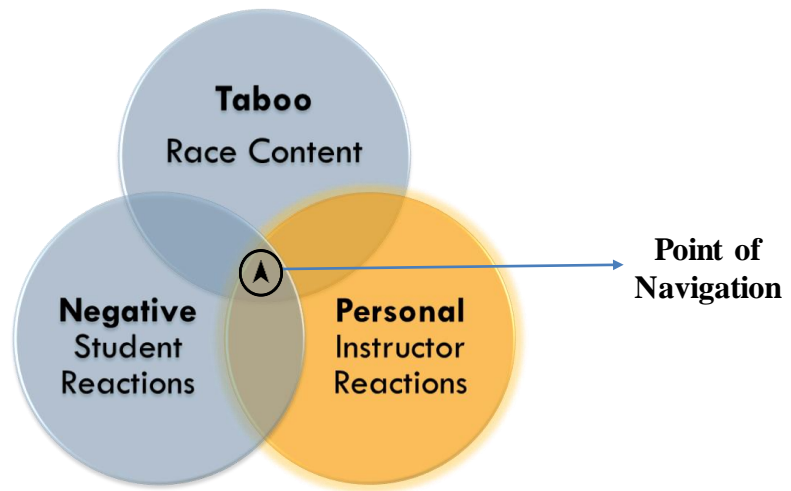
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

While literature concerning the three key challenges is available, the "point of navigation" implied a need to explore how faculty handle race talk challenges simultaneously—in the face of their own personal tensions. What has emerged in the findings and interpretation chapters ultimately led to the modification of this framework and illustrated what might obtain inside navigation. Details of this are discussed in those chapters. The next two sections describe participants for the study, sampling, and data collection strategies.

Research Sample

I utilized a purposive sampling strategy – specifically, criterion-based sampling to select participants for the study. Creswell (2008) describes this kind of sample as "information rich", and describes the idea behind the procedure as "intentionally select[ing] individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (p.214).

Importantly, Patton (1990) and Silverman (2010, 2011) outline that purposive sampling is frequently used in case study methodology, with a view to getting the most information about the phenomenon studied.

Participant Criteria

The study's participants consisted of eight racially diverse faculty members in graduate fields of education, who:

- have taught a graduate level, diversity related course for three years or more;

- have taught these diversity-related courses using a face-to face format;

- have navigated/engaged with difficult dialogues on race;

- have been introspective about their engagement with these dialogues, and have learned something about themselves, teaching and/or educating adults;

- have demonstrated a willingness to discuss their navigation experiences.

In accordance with Thomas' (2008) typology, these participants were suitable for a "key" case, as they were experienced in diversity focused facilitation that often included a race component, known in the broad field of education for teaching and scholarship on such social justice issues as race, and considered classic examples in their field overall. Specifically, six faculty of Color and two White faculty participated; seven were female faculty and one was male. Each participant had nine or more years of race focused teaching and training. All have taught diversity related courses at the Masters or Doctoral level, or both. Appendix F outlines participants' demographic details.

The utility of purposive sampling is sometimes cast in a negative light because is often judged on the basis of what characterizes strategies like probability sampling (Patton, 2002); however researchers maintain that what is most critical is whether or not

the sampling strategy supports the purpose of the study (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 2002). As well, strong evidence from the literature supports the use of a racially diverse, and gender diverse sample for the study: (a) difficult dialogues on race in the classroom present strong challenges for both faculty who are White and for faculty of Color (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Quaye, 2012; Sue, 2013;; Tisdell & Perry, 1997); and (b) difficult dialogues on race seem to transcend gender differences; both male and female instructors have documented such dialogues as a major concern for adult educators (e.g. Guy, 2009; Kwon, 2011; Ray, 2010).

Concerning teaching format, the study focused on faculty that engaged adult learners face to face–as against an online setting, since face to face interaction "seems the most tangible of the lived experience," where individuals display varied emotions and build on each other's verbal and non-verbal exchanges (Van Aacken, 2013, p. 53). A face-to-face setting is also important since several researchers have questioned the authenticity of teaching issues of diversity like race, purely online (Meyer, 2006).

My interest in faculty that teach in faculty in fields of education stems from over ten years of teaching and training others to be more inclusive of all that attend their classes. Now that living and working in my current U.S context includes an emphasis on cultural inclusiveness–and the difficulty in doing so with race talk has continued to increase in the past three to five years, this study is important in giving voice to experienced diversity educators who have a critical responsibility to "train the profession" (Bryan et al, 2012). The findings from this group, though not generalizable, have the potential to inform the ways in which educators set up, initiate and navigate classroom dialogues on race, while, importantly, negotiating their own responses to the

difficulty of race talk. An examination of these instructors' experiences might be pivotal to informing educational policy, professional development and practice in adult and higher education, particularly since for a field rooted in social justice, there are surprisingly few empirical studies that address the issue of difficult dialogues on race in adult education itself (Bowman et al., 2014; Ray, 2010).

While it is understood that many instructors experience difficult discourses on race, the current study has been distinct in investigating graduate faculty that teach diversity-related courses. Of the published studies available on faculty response to, or experiences with difficult dialogues on race few have looked solely at the experiences of diversity course instructors (e.g. Pasque et al., 2013). Faculty who have experience teaching diversity courses are critical as participants, because they often teach race-related issues on a more continuous basis. Consequently, I believed their experiences (a) would provide a more extensive set of data concerning their own personal challenges with moments of difficulty during race talk and (b) would provide a richer and more" extensive set of data from which to analyze how difficult dialogues have been navigated over time.

Sampling Strategy

In keeping with the purposive sampling strategy, I used chain or snowball sampling (Creswell, 2008; Patton, 2002) to locate participants. Once my proposal document was ratified, I (a)applied for and received IRB approval, and (b) approached gatekeepers within my community of practice—that is experienced adult education faculty familiar with outstanding faculty engaged in race focused teaching and scholarship—to obtain potential participant suggestions.

Seventeen names were initially listed as suitable for the study. I contacted twelve potential participants by email. Of the twelve, I received four positive responses; six faculty were non-responsive, while two felt that although they did teach adults in graduate school, their focus on undergraduate work within recent years would not align with the study's focus on graduate faculty. I confirmed a tentative interview schedule with these four participants, while simultaneously looking back at scholarly texts, articles and AERC proceedings documents - and checking back with gatekeepers, and those who had declined to participate for possible leads. Prior to the start of the first round of interviews, I emailed seven other potential participants, and by the end of the third initial interview, I had received confirmations to participate in the study from the final four instructors. The process of locating participants lasted approximately six months – July to January.

Data Collection

Three sources of data collection were employed in this study. They included two semi-structured interviews with each participant, a critical incident report from each, and my journal containing analytic memos. Participants completed an in-depth semi-structured interview first, followed by a critical incident reflection, and a second semi-structured interview, respectively. I recorded journal memos periodically, as I interacted with faculty during the interviews, as well as immediately after they had concluded. The use of multiple methods in data collection strengthens qualitative studies, and is a common feature of case study research since it provides added scope and rigor to the process (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Thomas, 2011; Yin 2003, 2009).

In using a case study that features the individual educator as the unit of analysis, it was particularly important for me to use in-depth interviews and critical incidents in particular, so that a rich context was developed for each case. In addition to the instruments used, I administered a short pre-interview questionnaire to collect "profile data"–that is, those self-reported demographic elements that have been used to describe each participant and her/his teaching contexts. These elements included race, gender, teaching field within education, approximate range of years spent in as a faculty member at the graduate level, approximate class size for diversity-related courses that they have taught, and any other demographic factors they deem relevant to the study. Data revealing the instructor's geographic location/area, age range or course names were not required on the questionnaire, given (a) evidence in the literature that alluded to participant fears concerning demographic data that could reveal their identities in studies similar to this (e.g. Bigatti et al, 2012) and (b) my commitment to ensuring confidentiality in the face of an examination of instructors' personal challenges at every stage in the research process.

The Semi-Structured Interview

I used in-depth semi-structured interviews as the main data sources in the study. Seidman's (2012) description of the essential purpose of an interview is the most congruent with my reasons for using interviews as primary data collection methods. He states that at the heart of interviewing is "an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p.9); and that "if the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people in education make of their experiences, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient,

avenue of inquiry" (p. 10). Since the current study described how faculty navigate difficult classroom discourses on race – and much of that navigation involves both an individual's emotional response and the identity they bring to that discourse, in-depth interviewing was critical to uncovering how they have made meaning of themselves in the context of race talk. As well, studies featuring individuals as bounded cases have also used in-depth interviews as main data sources, with a view to unearthing contextual details relevant to faculty who are involved in teaching on race (e.g. Quaye, 2012).

Each initial interview conducted for the study lasted 75-90 minutes. Each second interview lasted 30-40 minutes. I piloted the interview protocol, with a potential participant that later became unavailable. The semi-strucured protocol consisted of 24 questions. Based on feedback from the pilot, the interview protocol was reduced to 21 open questions (see appendix D), while the semi-structured format allowed for the opportunity to probe for clarity and build on areas of the responses that might have the potential to shed more light on the research questions. As outlined by Bernard (1998, 2006), semi-structured interviews are flexible in nature and provide an opportunity for participants to indicate new areas for questioning. With the exception of one participant who suffered a physical injury and was unable to meet face to face, all initial interviews were conducted face-to-face at a mutually agreed time; all follow up interviews were conducted via SKYPE or other mode of teleconferencing. With the exception of the injured participant, the length of time between interviews was one to three weeks. Interviews were conducted over a seven-month period.

The Critical Incident Reflection

"The critical incident technique outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having special significance and meeting systematically defined criteria" (Flanagan, 1954, p. 1). The technique originated with the work of Flanagan (1954) in psychology. A positivist researcher, Flanagan's primary purpose was to harness set procedures from the observations, and synthesize relationships that could be tested in a controlled environment. Still, he considered the technique "flexible," and noted that the essence of it was to have individuals record a critical incident through narrative, for example; the goal was "to obtain a record of specific behaviors from those in the best position to make the necessary observations and evaluations" (Flanagan, 1954, p. 5). Accordingly, scholars assert that in a post-modern environment, the critical incident technique might be used as more of an investigative tool, rather than a scientific one within phenomenological or interpretive paradigms (Chenell, 1988; Butterfield, Borgen, Amundsen & Magolio, 2005).

In keeping with the goal of investigating participants' interpretations of themselves in practice, so that I could describe their experiences, I used open-ended questions that prompted faculty to recall a specific incident, critical to their navigation of a difficult dialogue on race. I also asked them to record what they believed they were hearing, sensing and feeling in that moment, so as to obtain insights on their thoughts and behaviors as much as possible. Among the advantages of the CIT supported in the literature are its usefulness in allowing participants to probe assumptions and in allowing time for reflection. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) also outlined that the CIT is useful for complementing interview data. As such, it allowed me insights into personal perceptions,

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feelings, opinions and ideas that may not have been uncovered during the interview process, especially concerning faculty emotional struggles.

I emailed the critical incident reflection to each of my participants after the first interview, and usually received a completed reflection soon after the second interview. As outlined in Appendix E, the document specifically prompted faculty to identify a time when they experienced a challenging discourse on race--that is—to describe the incident as fully as possible, along with who was involved, how they felt and reacted, and what they learned. In addition, I probed how those lessons subsequently influenced their encounters with difficult race talk. I used several of the classroom encounters described in the critical incident reflection as introductions or openings to individual case findings for research questions one and two, and within cross case findings. In individual narratives, those descriptive encounters were used to bring the cases and related contexts to life, since a case study that is illustrative "makes the topic more real for the reader…; it enables readers or inquirers to share the experience" (Thomas, 2008, p. 118, 120).

The Analytic Memo

The third and final data collection instrument used was the analytic memo. Distinguished from field notes, which are generally generated from participant observation, Saldana (2009) indicates that analytic memos are "aha moments" in the process of coding where researchers can write "anything related to or significant about the coding or data analysis" (p.133). I used memos less, when compared to data from critical incidents and interviews. However, inspired by Saldana (2009), I wrote them to capture insights in the moment while interacting with participants, to facilitate meaningful reflections after each interview, and on reading critical incidents.

My analytic memos were used mainly in describing or painting a picture of faculty in practice, and to reflect on relationships between themes. I also used a few to probe lingering questions as part of their individual narratives. In my experience, the purpose of writing and coding analytic memos are mirrored in what Saldana (2009) outlines below. He contends that, analytic memos are important to chart or reflect on:

- How you personally relate to the participants and/or the phenomenon
- Your study's research questions
- Your code choices and their operational definitions
- The emergent patterns, categories, themes, and concepts
- The possible networks (links, connections, overlaps, flows) among the codes,
- Patterns, categories, themes and concepts
- An emergent or related existent theory
- Any problems with the study
- Future directions for the study
- The analytic memos generated thus far
- The final report for the study (p. 40)

Finally, I wrote memos in the right hand margin of interview transcripts or critical incidents while analyzing those, and in a journal. I then transferred much of the notes to MAXQDA software, in order to code them alongside other data sources.

Data Organization and Management

I used both manual and electronic spaces to organize and manage data. MAX QDA software helped me organize participant data into folders that were easily accessible. What was most efficient about using this software to manage data was its ability to link participant folders to related transcripts, codes, categories, subcategories, supporting quotes and related analytic memos. With just a click, I was able to store everything in one place - literally. I also stored copies of interview recordings and critical incidents received by email on a flash drive in a secured cabinet. As recordings were

transcribed, I stored clearly labeled copies of each transcript on the flash drive, and kept backup copies in password protected folders on dropbox.com. Folders were labeled "A" through "H" to reflect the order of data collection. Gradually, and as data collection ensued, I created hardcopies that would reflect the way data was organized electronically. Participants' transcripts, completed critical incident reflections, and journal memos were printed and placed in a total of eight color coded folders, labeled "A" through "H." Participants' pseudonyms were used to label their associated files, with a view to protecting confidentiality.

Data Analysis

I used coding (specifically descriptive and focused coding), thematic analysis and cross-case analysis as techniques for analyzing my data. I used these (a) since they seem well aligned with case study research as described by Merriam (1998), Stake (1995, 2006) and Yin (2003, 2009); and (b) based on my experience working with some of them (and learning from that experience) as an emerging scholar. I also attempted my own modifications of graphic ideas I have seen in the literature in responding to both the "art" and "craft" of designing a data analysis technique (Saldana, 2009). To supplement the analysis process, I used MAX QDA software for developing individual case themes; the software was particularly instrumental in locating and sorting in-vivo codes. The following sections explain my process of data analysis.

Coding

According to Saldana (2009), "coding in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient and/or evocative attribute, for a portion of language based or visual data" (p.3). This author has earmarked a

Streamlined Codes to Theory Model that I used to guide my coding and theme building throughout the current study. While Figure 2 (below) illustrates that model, I modified the steps in it for my study by indicating a broad conceptual framework (explained in Chapter six), rather than a theory as the final product.
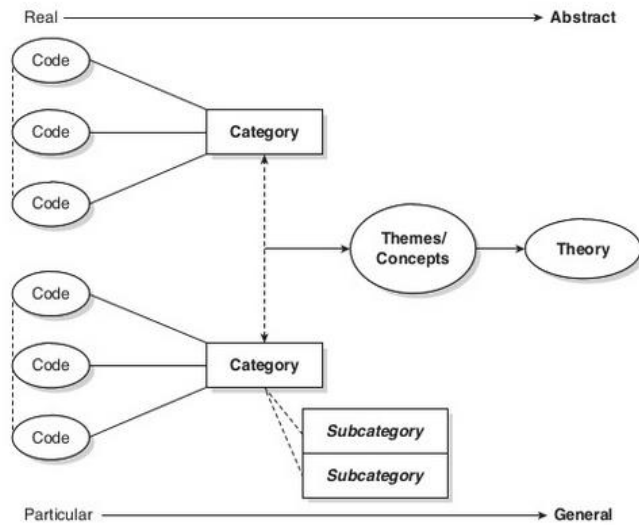
Figure 2: Codes to Theory Model (Saldana, 2009)

I began the analysis process at data collection, as the very first interview was conducted. I used a yellow highlighter to circle or shade a few thoughts and expressions from each participant that were glaring, based on the questions being asked. At the end of each interview, I immediately wrote down any hunches, thoughts, observations, or lingering questions that I had. Some researchers refer to this as "pre-coding" or "preliminary jotting" (e.g. Creswell, 1998; Saldana, 2009). These scholars outline that it is important to assert later assumptions, arguments or theories – or even to influence titles and frameworks. I found this to be particularly true; several of my individual case themes, and the study title were code words that I had generated in preliminary coding.

Second, I listened to each interview recording multiple times. I listened first to get an overall sense of the participant, and to jog my memory concerning any non-verbal expressions (pauses etc.) that might prove meaningful. The second time, I listened while reading through each corresponding transcript in detail, without making any written notations. I then conducted two rounds of first cycle coding, and second cycle coding manually, in accordance with Saldana's (2009) model. This was done for both in-depth interviews and for critical incidents. For first cycle coding, I started with in-vivo coding in order to begin to draw a picture, as Thomas (2011) would say, of each of my cases. In-vivo literally means "to come alive" (Saldana, 2009), and as such it was a necessary type of coding for the study. To code this way, I used a pink highlighter to indicate commonly used expressions of my participants. The goal was to get "participant inspired" code words, rather than researcher labels.

Next, I engaged in descriptive coding, which Saldana notes, asks the question "what is happening here" (p.72)? In doing this, I was able to write down what I saw and heard from participants in interaction, or what I sensed coming from the critical incident that may have corresponded with an interview experience. For example, data might reveal a sense of frustration, excitement or hesitation in their sharing of a particular moment in time, or particulars of an incident. While doing these two rounds of coding, I also made analytic memos in the right hand margin of each transcript. Given that in-vivo and descriptive coding highlighted in different colors, I had begun to build a foundation for forming categories.

For second level coding, I used a "focused coding" approach. Related to the work of Charmaz (2006), and to axial coding, focused coding "searches for the most frequent

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or significant initial codes to develop the most salient categories" (Saldana, 2009, p. 178). I used Microsoft word to create a set of two blank rows and columns. In each row, I placed frequently occurring, and/or related in-vivo code and descriptive codes. Each participant had an average of 15-20 pages of codes. From that these pages, I grouped codes into broader categories and subcategories, and placed the categories, salient codes, and line numbers of supporting quotes, across from each other on large sheets of flip chart paper. Creating a visual is important in seeing the 'big picture' or patterns in analyzing qualitative data (Creswell, 2008).

Focused coding was a process I also engaged in using MAXQDA software. With it, I uploaded each transcript and critical incident, highlighted code words, and created multiple codes and a tree-like coding system. As I tend to have a visual learning preference, I also used emoticons to code, so I could spot recurring and emerging patterns easily. Once this was done, I placed the most salient codes in categories and subcategories.

In addition to this, MAXQDA allowed me to check the frequency of code words, and create a summary report for each participant concerning their data analysis results. Seeing the codes in a structured diagram alongside supporting evidence also helped me verify whether or not I was as accurate as possible, and it was a useful way of triangulating the analysis – that is, checking what I had created electronically against what obtained during manual coding. I went through several rounds of focused coding, adjusting and readjusting categories till the most salient themes began to emerge from each participant, based on their transcripts, critical incidents and my notes combined.

Coding, categorizing and theme building were done by research question. At the end of this process for each individual, I wrote up an individual case narrative.

Thematic and Cross Case Analysis

Once I had prepared detailed individual case narratives, I created a template, in order to generate a thematic report of each case, in preparation for cross case analysis. Stake (2006) notes that very often, researchers analyzing multiple cases are more drawn to unearthing similarities among and between cases. The table displayed the unit of analysis (instructor), emergent themes, and the context/s within which each theme was apparent. One table was created per research question, so that each participant had a three table report; each research question sheet also had a different color. An example is below:

Table 2: Case Thematic Report

RESEARCH QUESTION I – "VICTORIA"					
Theme	**Case ID**	**Case Context**			**Data Source**
		Classroom/Course/ Institution	**Cultural**	**Teaching**	
"Dethroning Mrs. Fix it"	White; Female	Diverse; Small class/dialogue/ circle	Midwest Upbringing; Nice or nothing	Over 20 years; proven scholar; had all answers	Interview/ CI/Memo
Other Insights:					

Akin to thematic analysis, cross case analysis "examines themes, similarities, and differences across cases" (Mathison, 2005). For the current study, I was inspired by the goal of Lightfoot's (1983) case study of what constituted a good high school. Like her, I wanted to look across cases for some "essential elements" of the phenomena.

As such, I grouped the thematic reports according to research question (and color), so that themes from each case made up a particular group. I then engaged in several rounds of focused coding again—by research question--with a view to generating categories and cross-case themes. Simultaneously, I revisited the individual transcripts, case themes and associated folders in MAXQDA, so that I could (a) cross-check supporting evidence, color coded patterns and word frequencies with manually generated categories, and (b) organize final categories into electronic folders. It is important to note that in the process of writing up detailed case narratives and thematic case reports, several of the big ideas or patterns across cases had begun to emerge. I would always pause to add analytic memos manually first, and then later to the memo section of the MAXQDA folder. From the categories indicated across cases, I generated a set of themes per research question that seemed dominant in describing how faculty navigated difficult dialogue, handled emotions and perceived their identities in the process. Findings from these themes formed part of a final conceptual framework, to be discussed in later chapters.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in qualitative inquiry. Research not carefully conducted, exploits participants in varied ways (Glesne, 2011; Patton, 2002). Several elements that characterize the study caused me to put protective measures in place and guard against ethical violations. First, I am mindful that I am not only a novice researcher and emerging scholar, but I am also a graduate student who aimed to interview experienced faculty about issues of a personal nature–that is, personal feelings and responses. This reflects a power imbalance in terms of researcher-participant relationship

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(Glesne, 2011). In addition, since a few of my gatekeepers may have an idea of who some of my participants were, given snowball sampling , I had to ensure that confidentiality was maintained between and among all faculty involved in the process. Along with refraining from revealing participants' identities and using pseudonyms in collating my data and reporting the study's findings, I stored all data in my home office – and made copies of these files on a secondary storage device that was also kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Second, because of the subject of the study, some interview questions concerning emotions could arguably have become uncomfortable for faculty as they reflected on their experiences. I remained consistent in reminding faculty of IRB stipulations that (a) they were free to participate without feeling obligated that they had to and (b) the benefits of the interview did not outweigh the risks to participants, so that if they were in distress, they were free to discontinue at any time.

Third, I am aware of my own potential subjectivity and bias as it relates to the study. As a Black adult educator with foreign born status, race is a topic that intrigues me at the core. I have held views on racial dialogue in the past that were somewhat different from those persons of color who were born in the United States (as is the case of many foreign born Blacks). Since there were foreign-born persons of color participating in the study, I was cautious of the tendency to overly emphasize their perspectives. This could have threatened a balanced interpretation of the study's findings. As a means of attempting to avoid this and build a more trustworthy study, I used triangulation, member checks, and peer debriefing, all discussed next.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Like issues of ethics, trustworthiness is critical to ensuring the credibility of qualitative inquiry (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 1998). Triangulation–and specifically methods triangulation is one way that I committed to ensuring a trustworthy study. I used three different data collection methods; this approach, as highlighted by Patton (2002) is useful in "comparing and integrating data…to yield a more balanced result" (p.556) so that one is being checked against the other and no single method determines a study's findings. For example, data from critical incident journaling was compared with data from semi-structured in depth interviews, in order to help me detect recurring themes.

Peer debriefing and member checking are also important to enhance trustworthiness. I consulted with my chair to share what was emerging at the close of each preliminary and complete round of data analysis for individual and cross case findings, as well as short, related excerpts from that data. My chair did not have access to any complete interview transcripts or critical incident reports. Several participants requested that only the researcher have access to full transcripts that could potentially reveal who they were, given the personal nature of some of the questions, and of their corresponding responses. I also debriefed with three individuals, independent of the study, conducted member checks with them concerning categories and themes that seemed to be emerging across cases, from each set of data collection instruments. As a tool that is necessary to help keep a researcher's methods and data in context (Patton, 2002), peer debriefing challenged me concerning clarity in expressing precisely what I was finding— findings of the cross case analysis were initially difficult to articulate. Peers also invited me to reconsider some previously held assumptions. The three

individuals that formed my peer group all have taught adult learners, but are scholars in sociology, global and comparative education and theology. I connected with them once per month on average.

Regarding member checking, I acquired feedback from participants regarding how I represented them in the findings, particularly in case narratives. This was critical especially since the study explored issues of identity and emotion which are personal in nature and since participants' voices formed the central findings of the study. Member checking is useful in clearing up any existing ambiguities (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Merriam, 1998). As such, I sent complete case narratives, with individual case themes discussed, to each participant with a view to getting authentic feedback on my interpretation their perspectives, and to increase transparency and trustworthiness. Seven participants responded with detailed feedback; one participant acknowledged receipt of my request for member checking, but was unable to respond further. Also, at the start of second interviews, I asked for clarifications of statements in initial interviews that seemed ambiguous.

Finally, I used reflective journaling. I kept detailed records of my emerging thoughts concerning research design, fears, expectations and assumptions in a notebook I have kept since I finalized the topic for my dissertation. Merriam (1998) emphasizes the use of reflective journaling as a tool that enhances the quality of researchers' interpretations. In my bid to continue critical reflexivity as an adult educator and researcher, I journaled:

> to be aware of when I [may be projecting] my beliefs on to my participants…to disclose my interpretations, challenges, emotions, revelations and biases about participants and their narratives …to ensure that I would concentrate on

participant knowledge that differed from my expectations. (Quaye, 2008, pp.77-78)

In keeping with this, I concluded the study's final chapter with a reflective summary of my research journey.

Delimitations

As with any study, key decisions were made about how to focus the study, including limiting the participants to a small number of diverse graduate faculty who had taught diversity-related courses for over three years. I am keenly aware that any use of the findings from this study has to be done with individual context in mind and remind the reader to consider the contexts described for each participant in considering the degree to which conclusions from this study might be transferable to your own teaching context. It is also recognized, though this case study might suggest what may obtain in similar race talk contexts, that there might be other factors that significantly influence the behavior of individual cases/units of analysis—for example the campus context as a whole, policy, or administrative climate. A detailed discussion of such factors that often influence faculty behavior and decision making did not lie within the scope of this study. As such, additional research might be needed to capture these factors in relationship to individuals.

Limitations

Case studies often feature observation as a key data source. Arguably, I might have elected to observe faculty in their natural class context, for richer descriptions—and especially to capture both their responses, and their students' responses firsthand. However, a "difficult" dialogue on race often happens spontaneously and I would not

have been able to control when one might occur. Further, direct observation and my presence in the class may have influenced class participants' responses. For example, since they neither knew me well, nor had developed a comfortable working relationship with me, both participants and their students might have had the tendency to shy away from those elements of the race talk that might showcase its difficulty. Future studies incorporating observations over time, allowing both instructor and students to become accustomed to the presence of the researcher, might serve to illuminate to the kinds of dynamics illustrated in this study's findings.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I situated the study's case study methodology within a larger epistemological framework, and described ways in which it is appropriate to the nature of the study and to the topic of inquiry. Qualitative case study methodology was used for the study probing the questions *how do graduate education faculty navigate difficult discourses on race*; *how do graduate education faculty handle challenging personal emotions during difficult discourses on race* and *how do faculty see navigation of difficult discourses relating to or impacting their identity*? In conducting a multiple case study, each participant served as a unit of analysis. I used in depth interviews, critical incident reflections and journal memos to collect data. I used multiple rounds of coding and thematic analysis to detect individual case themes, then I used cross case analysis to identify convergences and divergences across cases. In doing so, findings revealed diverse strategies that experienced faculty use to navigate difficult discourses on race.

CHAPTER IV

Individual Case Narratives

Introduction

This chapter consists of individual case narratives and their associated findings for research questions one, two and three. Case narratives are provided for *Anita*, *Cathy*, *Georgia*, *Isabel*, *Manuel*, *Sandra*, *Victoria* and *Youjin*. Each case narrative begins with a short descriptive statement that represents the case, relative to her/his general approach to facilitating dialogues on race. It then provides a description of each case in context, and answers for each research question concerning *how faculty navigate difficult dialogues on race, handle emotionally challenging responses, and see their identities as relating to navigation,* respectively. Narratives often begin with excerpts from critical incident reflections. As well, themes derived are usually based on in-vivo codes, to keep the case illustrations vivid and authentic. The chapter represents the first step in a two - step multiple case study. Chapter five, which immediately follows the final case narrative in this chapter, provides full cross-case findings.

Anita: From "Walking on Glass" to Fearless Passion

"I've evolved...I was very concerned about the pressure walking on glass initially, because I always felt like somebody was going to go back, like a student-and complain. "

Case in Context

On meeting with Anita in person for the first time, I was struck by how animated and passionate she was about teaching diversity focused courses; verbal expressions were always accompanied by non-verbal ones, bringing much emphasis to her talking points— and making her delivery all the more engaging. Anita has credited much of her success in engaging difficult race talk to this kind of communication style and much of the style to intense levels of compassion for educating her students on diversity issues like race. Compassion for her in this teaching context means "understanding that people are robbed. They want to learn but we've never been able to talk about these issues." Still, she has been careful to note that her passionate style was not always something she owned proudly. Rather, she feels she has "evolved" over time, learning to come into a space of comfort with self and all she carries to her facilitation of race talk. Now-she spends less time worrying about "walking on glass" (trying not to offend), and more time channeling her passion constructively and without fear.

Anita's Background. A self-identified Latina, Anita has roots in both North America and Europe. She grew up with an acute awareness of "difference" on varying levels. For example, while growing up, she "never knew [she] was even smart" academically, given that those around never highlighted or affirmed her scholastic efforts; racially and ethnically, she understood that as a person of color in a given setting that was predominantly White, she was somehow "less than." Being acutely aware of

difference has also been a feature of Anita's life in adulthood. She has frequently observed harsh discrimination and marginalization while studying and working in special education and educational leadership circles over the years. Thus, she has become clear on the fact that working through difficult dialogue on race in her graduate courses merely amounts to the "same song, different verse."

Race Talk Triggers and Challenges.

> One of the things students have to do is, they have to facilitate a conversation – a classroom lesson for about an hour, and [during that] I saw in them what I saw in myself… I started to notice that a White student would say something and a Latino would jump on it and be passionate. So for me, the conversation we also have in class is not only the content – the content of the book, but [also] "what just happened?"

Many of the tense moments that arise from race related dialogues in Anita's diversity class originate from a lack of understanding and misperception that diverse ethnic groups have for each other. At the root of it, she notes "often they don't know how much they are hurting each other." Consequently, she sees her task as "not trying to convince or convert" anyone, but going beyond content knowledge to deconstruct statements that were perceived to be negative or stereotypical, while teaching her students to do the same. White students and students of color making stereotypical statements or racial slurs, and students showing resistance by giving Anita pushback have been the main triggers of difficult race talk over time. However, other key triggers involved provocative activities she would plan to purposefully elicit difficult race talk.

Although Anita's campus environs have been predominantly White for all ten of her diversity focused teaching years, a recent shift in demographic trends has seen her facilitate classes with approximately 40% of non-Whites. With an average of 20 students per class, she noted that there is also a growing presence of special needs students and

immigrants. With her goal to engage all in the process of deconstruction, Anita has found creative ways to work through race talk, handle her emotions and come to terms with the role of her identities in the process.

Navigating Difficult Race Dialogue

An overarching theme in Anita's navigation of discourses on race is metacognition. Her aim is to have students (and future educational leaders) think through the way they think about others by "constructing experiences to where they have their own understanding and their own epiphany." With this in mind, she makes every effort to model metacognition from planning stages to end of course. As she explained, "I talk to them about metacognition, so that as we go through the class I will not only model for them what I want them to learn, and how they can deconstruct conversations. I am going to talk them through it and tell them why I do what I do." Anita models metacognitive strategies by *setting the stage for an inclusive class climate*, *scheming for teachable moments* and *bringing others to the table*. In doing so, everyone has clear expectations of difficulties that may obtain in race talk.

Setting the Stage for an Inclusive Class Climate. Class climate involves diverse norms, processes and goals that Anita wishes to establish from the early days of the course. For her, "trust is huge," and a primary norm that she tries to establish when setting the stage for race talk. Alongside this, respect, compassion and humility for others are emphasized. "No fighting!" she constantly pointed out as a general rule. "There is a way to push, but there's a way to do it so that there's not a standoff." When she and her students have understood class norms, she has found they are more likely to think twice about how they offer their opinions, especially when either is personally offended in race

talk. She painted a picture of what setting up these norms might look like early on in the course, noting that revisiting them as the course progressed, was also crucial:

> I spend a lot of time on class norms--because norms are different by culture, how we interpret them. Honesty and compassion is the other part. Compassion is a huge part we talk about and [developing] trust and a safe space… where we can explore all their deficit thinking, all their stereotypes, everything that they say because to me, that's where their problems are occurring.

When asked about what safe space meant for her, she described it this way:

> Safe space to me is a place where we are talking about an issue and I can bring something up and I can use a word or an expression and someone doesn't jump on me and say "you're a racist!" And I want my students to be able to say. "I heard you just say this. Can we talk about that? What does that mean to you?" And to kind of deconstruct it.

To get to that space of safety, Anita has recognized that she must also try to establish a strong sense of community as part of the norms of the class. Here, she emphasizes the idea that as a class, her goal is for everyone to learn together, and simultaneously, to feel like they are an integral part of adding to whatever knowledge is shared. She has learned to practice the kind of vulnerability that is not afraid to confess "I messed up," when necessary during race talk, and described how her efforts to establish an open learning community might sound:

> I say to them, "this is a learning community, this is for all of us; this is not just me." I also have the conversation that I'm not the expert and that I expect for them to become part of this learning community and that we all engage…I'm going to model for you, but I expect that at some point, I'm going to retreat. And when you see what happens, you will be the one who starts to challenge, but in a gentle, in a way with humility to [ensure] someone else's dignity. And they all look at me like I'm crazy in the beginning of that. But I tell them, "by the middle of class--you don't believe me but it will change," and it does…and they start doing that.

Anita would find that much of the positive change she alluded to eventually manifested itself in students' responses to "teachable moments" she planned for.

Scheming for Teachable Moments. Intentionally planning or scheming up provocative activities that could yield intense and difficult racial discourse? This is a practice Anita frequently engages in, as one of her metacognitive strategies. In general, she noted with a smile "I also scheme." Scheming and its resulting tough dialogue has worked as a foundation on which to add more knowledge and information or use questioning, that may be required to diffuse race-related tension, given the context of the discourse—in other words, as an invaluable teachable moment. As well, scheming has worked as something she uses to determine her students' progress and competence levels.

During one particular small group activity for example, Anita observed tensions rising from a White student's use of inappropriate race-related language. Using her knowledge of her students, and confessing that her scheme came out "even better than expected," she shared what happened when she schemed so that the student was questioned about the language she used:

> [Earlier], we've talked about how beliefs change into practice. And we go back to the big group. I know that I have an African American student in there who I also know will say something. And that's what I want to happen. So I set up this kind of incident…they come back, and there are two other White students that ask [the woman from their small group]--"well, would you relate your story? Let's talk about it."

> So she opens up, and it wasn't as bad until she said "my neighborhood is not what it used to be--it's kind of become *ghetto.*" Oh!!!! And I was getting ready to say, "what does that mean to you?" I didn't even have to, because the African American [did]! But she stayed calm and she said "what does that word mean to you? Because it means something different to me..." And then it went back and forth, and then two other students started looking online and saying "well, the dictionary meaning is - a neighborhood that's becoming poor…" And so my comment back to them was "there are also connotations of that word" - and so we had this incredible discussion!

> When we take a break, I check in with both of them, and we deconstruct it. We come back after a break and I say, "I'm really proud…this took a lot of guts" And I thank [the White student] in front of everybody and I say "it took a lot of

courage to be able to admit that… this is the first step in how we're going to start to understand." Then I thank the African American for being able to discuss it in a way that everybody could hear.

Scheming for teachable moments has been a strategy that yields more positive outcomes more often than not for Anita, because of its ability to evoke honest and often very difficult conversations around race, and ultimately building confidence in facing and working through the difficulty of racial discourses. Often it is successful too, because (a) students are guided by the overarching class norms that should undergird their responses, and because (b) she always finds a way to affirm her students, regardless of their input in the dialogue; "no matter what I'm teaching, I'm always affirming," she was careful to note. Affirming others is also evident in Anita's consistent practice of engaging in race talk alongside other voices.

Bringing Others to the Table. "I can't teach diversity—or race, by myself." Anita has often asserted. "That's kind of an oxymoron…I am a strong believer in bringing people to the table, because we're never going to change things until we talk about them."A learned habit, Anita uses every opportunity that she can to bring multiple perspectives to her classroom as a means of working through issues of race. For her, this has largely involved engaging in co-teaching with both persons of color and White instructors, as well as "rely[ing] on students to be those multiple voices." Her experiences co-teaching alongside White instructors, for example, has served as a vehicle for (a) engaging successfully with White individuals who argued in resistance, and (b) herself, learning to view racial issues from an alternate perspective. According to her,

> Teaching with my [White] co-instructor was very very helpful. Not that she spoke for all the Whites in the room, but she was able to say "have you ever considered

this?" and then I would say to her "have you ever considered *this*?" That was a great lesson.

In a similar way, students' voices have helped Anita navigate difficult discourses on race by offering firsthand accounts of their race related experiences. But she has also found that if she developed authentic relationships with her students, ultimately, their voice would prove a timely advocate in moments of tension—particularly in the early years when she was more timid in the face of resistance:

> Once I asked how everybody was doing [in class] and a student said – "well, there's just too much reading in this class!" And yes, I wanted to say then why are you here cause that's what the education is for?!"And I didn't even open my mouth to respond because I was trying to process what to say, and the student next to me said exactly what I had been thinking. That student was White – I had a very authentic relationship with that student…and then someone else spoke up and said "that's dumbing the curriculum and we don't want the curriculum dumbed down."

> She sat down and shut up.

> And guess what? A year later…I got a letter from her and she said thank you… what I've learned in your class has really helped – she was getting promoted. Bottom line is…once you start developing authentic relationships and being vulnerable with people, other people advocate for you.

One important component of Anita's strategy of *bringing others to the table* involves communicating or conducting conversation in a way that is accommodating to diverse racial and/or ethnic audiences. "You don't preach to people who are different than you", she stressed—adding that multiple experiences and perspectives indicate there should be multiple ways of engaging diversity issues like race to different audiences. According to her, "a lot of the society [who are in] teaching are White, so we want to bring them to the table. At the same time,not everybody can hear that it's just Black and

White. There's a lot of in between still affected." Undoubtedly, she has had her emotions affected by challenging race talk.

Handling Challenging Emotions

"So I hear this immense sadness and anxiety..."

Well yes, the sadness, the anxiety, the fact that your parents didn't do a good job—blah, blah, blah. That's all they used to talk about you know – "these parents they don't care….they don't work with their kids on their homework. And they don't read to their children!" I think the hardest part for me was… divorcing myself from the fact that what they were talking about were my parents and me as a child. I experienced all that growing up through high school, elementary – and I went to a predominantly White school …but didn't really know what was going on. I now understood what was going on listening to them. It was hard at containing my emotions...I remember going half way maybe three or four classes – and I remember being in the parking lot one night and I was breaking down and crying – "why did I decide to do this?" Why? What was I thinking to want to do diversity training?

When probed about her challenging experiences with emotions in classroom discussions around race, Anita was quick to point out that sadness and anxiety were prominent because the emotional trigger was "very personal" for her. In the early part of her career in particular, she found herself struggling to listen to others' perceptions of Latina/as attitudes and practices concerning education. Based on her lived experiences as a Latina, she felt strongly that these perceptions were misconstrued.

The problem of challenging emotions has been compounded by the fact that several of Anita's peers and faculty members have verbalized similar negative stereotypes regarding Latina/s in education—some of which have even impacted her students of color negatively. For example, she recalled, "I've had students tell me that professors tell them that they can't write." As a result, she has experienced varied levels of anger as well, and has had to be consistent and intentional at efforts to overcome it. "There was a lot of anger there…because of misunderstanding," she confessed.

Nevertheless, her overcoming strategies have largely involved reflection, writing and stepping back—practices which she feels have only gotten better over time. Emergent themes here were *reflecting and writing for freedom*, and *stepping back, not pushing back*.

Reflecting and Writing for Freedom. Managing challenging emotions that arise from race talk often means reflection and writing for Anita. She feels both often work hand in hand, and both have brought much clarity to her. A fool-proof method of processing emotions, writing has been a very "freeing" experience for her--particularly at times when she also faced personal struggles. As an added bonus too, she has been able to use her writing as a public response to the very discourses that triggered anger and sadness in her. With tears in her eyes, she shared one particularly compelling example of writing for emotional freedom, and in a bid to clarify what she saw as misinformation and negative stereotyping concerning Latinos:

> All I had been hearing for eight, 10 years was "Latino parents don't value education." I heard it about Black parents too but on the scale they think Latinos are worse right? Because they're not educated. So I decided to write…and it got published…when they reviewed it, they said this is going to contribute greatly to the field and the misunderstanding. And so for the first time, and I wish I had dedicated it…in my mind I was writing it for my parents (breaks down in tears) – because I felt like [I wanted to] help people understand that Latino parents do care.

Deep reflections on an emotionally charged class have also led to heightened sensitivity to how students of color may have felt; and, she feels it has been an important part of the kind of honesty, vulnerability and trust that she encourages in class:

> Reflection is a huge piece of what I do…part of me. If I walked out and something didn't go as well…I sleep on it, think about it, and I check in with people…so if I had a discussion and something didn't go well, I would email the student and say "how are you doing? I want to apologize for what I did." And

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often I'd get a response saying "no, it didn't bother me!" I think that really helps a lot…people know you're real.

Reflection in, and on writing also has also been a vehicle for assessing how she could improve as an instructor. As she concluded, "I just kind of reflected on everything…I was able to look at my evaluations and I said to myself, I need to just control the passion…I reign it in. "Reigning it in," in turn often meant taking a step back.

Stepping Back, Not Pushing Back. Although she practices vulnerability with students in terms of being honest when she has made mistakes during race talk, Anita is convinced that a sure strategy for dealing with her own challenging emotions is to mentally step away, in an effort to assess the situation more objectively–rather than push back fiercely. She explained that "as someone who works with race and these [kinds of] conversations, you have to be able to take a step back." For her, this has often involved simultaneously staying calm, listening intently, and then attempting to restate. As she outlined:

> I think that's the biggest part. Don't get hooked--because that's what used to happen to me initially…divorcing yourself of that, and just listening to what people are saying. Go back, and whoever said it, tell them something like "can we talk about it? Let's talk about what happened", and "this is what I heard you say – is this what you meant?" Oftentimes when people hear it re-echo back, they're like "ah, well, no." And then tell the person "ok, you may not have meant that, but this is how I'm hearing it" and then you can ask other people in the class how they heard it. So, that's how you start the dialogue – but you do it in a calm way, you involve other people so that it's not just you and that person and the more you do it the better you get at it – and you encourage people to stay calm, to model it, to be forgiving, to be compassionate, to maintain everybody's dignity.

