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RACE IN PREDOMINATELY WHITE SCHOOLS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL
COUNSELORS

By
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M. Ed., University of Louisville, 2015
BA, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, 2013

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education and Human
Development of the University of Louisville in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

"

Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling and Personnel Services

"

Department of Counseling and Human Development
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

August 2018

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A Dissertation Approved on

July 24, 2018

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ABSTRACT

RACE IN PREDOMINATELY WHITE SCHOOLS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Katelyn Richey

July 24, 2018

This study examined the phenomenon of white school counselors and the discussions about race that occur at predominately white schools. Research in the area of predominately white schools and discussions about race is severely lacking (Chandler, 2009; Chandler & McKnight, 2009). Additionally, many researchers and authors reported that conversations about race are either avoided or poorly managed in K-12 schools (Brown & Brown, 2010; Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Lintner, 2004; Burrell & Walsh, 2001; ; Loewen, 2007; Zimmerman, 2004). This points to an even greater importance on school counselors cultivating these conversations with the students at the schools in which they work. ASCA (2012) identified advocacy as a core theme of their national model for school counseling. Included in the advocacy suggested by ASCA is the importance of promoting multicultural and social justice education in schools. This points to the significance of conversations about race in all schools, including predominately white ones.

Just like in K-12 classrooms, society has put a high significance on the “color-blind” approach as a way to correct for wrongdoings. Critical race theorists, however, argue that this color-blind approach is not enough in countering white supremacy (Crenshaw et al., 1998; Bell, 1995; Roediger, 1991). Roediger (1991) and Ladson-

Billings (1998) both asserted that it is important for white people to understand their whiteness. School counselors can, and should, assist with this process.

Utilizing Critical Race and whiteness theories, interviews from seven participants were coded and themes were derived from the data. The six broad themes discovered were lack of knowledge, exposure, prevalence, avoidance, tolerance/competence, and counselor roles. There were 22 sub-themes among these broader themes. Considerations for school counselors and counselor education programs are examined.

Keywords: whiteness, white fragility, school-counseling curriculum, Critical Race Theory, cultural and racial competence

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Race in Predominately White Schools: Implications for School Counselors

Research in the area of racial and multicultural competence within predominately white Kindergarten through 12th grade school settings is severely missing from academic literature (Chandler, 2009; Chandler & McKnight, 2009). A critical piece of multicultural education includes the concepts of whiteness, white fragility, and racism. In predominately white schools, whiteness and white fragility are issues that add another layer of difficulty to school counselors' implementation of social justice advocacy curriculum. However, this social justice work is critical in all schools.

Although there is little research on the perception and communication of race in predominately white schools, extant literature related to information on race relations and multicultural education in diverse schools and schools predominately made up of people of color is well documented. Gay and Howard (2010) published work outlining the need for teachers to be prepared to teach ethnically diverse populations. Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin, and Moore-Thomas (2011) published research on the disproportionality of teacher referrals on students of color, and the implications on students of color. Their findings indicated that Black and multiracial female students were more likely to receive disciplinary referrals from English teachers. They also cite a plethora of research that document that disciplinary referrals in general are not race or gender neutral. The

researchers suggested multiple ways to implement culturally relevant disciplinary practices and interventions. Massie (2003) wrote about the new Civil Rights movement and implications and interventions for students of color. She believes that it is important to understand what has happened in the fight for Civil Rights and equality, as well as how far there is still left to go. She states, “race is about experience, opportunity, community, and a whole bunch of other socially defined categories” (Massie, 2003, p. 508). Mays, Johnson, Coles, Gellene, and Cochran (2013) introduced ways to address racism and racial discrimination in the context of racially diverse schools. They did, however, address changing racist beliefs and attitudes in white children by stating the importance of introducing public policy interventions, like federal and local laws and educating on cultural norms. Cochran-Smith appears to make her research legacy about educating and informing teachers to be equipped to teach in diverse classrooms, but adds little regarding how to teach about race and diversity in predominately white classrooms (2003, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010).

