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Racism in the Classroom: Why is it Occurring? What is Being Done?

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RACISM IN THE CLASSROOM: WHY IS IT OCCURRING?
WHAT IS BEING DONE?

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Abstract

Racism has been an issue that has been in the United States for many of years. Since the 1800's history has taken place in forms of the Civil Rights Era, The Reconstruction Era, and milestones have been made with influential people such as Ruby Bridges, Rosa Parks, Septima Clark. From the fight for Civil Rights to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, The Brown vs Board of Education case and the denigration of race we have come such a long way. The research for this paper examines the cases and the people who are listed above as well as looking at the different forms of race, learn about the critical race theory and its founder, as well as read experiences from teachers who have worked with students of race to give us a better understanding on how we can feel comfortable teaching the touchy subject of race in the classroom setting.

Keywords: Racism, Critical Race Theory

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I would like to thank my husband, Ben, as well as my family for encouraging me to always do my best during my college career. I would also like to thank my professors and advisors for all of the guidance and words of encouragement in the days when I felt defeated to make me understand that I can do anything that I set my mind to even if it feels like a challenging task.

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Introduction

Imagine walking into a brand-new school; you have just moved in from a nearby state and you cannot wait to meet your teacher and make new friends. While you are full of excitement, you also feel a sense of insecurity. You know that you are a different race than most of the students, you had been bullied at your previous school and the fear comes back of going through the humiliation again. How did you feel while reading this? Could you relate to what was being written? This can be the reality for many students of race in the United States. Racism is a harsh reality that we face in society today, starting back as early as the Civil Rights Era students and teachers of color have dealt with troubling issues and have experienced various perceptions from other members of society.

As you read this paper you will learn about where racism in education began, take a dive into the famous Brown vs Board of Education case, learn about the various forms of racism (believe it or not there is more than one form), teaching approaches, curriculum building and theories/models that are used to make our classroom as welcoming as possible for the upcoming generation.

As future teachers, we need to see what is occurring in our world and see what we can do to make a positive impact. The Brown vs Board of Education case will help readers understand how far we have come in the education system since the passing of the law to allow black students into our classrooms, readers will also learn about the hardships that they faced as they headed up to that case and why that case was a staple in education. Readers need to understand the various forms of racism. When we are in our classrooms and out in society, we need to understand what is offensive to others and we also need to discover how we can teach our students not to be racist toward one another, we need to understand that we might just be the

only person in that child's life who can teach them the difference between right and wrong when it comes to racism. I also feel as if curriculum building is key and we as educators need to know what we should implement in our lesson plans and what we need to consider when we have a diverse group of students in our classroom. Remember, it is our responsibility to educate our students and provide them with the best learning environment. I feel as if this will be a core concept in this paper.

History of Racism in Education

Since the 1800s racism has been seen in the educational system throughout the United States. African Americans were not allowed to read or write because it was against the law, and for them to receive an education African Americans had to attend schools that was established by the Quakers and Christians (Lynch, 2019). Jim Crow laws were established in 1877. According to Hussey (2016). The Jim Crow laws were set in place to separate the black and white societies in the south. These laws not only separated societies in the school system, but also separated them in terms of where the black society could live, which cars in the train they were allowed to ride in, which water fountains they could drink out of, and the laws also determined which hospitals and restaurants they could go to. If that isn't crazy enough even cemeteries were separated!

In the 1950s the infamous Brown vs Board of Education case took place. The Brown vs Board case began as a combination of five different cases that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement. The cases were combined into one due to them having the same stance on ending segregation in schools. According to Robertson (2016) "The Brown decision overturned separate, but equal and set off a firestorm of resistance efforts throughout the south" (p.108). These events led up to the Civil Rights Movement and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In this portion of the paper, you will be learning about these events that played a huge role in the history of racism in education.

Years of Overcoming Segregation

Who is Jim Crow?

Jim Crow was a fictional character played by a white man by the name of Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice in the early 1830s. The character portrayed a clumsy and foolish

enslaved man. Rice envisioned the character after seeing an elderly man sing the song “Jump Jim Crow” right here in our own state of Kentucky in the city of Louisville. Thomas Rice then decided to dress himself as “Blackface” where he performed stereotypical jokes and songs of the African American race. The character faded out in the late 19th century, but the term “Jim Crow” described the anti-Black laws that were created after the Reconstruction Era (Andrews, 2014).

Jim Crow Law

Jim Crow law is another term that used for anti-Black laws. These laws were set in place for a century and was meant to legalize racial segregation. Not only did these laws deny African Americans the right to vote, hold jobs and have other basic rights that Whites had, the laws also denied education for African Americans in the south. For those states that did allow education to be available for African Americans they had to use separate textbooks and be in separate classrooms (Editors, 2022).

According to researchers (U.S. National Park Services, 2022) Jim Crow laws were applied in five states. Florida, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, and Texas. In the state of Florida, the schools for white children and Negro children would be separated. The state of Mississippi enforced that separate schools should be maintained for the children of white and colored race. Missouri established separate but free schools for the education of children of African descent; and it was made unlawful for any colored child to attend any white school, or any white child to attend a colored school. In New Mexico separate rooms would be provided for the teaching of children of African descent, and when the rooms were provided students were not allowed to be admitted to the school rooms occupied and used by students of Caucasian or other descent. And in Texas the County Board of Education shall provide schools

of two kinds: those for white children and those for colored children” (U.S. National Park Services, 2022). The Jim Crow laws ended in the post-World War II era and at the start of the Civil Rights Movement. The segregation law for education ended in 1954 when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Brown after the Brown vs Board of Education case.

Not only did the Jim Crow laws affect the education system these laws also affected the day-to-day life of people in society. The Jim Crow Laws began as a way to have the white population set a response to exclude the Black community from having their own rights (Cates, 2013). The first Jim Crow law was established in the state of Tennessee in 1881. The law stated that “all railroad companies located and operated in this State shall furnish separate cars, or portions of cars cut off by partition walls, in which all colored passengers who pay first class passenger rates of fare, may have the privilege to enter and occupy, and such apartments shall be kept in good repair, and with the same conveniences. In 1841 the state of Massachusetts instilled what was known as Jim Crow rail cars, these would be for the Black population only. Other states had Jim Crow cars in their trains as well that were used for Black people, drunks and for people who smoked. The benches weren’t cushioned and instead were made from wood. The Jim Crow cars were placed behind the locomotive where passengers would be hit with soot and inhale smoke that would be coming from the engine. One of the most famous cases concerning the Jim Crow Law and transportation was the case involving Rosa Parks. Rosa Parks made history for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger. This would become known as the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955

In December of 1955 Ms. Rosa Parks boarded a bus in Montgomery, Alabama after leaving work. Parks worked as a seamstress and worked for the NAACP for many years. Parks

along with other Black citizens was sitting in the row behind the section for white passengers to be seated. The white section was full and there wasn't any more room. A white citizen boarded the bus and when the bus driver asked Rosa and the others to move to the rear of the bus she refused and was arrested for violating one of the Jim Crow laws that were in place. Rosa Parks would be arrested and was considered guilty of all charges that were put against her. She appealed the conviction and put up a challenge to the Jim Crow law. She had a lot of support from the Black community, and they decided to boycott the buses. The Black population, which made up 75 percent of riders, took a stand on December 5, 1955, to signify their support for Parks and to hope to inspire the bus companies to integrate, by the end of the day almost 40,000 riders joined the boycott (Cates, 2013, p.131).

The participants of the boycott would vote to continue the boycott which would last 381 days. A resolution was written to explain what the boycott was for, it read "That the citizens of Montgomery are requesting that every citizen in Montgomery, regardless of race, color or creed, to refrain from riding buses owned by the Montgomery City Lines, Incorporated, until some arrangement has been worked out with the Montgomery City Lines, Incorporated. . Be it further resolved that we have not, we are not, and we have no intentions of using any unlawful means or any intimidation to persuade persons not to ride the Montgomery City Lines buses. However, we call upon your conscience, both moral and spiritual, to give your wholehearted support to this worthy undertaking" (p.132). The boycotters didn't right out challenge the Jim Crow laws, all they wanted was to have a middle section added to buses where both Blacks and Whites could sit when the black only or white only section was at capacity. Another request that they had was for fair treatment to be given to them and for black drivers to be hired for the black

routes, when their request was denied, they then fought for full integration of the buses. The boycott ended when the bus company agreed to the demands from the Montgomery Improvement Association, but the city government still followed the Jim Crow laws (Cates, 2013 pp.133-134).