Stepping back rather than pushing back has also been crucial for Anita as a way of curbing the passion she feels when it comes to race related stereotyping and discrimination. On reflection, she now feels this passion sometimes manifested in the

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wrong way, and that as students became aware of her passion, they sometimes used that

knowledge to further frustrate her:

> I remember having one class…I had some guys in there… and they were very vocal in class, very pushback and so that kind of fed my insecurities and they wanted, they wanted to gang up on me. I don't think I handled that well. You know, and sometimes I'm not sure – sometimes I let my passion get the best of me. I tried to push back and in retrospect I don't think that was the way to do it.

Recognizing that was not "the way to do it resulted in "stepping back." Once she did this,

she noticed students ultimately advocated for her or her own listening and

communication skills improved.

In addition, stepping back was important in order for Anita to learn to recognize

and separate outside personal challenges, from the emotional challenges of the moment

during race talk. For example, she recounted a time when a relative of her's was having

personal difficulties that encroached on her own emotions and made it hard for her to

focus at times. "It really affected me but I found that if I brought my stuff in, it would

escalate what went on in the classroom," she explained. But "over the years, I've learned

to distance myself."

Navigation and Identity

> I want [my students'] to understand that…there's multiple realities…and that affects how people function, so don't jump to conclusions just because someone disagrees with you, that they're wrong or that they hate you…The other part of that would be to have a process…so that when something goes wrong or something goes awry when we're communicating, take a step back – use the process that I teach you… its deconstructing deficit thinking because I think that's when communication breaks down. If you understand that there are differences in the world and that people are well intentioned, then content is easy.

The quote above speaks to Anita's general goal in facilitating diversity issues as a

whole, to include issues of race—she hopes for an understanding of multiple realities and

a process within which to work when tense moments arise. Both of these elements have

been driven and/or impacted by her cultural, professional and personal identities in varied ways. Anita feels that her understanding of how identity factors into navigating difficult race talk has been a tool for making adjustments to her facilitation methods and general attitude over time. As such, themes are a *culture in-between* and *a pressure filled profession.*

A Culture "In-between."As a Latina, and daughter of Mexican Americans, race and ethnicity have been prominent elements of Anita's cultural identity. In the race focused classroom, she has been perceived as "just another Mexican woman with an axe to grind." Overall, she described herself as having a bi-cultural identity, but also as someone "between" spaces, since she has never felt like she fit in with either persons of color or Whites: "the *less than* I get often from people of color, and the *you're not like the rest of them*, I get it from Whites...I'm in this middle space." For example, to some, she is "not really Mexican," because she does not speak Spanish. Added to this, her campus environment has largely been predominantly White and it created an unspoken barrier between herself and her peers in the early days--some not understanding her engaged style of communication, and others giving other White faculty credit for much of the work she had done.

Despite her insecurities about the perceptions that have had her existing in this space, Anita has observed two significant benefits of the middle space in her navigation of difficult dialogues on race. First, it has allowed her to approach navigation with a personal sensitivity of what it means to be treated like a minority, and subsequently to plan with minority students in mind. Ultimately, she conducts a lot of one on one mentoring with Latinas. Clear understanding of her "minority" status has also increased

her awareness of the need to make adjustments in facilitation that could diffuse tension. For example, in co-teaching, she has learned that "when a White person makes a comment in the room, [her White co-instructor] takes them on" and this works best; conversely, when a person of color makes a comment, she deconstructs or challenges.

Second, the middle space has allowed what she now feels is a unique opportunity to fit in with either Whites (since she doesn't have a Spanish accent) or persons of color (since she self-defines as Latina); she described it based on the words of a scholar that inspired her:

> Initially I saw it as problematic because I got so many negative messages, but now I see it as an advantage. It's like Trueba--he talks about being a chameleon and you go in and out...if you've ever watched television and you're surprised and go "oh, so and so is Spanish! I didn't know that..." That's how I feel...it's an advantage because I have a set of skills that now I can [use] with either one.

As well she has concluded that being able to "accommodate to educate" in this way is steeped in her experience working with special needs persons, and is a critical asset to opening honest dialogue. Her communication style in navigating over the years then has remained open and direct, but not hurtful:

> I've taken number of issues on, and pretty directly because I said to people, lets go back and unpack this. But do I get into someone's face and say "you're racist because you just said this?" No, because how is that going to help? It can't be "this is all about you being White and because I'm Black [or] brown, you're coming down on me." It doesn't help. What people need to realize is...we don't see the world the same way. I don't think it helps destroying someone in class.

A Pressure-filled Profession. Despite the direct, open style she has become comfortable with, Anita confessed that the point at which she became tenured was the point at which she began to assume this style with more confidence and worry less about how she would navigate race talk. For her, tenure status and race talk both in the

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classroom and in faculty interactions were "inextricably linked." As she stated flatly "I couldn't be the real [Anita Ybarras] until I got tenure or close to it, until my materials went off...once they went off, that's when I started speaking up and making my opinion known." Before that, she noted that she struggled with a non-tenure identity that demanded multiple research projects, and was rife with constant tension because of the need for good course evaluations.

Being non-tenured in a predominantly White university community within which she initially felt like she had to "accommodate constantly" in a negative way, was very much like "walking on glass" for Anita as she walked into her diversity classes with non-tenure pressures "hanging over her head," not wanting to make students too uncomfortable in race talk. Often, in the early years, she felt she was "too busy learning the culture" of universities to take time to be more personable--the result of which could have been more effective navigation strategies for race talk, for example, doing less "preaching" and fully engaging the voices of her students in her class.

However, the positive change that resulted from being tenured has become evident in both student and faculty circles. She has found herself "speaking up" with more confidence with faculty. For example, she highlighted an instance where, as a non-tenured professor, she would have remained silent or resisted giving an honest opinion on a racial issue:

> I remember being in a faculty meeting and someone saying well these kids can't write and I said "uh, which kids are you talking about?" And I said uh - it's not that they can't write, they bring an authentic way of writing…it's just different and we need to learn how to scaffold them.

It is this same fearlessness that accompanies her to navigation experiences with students. Simply put, she emphasized, "now I don't worry as much...it's become second nature."

Case in Summary

Anita sees navigating a difficult dialogue on race as an environment of trust, where students and facilitator engage in metacognitive strategies throughout the course, which are effective in working through moments of tension when they arise. Led by a metacognitive approach, she has found it particularly useful to keep the end goal of making students understand multiple realities in mind as she engages in race talk--not taking things personally, avoiding "preaching," and understanding that she is just one among many that will plant a positive seed in students while helping them engage in constructive dialogue around real life racial misunderstandings. While she has been challenged with student resistance and tense emotions, the nature of her cultural and professional identities have served to both heighten her awareness of these tensions, and provide avenues for her to alleviate them.

Cathy: "Activist Teacher"

"I believe in justice. I learned what an unjust world this is, that it made me who I am…this is why I do what I do… you can't be an activist teacher and sit down."

Case in Context

"We want justice" is a well-known slogan that groups lobbying for equity use across the world; often, such activism is accompanied by loud chants and a select stomping ground. Such a scenario however, is in stark contrast to how Cathy facilitates diversity-focused classes, though she may have similar cries for justice in mind. A self-identified White female from the working class, Cathy is firm on her purpose in life: namely, making a difference in the classroom through activist teaching. But when it comes to determining interactions and navigation strategies in race related discourse, "instead of using a sledgehammer", she noted, "I'd rather pick the lock."

Cathy's Background. In her own words, Cathy grew up around "very, very, very poor people everywhere." Alongside her vivid recollection of socio-economic poverty, she recalls two of its by-products as equally painful standouts – namely derogatory labels and negative stereotypes that were attributed to her and those around her. Because of this, and although she grew up in a region where there were no Blacks, Cathy has felt marginalized by social class, even as a White woman.

A move away from home during young adulthood led Cathy to significant exposure to, and interactions with varying persons of color in her community and at work. She recalled these interactions fondly because she made critical friendships and benefitted from the kindness of persons of color on several occasions. As she noted "I don't know what I would have done without them." Beyond the friendships developed

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however, Cathy's experiences with persons of color proved a significant [un]learning

experience for her, since the negative stereotypes she grew up hearing about Blacks in

particular as a child were shattered over time in adulthood. Her passion for justice further

fueled an "everything is critical" lens that has continued to undergird her work on race,

class and gender across a variety of adult education settings in the United States.

Race Talk Triggers and Challenges.

> I'm hearing anger. Fear. Guilt. The student is saying "I grew up poor; I was
> abused; I've struggled; I've never had advantages; I've never had privilege"…her
> anger is aimed AT me, which is difficult, but when she lashes out at me, her
> African-American classmates who live race oppression every day read that as a
> denial of their lived reality. Tensions rise…

In her 15 years of teaching social justice and diversity focused courses, Cathy's

typical classes have averaged 10-28 persons and their racial and/or ethnic composition

has been both diverse, at some institutions, and predominantly White and others. In her

experience, the greatest resistance normally occurs around the notion of White Privilege.

But while ethnically diverse classrooms provided the "help" she needed to diffuse points

of tension (because of students of color sharing their experiences), predominantly White

institutions and/or White students have often been the sources of the most resistance to

race talk – and as the vignette above illustrates, bursts of anger, fear, guilt and denial

from these students often trigger frustration, uncertainty and tensions in Cathy as

facilitator. Much of her reflection was situated in the context of a predominantly White

classroom - a place of both class and racial privilege, and where students are frequently

unaware of privilege and its systematic roots – at least initially. As she explains,

> The main thing I try to get across, really, is the concept of White privilege,
> because if they don't understand that, then they can't understand what that causes
> ... If it's built-in, structural oppression that hurts African Americans or Hispanics

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or whoever, then there has to be White privilege. There's no way to have one without the other… Just getting people to see that - even very smart people who are working on doctorates—sometimes it's really hard.

Often, Cathy notes, this lack of awareness is driven by post-racial and other cemented myths. For example, the myth of meritocracy, the "we have a Black president mentality," or an "everybody can go to Harvard kind of thinking." She noted that it also stems from biases displayed in the media and in popular culture, and by students' inability to assess issues with a critical lens. But what has she learned to do in navigating tensions, all the while teaching for social justice – in the knowledge that multiple forces are at play, and in the face of such additional challenges and consequences as students distancing themselves from race talk, or even poor course evaluations?

Navigating Difficult Race Dialogue

Cathy describes the way she navigates difficult discourses on race as "a delicate dance…a balance between the greater good and knowing who you're talking to." As she stated, "I'm always trying to negotiate with myself… to respond so you don't push the person you're responding to away if they're being very negative, but not to let others feel like you haven't been enough of an advocate for them." To achieve this "dance of balance", she has learned to "pick the lock" carefully. Emergent themes for her that showcase this are *using humor*, *storying the discourse* and *linking other forms of oppression* – approaches she finds far more effective than "using a sledgehammer" which equates to being harsh, overly confrontational, and possibly embarrassing students. According to her, "that comes across as arrogance and that just makes people dig in their heels and cling to what is familiar—prejudice and myth."

Using Humor: Given Cathy's personality, it was hardly surprising that humor was an essential part of the way she navigated racially based tension. Most of her responses during interviews were usually laced with a twist of dry humor. More specifically, over twenty of the transcribed non-verbal observations appearing in our conversations included laughter in parentheses as a result of something humorous she had mentioned, and over twenty-five of her responses to even my most 'serious' questions either started or ended with her laughing. As she admits, "I can be pretty funny." In her diversity-focused class over time she has learned to supplement her natural tendency to be humorous in a serious situation by putting a comedic twist on something her students say and by using video clips from professional comedians who engage critical racial issues.

For Cathy, the benefits of humor far outweigh the risks of attempting to put a funny twist that may or may not work on an uncomfortable topic like race or racism. She notes that more often than not, she is able to "make people laugh, release their tension and then start talking…have a dialogue." A successful moment with humor then, is one that gets students to a place of relative comfort with each other, promotes a safe atmosphere and evokes genuine dialogue. "And then," Cathy emphasized, with both hands outstretched as if she were bringing someone a golden platter, "I get asked questions!" Having students self – generate questions during difficult race discourses seems almost the crowning result of using humor. Cathy finds that in that moment, (a) students' defenses are decreasing and they can really 'hear' better, (b) she can apply her own critical questions with a view to broadening the discourse and (c) she can bring up

and work through issues that have caused tensions, even in previous classes. Overall, she has found humor to be "much more effective than moralistic didacticism."

Cathy cleverly identifies a major strength in her personality, builds on it and uses it to her advantage as a strategy for diffusing race talk tension, but even if a facilitator thinks s/he is funny, how can they set it up so that it works consistently?" I queried in my journal. According to Cathy, there are guidelines to working with humor in race talk. While trying to make things funny, she stresses that the goal is always "to make a point…not just to be funny for funny's sake" and "without ridiculing people at all." Jokes in those difficult moments are sometimes "borrowed," not necessarily born from her own original thinking. As she notes, "sometimes I think of something funny that may come from me having watched a lot of comedians who talk about race. For instance, I love Paul Mooney. I have to be careful with his material, but I can covey the spirit without the language." Finally, Cathy admits that her level of humor is highly dependent on how rested she is "it's not always easy; when I'm tired, jokes don't come, but if I'm rested I can almost always come up with something funny that can defuse the tension in the room." In times when humor seems unsuccessful, she has learned it may just be time to welcome personal stories.

Storying the Discourse. In all her social justice courses, Cathy consciously tries to expand the discourse on race in order to navigate tensions, by bringing in the lived experiences of herself and her students. In working through students' rejection of institutionalized racism via modern-day red-lining for example, she cited a story she often draws on:

> I share [my story]of how realtors always tell you where you should live. This is *the* neighborhood – you should live in this neighborhood, but they don't say it's

because of race, they say it's because of "the market". I would find myself in all White neighborhoods and I would think, "did I *not* ask for diversity"? When I moved here, I found a Black realtor. I thought, "this will help"… because when I was in [another state], we got a Hispanic realtor (laughs) because the town was primarily Hispanic. [Eventually] here I got a Black realtor and we told her we wanted a diverse neighborhood…but, just in case, we've learned to sit, wait, and watch where the school bus is dropping off the kids to make sure there are kids of color getting off the bus. You have to be aware, and make an effort, to find a house in a diverse neighborhood.

Sharing her personal story tends to set off several positive occurrences in the classroom. The use of an actual, modern day example makes the idea of racism come alive. Cathy's personal narrative has allowed students to come face to face with evidence of current racial oppression. Some students of color have also seen themselves in her experience, and to feel free enough to contribute to the discourse by sharing their own stories, thus adding to the evidence and paving the way for even more authentic dialogue. As Cathy observed, "usually if African Americans are in the class, they will talk about having that kind of experience where they're told they shouldn't buy in this neighborhood or they should go to this neighborhood." Stories also act as a solid yet gentle precursor to the far less palatable discourse on the concept of White privilege. By then, Cathy asserts, "people are more open to thinking about the realities of racism" and all it entails.

Perhaps two of the most critical benefits of expanding the race talk discourse by bringing personal stories to the table is Cathy's ability to rely on those stories as a solid strategy for teaching, and for decreasing student resistance. "Over the years, I've learned to let students respond…so it's not just teacher against student," she stated. And, in cases where her classrooms were diverse, she outlined that "when someone says "I don't believe in White privilege; I worked for everything" then you allow someone else [of

color] to address instead of me. In cases where her classes are predominantly White

however, these kinds of benefits are significantly harder to come by:

> Sometimes there is nobody to address it with me - when that happens, it's harder, and I have to really work hard at thinking of ways that they don't feel like I'm just constantly coming down on them…you know, badgering them.

Importantly, Cathy's use of her own stories and her students', is strictly based on

a thorough knowledge of her students. She is purposeful in obtaining as much

information as she can about them – even by way of her interactions with them in courses

previously taught. Once she knows them well enough, she is able to figure out the best

way forward as she navigates:

> I can either tell a moment in my past where I've experienced class or gender oppression, or someone I met, or known…depending on what they're complaining about… Hopefully, I know enough about the individual - then I'm thinking, for example, "that guy is confrontational because he feels it's almost always about males", and so I know enough about him to be able to come up with a scenario that he should be able to relate to.

Positive outcomes like the ability for her students to relate to an appropriate personal

story, also work well in cases where she unassumingly solicits student help in diffusing

tension. As she explained:

> It's nice when you have a diverse group and you know people well enough that you know it's okay to turn around and ask someone else a question and you know the answer you're going to get will support the material you're teaching, or it would contradict the misinformation the other student is basing his or her statements on- and that person is not likely to then argue with an African American and say "no you have not experienced this."

Linking other Forms of Oppression. Navigating difficult race talk heavily

involves linking the discourse on race with other types of oppression. Doing this stems

from Cathy's firm position that "if it's just [about] race, they bring too much baggage and

for White students it's too much about White privilege for them to be really eager to

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listen." Race-focused teaching and dialogue then, in her experience, is more effective if it is done by looking at how different forms of oppression intersect or relate to each other -- and avoids looking at the issue of race in a vacuum. As she outlined:

> I don't think it works to separate out race and class and gender and approach each as one thing, because it is a matrix…there are very privileged people of color who also think that everybody should be able to pull themselves up by the bootstraps and do not have a clue what kids who grew up in inner cities or poor rural areas go through. But they think they do because they don't understand that money offers them a distinctly different life experience—that's class. I think that it's important to address structures of oppression as they affect different people differently, and *that* I think is key to diffusing situations.

Over time, the benefits of "picking the lock" in this way have been consistent. Cathy notes that navigating by linking multiple systems of oppression has increased students' openness and willingness to listen and to learn from even the most difficult race-focused content. More importantly, she has also found that it is a way of promoting and practicing authentic inclusion in her classroom. Simply put, it has been a "tried and true" method of not leaving people out of the conversation or allowing them to mentally check out. Since most individuals have experienced some form of oppression during their lifetime, more often than not, her students would be able to relate to one or more, thus encouraging more participation:

> If you can talk about different types of oppression and how they're intermingled and how they stack on top of one another…you know, most women have had some sort of gender discrimination - and not all men, but most men have had something happen-somebody they know…or something. I just think it helps; it makes them a little more open. Just being able to see it.

Handling Challenging Emotions

> I remember breaking down and crying. I bawled because I was telling my students about the civil rights activist and congressman, John Lewis, who was walking up the Capital steps [at a time] when there were a lot of tea party protests…and they were protesting in Washington…and he walked by and they spat on him! They actually spat on him! I don't know why it came up that night, but I was talking to

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my class about it, and I broke down and I just bawled. I couldn't - I couldn't help myself because it's just so horrific.

Sadness mixed with anger have been common emotions for Cathy. In the example she provided above, tears became the result of this emotion, triggered by her citing the news events of the day during class. Other frequently challenging emotions have ranged from shock, disgust and frustration to empathy and sympathy. According to Cathy, these emotions have also resulted from student outbursts, or a student's absolute refusal to accept the existence of racism or racial oppression, even in the face of numerous studies—undeniable facts—and glaring personal examples. In her critical incident for example, Cathy noted the internal reactions she grappled with:

> I feel bad for [this student]. I feel guilty for making her re-live old wounds. I feel frustration that she doesn't SEE that, as bad as she has had it, if she were African-American, there would be another layer of oppression added to the class and gender-based injustices she has experienced.

As well, multiple emotions are evoked in her at times when Cathy is unable to draw on humor as an effective strategy and instead has to rely on a personal story based on the particular context or moment:

> If it's not a case where I can make a joke [based on student resistance], I might have to use a personal example. It's usually someone I know really well, digging from my own past or somebody I care about…. to just hear that sometimes especially when the moment is tense anyway can sometimes make me tear up.

Using balance and love are strategies Cathy has learned for handling those emotions that have challenged her over the years. Even though she jokes that much of her emotional experiences in class are probably related to family crises or periodic health issues, she has found that facing and working through, rather than avoiding her emotional reactions, has been effective. As such, the theme emerging here is *balancing the show of emotions.*

Balancing the Show of Emotions. In the course of her teaching, Cathy has remained open to expressing some of her most challenging emotions in the process of difficult race talk – but she has been careful to note that she does tries not to visibly display anger in particular. Early in her career, she found that she would both fear and resist an open expression of her emotions. However, as she engaged in race focused classes, she has found that embracing and displaying many of them has proven to be a solid way of dealing with the emotions themselves, and it has granted the added benefit of reducing tension in the class. Though perhaps in the eyes of others, she noted, this practice may be regarded as being "very risky," a large part of her rationale for remaining open to emotional displays is that it will help her to remain connected and in touch with her students' feelings and experiences in a very real way. As she explained, "In talking about race, I've learned that people do get very emotional and if I try to stay distant and not share anything about myself and my emotions, it's just not very effective." In addition to this, as Cathy characterizes herself "an activist teacher," the work of social justice is particularly personal for her. As such she finds it impossible and somewhat hypocritical to advocate for racial issues and yet shy away or appear aloof from all that the discomfort of talking about race might bring:

> I don't believe it's possible to distance yourself from who you are, and when you're talking about issues of equality and justice and democracy and things that you believe in, that I believe in very strongly - I can't distance [myself] - it's just not possible for me to do. It's not who I am, and when I try I come across as haughty…as not caring and above it all or something.

Often, Cathy's display of personal emotions has diffused tension and caused students to reflect on a deeper level in the moment. Shock, for example, that she may visibly display in her response to students' ignorance or defiance, has worked as an ally-

forcing some students to think twice and "encouraging others to speak up and say something." In other experiences, crying as a result of empathy and sympathy for students' negative race-related experiences has produced its own set of diffusing benefits as well. Though she avoids it when she can, she remains open to it:

> Crying usually works pretty well...then at least they're not going back towards being really confrontational. They may still disagree but they won't be as bad...yes, they'll back off a little bit - this is why I don't always try to avoid it.

Despite her success with being open in displaying many of her emotions, Cathy chooses not to display anger– well at least to *try* not to. This is because she believes anger has the unique ability to "shut people down;" with that done, she would not have a chance to reach them. Since not leaving anyone out is a major part of Cathy's goals for her classes, instead of visibly displaying anger when it challenges her, she tries to choose from three response options: (a) remain silent and allow a student/s to respond "for her," (b) keep smiling, despite the inner feeling or (c) talk it out with her spouse in the confines of her home.

Navigation and Identity

While being mindful of her racial identity, Cathy's primary identity influences in the process of navigating race talk have been class and gender. In her words, "I'm White—I have the ability to pass. I am clear. But I have been poor. And I'm a woman. Gender and class oppression gives me a place from which to try to race oppression." Class and gender statuses have significantly contributed to how she has handled tense moments when they arise, albeit in different ways. Emergent themes concerning these link the identity with its impact on race talk. They are *working class increasing empathy*, and *female identity increasing tension.*

Working Class Identity Increasing Empathy: Working class identity has been the most dominant influence. In fact, my journal memo noted my constant "surprise" at how much Cathy described herself as an oppressed minority based on her working class status, and how much she repeatedly linked it to almost everything she did." It was clear that, as she concluded "we talk about [racial] issues because I care and it's who I am." Though she admits being oppressed as a working class minority is "not the same kind [of oppression]" that racial minorities experience, she feels that her constant awareness of it helps fuel (a) a passion for justice that undergirds her facilitation of race talk and (b) the ability to relate to racial oppression and injustice more readily:

> When I did go to college especially to graduate school, I could clearly see my colleagues, my peers did not come from the same place that I did [working class] and I think that awareness made me hyper-vigilant and aware. I think in a lot of ways, although I'm not a person of color, I have enough of that the kind of marginalization in my history to speak to issues than someone who grew up White and middle class and has never been exposed to being openly marginalized in any way.

As a consequence, her working class identity has also engendered a strong sense of empathy for those whose lived experiences are on the margins. She often referred to coming from a place of severe marginalization as an outcast for most of her childhood and early adult life because of poverty, and she stressed that this reality helped to make her more in touch with her students' feelings. Citing that "I know what it's like to live where people feel hopeless," Cathy has maintained a sense of fearlessness in her attempts to deal with issues of race and privilege honestly. As well, having lived through the working class experience plays a significant role in her choice to be vulnerable with personal storytelling as an effective navigation strategy. For her, this identity influence is "not just academic," and is too beneficial to ignore. As she outlined, "in those kinds of

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[tense] situations, when I connect my story, it helps learners to see how vested, [you are... that's why I share more of myself with my students than most faculty do."

Female Identity Raising Tension: Early in her career, Cathy learned to cultivate a keen sensitivity to the kinds of patriarchal dominance that might challenge her in diversity-focused classes. She cited that this was mainly as a result of having worked in a male dominated industry for several years and literally witnessing an environment she described plainly as "sexism on steroids." In that work space, the pushback from men was a consistent challenge. In a similar vein, Cathy has found that counter arguments and resistance received in her race-focused classroom are often from male students. Subsequently, her authority and knowledge are deemed questionable by them, and this potentially heightens the tensions already present in navigation. She describes how that might look below:

> There have been men in my class who have made a lot of condescending remarks. Though they would not say they are condescending, but they certainly made it clear that they felt like women were...they had nothing to teach them. There have been many instances where I have student – male students, who will say confrontational things they wouldn't say for instance to my [male] colleague.

A key influence of Cathy's "problematic" female identity has been a greater resolve to persist in finding her way through difficult moments. Keeping in mind the fact that "it's not just her," because the literature supports the fact that women are often undermined in the college classroom, she has found that the very negative responses sometimes generated by her gender have been useful learning for her:

> You find out what works and sometimes you find out what doesn't work with different personality types, so it's always a process of looking at what you can put in your tool box to deal with the situation the next time it comes up.

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Case in Summary

Cathy self-identifies as a White female with a working class background and a passion for teaching for social justice. Because of this background, "working class" has remained a dominant identity for her – resulting in her being able to tell engaging stories about other forms of oppression outside of race as a way of encouraging dialogue about racial oppression and sometimes as a way of diffusing race talk tension. Cathy has also been able to draw on her personality and successfully navigate race talk with humor. In addition, drawing on her own experiences of marginalization, growing up poor and working-class helps her connect with her students on social justice issues relating to race in an authentic way.

Though she has experienced much success in using these strategies, Cathy is cautious in noting that part of her success comes as a result of her becoming accepting of not always knowing for sure that she's getting it right. Navigation for her is a constant negotiation towards creating balance, so she has concluded that "you won't always balance it." Regarding additional identities, although she cited gender as a significant influence on working through difficult dialogues on race, she speculated that being White for example, might make it easier for her to teach concepts like White privilege to White students.

Georgia: Negotiating Discomfort, *Safely*

I'm looking to create an atmosphere of being safely uncomfortable…If I get students to be uncomfortable, I'm a happy lady…I want people to feel comfortable looking appalled. Like, serious? Is that really what you just said? And then we can have a conversation.

Case in Context

In conversations with Georgia, it was hard not to journal about how simultaneously calm, yet, firm she was. Subsequent conversations would reveal that Georgia has learned to remain focused on her true goals, and how to get to them: that is, advocating for racial justice, but doing so in a space that often proves safe but uncomfortable. Facilitating students in an uncomfortable but safe environment largely involves negotiating with herself and her students; a "movement" from one place to another in race talk, but always toward promoting self-growth and understanding, rather than embarrassment. Since she has grown with regard to focusing diversity within a given content over time, she feels more equipped to manage her reactions responsibly, and meet students where they are:

> I've always wanted people to actually understand the content in a robust way. But now what I mean by understanding the content is perhaps different than I would have meant years ago because I know more. I know what I can give you.

As I would also come to learn, much of her approach to engaging content is rooted in diverse background experiences with advocacy.

Georgia's Background. An African American, Georgia has had a sustained interest in diversity teaching and training for some time. Noting that "issues of race have always been a passion," she has felt that it clearly influenced her specialization while

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pursuing graduate work in adult education. She has also maintained that her tendency toward being activist in nature when it comes to social justice issues, may have manifested as early as pre-college years, given her involvement in petition writing, for example. A strong sense of responsibility to the African American community, an Afrocentric outlook, and diverse mentorship experiences with family, community and her professional networks has continued to fuel her activist approach in courses emphasizing with social justice:

> If you do reading on [the] Afrocentric, on critical race theory you know that there is an activist component to it…this sense of building communities is part of the activity. How do we build community to help it create a more equitable society?

> I think also just my upbringing, the legacy of my grandparents and parents is that you do something. You don't just go to college to have knowledge but you do it because you have a responsibility to your community, however you have defined community. And then I think that within the larger context of really how African American activists move - look at [for example], the National Association of Colored Women, lifting as we climb. Each one reach one, that type of philosophy.

Race Talk Triggers and Challenges.

> Where there's more difficult dialogue that occurs, [it's] because one they feel like this is an intrusion. "This isn't what I'm here for…" The first thing that I have to confront is "why are you making this a Black thing, or a race thing or a whatever thing?" There's that resistance that comes in, and a privilege… that's what triggers it –if they have an expectation and I don't meet that expectation.

Unmet expectations are a regular trigger to difficult dialogues on race in Georgia's courses. In the excerpt above, she reflected on the ways this might happen, and her perceptions of the thought processes behind it. Since Georgia's emphasis on race and its role in society is one she infuses in all her classes, she has had opportunities to design

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courses to that end. She has found however, that weaving a diversity focus into a

foundations class, for example, could prove troublesome:

It's an adult learner - [but more at] -where the context in which these classrooms and learning are taking place. What does it mean to have this disparity? I think that immediately throws people off. They're expecting this kind of acontextual presentation of Adult Learning.

Georgia's experience with engaging difficult race talk has been in the context of

classrooms, and a general campus community that is predominantly White. Still,

compared to other colleges in her state's system, she notes that "we have a good number

of African American students, international students" as well as several Latino/Latinas.

Although she experiences more resistance from White students, she has experienced

some from students of color. For example, one African American male labeled her an

"angry Black woman." Despite the challenges, she has continued to find it "fun" to see

"intellectual squirming" – students grappling with real issues and being challenged in a

safe environment. Many times, race talk related challenges also occur "post class." In

admitting to the reality that "student evaluations figure in to your livelihood," and that

speaking up as an untenured faculty of Color can be daunting, she has maintained she is

sometimes "not uncomfortable but discouraged." Through it all, she has found ways to

work through class difficulties as well as handle emotional and identity tensions unique

to her and her context.

Navigating Difficult Race Dialogue

For Georgia, a prominent and overarching strategy to navigating difficult

discourses on race is unpacking or deconstructing ideas. As I journaled, "Behind almost

everything she does, is an effort to dig deeper into what was said, or getting students to

think reflectively about their statements." According to Georgia, it is important to unveil

and work through what may or may not lay behind a given line of thinking, concept or

reality related to matters of difference. Within the safe environment that she aims to

create then, unpacking ideas may be described like this:

> We begin to really grapple with issues and then that's the place of growth. You
> don't have to grow towards my way of thinking, but grow in your thinking. So
> you don't just have these ideas and have no idea why you have those ideas.

Such an approach also promotes a sense of advocacy in students, which Georgia

emphasizes, is in line with her ultimate goal–for students to not only obtain knowledge,

but understand how to use it constructively:

> Whatever are the constructs for that class, I say I want them to walk away with
> that content knowledge. And then I would want them to walk away with an
> activist orientation…I think that teaching is not just about imparting knowledge,
> helping to develop their reservoir of what they know, but rather empowering them
> to just take what they know and now put into action. We want them to walk away
> feeling like okay, I can actually do something with this. This wasn't just an
> academic conversation

With goals firmly in place, Georgia often utilizes the art of unpacking through emergent

themes like *challenging with inquiry*, *using multiple narratives wisely*, and *applying the*

three H's.

Challenging with Inquiry. Critical inquiry is often used with Georgia's students

at every step. For example, since she infuses race and its role in society into all her

classes, questioning has been a useful and powerful tool to get them beyond a traditional

line of thinking about adult learning and education:

> The first three weeks we don't even look at adult learning theory. We look at
> context. It's an adult learner. What is positionality? How does positionality play
> into who the adult learner is? What does it mean to have this disparity, either
> economically, or whatever it might be?

Beyond that, Georgia also pushes for an in-depth understanding of the concepts

that are often included in race talk. She has found situating inquiry within the context of

the literature most helpful as well, for allowing students to practice critical thinking, and engage in deep inquiry themselves:

> I ask people go back and look at such and such. Tell me how that shifts into what you've just written. Justify your thoughts through the reading. You're confronting the reading, challenging the reading, or you're affirming the reading – or extending the reading. Tell me "where do you fit in that?"

Often, much of the dialogue that is evoked by challenging with inquiry is not only rich in information, but in turn, it results in increased participation. She explained that using inquiry like this works well to garner multiple responses:

> That to me is where the dialogue begins to get very tricky, particularly around race as there is some who feel like there is – "we're in a post-racial society so it's not relevant," or "no I really don't have an understanding of why you would think it would be different to work with a Latino student versus a White student." "Well, the internet has equaled the playing field." So you get all these types of things that come up in the discourse, and then I have to challenge them. And when class is really going well, other students challenge that person and I get to sit back and watch.

Once she has opened up a safe space for multiple narratives to be heard, she must continue to unpack the discourse, by learning to use those narratives wisely.

Using Narratives Wisely. Georgia has consistently stated that she finds using stories to be powerful in their ability to bring issues to life, and to elicit understanding. As a result she often tries to incorporate one or more stories that are personal to her, to the students, or ones that reside in the literature during race talk. As she explained,

> The thing that I think does work is storytelling. I'm very much a narrative person. I think that there is something to the spoken word, there's something to this thing around morality that's really central to how people understand other people. We can't engage in this world without people understanding other people...and so narrative I think is the strategy that I try to use telling, getting people to tell their own stories, reining in stories from the outside.

Over time, she has learned that the narratives she uses are critical for negotiating, and are most effective when tailored to students. One has to "know something about your students" she concluded. Knowing in what contexts she should use particular stories has been equally critical. For example, she outlined that she has felt "freer" at times to use certain stories in face to face contexts, rather than online, to explain the importance of burying engrained racial stereotypes. She has become aware that students may misread her comments in the process, and explained it this way:

> I can say certain things in a face-to-face class and people can see my affect, they can hear my tone, they're made more comfortable because they're able to see those non-verbals. I say "how do you see this equity thing that you're working? How do we get there?" And I said "well you know I'm a reader of the Bible, and in the biblical days, the Old Testament, - [if] I get to cross over into the Promised Land, who wants that crazy, backwards, hurtful thinking going into this new space? So if we really want to do this thing right, we need to kill off everybody over the age of 50. Wipe 'em out." I can't say that in an online space. People aren't going to get the kind of humor… But face-to-face everybody laughs and they get where I'm coming from.

Using narratives in general is undoubtedly one of the ways Georgia combats silence–something she flatly denounces as useful to the navigation of a difficult discourse on race; according to her "what doesn't work is just sitting by and letting things rot." She has been careful to point out however, that in a bid to avoid silence and get students' narratives, part of the wisdom is to avoid "put[ting] them on the spot." In the case of both White students, and students of color, she explained that "I don't need a spokesperson for any race… I'm not one of those people who will say, "…and what do *you* think about this?" I don't want to bring people into the discourse that way." Regarding White students in particular, she outlined:

> I don't want them to feel like they have to speak in order to enter this course. I need them to be thinking and I need that thinking to come through when they

submit their assignments, but some of the things that we talk about are very sensitive, are thinking that they might not want to admit in public.

Her preferred alternative? To evoke and engage with the student's narrative one on one, thereby facilitating the kind of narrative that is authentic to the core:

> What I will do is I will call them out in their assignment in a one-on-one dialogue that we're potentially having…and I will push them and I'll say "this doesn't make sense based on the narrative that you said, that you've crafted. I need you to talk more about that - there's tension here. ..It's a very vulnerable area…so if I am coercing narratives so to speak, I'm not going to get authentic narrative and I'm also going to create an uncomfortable, uncomfortable space, not a safe uncomfortable.

Sometimes, Georgia's narratives have even been invented. In order to both conjure up and evoke alternative narratives, she periodically goes into "playing devil's advocate:"

> Sometimes I will just be the devil's advocate as they say. I'll just bring up contrary points I may not even believe, to get them to react, to think differently about what it is that they were reading or seeing or writing or whatever. Just pose that opposite viewpoint so they can expand their own thinking.

Applying the Three H's. As a final key theme in navigating difficult dialogues on race, Georgia tries to unpack with the three H's –honesty, humility and humor – elements she finds crucial to the work she does. She has learned that honesty first involves understanding self, and her place in the classroom. As a consequence, she can maintain the safe space she seeks for students:

> I do try to be very honest. I try to say what I want to say in a way that students will see authenticity and genuineness in my approach and that they feel comfortable challenging me. I want them to feel comfortable saying "hogwash! I don't buy this at all."

A large part of being honest with herself and her students involves agreeing to disagree. Here, Georgia admits that though she may not agree with everything, she takes time to hear, and be tolerant of others' ideas. As she explained:

You can still keep your ideas and arcane and backwards as they may be [but] I would want students to understand that there's always more than one viewpoint and that those viewpoints are viable even if you don't agree with them

Concerning humility, Georgia stated "I don't think you can do this work without a sense of humility…don't think too much of yourself. Like humility, humor is something she infuses much of in storytelling, and also notes that it is helpful in making things "light" during dialogues surrounding race. Race talk is "heavy," she concluded. So often, "you have to try to lift with your knees." Of course, much of that heaviness is complicated by diverse emotional challenges.

Handling Challenging Emotions

I had a student in an online class and we were talking about issues of equity in terms of opportunity and he was a military person - career military, and he said, "you know in the army everybody has equal opportunity. We train the men, we strongly believe that meritocracy will fit the military position on education. You can go as high as you want to go, take the courses, you do this, you do that, blah, blah, blah, blah." So I challenged him and I said "well, does everybody get into the military?" So if the playing field is uneven before you even get in, how can you claim that you're on an even playing field?

He took a real exception to that, and he was not able to link this larger societal issue to what it means to enter the military. So that means at the very beginning there is going to be a disparity in terms of in racial groups, gender groups, sexuality groups …just based on who got in the door in the first place… so it was back and forth, he and I…I began to get very sad at the fact that he couldn't see these connections, and then that sadness gave away to anger because I felt that the more he would dig his heels in I could see White privilege, male privilege, class privilege, all these different privileges and then that made me angry.

Anger is a primary emotion that Georgia has learned to wrestle with during discourses on race over the years. This is often coupled with sadness for what she perceives as the level of ignorance and/or intolerance some students exhibit. As such, she shared that anger and sadness follow closely behind surprise as well. According to her, "I am constantly surprised by the things that students think. I'm glad that they're willing to

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share it, but I've always taken a little bit aback by some of the things that people still think, and in 2014!"

Struggling with the uncertainty and anxiety of what to say first, in reacting to a trigger (like the vignette outlined above) is a natural result since she notes that "I think about it and begin to stew on this thing I begin to get angry." Yet, she has learned to be most effective in handling these challenging emotions. Emergent themes here then, are *regulating in responding*, and *processing with self and others.*

Regulating in Responding

I am not a person who has a poker face. I have to try hard because I don't want my facial expressions or my immediate affect to be one that puts that person on the defensive because I think that also takes away from the safety aspect of it. And so being able to regulate that I think is challenging.

In the quote above, Georgia provided clear insights about one of the main ways she handles challenging personal emotions. Part of her tendency to be honest or authentic has resulted in a tendency to visibly display those emotions, and as such, she has had to work hard overtime in practicing to regulate facial expressions, though she has found it hard. Interestingly, Georgia has found that this kind of regulating is linked to her subconscious understanding of her own personality, and her ability to draw on select socialization experiences. Here, she has found success in communicating both facial and verbal responses that are more regulated or moderated. For example, concerning socialization experiences, she shared:

My grandmother would always say, there's a way to say things. There's a way that you can speak truth. It doesn't mean that you don't speak the truth, but there's a way that you can speak the truth. And so I think we have to moderate and be very cognizant of how we speak truth. How do we speak truth in ways that allow the people to become empowered?

With regard to personality, she explained:

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I've had students who said "I can't believe that you didn't even flinch when that student said that." So I think that they maybe see me as being a very even keeled and I'm very subtle. When I get really excited, I talk faster, my pitch gets higher, and that type of thing. But I've been able to moderate that within the classroom.

While regulating herself in responding has worked, regulating what happens in the classroom in the form of setting limits has also been effective for Georgia. Again, she described the strategy in the context of understanding herself:

> I honor narratives, but sometimes people's narratives go a bit too long and…I have to say okay, let's move on. I think it's just my personality that I'm just not a real aggressive type person like that. So for me it's a challenge to be able to step in and I want to try to step in a way that honors. Which is - "I appreciate what you're saying, but…." They might start off on point but eventually they get off point and now, this is no longer working towards what my goals are for this class.

Processing with Self and Other. Like the act of regulating her responses, Georgia has found that processing those emotional components related to race talk are fundamental to handling challenging emotions. Because challenging emotions could potentially affect other areas of her life, she maintains a healthy and open communication with self, in order to prevent that. Her conviction about the effectiveness of this has remained strong over time, and is outlined as follows:

> I believe that it's very healthy to talk to yourself. When I'm driving I'm having a conversation with myself if I can't get anybody on the cell phone – because I now need to unpack this and get it out of my system because I don't need this in my house.

Having described how she might handle personal emotions after a particularly draining set of discourses, she also shared how she might process with self, in anticipation of an emotionally charged discourse:

> I kind of talk myself through these situations. If this happens, what will I say? And I have something prepared... so then I'm not just coming out of that initial instinctual response [like] "okay, but this is what I think." I can kind of diffuse

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and move at the same time. Like was it – punch and jab? I'm doing that Ali type thing.

Finally, Georgia remained adamant that a crucial key to handling emotions remains consistent – that is, her close network of friends and family, who often, simply lend an ear at times when she is most conflicted:

> There's a very small set of people who might get a phone call from me as I'm driving home from work, and they're not necessarily people who even understand. They're not in the process of talking about race or teaching. They're just people who are willing to listen. And that's about it.

Processing with self and other has not only proven an effective strategy in emotionally charged discourses on race, but it has also led to Georgia finding additional ways in which her emotional experiences might benefit her professionally. For example, she noted," things that I grapple with in the classroom become the fodder for my work, my research, my writing." Clearly navigating difficult discourses on race is heavily linked to who she is, and who she has become.