Uehara (2005) argued that many students will be getting information about cultures other than their own from media sources, so multicultural education in schools can be a natural fit to their everyday life, even if the school is predominately monocultural. The author argued that this can even be the case in schools that are not already necessarily tolerant or inclusive of other cultures. Uehara even thinks this media can be used to help stimulate discussion. Because the students are getting information about other cultures in one form or another, it is very important they learn dialogue that will help them to critically analyze and interpret what they are consuming. The school counselor can be a key tool in this process.

Many researchers and authors reported that conversations about race are either being avoided or are poorly managed in K-12 schools (Brown & Brown, 2010; Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Lintner, 2004; Burrell & Walsh, 2001; ; Loewen, 2007; Zimmerman, 2004). Many of them pointed to the fact that there is a discrepancy in actual historical events and the ways in which history is actually taught and written about (Burrell & Walsh, 2001; Zimmerman, 2004; Brown & Brown, 2010). In order for school counselors to have a rich understanding of the competence level of students, it is important to understand what they are learning about race, or lack thereof.

Social justice advocacy is a key component to school counseling and involves school counselors becoming change agents who resist systems of oppression. Kincheloe (1999) best described why a focus on multiculturalism and racial justice is important in white schools:

the work of the coalitions for social transformation does not simply go to black and Latino/a neighborhoods and Indian reservations to do their work; in addition, they work with whites and white institutions to develop anti-racist policies and progressive ways of being white. (p. 182)

Even if the students in a predominately white school never have to interact with persons of color, they will still become adults with voting rights and a say in public policy. A race-based curriculum could help white students to make educated decisions and consider the wellbeing of all people. As a school counselor, it is important to not perpetuate racist ideology by never challenging the beliefs of the students. This study will help to identify the beliefs school counselor's hold regarding perceptions of race, and what types of interventions are necessary to form a more culturally competent school atmosphere. As

Uehara (2005) stated, “The reality of a diverse nation is here and now.” Even if these students are only attending classes with students of the same race as themselves, it will not be long before they will be required to interact with those who look differently.

Statement of the Problem

The aforementioned research represents a few of the numerous articles that can be found on the importance of race-based education in diverse school settings. Similar education in predominately white schools should be of equal importance, but research is severely missing. Due to this lack of research, an important next step is to review the literature that is available pertaining to more diverse schools and then to discern what, if any, of that information can be applied to work in predominately white schools. Specifically, the ways in which conversations occur regarding race at predominately white schools and resources to aid in these conversations will be researched. Before learning how to have these conversations, it is first important to understand what this would look like. One purpose of this paper has been to address this statement.

Purpose and Significance

Research findings tend to indicate that most teachers and counselors are remiss in their curriculum around race-based education, including the concept of whiteness, and interventions directed at misunderstandings and insensitivity in the area of race and racism competence. Gordon (2010) asserted that teacher and counselor carelessness about race would not just hurt and impact children of color but also would not equip white children to challenge racist realities. Gordon alleged, “Discussions about race are often avoided to protect the pleasant relationships among colleagues at the expense of adopting racially conscious approaches to teaching and learning” (p. 149). Bemak and

Chung (2008) essentially described this phenomenon when they coined the term the Nice Counselor Syndrome, or NCS. In this phenomenon, for a plethora of different reasons, white counselors avoid discussing concepts like race, racism, and whiteness with students and staff. Roediger (1991) added to this argument that the avoidance of sensitive topics like race are actually, in fact, white problems. From the works of these authors, one conclusion can be that school counselors in predominately white schools can, and should, advocate for multicultural and racial competence, to the same extent as a school counselor in a more racially diverse school setting. However, this path, for school counselors in any school is not always an easy one.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions: 1) How do school counselors perceive their cultural competence? 2) How do school counselors perceive cultural competence among students and staff? 3) What is the role of the school counselor in discussions regarding race?

Research Design

Phenomenology is the approach to qualitative research that explores a phenomenon within a group of individuals, usually through interviews with participants who experienced the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2013). In the case of this research study, teachers', staff, students', and counselors' perceptions of race at predominately white schools are being explored. Interviews will be conducted with school counselors in predominately white schools.