Education during the Reconstruction Era

After slavery ended in 1864 African Americans began to find ways to taking the first steps of earning an education. While many obstacles were set in their way the overpowering commitment of education became crucial. Researchers for the National Park Service found that (U.S. National Park Service, 2022) African Americans in the South worked together to create their own education system. The ones who knew how to read and write were able to manage business contracts and they collaborated with one another to make certain that the laws and regulations that would keep them as formerly enslaved Black people would be heard. Their dedication eventually helped them gain funds to build schools and hire African American teachers.

Shortly after the Civil War began in 1861 the state of Virginia started to see African Americans establish schools for freed people. By the end of the Reconstruction Era more than one-third of the teachers were African Americans; not only did they teach, but they also founded and provided employees for the first secondary school in the state for free Blacks. The first school opened in Alexandria in 1861 and even though inadequate funding was an issue the attendance rose up until 1870 (Butchart,2020).

Tolson's Chapel was built in 1866 near the location of the Civil War Battle of Antietam. Researchers from the U.S. National Park Services found that David B. Simons who was a literate African American male and trustee of Tolson's Chapel most likely taught some of the

children and adults in the mid-1860s due to the small number of literate African Americans and the struggle to pay teacher's salary.

Freedmen's Bureau and its Impact on Education

In 1865 congress passed an act known as Freedman's Bureau, this act was set in place to help former Black slaves and poor whites in the south when the Civil War ended. According to Butchart, The Freedmen's Bureau offered services such as supplying food, housing, medical aid, established schools and offered legal assistance. When it comes to education, while the Bureau did not hire teachers or operate schools themselves, they did contribute by renting buildings to be used for classrooms, provided textbooks and transportation for educators as well having a superintendent and offered protection from the military for the students and teachers (Butchart, 2020).

One of the states that was impacted is Georgia. With the help of Freedman's Bureau, schools for freed people began to open. In the state of Georgia these Black Schools were so overcrowded that "within a year of Black Freedom, at least 8,000 formerly enslaved African Americans were attending schools in Georgia; eight years later those schools struggled to contain almost 20,000 students" (Butchart, 2020, p.1).

In the state of Alabama 41,300 African Americans attended public schools in the year of 1870; as of 1871 54,300 students were enrolled in public education. The increase in numbers was due to the enrollment of former slaves as well as assistance from the Freedman's Bureau Act and the American Missionary "During the day, teachers affiliated with the African American schools taught children and at night they provided instruction to adults, many of whom were motivated to learn so they could read the Bible" (Harvey, 2010, p.1).

Span (2002) mentions that in the spring of 1863 the state of Mississippi saw the start of the Freedman Schools for their state. The peak of Freedman Schools happened in 1868 after the 128 institutions had a total enrollment of 6,250 students. During the years of 1865-1870 there was rise to about 10 percent of the state's former slaves attending schools. In 1870 these schools would become the foundation of the first tax-supported public school system in the state (Span, 2002).

Shortly after the Civil War began in 1861 the state of Virginia started to see African Americans establish schools for freed people. By the end of the Reconstruction Era more than one-third of the teachers were African Americans; not only did they teach, but they also founded and provided employees for the first secondary school in the state for free Black people. The first school opened in Alexandria in 1861 and the attendance rose until 1870 (Butchart, 2020).

The History behind the Brown Vs Board of Education Case

The Brown vs Board of Education case is one of the most prominent cases to occur for the educational system in the United States. Spanning over five separate cases from states consisting of Kansas, South Carolina, Delaware, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The issue remained the same for all, the constitutionality of state sponsored segregation in the public school system. The five cases that were involved was Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Briggs v. Elliot, Davis v. Board of Education of Prince Edward County Virginia, Bolling v. Sharpe, and Gebhart v. Ethel. It was decided by the Supreme Court in 1952 to merge all of the cases together which then became known as the Brown vs Board of Education case (uscourts.gov).

The chief justices struggled to reach a verdict due to the differences revolving around the Plessy vs Ferguson Case with Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson not wanting to make any changes to the verdict from that case, he passed on before the hearing of the Brown vs Board of Education case and President Eisenhower appointed Earl Warren who was serving as the Governor of California to take over the case. Warren took pride in his position and on May 17th, 1954, he stated “in the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place,” as segregated schools are “inherently unequal.”

The case closed in 1954 when the court ruled in favor of Brown. The lawyer during the Brown vs. Board case was Thurgood Marshall. Thurgood was the head of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund and when President Johnson was in office Marshall was appointed as the first Black Supreme Court Justice (Editors, 2021). Marshall vowed to bring in the best attorneys for this case; he had appointed Robert Carter, Jack Greenberg, Constance Baker Motley, Spottswood Robinson, Oliver Hill, Louis Redding, Charles, and John Scott, Harold R. Boulware, James Nabrit, and George E.C. Hayes (naacpldf.org). The Brown vs Board case would be recognized as Marshall’s greatest victory during his time serving as a Civil Rights lawyer (Editors, 2021).

The Brown vs Board of Education not only played a historic role in providing equal opportunity for African American students, but also individuals with disabilities. The case affected various aspects of educational laws and procedures. Overtime policies in schools made changes to approaching students with disabilities. Eventually, states mandated that the segregation of race in schools denied Black students admission to a school that had white students. The plaintiffs in this case argued that by segregating schools the students’ mindset would be damaged due to the lack of educational

opportunities for the minorities and that by segregating public schools Black students were violated of their rights from the equal protection law of the Fourteenth Amendment. When it came to students with disabilities it was argued by the court that state-required or state- sanctioned solely on the basis of an individual's unalterable characteristics was unconstitutional and violated equal protection and equal educational opportunities. Once this attention was brought to matter a large number of legal avenues were opened for those who sought to redress for the students with disabilities.

During the Brown vs Board case the higher court decided that Yell's (2019) found that:

Due to the importance of education in society the stigmatizing effects of racial segregation, and the negative consequences of racial segregation on the education of those against whom segregation was practiced, segregated public schools denied students to equal educational opportunities.

Parental advocacy during the case rose and they claimed that "students with disabilities had the same rights as students without disabilities" (Yell, 2019, p. 41). The parents for students with disabilities based their arguments on the following basis: that there was an unacceptable level of differential treatment for students born with disabilities and that some students with disabilities weren't provided with an education, but students that weren't born with disabilities had the right to an education. The advocacy of parents for children with disabilities sought out to fight for equal educational rights by determining that if segregation by race denied equal rights, then total exclusion for children who had disabilities was also a denial of educational rights (Yell, 2019).

Who is Ruby Bridges?

Even though the issues of segregation were resolved in the northern states, that wasn't the same case for states in the south. A young girl by the name of Ruby Bridges became an activist for Civil Rights at the age of six years old by becoming the first African American to desegregate William Frantz Elementary School. Ruby was born in 1954, which was the same year that the Brown vs Board of Education decision was made, she was the oldest of five siblings and the daughter to Lucille and Abon Bridges. At the age of two her family moved to New Orleans, Louisiana in hopes of finding better job opportunities (Michals, 2015).

The school system in New Orleans made students of color take a test which would determine if they could attend a white school. These tests were apparently written to be difficult so that students of color would have a hard time passing. The logic behind this set-up was if all of the African American students failed the test the schools in New Orleans could stay segregated for a longer period (Tikkanen, n.d.).

Ruby's parents wanted her to obtain the best education possible, she passed the exam as well as her siblings, but her parents were torn about what to do. Her father feared for her safety, but her mother wanted her to obtain the best education possible and knew that attending a white school would have influence with how well she was taught. The decision was made for her to attend the white school. Ruby's first day at Frantz school was on November 14, 1960; she along with her mother was driven to the school which was five blocks from her home by federal marshals. She was informed by one of the escorts that when they arrived at the school, two marshals would walk behind her and two would be in front of her. Once Ruby and her mother Lucille arrived at the school there were large crowds of people that would yell and throw things at them. The police had barricades in place and were everywhere. Ruby was escorted into the

principal's office where she would spend her day due to all the chaos that occurred and the white parents keeping their children at home.