Navigation and Identity

When it comes to relating the navigation of difficult dialogues on race to her identities, and the influence/s one many have had on the other over time, Georgia largely spoke to the racial and personal dimensions of her identity. She identifies, first and foremost as "an African American," but she also outlined that "as is widely understood," race and gender often intersect, making the resistance from White male students, for example more glaring in her experience. Concerning elements of her personal identity, she has come to realize that being acutely aware of who she is as an individual, is essential to handling tense moments in race talk. Under racial identity her theme is titled *gifted but Black*; under personal identity, *instructor know thyself*.

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Racial Identity: Gifted *but* Black. Georgia has been clear on the fact that racial identity has played a key role in how students respond to her during race related discourses, but also, in how she might be perceived by both students of Color and White students. Noting that "race place a huge role" in race talk, she has found that students of color see her presence in the classroom as a kind of statement of "validation" as it relates to a minority narrative. On the other hand, she has often experienced White students' "questioning" of her content, methods and strategies. She explained this experience in the context of intersecting race with gender, for example:

> Certainly being African American creates a platform for some students to question and challenge me, which they don't do with my White female colleagues or my male colleagues…so I know that judgement is there; for whatever reason, there's not the same level of respect.

To this, she added:

> I think many of the White students particularly, they feel like they have the authority to define what the academic space is supposed to look like even when they're not the one who has a degree or knowledge of the content.

As well, her constant awareness of being African American has influenced her narrative strategy and emphasis on the use of storytelling. This, she suggested, has allowed her to build confidence in relating her own story, but also to invite others to come to the table and share theirs. As she notes, "I have to be assertive in stating what my perspective is, but certainly creating space for others to have their perspective as well."

Personal Identity: *Instructor, Know Thyself:* Undoubtedly, Georgia has learned to understand who she is personally. First, she has found that this understanding has influenced how she facilitates students during race talk. In encouraging them to "vent" honestly and openly even in writing for example, she has placed as much emphasis on

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their ability to interrogate themselves, as she does for herself in understanding who she is. She would regularly say to her newer students, "First draft, be 100% percent honest with yourself. Nobody else is going to see it. But you're not going to be able to move unless you are. You have to know your starting place." To this description of her practice she added, "it's that type of thing that I'm constantly pushing students toward is greater understanding of self... you can't teach without knowing yourself. You can't be an educational leader without knowing yourself. You have to know your starting point."

Further to this, understanding her personality has afforded Georgia the ability to learn how it might best be applied over time. She has found, for example, that elements of her personality have allowed her additional processing time when she experiences a tense moment during race talk. She explained it this way:

> For the most part I think that I'm just very quiet and very reflective, so I'm not one that's going to be prone to just talking, talking, talking without having really thought about what I want to say...I think that that automatically creates some space in how I respond...Even if it's a couple of seconds, minutes, I'm thinking then I'll come back to it. So I think that's just overall is my personality.

In addition to this, knowing herself has influenced a "trial and error" type learning experience - one driven by reflection - which she has become comfortable with over time:

> You learn what works for you because it's such a personal negotiation. So you have to know what your hot buttons are. It's not just the students knowing themselves. The professor has to know, right? What are your hot buttons? What are the things that you know that if somebody says this, [you'll] be taking off your earrings or something!

"Taking off her earrings" is akin to the expression "hot buttons," and in using it, Georgia was candidly and humorously referring to coming to such a place of extreme anger that one would literally be willing to remove accessories and to physically fight as a demonstration of that anger.

As an added dimension to her in-depth awareness of personal identity and the ways in which it has influenced or related to race talk, Georgia alluded to the element of spirituality as a summation of her journey. She explained that her firm belief in her divinely appointed "purpose" was part of the key to dialoguing on race without fear – a belief that trumped even the fear of what honest race talk could mean for her professionally:

> I don't have any fear because I believe that God has a plan for my life and part of his plan involves me living out his superintendent purpose for me and I believe that how I am functioning and what I am doing is part of that superintended purpose. And so with that being the case, I don't have to be fearful. Maybe I won't get tenure, but that doesn't mean I won't have a job somewhere else. This is not going close one door without opening another. I just have to trust in him.

Case in Summary

Georgia considers navigating race talk, primarily as a negotiation – but a negotiation that must take place in spaces that may be uncomfortable, yet safe. Negotiation for her "is about movement" – movement of self and student from one place in the discourse to another, with a view to having both think critically, unpack and move toward advocacy. In all of it, Georgia has learned that though her own emotions and racial identity, for example, may prove an obvious challenge in different ways, her understanding and clarity of thought concerning personal identity dimensions and how to best use these effectively with regard to race talk, has afforded her some success; since race talk for her is also about "risk taking," in this way, the benefits clearly outweigh the risks.

Isabel: Cultivating Patience in Practice

"One thing that I've learned now that I didn't know years ago is to be a little patient with yourself and where you're at. And hopefully find the resource you need…that's okay."

Case in Context

To my comment thanking her for participating in the study as one of the "veterans" in the work of teaching on race in education, Isabel immediately responded in surprise "oh my!" Despite many years of working specifically on this, she felt strongly that she was far from "expert" status, but instead observed that her practice has been a "journey"—a work in progress that has yielded equal amounts of challenge and success. Given her journey, much of navigating difficult dialogues on race for her has also been a work of cultivating patience for self and for others toward her goal of having students "be exposed to, understand and grapple with" race elated issues in and around their educational contexts.

Isabel's Background. Isabel has roots in Puerto Rico but she grew up in the Continental United States since early adolescence. She still identifies heavily as Latina, noting that, she has always felt "an element of difference" in predominantly White settings—"points of disconnection…salient from a young age," since most of her mainland friends "had very little prior experience with Latino populations." Over time, these experiences fueled her interest in working with educators as a solid step to addressing race based inequities in the field—race talk being a "minefield" she approaches, never knowing what will happen next.

Race Talk Triggers and Challenges.

I had another student – oh that student really challenged me! Because he had such a deficit perspective, particularly of – not just like Latino and Black

communities. One moment it was in response to readings, but that tension in that course was there, it felt like the whole semester. And I really struggled with that one student... And that was early on in my time teaching, because I think I took it very personally. I couldn't – I just – it was really hard for me to let it go– it was really hard to the point of his last assignment that I was just like, "You can't write things like this. This is like openly racist." You know?

Early on in her teaching career, Isabel noted that it was difficult for her not to take things personally when readings or negative student opinions triggered tense moments during her race focused class sessions. Since then, she feels she has learned to handle those moments with a variety of strategies that keep her focused on the learning experiences to be gained, rather than just focus on how she, or other students might feel in the moment.

Isabel described her East Coast campus environment as "predominantly White," with approximately five percent of African American students and about 13% students of color overall. In the school of education, an even "less diverse" faculty and class makeup exists. As her young daughter observed on first visit to the college "mommy, there's not a lot of brown people here." Consequently, she feels that though she has come into her own space in teaching race over time, periodically "fatigue has set in--" largely due to a frustration in not being able to connect readily with those who share similar passion and concern for social justice issues. Navigating difficult dialogues, handling emotions, and capitalizing on how her identities may be used in race talk, have been part of that fatigue; yet they have been valuable processes she continues to be eager in learning about. As she observed, the very difficulty of race talk often facilitates important learning—"when you don't have as much tension, then students aren't pushed."

Navigating Difficult Race Dialogue

Isabel employs strategies for use both inside and outside the classroom in working through a difficult discourse on race. She has found that sometimes class periods do not allow for enough processing time around a difficult issue, and will often use time outside of class to connect with herself, or individual students, in order to bring closure to the situation. In both contexts, but particularly inside the classroom, she has found it most useful to establish a learning community where she and her students might "struggle" with the hard issues of race. Inside this learning community, she navigates the discourse by *learning to wait*, *understanding she is not the expert*, and *dealing with self*.

Learning to Wait. Exercising patience with her students in the classroom community has been a critical strategy for Isabel. Concerning her students, she noted that this strategy often promotes an increased sense of community. In that way too, she sometimes does not have to come up with an answer herself to diffuse a tense situation, and/or it may buy her enough time to generate a suitable response or build on someone else's reaction. As she explained,

> Sometimes there are people really challenging each other and pushing and that sort of thing [but] I try not to be too quick on the trigger in responding. I try. If we are a classroom community, then my voice shouldn't be the only one that's responding. So I try sometimes to wait and to see how other people in the room are going to respond.

She has come to the conclusion too that, "for the students it's also a journey." Leaving tension hanging sometimes might then be useful for them to grapple and grow in the process. Useful and effective responses often come from students if they are given enough time to process, and if there is time and space allotted to hear what they have to say. Much of the success that Isabel has had with this comes alongside an

acknowledgement that some of the most effective responses and reactions occur

unplanned and spontaneously:

> You never know what one student will say…but this past week when I had students share autobiographies, there was this really interesting exchange between two students where this one woman talked about how something that another guy had said the week before really opened up her mind to think about her own racial experiences. And so you just – you just can't always predict those moments that – or know those moments of what's happening that doesn't even involve you, right?

She has also built what she refers to as a skill of "careful listening," where she tries to be

sensitive to students based on her knowledge of them—that is, asking questions mentally

during race talk like "who's in the room?" Are they okay? Overall, Isabel's dependence

on patience often became more effective when she understood, over time, that she was

not the expert.

Understanding "I'm not the expert." Isabel is clear on the fact that the work on

teaching and facilitating racial dialogue involves much lifelong learning. As she

observed, "I'm always learning about this topic…I mean, you can't stay like in the same

course that you were ten years ago, because there's so much work that's constantly

coming out." As a result, she constantly reminds her students that she is "not the expert"

in several ways. The benefit of relinquishing the "expert" syndrome has been a rewarding

one for her as the class community has been able to draw on students' lived experiences

when they share their stories, and to draw on perspectives and resources they may not

have considered before:

> So I can be like, okay, I need to do more homework on this because I don't know myself. You know? And sometimes it's the students themselves that bring in some resources that are fantastic or that have had some experience that really helps another student see a different perspective or that sort of thing.

Not playing the expert has worked particularly well in instances where race talk involves difficult taboo issues, that both herself and her students would need to work through and find solutions to:

> I've also said to students, I don't know much about that. Let's explore that more together…[once] they were talking about how do you deal with the use of the n-word, in the classroom. And so I remember looking for other writing and having students engage in some of that work. I try not to have all of the answers, I guess it what I'm trying to say. If an issue becomes particularly salient, well then let's explore it together as a class. And that buys me a little more time too.

A very important part of what Isabel does in relinquishing the expert syndrome is to own struggles with issues of race that are particularly difficult for her. She allows herself to become an active part of the struggle, and of the difficult dialogue in this way—cementing the sense of community in learning community. As an additional bonus or benefit, she is able to observe where her students are in light of their racial identity, perspective or thinking process:

> Sometimes I struggle with how to present work in a way that doesn't… just lump people into one category, so like in this article White people [versus] people of color…I know that there are White people that have very critical race perspectives that are engaged in anti-racist work… and there are people of color that very much subscribe to a color blind perspective, and so I put that out there for discussion and also to acknowledge where I am, or try to figure out where people are at on this in terms of their own identity and how their own identity is reflected or not reflected in articles… I think students really responded to that.

Although Isabel is comfortable with "not having all the answers" as an important part of how she creates community, she has learned that some students may find it off-putting. Yet, much of her comfort level with being a non-expert has been fueled by her ability to deal with self.

Dealing with Self. In one of Isabel's reflections, she shared the following:

> I think one of the things that I've learned over the years is I have to deal with my own stuff… as I come into the course, just in general, [to know] that I can also have intense reactions…within the course and in the conversations that are happening…[to know] how to navigate that in a way that as a professor – and that carries with it certain power and privilege in the classroom – how to both be honest in my responses while also allowing space for students without shutting down dialogue.

Throughout her time in teaching race-focused course, Isabel has concluded that the "hardest" strategy for navigating race talk has been "figuring out how to manage yourself… and your own reactions." She has also referenced this as "dealing with her own stuff" and "managing the self," and noted that it may mean having pre-thought out responses to potential moments of tension, or making a decision to be vulnerable in that moment. Concerning how she might work through a potential challenge, she noted for example:

> I [often] say "oh, we need to create a classroom community where diverse perspectives are welcome, where we challenge one another," and then sometimes I'm not really accepting where that student is at. I call myself out on it, so I think "what do we mean by those statements?" And I try to be more honest with myself about how am I going to react to those situations where I feel my own perspectives are being challenged.

Concerning vulnerability, she gave a useful example of what might obtain in practice:

> [If] I don't have a nice little answer to something, sometimes I try to make myself vulnerable – and I mean, I accept the vulnerability and expose it. So if somebody says something and its offensive, I could say something like, "It's really hard for me to hear that." Or, "When I hear that type of discourse, this is the reaction that I've had before."

Isabel has found that her practice dealing with self in preparation for and during difficult race talk, is a useful strategy to model. Alongside establishing the fact that "we all have prejudices" at the beginning of the course, responding to students based on

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things she finds offensive, helps them practice responding to each other in a way that can more readily diffuse, rather than escalate tension. As she summarized, "…students know that it's okay to do that without jumping on the other person's back, without saying, "You're awful, you're racist, you're this, you're that."

As part of dealing with the self, Isabel explained that "taking care of the self" has been critical to her understanding of navigation in race talk. It is "hard because it takes intentionality and time" she stated. Still, the benefits are many. Yet another strategy dealing with self has unearthed for her is learning to name and situate race talk tensions.

Naming and Situating the Tension. Naming and situating moments of tension in Isabel's courses speak to two things in general: (a) calling out rather than sweeping issues under the rug and (b) ensuring that personal narratives shared serve a common learning goal for the class. When trying to "name" an issue or listen to a narrative in the room, Isabel has made every effort to situate these in an academic context, or make scholarly connections. Describing that she uses students' narratives very regularly because she finds them to be "powerful," Isabel also explained that things might get out of hand if the stories are not situated within the scope of the class readings and goals:

> For example, the whole colorblind thing inevitably comes up in some way or another. I try to name it. "You know, so that really sounds to me like a colorblind discourse that so and so writes about. Let's open that up a little bit more and let's look at that. And what is the impact of that type of discourse?" So it's not just the course to talk about your personal opinions, right? And so I try to make connections to do that.

Similarly, she tries to situate students' intense reactions appropriately in different ways, and outlined a useful example below:

> It sounds like therapy, but sometimes when one student says something and another student says something and you can hear the emotion in their voice--so trying to name that emotion if they haven't already. Or even something like,

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"You really seem to be responding in an intense way. Where is that coming from? How does your role as a teacher influence this reaction that you're having?"

By and large, Isabel has found that naming and situating tense moments by making substantial connections to an academic context helps to keep students' focus, balance personal and academic discourses. She feels this has also helped answer lingering questions she still has about race talk: "how [can we] get beyond the anecdotal when they have so many personal experiences, right? How do we not to let that sort of become the dominant narrative that they tell?"

Handling Challenging Emotions

I had a student who, on two different occasions, shared about working in mostly Black settings for the first time and what that was like for her. It's not that she had a deficit perspective at all. But I felt like – it was a very common narrative: "As a White female, I'm uncomfortable because I'm working with a Black teacher and we have very different cultural ways of relating."

I don't know how – maybe because I've heard that so many times that it fit into a pattern for me. And for her, it was very much her personal lived experience, but I wondered how other people in the class were reading that. And particularly, African Americans in the class.

And so I don't know if that was a moment that I was scared, but I guess scared in the sense of I don't know how to respond. You know? Like, how – or *should* I? This is her experience. But it's almost like I wanted to push her to think more deeply about what was happening there [or to say] "did you notice that in those two experiences you're talking about the same dynamic of something that didn't work out and you were this young, White person, working in these mostly Black environments, but you didn't know how to negotiate that?"

In the vignette above, Isabel found herself emotionally conflicted-- scared to "push" the student and uncertain as to whether pushing would be too soon, or even necessary. She felt that since this particular student had only begun to express herself in recent times, a challenge might cause her to "shut her down." Fear and uncertainty have proven challenging emotions for Isabel in different ways, but she has also experienced

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fatigue, self-doubt, anger and frustration have also been experienced during race talk. She explained fatigue as "an overwhelming feeling of "wow, this is intense and it's tiring – even my research methods class is not that same type of intensity." Self-doubt would usually come in the form of questions: "am I reading right? Am I equipped to do this work?" Anger and frustration would be provoked by listening to students who she felt had "deficit perspectives." In light of these emotional challenges, Isabel reflected on some of the strategies that have worked best for her over time: *reflecting to verbalize* and *balancing open sharing* came across as key themes.

Reflecting To Verbalize. Isabel noted that she tends to be very reflective, so that she would immediately begin to process the emotions she found challenging on her own. However, she was careful to emphasize that "reflection alone is not enough" for her. As such, on reflecting, she would always try to process it by having conversations with her husband and/or a close colleague. She described the process:

> I do, seriously, often come home and talk to my husband about them. Or to somebody else – to a colleague or to a friend who I work with who might teach another race class, but maybe not. You know, just someone that I feel either understands it from a personal experience, like that would be my husband more, or someone who understands it because they're also doing this type of work.

When asked about her choice to handle emotions this way, Isabel pointed to the need to communicate with someone who would understand the context within which her emotions were triggered, underscoring, as she had previously, how valuable an on campus support system would have been in this case:

> I think I talk less to colleagues because I don't always have colleagues that I think will get it. So certain things, I just – you know, I have to share with my husband or with friends or whoever because of the context where I work. Several of them work in areas where there's more awareness of race inequities. So I think that matters. I think if there was a group of us who taught this course, who rotated this

course – the work community would be more viable in terms of providing a support system.

Balancing Open Sharing. For Isabel, there is a "thin line" between wanting to foster community by being open with her students, and revealing too much in the course of handling challenging emotions. She feels this is an area that she is still working on maintaining balance in as a key strategy for handling emotions. On reflecting, she is clear on the fact that despite what happens in the class, showing leadership is always a good choice:

> There's a thin line you know-- I think sharing too much with your class could be detrimental. I don't want to expose too much. Students have to feel like they have a competent person that's leading the class discussion. I think sometimes I've been too wishy-washy…or too…not too vulnerable…but just revealed too much of that "we're all one community, and we can share anything." Yes, but they also want me to guide the process.

It is in this space, Isabel has found, that she has had to exercise patience frequently. In learning to balance open sharing, or deciding against sharing, given the situation, she has come to the conclusion that developing the balance takes time, and that it is normal and "okay" to go through these emotions on her own if she needs to:

> I've learned to give myself permission to have those intense reactions and to know that tomorrow morning I may not feel as intense about that. And that I need to not get into it – like almost a desperate "oh my gosh, I'm having self-doubts, that means I should not be teaching this course!" It's okay [Isabel], and tomorrow morning you'll feel better.

Other strategies that Isabel has used to handle emotions were her long commute home, and avoiding the habit of "isolating" herself or withdrawing on campus on account of the fact that she felt she had little support and/or others who would understand her feelings and their related context. To my question of what would not work for sure, she noted that

"silence" was not helpful, and that faculty must acknowledge their feelings as an authentic first step to dealing with emotions.

Navigation and Identity

From interactions with Isabel, it was clear that her Puerto Rican roots and upbringing fueled her research and teaching interests on minorities and racial inequity as a whole. In fact, her experiences feeling an "element of difference" both in Puerto Rico, and in the United States, have earned for her a keen awareness of what it feels like to be "privileged" and to be a minority; she feels this has helped her understand where different students might be in thinking about race. She attempted to describe privilege this way first:

> My own experience in a home with a Puerto Rican father and a White mother in Puerto Rico… there was always an element of difference in some way…I think for me what stood out as a kid was the English speaking, so I was bilingual, so that was privilege in Puerto Rico…

Later, she alluded to understandings of her minority status:

> I came to the States when I was 12; to a predominantly White community. Very little - most of my friends, had very little prior exposure to Latino populations. And so the noticing of cultural differences, similarities, points of connection, and points of disconnection was very salient for me from a very young age.

Further, she has considered her choice of research as something that "puts [her] back on the margins" when others in academia find out what they are.

Despite this however, Isabel believes that there have been ways in which her identities related to the process of navigation in practice. These included her understanding of how people have perceived or treated her based on skin color and gender, and her as a result and her own sense of self entering a graduate classroom as a

minority addressing issues of race. As a result, key themes emerging under navigation and identity are *[in]validation: the Latina/White connection* and *heightened awareness: a mom of color.*

[In]validation: The Latina/White Connection: There is a strong sense in which Isabel feels that as a Latina and as a female, students will tend to question her ability and connection with her in class. Though she says, she is not frequently able to account for that feeling in a tangible way, she noted that conversations with others have helped to convey the general idea:

> It comes from the fact that I think sometimes if we share identities with students, how they take what you say is influenced by their identity. In fact, I was just having a conversation with a colleague - a White, middle to upper class woman from [East State] is how she describes herself. A lot of our students are White young females from [East State]. So she was saying that she could say certain things and her students are like -- they can connect with it, not because she's saying something that the students agree with, but they relate to her, they had similar growing up experiences, they relate to her and so they want to know oh, how did you get there? Because they see themselves in their professor.

> I don't always share those characteristics with my students…there's research that says female professors are not taken as seriously, or questioned more. I mean I got an email from a student. I thought it was inappropriately basically telling me what to do. "In your next -- in the future you should do this," I'm like "hello?!"… I'm not saying it was because I was Latina and she was White, but I'm saying that the dynamic was there.

Interestingly though, Isabel has observed that most people think she is White initially, based on her light[er] skin color and lack of an accent. In assuming this labelled identity in the past, and noting that it might work in a positive way for race talk, she has been unable to sweep its associated privileges under the proverbial rug:

> I don't want to deny or be ignorant to the privilege that US Citizenship brings that the fact that I was bilingual when I came here already and that I don't have a strong accent, some people say they can pick up an accent, but all of those

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privileges that people tend to see me as White, they don't really know that -- they're surprised when they find out I'm Puerto Rican. I don't want to deny the privilege that that gives me and even the ease of integration into social settings, that that can provide… whether I want to or not--including also [my] graduate class.

Heightened Awareness: A Mom of Color. One facet of her identity that intersects with race and ethnicity in the navigation of difficult discourses on race is that of motherhood. Isabel believes that as a mother of color who looks White, and has biracial children, she has been granted additional experiences to draw from. She is able to relate real-life narratives that might provoke necessary dialogue in her students. As well, it has been her way of seeing an alternate minority experience:

The multi-racial kids…that really shapes how I think about issues of race, even the stories I tell in the course… the personal experiences that I bring to the course. I have seen that that really… is a strong identity for me that I bring into the course.

An additional bonus for her has been heightened sensitivity to racial issues:

Sometimes, it can be to even piggy back on something a student has said - so like a student in one of our classes was talking about campus racial climate. So my perspective now as a mom with a [bi-racial] daughter, a freshman, is heightened in terms of my awareness of the racial climate.

Finally, Isabel has found it a positive experience to navigate difficult dialogues on race in a graduate classroom setting - overall. This is because she has felt that people come to the class with more than a basic understanding of some of these discourses. Though the discourse is "hard," she notes, "their starting point is different." As such it feels more like "home" – and her level of confidence is increased in these spaces, when compared to working through race talk with some colleagues or peers, who may not have had like experiences. As she explained:

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In terms of the people who are in the class, there is exposure to [diverse experiences]… or a wide range of experiences. Right now in my graduate race class I have teachers who are working in urban areas, I have an administrator working in an urban area, I have two students who are people of color working on diversity issues in higher education, so its' like people are engaged in this work, so that's definitely different in a positive way.

Case in Summary

Isabel believes that her journey in navigating difficult discourses is like "figuring out which direction to go next, based on the audience that you have." In many ways, she concluded "you really never know what might happen next." Still, there is a strong sense in which she "can predict if students might react emotionally or in terms of the discourses they use." Establishing a learning community where everyone can grapple with real race issues, as well as reflecting, sharing and relinquishing an expert syndrome have all worked for her as useful strategies. She insists "there is much to be learned." Undoubtedly, this has continued to include exercising patience with herself and others, and understanding the best roles her identities might play in advancing authentic race talk.

Manuel: Man on the Margins

"I've always felt, kind of on the margins… I speak from the margin, but I think in time, I began to understand that being on the margin is not actually a lesser position, but actually a very strong position."

Case in Context

Manuel has worked in adult education specializations ranging from leadership to workforce development for over twenty years, and he has taught specifically on diversity related issues in adult education for almost ten. For him, growing up meant having both overseas and U.S based socialization experiences, and always including various elements of his family traditions, rooted in several countries across the globe.

A self-identified Asian-American, he has been a migrant to the United States for many years and as such, infusing a strong sense of cross-cultural and multicultural awareness while teaching is now almost second nature. He is passionate about infusing multiculturalism because of his longtime interest in ethnic and immigrant group movement across borders, and "how those things come about." Ultimately, this has led him to "think more deeply about issues of oppression in general," incorporating race in America as an inevitable subject. When it comes to addressing race-related components in class however, he concludes that "things get a little harder."

Race Talk Triggers and Challenges.

I am in a classroom with a group of graduate students in adult education. I hear students discussing race in America. There are different voices and different opinions heard. I speak about how race issues are ingrained in American culture and institutions. There is a White student who says that we are all human beings—"why do we speak about differences like being African-American, Asian, Latino, etc?" He says we all belong to one human family. Differences can separate us more than bring us together.

I say that "even though we are all human, people are excluded from society because of the color of their skin." I say "White people have privileges that other darker skinned people or immigrants do not, and it is exposed in daily life when we interact with others." He says "we should focus on our similarities as human beings." I see the classroom looking at him. I see some students of color looking away. I see others are speaking to him about how race affects them. I see other turning away as if saying, he doesn't understand. I see the group shifting in their seats…

Manuel highlighted the incident above as one of the most memorable he has encountered in teaching about issues of race. For him, the incident was an illustration of the kinds of resistance that have typically occurred in response to race-focused content over time. Although his teaching specializations and the large, public colleges within which he has taught have varied over the years, the makeup of his classroom has been fairly consistent. His graduate classes have averaged 18-25 students; students have been diverse in race/ethnicity, rather than predominantly White--a trait reflective of his general campus community.

Much of the difficulty during race talk has stemmed from the resistance of White students, who often refute claims of having privilege, argue for a focus on the human component of individuals rather than the racial, and perceive highlighting race related inequity as non-progressive. In this kind of a space, often filled with anxiety, uncertainty and awkward silences, over time, Manuel has found himself "caring more" about speaking out on uncomfortable race related issues than any of the tensions he has faced. Considering issues like student responses to his actions, course evaluations and his marginal voice have been a constant when determining how to act. However, he has found ways to navigate race talk, handle his personal emotions, and understand how identity plays a part.

Navigating Difficult Race Dialogue

I remember consistently noting in my journal that throughout all my interactions with Manuel, one of the most common words he used was "voices." A variety of voices is what he draws from or mines from in general, as a strategy for navigating difficult race dialogue. His essential goal in mining? "Letting a variety of voices really hear each other throughout the discourse," as a way of creating and re-creating classroom climates of safety, trust, mutual respect and authentic dialogue, critical for tense moments. Emergent themes *engaging student voice, echoing mentors' voices and easing into individual voice*, display how he has become "much more comfortable" with facing and working through the tensions of race talk.

Engaging Student Voice. Manuel has described engaging student voice first and foremost, as a careful balance between knowing what his firm opinions are and being truly open to hearing and learning from other opinions. Often, when broaching or working through the discourse, he reminds students, "this is my lens; this is where I come from. This is my perspective and when I speak, I'm going to be speaking from this perspective. And at the same time I want to know about yours, I want to learn about yours." Second, Manuel has described engaging the student voice as a key part of his communication strategy for race-related dialogue. He notes that "sometimes, the way we discuss race requires an exploration of feelings and values that people carry, in other words, [we need to] take time to listen and hear what people need to say." In stepping back himself, and allowing students to "verbalize" without unnecessary interruption, he believes that confrontation can be lessened as well as his own communication strategies improved to prod the dialogue even further.

A third description Manuel provided of engaging students' voices was that it largely involved trying to honor his goal of bringing traditionally marginalized voices to the fore without excluding other voices needed for a truly inclusive classroom climate. On the one hand he noted "my role is obviously to bring other voices into play that are for the most part non-European--at least non-European centric, and I'm always searching for ways to do that." On the other hand, he observed "…but in order to, to engage people you have to create trust, create confidence and also create an attitude of inquiry, of curiosity for somebody else's experience."

Much of his mention of balancing his own versus his students' opinions and balancing the diversity of voices in the class rests on a foundation of respecting the truths of others, a trait he has acquired over time through understanding self and others in the context of racialized discourses. According to Manuel, he seeks individual and collective validation of voice for both White students and students of color:

> Issues of privilege and entitlement, particularly White privilege is an important thing to talk about, so I think in the discussion of race, I want [White] students to be able to look at that, [but] again also respect their truths too. Because I think people, especially White students in particular, bring their particular view of what that means to them. But if I can open a conversation to see what the truth of an African American student is, what the truth of an Asian student is and see that as a real experience…its powerful.

So adamant is Manuel about the importance of engaging the student voice during race talk, that he has consistently revisited and enhanced his instructional strategies in class over time to facilitate this. For example, he has set boundaries during situations in which he feels that that the student voice might be threatened:

> At times I've actually stopped students from talking about their own point of view about somebody else's presentation and I've said, "think about what questions you want to ask this presenter that would dig deeper into what they discovered, as opposed to what you think."

He has also continued to utilize classroom activities that would encourage students to speak or share more often than he, inviting other truths and other stories to dominate the discourse:

> I would break them into small groups, give them questions to discuss among themselves and bring it back to the whole group to report about what they found so that they have a chance to really talk among themselves, so it's not just [me] talking… introduce some concepts and then have them dig into their own experience… so that everyone's voice gets heard.

Echoing Mentors' Voices. Other voices Manuel frequently draws on are the voices of those who have mentored him professionally—peers and colleagues alike. He believes doing this is something that has proven to keep him focused on his goals, and most importantly, to maintain his composure during moments of tension in race talk. When a tense situation comes up, for example triggered by "somebody's racist comment," he describes how he mentally "hears" their voices, and is better able to respond to students, instead of having a negative or less thought out gut reaction:

> If it was a very challenging situation, obviously I would definitely begin to echo the words of my mentors or people who, who in my own learning have inspired me. When I think about [my mentor], the way she presents herself and the things that she's told me many times…those are things that carry me through these moments… So when I respond, I respond in their voices.

Manuel also draws on his mentors' voices by using them as a model upon which to build and improve his ability to facilitate race talk. This model is something he is acutely aware of while engaging students in race talk; as such he sometimes looks back at it mentally and adjusts his approach accordingly. Ultimately, this has served to improve his facilitation skills over time, alongside having the unique opportunity to model for his students, the kind of dialogue that he would have had with his peers. As he concluded,

My ability to engage in difficult dialogue is also a result of having stimulating, powerful and inspiring dialogues on race with colleagues and friends where we model what an engaged discussion feel like, looks like, and is like so that we can continue to say what needs to be said.

Easing into Individual Voice.

I am more comfortable talking about my own experiences on race, and about my research and learning about race. I understand my beliefs better. I can see the link between what I know about race with how I experience it, and about how in historical and personal terms, I can explain its social dynamics without being swallowed by anger, intolerance and pretense.

In the quote above, Manuel was responding to a critical incident reflection on how he now feels about engaging in difficult dialogues on race, having experienced several very challenging ones over time. Though noting that in the early days, he was intimidated, he recognizes now that he has become "far more comfortable" with the topic overall. A key strategy for engaging race talk with more confidence has been gradually finding a language within which to frame it, and by extension, easing into his own voice. Manuel's voice and language are a combination of his philosophical beliefs, core values and interests as well as his lived experiences around race related issues. He draws from his voice, using it as a strategy for diffusing race talk tensions in several ways.

As a firm believer in social constructionism, this guides the approach Manuel takes in facilitating; in other words, multiple truths must be respected, brought to the table and engaged through dialogue. He shared the sometimes interdisciplinary approach he has taken to cementing some of those philosophical truths:

I've gotten into Rosenberg and his work on communication, where he actually brings groups that have basically been killing each other for years and years into a dialogue. This is when I began to understand this whole idea of truth, that people do bring different truths to the table and also that everybody is responsible for speaking their truth and also for coming into agreement at least to be able to

communicate by a particular topic. So when I think about that and I think about race relations and injustices and so on, I think it's important to begin to create ways to dialogue where differing points of view can come. Because I believe that there are multiple perspectives.

Manuel does consider the issue of race a central component of social justice, but he considers it just one kind of oppression active in North American society. His personal interest in immigration and its related injustices is something he finds useful to write about, as a way of processing tough discourses he has had on race. In doing this, he has found it meaningful to frame racial injustice within the larger context of oppression when dialoguing with students, regardless of the nature of the disenfranchised group/s. As he explained:

> You can't talk about race without talking about oppression, and when you talk about immigrants to another country --whether they're voluntary or involuntary, there is always some kind of injustice or unfair act with other people. So that I think is part of what compels me into having more of a discussion on race. I think the turnaround is to have found a language by which to speak about it.

Strong relationships and an increasingly safe classroom climate have been two clear outcomes of Manuel's confidence in mining from his own "voice" during race talk. "Some people are going to be turned off every time they hear race or every time they hear entitlement…they just get turned off," he stressed. However, since his interest is to "create more allies," he often shares his own personal stories so that students can glean from his immigrant perspectives and relate them to race talk. In this way too, he believes students understand that he is as much a learner in the dialogue as he is a facilitator, and that they too can be open in expressing their opinions, regardless of their lived experiences. Easing into his own voice and drawing heavily on it as a navigation strategy is part of his acute realization that as an immigrant and person of color in a racialized

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society he " speaks from the margin" but also that …being on the margin is not actually a lesser position, but actually a very strong position." His awareness of a marginal positionality has also helped him make useful decisions about handling personally challenging emotions.

Handling Challenging Emotions

> I am feeling tense, and wondering "what do I say to make our reading clearer to this student?" I feel like I need to make sure he understands that race does matter, and I feel at a loss about how to make him understand that it does exist, even though we are human beings in all other respects. I also want to make sure he has a chance to be heard so I make space. I feel uncomfortable when he gets more upset while trying to make his point…

Emotions of tension, anxiety, discomfort and a sense of uncertainty have often challenged Manuel in the midst of race talk. Early in his career, there were times during which these emotions were mixed with some amount of anger. He shared an example in his critical incident of how anger began to mount, while he listened to the student mentioned in the vignette above, and the reaction that followed:

> I am thinking that this student has a shallow opinion about race. He hasn't reflected on his privilege as a White male… I know he is not wrong to say we are all human beings and should not discriminate because of the color of your skin or how you look, but my reaction is to say… "you are wrong about race. It does exist. It is made up, but it does exist and it affects people greatly. I don't want to give you the podium to voice your opinion about it. I don't want to give the podium to privileged White people to further their agenda. I want the podium to belong to the voices in this class that I have not heard from and who are impacted by race and racism, and who are excluded from the conversation."

As he continued to assess himself in teaching, and his posture in race talk over the years, Manuel has learned that *saying no to silence and setting necessary limits* have worked well for him in dealing with personal emotions. As he emphasized on reflection:

> I feel responsible for taking care of my own experiences about race and making them known, but I also feel that encouraging open and continued race dialogue is

also part of my responsibility… I learned to manage the time each of those voices get to speak.

Saying No to Silence. When challenging emotions arise in Manuel**,** silence as a response is something he finds counterproductive. He noted it may be a natural reaction to "shut down," when instructors find themselves at a loss for words—or when they become angry or saddened. But he was firm in his observation over time, that silence would only prove to extend the difficulty of the dialogue and its emotional tension, rather than diffuse it. As well, he feels silence would communicate to students that he has been silenced by them. In staying silent, "I've been disarmed," he outlined, or "I've become so angry that if I say something, I'm going to [explode]," he concluded. His preferred option? To try as best as possible to remain calm, restate the comment that provoked his negative emotion/s and state how he may be feeling. Saying no to silence in this way, gives him an interim period--a few seconds or minutes, to "get [him]self together to maintain composure" before offering a verbal response.

In understanding that "it's not enough just to be silent [in the face of] somebody's racist comment," Manuel was cautious in noting that a balance needs to be created between not saying anything at all, and saying too much. For example, he talked about handling the vulnerability that could come from sharing personal feelings and emotions in race talk, instead of being silent. While being honest and vulnerable are important to him, he observed, "in some cases, an over expression of those emotions—anger, or particular points of view can shut people down." In keeping with this idea of balance, one particular reminder that Manuel uses for himself is that no matter how he feels emotionally, and how he may want to react, he is in a professional domain and environment that requires an equally professional response:

When you're in a classroom, you're in a public facility, you're in a university. You know, there *is* a reaction towards a racist comment, and this [comment] can come from anybody-not just White students, but it's to be able to expand the dialogue and not just react to it...maintain a professional stance.

Setting Limits. "But there *are* times when you must shut it down?" I journaled in reflecting on Manuel's stories about challenging emotions. In a follow up response, he noted that he would be less open to shutting down the discussion completely, even at times when his emotions might be negatively affected. Instead, he placed an emphasis on setting limits on the discourse by taking well-timed breaks--critical, not only for him, but a benefit to students as well:

I think there are times when you have to give it a time limit, because some of these talks can just drain the entire class emotionally. So there is a place where you have to know to take a break, or have a break sitting right at the end of that discussion, so that when you have 15 or 20 or 30 minutes to talk, there is a break sitting so that you can make the transition

Manuel might also give students an open-ended question or short exercise to think about during break, and/or may choose to resume the discourse that initially caused tension as a means of exploring issues at a deeper level. He noted however that "sometimes it's hard because if you have a three hour class and you have some juicy discussions going on but you know you have to move on."

Manuel sets time limits on race talk that triggers negative emotions, but he also sets limits by reminding students of the end goal and core focus of the class in mind. Because "some students go on and on," he has found this particular strategy for handling emotions quite effective: "bring students back to the topic," he explained. "If you are talking about an article, bring them back to the article and not just let the discussion move so global, you can't even grab it!"

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Similar to the way in which he navigates or works through a difficult dialogue in general, Manuel draws on the voices of mentors and colleagues to maintain his composure. As well, he noted that "one of the most important things to grapple with these issues is to conduct research and writing." Grappling in this way has more often than not, lead to added clarity concerning the critical role his identity plays in classroom discourses around race.

Navigation and Identity

For Manuel, much of the identity statuses that relate to the way he navigates difficult discourses, lies in his cultural background. Though he stated being a professor obviously affords him grading privileges, he feels being an immigrant of color, has influenced his navigation of race talk the most. Cultural identity has been most salient as a theme. A position on the margin according to Manuel has meant a lesser or secondary position—one void of the kind of power that mainstream cultures have; it is one that Manuel believes he occupies, and has to navigate inside the classroom, on campus and in daily life, For him, these three are inextricably linked because his identities are with him wherever he goes. As he concluded, "I navigate through the halls, in class, when I step outside." It is a continuum for him.

In the classroom, he feels his position on the margins is acknowledged and unreservedly cemented by students—particularly those of the dominant culture. As he explained: "a lot of times when you have confrontation with students, it's that the students are seeing you, as being on the margin." In having to approach his classes with this understanding (and expectation of some resistance) at the forefront of his mind, Manuel believed, that the original feeling of being on the margin was a disadvantage. He

found that students would discount what he said or be hesitant to embrace the multicultural content that was not mainstream: "that is a feeling I've always had as faculty – always being on the margin. Because…the whole ethnic studies kind of idea-- that may not be the center of reality"

However, as he has begun to find his voice, and according to him, "get better at teaching," he has been clear on the fact that "the original feeling of being on the margin and speaking from the margin was not a place of weakness." Three significant benefits to navigating difficult dialogues on race have resulted from it. First, given cultural identity, Manuel has maintained a huge interest in his ancestral roots and the accompanying injustices meted out to them on their arrival to the United States. Injustice and oppression have been broad general terms that have given him a language within which to frame racial oppression—a discourse often side stepped by his students. Second, being on the margins combined with his status as professor has motivated and compelled him to discuss race and racial issues in depth. "There have been certain stereotypes, certain behaviors, certain labels that people expect of me" he stated. Subsequently, Manuel has found himself using high levels of discomfort he has experienced through labeling, to fuel his motivation for bringing traditionally marginalized groups to the center:

> In going into the classroom, I said to myself "now I have the position where I can speak, and bring out other voices that are not normally heard including my own…my identity, my experience as an immigrant in the United States compels me to discuss some things that I feel, because it is not a reality that is necessarily at the center.

Third, as an immigrant and person of color, Manuel's identities have granted him a unique opportunity to "code switch", so that he can facilitate his learners' experiences in different ways during the discourse. He describes the code switching as something he

does "very quickly," so that he can easily be in the frame of mind of someone else with similar immigrant experiences, for example.

In looking back at identity influences in difficult dialogues on race, Manuel has found cultural identity to be most prominent. His responses to challenging emotions too, were linked to this identity--labeling as "cultural" the fact that he would "never enjoy [shouting] students down." Nevertheless, elements of his professional identity were highlighted. For example, he made mention of the fact that one had to "consider good course evaluations" in working through difficult race discourses with students. Overall, however, Manuel has felt that his arrival at a place of comfort concerning cultural identity helped him understand his position on the margins, and helped him find better ways to navigate from this position. He summarized it as follows:

> I think the more you understand where you stand, the more you understand what your position is, and the clearer you are in your theoretical or, or life perspective as to what those things mean to you, I think the better I'm able to engage in a dialogue about it.

Case in Summary

Manuel describes navigating the race-focused classroom as a dynamic process involving a mix of "moving through the struggles of power--the dynamics of race, and being conscious always, of the community of voices involved [in these dynamics.]" Interestingly, navigating for Manuel is a process that primarily occurs in the classroom, but one that also occurs in a variety of other settings by extension. As he concluded, "when I think of navigate, I'm thinking about not just the classroom but the whole department." This is because of the consciousness of who he is—as an individual on the margin--and the fact that he's found similarities in both settings. A large part of navigation for him is trying to create balance, while planting seeds and bringing

marginalized voices to the fore. To do this, among other strategies, he has learned to find

a language within which to couch race-related discourse, to say no to silence as a key

strategy in managing emotions, and to recognize the merit of his cultural identity in

positively influencing the way he conducts discourses on race.

Sandra: Love on a Mission

"I think my approach makes it difficult for people to completely dismiss me as the angry Black woman because it's interwoven with love and therefore sometimes they don't know what to do with it. When I can hug you right after I tell you that you're a racist – that you've been trained to be that, what do you do with that right?"