A qualitative approach to this research topic is best because there is a complex phenomenon that needs to be explored (Creswell, 2013). Through this research, the

author aims to invite individuals to share their stories. The result of this research will help to lend itself to future theoretical development and explored using quantitative research. However, as there is very little research on the subject of the perception of race in predominately white schools, this research will be a starting point for other research studies to come. Largely, this research will help to explain interactions among people, which can be hard to capture with the use of a quantitative measure.

Assumptions and Limitations

An assumption of this study lies with the interviews. Face-to-face interviews and asking questions regarding race may cause individuals to be less-than truthful about their genuine feelings on the topic. I will attempt to account for this through prolonged engagement (Patton, 2015). For example, by using multiple data points, as well as having an external individual review interviews and codes, I hope to reduce the risk of limitations from interpreting and conducting interviews. While this will not help with the honesty of the participants, it can help to provide richer data to provide a fuller picture of the subject.

The axiological assumption of this research study is that the researcher and participants will, in fact, have biases and be value-laden. In order to control for this, the research will be open regarding her feelings and values regarding this topic and the entire process. . In order to aid the participants in answering truthfully, multiple data points, (e.g., individual interviews, the focus group), will help to draw out additional data and feedback. It is still the understanding of the researcher that there cannot be a full guarantee that the participants will not answer every question in a way that makes them

look desirable. Having an open mind and a desire to learn from participants, instead of educating them, will help in this task.

Key Terms

Definitions of the key terms relevant to this study are provided here. Whiteness is defined by DiAngelo (2011) as “specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate White people over people of color” (p. 56). DiAngelo, also, defined white fragility as:

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress- inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. (p. 54)

The ASCA website (2017) defines School Counseling Curriculum as:

This curriculum consists of structured lessons designed to help students attain the desired competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level. The school counseling core curriculum is delivered throughout the school’s overall curriculum and is systematically presented by school counselors in collaboration with other professional educators in K-12 classroom and group activities (para 3).

Cultural competence:

Having awareness, sensitivity, and skills in relation to race, and culture, that is different from one’s own and can be viewed as a mutual understanding, respect, and willingness to remain open and learn from other cultures.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a paucity of research on the topic of perceptions of race in predominately white schools (Milner & Laughter, 2014; Yeo, 1999). Research is available on other related topics such as perceptions of race in racially diverse schools (Mays, Johnson, Coles, Gellene, & Cochran, 2013) and counseling and social justice (Singh, Urbano, Haston, & McMahan, 2010). Extant research suggests a theory that topics like race and poverty are largely ignored or misconstrued in social education in U.S. schools (Brown and Brown, 2010; Burrell & Walsh, 2001; Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Lintner, 2004; Loewen, 2007; Zimmerman, 2004). This related research helps form a better picture of what is lacking, and what is needed, in schools.

School Counselor Roles

Social justice advocacy is a key component to school counseling and involves school counselors becoming change agents who resist systems of oppression (American School Counseling Association, 2012). A racially informed curriculum could help students to make educated decisions and consider the wellbeing of all people. An important part of the school counselor role is to challenge students' beliefs and to challenge racist ideology. By allowing students to continue to believe in racist narratives, use racial slurs, or practice racist behaviors school counselors ignore a problem and behave in ways that not align with teachings of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA). However, confronting controversial behavior can be a difficult task

to undertake. Bemak and Chung (2008) argued that it is of the utmost importance is to move beyond Nice Counselor Syndrome to embrace social justice advocacy work. To do so, they provide a list of 16 practical recommendations that school counselors can use for assistance with incorporating a social justice framework into their curriculum. These recommendations include, but are not limited to: being aware of the Nice Counselor Syndrome phenomenon; remembering negative reactions are not personal; understanding the culture and political dynamics of the school corporation; finding and using the courage to speak up and implement this work; and taking calculated risks.

In their description of the Nice Counselor Syndrome, Bemak and Chung (2008) examined the underlying reason white school counselors are afraid to act use multicultural practices and to advocate social justice advocacy in their schools. These reasons include personal and professional obstacles. Personal obstacles include emotional factors (e.g., personal fear); becoming the troublemaker in the eyes of administration and colleagues; anxiety and guilt; anger; powerlessness; and discomfort. Professional obstacles include administrative tasks that ideally should not be assigned to the counselor; interfering with other's professional turf; assassination of character; and job security. The obstacles can be compounded, making it even more overwhelming and difficult for school counselors to handle. Being socially ostracized, labeled as someone wanting to make trouble, or looked at as an outsider can be incredibly isolating for a school counselor who also has a basic need to belong, and feel connected, to a professional community. One or more of these things may influence school counselors to decide to not implement social justice initiatives in their schools.