Her first few weeks of school wasn't easy because she was confronted on several occasions with racist remarks and was even threatened to be poisoned by a woman, from that day forward the marshals only allowed her to eat her food from home and she wasn't allowed to go to the cafeteria or outside with the other students (Tikkanen, n.d.). Despite all her struggles and only having one teacher by the name of Mrs. Henry accept her Ruby never missed a day of school (Michals, 2015).

Mrs. Henry

Barbra Henry was a teacher who moved to New Orleans from Boston, Massachusetts; she was a new teacher to Frantz School and was willing to teach Ruby. She was the only student in Mrs. Henry's class because all the parents threatened to pull their children out and send them to another school. Mrs. Henry was Ruby's teacher for the entire year. Mrs. Henry and Ruby sat side by side at two desks while working on her lessons, it was said that Barbra Henry was "loving and supportive of Bridges, helping her not only with her studies but also with the difficult experience of being ostracized", even in her adult years whenever she would see Ruby, she greeted her with open arms (Michals, 2015).

What is Ruby Doing Now?

After graduating from a desegregated high school Ruby Bridges became a travel agent. She married and had four sons. She alongside her former teacher Mrs. Henry worked together in the mid-1990s as public speakers. She later wrote two books about her early experiences and received the Carter G. Woodson Book Award. In 1999 the Ruby Bridges Foundation was established. This foundation was formed to promote

tolerance and change through education. Washington, DC. Made her an honorary member as a deputy marshal (Michals, 2015).

Septima Clark

Septima Clark is a Civil Rights activist who played a vital role in education. Septima was born on May 3rd, 1898, in Charleston, South Carolina. Clark was a Civil Rights activist who is known for her citizenship schools which helped emancipate and empower African Americans. Clark had the qualifications to be a teacher, but in Charleston African Americans weren't allowed to teach (Biography.com Editors, 2020). Clark would however teach at a Black school on Johns Island which was just on the outskirts of Charleston and would expand her career throughout the state of South Carolina (Stanford University's The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute n.d.).

She joined the NAACP in efforts to try and make the change to where people of color could teach in the school systems. In the year of 1945 she, along with other members of this organization worked alongside Thurgood Marshall to fight for black and white teachers to obtain equal pay (Biography.com Editors, 2020).

Septima Clark lost her teaching privileges which she held for 40 years in 1956 after a law was passed in South Carolina that made it where people who worked for the city and state couldn't be involved in civil rights organizations. Clark refused to leave the NAACP which resulted in her contract not being renewed. During the summer she would volunteer to hold workshops at Highland Folk School in Tennessee. This school was a "grassroots education center that was dedicated to social justice". Rosa Parks would attend one of her workshops.

After being hired on as the director of workshops Septima Clark would teach people basic literacy skills, their rights as a U.S. citizen and how to register to vote. Highlander school would be closed in 1961.

Following the closure of Highland Folk School, Clark would go and work for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) as a director of education. The SCLC established the Citizenship Education Program (CEP) that was based off of her citizenship workshops from her time at Highland. It was here that Clark would conduct teacher training and help build curriculum (Kings Institute, n.d). She retired from the SCLC in 1970.

The year of 1974 showed what a triumph in her mind was as she was elected to serve on the school board in Charleston. This was the same school that had fired her in 1956. Clark stated that “It just goes to show that we can get something done nonviolently”. Even though she viewed this as a triumph she still believed that blacks were far from having complete equality. In an interview that she had with Lanker for the “*I Dream a World*” book she states that “Dr. King had a dream that all people should be free ... that they should be able to do all the things they want to do in America. I think we’re nearer. I want people to say, this is my dream and I want it carried forth.’ I want that dream enforced” (Encyclopedia.org, n.d.).

Septima Clark was awarded with the Living Legacy Award in 1979 by President Carter and received the Order of Palmetto, which is South Carolina’s highest civilian honor in the years of 1987. She passed away in December of 1987 but is remembered for helping several African Americans take control of their own lives and discover what full rights they had as citizens (Editors, 2020).

Research by Gyant and Atwater (1996) finds that Septima Poinsette Clark is referred to as the Queen of the Civil Rights Movement. She wrote a statement in 1962 which said, “Before a

person goes into work in this kind of activism, he may have to pay for the freedom that he is trying to establish for all.” In her early years she longed to be a schoolteacher, it was her love for children, her parent’s beliefs and her teacher who inspired her to become an educator. Both of her parents believed in the value of education, and they strived to ensure that each of their eight children completed high school. Out of the eight children, Septima and her sister would go on to achieve a college degree.

Clark loved being around children, as a young girl she was referred to as the “Young Mother”, she didn’t particularly care for this name, but she would go around the neighborhood and take the children to a parade or to Sunday school. Clark obtained her teaching certificate once she completed the seventh grade, even though she could obtain a teaching position her mother told her to go and get more education. Septima Clark enrolled into Avery Normal Institute that fall and it was there that she received her first-grade teaching certificate. While many of her teachers and her principal noticed the love that she had for education, arrangements could not be made between them and her parents to send her onto Fisk University, however Septima would go on to achieve her bachelor’s and master’s degree in education.

Johns Island

Ms. Clark was hired on as the teacher and principal of Promise Land School in 1916. This school was one of the 14 schools for Black students on Johns Island (pp.579-580). During her time teaching on Johns Island, Clark built a relationship with the Sea Island community, she said that many people were illiterate and weren't aware of the public services that were available to them. she stated that: I was down there on Johns Island teaching under mand and mounting handicaps, I did have one thing, at least in my favor, one big thing: I spoke their language. I could communicate with them (Clark, 1962, p.43).

Clark spent her time teaching residents how to carry out their role when it comes to Civil Rights. She knew what they needed to do, and she was willing to help. Septima Clark wanted to stand up for the less privileged and the silent and it was her goal to reach the need of full citizenship. Clark would work with men who would come to her wanting to learn to read, she mentions that they would come to her after becoming interested in a fraternal organization, they knew that being a part of an organization such as the Odd Fellows would mean that they would need to learn the rituals, make speeches to other members and how to keep books; therefore these men would come to Septima and other Black teachers to learn how to read (Clark, 1962). Even though her main goal in life was to improve the social status of the African American society she loved her time working with the Sea Island community as she helped the adults learn how to read and write. She would leave Johns Island in 1918.

Clark and the NAACP

In the mid-1920's Septima Clark went on to work at her alma mater, Avery Normal Institute. This is the school in which she received her first- grade teaching certificate. While she worked at Avery, she became involved with community organizations whose plan was to improve conditions for those in the Black community. Clark met a gentleman by the name of T.E. Miller. Miller was the past president of the State Colored Agricultural and Mechanical College in the state of South Carolina. He also worked in the NAACP to increase the number of Black educators being able to teach in public schools. Clark and Miller started a campaign to get the Charleston School Board to hire Black female teachers. A law was passed in 1919 that allowed Black educators to be hired in Black public schools, from up to this point they were only allowed to teach at private schools for the Black community or at schools such as the one that Septima taught at on the Sea Islands. After two years not only were Blacks hired as teachers, but

they were also hired as principals in the public-school system; Clark also worked alongside J. Andrew Simmons and the NAACP to file a class action suit to gain teachers equal rights to equal salaries based on their certification (Gyant & Atwater, 1996, p. 582).

Clark and the Highlander Folk School

Septima Clark worked at the Highlander Folk School for fifteen years. During her time there she led and coordinated workshops and was later the director of education. This institution helped provide southern folks the opportunity to learn new ideas about stereotypes, breaking down generational barriers, develop leadership skills and to improve their lives and their social conditions of the participants while helping apply the principles as well as the spirit of democracy to their everyday lives.

Clark stated in her biography that:

I love people and I want to help them, to understand them, feel with them, share their troubles as well as their joys, and do all I can toward assisting them to the attainment of a happier and more worthwhile existence (Clark, 1962, p.168).