Two things immediately become obvious in dialoguing with Sandra Bland about race talk: love is her overarching framework, and she is clear on her call or mission to educate on issues of race and racism in the U.S. A careful combination of two things that to some, may seem conflicting is what seems to characterize her practice: a strong love for others, yet an equally strong passion to "go hard" in speaking truth about a topic that can be so painful. Perhaps this combination reflects her lived experience as a Black woman – knowing what oppression looks like, but learning to love in spite of; perhaps it's reflected in the words of one of her favorite songs, "you've got to be carefully taught," so she must teach hard truths about race – but carefully. Whatever obtains, Sandra maintains that her graduate students have to "unpack their stuff."

I first met Sandra at a conference, during which she dialogued much with emerging scholars. As I journaled at the end of our first interview: "back then, I was struck by her sense of humility, and her welcoming and loving stance toward those she did not even know." These impressions of her only increased by the end of our interactions for this study. No doubt, she tries to embody love, but remains on a mission.

Case in Context

Sandra self identifies as Black and African American. Motivation undergirding the passion and love she has for people in the process of working through race talk, is rooted in socialization experiences growing up. When probed about the way in which she appears able to just embrace people from all walks of life, she mulled over it like this:

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I was born on the [East coast]. So on the [East] coast, what was there? New immigrants, Latinos, Blacks from the south. This was my community – these were the people who nurtured me, these were the people who loved me, so for me Caribbean is love, Black is love. This is the root, it's in my gut…this is who I am.

In addition, her fearless passion for teaching race are evident in the stories from her background that seemed to impact her most. Sandra has watched herself be marginalized over time: doing very well in high school, then being placed in a "remedial" class in college because of not having the "right language"; feeling comfortable at home in the projects, and not knowing she was "poor" till she moved away and realized how people talked about Blacks; feeling uncomfortable "in her skin" in corporate America – and now, being one of the few Blacks in a large PWI. For her though, the work is as much professional and societal, as it is personal: "in every class, we talk about race….because we are in America. We are in an American school system that is so fractured by race that it doesn't matter what the name of the class is, somehow it's going to be a feature," she emphasized. Not surprisingly then, Sandra's classes would have a variety of triggers for difficult dialogues on race, embedded in them.

Race Talk Triggers and Challenges.

For me it's always kind of embedded with the actual textual analysis but then also "how are you responding to this?" And THAT normally opens up everything. Right, so when you ask somebody "what did you notice? How did you feel when you noticed it? They'll talk about anger, they'll talk about surprise – so everything has come up from –over the years from "my family didn't own slaves"; "I have a Black boyfriend" – to you know all of the kind of stereotypical conversations… I've had White people be angry at other White people in the room because they know that they're living in a White bubble. So depending on the consciousness level of that particular White student, more often than not that White student is part of a working class, barely middle class set of backgrounds where I think they probably caught some hell on the class issue or maybe lived around people of color and so I think they have a different level of consciousness.
With approximately 10 years of experience teaching diversity-related courses,

Sandra has seen multiple types of resistance from graduate students on her predominantly

White campus. Her classes average about 20 students; most are White women--a situation she said represents education in general across the nation. In addition to push back from them, "anecdotally," she noted "I've had the most problems in my classes from White males and bi-racial women."

As mentioned in the example she gave above, students often experience emotions like anger and surprise, or respond with what some researchers call denial or deflection. Because Sandra's main goal is to increase students' levels of racial literacy, she tends to frame the difficulty of the discourse in language associated with this goal. So, for example, she might refer to the level of students' "consciousness" in understanding the dynamics of race when she refers to them, rather than define them as "difficult." Thinking of students this way is one of the things helping Sandra move forward with the discourse, despite its many faceted challenges. Driven by a personal passion for racial justice, she remains "unafraid," though she admits for example that race talk is full of risk. In her words, "you never know when people say things, who's honest or not…[but] I can't have fear." Instead, "in love," her eyes stay fixed on the prize goal and mission of the class; sometimes fulfilling the mission means doing so with a tough kind of love as well:

> My focus is to get students be self-reflective, perceive your racism, and to see how that impacts the lives of children in school. And if they don't think that they can move forward from that, then they need to think about a different career. Continue the self-reflection for a better world but don't mess up other people's children in the classroom. You can do something else. And I say that, too. I have counseled people out of teaching.

As she continued to walk me through her journey of love on a mission, she often reminded me her work with race talk is "never perfect, but always a work in progress."

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Navigating Difficult Race Dialogue

Sandra's primary goal that students self-reflect in order to understand and perceive their own racism is one she often refers to as "unpacking." In unpacking, students will also be able to identify and interrogate racism in areas where they work as educators, and within societal structures. Her outline remains simple, and inclusive to all:

> It's racial literacy as a framework for my class with multimodality as my pedagogy. The goal is for people of color to unpack their stuff and for White folks or people who identify as Whites to unpack their stuff as well.

But when tense moments arise, what exactly is she drawing on to diffuse them? As indicated in the brand that defines her case narrative, i.e. "love on a mission," love manifests everywhere, but more so, it works as a meaningful strategy in navigating difficult dialogues on race in diverse ways. Sandra largely strategizes with love – an overarching theme that evidently manifests three ways: in *building relationships*, *conveying full presence*, and *rejecting fear*.

Love Builds Relationships. Relationship building is one of the main ways that love manifests as a way of dealing with difficult dialogues on race for Sandra. Allowing for time to do this as part of the foundation to her work eventually generates an atmosphere of openness and honesty. When discourses on race get tough, such an atmosphere then fosters a sense of safety and trust. Both she and her students are able to draw on this class climate, resulting in a willingness to keep the dialogue open rather than shut it down. As well, the opportunity to build relationships is a clear advantage of teaching on race over a period of time, rather than in one off sessions. As she explained:

> With my graduate students, my goal is to build relationships with them, and when I talk to them about building relationships with their students, part of what I do is try to model by me building relationships with them…if something doesn't go

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right, students usually tell me because I create that kind of environment. So going in one time is very different than seeing someone 15 weeks, week, after week, after week, that I'm trying to build a relationship with and trying to model how to do it.

Building relationships may be done in a number of ways. Fundamentally, Sandra regards it as a "personal responsibility." Subsequently, she tries to learn about her students' individual cultures. She also makes every effort to be vulnerable with them about her own thoughts, experiences and struggles during race talk. "I open up about myself," she maintained. Building relationships also means providing a plethora of instructional strategies that would help the class learn about themselves and each other – herself included:

> It usually is a multi-modal thing…and you'll hear poetry…I get them to get their own stories. You'll hear audio, video, music, poetry and you'll read Gloria Ladson Billings and others…and then we'll still give you the practice – you'll get the case studies…and there's a lot of dialogue – so there could be a time that you walk into my class, you will hear students talking together in pairs and then at the beginning of every class, I have what I call writing for full presence…writing for full presence is to get other things off their minds that would prevent them from being fully present in the class – together…that's what you would see..

> Sandra's ability to strategize for tense moments through relationship building is clear. But using this strategy also unearths others. As a result of relationship building, this race talk facilitator has no problem naming or calling out her students if their discourses contained racial slurs, micro aggressions or inappropriate statements. She explained, for example that:

> I feel very comfortable, and hopefully have created a space where I can say, "Whoa, would you have said that to me if I were a White man?" Because you know what? That's part of the learning process.

In addition, she might boldly name students' attempts at resistance:

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> I tell the White students, "you might be uncomfortable for 15 weeks, or 5 weeks or 12. Black people are uncomfortable all the time." So, I'm very, very clear about that, that, "Yes, this is your journey. Yes, everyone's going to learn in a different space. But if you're uncomfortable in my class for 15 weeks, then so be it. And if as a Black person you're uncomfortable because you don't want to see some of this stuff, well, you're going to have to have a wakeup call, because I'm not going to prance around."

Or, as mentioned earlier, she might challenge a student's vocation in light of their resistance to examining self and racial literacy: "you have to unpack your stuff. And if they're not willing, I always ask them throughout the course "why are they doing this work?"

Given her tendency to be bold and truthful, Sandra is also mindful of reinforcing the love that guides her practice, and that she wishes to model for students in working with them:

> I start off very early telling my students that I love them in the Freirean sense of love and because I take this stance of loving them and seeing them there's certain things that I say that they can hear. So when I tell my White students that they're racist and they've been trained to be, they can see me from a stance certainly as a Black woman, but they can hear it in love.

Building relationships as a strategy works n diffusing tense times, but also in evoking other sub-strategies such as naming or challenging perceived racism. Arguably, love is also manifesting here; albeit "tough love," which is needed in hard dialogues on race, and also needs to work hand in hand with strategies like being "fully present."

Love Conveys Full Presence. Another strategy evident in Sandra's practice is the practice of "full presence." She described what she understood it to be, and how it might look in her classroom:

> Being fully present is an embodiment that I have to know what surroundings I'm in and be able to act accordingly, and one example is this - one night in diversity, we've done a lot of reading on sexual orientation, race, racism and so on. And so I

usually try to get a guest speaker, so they can write about it and then next week we might do some narrowing of it to some of the readings; particularly after the guest speaker, I read the bodies, I read the room and, instead of going to the next video, I said "let's just share one word about how you feel." After that 30 seconds of reading, the room changed, and then I was able to move on to the next thing. So that's what I mean.

Full presence not only helps Sandra to ascertain the mood of her class and react appropriately, but for her, it is a way of letting her students understand her love and care for them as individuals. In other words, full presence translates. "I see you," "I hear you," "I understand." As Sandra often acknowledged in our interactions: "This stuff is not easy by any means." By extension, again she hopes to model full presence co-mingled with love for her students as educators:

> This is where love is important, because for me, at the end of the day, I do say "if there were more love, if you go into that classroom, and you love those children as though they were your own, that would stop you from a lot of these racist ideas that you have about them. And then you would be seeing them through the idea that, "I need to nurture them and take care of them and prepare them for their future."

One of the most evident ways Sandra models full presence is by her willingness to be open during discourses on race that prove emotional for her. Though this is discussed more fully later in the section concerning the way she handles emotions, it is an important manifestation of full presence to be highlighted at this point. Sandra's reactions over time may not necessarily be as a result of sadness either. Often, it is her passion and concern for the state of race in education, her excitement when students are transformed, and, as always, her love for students by being willing to display what they often feel. As she explained:

> I'm fully present, so if something disturbs me or if I react to a piece or if it touches me. Or I'll cry at the students' presentation because they've gotten it and I hug them and this is publicly. So, because I am who I am, they couldn't help but to see

that and I tell them, "as a White person in this country, you cannot see every day children or parents or communities that you think you're better than - that will impact the teaching…it's engrained." These are the conversations that I have.

In addition to this, being fully present requires means Sandra is open to flexibility and change, though her overall focus and mission remain the same. She essentially is clear on the fact that because of her style, no two classes may be the same:

> Sometimes I might find myself saying something publicly to everyone and then there are things depending on where they're at in the race synergy, I may not. For me, it's a very live and active thing. I never go in and teach the same way the same manner the way that I did before. It's always being fully present.

Full presence is embodied clearly embodied in navigating difficult discourses on race, but coupled with it was perhaps Sandra's most glaring strategy of all: a strong consciousness that with love, there is "no fear."

Love Rejects Fear. In understanding that race talk is "hard," Sandra anticipates student resistance as a normal occurrence. In the face of that occurrence however, she maintains a stance of not being afraid:

> At some point you have to stop being afraid, and you have to come close to yourself in the mirror and say: "what is it that I want to do? How is it that I want to make a difference?" And for me, I can't have fear. I think that what's important for me.

In teaching on an issue that frequently elicits fear among many instructors, she declared "I don't mind being the 'race' one, especially if no one else wants to do it." Lack of fear has already been alluded to in Sandra's boldness to call students out, based on having fostered genuine relationships with them. However, what is also dominant is how she has been able to identify the way the presence of love fosters that kind of boldness, simultaneously rejecting fear. Her love for justice and for her students supercedes fear; as such she is also willing to take risks. She reflected on it like this:

I always believe if I can affect one or two of these students, they have the potential to affect 30, 40, 100, 500 students as they go off to teach. So, in some ways I've felt like the work I'm doing is much more important for me to take risk and maybe hurt feelings along the way, because it's those Black and brown children and families that deserve more.

Simultaneously too, when love is on a mission, fear seems exchanged for a sense of "excitement." Sandra often alluded to this in the way she would think about the effect of race talk on her. "People say "I don't know how you do it. I wish I was as brave as you are," she shared. "And for me, it's not about bravery. It's about what kind of world do we want to have?" Likewise, all her references to race talk, signaled bravery and the sense that she looked forward to engaging in the difficulty of it, rather than feared it. One example of this is provided below:

It's a wonderful thing to constantly kind of have people look at themselves in the mirror in terms of how I'm describing something and [they ask], who was "I" - an actor in this, or was I a standby? So, that in and of itself excites me, that people are having or trying to have that level of conversation. So, when I walk around, and I listen to them, and people are having what we call *real* talk, I feel now we're getting somewhere…

Later, she added:

I know that I get total satisfaction with people realizing they have been under the same kind of White supremacist cloud, or sometimes think you're the only one. [For example], being a Black girl, and putting a towel on your head and saying, "Look at my long, wavy hair." 'Cause kinky hair is not good enough.

The sense of satisfaction and the excitement Sandra feels sometimes never accounts for the full gamut of emotions experienced during difficult discourses on race. As she has learned over time, she has to face and deal with those emotions that are negative as well.

Handling Challenging Emotions

I am hearing a young White male stake his "claim" that he knows better than his Ph.D.-holding Black female professor regarding which texts should be used in the

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class. I am hearing him exercise his privilege to voice what he disagrees with, and his confidence to act on how he is feeling. His behavior – withholding of responses and displaying "disengaged" behavior is what I observed from J. throughout the semester.

I am feeling angry. I am fighting back potential feelings of intimidation given my conditioning of internalized oppression, and my status as an untenured professor, Black female professor at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). I am thinking and sensing he is aware of his power to critique me and to dismiss my class and my intellectual choices and pedagogical moves as "bullshit". It is a reality that I've faced several times and one that many professors of color must deal with throughout their teaching career.

I am reacting and responding as a human would, but I was able to have a voice of reason kick in. I did not hear the comment directly, and while I wanted to confront the young man directly, I understood that this was not the best move to make so I did not.

Sandra knows the territory of anger as a familiar gut reaction based on pushback from White males. As well, the critical incident excerpt above is a bit unique. It was based on (a) resistance reported to her by her TA about a White male that refused to accept the assigned readings on education and the Black community, and (b) her observation of this student over several weeks. In this instance, Sandra thanked the "voice of reason" for preventing confrontation, but notes that she has chosen confrontation when she has experienced other types of challenging emotions: namely, sadness, frustration or despair, mainly because of students' lack of knowledge and awareness. Primary themes emerging from the query of how she handles emotional responses that are challenging include, *daring to be honest*, *maintaining* a *necessary mindset*, and *talk therapy*.

Daring to Be Honest

It doesn't often happen but because I have experience with these issues, I have to be honest with where I am in it. If I am hurt, I need to cry. If I am angry, then I would expect, I said, "I'm not angry at each of you individually but this society

makes me angry. I'm angry and this is why I'm angry." And so I have to be who I am.

Being honest is a practice Sandra engages in, as a way of handling negative emotions personal to her. She has found that to be a freeing, and a sometimes automatic trait of being fully present (described earlier). A large part of being honest stems from the fact that she has also lived some of the racialized experiences that are discussed. As such, relating to it in an authentic way sometimes proves second nature.

Having experienced oppression as a racial minority, and having lived through many of its negative moments, Sandra often finds it easier and simpler to be honest about her emotions. This is a situation she has observed as somewhat ironic, but unique to teaching on issues of race. According to her:

> The thing that frustrates me is also the thing that allows me to be able to deal with racism, and that's because I'm in a space of teaching it, and I'm in a space of calling people on their racism, and that helps me.

She remains adamant about the need to be honest with her feelings, explaining that who she is racially, and her perceived call to social justice teaching are key factors:

> I see my work certainly as God's work but also in the tradition of activism, and if I'm going to not say something, not that I'm going to be careless, but if I'm going to not say something or show an emotion because I'm worried about somebody giving me a 2 on an evaluation, then I'm not who I say I am.

Seeing her work as "God's work," and being fearless about showing personal emotions are two critical elements that form the kind of mindset Sandra seems to employ in handling her emotions.

Maintaining the Necessary Mindset. That there is a necessary mindset to maintain while handling personally challenging emotions during race talk, was evident in Sandra's experience. She appeared very clear about the fact that the way she

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conceptualized or perceived the work that she was doing, was key in handling it. For example, as a race talk facilitator Sandra shared that "not a lot of people at my college teach these courses." Further, she added "I understand what it is that I'm doing, that I'm involved in, and it's not for the faint at heart." This understanding of the *hard* nature of the work also came with a solid understanding of the purpose of the work, and a sense of focus on the end goal:

> I'm of the mindset that it is not about me and saving face…it is who I am, but also, like I said, I have nothing to lose and I'm working on behalf of children who I have not met…I also see this as I have nothing to lose and the children in the classroom have everything to lose.

Later, she added:
> It's messy. It's very messy, but yet it's very clear to me. It's messy, and complex, and complicated, and trammeled together, but I'm very clear about what it is that I do and the way that I feel that I should do it.

Much of Sandra's emphasis on maintaining a necessary mindset was also observed in the way she compared handling emotions earlier versus more recently in her career. When probed about what she wished she knew about handling her emotions for example, she referred to the idea of having a mindset as possibly preventing some of them. For example:

> I wish I knew that White people are clueless, for the most part…they are so clueless and they are so within their world of privilege. The thing about privilege is it's so deep because you actually convince yourself that you are more deserving. And that type of arrogance, just the level of privilege, I didn't really understand the concept of White privilege. I came to understand that as I read more and as I taught more. Perhaps I could have saved myself a lot. I still get frustrated. Maybe understanding that might have been a trigger in my brain, "Oh that was a privileged comment." I think I would have been able to maybe redirect some of my emotions if I had a deeper understanding of the privilege, which I see myself doing now.

In addition to this, much of maintaining the necessary mindset involves self-reflection and talk therapy. While explaining that she was raised to be self-reflective, Sandra emphasized (a) the necessity of colleagues in academia who teach similar courses, and (b) her dependence on her spiritual life, as part of how she processes on the hard days:

> I have good friends and talk therapy helps. Talk therapy, and of course prayer. I am a Christian and I think that helps me continue to look at my students in love and not in hate. I'm frustrated with them, yes. I get angry with them but I never hate them for how they think. And so my Christian values, the belief that love does change, and that is very much in my pedagogy. That also helps me.

Navigation and Identity

Sandra shared that her *racial identity* as a Black woman was central to what obtained in the race talk classroom. As well, she cited *Christian identity* as central to a loving approach. She often referred to scholarly literature as a way of underlining that her race and gender were often the reasons she received resistance in the first place. More than that however, it was evident that her identities actively shaped her work and that personal passion and professional stance are closely linked. In her words, "my work is my life and my activism". Reflecting on one of her heroes illuminated this line of thinking:

> Malcolm X is one of my heroes, and in no way am I saying I am, or would want to be as strong and as outspoken as Malcolm. I mean he hangs in my office, because he reminds me, "This is what this is about. This is not a cushy job at the academy. Always remember the masses who are being miseducated, not educated, and are starving. We're not too different than they are. You're no better than they are.

Such a passion and sense of responsibility is also clearly linked to Sandra's identity formation as an African American from a young age. Having lived as a racial minority and having experienced her race was often negatively perceived by others, she considers difficult discourse on race in the classroom as merely another aspect of the

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cause she has to fight for, and a vehicle through which to advocate on behalf of others who look like her. A glaring by-product of this way of thinking has been lack of fear and increased boldness in the classroom. She explained it this way:

> In some ways, when you don't have much, it's not a lot to lose. I think my Caribbean background and my Southern background combined – being a Black girl from [Eastern State], not much is expected. You're just supposed to live in a certain way, that if you don't take risks, you won't get anything done. And I think my whole life has been taking risks…having the audacity to go to university, to go to a [Prestigious] college; having the audacity to work in corporate America; to say, "Okay," at 13, "I want the Ph.D.," and not know what that means, and then figuring it out.

Fear then, even in the face of her non-tenure status, is not an option because of the passion that drives her; and since the benefits outweigh what others may perceive as "risks" in her view:

> You have to stop being afraid of your colleagues who are going to think a certain way about you, or your students who are not going to like you… in some respects, I have had nothing to lose buy my job. Would it have been important? Yes. I need to take care of myself, but I can get another job. For me, it's what's at stake here, or what's the potential of what can happen?

Sandra's identity has impacted the way she navigates race talk by reinforcing personal passion, a mission-like mindset, and reducing her levels of fear. However, multiple socialization experiences impacting Sandra's identity formation, have been critical to her pedagogy of love as well. Her reflection on the effectiveness of love as a ground rule highlighted this:

> In some ways for how I'm received is because I truly believe in the loving approach which is also attached to Christian values – growing up in a religious home, church was a necessity for them and for us. So that love comes as a very honest and authentic…and that comes across in my teaching. If I did not have the love piece and I was a bit more where people would call me as militant –and some of the things that I say, I have been called that – but I think my approach makes it difficult for people to completely dismiss me as the angry black woman because

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it's interwoven with love and therefore sometimes they don't know what to do with it….what do you do with that?

Case in Summary

Interactions with Sandra, and close examination of her data illuminated that she sees her personal passion as her professional responsibility. Both of these things involve "unpacking--"an art in race-focused teaching that she considers fundamental to challenging racism. Sandra realizes that the work of navigating difficult race talk takes a certain mindset. Love must be at the center--to build relationships that would speak truth, and counter fear. Despite successes with facilitating racial discourses, she knows there is much to learn. Still, the focus remains, *love on a mission*: "I'm not saying I can't learn," she concluded. "I'm always thinking about how to change my practice, but I'm not going to move from what my focus is."

Victoria: [Un] Learning Whiteness

"One of my goals… one of my most important goals is to be conscious of the fact that I as a White woman, am poorly equipped to teach on race…as a White person you, you often think you know something that you don't know."

Case in Context

For, Victoria the ability to remain consciously 'White' while facilitating race talk has been her saving grace, and the point from which she determines interactions and navigation strategies in graduate classrooms with a diversity focus. I first met Victoria in person during a conference, and as I expressed my absolute awe at the opportunity to explore her world – that is, decades of experience with race related issues in a variety of programs, she chuckled in seeming surprise at the idea that she has ever even been heralded as a leading figure for her work in adult education. With soft voice and mild mannered persona, she carefully emphasized she was merely a simple teacher, trying to be "more human," trying to make the world a better place.

Victoria's Background. Victoria grew up in a state where currently, the ratio of Whites to persons of color is approximately nine to one. As a young girl, this demographic was hardly different, since she described the population in and around her community back then as being "almost entirely White." Only one of over six hundred students in her high school yearbook, for example, was Black. Although she had little to no interactions with persons of color while growing up, she distinctly recalls the strong emphasis given to politeness and to avoiding unpleasant confrontations or "contentious" discourse, as part of her socialization experiences.

A self-identified White, middle class female, she has taught at both master's and doctoral levels in predominantly White and racially diverse settings, focusing much of

her work on issues related to women and diversity. Victoria noted that her father's early emphasis on being polite in her formative years formed a core characteristic of who she became on a personal level, and that this emphasis also followed her into early professional life at a predominantly White university. There, her White male mentor always emphasized the need for people to respect each other and keep everything "nice." As she would later find, keeping things nice and polite played perhaps a much greater role than anticipated in her experiences with matters of racial difference in the classroom.

Race Talk Triggers and Challenges.

An African American woman had come back late from lunch and somebody said something to her about being late… there had been a broken taboo about criticizing African American in front of White people. Suddenly people are shouting at each other, An African American man is crying… and it exploded.

"Whites making unconsciously privileged statements, or defending themselves;" students responding negatively to content or choice of readings, students citing perceived micro aggressions – these have all been typical triggers of a difficult race related discourse for Victoria over time. With an average of eight to ten adult learners normally in attendance, her diversity- focused graduate classes were racially/ethnically diverse and quite non-traditional in structure - often meeting in informal settings, and often student led. Since much of Victoria's case narrative reflects her experience in this learning context, her illustration of a typical race talk trigger and challenge served as a point at which I could begin to understand how she has navigated these dialogues, responded to personally challenging emotions and been shaped by elements of identity.

Navigating Difficult Race Dialogue

Critical humility is the primary concept that Victoria uses in navigating race related discourse and tension. Conceptualized by a community of practice (CoP) that she is an active part of, the concept seems a careful balancing act that she tries to practice, and in her own words, it is described as follows:

> [As a White person] when you try to talk about race, you need to be confident enough that you know something that's relevant to the situation and confident enough in your knowledge to step in and speak. Simultaneously you also need to be aware that you may be ignorant and not know. So you have to be confident enough to engage critically, and at the same time do it out of a place of humility where you're open to the fact that you really may have something wrong.

As Victoria engages both self and students in navigating difficult "race talk," she embodies critical humility. The way she does this is reflected in three themes: *dethroning Mrs. Fix-It, putting people first*, and *naming the elephant*.

De-Throning "Mrs. Fix-it." One of the most striking things I observed about Victoria throughout our interactions was the ease, openness and willingness with which she talked about "not knowing" *the* answer or solution to various classroom race related tensions. Much of this ease has been generated by her learning to constantly set aside her "fix it" gut reaction to navigating such spaces of discomfort. For example, whenever I asked her what she thought might have been a "best practice" for a race-relate discussion that had become very challenging; she almost always spoke to the importance of learning to navigate by first understanding clearly that she did not have the lived experience of a person of color. Subsequently, she would not have a complete picture with which to formulate a solution that might work for everyone. As she outlined to me, "as a White woman, [I]am poorly equipped to teach on race…as a White person you often think you know something that you don't know." Victoria was always quick to contrast this learnt

approach with what she called the "White person need to fix it attitude" – a stance where "White people usually want to fix things right away and make everything pleasant and nice."

"De-throning Mrs. Fix-It" for Victoria has been a work in progress over time. She described those early difficult race talk experiences with students of color and with White students as "eye-opening" and a "baptism by fire" respectively. For example, regarding African American students, she was initially very intimidated by seemingly forceful, activist approaches that they took to the discourse. Regarding White students, she has encountered tensions as a result of some students' reluctance to identify as both "White" and systematically privileged.

In teaching over the years, she has found it necessary to "bite [her] tongue… to listen and don't try to explain [her] self or how she's being misunderstood" – at least not right away. In one particular incident for example, she explained that an African American doctoral student, questioned, in a very harsh way, the kind of learning he could ever experience from her, given she was a White woman. Instead of trying to fix things, Victoria acknowledged the reality of her internal reaction, avoided negating the student's perspective and focused on her strengths. Interestingly, in Victoria's early recollections of this student, described as "something else," her accompanying non-verbal expression was a somber one, full of shock and disbelief. In later reflections on interactions with him, she still described him as "something else" but this time, with a smile on her face in seeming appreciation for his contribution to her learning of another large part of critical humility in practice – that is, putting people first.

Putting People First. Victoria often starts her classes with an activity, which she describes as simply "letting other people in the community know there's something going on in their lives, [or] what was bugging them" For her, "the main intention was for people to get to know each other in a way that would set the foundation for learning community." Giving students a legitimate voice in this way is just one of the ways she acted on the notion of putting [other] people first. "It means noticing," She explained. Like the practice of "dethroning" her fix-it stance, Victoria describes coming to terms with valuing people in light of the tendency she has to do things "her way" as a White person.

> You know we used to kind of joke about being in a mixed meeting where maybe I would just jump right into the agenda… I'd be like "oh I'm being a White person." I mean it's a way of doing business that gets really entrenched in people. Just getting down to it, right, (claps hands) let's go! [But] I had to try to learn to pay more attention, to the human beings.

Victoria has not only learned to put other people first by giving students a legitimate voice, but she has also done so by focusing less attention on ideas. Although it did not occur in a diversity focused classroom setting, she used the following vignette to illuminate how amplifying her own ideas, rather than others' first, was usually second nature for her. She is describing an encounter with an African American woman who was her dissertation advisee:

> My advisee was almost done [with her research about internalized oppression in African Americans], and she's so excited and she said, "I just noticed I'm all done with my analysis and I never coded anything about White people. I don't have anything about White people in my codes." So, I got excited, "this is an emerging coding category - let's talk about it…you had your analytic categories… You got all this data about White people and you didn't code it? What is that all about?" So I just get all excited about the issue I see in front of me. I give her this assignment, and the next month we get together - and she didn't do the assignment, and she said, "Why does it always have to be about White people? I

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want this to be about us." I [felt] so ashamed how I just went babbling on about what was in my head, totally disengaged. I do what I always do, which is again, always talking about the ideas and I forget I'm talking with a person.

"People first" is essential to Victoria's navigation of difficult race talk because it allows her to make genuine connections, build community and ultimately facilitate learning from others' lived experiences. With a glowing expression and excitement in her voice, she recounted one of her most memorable learning moments about race and racism via a Black student's experience. For her, the glow was not so much concerning "the content of the learning, but the empathic connection:"

> I remember her telling me that she had to coach her son when he was out -- if he ever came into any kind of encounter with police never to have his hands in his pockets, never to be holding anything, never to run, always to be respectful, all of these things. And I was flabbergasted by this, it was like "oh my goodness!" I had no idea. And because we were already in relationship, I really did feel I was living in her world.

Giving students a legitimate voice has, by extension, aided Victoria in the navigation process, since once she has earned their trust, they often take the lead in tense moments and use their experiences as a teaching tool for the rest of the class. As she concluded, "I've learned to rely on the wisdom of students and [know] how not to get in the way." Like the act of "dethroning Mrs. Fix-it" putting people first for Victoria remains a work in progress and something she finds very "hard" to do consistently. It seems, however these two have perhaps been less challenging aspects of critical humility in practice than the third aspect, "naming the elephant."

Naming the Elephant.

> A lot of times people don't always speak up because they think "oh I'm scared, oh I don't know what to say, I might upset her! And so critical humility is if you see something that needs naming, you need to.

The proverbial "elephant in the room" is a well-known Western idiom that describes a topic/issue that is particularly touchy, but that no one wants to talk about. Victoria believes that a significant part of her critical humility in practice is naming a given "elephant" or calling out an issue during a race related discourse - and doing so unafraid. She noted that this was a particularly challenging element of critical humility for her. The result? Remaining in a place of silence, "too scared to speak" in the early years. Victoria also had the tendency to delay her attempts to speak up because of wanting to say just the right thing, even when she might have felt some amount of courage to actually do so. As she explained,

> …the other thing I have a problem with is, you have to be right on the spot. I might think about something someone at the moment says, and you just say to yourself, how do I get this right? By the time you figure out how to get it right the moment has passed!

For her, naming the elephant also means having enough courage to tell things like they are, and to speak even if there is a risk of making a mistake. As an adult educator, she feels a strong responsibility not to remain silent in times of tension. Yet, despite her conviction, Victoria has queried whether silence actually proved to be a worthwhile ally during tense moments. She explained that while she felt she might have been silent "for all the wrong reasons," her students may have interpreted her silence as "an openness and willingness to learn [from them]." Thus, in her opinion, it could have helped to engender a space of trust and freedom for students to express themselves. Finally, Victoria was careful to offer a critical distinction between being afraid and being uncomfortable in learning to name the elephant during difficult race talk. Discomfort was inevitable given the nature of difficult dialogues on race, but the fear of speaking up when necessary ultimately receded over time. "I didn't stop being uncomfortable," she noted, but I

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stopped being scared into silence and inaction." Still, fear, like several other personal

emotions to be explored next, has been a glaring, constant and challenging companion.

Handling Challenging Emotions

> We convened after dinner, sitting in a circle. My general impression is that the
> aura was peaceful. …looking around at the faces, I saw that everyone looked
> attentive. I was very, very nervous. I felt fearful that there would be explosions
> that I would be ill-equipped to handle. When I am fearful, I feel a sort of
> clenching in my stomach and breathe shallowly. I knew a lot was depending on
> me…

With this short excerpt from her critical incident reflection, Victoria revealed

some of the most challenging emotions she has grappled with, in anticipation of race-

related discourses. Fear has been the most dominant, not only triggered in anticipation of

the discourse, but also triggered by student conflict and outbursts during race talk. In

addition, anger that leads to impatience has also been part of Victoria's reality when

students make comments in class that cause racial tension. She notes "I would get angry

and then I pause, then start being condescending and I start telling... I just - I get

indignant and I blurt things out impatiently." Alongside understanding her most

troublesome emotional responses, Victoria has learned strategies to handle them. Themes

emergent here are: *embracing the foreign language of emotions, staying true to inquiry*

and finding my sanctuary.

   Embracing the Foreign Language of Emotion. The language of emotion was

foreign to Victoria, and a way of communicating that she had to first acknowledge as

very different from what she was used to, both in her practice as an educator and in the

way she lived her life. She had to learn this language quickly, and it not only helped her

to keep in touch with the varied ways in which her students might be communicating, but

it also helped her to be honest with herself. Unlike what she had learned much of her life as an accomplished scholar, learning emotional language and logic is something Victoria confesses she "wished [she] knew" all her life. Had she known and embraced it, she explained, it would have made things much easier – that is, when emotions arose in both herself and her students, she would have understood it as something that had an uncomfortable but necessary place, and she would have been able to remain more fully present during her tense experiences:

> I grew up very successful as a student and as an educator. But I had to learn there's another kind of logic, it's the logic of emotions, [I had to] to learn to speak it, and to be in that place or at least to be aware that something's going on.

Embracing this new language of emotions also meant displaying emotional honesty, which, for her means "not stuffing it" or not making disclosures that are meaningless or merely politically correct in response to one's emotions. More importantly for her, it means not running away from the emotions herself and "being brave enough to tell people about things like insults that might cause [emotions] like anger, anxiety or disappointment." She emphasized her tendency to mentally forfeit a tense, emotional situation, particularly in cases where she is at a loss for words. When asked how others might combat that tendency, her consistent warning? "Stay engaged….don't withdraw!" Part of that engagement clearly manifests itself in the use of inquiry.

Staying True to Inquiry. Questioning self and others has become a life habit for Victoria in handling moments of personal tension during race talk. Like she does most other strategies, she uses inquiry in anticipation of, during and after difficult moments. For example, she has used questioning developed by her CoP to plan and prepare for

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conversations with students she feared might be difficult, given the information she

needed to communicate. Often, these are based on how she or others in a similar situation

have responded before. In explaining how this works, she stated:

> This critical humility strategy has a bunch of questions that we have created to help you as a White person think about why an interaction may have gone wrong. What were you bringing to it that interfered with your capacity to do what you intended to do? And these questions, almost entirely are used as a kind of after the fact bad experience questions…we thought out these questions, but these questions also help, can help you plan for difficult conversations.

Such self-reflection questions have been important for her to "really think," to

probe and to examine her personal motive/s and its relationship to her potential emotional

reactions:

> One of the questions is to really go after what you're about… what do you have at stake emotionally and for your own self-identity? You really think about - what might I be trying to prove to myself or to him or to her? To be really aware of your own emotional state and whatever sense of identity you bring to your interactions.

As a result of this kind of "planning strategy," Victoria is more readily able to remind

herself in times of emotional turmoil to "just hold up and just keep in control."

Whenever Victoria experiences a challenging emotion during her interactions

with students, she also stresses the importance of "try[ing] to find questions that you can

ask authentically" of others. "Her emphasis was so much more on the need to be genuine

with the questions than the questions themselves," I journaled at one point. And it was –

because this was the hallmark of Victoria's idea of what true inquiry was in her role as

educator. It was a strategy that involved asking the right questions but asking them with

an authentic approach; in using it, she embraces open-endedness in every sense of the

word, with no hidden agenda. As she summates:

So often when people are doing the Socratic method, they really have a point to make and so they put it in the question format and they don't really want to hear different responses… so one of the important things to do is think of questions that are genuine, and that you're open to whatever answer comes, and to go from there.

Examining her previous handling of emotional responses through inquiry is as important as the act of responding itself. For Victoria, this kind of examination is (a) in itself, a way of handling those emotions she might have found challenging – after she's experienced them and (b) a foundation for improving on future questions she might want to ask of herself and others in processing challenging emotions.

Finding My Sanctuary. Victoria has concluded that in order to handle emotions successfully, everybody needs a "sanctuary" group. This, she explained is a place to be real with invested others who have similar experiences. She has found this kind of gathering particularly safe at times when she has made a mistake or responded poorly in the classroom: "it's such a safety valve you know - you're just there, you've made a big botch on something but the fact that you have someplace to take it makes things so much easier." For example, she described how much she had been "carrying around shame for six months" concerning how she had negatively responded to a student of color, and that coming out with the story to her small group helped her deconstruct elements of her White racial identity and personality that may have caused her to react the way she did. More importantly, this kind of reflective work was always done in a non-judgmental space with other White professionals, whose only goal was to improve their ability to create and sustain an authentic sense of community in diversity.

Overall, the most significant benefit for Victoria in engaging as an active member of a sanctuary group was decreased levels of fear. She described over the course of our

interactions, that she remembers coming to a point at which she "stopped being so scared" and she directly attributed that to what she calls her "White group" – a space with people who helped her face the dominant identities that had overwhelming influences on her handling of difficult race-related dialogues.

Navigation and Identity

> It didn't make any sense for me to say my roots were in [a European country] or something like that, because what I really was shaped by -- I was shaped by the fact that I grew up in the Midwest.

In the quote above, Victoria was responding to critiques made by her students of color. They had been engaged in an exercise in which each person was asked to identify his or her cultural roots. Victoria said hers were Midwestern, and the students emphatically insisted she name the countries from her European heritage. She has reflected on her encounters with race-related tension regarding cultural identity and she unapologetically believes that she has mostly been impacted by her racial identity as a White person and by the Midwest socialization experiences that helped to shape it. Below, *polite Midwesterner*, and *Whiteness as norm* are themes explaining more about this.

Polite "Midwesterner." Victoria has been very aware of her fear of confrontations throughout her life. Initially, she would be afraid of "naming" in an uncomfortable race focused classroom. However, she learned to speak up in the face of tension after what she calls her "three years of baptism by fire." The tendency not to speak in the early years prior to that may have often been driven by Midwestern socialization. She described this below:

> This notion of "if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all…" that's a very prominent value. So that really drives a tendency to be non-confrontational. And then it often walks over into being conflict avoidant, you're not supposed to create a conflict, and so you just assume avoid them altogether because… people don't raise their voices if you hear people raising their voices which is really a conversation style for some people, it creates a lot of anxiety.

As a result of this, naming, calling someone or something out, or simply speaking up without fear ultimately became what Victoria described as "the hardest" thing to learn. During the first two or three years, she noted "I was learning how to confront racism and be conscious of White privilege and White supremacist consciousness." As such, she sometimes faced with what seemed an uphill internal battle between what she knew as a core value growing up, and what needed to be addressed in her classes. Such a battle often saw the "Midwestern" fear as the victor as even if she did end up speaking, it sometimes happened too late. In emphasizing her "deep-seated" norms, Victoria also pointed to the influence of gender: "women of my generation, class, and mid-western upbringing tend to be strongly conflict-avoidant." As observed in her practice of "naming the elephant", though Victoria regretted choosing silence, she speculated that it could have earned trust for her since students might have interpreted it as her way of empowering them with a space to speak.

In addition to this, navigating difficult discourses on race has unearthed in Victoria, an understanding of how intricately growing up in the Midwest had shaped her; this kind of learning was now not just academic or head knowledge, but more authentic and something she has clearly utilized to reflect on and improve the navigation strategies and emotional responses overtime. As she concludes:

> I learned to be conscious of who you are and how you have been shaped by your upbringing…it's really real. It's funny… I taught at [my former] university, we lived and breathed theory there. And so, these ideas were very familiar to me

about sociolinguistic, your epistemic and your psychological meaning perspectives, right? That [theoretical concept] just comes out of me by second nature. But I just learned to understand it in a very different way.

Whiteness As Norm. As indicated throughout this narrative, Victoria's case was fundamentally one of [un] learning Whiteness. During her time facilitating and observing graduate students in race focused dialogue, she found herself simultaneously learning about self as a White person, but yet she was also unlearning some of the norms and tendencies that came with being White, and that would impede the facilitation of another ethnic or racial way of knowing or way of dealing with things. This constant and conscious knowledge had a critical influence on how she navigated race-related tensions and handled her emotions.

Outside of the occasional student questioning her input or content given that she was a White person, the most threatening influence was Victoria's tendency to want to "provide a fix-it presence" in order to make everything better when tensions arose. This was a presence she described repeatedly as something characteristic of persons who are White. In the early days of facilitating difficult race dialogue, she recalled bemoaning the fact that a co-instructor would not step in to help diffuse things: "I spent a lot of my first year being really anxious and wishing she would step in and do what she was supposed to do, which she never seemed to do…I wanted to fix things right away!" As she reflected, she concluded it may have been a blessing in disguise because her racial identity "fix it" influence was something she needed to unpack and retire in the context of race talk. In fact, she noted that the moment she was able to do so, equated to the moment she recognized true success in navigating.

She described this compelling moment in her critical incident. During a weeklong residential retreat, her students had decided to hold a special evening session to address some very tense race-related issues. Victoria facilitated the discussion during which she was crippled with fear. Her illustration indicates a movement from apparent uncertainty and fear to a place of freedom once she came face to face with unlearning the influence that her White identity had had on her over time:

> I had these two cohorts in sequence where I was just living issues of race and White privilege constantly. So to me, it started to all mush together into this volcano, chaotic roiling experience that lasted for about three years.

> But when I was writing the critical incident for you [which happened at the end of the first year], I came to realize that that night when I had been so frightened that I had to step forward, I couldn't avoid it, I would have avoided it if I could, but I wasn't allowed to avoid it… and I did okay. And the way I did okay, was by not trying to fix anything. I came to understand that I was making a real contribution just by sort of making sure that everybody was able to express themselves, to be heard.

In addition to this, Victoria's Whiteness greatly contributed to the way she has negatively handled personal emotions. In situations where she has struggled with anger, for example, she has responded by "telling." "Telling" for her is an act of addressing things in an authoritative way, without much thought of other experiences and inputs. Like other challenging personal habits during difficult race dialogue, she has pointed to her Whiteness as a suitable frame for understanding her responses:

> Well it's really easy to be [condescending] if you're in an act as a White person who doesn't have any idea what they're talking about … doesn't have any capacity to understand the U.S culture from the perspective of a person of color, and just goes on.

Case in Summary

Victoria likens her navigation of difficult discourses on race to finding her way through shoals. In this context, there are "potential shipwrecks" and one never knows

where s/he will end up. Over time, she has come to the place of being "okay" even if she becomes shipwrecked in the discourse. She has learned to do so with the practice of critical humility as a strategy, which engages less of a fix-it mentality, putting people first and naming the proverbial elephant in the room. In handling responses, she has learned to work successfully with embracing emotion as a language all on its own, staying true to inquiry and finding a sanctuary within which to share her honest thoughts. Although Whiteness has an overarching influence on her as an educator, the cultural experience of growing up in the Midwest has proven itself just as impactful in navigating race talk.