There are other obstacles to education and discussions about race outside of the Nice Counselor Syndrome. Yeo (1999) researched how difficult it is to integrate multicultural education programs into predominately white schools. Yeo reported that multicultural programs bring fear and anxiety from community members of a change to their natural order of life. Yeo's rationale is that these white individuals are in fear of losing their white privilege, even though the individuals would probably not label it as such, as it is a phenomenon that they understand very little. Other whiteness scholars would argue that white fragility does not come from a place of awareness, but from a refusal to honestly admit that it exists (Roediger, 1991).

On top of the previous points, rural schools are worried about consolidations and closings, changing economies and culture, along with other things. Uehara (2005) also added that anxiety can occur when whites in rural schools interact with other cultures, as they lack self-awareness, are unfamiliar with non-white cultural practices, lack knowledge and exposure to non-white cultures, and are deficient in awareness or skills. These add to the difficulty of taking small steps to begin the conversations around race, let alone implementing a social justice curriculum.

Counseling for Social Justice

A natural connection exists between multiculturalism, which focuses on the plurality of culture in society, and social justice, which focuses on reducing culture-based inequity in a society (Jay, 2003). While multiculturalism and social justice are certainly complimentary concepts, they are very distinct. Jay (2003) argued that while multicultural education emphasizes inclusion and celebrating diversity in schools, it often ignores discussions of power and oppression. In other words, because of this emphasis on

multicultural education, social justice and related conversations about power and oppression are largely overlooked. Although multicultural counseling is possible without also adopting a social justice position, without the social justice advocacy piece, counselors risk viewing new knowledge about whiteness and racism from the perspective of their own culture and privileges and subsequently perpetuating oppression (Chung & Bemak, 2012). Similarly, according to Chung and Bemak (2012) students may benefit from a multicultural approach that incorporates social justice practices as means of developing critical thinking skills, which can translate across academic, social, and personal contexts.

Reed (2010) described one approach, the multicultural and social reconstructionist approach to education, that fosters knowledge, skills, and attitudes within students to address social inequity based on race, social class, gender and disability. Griffin & Steen (2011) found that social justice-minded school counselors must be culturally competent, which begins with maintaining an awareness of personal worldviews, biases, and privileges. Similarly, based on this research, white students in rural schools may be better positioned to act as change agents if they are able to develop a personal awareness of their position in society. If school counselors are able to adopt this way of evaluating their perspectives and ways of thinking, they can act as a teacher by modeling this behavior with the students. It is important for the school counselor to put it into practice rather than merely espousing this as a value.

Resources

The National Association for Multicultural Education (2017) provided some guidelines for having these important conversations and fostering multicultural learning

in majority-white schools. These guidelines include self-reflection, or examining one's own culture and racial identity, along with the effects of said-identity; listening to, and observing, students and the way they speak about these topics; teaching about language and incorporating these topics into the school curriculum; incorporating social media; and helping to channel white anti-racist identities. Further examination of "*helping to channel white anti-racist identities*" is warranted, as the statement is a simplistic way to describe a very emotionally loaded and difficult task.

Teaching Tolerance is a project associated with Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) that offers numerous resources to help teachers and counselors have difficult conversations with students, with many specifically regarding race and racism (Bell & Lindberg, 2017). Strategies to help prepare school counselor and teachers to incorporate lessons on race include specific activities to help address comfort level, address discomfort and vulnerability, and students' strong emotions. Also, in the guide, are three different strategies to help students learn how to have difficult conversations while continuously monitoring their feelings for grades 6-12, and even alternatives for K-5. The guide contains self-care suggestions for the facilitator as these conversations can be very difficult and emotionally draining. Numerous professional development resources can also be found the Teaching Tolerance toolkit, including activities and other learning resources for the students, as well as educational materials for the facilitator.