As she worked with the HFS she was able to also work with the Citizenship Schools, these schools shared the idea that freedom of thought, having enjoyment equal rights to livelihood, education, health, cultural interest, and the public services which would have constituted the reaffirmation of a democracy.

Denigration of Race

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word denigrate means to attack the reputation of, or to deny the importance or value of something (Merriam-Webster.com, s.v. “denigrate, n.d.”). When it comes to racism, not only has it played a role in the history of education, but it is also still an issue today. Students, teachers, and other members throughout

society feel the sting of being denied or belittled based on their race. In this section of the paper, you will be learning about the different forms of racism such as internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and new racism as well as look at the racial theories such as the social identity theory, critical race theory and the intersectional theory.

Internalized Racism

Internalized racism can be defined as a situation that occurs when a racial group that is oppressed by racism shows support to the supremacy and dominance of a group by maintaining or participating in a set of either attitude, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominate groups power and privileges which limits the oppressed groups advantages (Bivens, n.d., p. 45-46). In simpler terms this form of racism can be a “pervasive component of racial discrimination that results in acceptance by marginalized racial populations, of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves” (Brown & Segrist 2016, p.179). It is important to know the signs of internalized racism when we are in our classrooms and even out in society. We don't want to make our students and their families or even our co-workers feel uncomfortable and once we learn about what can cause internalized racism the better, we can handle it when a situation arises.

Bivens (n.d.) mentions that there are three major topics that should be addressed when it comes to understanding internalized racism. She raises the importance of how people of color who are victims of race will internalize it within themselves which will cause them to become discouraged and will compromise their thoughts on how people in their own community will view them. The second idea that she discusses is how internalized racism is systematic. She describes it as being “distinguished from human wounds like self-hatred or low self-esteem, to which all people are vulnerable” (p.44) and that it needs to be made clear that it is not a problem

for individuals but is a structural issue. Lastly, Bivens brings light to the topic of how this form of racism impacts people of color as well as intra-culturally and cross-culturally. Bivens (n.d.) stated that:

Because race is a social and political construct that comes out of particular histories of domination and exploitation between Peoples, people of colors' internalized racism often led to great conflict among and between them as other concepts of power-such as ethnicity, culture, nationality, and class are collapsed in misunderstanding. (p.45)

Internalized racism has been examined in various stages. It was described by Brown and Segrist (2016) that how in earlier stages the inner thoughts of negative stereotypes play a role in the subject, from there it can be utilized by racial identity and that the operationalization of beliefs such as Africans and African Americans haven't made any significant contributions to history which in turn can make them feel devalued. Not only this, but it can also cause people of color to feel a sense of invisibility.

Interpersonal Racism

Interpersonal racism is one of the four dimensions of internalized racism. The interpersonal dimension can be invisible to people in society. People of color struggle with interpersonal racism in ways of feeling a sense of anger toward their White counterparts for their inability to understand what privileges they have that colored people do not. Interpersonal racism can also be shown as a way of referring to White people as an inferior which can make feelings of distrust, or a lack of confidence occur. It has been discovered that in the interpersonal view there are new ways to engage conflict and communication by using nonviolent communication or transactional analysis (Bivens, n.d., p.47).

When it comes to discussing interpersonal racism in the classroom it is important to understand that this is a topic that most educators try to steer away from because of the touchiness of the subject. Teegar (2015) mentions that little information is known about the time frame and the situations that children become aware of discrimination, but the questions such as who, what, where and when helps them understand has been less applied over the years which is what helps the child facilitate their perceptions. Teachers needs to talk about the link between race and achievement in order to challenge the status quo. The students' needs to understand about race and racism so they can learn to mute their perceptions of racism at school. Children and adults need to learn that when they can perceive their experiences when it comes to racism, they will be prepared for the roles that the school system plays. Teegar mentions an example from a study conducted by Carter,2012 which states that "For example, when schools reward white students' dominant culture capital but penalize minority students for display of non-dominant cultural capital" (p.228). This creates a climate in which students of color can feel marginalized and excluded.

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism can be defined as the way that people of color can feel when they begin to question their own power. It is important to understand that with this form of systematic racism people must understand the inner workings of it. When someone is feeling a sense of institutionalized racism, they can have issues with making decisions due to feeling like they don't know about what needs to be done as well as a white person does, or they may not support each other when it challenges white privilege. The other factor that could come into play is when people of color struggle to find ways to get access to resources for their own community and how to control them (Bivens, n.d.).

New Racism

Racism as we know isn't just prominent outside of the classroom doors, but it is also noticed in the classrooms beginning as young as elementary students. A study conducted by the American Educational Research Association brings attention to what is being referred to as "new" racism. The researchers in this study found three underlying patterns of racism in the K-12 school system. These forms of racism are known as evaded racism, anti-racist racism, and everyday racism.

Evaded Racism

One of the forms of "new racism" is evaded racism. Evaded racism occurs when people of the colored community is blamed for educational inequality at a level of an individual which makes their institutional responsibility invisible. As mentioned, evaded racism is blamed on educational inequality when it comes to students of the colored community and those in the white community, one of the major factors that is looked at is that of the educational achievement gap. In a study that was conducted by Ladson-Billings (2006) it was argued that "the framing of the achievement gap serves as a distraction from the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society have created an education debt that is owed to Black and Latinx students". It is also noted that when looking at how racism is acknowledged in elementary classrooms it is mainly avoided, it was found that when it comes to emphasizing the importance of diversity it is usually a "afterthought rather than through an actual paradigm shift that weave diverse histories and perspectives into the school, thus rectifying racism" (p.187).

Anti-Racist Racism and Everyday Racism

Anti-Racist Racism and Everyday Racism are the other two forms of new racism. Anti-Racist Racism can be defined as a behavioral or prejudice function which is linked with fear, stress, or various forms of power-loss anxiety (Hall, p.71). This form of racism can also be viewed as White supremacy because of the distinction that is given between both racism and anti-racism as an over simplified view of reality where groups or individuals are labeled. The feelings of being the dominate culture can then lead to confrontations. Hall mentions that “Anti-Racist Racism is then the decided, indirect, covert abuse of power for race group gain by oppressing others when more civil actions would be equally effective” (p.72). Everyday Racism is the last form of new racism.

Everyday Racism ties into the Critical Race Theory which will be mentioned later in the paper. This form of racism is multi-dimensional, and a pattern of repeated behaviors are noticed (Dovemark, 2013 p. 17). Examples of everyday racism can take form of mundane responses and jokes. According to a study conducted by Holt, 1995 it was found that there is a small amount of everyday racism that is in the school system. Holt mentioned that a primary theme that was found involved the White staff members racializing students of Color as well as teachers of Color, as this was occurring the White teachers acted as barriers to improve the school racial climate (p.192).

Holt also mentions that during his research he found from a study conducted by Allen 2013 that when looking at research in K-12 schools there is racial microaggressions on students of color; these microaggressions involve the treatment of the names of students of Color. Huber (2012) stated that “They argue that situated within multiple policies and practices, the cumulative impact of those subtle manifestations of racism had lasting and damaging impact on the self-perceptions of students (p.192). A suggestion was made by the researchers that when it comes

time to confront racial beliefs and practices among teachers and their administrators it is very important to understand the impact that racism has on their students' lives. Teachers should "connect the construct of internalized racism to historical and contemporary experiences with racism and schools in terms of curriculum, resource disparities, and teacher competency arguing that it has a deep psychological impact on students of color (Kohli, 2017 p.193)

Colorblind Racism

Colorblind racism can be described as a multitude of things, from deemphasizing racial differences, and its histories all the way to looking into the mechanics of racism such as tracking of school curriculum and student surveillance. When it comes to the colorblind approach it affects the way our students can learn how to notice racial differences and be acceptable of them, with this term can also be attached to the belief that the membership of racial groups and those with racial based differences shouldn't be acknowledged when it comes to decisions being made, impressions being formed or looking at enacted behaviors. There are five different views when it relates to the colorblind racism approach these are: interpersonal color blindness, educational color blindness, organizational color blindness, legal color blindness and societal color blindness. In the next few sections I will be pulling information about Interpersonal Color Blindness and Educational Color Blindness because those are the two that we see in the field of education.