Youjin: In Between Places

I guess that's how I'm feeling personally…very comfortable being in the in between places and on the margins… I feel that I can use that marginality of life when I discuss this racial issue, which is a very important part of me as a person but also [in] teaching.

Case in Context

Youjin approaches classroom discourses on race with an eye for the complexities and nuances of individuals' cultures. For her, "everyone is ethnic" in some way and as such she focuses less on emphasizing a Black/White dichotomy in talking about race. Initial interactions with Youjin also revealed that she has come to a place of comfort in facilitating race talk, mainly by using a streamlined process learned over the years, and using her understanding of self and identity to her advantage. Much of this identity is steeped in her status as an Asian-American and immigrant. She feels she enters racial discourse "in between places" and on "the margins." She feels she has accomplished mostly successful classroom discussions around race because of some students' perceptions of her in between status, and a strong motivation to continue advancing the dialogue for equity in education. Despite the success however, Youjin agrees that race has remained "a hard question, a hard talk."

Race Talk Triggers and Challenges.

He says that "I am pushing my personal agenda." He is a White, male student and taking this multi-cultural education as a [course] requirement. So then we went back and forth. Basically he never backed down. He basically argued that this course has put the most biased perspective about race and discrimination and prejudice, and I did not allow different perspectives to be discussed and brought up, and the different perspectives were configured as an opposition to my personal agenda. He even wrote me on the email…and then it happened a couple of times, and then also [when] he was in class, he was very vocal about it.

In teaching diversity-focused Masters and PhD education courses over the years, Youjin has observed resistance to racial discourse in several different ways. Alongside claims of her having a personal agenda and biased perspective, she has been accused of taking students through the issue of race *yet again*—an issue they sometimes see as having been already exhausted in general. As she recalled, students would say "oh [we have to] talk about Martin Luther King again, or we [have to] talk about slavery again! This line of thinking Youjin has attributed to a form of "racial exhaustion" in the case of White students. For Black students, she notes that racial exhaustion is evident when they become disengaged during race talk, because they are, according to her, "already advanced" in their understanding of racial identity. Both of these reactions, she observed are common and cause the atmosphere surrounding the discourse to become more difficult as students become more defensive. She also notes the need to be "very careful," particularly when talking about White privilege.

Students of color in Youjin's classes and comprehensive university campus have averaged approximately 20%, and she described the small faculty in her program as fairly ethnically diverse. Because she has been teaching multicultural courses and courses related to educational policy and equity for over twenty years, she feels that teaching on race and racism, though challenging at times, is now comfortable for her, and a naturally occurring task. An optimist at heart, she feels that she enters race talk with her students believing positively that each one can learn from the experience. As such, she has found meaningful ways to navigate difficult dialogues on race, manage her personal emotions, and maximize identities effectively in the process.

Navigating Difficult Race Dialogue

As a preface to engaging in race talk that would sometimes become challenging, it has been critical for Youjin to establish a solid foundational context within which students could situate and understand themselves as ethnic beings. She aims for her race space to be "inclusive" and outlined, "my approach to race and ethnicity is that first I want them to feel that they're all racial, they're all ethnic. I do not divide [and say] this is the White or [these are] the people of color." She has observed that by doing this she can begin to cultivate a general sensitivity to race and ethnicity, especially because unlike persons of color, White students are often not usually able to identify covert racism. Importantly too, Youjin has chosen over the years to assess students through the lens of racial identity development theory, and so having them identify ethnically helps her assess where they are in their development, and how she might move forward with the discourse. She describes how she has students use a cultural mapping tool to trace their identities, and shares an example of how this set up might look:

> Of course the students or people of color, students of color have no problem identifying their race and ethnic identity, while my White students like to think more of themselves as let's say German from descended or Spanish-speaking or German-speaking rather than White, then we talk about how everyone's identity is formed and multi-layered and why some people have a difficult time of identifying certain aspects while others think more about it and then why there are differences.

Mapping self-identities and looking at students through identity development models is only the beginning for Youjin. She then takes students through a guided tour of the historical context of race in the United States, exposes them to some international perspectives on race and encourages students to become acutely aware of contexts within which they might be minorities. As she notes,

I'm trying to creating the context where everyone can talk about their own minority situation…so that everyone is inclusive about it… beginning to see that female students can talk about their gender, gender minority; the racial minority students can talk about their racial minority situation; the linguistic minority students can talk– or the sexual minority students can talk …but then everyone is in that position of minority…it's much easier for me to then begin to help students develop their diversity awareness.

This overall approach to introducing the reality of racial inequity is one she has found much success in. In saying so, she was also quick to emphasize that "it's not just a loosey-goosey kind of nice to get to know somebody...it's the awareness. Not only awareness of their own racial identity but also to know that racial identity has a consequence." Once these ideas are engaged on the 'front end' – meaning she sets up a screen or creates early on in the class--she finds that she can draw from students foundational knowledge with other navigation strategies when the discourse gets hard. Every strategy she uses can be seen within the context of what she does to set up the class climate. This involves basically being inclusive in practice. This means emergent themes such as *affirming, cracking and gauging.*

Affirming. Much of what Youjin does in working through race talk is to affirm the voices of all the students in her class when they offer opinions or perspectives on particularly difficult race-related topics. She often affirms their courage to speak. Although she does this with both White students and students of color, she has found that it has been particularly helpful for White students, so that even in times of disagreement, they can feel they have a safe space in which they can be honest. As she explained, "I have to affirm so they can also be comfortable asking questions...it' more of "I want to learn more about that experience," rather than "I disagree"…then it will become a really safe place for people to talk about it." In this way, some of the perspectives—that is,

those student voices shared may spiral into valuable "teachable moments" for her and the class to benefit from. In using verbal affirmation as a strategy, Youjin has been careful to learn to guard against what she considers false affirmation. She feels this is really defensiveness and denial at work, and provided a hypothetical scenario from which she learned that this kind of posture is usually counterproductive:

> For example, let's say when students accuse me of advancing a certain progressive agenda in relation to race--and I think it's denying of course, it doesn't work-- denying what I'm talking about [by saying] "oh, this is not what I meant." That does not work. Or expressing that, "well – everyone has a right to have their own opinion." That basically kills the conversation, the relativistic reference to it: "Oh well, you are free to have your own, it's one thought and I have my freedom – and I have expressed it"

Rather, she noted "engage the student" by providing authentic affirmation for them. Authentic affirmation is an easier response for Youjin, even in the face of pushback from students largely, because she draws on her knowledge of where they are in their racial identity development. "I figure that when the students don't get it, that they are in the infantile stage." As such, she feels less pressure all around. Cracking has also been a useful strategy to help her initiate the discourse.

Cracking. Because Youjin, initiates race as one of several components of a given culture, and as one area in which an individual can hold minority status, she considers finding a minority status students can relate to, and tapping into it a useful strategy for navigating race talk. She has referred to this often in conversation as "finding a crack" or "cracking," and described one way it has worked for her in the past:

> I do have to be very careful, especially when I talk about privilege, White privilege. I do have resistant students. When I talk about gender privilege, I have very resistant male students. So I have to crack it…in interaction, for example, when the Christian students feel that they are a religious minority in America - that is a great kind of a crack that I can go into with my White male students to talk about race and gender.

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As she indicated, cracking is effective when students have identified areas within which they might perceive themselves as minorities. Youjin noted that finding this entry point or crack by which to open up race talk has been useful in keeping students less judgmental about each other's understanding of self, and provided an environment in which they could feel relaxed enough in anticipation of race talk:

> I don't want the students to be tense and then display even a physical kind of shut down motion. I want them to be open--even physically; and that's a part of psychology. So for me to create the cracks and make people relax so that this discussion has an impact, even though they don't recognize it immediately, is important.

As she would learn over time, both affirming and cracking work well, but only if she has gauged things well.

Gauging. Gauging for Youjin simply means "keeping [her] senses on high alert" so she can try to read students' minds and moods during race talk. It has also been a means of preventing what she calls "incivility" in race talk—where one or two students dominate the conversation, intimidate or try to take control through questions or comments. It has been one of the strategies she engages in most, and she confesses that this practice sometimes causes her to be "very tense." Noting that in race talk, "you have to be perceptive," gauging works as a way of assessing where her students are and ensuring she is inclusive to all, but also as a means of providing as much balance as she can concerning the needs and engagement levels of her students during race talk.

For example, in the case of White students, one of her goals is to create allies and so gauging works to ensure that. As she notes, "there are White students who have developed extremely advanced and sophisticated notions of race, so I can also have developed students as an ally to that conversation if they are advanced" In the case of

students of color, she frequently worries that because they are usually advanced, when they share the challenging racial experiences they have encountered, it becomes particularly difficult for them; hence, she often gauges the tension in the room while they speak, to determine how to move the conversation forward.

In gauging, Youjin noted too that she rarely asks African Americans directly to speak to their lived experiences, even for the purpose of having a "teachable moment." It is gauging, she recalled that has always determined how much they share. As she outlined, "depending on how confident and strong, a student of color is, I would allow other students to ask exploratory questions so that they can learn from it. When the students of color subject themselves to that sort of interrogation, my senses are on high alert."

Keeping her senses on high alert in this way, is an important part of protecting students of color from disengaging due to what she calls *racial exhaustion*. Youjin has learned to be particularly adamant about the need for this kind of protection, and she explains the rationale behind it this way:

> Something called racial exhaustion…it's when my students of color come to this point in a racial discourse because they are already advanced. It's true that they are being tapped into, always *"tell me about your position."* So the faculty tends to put them in this more of a vulnerable position, by trying to drag their personal experiences out for the rest to look at with very little positive consequence. So my students of color feel that they are being used, exploited--so that often times that they can have a very disengaged posture that they don't want to be pulled into. They're sensitive in this position, so I have to read. So I don't call on my students of color and ask them, *"tell me about your experience"* unless they either volunteer or others also have shared it. I don't call on them. I have them volunteer. I create the environment for them to volunteer but I never ask, *so how do you feel about the situation? How was your experience?*
>
> So let's say we talk about this invisible knapsack, right? If I'm doing this and I will ask my White students as well, *and have you experienced anything like this, so share with me that, anyone who has had the experience?* My African-American

students sometimes like to volunteer that. I will ask if anyone else has experienced this or is there anyone else that has a different experience? And then we'll talk about why the experiences have been different. That way I don't call on them. I don't call because if – in the same way, I don't call on somebody and say *tell me about your White experience,* why should I ask my Black students *tell me about your Black experience?*

Physical movement around the class to communicate "I am here" or "I am listening" to students; as well as reflection, writing and sustaining student relationships, even beyond the scope of the class have also been useful strategies for Youjn. She observed that sometimes navigation "has to go beyond the classroom walls," if time does not permit— for instance, building relationships by checking in with a student that had challenges with her White peers during a small group project. **"**It is another way of working with my students so that they don't feel marginalized inside" she noted.

Handling Challenging Emotions

It's more of a nervousness…and defensiveness and I'm not necessarily angry at people who do not get it…when some students get it I'm really, really excited. I just jump up. So I'm very happy…pleased, and then I affirm verbally, so even among the tension - when students get it, I don't always see that the tension is because a student is against me. It doesn't happen that often…and I don't have to fight by myself or I don't have to don't have to conquer this one student or few students who don't get it. So I can get mad at them but I am nervous in a way that's if I don't do it right, I will lose the teaching moments. Sometimes I'm so eager to get it, I come across more defensive.

Youjin's experience with challenging emotions has not been a glaring part of her time working through difficult dialogues on race. As alluded to in her reflection above, she often experienced more positive than negative personal emotions in this space. This, she noted, has been partially a result of her optimistic personality and her ability to find allies among both White students and students of color along the way. When challenging emotions do arise however, she has indicated that they manifest in more of a nervousness

and anxiety, based on being on high alert in gauging—and wanting to make the right decision so that the conversation is meaningful and "teachable." As well, she notes that her eagerness and excitement might be interpreted by students as defensiveness. Her strategies for dealing with potentially negative emotions have been fairly consistent over time, and work well in keeping her focused. These include not dwelling on things that may trigger her negative emotions, looking at the bigger picture and switching to solution mode. Hence, the primary emergent theme is *letting go to look ahead.*

Letting Go to Look Ahead. Learning to let go, or to not dwell on things that could trigger negative emotions has been a useful strategy for Youjin. She feels that it has become easier for her over time because she makes every effort to stay "fully present" when she is engaged in race talk. For her, this means that she brings her whole self to the discourse, and that she has done everything mentally, physically and emotionally that is possible to make her teaching moments become as effective as possible. As such, when tense emotions arise, or when that class time has expired and she has had a time to reflect, she is comfortable in knowing that she has done all she can for the class to be effective:

> We all have very different ways of dealing with emotions in relation to teaching. My way of handling is that once I finish teaching then I don't dwell on it very much…so I'm not as hot [or angry]but what's important for me is that because I'm fully present while I'm teaching, then I always feel that I'm doing my best.

As a consequence of this, she has found it more profitable to keep looking ahead--to what she wants her students to accomplish at the end of the day--or by understanding that lessons can be learned that might warrant future changes. During tense moments, she might also consider where students might be in their racial identity development. She described this stance further as follows:

> In supporting my educational philosophy I think that I always believing that students can learn. Students change, transform for the current level of maturity in their racial awareness…it's not the end of the world and so I'm doing my best, so if they don't – have not reached the level that I want them to be then they will have other opportunities

In addition to letting go and looking ahead Youjin mentioned that one of the ways she has learned to manage emotions that could prove challenging is to write about her experiences and her work. She concluded that this has also helped her find clarity and new ways to think about issues:

> To deal with these tensions, I write about it. I do think and write about my teaching. I mean I prepare my each class I notes before every class, even though I have class for 10 years. I never go in with my same lecture notes. Every class, every year, I prepare new. So that strategy helps me to reflect on what I have done differently.

Much of the way she deals with emotion stems from her multiple identities – had a lot to do with her own multiple identities.

Navigation and Identity

Over the years, Youjin has come to understand the range of identities that relate to her navigation of difficult dialogues on race, and how best to utilize them. Noting that racial, ethnic immigrant and gender identities were the most salient for her, she also highlighted the place of her personal faith tradition. Of importance is, "my social activism orientation…to be conscious of other brothers and sisters…that's rooted in Christian discipline," she maintained. All of these identities have not only impacted her navigation of difficult race talk, but they have also been impacted by the navigation process. Primary themes emerging for Youjin here, are titled *the sweet Asian woman*, and *the racially in-between immigrant*.

The "Sweet" Asian Woman. Youjin often uses her experiences as a woman from an Asian country to talk about personal incidents of discrimination from her perspective. This practice helps to serve two primary purposes: as a facilitator, she can model sharing of minority gender experiences that females in her class may feel more connected to; as a consequence, this works as a form of *cracking* (described earlier), through which she can enter the race discourse:

> I can bring my experience of being a woman through my cultural autobiography. Everyone [in class] has to write and pick their minority focus. I wrote mine to share and [in it], I'm talking about my gender identity more, having grown up in Korea in a more male dominated society…So I write about it. And I dare to talk about privilege and advantage from that angle--and then we enter into the other areas about minorities. So I think being a woman I do feel that I can use my experience to talk about race.

Still, there are perceived challenges to being a woman—and an Asian woman inside the race talk classroom—stereotypes that Youjin has also had to reconcile in settings outside of class. Given that Asian women are frequently labeled as passive and/or gentle, she shared that she makes every effort to respond to students during race talk "with a smile, but firmly." She recalled too that that most of the pushback and resistance she received would often come from White male students, and explained her perceived challenge on account of race and gender:

> I do feel though that I do not command the same level of respect. I'm an Asian woman and somehow people see me as a sort of a typical Asian woman…. sweet and with no opinions…probably all are surprised that I can be very authoritative…but I had to deal with that.

The In Between Immigrant:

So I have acquired the Pan-Asian identity. I feel very comfortable saying that I am an Asian-American, while I'm very comfortable saying I'm Korean-American. I am also very comfortable saying that I am a woman of Color… when I think

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about person of Color, it allows me to expand my boundaries to include people of other origins. So I can identify myself with African-Americans and Latinos and so on.

Her choice to identify with multiple Asian identities, and identify as a woman of color, while staying true to her Korean homeland has augured well for Youjin in race talk. For example, she feels that by identifying as a person of color, she has opened herself up to critical collegial relationships that have furthered her understanding of racialized America. This was because much of the hard race dialogue she experienced in class helped her understand and communicate more authentically with several colleagues on campus:

> Most female Black colleagues that I have tend to be very vocal and to be very assertive. That is very different than what I grew up with, so I think by learning about this racial difference and dealing with it, and learning to be frank about the reality, and then also to speak about it has helped me to understand my colleagues.

In turn, Youjin noted that these relationships also allowed her to enter into some of the personal lived experiences of her minority students, helping her understand some contexts better.

As an Asian too, Youjin admitted, "I think half the time I feel that I am actually in a good position between White and Black." She noted that she felt she occupied "a rich site"—a space between them, and one which she might use to navigate discourses on race with both groups. She described how she saw this space working as follows:

> The White students don't see me as Black, therefore they don't necessarily see that I am pushing the Black agenda on them. My Black students don't see me as a White, so that they don't necessarily see that I am pushing the White agenda…they don't come in thinking that oh, here is another White teacher that I will be doomed.

Despite this potential benefit, Youjin has also been very conscious that the same middle space could work as a detriment to her. Describing it as a "sword," she explained how her Asian identity could promote rather than hinder resistance:

> In some ways, I don't have enough of a credibility to discuss this kind of issue to a Black student. And White students may think that I am an immigrant, therefore I also have not fully grasped the racial issues.

Other elements of her racial and ethnic culture useful in the context of navigating race talk are her learned perceptiveness, and the immigrant identity that is tied to her being Asian. For example, she feels that her ability to "gauge" or to read students with a heightened level of sensitivity is firmly rooted in her Korean upbringing:

> It's like mind-reading, an English word but it's not really mind-reading; in Korean expression we call this *lunchi*. You have the art of using your eyes to gain – be very perceptive of your environment because very little words will be said. [For instance] your father will not tell you *I am very disappointed,* but he will say it in his body language, his expression.

Concerning immigrant identity, Youjin expressed that this has been effective in helping her maintain a necessary degree of "space" from race talk. Although she maintained that not having the lived experience of U.S born persons would limit her knowledge of racial realities, she felt immigrant identity could work as a positive—some students perhaps, feeling less threatened; as well, it is easier for her to let go of some things: "My identity as an immigrant allows me to put some space between me and U.S. born or between me, the U.S. born Korean-American, U.S. born Asian-American. It sort of allows me to transcend that label. So I feel very flexible……I don't come in with that baggage.

Case in Summary

Youjin has conceded that navigating a difficult dialogue over the years is highly contextual, involves multiple elements and is a labor that has been learned over time.

Importantly, she sees navigation in light of her physical movement around the class, something that is "very, very symbolically important" for her. Simply put by her, in this work, "you have to be engaged." Outlining that she usually has a positive outlook, Youjin maintains that she does not dwell on any emotions that become challenging for her, but looks ahead to the greater goal of the class. The variety of identities that she has found useful to help her navigate this very "hard talk" are also ones that have equally impacted by the process of navigation itself.

CHAPTER V

Cross Case Findings

Introduction

> Everything is about balance
> – *Georgia*

The central research question guiding this multiple case study was: *How do graduate education faculty navigate difficult discourses on race in their diversity-related courses?* Sub-questions probed, *how do faculty handle personally challenging emotional responses that they experience during difficult dialogues on race?* And: *How do faculty see the navigation of difficult discourses as relating to, or impacting their identities*? Arising from the case narratives, the idea of *balance* stood out from the study's cross-case analysis. In fact, the word balance was frequently expressed by participants, as each described and explained their experiences. It was clear that faculty engaged in balancing varied strategies in navigating difficult dialogues on race, and in handling challenging personal emotions; and that they chose to model those strategies as a way of teaching their students how to do the same. Faculty also related their identities to navigation in diverse ways. In general, participants shared far more commonalities than divergences concerning the kinds of strategies they balanced, though each may have placed more emphases on select ones, based on their needs and contexts. This chapter presents dominant patterns concerning themes of balance that emerged from cross case analysis of the data, select illustrations associated with these themes, and any divergences that may have also emerged. The chapter concludes with a summary of the cross case findings.

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<div align="center">**Research Question One: Themes**</div>

Model Humility but Maintain Confidence

   Participants often likened navigating difficult dialogues on race to a careful

balance between modeling strong levels of humility, while at the same time maintaining

confidence in themselves and their abilities to guide and facilitate the class. Such a

balance may be illustrated with for example, Victoria's practice of the *critical humility*

concept. As outlined in her case narrative, this concept means faculty have enough

confidence to speak whenever necessary but that they always do so with the

understanding, awareness and acceptance that they are prone to error, and do not have the

answers to everything:

> You have to step forward - but you must always be aware that you might make a mistake. You must not think this phrase people use "I've done my work." You must not think you've done your work and now you know it all. You have to always have that consciousness. It is your responsibility to speak up, but don't think you necessarily know the right thing to say.

As an illustration of this kind of balancing act, Victoria recalled a particular classroom

incident, within which an African American doctoral student, questioned, in a very strong

way, the kind of learning he could ever experience from her, given she was a White

woman. "What can I learn from you?!" he exclaimed. "What do you bring to this?"

Victoria vividly recalled her learned reactions:

> First of all I was floored, like "oh my lord, what do I say?" My body response was to be totally clenched up, I totally couldn't breathe. I knew I was on the spot. But what I did say was, "I have a lot of knowledge about these bodies of thoughts that can be useful to you to know about and to be able to write and to talk about. And I can help you learn about those bodies of knowledge." He seemed to be ok with that.

Further, she concluded,

<div align="center"></div>

I really felt he had plenty he could learn from me. As carefully as I could, I explained what I had to offer, so I was pretty confident about what I did have, and maybe because I could I could speak with confidence about what it was he could learn from me while still being aware of what I didn't know that was relevant in this situation. It must have been convincing.

Instead of "becoming defensive," or at the other end of the extreme, shying away from the discourse, Victoria modeled humility in refusing to belittle or negate the student's perspective. Simultaneously, she maintained confidence by focusing on her strengths – those things she believed she could contribute to the student's learning experience. Subsequently, she noted, tension was diffused and she gradually built a meaningful relationship with one of her most vocal students ever, and ultimately with the rest of the class.

Although Victoria described the balance involved in critical humility in the context of her positionality as a White woman involved in discourses on race, several other participants emphasized the absolute need for humility, while maintaining self-confidence. Anita, for example relinquishes an expert positionality from the early stages through the end of her courses, citing that the benefits of doing this far outweigh the risks:

I tell them at the beginning, "I'm not the expert. We're all going to make mistakes - including me." And so when someone makes a mistake, I talk about mistakes I've made. You can't believe you know it all, because if you do, when you put yourself up on a pedestal, it's a long way down! It's a lot easier to go along with them and to say "I blew it!"

Anita also exercises humility by inviting students to inform her whenever something uncomfortable is said during race talk. According to her, "I say, there will be someone who says something [wrong], including me– and if you hear me say it, PLEASE, please ask me!"

Like Victoria and Anita, others also advocated for the practice of humility as a way of navigating tense discourses, while pointing to the need for confidence in self or craft. For example, so adamant is Sandra in terms of preserving humility that she avoids doing things that she feels might threaten it. Noting that she has often heard of students' appreciation for the safe and welcoming environment she facilitates them in, Sandra explained that even affirmations of her style are treated carefully to protect an attitude of humility:

> If something doesn't go right, students usually tell me because I create that kind of environment. In fact, that is the verbal feedback I get, and my understanding is that people who wrote my evaluations [say that]. But I do try not to read them because I need to remain humble.

Humility became the end all or summation of the matter of race talk at the conclusion of each of our interactions for Georgia too, but not without a sense of confidence. She explained, "I have to be assertive in stating what my perspective is but certainly creating the space for others to have their perspective--and they have." As well, she noted, "you can't take yourself too seriously. Humility is a big piece of doing this work well."

In Cathy's context, a display of humility means being honest with students in accepting and concluding that she will not always "balance it" – that is, the actual navigation of the discourse itself. This, she notes, has only helped to engender trust in her students. She explained it this way:

> First you have to accept that you won't always balance it. You could try but, but it's not always going to work out just the way you hope it will and it's not always balanced…people will forgive a mistake if they know you're trying your best and you share that.

Others, like Youjin and Manuel found that their constant awareness of themselves as immigrants to the United States made a sense of humility and a lack of confidence almost

default approaches for them during race talk, since they realized they might not have had as many of the same lived experiences as their U.S born students. As Youjin outlined, "[early on], I was not too comfortable and confident talking about race, because my racial experience was not authentic. I did not feel it was authentic." Both of these scholars had to come to a place of comfort with themselves and their crafts first. This comfort level then fueled the confidence they needed to work through race talk effectively. On reflection, Manuel summarized how this occurred for him:

> I was thinking just for this interview about when I was teaching those classes and I thought "my God, those first classes must have been awful because I wasn't really very comfortable" But just to be able to clearly and confidently talk about my background and the things that I felt important and then engage people…the more comfortable I got with that, the more the conversations got easier.

Although humility mingled with confidence is an effective balancing act that faculty mostly agree on, Isabel's experience has taught her to be wary of the fact that her efforts at humility might come across to some graduate students as inadequate academic preparation, competence, or leadership on her part as an instructor. Simply put, "some students want you much more to be the expert and that sort of thing." Still, she noted, "that's just never been my style." Much of faculty's efforts to retain a strong sense of humility alongside confidence is based on their preference to model inclusiveness.

Model Inclusiveness, but Maintain Control

Another recurring balance was that of modeling inclusiveness, but at the same time, maintaining control of the class as necessary. Inclusiveness for participants meant honoring their students' voices and choosing to use the class as a learning community, rather than just themselves or select individuals, to work through difficult conversations. In Isabel's mind, the benefits of building community and honoring students' voices are

critical, since, "you never know what one student says in a response that may trigger in a positive way, something in somebody else." Participants noted that much of community building simultaneously involved "affirming," "developing authentic relationships" and creating "trust" and/or "safe space." For Victoria in particular, an added benefit to using this strategy included increasing her own knowledge, while allowing students to explore theirs firsthand:

> As a White woman, I'm poorly equipped to teach on race except what I think about being White, so primary goals were about creating capacity for real community… to learn together… to make space for everyone to bring their racial identity into the interaction.

It is important to note here too that most faculty warned against calling on a particular student to share racialized experiences in a bid to be inclusive; most also emphasized that any effective use of the student voice to diffuse tension was based on faculty having solid knowledge of, and relationship with students—and on students' voluntary participation. As indicated in their respective case narratives, Georgia for example, argued "I don't need a spokesperson for any race," while Youjin emphasized avoiding "racial exhaustion," particularly for students of color.

While participants have always aimed for inclusiveness as a strategy, they have also had to be wary of situations in which personal stories from the community could prove counterproductive. Isabel's notion of the classroom as a site of "struggle" for race talk is a useful example of her attempt to create this kind of balance:

> I want to create a community where we can have those struggles and we can experience those tensions without shutting down, where we can understand some of the differences in understanding race and struggle through that together. So I start there, and I always really make a point of, "hey thank you for sharing that," and responding to the person who shared. I start there to set the tone of "you can talk about these things…but for everybody – whether they know it or not – race is personal. And people have ideas, they have opinions – they might be

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misinformed. But they're still coming from this very personal place." So I think that helps us set the tone for "we are a community, we all feel things. If something becomes particularly salient, let's explore it together."

Not long after however, she observed that within community:

> You have to have a balance of the sources that students are using to inform their dialogue and their understanding. Beyond the personal, we also get into work that's been researched. It's important to do the personal work, but it's also important that it's not just personal. I mean, it's not just people's personal stories or thoughts, but that when we talk about this work, we have to be able to support it with scholarly work that's been done before. Because you will be discredited very quickly if you don't. I also try to make connections to the literature we're reading, to the theoretical frameworks, to work that's been done before.

Others have also placed significant emphasis on the idea of fostering a sense of community towards navigating moments of tension. Again much of that includes giving space for the students' voices, and ultimately using their awareness and understanding of each other to diffuse it. Manuel put it this way:

> This sense of building communities I think is very important, where people can learn from each other, where they accept or they listen to each other, so that when you do have a discussion that is sensitive, and could have potential to explode, you have some kind of foundation there to help people talk to each other, so there is less animosity.

Still, he is careful to acknowledge that as race talk continues, there is often need to activate mechanisms that can control it, given the realities of allocated class time relative to the tendency for race talk to be often ongoing and lengthy. For him this often means setting limits via time management, creative summarizing and academic references:

> You've got to be good at summarizing and bringing out the good points that came out of that short time that you had to talk about race, and the conflicts that arose —and to say "look this is part of the discussion, and what I would say to you is that the dialogue on race never ends…" I think there are times when you have to give it a time limit – bring them back to text.

Georgia cited both the importance of community and of maintaining control by making

connections to scholarly sources or even students' previous statements, when their

personal opinions on race tended to dominate:

> I will have a central textbook that I use that has supplemental reading. So I refer
> people back to that and I ask, "[could you] go back and look at such and such?
> Read it." Tell me how that shifts into what you've just written or said. Justify
> your thoughts through the reading. You're confronting the reading, challenging
> the reading, or you're affirming the reading, or extending the reading. Tell me
> where you fit in that. I will bring up examples…nine times out of ten I can go
> back and find something that that person said themselves and ask them to justify
> this conduit with this conduit over here.

For Sandra and Anita, both describing themselves as "big on building

community," being inclusive also yields varied reactions that they have to be ready for;

goals in talking about race remain the same nonetheless. Sandra explained it this way:

> Sometimes I'll get more resistance, other times I pushback a little, so I have to be
> responsive to who's in front of me and that might mean I have to do some
> individual things – more office hours to have some conversations. So my
> approach changes based on the student but my goal is always the same because
> racism, you know, [we've] got to get that out of the way!

Like Sandra, several others also found themselves having to quickly adapt or change

when their attempts to be inclusive resulted in the kind of resistance that could leave

some students feeling marginalized or offended. These participants would sometimes

extend their conversations outside of class as part of the inclusive with control balance.

As Cathy shared, "sometimes I would email somebody in class and, and explain [more]. I

don't want them to think that I let them down, or that I didn't advocate for them as much

as I should, and usually that somebody is a person of color." Youjin has even gone the

extra mile – literally. At one point, her students were involved in a small group project

that included discussing obesity as highest in African Americans. Youjin felt compelled

to connect more with the one African American that belonged to the group, after sensing the individual may have become uneasy due to the discussions:

> Every time we had to speak about obesity… that made it a difficult situation for her. So the only way I could rectify this--I could not say, "hey, you have to choose a different [group]--"the only way that I could do it was to develop a personal relationship with the student. So I ended up actually giving her a ride home multiple times. I had to develop the relationship also, so that she could think that she has somebody to work with, she has somebody in a higher place in her circle of friends. It was important for her, and it is another way of working with my students so that they don't feel marginalized inside.

Balancing inclusiveness with control for the mutual benefit of the learning community is a critical strategy to use when tense moments arise, faculty agree. Still, some caution that it is even more important to be sensitive, as early as possible during times in which stories and opinions are expanding beyond the scope of the discussion. They caution that not doing so could escalate the difficulty of the dialogue. Manuel, for example, illustrated how this might happen:

> You do allow the student to verbalize… [but] some students go on and on and on, and a lot of other voices also speak up so that we begin to see the different elements that come into play. [For example,] I think at times African American students also bring their own perspective and other students may have difficulty understanding some of their perspectives because they don't have a clear sense of maybe historical oppression or generational grief or anger that people might be carrying. The key too is, you don't want to get into too much of the psychological part, which can be a problem.

In line with this idea, faculty like Youjin would later emphasize "if it's too much for my students of color, I have to stop and bring it back." Maintaining control like this in the midst of fostering inclusiveness seemed a balancing act that depended on whether or not participants were fully present.

Model Full Presence, but Maintain Some Distance

Participants frequently communicated a need to always be "fully present" during difficult discourses on race, but yet maintain some distance from what obtained during those moments. To be "fully present" or to "fully engage" all the senses was critical, but there was an equal acknowledgement that this was difficult—Anita, for example noting that such a stance could "wear on you" over time. Hence, putting some element of "distance" or "space" between themselves and the discourse has helped create an effective balance in doing race work. Anita's reflection on being "full presence" over the years led her to this conclusion:

> It gets to you on some levels. I think it affected me… but I think what I had to do was figure out, how do I deal with that? What do I take? What do I personalize and what do I not personalize? Therein lies a really important thing. You cannot get personally hurt by a lot of what is said, because if you are hurt, it shuts communication down. You have to be able to come to a stop with yourself.
> In seeming answer to her questions, and agreement with her conclusion, several

other participants related the diverse ways in which they practiced full presence, yet created space between themselves and race talk. Sandra defined being fully present as,

> learning to read people's body language, their facial expression and so forth …because it's so complicated, and they babble over what they say because sometimes it's the first time they say it. So to be fully present is active listening to see in that five minutes or ten minutes, what that person is saying - and to be able to pick up on the thread to give it back to that person directly so that the community can learn. That means I have to watch eyes, I have to read the body - I also have to read the room - the silence…being fully present is an embodiment-- I have to know what surroundings I'm in and be able to react accordingly.

At the same time, when a dialogue has been particularly difficult, she consciously avoids looking for personal validation, or taking things personally:

> I see it as not something against me, it's the stage that they're at. So if I understand that this work is complicated and nuanced, and that people will progress and regress at their multiple stages…it's like the stages of death, denial, acceptance, anger. If I understand that people are going to go through that, then I

can't take it personally, and I don't. They're welcome to like me. They don't have to, but you know what? Liking is not helping those children that have racist teachers, so it's not about me. It's never been about me.

Like her, others felt that staying true to the overall goals of the class and not looking to take dialogues personally, convert or convince their students were effective ways to remain even-keeled at times when they became weary in engaging a full presence. According to Anita:

I'm not trying to convince anyone at the moment…I'm not here to force you to change your beliefs. I'm here to expose you to other things, and if your beliefs start to change [so be it], but if they don't, that's not my job.

According to Georgia:

One of the things I don't do is, I don't seek personal validation from students. I just put it out there and go with it from that standpoint, which is what I want them also to do, so I'm trying to model the type of sharing that I also would want them to do. You honor mine and I'll honor yours and we don't have to agree.

To this line of thinking, Manuel added:

[My goal is] to plant seeds in a sense, not to be able to take them to the *end* of that discussion even… you will never sit down and complete a dialogue on race in that one sitting. You have to be open to continuing the dialogue…on and on and on.

For Youjin and Sandra in particular, being fully present is hardly one sided, and something they demand from their students as well. While Sandra encourages them to "write for full presence," highlighting things that may prevent that, Youjin explained that for her:

[Being] fully present means that engaging myself in the conversation of a student, which means that I'm not necessarily lecturing over their heads but I am part of the conversation. I'm questioning students. Students also all know they're allowed to question me. So that's fully present from my part, but I cannot be totally present if all students are not fully present…it's very interactive.

Further, she shared,

I have to have a sense of the pulse of where students stand. There are White students who have developed extremely advanced and sophisticated notions of race, so I also have to develop students as an ally to that conversation. I have to be

highly alert - read whether it's becoming a little too much for my students of color.

A result of that intense interaction, Youjin says, can also be "tiring." While like others she maintains a distance given her belief that if a student is resistant, it often means s/he is not advanced in racial literacy, she has also chosen to maintain her distance by being realistic about the "hard" nature of race talk, and staying positive. In this way, she has been able to let things go more easily:

> My way of handling it is that once I finish teaching, I don't dwell on it very much, because I'm fully present…my classes generally never go really poorly, because I don't see it that way, because it is a hard talk to give…after students talk about the different aspects, different perspectives, the difficult things, then I am fine again.

She also believes that having not had the lived experience of a U.S born person of color, her immigrant status may have helped her "create some space" between herself and the dialogue, so that she does not "take it on" to the extreme on a personal level.

Two participants, though not explicitly referring to "distance," did allude to measures used for keeping distance between themselves and the rigorous moments involved in difficult dialogues on race. For example, Cathy reiterated throughout our interactions that humor and student voice were key for her during very tense times, because then she could depend on her knowledge of the learning community for help, and herself, step away from the discourse momentarily. As she outlined,

> It's much more effective to have a joke…[or]it's nice when you have a diverse group and you know people well enough that you know it's okay to turn around and ask someone else a question that you know the answer you'll get, and that it would contradict [those resisting] – and they would accept.

Similarly, Victoria often opted to let tense moments play out, particularly if they involved students of color, because she lived in the consciousness that she was not an expert on handling those moments, given her racial identity.

Despite the varied approaches to balancing being fully present and maintaining distance, participants have consistently articulated that efforts to remain fully present are far reaching. According to Sandra,

> I am the instructor, so I have to become fully present and as a result I'm usually exhausted at the end of the class, but exhausting in a lifting way because in taking on the discourse I can see that people are opening their minds and making connections…they start making connections about inequality and that is a powerful thing.

Georgia conceded by observing that:

> I think that there are just a lot of opportunities when you're really attentive because that's when you can make connections. So as I'm helping students to make those connections, I think of negotiation because negotiation is about movement…. there are a lot of moving parts and you need to understand how one movement impacts another movement…you must have an awareness of what's going on, and so I think that frames both a hypervigilance to it and a hyperconsciousness to what's going on.

As Anita would remind all, to complete and balance this strategy, "you have to be able to separate yourself from what has happened to some degree." This kind of balance seems to work well in tandem with patience and timing.

Model Patience, but Maintain Good Timing

> When I start a class, I talk about my approach to teaching, and that I am going to challenge some of the things they say, and when we say things without even knowing. We talk about that, so I say, "don't take it personally." I don't challenge them the first two or three times, because guess what? There's no trust there. I'm a strong believer in creating a safe space for people, because if you create that safe space, guess what comes out of their mouth? Some of the worst [things] you've ever heard, and the only way I'm going to get to it--what people would call racial slurs--is for them to feel like they can say, "The people down the street

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do this, and I think they're this." If I say to them "don't say…" or if I get in their faces too early, it closes the door.

I temporarily put it on hold, because guess what? Those same people by class three or four, do you think it's gotten better? It's gotten worse. Then I'll stop and say, "let's talk about something." By that time, I have assessed people, and I pick the person who I feel has a strong self-identity who can handle the feedback in front of people, and from then on I say, "I want you to do this with me, because I have this bad rap too." That's how it builds up.

In her description above, Anita explained how important it was for her to be patient with students, while at the same time exercising good timing in determining when to speak up or intervene for the benefit of the learning community. Though their individual contexts differed, most participants in the study spoke directly to this kind of balance as "essential" to effective racial discourses, particularly at times when they become tense. Several participants compared students' involvement in race talk as a "journey," and felt that it was necessary to give them the time they needed to process meaningfully, making necessary adjustments as the classes wore on. Sandra, for example, deliberately offers multiple instructional strategies as she sees fit, in her bid to encourage processing time:

I don't talk and talk and talk. What I find is there has to be a balance. I kind of intersperse things - that's what I find to be effective. I think most students would love to come to the class to be lectured to, and that lets them off the hook. I always tell my students "don't play graduate school with me. This is not an academic exercise. Don't try to give me the answer that I want." People need time to process, because if it's the first time someone is really seeing that they're racist, or for the first time a person of color is seeing that they're prejudiced, people need time to write and to talk it through. So I always give the writing time, and socratic circles or dialogue - in the middle of talking about a particular context and text, survey so you will always find in my class activities around discourse and around writing because people need time to process this stuff.

In a similar way, participants like Youjin, Manuel and Cathy have found it useful to time the introduction of content surrounding difficult race and racism issues carefully.

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As indicated in Youjin's case narrative, her use of "cracking" for broaching race talk with other forms of discrimination and oppression first, works well most times. Cathy and Manuel engage in a similar practice, and Cathy describes its benefits this way:

> We talk about gender, class and race … it's broken up by areas of discrimination instead of race is all here, and so sometimes you can get people to listen through the gender… Sometimes I can get it through others [like] sexual orientation. I mean if I can get people really resistant… If I can get them to get any kind of structural oppression that has built in oppression in whatever area, then that opens the door to thinking about White privilege.

Manuel added a similar observation:

> When we start dialogues around entitlement and privilege, particularly White privilege, a lot of the conflict begins to arise because students don't want to differentiate between my privilege and your privilege and who's privileged and why is there privilege related to race. I think they have an easier time looking at class and economic disparities as opposed to looking at race and entitlement.

Cathy, in fact, has had to adjust her timing of White privilege content several times in the past if, based on her knowledge of the learning community, she feels that it might need to be delayed, or alternately, moved into the discourse earlier. Even during interactions for this study in mentally assessing her upcoming class, she mentioned "I may leave that for later." Noting that White privilege is often "the most difficult" part of racial dialogue, she also reflected on a critical incident in which a White female student rudely pushed back at her, denying any acceptance of the concept. Cathy concluded that the incident made the class "very tense," but she did walk away with a valuable lesson concerning patience and timing:

> When this incident happened, I tried to ease in to bringing up White privilege. I assigned many readings on the multiple institutionalized racist norms in US culture before I broached the subject of White privilege. Now I start with it. Until White privilege is accepted as fact, I've found, students find a way to dismiss readings about discrimination.

Like these facilitators, Isabel has also found it important to balance a strong sense of patience with good timing. In her reflection, she observed that patience and timing are a work in progress, but a necessary one to preserve the kind of community she constantly strives for. As she indicated in her case narrative, "if we are a classroom community, my voice shouldn't be the only one responding, so I try sometimes to wait and to see how other people in the room are going to respond." She later illustrated an incident that would amplify how she might engage in this balance during race talk:

> I had a student the first class who was introducing himself and the language he used was something like, "so I don't see color, I try not to see color anymore." Sort of a colorblind discourse. Even though that wasn't quite what he meant, but he said it. Then, later on in the class someone was talking about that, and was saying when people say this colorblind stuff, "that's BS." So I was like, "okay." I was sitting there thinking, "so do I say something?" Because like in that particular class that I was talking about, there were people really challenging each other and pushing and that sort of thing. So I debated – I let it go a little longer and he actually responded, explaining what that term meant for him.

In addition to this, participants highlighted that balancing patience and timing was as relevant to them, as practitioners and scholars, as it was to their students. Several indicated the need for those doing this work to have patience with self in learning to facilitate difficult racial dialogues better over time. For example, Anita concluded one interview with her own words of advice concerning this balance: "What I would tell a new person is that it'll take a while for you to develop…it doesn't happen overnight." Similarly, Georgia added, "I think it's not something that, for some people they have it. It's just natural…you learn it as you go along." Others like Isabel, wished they knew long before now, that "tomorrow…you'll get better and it's okay to be a little patient with yourself."