Interpersonal Color Blindness

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary the word interpersonal means being, related to, or involving relations between persons and the word color blind means not influenced by different races. Bar-Haim (2006) stated that "perceptual differentiation of race occurs rapidly- in less than one-seventh of a second and emerges as early as six months of age" if this is the case then we know that we are able to see racial differences, if you recall in the opening section I

mentioned that one defining factor of colorblind racism was that of not recognizing race this is where the interpersonal color blindness approach comes into effect. Apfelbaum (2012) found that there have been negative social consequences when it comes to this colorblind behavior. He explains that even as ironic as it seems white individuals who steer away from communicating about race is viewed as more biased in the eyes of people of color than the ones who openly talk about race. It was also noted that when race is avoided in conversations the topic is deemphasized and this can affect the shaping of one's attitudes toward the racial-out groups.

Educational Color Blindness

As we look at educational color blindness, we can learn that this approach is noticed in many classrooms across the United States. Colorblindness in the education system can result in racial profiling in schools as well as effecting the curriculum that is being built and being replaced with individual based stereotypes. As mentioned in the previous section we determined that children could define racial differences at just one-seventh of a second. At the age of ten color blindness becomes a model approach for children who are beginning to deal with racial situations (Apfelbaum, 2012).

According to a study that was conducted by the researchers in an elementary school it was discovered that after reading a series of conflicts from the schoolyard which involved racial discrimination issues the children who were first exposed to the stories which involved color-blindness were less likely to identify bias when it occurred and tended to describe discrimination in a less serious manner to their teachers. This shows that "the fact that color blindness makes children less likely to identify overt instances of bias could lead people to mistakenly conclude that color blindness is an effective tool for reducing bias" (Apfelbaum, 2012, p. 206).

Critical Race Theory

Remember in the previous portion of the paper when I made a mention about everyday racism and how it would be tied in with Critical Race Theory (CRT)? Well, here we are. Critical Race Theory is a huge issue that incorporates the factors of everyday racism such as White Supremacy and color-blindness. Critical Race Theory was built on the foundation from various protest that insist scholars consider the ways that race, and racism are endemic to society (Tichavakunda,2019 p.651).

There are seven corresponding tenets that Critical Race Theory (CRT) draws on in terms of education. These tenets are interest convergence, Whiteness as property, counter storytelling, critique of liberalism, intersectionality, racial realism, and social change (Craft, 2020 p.11). I will review the history behind CRT. CRT can be followed back to the Critical Legal Studies movement which occurred in the 1980's. This movement was started by a group of legal scholars by the names of Derrick Bell Jr., Charles Lawrence, Richard Delgado, Lani Guinier, and Kimberle' Crenshaw. These students decided to question the role of the law when it came down to maintaining and further constructing racially based social and economic oppression. By challenging the predominant racial injustices as they committed themselves to interrogate the continued presence of racism in the United States jurisprudence and stalled advancement of the Civil Rights legislation (Craft,2020, pp.10-11).

Derrick Bell Jr.

Derrick Bell is referred to as “the most influential source of thought critical of traditional Civil Rights discourse and a premier example of CRT” (Tate, 1997 p.211). He has two purposes when it comes to the Scholarship of CRT. The first purpose is to contribute intellectual discussion which concerns race in the American society and the second purpose is to “promote

political activism to achieve racial justice” (p.211). The way that Bell understands Critical Race Theory is by critiquing the Civil Rights laws and viewing their efforts to implement the stimulation of recognition of their importance that made it a challenge to rethink the problems that were created by the perspectives of the dominant liberals and the conservatives. Bell mentions in his book *Race, Racism and American Law* a little more insight on his purposes of the Scholarship. He states that

It is, though, not the goal of race, racism to provide a social formula that would solve either all or any of the racial issues that beset the country. Rather, its goal is to review those issues in all their political and economic dimensions, and from the vantage point enable lawyers and laypeople to determine where we might go from here. The goal for us, as it was for all those black to the slavery era who labored and sacrificed for freedom, was not to guarantee an end to racism, but to forcefully towards that end (p. 14)

Derrick Bell Jr. argues three stances from his previous journal writings. The arguments are the constitutional contradiction, the interest convergence principle, and a corollary to the interest-convergence theory. He argues that the constitutional contradiction is based on the United States Constitution and the subsequent legal decisions. The basis of this argument stemmed from the analysis of property in the American society and by looking at the roles of the government that protects property interest. Bell argues that the provisions on slavery that is “in the original Constitution reflects the pragmatic and political compromises by the farmers” he continues to say that “the farmers of the Constitution chose racism and the rewards of property” (p.214). In Bells’ opinion race and property are linked together in an intricate form which often leads to the issues of racial injustice. His case on the interest-convergence took the stance that the interest-convergence principle is built on the aspects of political history as the legal precedent

and that it emphasizes that African Americans only make significant progress when the goals of the African American race are consistent with the needs of the Whites. Bell stated that

Translated from judicial activity in racial cases both before and after *Brown*, this principle of “interest convergence” provides: The interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with interest of whites. However, the 14th amendment standing alone, will not authorize a judicial remedy providing effective racial equality for blacks were the remedies sought threatened to superior social status of middle- and upper-class whites. (p. 523)

The third argument formed by Bell is that there is a corollary to the interest-convergence theory in which many Whites won’t support the Civil Rights policies that appear to menace their superior social status. Bell refers to this as the “price of racial remedies” and compares it to the *Brown* and *Bakke* cases.

Richard Delgado

Richard Delgado is another important scholar in the expertise of CRT. Delgado was placed by Crenshaw at the historical and conceptual beginnings of CRT. His arguments are constructed in debates with other polymaths in the legal community regarding the merits and the potential contribution of CRT to legal analysis. He builds a case that the critical race scholarship is based on eight themes. These themes are an instance on naming our own, they believe that knowledge and ideas are powerful, a readiness to question basic premises of moderate or incremental civil rights law, the borrowing of insights from social science on race and racism, critical examination of myths and stories powerful groups used to justify racial subordination, a more contextualized treatment of doctrine, criticism of liberal legalism, and an interest in structural determinism (Tate, p.219-220). Delgado also draws on insight that when examining a

structural feature of human experiences that separates people of color from their White friends and co-workers that “White people rarely see acts of blatant or subtle racism, while minority people experience them all the time”. He also brings to attention that most minorities live in a world that is overtaken by race. In 1989 Richard Delgado advanced to say that when looking at any justification for legal analysis and the scholarships that incorporate stories or experiences from people of color there are four reasons that should be considered. They are that reality is socially constructed, stories are a powerful means for destroying and changing mindsets, stories have a community building function, and stories provide members of outgroups mental self-preservation (p. 219).

As mentioned earlier the second reason for his argument regarding critical race theory is the potential of story to change mindset. Delgado says that “most oppression does not seem like opposition to the oppressor and that the dominant group of society justifies its position with stock stories”. The third case that was presented is that when incorporating stories into critical race theory the role storytelling can play in community building can help build consensus, a common culture of shared understandings and a more vital ethics. Delgado voices his concerns about the dangers and storytelling especially when it comes to the first-time storyteller. He mentions that the listener to an unfamiliar counter story may reject it because the story reveals hypocrisy and increases discomfort; when this occurs the person listening to the story may concisely or unconsciously tell the story in a new way which frames the content of the story within the listener's own belief system which can mute or reverse the meaning of the original story. As we continue to investigate Delgado’s arguments, we can see that his fourth argument is for incorporating voice into legal analysis to help ensure the psychic preservation of marginalized groups. He mentions that this is a factor that contributes to the demoralization of

members of the out-group, which is self-condemnation he says that historically, people of color have used storytelling to heal wounds caused by racial discrimination and along with the tradition of storytelling in Black culture there exists the Spanish tradition of the picaresque novel or story, which tells of humble folks pecking the pompous or powerful and bringing them down to more human levels (p.221)

On the topic of CRT, it was argued by Delgado that critical race scholars examine the legal system for category methods of legal analysis, and doctrines which helps illuminate ways that the legal system maintains their status quo. Delgado along with Stefanic describes back in 1989 how three major important resources that lawyers use in legal research tie into this-the Library of Congress, subject heading, the *Index of Legal Periodicals*, in the West digest system-function like DNA that is, they allow the current system to replicate itself. These three systems function together to reconstruct preexisting arguments, ideas, and methods in legal research. Cultural nationalism is another factor that is mentioned by Delgado, this philosophy is based around the Black Power movement which occurred in the 1960s-1970s and “is defined as the belief that Black and Brown communities should develop their own schools, colleges and businesses” (p.224).