Balancing patience with good timing is a critical strategy for working through

racial discourses. Based on the very nature of the strategy however, faculty have come to

realize that race talk difficulty may not be diffused right away, or within the confines of a

single class session. As Youjin recalled, using patience and timing sometimes extends

beyond the life of the course:

> I remember this way to ease the tension that was not happening right at the
> moment in the class. One student who was male and was White kept getting to me
> and I kept trying to engage him, and then I ended up taking more than half of the
> class several times in responding…but interestingly after he graduated years later
> we still kept this going. It was [like a] contest. He remembers me, I remember
> him and we have a conversation. So I guess that's another way of us solving the
> tension – it does not always happen in the classroom right away, but I think
> somehow when students are transformed gradually.

As faculty exercised a careful balance between patience and good timing, they often

became doubly mindful of the way they were communicating.

Model Careful Communication but Never Default to Silence

In their descriptions of difficult race talk, participants never failed to point out the

extreme importance of careful communication. All felt constantly conscious of how, and

to whom they were communicating. "With good communication," Anita noted, "you can

deconstruct a lot of misinformation." Simultaneously, all embraced a zero tolerance

approach to silence, as a choice in responding to students—though a few questioned the

place of silence at times. Participants seemed to pay particular attention to several key

elements of communication: remaining affirming in tone, asking questions, listening; and

employing effective non-verbal cues.

As if summarizing the sentiments of the study's participants, Georgia declared

"silence is not an option." Yet, she has realized over time that when she wants to respond

to a student, the wrong tone, and choice of words could prove detrimental. "I want to try to step in in a way that honors students," she concluded. Thus, her choice is often to communicate a tone of affirmation first, while at the same time offering the student an option through inquiry, to revert to the main point, or hear others' voices. She might say for example, "I appreciate what you're saying, but can you maybe talk about *this* [instead]?" In doing so, she said, "I now redirect or allow space for somebody else."

Others have also found it useful to affirm and redirect in communicating. Youjin, explained it this way: "I have to affirm students so that they can be also comfortable asking more questions, so it's a tone of "I want to learn more about that experience," rather than "I disagree." Likewise, Victoria stressed that communication with students during race talk is "a listening partnership," one in which she is trying to equally learn, "not trying to replace the student's vague notions with my clear notions of what I think," she observed. For Anita, affirmation is key and in everything she cautions, "don't ever embarrass students or humiliate them."

Some participants emphasized the need for a conscious awareness of voice volume in communicating. According to Manuel, student resistance often means, "there are other voices that want to silence [the discourse] and say we are all humans--which we are, but they are ignoring the dynamics at play." While he rejects the idea of remaining silent, he has also elected to affirm students by listening to them carefully—akin to the kind of "careful listening" that Isabel spoke of in her case narrative. Then, he uses inquiry and gauges his voice carefully – approaches he partly attributes to philosophical beliefs:

> I enjoy listening to students, then asking powerful questions that get them going "oh I never thought of that," but I don't enjoy shouting them down because I want to make a point. I can make my point without yelling. I mean I certainly have seen, professors who do engage in very loud arguments [about] what they believe

in, but again you know if you come from a social construction point of view, you're always speaking from a particular lens.

Sandra also spoke to the need to remain even-keeled in volume and tone when communicating with students during difficult dialogues on race—her firm and personal belief in the need to love her students, governing her response. In low tones, she shared:

> I do take a loving approach and a loving stance; I am really very loving. And I think if you want to talk about how you carry the body mentally, oftentimes, I don't talk any louder than this. You will never hear me yell. You will never hear me scream.

As part of balancing careful communication with rejecting silence, participants also agreed that being willing to vary how they communicated with different students was an effective practice. Anita, for example reflected on how her own tendency to engage in race talk with "passion" (that is, with much animation and physical gesture) could be read negatively by some:

> If I'm talking to a person of color, it's a great thing. If I'm taking about a subject that has nothing to do with race, it's an awesome thing. But if I'm talking about this subject with White people it is seen as "Holy crap! She's trying to convince me!"

Subsequently, "accommodating" in order to avoid shutting down race talk has worked for her time and time again. Though she also feels accommodating is tiring, and is often negative more so for persons of color, she believes everyone should try to do so, particularly with hard dialogues like race:

> I think of Glenn Singleton and his courageous conversations…he is pretty direct, but to me there's a spectrum of approaches. So, what I may say to is going be different from what he or somebody else may say…. I vary that based on who I'm working with…we have to learn to accommodate.

She also gave a useful example of what this might look like, once she has had adequate knowledge of her students:

I have this African American student and when I'm with her in my classroom if she's separate, I tell it like it is. And she'll tell me – don't mince words. I want the truth. But if I'm talking to a Latina or an Asian and I'm not stereotyping but based on what I've seen of them in my classroom and how they communicate…and part of good teaching is assessing and understanding where your students are at along the spectrum so I'm going to work with them that culturally I try to match as much as possible. Am I going to do direct with some of my Asian students? No! but I had last summer who was Filipino – and she talked about racism, all the racism and from people of color to her too…and she's very direct but yet maybe not as direct as probably the woman from Kenya – and [she was] not as direct as the African American, so to me you have to be able to accommodate.

For her too, silence is hardly ever an option:

You cannot just allow things to slide by because you've condoned it…that's the bottom line. Everybody in there knows what's going on so if you don't say anything and you're working in a program where you're supposed to be then you've just condoned it.

In addition to this, participants often noted that making the choice to avoid silence, alongside the kind of careful communication that would avoid shutting students down, never came easy--especially in the earlier parts of their careers. For several, going against their natural responses was a learned habit, and sometimes painful too. Cathy's critical incident response to a White student who lashed out against the concept of White privilege, illuminates the kind of internal turmoil and painstaking effort faculty often endure in their efforts to communicate effectively and ultimately keep dialogue open:

With as much kindness in my voice as I can manage against the fairly venomous remarks and attitude, I talk about Anderson and Hill-Collins concept of a "Matrix of Domination," affirm the student's accomplishments, and share my own story of similar struggles adding—as difficult as life has been at times (with an example), I have to recognize that if I were an African-American woman, there would be additional obstacles—and I honestly don't know if I could have taken one more straw without my back breaking.

Though faculty widely agreed on avoiding silence, some seemed more hesitant to completely dismiss it as a form of communication that might help, rather than hinder in working through difficult dialogues on race. As Sandra noted "some silences mean

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people are thinking; some silences mean people are resisting." Similarly, Victoria wondered if her silence, though often driven by fear, actually worked for her – promoting trust in students. Though Isabel feels silence is mostly negative, she had lingering thoughts about its place—sometimes because of uncertainty, but often, in case it might be needed alongside strategies like balancing patience with timing:

> Sometimes you have to let things go to another class session or you have to put something on hold, but generally, silence around something doesn't work. Even if you don't go into something in depth, acknowledge that it's there, that there are differences in the room about the issue, and that we're not going to have time to work on them. Just acknowledging it I think is better that not saying anything. But that's hard because sometimes I'm scared like of what to say. Also, for the students it's a journey, and so sometimes it's okay to leave that tension hanging there…because maybe they just need to grapple with it for longer. So, that's a fine balance with the silences.

Finally, two participants—Youjin and Manuel--explicitly referenced physical movement in the classroom as an effective means of communicating and diffusing tension. For example, Youjin stated: "moving around in the classroom is very symbolic for me…coming close to students means I am communicating with them, I am interested in what they have to say…[they] cannot get away from the conversation."

Draw on Prior Learning but Be Open to Teachable Moments

That an effective strategy for navigating difficult dialogue on race was balancing their use of prior learning experiences with classroom teachable moments in the "here and now." was frequently reported by participants. All referred to these two sources of learning as critical for diffusing race talk tension, noting that like other strategies, they would determine how to balance their uses, based on the immediate needs of their graduate student audience. As summarized by Georgia, for all faculty participants, "experience is the greatest teacher." Most learning experiences they have drawn on have

been informal. As well, most participants have been driven by a personal awareness that learning is continuous, and by a personal desire to learn how to work through race talk more effectively. Cathy outlined it this way:

> You don't stop learning when you leave the classroom. The classroom is only a place where we come together--well at least one place where we come together to talk to each other at least, when we're doing face-to-face classrooms. But there are many other places that we navigate. When we're in a particular department, we navigate with our colleagues, [and] sometimes those discussions can be even more challenging.

Participants like Anita, Isabel, Manuel and Youjin for example, would agree, citing informal and incidental learning experiences by way of interactions with colleagues that informed their way of doing things when moments got tense in their classes. Youjin, for example recalled how heated discussions with her campus peers promoted self-growth, while cementing ways in which she should guide her students during race talk:

> I think that it equipped me to speak frankly in class and also express the issue, [meaning], let's speak about it, instead of pushing it under the rug…especially when I interact with my African-American colleagues--because I honor their development in the world where they have been constantly bombarded with this notion that *you're not good enough*—that is on their mind when we talk. The female Black colleagues that I have…they tend to be very vocal and to be very assertive…but we have these relationships, not just kind of a – kind of passing, "*hello, how are you*," but it's a truly genuine relationship where we can fight.

Further, she concluded,

> I think that's a tremendous learning I have [had], and that's what I want my students to learn, that not talking about race is not going to make us better friends. [When we do] talk about that, we become better friends. So I think especially students who haven't developed a more advanced level of racial literacy, they tend to think that color-blindness will get them accepted among their friends of color. They are wrong and they have to learn that.

This idea of grappling with issues of race with colleagues was well documented by Victoria as she reflected on critical incidents surrounding her White learning group, and how she drew on those interactions in times of racial tension. Of learning the multiple balances involved in her practice of critical humility through the group, she explained:

> We've gotten together once a month since 1998. That's the one time for six White people to try to learn how to be better White people and, and this thing that we've come up with that we called critical humility is trying to get into balance, the willingness and the sense of responsibility to speak up when you think you should speak up about something that you see… we come every month and people share "well, this happened but I really blew it." Then we talk about it…and we develop questions that can help us plan for difficult conversations… we pick together.

While pointing out she wished she had learned this earlier in her career, she concluded:

> After all of these years of meeting once a month with this group--and we've been sort of onto the idea of critical humility for a decade-- it lives in me, the awareness. The awareness is always there and driving me -- I have a model in my mind of what I'm trying to do.

Others added an emphasis on the fact that the peer-to-peer interaction often formed meaningful mentorship relationships that they could draw on in time of need. Manuel, for example noted that:

> I think that the more I had an opportunity to discuss this issue with my peers and colleagues, the more I became comfortable. I knew that I had their support as well and I knew that they understood when I had difficult exchanges with students because they had those exchanges too… I've really learned from their modeling, from their way that they discuss the issues the way they brought in their own personal you know perspectives in it and they also encouraged me

Similarly, Georgia stated:

> Certainly mentors in the field… I went to them, I used them liberally. They were very open to helping me. Keeping that lock open with my peers and with my mentors was certainly part of it…played a central role.

In addition to learning from peers, colleagues and mentors, faculty indicated they often learned from other students in and around their campuses. Lessons received from Anita's students for example, have helped her fuel and maintain an accommodating stance:

> I've heard horror stories – and that's the other thing that's influenced me – huge influence! Students have said things to me personally, in course evaluations, or they've also taken the time to write, "I was in this other class and I won't open my mouth because I've watched what happened and I feel alienated." [As instructors of color], if we humiliate in communicating, the very thing that we say Whites are doing to us, we're doing to them. The whole idea is, we're supposed to bring each other together and try to dialogue and figure out how to work this out. So horror stories – or stories from other classrooms have really [influenced]. I said to myself "you know, I think I may have done some of those in the beginning," but now I've really tried to listen to students because I do believe 99% of people are well intentioned and they do want to learn, but this is such a scary topic for all sides.

For Sandra, learning from her students has meant adjustment to course content, so as to be less exclusive—though she does assert reasons for her approach:

> I've also heard "why are we always talking about the Black kids and the Latino kids? There are other kids, right?" So I have also learned over the years to be a little more inclusive. I've learned to add Native Americans because there are hardly any … I've gone into Takaki, and showing videos of other folks. But I tell them this has historically been a Black/White binary, and these are mostly who we see being discriminated against in education…we've got to be real.

While faculty draw on the wealth of prior learning experiences as necessary during race talk, they equally keep their eyes open for teachable moments, as the benefits are many. According to Cathy:

> Especially [in] classes around social justice, I learn from my students sometimes what they've gone through, what they've experienced and also how different people think and why they think the way they think, and so with every class I get a more complete picture of structural injustice and how it acts on people's lives.

Further, she added, "it helps students see other perspectives too." In line with this, Sandra

believes there is potential to learn from everything and make it a teachable moment,

though finding the balance remains tricky:

> I look at everything as a potential teachable moment; I do. Now, John Dewey
> would disagree. He might say that some kinds of moments don't teach you
> anything at all, but sometimes I think that that teaches you perhaps what not to do
> for that time. But it's difficult to say, because there are always people, and the
> context is really what is always shifting, and you can't always do the same thing
> and expect the same outcome. But I think that teachable moments are when
> people are on the cusp of related concerns...with people, there's always the
> potential of – I learn from you every time I talk to you…even our bodies are a
> text.

Anita's shared one of the more compelling critical incidents that reveal how

faculty try to remain open to identifying and using teachable moments. In it, she

explained the effectiveness of the strategy as well:

> We were at the end of the semester—the last class, and I was teaching my
> [diversity] class…we've talked about everything. This woman came up and said,
> "Oh Dr. Ybarras, I found this funny recording…can I show it to the class?" And, I
> should have said, "I haven't seen it. I want to see it first," but it was the last class
> and I'm not great at making split decisions sometimes, so I said "okay." and then
> afterwards I thought to myself "why did I say ok?" Anyway, she showed it. It was
> a really good Mexican comedian but she was making jokes about a Mexican. And
> that's the whole point – the biggest thing we've been talking about there's
> multiple realities…you can't stereotype! And the woman showing it was White…

> After 30 seconds, I said "please stop the tape." I didn't even get a chance to open
> my mouth, and a Mexican student said "can I ask you why you showed that? Why
> did you show that tape?" And she said "because I thought it was funny." And she
> said, "Do you realize I'm from Mexico, and a couple of others are in here?" And
> the woman, to her credit, said "I didn't even think about that. I'm so sorry"

> Twenty-five people are in this class and you could have heard a pin drop! And
> they go back and forth in front of 25 people. Then, a second woman spoke up and
> said "I have to agree, I feel the same way." So they have this incredible
> compassionate conversation, and at the end she tells them "who she's making fun
> of is what I lived, and it was very tough." And so she apologized to the class, and
> then I apologize to the class too. I send an email that says I'm sorry and I say to
> her in front of the class that I didn't know what was in it. I said "I learned my

lesson – sorry guys!" But it was incredible! It was an INCREDIBLE teachable moment. And then I went to each of the students and I said "you don't know how incredibly proud I am of you, of this moment".

Many of these teachable moments ultimately become the kinds of "prior learning experiences" that faculty draw from in tense moments. They often note too that learning this balance comes with maturity and experience. As Georgia put it, "as you grow older and you have more life experiences, if you are a wise person you learn from them…and so its trial and error; and you learn what works for you 'because it's such a personal negotiation." Like her, other participants believe it balancing the kinds of learning they can draw on takes "openness" and is something they make a decision to do. Isabel, for example is always looking for vehicles through which she can learn:

> [Race talk] is something that I want to learn more about. I feel like there's still more to learn. In fact, I have someone coming in to my class this semester. She does race-based work, and I'm like, "Hey, let's get together." I want to hear what she's doing and what works for her and how does she handle rough situations? In this work, you have to stay fresh because there's so much new stuff always coming out. That's why I go to conferences too.

Conference presentations were cited as one of the formal modes learning to better facilitate racial dialogue. However, this was not as frequently mentioned as participants reading scholarly articles and texts on history and on cultural groups that were different from their own. Sandra stated she had to become "a student of other forms of discrimination," racial identities in, while Manuel and Youjin would strengthen their knowledge to increase confidence of the unfamiliar. According to Youjin:

> Reading the anthropology literature about different world views and the U.S., has given me a knowledge base to use with my students. And I had to read a lot about this American history, about this prejudice and discrimination because when I came to the U.S. I had no idea about Japanese concentration camps or anything.

Balancing the use of varied learning experiences would become increasingly useful as faculty learned to handle their challenging emotional responses over time.

Research Question Two: Themes

Model Honesty, but Don't Reveal *Too* Much

> I think it's important to respond by even stating how you may be feeling, or how you're thinking, or by restating what you heard even. It's not enough to stay silent.

> *-Isabel*

Participants in the study indicated that being open and honest about personal emotions that they find challenging while in class, is not only useful, but a necessary strategy for them. However, they mostly agree that the degree, to which they should openly display their feelings, should vary. In particular, most have agreed that they have tried to be extra careful in managing anger—avoiding a display of it, for fear of negative repercussions during the dialogue. For example, Anita has learned "reign in her passion," in a bid to "bring [more] people to the table;" Manuel has remained firm on the fact that *"*in some cases, an over expression of those emotions like anger can shut people down," while Cathy indicated in her case narrative, that she "tries not to show anger unless it will do some good." With regard to other commonly experienced emotions such as fear, frustration, sadness and sometimes surprise, faculty have described themselves being engaged in a constant movement between the end of the extreme that is closer to silence, and the opposite end of the extreme that would display everything they felt emotionally.

Georgia explained how this balance might look in her classroom experience and the rationale behind the way she chooses to operate. Likening navigation to "negotiation" in the classroom, she posited that:

> I think negotiating [personal emotions] within that classroom dialogue is important as well. There is this place where I think that we have to be authentic and there's also a space where we have to understand that because of the power that you hold as the instructor, you can't always be authentic, authentic.

> You can't keep it 100%. I might need to keep it 92.5 percent because if I am very strongly opinionated about something, then students feel like they don't have the space to be them and stress their viewpoint, which is bad, if they're not a really strong-willed person. Some people just argue to death, but that's not the majority of the students. The others are pretty smart and they say "oh, this is how Dr. so and so feels about this, so I better say *this*."

> So there's a place where I don't think that faculty can always be 100 percent. You can't always keep it 100. I've got to step back and maybe keep it at 92 and a half because I need to have the space in here where I am still going to be able to grapple with you. If I shut that down because I'm so overbearing, then I'm not healing this discourse. I'm not helping you to grow. I'm not helping to meet the objectives of my class.

Being too "overbearing" in expressing personal emotional responses is something others also guard against. Manuel, for example stated that he has heard of faculty who become visibly angry and have the "you're going to listen to my point of view" kind of response. However, he continues to feel that while as an instructor in this work, he has a responsibility to be honest about how he feels, he has "just as much responsibility to not shut people down." Like him, maintaining a balanced display of emotions, is critical for instructors like Georgia--in order to prevent threats to students' honest disclosures, and to the safe learning community they aspire toward. Georgia, in particular had this explanation for how she feels this strategy preserves and protects the classroom space as a learning community:

I want to be a little bit of the space and you have a little bit of the space and this person has a little bit of the space and we fill up the space together. I think many times what happens is that consciously or unconsciously, faculty fill all of the space or they leave so little of it that the students can barely squeeze themselves in there. That's not how I want my classroom to look.

Other participants have learned to balance extreme vulnerability with minimal to moderate levels of displayed emotion, adding that this might help to preserve a sense of control and leadership, which in turn, makes students feel secure. This is evident in Isabel's reflection, for example. Like Georgia and others, she also advocates for a consciousness of the power that instructors hold in the discourse:

> Well I think it's a fine balance between being vulnerable to your students and exposing too much of your own emotional struggles. So I think – I don't know that I've gone there often--not censored myself--but I do think carefully because I think sharing too much with your class could be detrimental…students have to feel like they have a competent person that's leading the class discussion. I think that early on, it was really hard for me to figure out how to navigate that. And how to navigate that in a way that as a professor – and that carries with it certain power and privilege in the classroom – how to both be honest in my responses while also allowing space for students without shutting down dialogue.

Further, she explained how she has learned to do it more effectively:

> I try to accept the vulnerability and expose it. So if somebody says something and it is, or it could be offensive [to me], I could say something like, "It's really hard for me to hear that." Or, "when I hear that type of discourse, this is the reaction that I've had before." So it's an example I guess, for students that it's okay to do that without jumping on the other person's back, without saying, "You're awful, you're racist, you're this, you're that."

For faculty like Cathy and Sandra, the degree to which emotions are visibly displayed in class appear much higher. Though Cathy indicated that she "tries not to show anger," she feels she has reached the point in teaching for social justice where the letting her class knows how she honestly feels is, in most cases a risk she "is willing to take." In response to questions of why she would risk sharing when her emotions are hurt for example by

"tearing up", she stated, "when I try [to remove myself emotionally], I come off as haughty I think. I come off as not caring and above it all or something...that is not right that's not who I am." Still, she was careful to undergird her willingness to be emotionally vulnerable with careful responses:

> When I'm talking about these issues I'm careful. I try not to be didactic--like I said, if you put people off you lose them--so it's not bad you know, I'm not just totally confrontational and saying "this is the way it is."

Sandra related a similar outlook regarding an open expression of emotions, which for her is a combination of necessary modeling and being true to herself:

> Sometimes when it becomes too overwhelming, or something might have happened...I think of, for example, talking about the Michael Brown situation. I was distraught and I am who I am and so I come to the class and I start talking about how I'm feeling. It's also a way of modeling vulnerability for them, which is also part of my pedagogy, and I have cried. I have expressed anger. I have said, "I cannot teach right now for like the next 15 minutes. Here's the situation. Talk to the person next to you." I'm that vulnerable.

While most other participants appear to have moved from being too open to and vulnerable in their mind, to being more even keeled when their emotions were affected, Sandra's reflections revealed the opposite. For her, coming to a place of extreme openness along the continuum was a point of growth. In outlining that her approach is "not perfect," She explained it this way:

> [Earlier in my career], I do remember walking out and going to the bathroom and getting myself together. I mean since then, I have matured and I'm not afraid to cry or say whatever I say in front of people. I don't live in fear. I think that's what's important. I don't live in fear. I can't.

> Sandra's firm stance on not being afraid is one that was echoed by all participants.

They all expressed that at some point in working through race talk over time, they experienced varied levels of fear—particularly related to student repercussions. However,

they all maintained that (a) speaking up and/or being honest with one's own emotions in some way, was the best choice, despite the fear they felt; and (b) they all came to a point in their career where their passion for race and/or social justice became more important to them than fear. Manuel described it as coming to the place where he "cared more about the issues" than anything else. Cathy agreed, maintaining that,

> It's definitely a risky thing to do but I'm doing the best that I can and I think it's important to do it and their course evaluations are secondary to that…it balances out because a lot of people are grateful ... a lot of people learn a lot.

The "point" at which fear became secondary to participants, also varied. While for faculty like Victoria, "speaking up" in general, despite fear came over time in working through issues with her White group, other faculty like Anita experienced significant decreases in her levels of fear, on achieving tenure. Of note also is the fact that those faculty members who were untenured at the time of data collection for this study, spoke explicitly to rejecting fear, albeit for diverse reasons. Georgia, for example highlighted her work as "divinely superintended," while Sandra reflected on her fearlessness through the lens of history: "Can you imagine at the Selma marches? I'm sure they were afraid but were they stopped by their fear? Oh, my goodness! We wouldn't be voting, possibly." Fear, alongside other emotions faculty discussed, seemed to be addressed even more directly through processing with themselves and others.

Prepare *Self*, but Process with Community

Faculty have constantly felt that there needs to be a careful balance between preparing themselves mentally or subconsciously for the difficulties of race talk—and processing with individuals in whom they can find trust, safety, and understanding. A significant benefit to this strategy for them was being able to generate a list of things they

felt might challenge them emotionally, and planning some hypothetical responses. At the same time, processing with others has helped them learn from others' similar experiences and reflect critically on their own actions. Preparing self often involves mental reflection, self-talk—before and/or after a class in which participants' emotions have been heightened, as well as reflection through writing. Processing with others has involves a small set of persons who are willing to listen whenever needed.

For Georgia, a self-declared "proponent of self- talk," processing with the self may involve a confluence of ideas that she runs through to determine what her response might be in emotionally charged circumstances, and could be based on varied sources:

> It's running through an inventory of things that I might be personally challenged with– so I'm not completely taken off guard and you can get that through literature. You can get that through talking with other colleagues. You can get that even as a student from being in those spaces and knowing when this has happened so you have a sense as to what could happen…I kind of talk myself through these situations. If this happens, what will I say? And I have something prepared first. So then I'm not just coming out of that initial instinctual gut response, like saying "okay. But this is what *I* think."

She added that having others to process with was critical, especially with handling her feelings in the early years:

> The first couple of years in doing this, [my mentor] and I were in constant contact. "You won't believe what happened…this is just crazy…help me through this." All of that led to kind of how I approach and see things now.

Isabel, outlined a similar description, as she considers self-preparation as "managing or taking care of the self." Comparing it to the process of research itself, she noted that coming face to face with the reality of one's feelings, of the difficulty of race talk—as well as thinking more positively, takes some of the weight off:

> I just remind myself that this is hard work. It's like having these interviews – it can feel tiring. It can feel exhausting and you just do it anyway. I think reflecting and thinking on it, like during the drive home and deciding, is this something I

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need to pay attention to more? That's just the nature of the work, right? And I just tell myself – it's okay that I felt that way and next week's class will be different… I think being okay with the discomfort- like not panicking. Whatever reaction you have… owning that reaction. Not letting it unsettle you so much that you're really questioning your place, but understanding that that's part of a process. I think that's been really important

Further, she noted that processing with self, though critical, was often inadequate:

I think I'm a reflective person, so thinking about it on my own works. But if I only do that – if I stay there, that's usually not enough for me. I usually need to actually verbalize through it with my husband or with somebody.

Like Georgia and Isabel, others have pointed to the need for having a positive outlook concerning race talk, and learning to be honest and "okay" with the kinds of challenging emotions it could bring to them. Youjin explained her responses like this::

If something didn't go well, I need to learn from it, but I am not going to live with it again tomorrow. But that's how I live my life and that's how I deal with my emotions. So I am emotionally quite sort of I would say kind of in the middle ground. I'm not overly excited, I'm not overly-depressed. So it helps when the crisis or tension comes, generally I'm in the more of a "let's get down, let's work it out [mode]."

Explanations she gave later about handling emotions that challenged her, also suggested that viewing the discourse through the lens of student progress might prove effective too. As she explained:

Students change, transform for the current level of maturity in their racial awareness. That's not the end of the world and so I'm doing my best, so if they have not reached the level that I want them to be, then they will have other opportunities. I guess I'm generally the optimist in that sense.

Cathy cited a similar experience, noting a conscious awareness that she is "doing her best." "Every time the dialogue is really difficult you handle it as best you can and you drive home and you think about all these things [you] should've said, but that's just part of it," she noted with a smile. As well, she outlined that self-reflection on resistance and her emotions would often drive her to "work harder" and "find more sources."

Based on the data, a significant aspect of processing with self, evident was self-reflection that resulted in writing. Most faculty outlined this was an activity that they found freeing, and that gradually helped them to become more comfortable with emotional responses in the classroom. Much of the writing has been research based, or scholarly. According to Manuel, "one important element is to be able to write about it--to really sit down and grapple with those ideas in writing…my writing has helped me to be clear." Still, he followed up with constant references to community. For example:

> It's also your relationship with other faculty. Having people you can talk to, people that will understand when you say, "oh I have a student who said this, or did this" You must have mentors and allies you can go to and say, "what do you think?" My teaching experience has been about half those people close by with whom I could share honestly.

Likewise Anita noted that in her context, alongside "therapy," reflection and introspection" played a huge part in fueling the kind of writing that would address some of the inner conflicts and sadness she experienced when students would offer deficit perspectives concerning Latina/os:

> Therapy was a big part, reflection, introspection… there's so much understanding and misinformation, because what you see is not just what it means to you. I think in my research, my writing has really helped. I started doing research on teacher race, because people were like, "it's not that much of a problem." Uh, do you want to rethink your statement? Yes it is. It drives everything. That has really helped me, and it's helped my teaching, because I'm bringing that back into the classroom.

Similar to the others, Anita has found great value in processing with others, most often, co-instructors, mentors and allies in the field:

> I handled emotions by talking to [them] a lot and that's a good thing about having a co-trainer….we'd debrief – and some things would affect her differently than it would affect me. And then when I did training with [my White colleague], she gave me another perspective (not that she spoke for all the Whites in the room) but she was able to say "have you ever considered *this*?" and then I would say to her "have you ever considered *this*?"

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The importance of processing equally with self and others was no less emphasized by Victoria, as in her experience, self-reflection was absolutely critical to how she handled varied emotions, for example. Still, she noted self was not enough, and that being part of a White group, provided much needed "sanctuary:"

> You need yourself a sanctuary group. We say that all the time and at these workshops that these institutes that we do once a year, people come away from those institutes wanting a White group of their own because it's such a safety valve. You can feel that you're just there, you're a big botch on something but the fact that you have someplace to take it makes such a difference.

Sandra's sanctuary is a space in which she finds additional energy to keep going:

> I have a really good group of friends who also teach these types of courses and when I've had a really frustrating day, I get on the phone with them and we have talk therapy, and I get on that Facebook page and I post articles

Overall, faculty handled challenging personal emotions by being open and honest, but not revealing too much; and by preparing themselves but also processing with their respective communities. Though all were consistent in doing this, the levels to which they did so varied. Two participants – Sandra and Cathy, were more vocal about visible displays of emotion than others, as an important way of staying true to who they are. With regard to divergences among faculty, one participant – Manuel, added the strategy of physical movement, an effective one for him in times when his own emotions became challenging:

> I try to release some of that feeling by moving around the room and not remaining up front or sitting… the classroom is a laboratory. You can move around, you can get closer or farther away from the conflict in a certain way.

Another highlighted spirituality as her key safe space for dealing with emotions:

> When I get really frustrated, I go to God in prayer and ask for wisdom. I ask God to help me have a breakthrough, and then sometimes, I know it sounds really

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strange--but sometimes something will happen. God will send me something, a video clip, or I'll come across something that is exactly what I need in order to have a conversation with my class.

Research Question Three: Themes

Responses for this research question indicated that two types of identities were most influential to participants' navigation of difficult discourses on race: their cultural identities and their personal identities. Further to this, faculty found that the relationship between these identities, and the act of working through or navigating race talk was a reciprocal one; not only did their identities impact navigation, but the process of navigation itself had some impact on their identities. As such, I have organized the findings for this research question into three themes – namely *Maximizing the Culturally Minor, The Personal is Professional, and Navigation as Personal and Professional Development Tool.*

Maximizing the Culturally Minor

Participants made connections to elements of cultural identity the most in discussing their navigation of difficult race talk. In particular, all suggested race and/or ethnicity as possible reasons for both the challenges and strategies involved in their facilitation of race talk. Several highlighted intersections of race and gender. While faculty of Color felt that their racial/ethnic identities presented multiple, and unique challenges when compared with their White colleagues, White faculty in the study differed in their thoughts on the kind of impact their racial identity had. However, all participants indicated an understanding of how to best maximize elements of their cultural identities towards working through difficult race talk. Though race and/or

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ethnicity remained a primary focus amongst participants, two participants highlighted

social class as a salient identity that related to navigation, and two maintained that their

identities as Christians helped govern their approach. As Sandra explained:

> I am a Christian and I think that helps me continue to look at my students in love and not in hate. I'm frustrated with them, yes. I get angry with them but I never hate them for how they think. And so my Christian values, the belief that love does change, and that is very much in my pedagogy. That also helps me.

Faculty of Color expressed a constant awareness of students' perceptions of them

as having a hidden agenda, or students questioning their approach to the content and

strategies used during race talk. Georgia and Sandra as African American faculty, were

the most vocal about this. Sandra's frustration was obvious in her initial response

concerning identity: Oh, my God….well, first of all, to be a Black woman in the

academy, it's just such a mess, but thank God, there's research on that. It's insidious. I

don't even know where to begin with that!" In addition, she explained:

> I know that there are some things that people say to me that they would never say to a White male professor-- never. I know it. I've had conversations with students where I've called them on that, "You know what? I'm going to repeat what you just said and I want to ask you would you have said that if I were a White male."

Like her, Georgia acknowledged that coming into a race talk space as Black and female

had unique challenges that were well documented:

> I think that certainly being African American and female in that space creates a platform for people to feel justified in questioning and challenging me, which I know they don't do with my White female colleagues, or my male colleagues…_ for whatever reason there's not the same level of respect, not by the majority but it only takes a couple of students who are going to have that disposition to really create an [negative] atmosphere in the classroom.

> For most, and the literature would support this, that they've not had African American females in positions of authority, so they had no reason to assume that we have a knowledge set that is greater than theirs, and so when you present

information that is contrary to what they have come to know, they feel that you are discredited or that you have an agenda and this is promoting what goes on in the classroom. They don't assume that the White male has an agenda. [They assume] "this is just the information that we need to know."

Despite the challenges, these participants have found ways to maximize their minority identities during race talk. While Georgia feels that this has only helped her remain firm about her lived experience and learn to "agree to disagree," Sandra has used her perceived limitation as a teachable moment in calling out students about their comments to her. Specifically, she might query whether they would have made similar comments to a White faculty member. She cautions however that this is always framed with love and only occurs after her classes have developed a strong sense of community:

> I've done this several times. I've done it in private settings, and I've also done it publicly, because we do a lot of kind of fishbowling in Socratic circles. After the exchange, then I will open up to the class, and I will say, "Well, what did you hear?" And often, it's kind of like a shock. You know, they kind of, "*[Gasp]* "No, I didn't mean it that way." And then I just let them kind of talk it through. And then it is often the reflection. If it's done publicly, in the classroom, it's the reflections from the students – almost like the two of us were in a fishbowl, that very tense moment. It would just be an incident in the class, and that student can walk out and feel embarrassed. But when it is fully made into a teaching moment, where the people in the community are pulled in, much like Native Americans-- like a teaching circle, then it becomes different. Then you are actually helping to teach your fellow people – right? In the classroom, with your own – whether you consider it a mistake, a slip of the tongue, or something you really felt. And then it becomes a learning space – right? And not just me against the student.

Other faculty of Color— Manuel, Youjin, Anita and Isabel have also acknowledged their constant awareness of a multiple minority statuses. Unlike the study's African American participants however, they have suggested the racialized experiences undergirding their racial/ethnic identities are a tool that they can use to (a) reach both Whites and persons of color in different ways, or to (b) maintain a mental/subconscious distance between themselves and the tensions of race talk.

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Manuel, as a "man on the margins" and Asian immigrant, explains his constant awareness this way during classroom race related dialogue:

> I live with a glass ceiling. I've always left feeling like, no matter how creative I am, how well I do, how well I can teach a class, or how well I can discuss a subject, there is that sense I may not be able to go as far as I want...we're not part of the center where all the discussions and all the power and all the decisions get made – even in the multicultural things we discuss, things about race, we're on the margins.

Yet, he has come to know it as "a place of strength," since an immigrant identity has offered for him a "code switching" that benefits him during navigation. For example, he has been able to relate his story to other persons of color who may be outside the Black/White dichotomy. Youjin described her immigrant status as being helpful to both herself and her students. She shared an illustration of how this might manifest, particularly when intersected with her social class identity:

> My immigrant identity helps me to look at race in a more complex way, as a more complex concept...also, because I grew up in Korea as a privileged person, from a very educated background and was very successful, I connect all of that...I know what it is to be very privileged--then coming here and being married to a White man, and watching the unequal treatment between him and me...these complex experiences have afforded me a chance to look at race in a very conceptual and abstract way to help our students to kind of remove themselves from only being their very, very personal experience and looking at other experiences.

As an added benefit, she maintained that her racial/ethnic identity provided flexibility and a sense of "in between ness" that helps her maintain a useful distance:

> I'm not a U.S. born Asian-American or Korean-American which means that I can distance myself from the very core sort of American-ness... my identity as an immigrant allows me to put some space between me and U.S. born or between me, the U.S. born Korean-American, U.S. born Asian-American. It affords me a little bit of that, or allows me to transcend that label...
>
> Half the time I feel that I am actually in a good position between White and Black. Because the White students don't see me as Black, therefore they don't

necessarily see that I am pushing the Black agenda on them. My Black students don't see me as White, so that they don't necessarily see that I am pushing the White agenda. My Black students don't come in thinking that "oh, here is another White teacher and I will be doomed." So my point is, I don't come in with that baggage. When I talk about racial issues my White students don't think that I am Black. But at the same time when they hear me speaking about these privileges and so on, of course my students are beginning to see, "okay, she's a minority and now she's pushing for the minority agenda."

Latina faculty Anita and Isabel also articulated examples that were congruent with the notion of "in between-ness." As outlined in her case narrative, Anita referred to her racial/ethnic identity as "chameleon" like. Based on her appearance, and as a second generation Mexican American, she has neither been fully accepted by Mexicans or Whites. She outlined that it has influenced her creation of a "middle space" position necessary for accommodating different voices during race talk. She explained its benefits like this:

> My goal is to get people to the table and then to get action, and if I alienate them constantly, I don't see action…I believe everybody needs to accommodate. If I had that kind of style, where I expect people to listen to me, then I feel like you get this wall up, and this wall up, and I don't feel like there's any middle space or even a safe space to be able to talk about it.

In the same way, Isabel noted that how people perceived her racially or ethnically has in itself made room for race talk in multiple spaces:

> I don't want to deny or be ignorant of the privilege that US citizenship brings...and that I don't have a strong accent...all of those privileges--that people tend to seem me as White--that some are surprised when they find out I'm Puerto Rican. I don't want to deny the privilege that gives me and even the ease of integration into social settings that that can provide, including my graduate classes.

Like other faculty of Color however, she has found herself constantly being aware of her self-identification as a Latina scholar—an awareness which sometimes provokes self-doubt:

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I think having more students of color for them having a Latina professor... for some White students, my identity could be -- I don't want to say threatening, but there's always that question in your mind as a person of color, are they... invalidating what I'm saying because I'm a person of color?

White participants in the study were, like faculty of Color, keenly aware of their cultural identities and their impact on race talk. For Victoria, being "White" was a limiting for her in terms of understanding how to facilitate race related dialogue. This often resulted in fear and a reluctance to speak up when needed. For Cathy, being working class remained the most salient identity influencing race talk. According to her, it has helped her maintain high levels of empathy for racial injustice and others' experiences of oppression:

As far as class goes, I think because I come from an area and a people who have been marginalized for a long time and still are, that this helps me relate in discussing issues of structural inequality. So I know... it's not just academic. That skill set is helpful all the way. I think it's an asset.

Still, she speculated on the multiple influences her racial identity might have had:

Sometimes I think it's easier for me to be able to talk about White privilege for example. I have a predominantly White class. Sometimes I think they can take it a little better from me. There are times when I think that it's helpful, then there are times when I'm sure people of color in my class wonder about the authenticity of me talking about issues of race...but I've never taught as a person of color so I can't be sure...it's always kind of a dance.

This "dance" of uncertainty was shared amongst several participants. Their responses about the main ways in which their cultural identities have impacted race talk often concluded with other possibilities. For example, while Sandra noted that there may be students at her PWI, who intentionally "take classes with [her] for a different experience," and conversely "those who may be unnerved by her presence," Youjin observed the following:

Both Black and White students tend to open up because I am Asian - and also Latino and Asian students…they sort of relate to me in that capacity where they can also be part of feeling comfortable enough to be part of the conversation because they don't think I come in with an agenda. That's the positive side. On the other hand, because I was not raised in the U.S, it's very possible that my students, especially Black students may not trust me… and White students may think that I am an immigrant, therefore I am not fully grasping the racial issues.

Despite the perceived relationship between faculty and aspects of their cultural identity in navigation, in general, the personal and professional were clearly intertwined.

The Personal *is* Professional

I met with a student last Saturday, where there were several doctoral students with their professors in the room, and there was a White woman who was talking about how she has to be very careful about the things that she does, because she doesn't want the students to revolt; she doesn't want them to be upset with her. She's untenured. In other words, she has to teach to the comfort level of her students. And I have to tell you, I've never felt that.

And I want to know why….

I think it's how I was raised. I think I see it in some ways as an activist. When you think about Bloody Sunday – and I'm not in any way equating that I'm putting my life on the line in that way--but when you think about civil rights activists, here and abroad, we've got nothing to lose but our lives and everything to gain. So, in some respects, I've had nothing to lose but my job. Would it have been important? Yes. I need to take care of myself, but I can get another job. And so, for me, it's the "what's at stake here, or what's the potential of what can happen?"

In the illustration above, Sandra spoke explicitly to the kinds of issues that drove her engagement with difficult dialogues on race—and how much they engendered strong levels of boldness in her, even as an untenured professor. Though not every faculty member professed similar levels of boldness in the face of untenured status, all did outline that they have been driven to continue working through race talk in academia, because of a strong personal passion concerning the importance of race talk. They shared

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that this passion is inextricably linked to who they are at the core--or to elements of their

personal identities. Such a passion has often been shaped by their lived experiences.

According to Manuel, for example:

Some students will say, well, we're all human beings, let's look at our humanity…we all have the same color blood. But my identity, my experience as a citizen in the United States compels me to discuss some things that I feel, because it is a reality that is not necessarily the center.

Similarly, Anita concluded that what has kept her engaging students in what can be a

"scary topic" is the combination of things that have impacted her personally, throughout

the course of her life and career. According to her:

I was judged so many times throughout my life and I feel like people didn't really understand me. To some degree I think we're all judged. I think it's not just me – we're all judged. Second, my educational background. So there's two strong threads that go through my life – the "less than" and the "you're not like the rest of them." Third, I worked [in disability], and it was fascinating to me that people were so quick to judge, and that there was only one right way to do something – their way… that imprinted it on me.

Further, she explained:

What people need to realize is – they don't even realize what they're saying, and it hurts people's feelings. We don't see the world the same way. So someone to use the term wetback? I don't appreciate that. My parents did come over. Couldn't you just say migrant, immigrant, or person who's moved across? There are other people that come across, Whites, that same river, and you don't call them that…this whole idea of accommodation is not just people of color having to accommodate. But what they don't understand is, every day we wake up, we accommodate. I'm still trying to make some colleagues understand that when I send an email, it takes me an hour to write when it would have taken [them] five minutes because they don't have to worry about the political, and how someone's going to perceive their English wise….believe me, I accommodate every day of my life. And to me that's White privilege.