In conclusion, Delgado refers to the statement that “political objectives are always forward looking” so basically, when affirmative action is viewed as a tool for differing socially engineering societies the processes can ignore the fact that others of differing race or cultural background have been treated unfairly in work settings, deprived of their land, and became enslaved. This same action also creates a debate where even small accomplishments can be overshadowed by issues that make those accomplishments seem painful. It also involves requires

“careful thinking by liberals and conservatives alike about the opportunity being denied to White citizens” (p.224)

Kimberle Crenshaw

Kimberle Crenshaw graduated from Harvard Law School. Her contribution to Critical Race Theory was challenging the neoconservative critique of the New Rights. New Rights is “a set of arguments that reduced Civil Rights to mere special-interest politics” (Tate, 1997, p.228). The New Right placed sight on the law and politics as being essentially distinct. Crenshaw argued that by failing to critique the “real” law and instead embracing the language from antidiscrimination contradictory purposes and interpretations were ignored. She believed that “the primary goal of antidiscrimination law, according to the restrictive view, is to stop future acts of wrongdoing rather than correct present forms of past injustice” (Tate, 1997 p.228). She looked at the belief in colorblindness and equal process as illogical in a society where racial groups had been treated differently and the way that they were treated is being carried over into present day.

There are three reasons that Crenshaw says the CLS critique is unequal for people of color. Her first reasoning is that many students who studied CLS failed to ground their analyses in the realities of ones who are racially oppressed, her second reason is this critique neglects to examine the hegemonic role of racism, thus rendering its position analysis to be unrealistic and lastly, while this critique exaggerates the role of liberal consciousness and minimizes the potential transformative power that liberalism offers Crenshaw notes that while examining the civil rights movement “the Blacks challenged their exclusion from political society by using methods recognized and reflected in U.S. society's institutional logic (p.230). She brings attention to the importance of Civil Rights activists who articulated their demands through their

legal rights ideology which exposed a series of contradictions with the most important being the constitutional guarantee of citizenship and the public practice of racial subordination. Crenshaw (1988) states that

Rather than using the contradictions to suggest the American citizenship was itself illegitimate or false, civil rights protesters proceeded as if American citizenship or real, and demanded to exercise the “rights” that citizenships entailed. By seeking to reconstruct reality to reflect American mythology blacks relied upon and ultimately benefited from the politically inspired efforts to resolve the contradictions by granting formal rights. Although it is the need to maintain legitimacy that presents powerless groups with the opportunity to wrest concessions from the dominant order, it is the very accomplishments of the legitimacy that forecloses greater possibilities. In sum, the potential for changes both created and limited by legitimation.

The Tenets of CRT

CRT is based on key principles which places the spotlight on white-dominance and the racial relations that rejects discourses of objectivity, neutrality, color-blindness, meritocracy, and having equality under the state of law. The main goal of CRT is to attack the construction of race that privileges surface Whiteness and not individual people who may identify with a particular race. CRT also advocates for people in society who may be viewed in a different way aside from being a unique individual due to the constructions of race (Aranada, 2016, pp.2-3)

The first tenet is interest convergence. According to Bell (1995) interest convergence happens when racial equality is achieved to benefit the White community, in other words this can only be allowed if Whites benefit when racial gains are being made. In the world of education this tenet is achieved when both schools and universities believe that inclusive policies and practices will best serve the interest of the established systems (Craft, 2020, p.11). An example

of interest convergence can be the Brown VS Board of Education case. This is an example of interest convergence because the legal decisions that were made benefitted the White community. According to Tate, 1995 the “legal decision benefitted Whites by increasing the positive stature of the United States with the rest of the world during the Cold War”. Another study adds that the Brown VS Board case showed that the progress for people of color is made only when the interest and needs of the White population is met, and furthermore, that liberal racial reform such as the Brown case exacerbates such racial inequities.

The next tenet is Whiteness as property. Whiteness as property was introduced by a woman by the last name of Harris, her grandmother told a story of being passed as White after leaving the Deep South. This story from her grandmother created the belief of Whiteness being a prized property because of the assumptions, benefits and privileges that were associated with the White race as being valuable assets in which White people work hard to protect. In other words, if we look back to the formation of the United States, we will find that if someone owned property they would be able to participate in the governance of the Union unlike those who didn't own any property (Landson-Billings & Tate, 1995) described in a study that when the White population began to take over the Native Americans land, they (the Whites) were the only ones who could legally own any property. African Americans as we know wouldn't be allowed to own property, but instead they became slaves to the White population and the Whites had the ability to trade them or sell them. The Whites were looked at as people who had privilege, power, a high status, and rights just because of the tone color of their skin.

Next, we will look at counter-storytelling. The aspect of counter-storytelling is to allow the voiceless from marginalized groups the right to speak. It is known that in the United States that the experiences from African Americans who encounter dominate narratives that are

constructed by Whites is where the counter-stories chronicle begins. These stories illustrate the ways that people in the African American society experience social, political, and the institutional systems which differs from what is to be considered the dominant groups counterparts. Counter-storytelling also allows the voices of those in the Black community to tell stories that are needed to understand the societal experiences in which they encounter.

Critique of Liberalism can be described as the challenges that African Americans face when it comes to issues such as objectivity, meritocracy, racial neutrality, equal opportunity, color blindness, and incremental changes. This tenet challenges the conception of color blindness, once this occurs inequality, oppression and inopportunity are ignored.

Intersectionality is a form of racism that is based on gender, class, religion, ability/disability, and sexual orientation as well as forms of oppression such as sexism, homophobia, and ableism. Intersectionality is considered by scholars to be where the elimination of racism on a larger project of social justice across racial differences should be addressed. When this occurs, the students can see the extent to where specific identities from social justice play out.

Furthermore, racial realism is an alternative approach to find equal opportunities among marginalized groups. This form of racism can date all the way back to the Civil Rights Movement which we read about earlier on. Why? because this movement as well as others have had historical impacts in forms of judicial decisions, programs, services and obtaining equal treatment like their White counterparts. The focus of racial realism is to establish the presence of power dynamics and systematic racism as a pervasive form that will never be eradicated. It is also important to see that racism and power dynamics from this point of view is providing an opportunity for resistance and social change.

Lastly, we will look at social change. In our education system this one is important. According to Bartlett and Brayboy (2005) “critical race scholars are committed to the establishment of a socially just U.S. society and educational system and maintain a praxis of activism as a component of their scholarship” (p.13). Why do they want to do this? It is because critical race theory is accountable for race and racism’s role in the education system to work toward eradicating racism as well as opposing and eliminating various forms of subordination that is based on factors such as gender, sexual orientation, racial class, language, national origin, and religion.

Racial Issues in the Classroom

In this section I will be examine examples of racism in the r educational system. Not only will this portion help us see what our co-workers and students experience but it will also share ways in which we can combat racism in the classroom from working with one another to building curriculum that is inclusive to everyone.

Experiences from Teachers

In the world of education, we have teachers of various races working in our school systems. These teachers sometimes face racial discrimination not just from students, but from parents and other co-workers, this has become an issue which makes teachers question wanting to even come to work due to how they are being treated. We learned earlier about what unintentional racism is and while some is unintentional other cases aren’t. Teachers are there to help shape the future generations and the color of their skin doesn’t have anything to do with how well they teach. Bidwell et al., (2016) conducted a study in which they observed four White math teachers to see how they interacted with teaching Black students. During this study the teachers discussed how they talk about race in the classroom, building relationships with their

students of color and how they provide what is known as safe spaces for their students. Race is a touchy subject for teachers to want to discuss and as we have read there are many forms of racism that could take place. It is important for us, as educators to understand how to discuss racism with our students in the classroom, not only to make our classroom a positive environment for our students to thrive, but also to change the future and combat the issues of racism in society.