In line with this, several participants linked personal passion for engaging race

talk to family. Isabel's response to what has continued to influence her engagement with

race talk was almost immediate: "because I have three children," she replied. Having a

daughter in college as well has helped her generate useful narratives for sharing in discourses on race. As well, Youjin offered that much of her motivation to talk about race in a professional space comes from her marriage. As she explained, it has offered her a firsthand experience of racial inequality:

> Having lived with my husband who is [non US born] White-- we've been married [over 30 years]--that also allows me to see how he's treated in the racial context in my presence compared to me, how others treat him as a White male and opposed to Asian minority woman. So I live with that stuff.

Cathy's reflection on the state of race relations in the U.S made her personal passion clear:

> Most structures have entrenched racism as we're seeing with all these young men getting shot, and then we have people denying that it's race ...it's the biggest issue... I have grandchildren and I don't want them living in a world I can foresee if it keeps going the way that it's going!

She indicated too, that personal experiences in a low socio economic class have been tied to her personal identity and passion for her work in social justice:

> Living in a place with so many poor people, living through that different place than most people, it's a part of me because that's who I am...when I did go to college especially to graduate school, I could clearly see the, that my peers did not come from the same place that I did and I think that awareness made me hyper-vigilant and aware...I see what an unjust world this is...it's made me who I am.

African Americans in the study also equated their work in dialoguing on issues of race as part and parcel of who they were, and often. According to Georgia:

> This has always been something that has been of interest to me. Even when I was in high school, I started a petition to have an African American history course taught. So issues of race have always been something that have been a passion for me. Everything that I do has some aspect of race attached to it. So my courses that I get assigned are not necessarily courses that focus on race. I always bring race to in as part of the context

Like her, Sandra explained:

Everything I do, I would have to say, even in ways that I don't even recognize; the articles that I choose, the clips that I send. Part of it is always, underneath I'm going to get these folks to really look at this, Black and White….I feel this deep connection and passion to people who look like me who are constantly, constantly the target of so many things negative.

For White faculty like Victoria, the elements of personal identity that manifested professionally, also stemmed from lived experiences, but occurred in a different way, when compared to the other participants. As outlined in her case narrative, Victoria felt like an outsider to the race talk experience as a White woman. She noted that she grew up "in a very White place" and explained how this part of who she was impacted race talk:

One of the things that I think of as being most common to the kind of socialization I'm talking about is the notion of if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all. That's a very prominent value… if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all. So that really drives a tendency to be non-confrontational. And then it often walks over into being conflict avoidant, you're not supposed to create a conflict, and so you just assume avoid them altogether…for sure you would carry that business of being non-confrontational into encounters. It's one of the things that causes me to be scared and to be silent when I know I should be speaking up.

Having learned over the years however, Victoria's concluding reflection on engaging in race talk appeared a bit more personal:

I'm going to quote a dissertation advisee that I had 25 years ago when I asked her a similar question about the White history subjects in her dissertation who the issue was feminist consciousness and feminist issues… and… she said to me, and I think she might have been quoted one of her people, but she said to me because once you become aware, you cannot go back…when she said that to me, I didn't understand. I said -- I kept saying that doesn't make sense to me, and I didn't understand, but I think I have come to understand it now. I feel that same way, you can't turn your back on this awareness of injustice and oppression, which is making itself so aggressively obvious in the news these days. You can't not look.

Outside of the personal identity elements shaped by their lived experiences, participants referred to personality traits as impacting difficult discourses on race

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positively. For example, several stated repeatedly that they were "very reflective," and that this helped them choose to process difficult emotions, rather than respond to it harshly and openly. Participants also referred to being "open--"for example in the case of Victoria who felt this trait helped her learn from her students in the face of her own lack of knowledge. Finally, faculty such as Cathy, Georgia and Sandra referenced humor as a natural part of who they were—and a strategy that they have been able to use in difficult moments.

Navigation as Self Development Tool

While participants in the study described at length how they engaged in navigation of a difficult dialogue on race while teaching diversity related courses, they also expressed the fact that the navigation process has been a developmental one for them – both personally and professionally. Most shared Georgia's sentiments that she has been "impacted by every [race talk] encounter." According to Manuel, for example:

> I think the way it has changed me is that now I'm really able to listen to people's stories and what they are about, and where their coming from--regardless of how they're defining themselves or how they are structuring their thinking--so that they make sense of their identity... One thing that I definitely believe more now is that cultural narratives are really important. Even as research.
>
> When you begin to listen to people's history – this whole argument about how we're all human beings and this and that, give or take a very different tone because you get much deeper into people's experience, rather than just challenging it and saying, "No there is a difference, there is a reality and it does affect you," especially in the United States. Professionally, I think it has made me a better teacher, because I am able to listen better, and to integrate people's narratives.

Anita, though concluding that navigation is "taxing," felt that there were more benefits to be derived than negative outcomes, concerning how it has also helped her career in academia, and affected her interpersonal skills:

Its' extremely taxing but the positive outcome was when I could hear people articulate what they are thinking – that's applied research, because what I do is you hear it enough. One time is not powerful, but when you hear it often--three times, or twice, it becomes a pattern for me. So I take that and move it back into my teaching and say, "I'm not doing something right here. I need to revise my teaching." I'm hearing them say this, so I need to approach it from this, or we need to talk about this. So the outcome for me is it helps my teaching. It informs my teaching. It also informs my research, its better relationships with students... It has also allowed me to understand people better, or what they bring – it's allowed me to accommodate. That to me is a really important strength.

Others like Georgia, Sandra and Victoria pointed to increases in self-confidence.

Georgia explained it this way:

My comfort with being in my own skin as an African American female faculty has certainly grown, and I think with that comes a greater sense of confidence about who I am and what I'm doing. So I think that's just part of the developmental process. I don't know if ten years is all it takes for that to happen, but I have seen my positive, progressive changes along the way.

For her, confidence in self was accompanied by improved sensitivity, patience and

instructional practice too:

I try to allow more space for other students to offer different interpretations before jumping in with my own. I learned I do not need to answer every student as the classroom is about collective learning and collective teaching. Even if their interpretations do not mesh exactly with mine, it helps the student who is feeling defensive to understand that there are many viewpoints rooted in other worldviews other than mine which may differ from his or hers. The student is able to see that I am an equal opportunity challenger of viewpoints and that my viewpoint is also open to being challenged. I also try to validate the person at a human level in a more direct way while still challenging the individual to think more expansively about his or her viewpoint.

Similarly, Sandra outlined that self-confidence has increased, though her's has been

coupled with a strong sense of urgency:

I've gotten bolder. And in part I've gotten bolder because the world has shown me that I need to get bolder. When you look at Ferguson; when you look at Staten Island; when you look at the stop-and-check policies; when I'm in high school classrooms, and I see that if it's sweep Tuesdays…I'm becoming bolder as my knowledge increases. As what's happening in the world, I become bolder in the classroom because I feel I have less and less time.

For Victoria, increasing self-confidence by way of not being afraid to "speak up" or "name," has been a clear learning outcome of the navigation process, and a "lifelong" journey. In her critical incident, she illuminated the moment that proved a "turning point" concerning confidence. In that moment, students of diverse racial backgrounds were emotionally engaged in discourse, and she noted that somehow, after having observed these discourses over time, she began to change:

> Somewhere mid-way through the evening I started to gain confidence. Nothing had erupted, although there had been lots of emotions and tears… I know I was aware that I could be this cohort's leader without having to rely on her. This experience was a sort of "coming of age" for me in terms of confidence regarding high-emotion group interaction. I had begun a transition from what I think of as typical White-person, fix-it or avoid-it mode, to a more open-ended attitude that began to become comfortable with discomfort. I have continued to learn how to be an alert and open listener, gaining skill with trying to hear and understand rather than lapse into fixing or fearfulness.

An accompanying lesson for her also appeared to be learning to treat those she interacted with as humans. As indicated in her case narrative, navigating difficult race talk reinforced the theme of "people first—ideas second." Her reflections on this follows:

> Learning about the elephant, you know learning not to run away…learning how to name it, and to work your way through it. That's something that I happened to learn about in the context of race dialogue, and talking about oppression and internalized oppression and privilege…but it has applicability. So I've learned with some degrees of success and non-success to remember I'm talking with a person. If I had learnt that when I was in my twenties, probably my life would have been very different. You become more human.

Being "more human" was echoed by Youjin. In her mind too, development as a result of navigation has been as personal as it has been professional:

> I'm always thinking that I'm very comfortable speaking with any kind of person. And I have no problem stopping someone in the very center of an urban setting and then asking a Black man, for example, who's walking by the street for directions. So for me that is my act of micro-kindness in the way I acknowledge

you as a human being and you acknowledge me as a human being. You tell me, you help me and I'm thanking you for your help...that kind of interaction to me is something that I live with.

So I'm very confident that I'm quite racially and both culturally open. But I have also caught myself holding or clutching my bag when I pass by some Black youth in the middle of the subway, for example. I catch myself [and realize] that my consciousness is not fully developed there. There's not the same full trust that I give to other White, I give to other [Asians like me]. So that kind of catching myself--doing that is coming from constantly thinking about this as part of my teaching....I see my students when I see other Blacks. I see my students in other Latinos...I see my students on the people in the streets. So this is a constant interaction.

Of this kind of experience, she concluded the following about race talk:

We can continuously gain more and more, go deeper and deeper in our racial consciousness. And those ultimately gaining this understanding will lead to deep understanding of humanity. Really, it helps being able to connect with others who are different.

As Georgia also noted, "it was a reminder that students are people too."

In general, faculty have found navigating difficult dialogues on race as a source of personal and professional development. Several have cited that it made them more "human" and improved attitudinal competencies including self-confidence, sensitivity, empathy and awareness. Professionally, several faculty have developed in their respective research areas, and in being able to apply their firsthand knowledge of racial difference from race talk to their scholarly endeavors. As well, their teaching craft has been enhanced in different ways.

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed cross case findings for the current study. Research question one queried, *how do graduate education faculty navigate difficult dialogues on race in their diversity related courses*? The study found six primary themes involving balance: *humility with confidence*, *inclusiveness with control*, *full presence with distance*, *patience*

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with good timing, *communication with no silence* and *prior learning with teachable moments.* Research question two probed, *how do faculty handle challenging emotional responses that they experience during difficult dialogues on race?* Again, balance surfaced as faculty described *modelling honesty, but not revealing too much* and *preparing self* but still *processing with community.* Finally, research question three asked, *how do faculty see navigation as impacting or relating to their identities?* Themes emerging were *maximizing the culturally minor, the personal is professional,* and *navigation as self development tool.*

Across cases, similar patterns often emerged. For example, faculty all displayed a firm anti-racist stance; all but one considered their teaching on racial issues as a form of activism, and most felt called to it. Goals to deconstruct student perceptions of race, and types or sources of student resistance were also similar. As well, participants have struggled with anger, frustration, sadness and in a few cases, fear. Concerning identity, all faculty grappled with tensions between some form of identity and race talk. Still, most faculty in this study have learned to maintain boldness over time, several rejecting fear on account of their identities and personal or lived experiences. Another key pattern found was that of balancing between strategies. But in addition to this, faculty described balancing more attitudinal or self-strategies than instructional strategies for difficult race talk. There was a sense that attitudinal competencies brought to the discourse were critical to managing it. As well, the act of navigating a difficult dialogue on race was beneficial to faculty self and professional development.

Concerning differences, faculty who were immigrants or second generation identified a "middle space" they felt were an asset in navigating between the Black/White

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binary, while African American participants have remained unafraid of potential threats to tenure via course evaluations. In fact, African Americans seemed the most driven to continue, as a direct response to difficulty in race talk. As well, a few participants found spirituality and physical movement as effective strategies for handling challenging emotions. Clearly, findings indicate participants were as nuanced in their positionalities, as they were in the how they used the strategies described. The next chapter discusses nuanced findings in light of the literature and positionality theory, toward an emerging framework for describing faculty navigation of difficult race talk.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter consists of an interpretation and discussion of cross case findings, as well as conclusions and recommendations for the study. The goal is also to illustrate an emerging framework for describing faculty navigation of difficult race talk. The study's central research question was *how do graduate education faculty navigate difficult discourses on race in their diversity-related courses*? As well, it probed *how do faculty handle challenging emotional responses that they experience during difficult discourses on race*, and *how do faculty see navigation as relating to or impacting their identities?* In chapter three, propositions influencing the study's conceptual framework included key challenges that fuel difficult classroom dialogues on race—namely, the idea of race as a taboo topic, student resistance, and instructor personal reactions.

Though faculty who teach diversity-related commonly face these challenges, little literature was located on experiences that highlight how they navigate, or work through the challenges simultaneously, and in the face of their own personal tensions. Accordingly, the central purpose of this study was to describe how graduate education faculty in diversity-related courses navigated difficult dialogues on race. Since emotions and identity tensions are often the most evident personal challenges for instructors during navigation, the study also sought to investigate how faculty handled personally challenging emotions and how they felt their identities related to the navigation process.

According to Baxter-Jack (2008), a case study's conceptual framework may continually be developed as the study progresses. This is in order that the themes emerging from analysis might inform the final conceptual framework. This chapter, and

Figure 3 (below) illustrates such a development. Emerging from the cross-case findings, I

have interpreted that three key elements undergird the way experienced faculty navigate

difficult dialogues on race. These elements have formed a construct, which I have added

to the final conceptual framework. Arguably, the framework might be useful in order to

better understand the instructor experience in navigating difficult dialogues on race.
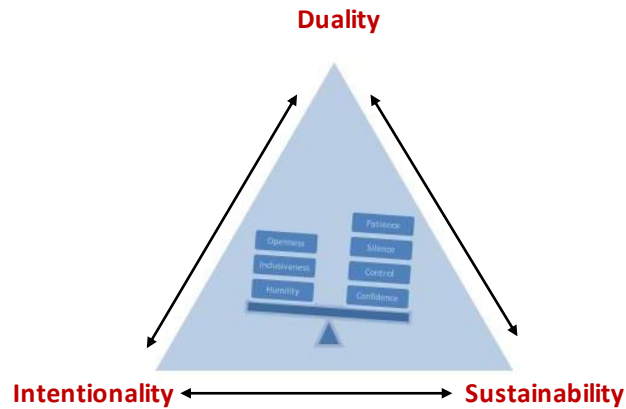
Figure 3: Construct Illustrating "Navigation."
Balancing strategies undergirded by three main elements.

- *Duality:* A concept referring to opposites, or two contrasting aspects of
  something (Oxford, 2015). In this construct, duality refers to those somewhat
  opposing, or dichotomous strategies that form core themes in Chapter 5.

- *Intentionality:* Being deliberate or purposeful (Oxford, 2015). In this construct,
  intentionality refers to participants' deliberate engagement in teaching and
  learning practices that would enhance the way they facilitated difficult dialogues
  on race.

- *Sustainability:* The ability to maintain something (Oxford, 2015). In this
  construct, sustainability refers to participants' continuous engagement in
  strategies that foster persistence and self-preservation concerning difficult
  dialogues on race.

With an understanding that interpretation is often subjective, so that my findings might

otherwise be interpreted, I used the elements in the construct as analytic categories

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I begin by describing each element, then discussing related

cross case findings, connections to the scholarly literature, and connections to positionality theory.

Analytic Category One: Duality

The element of duality surfaces most dominantly across findings from all three research questions. In general, faculty navigate difficult discourses on race by balancing dichotomous strategies, which vary by research question. Consequently, a tense duality exists in practice. For research question one, focusing on navigation, duality is most evident in balancing *humility* with *confidence, full presence* with *maintaining distance, inclusiveness* with *control* and *drawing on past or prior learning experiences* while *engaging teachable moments*. For research question two, focusing on handling emotions, duality is most evident in participants' efforts to balance levels of *openness and vulnerability*, as well as balance *processing with self and other*. For research question three, focusing on navigation and identity, duality is evidenced throughout as faculty often experience dichotomous tensions between aspects of their identities and classroom practice.

Engaging in duality appears highly complex and nuanced, since its strategies manifest simultaneously—and since what is involved in creating a balance between opposing strategies is usually based on multiple factors. These include, but are not limited to faculty's personalities, lived experiences, identities, and the very specific nature of the difficulty being experienced during race talk at a given time. Manuel's description of balancing strategies for example, helps illuminate this. He outlined that:

> I don't just navigate as I stand in front of the class, write things on the board, pass papers out and discuss papers, I also navigate as I move through the class as I gaze at somebody, look at somebody else, move to the back of the class where

someone's not necessarily participating as much. Just by moving myself, I provide encouragement, or I can move away to avoid feeling the conflict. Subsequently, he described that personality, culture, learning and lived experience factors constantly influence his choice of strategy in the moment—as well as the degree to which it is engaged. "Depending on the situation," he said:

> I try to stay calm because it's just the way I am…I definitely echo the words of my mentors or just people who, in my own learning have inspired me and have given me the language to speak about race meaningfully…as opposed to just being angry because somebody is being racist in a classroom.

Like Manuel, other study participants have been able to balance verbal and non-verbal communication, drawing on diverse learning—in order to foster inclusiveness with control, and full presence with distance. Not surprisingly, they often draw on prior learning experiences, a process that is fundamental to adult learning (Merriam, Cafarella & Baumgartner, 2007). What is most apparent here though, is that dualities layer or impact each other in multiple ways, and that faculty's positionality remains key throughout. Instead of using physical movement to psychologically create distance in tense moments as Manuel did for example, Youjin might draw on her strong sense of personal optimism, believing that students will eventually come to a higher degree of racial literacy. Similarly, Sandra might hold a belief about students' racial literacy as a way of maintaining some distance when talks get tough; however, her strong sense of personal responsibility and passion as an African American might dominate, and move her not to choose distancing herself at all, given the situation.

Tenets of positionality theory provide a useful explanation for the processes that may obtain behind the scenes as faculty find balance in the presence of duality. The theory's scholars often refer to the idea of "intersecting identities" (e.g. Kezar & Lester,

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2010), noting that individuals carry multiple identities, standpoints or positionalities that remain fluid, rather than fixed, based on a given context. As such, people can make meaning from multiple aspects of their identity. In this study, it is evident that how participants make meaning of different identities significantly influences how they engage dichotomous strategies during race talk. Multiple identities such as race class and gender are often building and reinforcing people's perspectives simultaneously (Collins 1993). Further, such perspectives seem to shape strategies that appear complex based on their duality.

Concerning balancing *humility* with *confidence*, Victoria shared that being confident enough in what she had to offer, while simultaneously not trying to provide a "fix it presence," remained a key strategy for her. However, a description of her personal struggle with this duality to find balance, illuminates another layer of tension faculty experience: a tense dichotomy often exists between the elements of self they have lived with over time, and the self-strategy they need to practice for improved cross cultural relationships with their students. This tension is especially apparent in the findings of research questions one and three. Often, it is steeped in a confluence of personal, cultural, and lived experiences and identities. In Victoria's case, her perceived expert syndrome and racial identity combined, provided significant threat: "I continue to have this White person curse of needing to get it right, of needing to be correct, of not wanting to make a mistake, of not wanting to be proven wrong," she explained. In addition, she cited socialization and professional life experiences as factors fueling the tension:

> One of the hardest things that I've had to learn is that being able to prove logically that something is right doesn't necessarily convince people. Throughout my whole life, if people weren't coming around to my way of thinking, I would just try to explain it again. Because I'd think, 'Surely, the problem is they didn't understand.

If I can just find the right words, get the logic right, then of course people will be persuaded.

Research conducted by the *European American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness* group (2010), and resulting in their work on *critical humility* is particularly consistent with findings on balancing humility with confidence. In Sheared et al.'s (2010) *Handbook of Race in Adult Education*, the group describes critical humility as "a habit to which [they] aspire…a delicate and demanding balance of speaking out for social justice while at the same time, remaining aware that our knowledge is partial and evolving" (p.147). Though they do not use the word confident in the concept, they do suggest that critical humility involves humility and confidence co-existing as a tense dichotomy while White individuals engage in cross-racial relationships and dialogue. As the group noted, "the two parts of the definition capture the paradox with which we struggle" (p.147).

The alignment of the current study's findings with their concept suggests the potential for specifically exploring the duality or "paradox" inherent in balancing humility and confidence, empirically. Moreover, since balancing confidence with humility was utilized by faculty of varied races and ethnicities in this study, not just White faculty, findings also imply the potential usefulness of further research that might be conducted on the strategy, with diverse faculty involved in race talk. As well, positionality theory is useful in understanding the duality involved here. Positionality theory stresses meaning making based on highly specific and nuanced contexts (Kondo, 1990).

While White faculty must be vigilant about exhibiting extreme humility in the discourse because they do not have the lived experience of persons of color, positionality

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theory might suggest that participants who are Black immigrants of color for example, equally need this kind of humility, since they do not have the lived experiences of African Americans. Their racial identity experience may not allow for a full understanding of the historical Black/White binary that has shaped race relations in a U.S context. In addition to this, positionality theory outlines that power in all its forms, is central to individuals' meaning making (Kezar & Lester, 2010); if faculty of Color hold positions of power by virtue of their instructional authority, even though they may be considered racial minorities, this position[ality] of power suggests a need for elements of humility to be retained in their practice as well (as indicated by most participants of color). Notwithstanding, how individuals perceive their power dynamics in a race focused teaching context, may alter this suggestion. Ray (2010) for example, reflected on her positionalities while teaching race; race and gender identities appear as dominant, despite her instructional authority:

> I often struggle with the idea and reality of creating a less hierarchal learning environment, while understanding that my power is limited and that my position as a Black woman requires a keen awareness of power relations in the classroom. (p.79)

As noted earlier, the element of duality is also clear in findings from research question number two. Participants have found themselves in a balancing act between processing inside – with self – and outside with others in whom they can find solace and support. As well, they have maintained a commitment to openness in being vulnerable with their emotions, but not entirely completely, in the event that students might be adversely affected. As Anita put it, "in this work, to be effective, I think you have to disguise some of your true feelings." On the other side of the proverbial coin,

participants' constant references to processing with colleagues and friends, peers, family and mentors, indicates an established community, or as Victoria has put it, "sanctuary" for faculty involved in dialogues on race is both commonplace, and necessary.

Findings from the study concerning the need for self-reflection and community support are consistent with the literature. Research on diversity faculty of Color have found participants' "coping mechanisms" to be family and friends (e.g. Kwon, 2011; Ting, 2003), and like-minded others in the academy (e.g. Baumgartner & Johnson Bailey, 2008; Fasching-Varner et al., 2015). Critical reflexivity is often emphasized for educators of adults involved in race work (Brookfield, 2005, 2014; Closson, et al., 2014; Quaye, 2012: Sue, 2009, 2011). As well, theories of adult learning and development such as situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1986), transformational learning (Meizrow, 1990), and reflective practice (Schon, 1987), point to effective ways in which faculty can both garner learning and support to enhance practice. Again, positionality theory is critical to the study's findings, given the theory's emphasis on individual meaning making within local context. In using it, we are able to understand that participants balance self-reflection and support based on their positionalities, but we are also able to articulate the fact that though the balance may be common to all, its engagement remains highly contextualized, since an individual's position (aspects of identity) may shift according to context (Alcoff, 1988; Kezar, 2000, 2004).

Despite the fact that the study's findings concerning processing with self and others are consistent with the literature, findings seem to suggest further, that in doing race work, neither of these vehicles for reflection is adequate on its own; a balance of both are needed. Specifically, the presence of consistent or reliable opportunities for

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community support in like-minded academic circles appears critical. Isabel's case for example, highlights this. Unlike the other participants, she made no mention of any form of support system in academia that was consistent. In mentioning a sense of "isolation," she also made multiple references to attempts to reaching out as a means of finding more "like-minded" support on campus, referenced the exit of a former faculty of Color as a "loss," and indicated that she felt like she was "back on the margins," when other members of a predominantly White faculty came to an understanding of her scholarship concerning racial matters. She referred to herself as a "very reflective" person, and did reference support from communities off campus. However a challenge unique to her begs the question of whether there might be links between a greater sense of campus isolation and lack of academic/campus community concerning race work. Of all the participants in the study too, she made the most frequent and explicit mentions concerning wrestling with "self-doubt," which often contributed to an element of fear in facilitating race talk at times. Isabel's experience is not far-fetched as the literature is rife with links between isolation experienced by faculty of Color at predominantly White institutions (e.g. Dozier, 2014; Fasching-Varner, 2015; Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Tuitt, 2009; Turner, Gonzalez & Wood, 2008).

Broadly speaking, strategies rife with duality from research questions one and two have been described in the literature in different ways. For example, Perry (2009), in his qualitative study on African Americans' experiences with credibility during race-focused talk, found that faculty drew on several countermeasures, given strong student resistance and their own discomfort in a predominantly White classroom. Perry named the countermeasures "anticipatory teaching," "disarming" and "depoliticizing." They

involved "approaches" that echo this study's findings, such as establishing confidence early in the class, striving to be as inclusive as possible, and gauging or being sensitive to students' reactions respectively.

Other scholars have probed the importance of modeling strategies like openness, honesty and careful communication in handling students' emotional responses during race talk (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Brookfield, 2014; Gnandnass, 2014; Haltinner, 2015; Manglitz et al., 2014; Quaye, 2012; Roberts, 2002). Researchers have also invited instructors to come alongside their students with a show of vulnerability as a means of creating trust, safe space and/or community (Wang, 2008); to reposition emotions as a tool for learning (Froyum, 2015; Roberts & Smith, 2002; Wang, 2008), and to labor through the difficulty of race dialogue in love (Howard, 1999) – the latter particularly evident in Sandra's approach.

However, as far as I have been able to determine from the literature, there does not appear to be much evidence of an explicit discussion or exploration of the duality involved in navigating a difficult discourse on race with multiple strategies. In other words, though individually several of the strategies from the study's findings do appear in empirical research, the tense duality that seems to exist between and among strategies, is hardly explored. Working through race talk is often considered a complex venture (Brookfield, 2014; Haltinner, 2015; Perry et al, 2009). As such, the literature seems able to benefit from studies that focus on thick, rich descriptions of the nuanced cases behind complex dualities that exist during race talk.

For example, the current study indicated that faculty had to decide how open or vulnerable they would be when a race talk situation became particularly difficult for them

emotionally. While Sandra might choose to visibly display sadness, Georgia's mindfulness of students' tendency to give her the answers she wants, may cause her to hesitate in being "authentic, authentic," and instead she might choose to hold back more—though they both are African American, articulate a very personal connection to race talk, and emphasize that they have "no fear," as untenured professors.

Like them, other faculty may or may not choose to be completely open. Manuel may base his decision on a particular set of strategies on his cultural upbringing or strong need to maintain a strong sense of professionalism in a public setting. Isabel may base her's on the need to show emotions as proof that the classroom is a site of struggle. Yet, concerning professional identity, she may opt not to because of some students' perceptions that the instructor is not in control if she visibly displays emotion. Clearly, complex identities are negotiated in engaging duality. There is the certainly the influence of classroom context, since faculty identity is shaped and reshaped in interaction with a professional context or community (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Reybold, 2008). But there is also a strong sense of personal identity involved—an identity that has been shaped by cultural and lived experiences. Dual strategies are driven by multiple positions held by the individual as they navigate a difficult discourse on race. As positionality theory reminds us, meaning is made "from various aspects of identity, not just social class, gender and race, but other features such as professional status" (Kezar & Lester, 2010, p.167).

In addition to this, most published work available on strategies for handling emotions during race talk, focuses on strategies geared towards managing emotional responses of students or managing student resistance, not on strategies for managing

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instructors' personal tensions (e.g. Roberts, 2002; Froyum, 2015). Perhaps one of the

most explicit connections to duality for race talk instructors lies in Wang's (2008) essay

Engaging Emotions in Multicultural Education: Pedagogical Considerations. In it, the

author notes the kind of duplicity or "double role" that multicultural educators engage:

> To an intensified degree, multicultural educators have to be simultaneously in and
> out of the discussion to guide students through their struggles. Being both a
> participant and observer is a double role that the teacher needs to play. In such a
> conflicting space, teachers are expected to suspend their own beliefs so that
> students are encouraged to express and discuss their own perspectives; however,
> positions against racism, sexism, and all forms of social injustice must be made so
> that the dominant power structure can be interrupted. (p.15)

Further, she gave a personal example her experience with duality – an example that,

based on this study, might be considered a balancing of multiple strategies like humility

with confidence (relinquishing the expert syndrome), or perhaps drawing on prior

experiences with teachable moments:

> Situating myself as a participant in the conversation, I explicitly express my
> sympathy with the pains that students experience in unlearning what is learned,
> and I share my own emotional struggles with the issues of social differences...at
> the same time, as a teacher committed to democratization, I also make my own
> social and political positions clear, as these positions may shift and change as a
> result of the class conversation. (p.15)

Concerning research question three on identity and navigation, faculty found

significant personal and professional benefits to the act of navigating difficult dialogues

on race. Faculty learning during race talk goes beyond content and class management to

understanding people – as such, it seems to have the ability to impact interpersonal traits,

cross racial and intercultural relations and generating acute levels of self-awareness,

albeit in different ways, and in accordance with one's positionality. In addition, it helped

improve faculty teaching skills. Consequently, the act of navigation manifested as one

that was recursive, and presented this duality: as they developed others in facilitating the

dialogue, they became and remained active learners themselves. Still, the duality often remained tense because faculty often had to sacrifice and/or unlearn aspects of their identity that had become norm, in order to enhance their practice. Dualities in the process of teaching and learning included Victoria learning to "name" or call out things that needed to be dealt with, and [un]learning silence, or conversely Anita learning to "reign in her passion" that would come across as negative, and [un]learning a sometimes angry, confrontational stance that would escalate the difficulty of the discourse.

Merriam, Cafarella and Baumgartner (2007) assert that teaching and learning often occur simultaneously for adult educators in the classroom; as such, this dynamic has advanced the development of theories like situated cognition (Lave, 1986) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1987), to name a few. Arguably then, teaching and learning may not be regarded by some as contrasts. Findings from the present study concede to the notion that they occur simultaneously, but that the process for those who engage in race talk, does include a tense dichotomy that is unique. An important note must be made here as well. That culture and lived experiences shape identity in various ways is well established (Flores & Day, 2006; Olsen, 2008). Traditional theories concerning identity are often "essentialist," considering identities mutually exclusive (Kezar & Lester, 2010); conversely, positionality theory is useful in validating findings from research question three concerning how identity relates to navigation. Concerning the *personal is professional* finding, participants' personal passions are a key influence on personal identity and who they are. This seems to override even the fiercest challenges they face in navigating difficult race talk. Consequently, personal and professional identities appear

blurred, and inextricably linked in this context. As Manuel noted based on his position as both professor and immigrant of color:

> My identity as an immigrant is another important thing. Some students will say, let's not look at whether you're Black or Asian, or whatever, because we're all human. We all have the same color blood. But my identity, my experience as a citizen in the United States compels me to discuss some things that I feel. I believe we work at it every time we interact…we have very many realities that come into play. Sometimes all at the same time and sometimes a few at the same time.

His reference to "working at it" is useful in introducing the second element of the construct that seems to undergird the cross case findings: that of *intentionality*.

Analytic Category Two: Intentionality

The term intentionality has remained a paradox in meaning over time in fields ranging from philosophy to science (Pfeifer & Sarkar, 2006). For the purpose of this discussion, intentionality refers to participants' deliberate actions as they navigate race talk, handle their emotions and relate the process of navigation to their identities. Cross case findings indicate that faculty are highly intentional while teaching, and while they are simultaneously learning, in the process of navigation. In teaching practice, they have been purposeful about balancing the strategies they use to navigate difficult discourses, about adjusting them as necessary, and about maintaining a dialogue space that though difficult at times, remains safe. Concerning learning, faculty have remained deliberate in locating formal and informal learning opportunities that would enhance their practice in handling race talk.

For example, in finding balance between *communication and silence, patience and timing*, and *openness and vulnerability*, faculty remain mentally prepared to respond, rather than remain silent, in even the most uncomfortable race talk moments. Yet, they

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have also held back strong 'gut' responses, or adjusted the timing of their verbal responses, so as to prevent students from shutting down, or to facilitate possible additional processing time that students need. Such a balance between and amongst strategies is highly intentional. Cathy provided a compelling example of this in her critical incident reflection, concerning a student whose pushback made the class tense. In the reflection, Cathy started off by saying "as kindly as I could…," indicating a deliberate and conscious effort to adjust the way she was communicating; in the same breath, she disclosed the negative emotions she struggled with:

> Such disclosures are always a risk. It makes an instructor vulnerable. It tests my patience. Although I can see where she is coming from, I can also relate to those in the room that judge her harshly. I have to fight that part of myself because it is unproductive. I wish I could say that it gets easier, but it doesn't. The older I get the angrier and more impatient I am with our racist, sexist, classist culture. I question my ability to make a difference—which is the only reason I do what I do.

Manglitz, et al. (2014) would refer to the above described tendency as a necessary "emotive capacity" (p.113) for faculty who teach race. These scholars would contend that Cathy, like other participants who practice emotive capacity, demonstrate several of its dimensions like "confronting silence, negotiating tension and anxiety and dealing with privilege" (p.113). Similarly, participants' ability to do this might be regarded as "valid" as against "hyped" evidence of emotional intelligence. Valid evidence might be characterized by their ability to "use, understand and manage emotions that can potentially benefit themselves and others" (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2008). Still, findings of the way faculty handle personal emotions might leave a lingering question about authenticity. In the literature, faculty are often encouraged to be authentic about their feelings as a way of showing the class that they also struggle. Yet, the literature also

establishes that faculty remain influenced by their positions and/or shaped by multiple identities. As such, *to what extent does withholding one's feelings on the basis of culture, for example, negate one's authenticity as an instructor in the race-focused classroom?* Still, positionality theorists might argue faculty in the study show acute awareness of their positions of power as instructors, and were willing able to shift dynamics accordingly (e.g. Georgia, in not being "authentic authentic," so her students would not respond on that basis).

Recently, Closson, et al. (2014) drew attention to the urgent need for a pedagogy of race—specifically, they called for "intentional pedagogy" as a critical foundation to race pedagogies for Black faculty. Intentional pedagogy speaks to the kind of teaching approach concerning race that is liberatory, thoughtful and engaged, one that reveals the authentic self through reflection and one that takes risks in vulnerability (pp.5-6). The idea of a distinct willingness to choose to engage in a specific kind of practice with the goal of challenging racism directly, is inherent in this description, and aligns closely with intentionality as it is defined in this study. As such, I have used *intentional pedagogy* to frame a significant part of this section's discussion.

First, Black faculty in this study do seem to practice an intentional pedagogy. Specifically, both Sandra and Georgia were the most vocal about not hesitating to challenge racism and privilege in communicating a response during race talk. At the same time, they emphasize taking time be patient, and silent at times in order to learn from their students in authentic dialogue. Concerning engagement, these faculty members clearly positioned themselves as "insiders," very frequently sharing their narratives as Black women, with the understanding that they can validate those experiences, given

their authority as instructors. Revealing the authentic self through reflection is also an essential part of what they do—Georgia, for example, always practicing those self-preparation techniques, that according to scholars of intentional pedagogy, serve to "craft solutions that might allow them to create learning experiences that foster a better understanding of the topics under discussion" (p.6). In a similar way, instructors in Pasque et al.'s (2013) study use either "reactive usage" (where faculty would reflect on an incident and decide on how to turn it into a learning tool); or "proactive usage" (where faculty would intentionally plan activities that would illicit difficulty in race talk).

Taking risks, as the final part of an intentional pedagogy is something Sandra and Georgia are also willing to do, without hesitation. Over time, risk taking has been linked to effective learning in situations of potential conflict like race talk (Closson et al., 2014; Dirkx, 2008; Mayo, 2010; Mildred & Zuniga, 2004; Zuniga & Chesler, 1997). As indicated in the cross-case findings, Sandra and Georgia took risks in several ways. They combatted silence, often with honest responses and pushback; they maintained confidence despite their marginal position as Black faculty, while remaining humble; and they balanced a sense of inclusiveness with the courage to control. Both of these participants did allude to the intentionality that existed. As Sandra put it:

> I think my students constantly remind me of the personal courage it takes to go into society where racism is sanctioned, and it's as natural as the water we drink. But that to be willing – right? To be willing to kind of go up against it, particularly because you've chosen the role or the career as teacher, is a very brave thing.

More interestingly, the levels of intentionality regardless of the risks involved again open the door to looking at faculty actions through the lens of positionality theory. Multiple layers of our identity shift in context according to the theory. In Sandra's case, aspects of

personal and cultural identity converge. How she sees herself positioned as a Black advocate in the classroom seems to primarily drive intentional practice. Like other faculty of Color in the study, here she seems to situate advocacy and her instructional authority combined as places of power that drive willingness and intentionality, rather than focus on her racial minority status as a limitation. Concurrent with these findings, Alfred (2001) found that African American women engaged in re-conceptualizing their marginality in the face of underrepresentation and challenge in predominantly White institutions.

In spite of this kind of connection between the concept of intentional pedagogy and Black faculty in this study, a lingering question remains: might intentional pedagogy be adapted by other faculty of Color or even White faculty? While it is historically understood and uncontested that Black faculty face unique challenges in the academy, particularly those who teach on issues of race (Fasching-Varner et al., 2015; Johnson-Bailey, 2010; Perry, 2009; Sue et al, 2011; Turner, Gonzalez & Wood, 2008), the findings of this study suggest that other faculty of Color, and White faculty exhibit several elements of intentionality in practicing their respective race pedagogies.

In Cathy's example mentioned earlier, risk taking was evident in saying no to silence, alongside an engaged pedagogy. Although faculty like herself and Victoria may not have been able to assume an "insider" position as defined by Closson et al. (2014), because they are White, other elements of intentionality such as authentic, self-reflective practices (including their acknowledgement that they would never fully understand the racial minority experience) are evident in their narratives. Victoria demonstrated that she learned to practice authentic self-reflection as a critical part of her practice in cross-racial

interactions, to learn from dialogue with her students, while at the same time, allowing White students to be challenged directly, and to take risks in "naming" tensions or racism that arise during race talk. Pedagogies undergirded by intentionality and practiced by both Black and non-Black faculty in this study seem to align with those spoken of in the work by Closson et al. (2014). Such an alignment, examined through the lens of positionality theory, seems to infer that intentionality may be driven by diverse instructors, but that the root and level of that intentionality may vary according to how one is positioned or how one situates oneself in the classroom context.

Although cited earlier, Perry et al.'s (2009) work, as one of the few on race pedagogy from the instructor perspective, is also useful in the discussion of intentionality here. Perry investigated the experiences of 20 African American instructors who used an approach like "anticipatory teaching" for example, to establish confidence up front, since they anticipated White students would denounce their credibility. So, for example they would establish their academic credentials early in the class, or frequently tout academic references that gave credence to their statements. Faculty of Color in the current study, especially African American faculty, did speak to their awareness and some anticipation of White students questioning their credibility, and their subsequent reliance on scholarly references and preparation; these findings do align with Perry's work. Unlike Perry however, I found that faculty remained more direct and intentional concerning challenging racism, despite student resistance.

For example, Sandra referenced the need to "go hard," Victoria and Isabel stressed "naming" racism, and Anita noted her goal was to "challenge." In Perry's study, faculty engaged in de-politicizing by being more "value neutral" or "less personal." As

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one of their participants mentioned, "What I do is say, "we're studying the past…not studying your values and your beliefs. Here's what the research says, and here's how it happens" So it's kind of like studying the anatomy of prejudice, separate from you" (Perry, 2009, p.97). In addition to this, all faculty members in the current study--not just Black faculty--did appear to engage in some level of "disarming," which Perry described as creating a more inclusive and less judgmental classroom space to encourage student participation. However, disarming as a strategy did appear limited to the goal of establishing safety and trust for discomfort to be a norm in the class; findings do not indicate that they engaged in disarming to counter questions of credibility.

Racially and ethnically diverse faculty in this study remained focused on the goal or intention of authentically challenging issues of racism and privilege. Again, such an intentional pedagogy seems aligned with Closson et al. (2014), who noted that while Perry's (2009) strategies were critical to Black faculty negotiating race talk, the strategies were not balanced with a pedagogy that was "liberatory" —that is a pedagogy that intentionally challenges the status quo. Concerning identity related findings pertaining to research question three, participants emphasized that the work of facilitating race talk was often as personal as it was professional. More often than not too, all brought their lived experience stories around race to the classroom. Consequently, in the presence of a tense duality, faculty remained intentional about maximizing their identities for the benefit of handling tense moments.

In *Teaching Our Own Racism*, Brookfield (2014) cautioned against the kind of pedagogy that Whites might engage in and might serve to counter their own anti-racism. He contends that traditionally,

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…anti-racist and diversity education is something done to you, by those who have cracked the code of cultural misunderstandings, and who have come out the other side of struggling with racism to a point where they can now teach others how to think and work in non-racist ways. (p.89)

However, he pointed out the danger inherent in this approach:

This pedagogic process is crucial and valuable, but risks avoiding a powerful dynamic of how educators can use their own personal, autobiographical experience to model how they themselves struggle to detect and immobilize (as much as that is possible), racist instincts in themselves. (p. 89)
This notion of having somewhat arrived at a place where one is racially aware enough to detect subtle racism and help others identify and counter it, without acknowledging and working through it along with those being taught is what he warns against.

Brookfield's (2014) suggestion is consistent with the findings of this study, which featured participants' intentionality in acknowledging and working through their own race based struggles with students. As well, none of the participants felt they had arrived at a place where they could, like experts, detect varied forms of racism and help their students identify and counter them, without intentional and conscious efforts to share their own struggles. Brookfield (2014) also urged faculty to employ storytelling and narrative as a useful way of "teaching [Whites'] own racism," a practice both Victoria and Cathy have sought to engage in.

Interestingly, none of the White participants for this study described themselves as "allies" in the process, a term that is frequently used in the literature to describe Whites who have come alongside the struggle and cause of racial minorities. Several researchers have found that White faculty often position themselves this way in a bid to side with students of color during discourses on race (e.g. Quaye, 2012; Sue et al., 2009). Unlike proponents of the "ally" tradition, Brookfield (2014), observed that hearing a White

instructor disclose that s/he is an "ally" often makes him "cringe," since many times this position is void of necessary honesty in racial interaction such as uncovering racial micro-aggressions in oneself, talking to students about them--and how they obtain in daily interaction, and "modeling pushback through team teaching" (Brookfield, 2014, p.90).

An apparent trend so far concerning intentionality is that what faculty in this study practice, seems consistent with calls in the literature for the kinds of practices that might prove more effective. These calls are often made with reference to a particular race, given of course the positionality of the author/s and goals of the work. However, given that racially diverse faculty in this study have intentionally exhibited several of the practices called for, findings of the study again suggest that the way one is positioned— i.e. multiple identities combined--has a strong influence on practice. For example, Anita's case narrative held a classic example of the kind of modeling Brookfield (2014) encourages for White faculty. Though a participant of color, she often made reference to team teaching with a White colleague as one of the highlights of learning to teach race effectively, and understanding multiple points of view in the process. When she would argue with her colleague saying: "have you thought about this?" her colleague would counter "yes, but have you thought about *this*?" Discussing the tensions of such a practice to her student audiences has augured well for her.