The teachers from this article suggested that building relationships with your students are important and that talking about race is important, it shouldn't be avoided and there are certain ways to bring it up when questions arise. Teachers want their students to respect them, correct? Well in the same way the students want respect from their teachers if they can respect each other's cultures then they will feel comfortable talking about touchy things. The teachers in this study were asked about how they were successful with teaching Black students, and they said that you must form meaning relationships with your students, engage with them during their racial conversations and reflect both individually and collectively with other co-workers on issues of race and racism.

When asked about relationship building a teacher by the name of Carrie who taught at a school where race wasn't discussed between faculty, but still had interactions with students of color mentioned that by forming relationships with students you can either "make or break the deal with being able to connect with them" (Bidwell, 2016, p. 1276) she also mentioned that if you go and support your students outside of the classroom when they are involved in extracurricular activities that will help with a good relationship. Another teacher said that she would rather live in the same community as her students so she could feel closer to them instead of living off in a suburb. The third teacher said that she built individual connections with her

students because she could see their potential and she knew that because of her race being different from theirs that it could have been a roadblock for their learning. She stated that “students already have many socio-cultural and -political barriers that can keep them from being successful but, if a student has an issue with the teacher, then nothing’s going to be learned”. The last teacher that spoke on the topic mentioned that “I think addressing a child’s affective domain is the most important thing to be able to teach them” (p.1277).

After reading the comments from these teachers we can understand that building relationships is the first step to having success with our students of race, but what can we do when it is time to have to engage with them in a race-based conversation? That was answered as well. It was discovered that when race is discussed in a classroom setting students not only can learn and grow, but the teachers can also benefit from such conversations.

The math teachers all mentioned that by discussing race with your students you, as their teacher can seem more “real” and understanding. I would say that Patt said it best when she stated that “If you like your students, you’ll find that it is your place to bring race up. I mean, if you’re a White teacher, and especially in my situation where most of the kids live very insular lives and they don’t deal with a lot of White people—it’s their chance to know you” (Bidwell,2016 p.1277). Caroline made the point to mention that as a child she was taught not to see color and when she began her teaching career, she admitted to being colorblind toward her students and overtime she realized this is something she needed to work on she stated that “I think it’s just important not to think about them students as all being the same and also not to classify them in a certain way, but just to try to appreciate their cultures which I think is something that I’m still working on as a teacher” (Bidwell, 2016 pp.1277-1278)

Many schools throughout the United States have students of different cultures that attend them, the schools usually extend the idea of looking at inequalities that is based on factors such as the students gender, race, learning ability level and class through tracking and labeling certain practices, and racial disparities in the enrollment levels of gifted and talented and special education classrooms which is based on bias disciplinary practices, hidden curriculum and other aspects of educational programming. While many schools are working to promote and foster their students' minds to have appreciation of others humanistic differences and diverse cultures using multicultural education programs the efforts usually have mixed results. These mixed results are caused by misguided concepts by children about how they view differences of others, and the discussion of historical discrimination is avoided.

It was noted that students who are in racially diverse schools begin racial grouping as young as preschool. Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) showed that by this age the children are able to identify race and with that they include or exclude other students from playing with a certain toy or by having access to other goods. Another study that was conducted by Tatum, 1997 showed that "students in racially diverse schools socialize across race lines in elementary school but begin racial grouping in social spaces such as cafeterias and parties by the time they reach the sixth or seventh grade (Skinner,2009, p.278).

Skinner and Schaffer (year) also conducted a study to see how the students of Black teachers treated them compared to that of students who had White teachers. The students in these classrooms were a diverse group who consisted of Asian, Latino, White and Black ethnicity. The school that this study was conducted at was in a middle-class area in the Southeastern part of the United States. The researcher visited this school for a total of 107 days over a two-year period where they studied the teachers and talked to the students to learn about the "Whiteness" and

“Blackness” in their school. The school in which the study took place was a K-5 elementary school where they acknowledged and explored racial and ethnic diversity by having international festivals, research projects, create multicultural artwork, have after-school language clubs and a critical multicultural curriculum.

White students who attend this culturally diverse school who come from middle- and upper-class families has been known to not discuss race and if they do then it had been viewed as being rude or inappropriate behavior. It was noted that the students at this school took a field trip to see a play about Fredrick Douglas and as they pulled up to the school one of the girls asked if it is a “Black school”. It was then that the researcher decided that the student was interested in learning about human perceptions.

As the researcher conducted her study, she discovered that the White students at this school would only discuss race during class lessons on the topics of slavery and the civil rights movement. The White students were noticeably uncomfortable when hearing about how the White people treated the Black people and one student even stated, “It makes me embarrassed of my color and it makes me ashamed of my color” (Skinner,2009 p.282). The teacher then led the students in a discussion about the importance of knowing the history behind the topic so that slavery wouldn’t happen again, and she also talked to the class about how people from other ethnic backgrounds had helped to end slavery in other parts of the world.

Black students on the other hand felt very comfortable when talking openly about race and their cultural interest, when asked about why they thought their White classmates didn’t feel comfortable speaking about race most of them indicated that it was because they didn’t understand Black History and culture.

At this school there were a group of Black students who were considered as the “black clique” these students were invested in the mainstream culture and frequently used slang terms that identified with being “ghetto”. The student who was interviewed said that she noticed that in the classroom setting “race is evoked” and talks about how it is viewed with peers. During a math lesson this student was paired with a group of three other students with different ethnicities: a White student, Latino student, and an Asian student.

The Black student was known to display her Black identity in a more direct manner than the other Black students and often made comments about what “all Black people know” (Skinner,2009 p.285). During the math lesson the researcher noticed that this peculiar student had difficulty when the homework was being reviewed by arguing with two other students about the questions, when she learned that she did the problem incorrectly she would flip her answer sheet over and slide down in her seat. The female student would also joke around in class and refer to herself and another student as “ghetto” and would seem to make fun of the White student who didn’t understand Black culture. I am using this certain situation to use the explanation as to why the student was expressing herself like she did. It was determined that by performing and explaining what a particular Black identity was she wasn’t using it as a way to avoid “acting white” but she was saving face in the competitive environment with other students by establishing what she knew.

Teaching Race

To comfortably teach race in our classrooms it is important to first learn about the history of racial events, and the various forms of racism. This will help teachers provided examples from what you might witness in the classroom.

For example, Rogers and Mosley (year) in a metropolitan St Louis school went to a second-grade classroom and conducted an observation over the course of the 2002-2003 school year. The researchers attempted to discussions around Civil Rights. The two researchers live in St. Louis and are members of the Literacy for Social Justice Teacher research group. One of the aspects that these ladies took into consideration was the children's beginning exploration of race. Both Rogers and Mosley paid attention to the observation by the students of noticing Whiteness and recognizing color as they went through a guided reading lesson. The book that was used for this observation was *The Bus Ride* that was written in 1998 by a white man named William Miller and illustrated by a Black man named John Ward.

The story of this book revolves around an 8-year-old African American girl named Sarah. Sarah's story resembles the actions that was taken by Rosa Parks who boycotted the public transportation system. In the book the author provided two actions for the readers to determine. One was that breaking the law in this case was unintended and that some of the characters in the story says that Sarah made a mistake, while the other action was that acts of socialism are interpreted as acts of confusion due to other characters seeing Sarah as a brave martyr who was fighting for equal rights. The forward in the opening of the book was written by Rosa Parks herself. In the book the roles of the White characters were portrayed as diligent workers who just wanted to get to work on time, the White characters are also represented as riders on the bus, bus driver or police officers. The Black characters aside from Sarah and her mother also have passive roles as bystanders or onlookers. There is one police officer in the story that has colored skin. Now, I know after reading you are questioning why Rogers and Mosley gave us the background information of the story being told. It is to help us as readers better understand what they found.

As the students read *The Bus Ride* independently, they were working on their critical thinking skills. It was found during the research that the children noticed the link between linguistic patterns and ideological patterns which helped produce conversations about people and their actions. While the students read, Mosley was able to ask progression questions that kept the student's interest as they read through the book. One of the students asked what the word sergeant meant which allowed Mosley to draw the students attention to the pages in the book with the newspaper reporter and the sergeant (police officer) who were waiting in the police station with Sarah as she was carried there from her seat on the bus. Mosley was able to ask questions to expand on the students understanding from the story.

If using this book in the classroom is it important remember how research can inform classroom practices and curriculum development. For example Rogers and Mosley (year) were able to take a student's question about the term "sergeant" and expand on it to gain understanding. For example, when students asked were asked if Sarah made a mistake or if she was being brave by fighting for equal rights. The students didn't respond to that question, but when referring to prior knowledge a student who they call Brad said that "They didn't tell us, but I think it was a White man, I think it was a White man, he said, that jail will do you good". Mosley was able to expand on Brads thinking by asking "Why did you think it was a White man?" Brad replied with "Because, because I think, mostly when it said Black, Black people or what color of their skin it was, and it said what they said, but here it didn't say it was White or Black" (Mosley& Rogers, 2006 p.474); when Mosley and Rogers asked the question as to why Brad thought it was a White person, she was furthering the discussion about noticing and naming race.

Another book that was used during the study was *Martin Luther King Jr. and the March on Washington* by Frances E. Ruffin. The events in this book represent the events as well as the social and political issues during the segregation period that leads up to the portrayal of Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous *I Have a Dream* speech that was given in Washington, DC. The students did a guided-reading lesson with Rebecca Rogers as they learned about African Americans and equal rights. The students were said to have illustrated a misunderstanding about the history behind the Civil Rights movement and therefore didn't understand the people's intentions and feelings on the topic.

The author didn't differentiate between the Black and White characters, but instead used a passive voice in the text to get the communication of the intention about the text across. For example, it is mentioned on page 477 that the Jim Crow Laws were referred to as "there are laws" this gives a polite stance on what they were instead of acknowledging that White people are the ones who created and reinforced the laws which caused hate crimes toward people of color. The Black characters in the story are referred to as "they" which prevented the reader from naming African Americans.

When preparing to use this book in the classroom it is important to also remember that Doucet and Adair (2013) suggest teachers should be "skeptical or worried" when discussing race with young children. Doucet and Adair (2013) stated that the most common responses that they hear from teachers when asked about talking about race with young children is "The children are too young to talk about it," "I don't want anyone to feel uncomfortable", "They are so innocent!" (p.88). Applying this idea to a teacher could use Ruffin's *Martin Luther King Jr. and the March on Washington*. In this book Ruffin developed a book examining MLK, Jr that was appropriate for the grade level that is being taught. This is a perfect example of what is known as the

Piagetian notion. Doucet and Adair (2013) also mention that scholars look for developmentally appropriate practices, especially in early childhood education. This relies heavily on the Piagetian notion which relates to cognitive development which inadvertently places boundaries around topics that are appropriate when discussing with young children. While it is known that children can handle conversations about race and racism there are ways to ease into the discussion.

Teachers may also use multicultural books in the classroom. Multicultural children's literature can be described as a wide genre of picture books as well as easy chapter books which are written about the experiences, historical events, and cultures of diverse groups in society. When multicultural books are used in the classroom the students of racially diverse backgrounds have the opportunities to see themselves as well as the experiences that their ancestors faced represented in the books that they read, these books also allow all students to learn more about people who have a different background, by using multicultural literature in the classroom students can develop compassion towards individuals and groups who are being marginalized in society.

To determine if you a teachers should use a multicultural book in the classroom Husband's (2016) suggests ten questions that teachers need to consider. These questions are: Has the book won a particular award or distinction? How accurate are the facts in the book? How realistic is the content in the book? Does the book contain any racial stereotypes or racist messages? Does the book reflect authentic language variations, dialects, and communication styles? Whose perspective/voices are presented in the book? Does the book have high quality images or illustrations? Does the book present a nuanced or complex narrative of a particular racial group or event? To what degree does the book make connections between racism and other

forms of oppression? And finally what curriculum value does the book have? If we consider these questions and look into the reasoning's behind them then we will be able to build a better classroom library. Husband, (2016) also mentions that so many teachers are reluctant to teach about race in the classroom. Husband states that “teachers should teach about race and racism in the classrooms as a means of helping children develop a more critical-consciousness of race and racism” (p.13).

Husband (2016) stated the following example:

White children can develop a deeper sense of empathy for Native American people by reading authentic and accurate multicultural books that highlight the experiences of Native Americans. An elementary teacher might use a book like *Encounter* by Jane Yolen (1996) to open a dialogue about the multiple voices and perspectives involved when Christopher Columbus reached North America. After reading this book and discussing and reflecting on the content therein, children are likely to develop a deeper sense of empathy towards Native Americans in society (p.16).

Husband also provides suggestions to help teachers teach race and racism in the classroom. Husband (2016) describes four approaches that can be used when it comes to teaching race in the classroom. The approaches are the Cultural Studies Approach, The Critical Inquiry Approach, Critical Literacy Approach, and the Critical Readers Response approach. By using these approaches teachers are able to adapt to various needs, interest, and strengths of the children in their classrooms.

The Cultural Studies Approach is one of the most common approaches when teaching children about race and racism. When using this approach teachers are able to use multicultural literature to look in-depth into experiences of a non-White racial group in society. Teachers

could carefully select multicultural readings in the unit that caters to various voices and perspectives on the historical content that is given. The goal of this method is to help students gain a deeper and distinctive understanding of the particular race group that is being discussed. The next approach is the Critical Inquiry Approach. By using this approach, the students are able to form questions that are related to race and gear that toward what is being explored in the classroom setting. An example could be after a teacher reads a book to the class there can be an opportunity for the students to ask questions that they want to learn about more in a small group setting. The teacher can then split them into assigned small groups and when the given amount of time is up, they can discuss with the rest of the class what they learned. When using the Critical Literacy Approach the teachers are able to conduct a lesson to the extent that students can examine multicultural text from a critical perspective view. By doing this the teacher is able to pose questions that are related to racial justice, as well as ask critical thinking questions and use the concept of critical dialogue to review issues of racial injustice.

Hudson (2016) uses the example of a second-grade teacher who is applying this approach. He mentions the teacher might “Read *Harvesting Hope: The story of Cesar Chavez* (Kroll 2003) to teach their students about the historical experiences of a Latino farmworker who worked for equitable pay and civil rights in the 1960s. While reading and discussing the contents of the story the teacher might engage his or her students in a critical dialogue related to pay equity and discrimination. The teacher and the students might conclude this process by writing letters to their local government officials to demand equal pay for minorities and women” (pp.16-17).

Lastly, we will look at the Critical Readers Response approach. This approach, also known as CRR allows students to learn about issues of racial injustice through readings, open

discussions, and responses to multicultural books. An example that is given describes a teacher who might begin the class by providing students with various copies of multicultural children's books that is related to the topics of race and racial injustice. The teacher could place his/her students in a "literature circle" group that is based on the similarities of reading interest, in these groups the students would be prompted to read the books, take notes, and become prepared to discuss the important key findings that they discover in their readings at a later date with the rest of their classmates.

Recommendations

After conducting extensive research on the topics of how we can learn more about the historical events that occurred leading up to where we are now in our education system, I recommend researchers continue to investigate more detail about the history of racism in the classroom. We must know what we are teaching and how we teach it. By using the multicultural literature method and researching the questions that Husband mentioned in his article we can provide books for our units which provide a historical perspective on events which uses the experiences and struggles in a way that our students can understand. If we follow the multicultural literature method, we can better explain the events that occurred because as we learned multicultural books doesn't change the characters names or sugarcoat what happened, but instead tells the story in a way that children can understand and from that we can pull discussion questions and create lessons which cater to any unanswered questions that our students may have.

Building positive relationships with our students is equally important. Just because a student is a different color, we need to show them the same respect that our other students receive, by learning about their culture and allowing them to express themselves we can create a

positive classroom environment. By speaking about various cultural backgrounds and ethnic history we can educate our students on how to be respectful of one another and how to make a positive change in the world.

Conclusion

By examining the history of racism within the United States we are better prepared to teach the history of racism in your classrooms. A deeper examination of resources available will help educators be the role models our students need in the classroom. We are teaching the future leaders. Our actions may make it a positive place for everyone.

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