In the same vein, while Brookfield calls for an exposure of instructors' personal tensions, Isabel noted, the graduate classroom for her has been "a site of struggle" concerning race for everyone, not excluding herself as facilitator. Positionality explains here that multiple positions including the feeling of being in a "middle space," influenced

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participants' willingness to accommodate and engage racial other/s (Anita); and to be open to shifting power dynamics between instructor and student (Isabel). The theory also illuminates the way faculty are able to shape and reshape contexts given the power they have.

It is understood that given the positionality of a White instructor, s/he represents the dominant culture and as such, calls for an intentional teaching of her/his own racism is crucial. As findings from one case study outlined, White faculty understand that it is when they begin to grapple with their own feelings and tensions about race in the classroom, that they can begin to teach effectively (Quaye, 2012). However, findings of this study may serve as a reminder that such a practice is important and should be intentional, regardless of racial or ethnic origin.

Finally, throughout the findings, it was clear that faculty were actively seeking out learning and development opportunities for themselves in order to enhance race talk work. Reading extensive amounts of literature to learn about cultural histories and norms outside their own, attending conferences, purposefully seeking out teachable moments from their students' narratives, engaging in critical dialogue with peers and mentors that would inform and challenge their perspectives, reflecting on self critically were all paramount. Faculty consider themselves learners as they navigate difficult dialogues on race. As Manuel put it, "we work at it every time we interact." The emphasis here is on "work at it," which indicates the will to be deliberate or intentional.

Proponents of models like staged self-directed learning (Grow, 1991) would note here that faculty seem to display high levels of self-directedness as a personal attribute in learning. Not surprisingly then, as adult learners, their purposeful stance toward learning

resulted in effectiveness in practice. Newer theories like intentional self-development (Brandtstadter, 2006) might add that faculty hold a strong sense of personal agency that drive their development, based on their notion that ISD involves the process of forming personal goals and making deliberate plans to achieve them. Positionality theory however is useful in considering the extent to which intentionality in learning and practice is driven by multiple positions that shift by context—namely intersecting identities, power relations and context in each case. Such nuanced understandings are important to continue the conversation on the complexity of race pedagogy itself and how to promote the kind of intentional learning that might drive faculty development. As positionality theorists assert, "the positionality model incorporates agency so that people are not merely responding to context and power, but actively shape the conditions within which they work, think and live …positionality fundamentally focuses on "interrelatedness" (Kezar & Lester, 2010, pp. 166-167). As I have come to recognize, to "actively shape," one must engage in that which sustains race work. Sustainability then is discussed next as the third and final element of the construct.

Analytic Category Three: Sustainability

In using sustainability as a final element underlying the cross case findings, my suggestion is that the study's participants have fostered persistence that fuels sustainability for engaging difficult dialogues on race over time. In fact, no mention was made of despair or of a plan to discontinue the work due to its difficulty. Faculty actually cited the work as "exciting" at times and appeared to be filled with hope in my concluding interactions with them. Inherent in this is a strong sense of continuity, which has not often been reported in the literature on race talk with adults in higher education

contexts (Gnandnass, 2014 has been one recent exception); conversely, many studies have reported that difficult dialogues on race largely result in fear, fatigue and frustration in instructors (Haltinner, 2015; Kwon, 2011; Sue, 2013; Tuitt, 2009), and that many shy away from teaching on issues of race (e.g. Bigatti et al, 2012), or eventually walk away from doing it as a result (e.g Fasching-Varner et al., 2015.). Faculty in this study seem to sustain their work by balancing the cognitive and emotional domains of their practice, by obtaining continued the kind of community support that garners self-preservation and creativity, and by committing to the cause unrelentlessly.

Cross case findings indicate that faculty in this study appeared to exercise both the cognitive and emotional realms as they engaged in balancing strategies for research questions one and two, and in juxtaposing self and identity against practice in research question number three. Finding a balance between dual strategies often involved faculty mixing content knowledge with personal opinions, ideas and emotions. Sustaining such a balance might be explained by scholars as having both cognitive and emotive capacity, necessary for race talk. Aspects of cognitive capacity include acquiring knowledge about race as a social construction; having acute awareness of how race operates in individuals, institutions and society; and understanding and acknowledging the experience of those who hold subordinate positions (Manglitz et al., 2014). Aspects of cognitive capacity for diversity-related teaching are also explored elsewhere, though they may not have been termed that way (Banks, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 1996, 2007). As described earlier, emotive capacity involves restraining one's own emotional responses while listening to others who are just as laden with emotions (Manglitz et al., 2014).

Other proponents of emotion as critical to teaching and learning, might suggest that faculty exhibited high levels of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1990). According to Mayer and Salovey (1997) branches of emotional intelligence are as follows:

> The abilities to (a) perceive emotions in oneself and others accurately, (b) use emotions to facilitate thinking, (c) understand emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions, and (d) manage emotions so as to attain specific goals. (p. 124)

Faculty clearly demonstrated that their levels of emotional intelligence were acute, given the above definition and based on how they balanced navigation strategies that often existed in a tense duality. The ability to do this has fueled sustainability.

Interestingly, a large scale study conducted by Trigwell (2011) concerning emotions in the classroom found that university faculty who experienced positive emotions almost always deferred to student- focused approaches, while those who experienced negative emotions almost always used "transmission approaches" (Trigwell, 2011, p.607). Although his participants were not teachers of racial issues, this study is commonly referred to concerning emotions and teaching. However, the findings of the current study are not necessarily consistent with it. Ironically, though faculty in the current study have often experienced what Dirkx (2008) would call negative emotions in their practice, they have maintained student-focused approaches to teaching. In the face of a discourse that is so personal and painful at times, I contend that it is faculty's intentionality in practice as a means of sustaining themselves that have made the difference. Conversely, it might be argued that faculty may have experienced more positive than negative emotions in the course of their practice over time, leading to an overall student centered approach. As Closson (2011) detailed in her study on teaching

race, not all emotions experienced by instructor are negative during navigation. Still, strong evidence of intentional practices that drive sustainability are discussed next.

Faculty always emphasized the importance of community support to for self-preservation, and to enhance their practice. Although this was mentioned under the element of "intentionality' earlier in the chapter, I believe it is salient here as well because of the fact that most of the cross case findings involve faculty seeking out or relying on some form of community over the years. Arguably, the very intentional learning that undergirds the findings themselves have fueled sustainability in the practice of the study's participants. Seeking out learning along the way, combined with their intentional commitment to interrogate themselves and their craft in community are what keeps them going. Georgia's reflection on navigating difficult discourses on race in general gives credence to this line of thinking, specifically to the merit of community support. In it, she shared:

> The topic doesn't become lighter, but we know that when we lift things, lift with your knees and it makes it easier to carry. So even though the actual weight hasn't changed, the way that we go about carrying it has changed. That's what has to be operationalized in the classroom, and so that's where the lightness comes in at. It doesn't make it – see, we know it's a heavy weight object. You know that elephant is still sitting on it. He hasn't gone on a diet. He's still just as heavy as he was before. But we have strategies for lifting this thing and for carrying it that make it seem lighter. And a part of it is that we begin carrying it together.

She continued,

> And so instead of just me carrying this elephant by myself, because of the sharing that I've done, because of the vulnerability that I have exposed myself to, now I have this person on this side and this person on this side and this person on this side help to carry the elephant. The elephant still weighs the same. It doesn't feel as heavy, so to me that's what I need. T

That faculty of Color, and specifically Black faculty experience the most significant amounts of fatigue during classroom race talk is replete in the literature (Fasching-Varner et al., 2015; Kwon, 2011; Sue, 2013; Ting, 2003; Turner et al. 2008). Scholars have often called for methods and strategies that might help lessen instructor fatigue, and preserve a sense of motivation in doing race work (e.g. Bowmanet al. 2014; Ray, 2010). This section further suggests that consistent community support and a sense of intentionality about it, often equates to finding effective self-preservation mechanisms for faculty involved in race work. Fostering this kind of sustainability in practice may begin to lessen the isolation felt either by faculty of Color on predominantly White campuses (e.g. Sue et al, 2011), or by White faculty struggling to find their place and/or credibility in teaching on issues of race and racism in the classroom (e.g. Quaye, 2012; Sue et al, 2009). But as is also indicated by the cross case findings, one must do so with positionality in mind. As Tetreault (2012) shared, "one's ethnicity, cultural background, and religion can all be sources of different understandings and different questions… in diverse classroom environments position—perhaps more than any other single factor— influences the construction of knowledge" (p.1676).

Finally, the will to continue, driven by a multiplicity of personal, societal and contextual factors has been significant in sustaining experienced faculty. Across the board, they were driven by a strong personal passion, philosophy, and lived experiences that influenced their perception of navigation and their practice of it. For example, they considered navigating race talk as a continuum, so that the classroom was just one of many sites. Their passion for the work in general permeated diverse physical contexts.

Also, they considered their work in diversity as a way of thinking or looking at the world; beyond just being a vocation, it appeared that several felt called to it.

Alongside the plethora of negative risks involved in teaching race, faculty found the positive even in how they used their language. For example, they would refer to race talk being safe though uncomfortable, or an exciting space where transformation was always possible. As Harper (2015) contended in a recent webinar on racializing research agendas, practitioners have to change the discourse as a way of normalizing the difficulty inherent in race talk. Faculty in this study perceived the discomfort involved in race talk as part and parcel of the process and this perception appeared to have continuously influenced their will to continue, thus fueling sustainability. Such a notion is consistent with the findings of Mayo (2010) and others, who have asserted that without risk and discomfort, learning in multicultural or diversity education spaces is limited.

So far, I have interpreted that elements of duality, intentionality and sustainability all undergird the cross case findings of the study, and that these are highly dependent on positionality. But what does this mean for policy, research and practice concerning race talk in graduate classrooms? While some of the implications have already been mentioned, I outline conclusions and recommendations arising from the study in the next section.

Conclusions

Findings of the study describing how faculty navigate difficult discourses on race, handle challenging emotions, and relate navigation to their identities largely reflect that faculty are engaged in a balancing act. Further, they have maintained this balance in the presence of a tense duality, engaged it with intentionality, and committed to

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sustainability. The study's findings have led to my first the overall conclusion that approaches and strategies for authentic race talk are still very necessary. This includes both findings that are often reported in the literature, and those that are not. For example, participants' descriptions of the constant presence of student resistance, their own negative emotions like anger and sadness, coupled with a sense that the work is emotionally draining, is consistent with the work of many other scholars. Conversely, participants' balancing between and amongst multiple dichotomous strategies, learning to maintain a "no fear" attitude, and citing strong benefits to navigating hard race talk, is not frequently reported. With regard to the construct emerging from the findings, several conclusions might also be drawn concerning each of its elements—namely duality, intentionality, sustainability.

Conclusion I: Duality

Literature surrounding race talk has often reported the importance of a variety of *individual* instructional strategies and attitudes. However, this study found that (a) multiple strategies are engaged simultaneously, that (b) strategies highlight a mix of the attitudinal and instructional, and that (c) dualities might not only exist between two strategies, but amongst multiple sets. As such, the first conclusion to be drawn here is that faculty who engage in race focused discourses must acknowledge that a tense duality exists in engaging strategies effective for race talk; as such faculty should be open to identifying this, rather than focus only on fine tuning single strategies one at a time. Acknowledging a tense duality might also have implications for improving one's craft. For example, in self-reflecting on a race talk episode in which a faculty member was

negatively affected, s/he might try to identify what strategies could have been added - which might have fostered a greater sense of balance.

Second, faculty positionality adds complexity to how dichotomous strategies are engaged. This is because one's position might not only be juxtaposed against the context of a graduate classroom talking about race in general, but also against a very specific set of students within a given diversity course. Since race talk might look different based on students' identities and reactions, faculty positionality—and how they use strategies-- might shift and change according to that context. Hence, it might be fair to conclude two things here. One, that faculty must be consistently be flexible in adapting and changing strategies used in race talk – even per class session. And two, although an application of dual strategies might prove effective, doing so without an examination and understanding of how one's positionality might shift and change in race talk, might prove counterproductive.

Conclusion II: Intentionality

That being deliberate is critical during difficult dialogues on race has remained evident across the findings. Faculty were highly intentional about continuing to engage hard talks on race and about continuing to learn how to facilitate them better. This, despite risks to their personal and professional identities over time. Intentionality in this context clearly implies a great deal of sacrifice often has to be made. For several participants, even tenure as the oft cited *holy grail* of academia, easily became secondary to their anti-racist stance. As well, most faculty were intentional about being visibly open about emotions at times. Race talk involves the cognitive and the emotive; yet decision making is subject to faculty positionality and personal philosophy of teaching. To be

effective then, I conclude that faculty involved in teaching on race and racism—particularly novice faculty, must actively respond to the question: *Am I comfortable with discomfort? To what extent exactly? How much am I willing to sacrifice?* Answers to these questions may (a) make or break the way they engage in difficult dialogues n race or (b) serve as an evaluative tool as to whether or not social justice teaching might have been an authentic commitment.

Cross case findings emphasized participants' abilities to maximize even those identities that were perceived as limitations. Even when a tense duality existed in practice – e.g. between faculty identity and student identity—faculty were deliberate and purposeful in finding ways to keep dialogue open. They were intentional in making positionality influence their work positively--not always seeing it as a limitation. By extension, they were also willing to unlearn aspects of themselves, and adjust power dynamics that would prove counterproductive to diffusing difficult race talk. Faculty in this work then, must consistently answer questions like: *What salient identities characterize me best—personal, cultural and professional? What works for me? What is unique to my context in the moment? What role/s might my positionalities play in that moment? How can I best apply who I am to that context?* Finding one's personal style, rather than looking for a "one best system," sometimes advocated in diversity training—or utilizing the strategies of even others who have been successful race talk facilitators, but are situated in a different context, may prove the most effective.

A final conclusion to be made concerning intentionality is that it must align well with goals. Often, faculty teaching diversity-related course do have an anti-racist stance, and do set goals to make a solid impact through authentic and sometimes difficult

dialogues on race. However, if their levels of intentionality throughout the life of the course are low, there might be little success concerning that goal. If no sacrifice is made, or if when the difficulty heightens, faculty are not purposeful about finding ways to deconstruct the dialogue in safety, what could have been learned or impacted might be swept under the proverbial rug. Subsequently, only superficial dialogue might obtain. Participants in the study (and others elsewhere in the literature), have been clear on the fact that much of the learning in race talk happens in the most difficult moments. As such, faculty that are intentional about engaging authentically, and with sacrifice, about sharing the "struggle" of race talk with students, and about learning the best ways to maximize their positionalities during race talk, appear most poised for effective dialogue.

Conclusion III: Sustainability

As the final element in the emerging construct, three conclusions might be drawn from the idea of sustainability. First, the practice of self-reflection and community support are emphasized in the study's findings as an absolute for faculty to sustain themselves as they consistently engage in difficult dialogues on race. Reflection and support are frequently called for in the literature surrounding race talk. However, this study also led me to the conclusion that faculty must be creative in finding time to self-reflect, and in finding ways to engage support-particularly on campus.

Participants in the current study located self-reflective vehicles and support mechanisms in several things that they did. These included locating reflective and learning opportunities in teachable moments, diverse mentorship opportunities or even while driving home. It has often been said that formal professional development for multicultural or diversity training is a "chore," since faculty are pressed for time in

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juggling multiple responsibilities. However, based on findings from this study, I conclude that informal and incidental vehicles that can facilitate self-reflection should be activated more by individual faculty. By extension, this could promote continued self-development. Self-reflection for faculty also included much "unpacking" and unlearning of elements of their positionality so that change could occur. My conclusion is that faculty in conducting intentional critical reflection, must engage deconstructing of both self and practice equally – not just focus on shifting instructional strategies. This is particularly necessary since findings from this study indicate most strategies balanced are attitudinal, or of the self.

Concerning support, faculty support is often facilitated according to racial group, since personal tensions during race talk are often uniquely based on racial identity (e.g. literature calls for faculty of Color support, given isolation often felt in PWIs). Findings from this study indicated several faculty often connected with racial others in the work to struggle and to learn. From their actions, I conclude that that cross-cultural and cross racial interactions can prove a sustainable support system in doing race work. As such, faculty of all ethnicities should remain open to connecting with diverse others committed to facilitating dialogues on race.

Second, although findings from the study indicated that support was critical, findings also indicated that support or not, several of the participants were willing to continue engaging in difficult dialogues on race without fear—whether because they felt called to it, or because their lived experience or identities fueled their passion. I have concluded from these findings that faculty must establish and embrace a strong personal connection to the task of doing authentic race work. Such an embrace will help to fuel

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sustainability—a strong sense of continuity, even in the face of lack of campus support, and/or isolation.

Third, findings indicated that for most faculty, experience was the greatest teacher. As mentioned earlier, they identified and built on diverse teachable moments and prior experiences. Hence, I conclude that learning about strategies for difficult dialogues on race is important, but that learning how to learn about them over time—and in diverse ways--, might be even more critical for sustainable development of the professional self.

Recommendations

In this section of the chapter, I outline several recommendations, based on the study's findings, and in light of the conceptual framework emerging from the study. Recommendations outlined here are by no means exhaustive, but reflect key actions that researchers, policy-makers and practitioners might take in their bid to improve the facilitation of difficult dialogues on race.

Recommendations for Research

Concerning recommendations for research, I suggest four. First, further research should be conducted on duality, intentionality and sustainability components of the conceptual framework emerging from this study, on a local or campus level. Specifically, these might be longitudinal studies – over the course of one to three years; and studies with an emphasis on learning. Specifically, research questions might ask *what dual strategies might obtain for a given course over time? How have faculty who are social justice oriented, in a particular program or between programs, engaged in intentional learning to improve their craft? What positionalities influenced learning the most? In what ways have faculty learned to sustain themselves in practice?* Knight (2006) asserts

that faculty professional development needs to move beyond recommended strategies to an understanding of how to learn them. Qualitative studies like these might be helpful in further informing professional development initiatives and local practice.

Second, mixed methods studies could focus on investigating faculty use of reflective learning tools. An example of such a tool is discussed in the section to follow on "recommendations for practice." This could be either a study of one particular course during one semester, or over several semesters. Survey portions of the study could capture strengths and weaknesses of the reflective tool; interviews or small focus groups could grant insights into personal successes and challenges in using the tool. Third, research could be conducted on faculty who reference occupying a middle space by virtue of ethnicity or immigrant status. *In what ways does this identification influence difficult discourses on race?* Diverse research studies on foreign born racialized identities, and on second and third generation individuals in academia has continued to grow in recent times (e.g. Fries-Britt, Mwangi, & Peralta, 2014; Hernandez, Ngunjiri, & Chang, 2015). However, not much exists on how that relates to either race pedagogies, or handling racial discourses with adult learners in general.

Fourth, this study took an open ended approach so that faculty could choose those identities that were most salient to their practice. While most referenced race primarily, with gender and class in a few instances, further research could hone in on other identities often unexplored. For example identities surrounding ability could grant valuable insights to the way these intersect with other identities and influence self in practice.

Recommendations for Policy

Given the emotionally draining nature of dialogues on race, policy makers on campus should provide unique and sustained support for faculty committed to anti-racist work. This is particularly necessary since (a) many graduate programs in education require their students to be enrolled in at least one diversity course for the completion of their program, and (b) many graduate programs frequently emphasize their commitment to racial inclusion and other areas of diversity in their brochures, websites, marketing material and course syllabi. If this commitment is to be authentically honored, and prioritized beyond the scope of reading material, varied support mechanisms are needed for instructors who consistently engage in race work. Support may be financial or developmental, based on faculty needs and program or campus context.

Policy makers serious about anti-racist education should dedicate funds to formal professional development of instructors committed to diversity-related courses. These formal professional development opportunities might include travel to conferences, or to workshops uniquely associated with race talk. Findings of the current study indicate that participants frequently drew on informal learning opportunities to fine tune their craft. However, a recommendation for policy makers to dedicate formal professional development funds means faculty would be provided with opportunities to meet and network with others engaged in similar experiences. Informal professional development is inherent in this kind of networking and relationship building. By extension, these relationships could begin to lessen the sense of isolation experienced by faculty doing race work, and increase emotional support.

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Such networking opportunities are particularly necessary for faculty in smaller graduate programs. It might allow them to build relational support outside their institutions, since they may be one of few people focused on teaching diversity-related courses on their campus. As well, since emotional support needs of faculty appear so nuanced based on the study, opening up opportunities for networking will allow faculty to personally choose how they might engage in obtaining support, and from whom they will obtain it – based on their own needs.

Second policy-makers should acknowledge the difficulty inherent in dialogues on race. This may sound simplistic. But often, and according to the literature, two things may obtain concerning the culture around racial discourse in a given program. On one hand, campus administrators may avoid authentic dialogues on race because it appears so difficult. On the other hand, faculty who are social justice oriented, may engage in difficult dialogues on race, and suffer emotional stress. As such there is often a disconnect between what faculty experience – and the wider campus culture/authority. To decrease this disconnect, policy makers might add in roundtables or brown bag sessions focusing on race focused dialogue. In these forums, racial literacy, practical examples of difficult race talk, and faculty versus staff perspectives and experiences might be explored interactively. Forums like this may also increase a more inclusive campus culture.

Third, policy makers should create professional development programs that guide faculty on how they might actively learn as they experience difficult dialogues on race. Learning in the moment may be akin to reflection in action, or reflection on action (Schon, 1987). Very often, this might be difficult given that when tense moments arise in

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race talk, faculty may not be harnessing learning in that moment; conversely they might want to forget the moment. However, findings of the study indicate that experienced faculty have found a way to embed reflection in, and on learning, as part of their practice. Much of the learning involved self-development, informally. Given that fact, professional development initiatives should include piloting critical incident and reflective templates on practice, and inviting experienced diversity instructors to share ways in which they continue to learn intentionally. In addition to this, professional development might incorporate a one to one peer coaching program or peer mentoring program, thus granting opportunities for networking and shadowing of race talk facilitation across programs and departments--between novice and more experienced diversity instructors. Incentives should be granted, but such a program should be informal, sustainable over time, and its particulars be determined by the mentor/mentee involved.

Recommendations for Practice

Like policy makers first need to acknowledge the difficulty inherent in race talk as a foundation to providing meaningful support for faculty, I recommend that faculty who teach diversity courses must continue to acknowledge the multiple dualities that exist in practice. While the importance of understanding relationships between positionality and/or multiple identities--and practice have been explored in the literature (e.g. Gnandnass, 2014; Tummala-Narra, 2011), discussions on tense dualities that exist between and amongst strategies are very few. Earlier in chapter six, I mentioned that while many of the attitudinal and instructional strategies were referred to individually in the literature, I was unable to find references to how these strategies are simultaneously engaged, often as opposites.

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As a result of this complexity in practicing race talk, my second recommendation mirrors that of one of my participants. According to Victoria, "everybody needs a sanctuary group." I have used her words here, because the term sanctuary conjures not only a place where people and practice are like minded and similar so that learning can take place, but a sanctuary refers to a place of safety. As such, faculty who consistently engage in race focused dialogue should be involved in active communities of practice that foster learning and accountability around the dual tensions involved in race talk, that provides safety for both cognitive and emotive realms of sharing, and that encourages personal transformation and change.

For personally led initiatives like the community of practice or sanctuary group I have referenced, time is often the enemy, given that many faculty are tasked with multiple responsibilities outside the scope of their teaching practice. Here, I suggest two things: (a) that faculty attempt creativity in establishing CoP for meetings to cut down on commuting time; for example facilitating gatherings via Google Plus, SKYPE or Moodle technology platforms, and (b) that faculty utilize involvement with their CoP as a form of research- here they are able to obtain emotional/psychological support, advance their scholarship, and still fulfill part of their research responsibilities. Based on the study's findings, this kind of intentionality in practice is critical to sustaining self and practice in navigating difficult race talk.

Finally, and perhaps the most salient recommendation for practice is that a self-reflective tool is critical for practitioners, in order to cultivate personal style, and personal best practices for engaging strategies. Several reasons exist for this. As also indicated from the study and the literature, much of race talk facilitation is dependent on a keen

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awareness of self and identity. Self-reflective tools are important in the absence of formal professional development tailored to individual nuances, or in the absence of time or finances for seminars and conferences. It also acts as an accountability tool, and can be used alongside CoP sharing.

In addition, a self-reflective tool may help faculty reframe their language and mindset concerning race talk. So, for example, faculty in this study understood that discomfort and associated emotional responses are a norm for race talk. Their language was hopeful and at times filled with excitement, rather than filled with despair. A self-reflective tool could include for example, include a strategy/component of race talk that helps one evaluate how s/he frames an approach to the discourse, alongside other key strategies. I have provided an example below of what this kind of reflective tool might look like in identifying key strategic areas for race talk, juxtaposing positionality against practice, and evaluating one's strengths and areas for improved practice (note that the dimensions are reflected on recursively – as faculty progress in a given course):
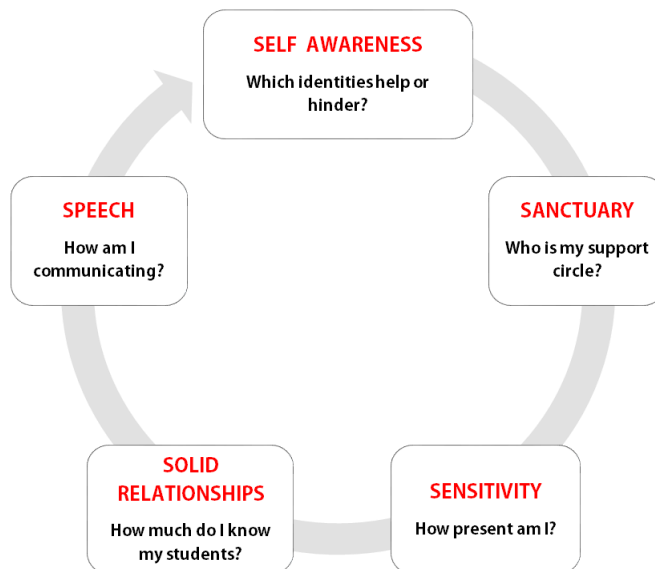

Figure 4: Five 'S' Self-Reflective Tool

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Researcher Final Reflections

At the beginning of this research journey, several persons would ask me: "Don't we have enough stuff on that?" "Why are we talking about talking about race again?" It discouraged me for about six minutes, because as I engaged with people in academia, I could sense a need for this kind of work. And I had a God-inspired gnawing inside. As a direct result of pursuing this study, I have grown in my ability to critically reflect on self, to dialogue cross-culturally, and to be a tad more confident about my work with adult learners. As well, what I have learned from participants about navigating race talk is something I'm not sure I would glean anywhere else in such a short time!

My own positionality as a Black immigrant female became a crucial point of reflection throughout data collection and analysis. I have come face to face with the tensions between the two dominant realities that form this positionality: (a) my lived experiences as a Black woman, born within a majority Black culture (alongside the kinds of pride and confidence inherent in this experience); and (b) my identity as a historically established minority within a racialized U.S space (by virtue of my skin color). Accordingly, as I listened to my participants, I found myself sharing the fierce passion of Black faculty to challenge any evidence of racism as a Black woman myself; I periodically smiled and cried with other faculty of Color who spoke to the reality of life on the margins. Yet, I could relate in some way to White faculty who engage in difficult race talk with similar levels of passion, but with an understanding that they could never really own what it would mean to do this work as a Black, U.S born individual.

At the same time, the reality of my third space or middle space existence became glaring. The complex tensions apparent here elicited mixed and sometimes conflicting

emotions of sadness, anger, joy and hope. Clearly, I embody the *outsider/within*. Overall, this research experience has engendered a greater understanding of my own multiple positions. Though neither Black nor White American, I might carry a confluence of psycho social lived experiences, that may serve to "exploit the margins" (Hernandez, Ngunjiri, & Chang, 2015), rather than increase its hold – even in a heavily racialized context. As a direct result of the study's findings, I am challenged to continue shedding light on this complex, dual "middle space," and what it might mean for the practice of navigating difficult dialogues on race in adult learning spaces.

Very recently, I found out that an oft cited 'race scholar' published a book exclusively on facilitating *difficult* dialogues on race in college classes. I first became excited, and then concerned - thinking yet another resource may have already covered most things. Given what writing this dissertation has taught me however, I proudly dwell on the first option – a sense of excitement about the seeming relevance of this kind of work. As such, I hope to keep going: I write for women who have been powerful mentors, but whose mindsets were so etched in post-colonial thought that they could not initially see the value in themselves, simply because they are Black; I write for the little girl that inspired me to go natural as an example for her, because she could not sleep based on being teased about "nappy" hair, as the only Black kid at her school. I also write for dozens of very good friends of multiple races and ethnicities across the globe—they too have brought tremendous value to my life. Finally, I write for my extended family – many of whom will be socialized in the racialized context that I wasn't, and will have questions that I didn't. Race is all around us, and my script will continue to echo that, but with solutions in mind. As one of my participants put it, "you can't *not* look."

APPENDIX SECTION

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in the Study

To: Potential Research Participants
From: Kayon K. Murray
Subject: Research Participation Invitation: "Experiences of Education Faculty
              Navigating Difficult Dialogues on Race"

This email message is an approved request for participation in research that has been declared exempt by the Texas State University Institutional Review Board.

Purpose of this research:
The purpose of this qualitative case study research is to find out from experienced faculty teaching in college of education graduate programs, how they have navigated difficult discourses on race in their diversity related courses over time. As navigation means "…to walk or find one's way through" (Oxford, 2003), the study goes beyond looking at expert-recommended teaching strategies, to examine how faculty have learned to work through their own personal tensions, in the face of diverse classroom challenges associated with race talk.

Criteria for participation:
Individuals selected for participation in this project will be racially diverse faculty in
   graduate fields of education that:
1. have taught a graduate level, diversity related course for three years or more;
2. have taught these diversity-related courses using face-to face format
3. have navigated/engaged with difficult dialogues on race
4. have been introspective about their engagement with these dialogues, and have learned something about themselves, teaching and/or educating adults.
5. have demonstrated a willingness to discuss their navigation experiences

If you volunteer to participate, you:
•   will be interviewed individually (in person, via SKYPE, or by phone; estimated time 60-90 minutes);
•   will be invited to complete a critical incident report detailing **one** specific incident that illuminates your experiences with difficult discourses on race.
•   will be contacted for a brief (30-45 minute) follow-up interview.

Assurance of confidentiality:
Participants will not be personally identified in transcripts of interviews or in any future presentations or publications sharing findings from this project.

Voluntary nature of participation:
•   Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary.
•   You may withdraw from the research at any time.

Anticipated value of the findings:
Many faculty in U.S graduate fields of education engage their learners in race-centered discourses given increasing diversity, race based inequities, and their responsibility to prepare educators. 'Race talk', however, is difficult for many who teach it is often feared among faculty in adult and higher education settings. Yet, only a few published studies have focused exclusively on the instructor experience with it. Gaining such an understanding is important to helping others alleviate similar concerns and to developing policies that support meaningful faculty development initiatives for teaching on matters of difference. Project findings will be shared at one or more conferences focusing on adult students and/or diversity in higher education and will hopefully be published in a similar journal.

If you are interested in participating or have questions about the research:
Please reply to Kayon Murray at kkm56@txstate.edu

This project EXP2014F60695K was approved by the Texas State IRB July 17, 2014. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser (512-245-3413 - lasser@txstate.edu) and to Becky Northcut, Director, Research Integrity & Compliance (512-245-2314 -- bnorthcut@txstate.edu).

Questions about this project should be addressed to Kayon K. Murray, kkm56@txstate.edu.

APPENDIX SECTION

Appendix B: Consent Form to Participate in Research Study

IRB Approval #EXP2014F60695K

This form provides you with information about the research you are asked to participate in. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title of Research:
              Experiences of Education Faculty Navigating Difficult Dialogues on Race

Researcher: **Kayon K. Murray** M.Ed., PhD Candidate, kkm56@txstate.edu
                    Adult, Professional and Community Education Program
                    Texas State University

Purpose of this research:
The purpose of this qualitative case study research is to find out from experienced faculty teaching in graduate fields of education, how they have navigated difficult discourses on race in their diversity related courses over time. As navigation means "…to walk or find one's way through" (Oxford, 2003), the study goes beyond looking at expert-recommended teaching strategies, to examine how faculty have learned to work through their own personal tensions, in the face of diverse classroom challenges associated with race talk.

Criteria for participation:
Individuals selected for participation in this project will be racially diverse faculty in graduate fields of education that:
1. have taught a graduate level, diversity related course for three years or more;
2. have taught these diversity-related courses using face-to face format
3. have navigated/engaged with difficult dialogues on race
4. have been introspective about their engagement with these dialogues, and have learned something about themselves, teaching and/or educating adults.
5. have demonstrated a willingness to discuss their navigation experiences

What is expected of you as a study participant?
If you volunteer to participate you will be interviewed individually, in person or via SKYPE. Interviews are anticipated to last 60-90 minutes. You will be contacted for a brief (30-45 minute) follow-up interview. You will also be invited to complete a critical incident report detailing **one** specific incident that illuminates your experiences with difficult discourses on race.

Voluntary nature of participation:
Your decision to participate in this project is entirely voluntary. If you decide you do not wish to continue your participation, you may withdraw at any time.

Anticipated benefits of the research:
Many faculty in U.S graduate fields of education engage their learners in race-centered discourses given increasing diversity, race based inequities, and their responsibility to prepare educators. 'Race talk', however, is difficult for many who teach it is often feared among faculty in adult and higher education settings. Yet, only a few published studies have focused exclusively on the instructor experience with it. Gaining such an understanding is important to helping others alleviate similar concerns and to developing policies that support meaningful faculty development initiatives for teaching on matters of difference. Project findings will be shared at one or more conferences focusing on adult students and/or diversity in higher education and will hopefully be published in a similar journal.

Anticipated risks of participation in the research:
Given the focus of the project concerning how you have navigated difficult discourses overtime, your level of experience in doing so – and your willingness to reflect critically on your experiences , there are no anticipated risks of psychological harm, other than the potential minimal risk of some possible discomfort in recalling negative classroom experiences. You may refuse to answer any questions if you do not feel comfortable providing an answer.

Assurance of confidentiality:
If you agree to participate in the research study, you are agreeing to let me use examples of your oral or written responses as information for my research.
- Your identity will be known only to me as researcher.
- With your permission, interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed.
  You will be assigned a pseudonym and your actual name will not be used either in transcripts of interviews or in any future presentations or publications sharing findings from this project.
- Data will be stored in a locked file cabinet to ensure that it is secure and remains confidential. Your signed consent form will be kept in a different secure location.
- A copy of the study findings will be shared with you if you wish.

Contacts and Questions
If you have questions later about the project or wish to withdraw your participation, please contact me directly (Kayon K. Murray, kkm56@txstate.edu;862.668.1238)

This project **EXP2014F60695K** was approved by the Texas State IRB on July 17, 2014. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Jon

Lasser (512-245-3413 – <u>lasser@txstate.edu</u>) and to Becky Northcut, Director, Research Integrity & Compliance (512-245-2314 – bnorthcut@txstate.edu).

Statement of Consent:
• I have read the information above and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in the study

• I consent to participate in the study

_____

Participant Signature   Printed Name
     Date

_____

Researcher Signature   Printed Name
     Date

If the interview was not conducted in person, you may return the signed consent form in as a pdf attachment to email, or via snail mail to 1518 Old Ranch Road 12, Apartment 1207, San Marcos Texas, 78666.

Appendix C: Pre - Interview Data Sheet

Thank you for your time in completing this brief data sheet for this qualitative study. As a part of building an accurate profile of each participant, it is designed to capture self-defined elements of who you are and the important work that you do – as well as to expedite and supplement the interview process.

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself in the following general categories:

   - Identity (gender, race, any other identity dimensions that you feel may be pertinent to your teaching of race):

     _____
     _____

   - Educational background (particularly master's and doctoral level)

     _____

   - Field of study related to education in which you teach/have taught (e.g. Educational Leadership, Adult Education etc.).

     _____

   - Approximate years teaching at the college level:_____

   - Approximate years teaching diversity-related courses:_____

2. Referring to your *graduate level* diversity classes, please share briefly on:

   - Typical class size/s_____

   - Typical racial/ethnic mix_____

   - Typical class category (required or elective?)_____

   - Typical class composition/level (Masters, Doctoral or mixed?)_____

3. Anything else that you would like to add as it relates to the aforementioned questions?

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Interview I: Navigating Difficult Dialogues on Race

Thank you for meeting with me today for this conversation…

1. I'd like to start by verifying a bit about your background, based on the pre-interview data sheet. Can you tell me about that…a bit about who you are, and about your teaching career? (Possible prompts - if excluded from pre interview data sheet: educational background, graduate degree focus, tenure status, years in teaching/in current institution etc.).

I understand that you volunteered to participate in this study because you apparently have encountered difficult dialogues about race as part of teaching a graduate course related to diversity. But, before we talk specifically about your experiences with these difficult dialogues, I would like to get a picture of your classroom and general work environment to get a better sense of your context.

2. If you were to record a video that would give me an idea of the place where you work (atmosphere, culture, diversity etc.), what would I see?
3. What does it feel like to work where you work, and to teach on issues of race there?
4. How did you first get started teaching a course or courses including a focus on race?
5. Courses that feature some focus on race are usually varied, in terms of the way instructors approach them. Can you tell me a little bit about your approach to dealing with race content?

    - What are your goals in teaching on race related issues?

    - What type of atmosphere do you strive for?

    - What do you want your students to come away from race talk with? (Possible probe: what's the one thing you would want them to get?)

    - How have your goals developed or changed over time?

In the next set of questions, I will ask you to share some of your personal experiences with difficult dialogues on race and how you have worked through them. I want to thank you in advance for sharing this space with me…I know that for some, several of these issues are not easy to talk about. Please feel free to give examples, to make your responses as detailed as possible – and of course, to stop me at any point in our conversation if you have questions or need me to clarify something.

6. Think about the difficult dialogues on race you have experienced. Can you share with me some of the typical contexts in which these kinds of dialogues arise? (Possible probe: What triggers it – e.g. response to content, classroom peer? What's happening in the classroom prior to this? Who's involved?)

7. In general, how have you responded to students when difficult dialogues on race arise? Why do you believe you respond in those particular ways?

8. What do you believe to be the most effective strategies for responding to a difficult dialogue on race? (Possible probe: what are some of the general approaches that have worked - or not worked for you in responding to students?)

So far, we have talked about some of your general responses and approaches with students, but we know that many times, faculty grapple with their own personal reactions during difficult race talk. Given your experience over time….

9. Could you tell me a little bit about the kinds of emotions that you find to be challenging during a difficult race dialogue? What factors generally trigger them?

10. When you experience these kinds of emotions, how do you handle them?

11. What factors influence the way you handle emotions during race talk?

12. What strategies for handling emotions in this context have worked or not worked for you?

13. In looking back, what do you wish you had known about dealing with emotions and emotional responses that you know now?

What you've shared up to this point gives me insight into how you handle/facilitate the difficulties of race talk that emerge for your students – and for you. In my study, I use the term navigate to mean more than just teaching strategies/approaches or responses used to facilitate students during difficult dialogues on race…navigation here means "to steer, or to find one's way through…"

14. Tell me what comes to mind when you think of the term navigate in this sense. What does navigating or working through a difficult dialogue on race mean for you? What does that involve?

15. If novice diversity educators asked you to describe how you have managed to balance dealing with your challenging personal reactions and other challenging

classroom elements (e.g. negative student reactions), what would you say?

16.   In looking back, how do you think you have learned to do this since you began teaching on issues of race? (Possible probe: what, if anything has equipped you over time – formally or informally?)

Interview II

In our previous conversation, you shared about what navigating a difficult dialogue on race means for you. Before I ask you any additional questions is there anything you might want to add to what we discussed previously, or to clarify with me?

I want to continue getting insights from you on this, but looking a little closer at the issue of identity this time. You shared a number of 'identities' or things that define who you are early in our conversations (e.g. race, gender etc.).

17.   How might any of these identities relate to how you handle difficult dialogues on race? To how students respond to you during such dialogues? (Possible probe: can you share with me what it is like for you to have to navigate a difficult dialogue on race (e.g. as a Black/White, female/tenured/non-tenured professor)?

18.   How do you believe difficult dialogues on race have impacted/affected you personally and professionally?

19.   It's often been said that dialogues on difference – e.g. on difficult subjects like race, have varied positive outcomes for students. What of positive outcomes or benefits for you, as an instructor engaged in difficult race talk for some time? Your thoughts?

20.   In what ways, if any, do you believe your engagement in difficult dialogues on race has changed over the years? Why or why not? (Possible probes: what have you changed or done differently in working through it? Why? What lessons have been learnt?)

21.   Is there anything that was important about your experience in navigating difficult discourses on race that we have not talked about so far?

APPENDIX SECTION

Appendix E: Critical Incident Report

As an extension of our first interview, I would like you to describe a specific experience you have encountered in navigating difficult dialogues on race…

Could you please take some time to reflect on an incident that stands out in your memory as the most – or one of the most difficult dialogues on race in your graduate classroom? What happened (e.g. who was involved)? What may have contributed to the incident (personal, cultural, institutional factors etc.)?

Now describe "that moment" in as much detail as possible, with these guiding prompts:

- *What am I hearing?*

- *What am I seeing/observing?*

- *What am I feeling?*

- *What am I thinking/sensing?*

- *How am I responding/reacting?*

Now that you have reflected:

- How do you believe you were impacted either personally and/or professionally?

- Has this experience influenced the way you now engage in difficult dialogues on race? If yes, how exactly?

Appendix F: Synopsis of Case Profiles

Name	Race/Ethnicity; Gender	Teaching Context	Years Teaching Diversity-Related Courses	Level of Students
Anita	Latina, Female	Large University; Racially Diverse Program	8-10	Masters and Doctoral
Cathy	White, Female	Large PWI	10-15	Masters and Doctoral
Georgia	African American, Female	Large PWI	8-10	Doctoral
Isabel	Latina, Female	Large PWI	8-10	Masters and Doctoral
Manuel	Asian-American, Male	Large University; Racially Diverse Program	9-10	Masters
Sandra	African American/Black, Female	Large PWI	8-10	Masters and Doctoral
Victoria	White, Female	Large PWI; Racially Diverse Program	15-20	Masters and Doctoral
Youjin	Asian American, Female	Medium PWI; Diverse Program	15-20	Masters and Doctoral

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