ASCA (2012) identified advocacy as a core theme of their national model for school counseling. ASCA states that school counselor advocacy includes promoting multicultural and social justice education in schools. As discussed, students in rural, majority white schools also benefit from understanding how culture and power interact in

our society. The school counselors' obligation to ensure the success of all students includes assisting rural white students in the personal and social development necessary to engage in an increasingly globalized society.

In the preface of the first edition of their social justice text *Off White*, Fine, Powell, Weis, and Wong (1997) commented, "One of the ironies of white power is the ability to escape social and intellectual surveillance" (as cited in Richardson & Villenas, 2000, p. 258). This idea may be particularly relevant in rural white schools where students have limited interpersonal engagement with members of other cultures and white identity may be reified without critical inspection. Powell, Weis, and Wong (1997) are pointing to the fact that these white individuals still see blackness as inherently criminal, while whiteness is never suspected, surveyed, or made to be seen as criminal.

Understanding these contexts is an important feat for the intrepid school counselors who are committed to multiculturalism and social justice. The school counselor may initiate critical conversations and act as an advocate for more intentional multicultural practices in the schools. The school counselor is uniquely positioned to serve in these roles due to their duties in rural schools, including working with the entire student body. Similar to the growing body of research that concluded that having a supportive relationship with an adult is a predictor of child resilience (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2015), having a consistently visible social justice-oriented and multiculturally conscious adult in the school system may have significant repercussions in a student's multicultural development.

Bell, Goodman, and Ouellett (2016) have an informative chapter in *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* where they provided tools and tips for teaching these

important concepts. This can be helpful for not just teachers of teachers, but also for counselor educators that desire to incorporate the important themes of diversity and social justice throughout their teaching. In this chapter, Bell, Goodman, and Ouellett go in depth about the important questions of: “‘Who are we as instructors?’ ‘Who are our students?’ ‘What do we teach?’ and ‘How do we teach it?’” (p. 56).

As white counselors in predominately white schools, it is important to have an understanding of racial competence and to have the skills to work with all students, including students of color. One of these important skills is the ability to even just simply talk about race. Day-Vines et al. (2010) published research that helps counselors with broaching these, sometimes difficult, topics in the counseling process. The authors asserted that, “a recognition that race may contribute to the client’s presenting problem functions as a vital element in building a working alliance” is an important skill for a counselor to possess. An avoidance of these topics can damage the alliance with the student and be detrimental to outcomes. These authors help with the following three competencies: “(a) the counselor’s awareness of her or his own assumptions, values, and biases; (b) understanding the worldview of culturally diverse clients; and (c) development of appropriate interventions for use with these clients” (p. 404). Ethically, it is important for school counselors determine where they are in this process and to ensure they are meeting social justice competency expectations.

Counselor Education and Preparation

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) provides guidelines for counseling programs seeking accreditation on how to structure their counseling programs; this includes guidelines on incorporating

important content into mandatory classes. According to CACREP, one key part of the counseling curriculum is “Social and Cultural Diversity,” with eight subsections of this topic. These subsections include concepts like theories and models, power and privilege, oppression and discrimination. CACREP (2016) requires that programs “must document where each of the lettered standards listed below is covered in the curriculum (p. 9).” However, if all of these competencies are covered in just one single multicultural counseling course, then material covering these topics could, in theory, be left out of every other class a counselor must take. It is important to note that CACREP encourages that social justice and multicultural education permeate all courses. Language about diversity is seen throughout each of the standard domains. However, it is not a requirement that this take place. Individual teachers, and/or the counselor education program, need to decide how to use these competencies in other areas of the program. Additionally, nowhere throughout the entire list of these competencies is the word “race” listed. Although unlikely, this means a student in a CACREP accredited counseling program could potentially never have to have a conversation regarding race before graduation.

Recently, ASCA (2012) identified advocacy as a core competency area in its national model for school counselors. Additionally, in the competency section entitled “Responsibilities to Self,” ASCA includes this subsection:

Monitor and expand personal multicultural and social-justice advocacy awareness, knowledge and skills to be an effective culturally competent school counselor. Understand how prejudice, privilege and various forms of oppression based on ethnicity, racial identity, age, economic status,

abilities/disabilities, language, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity, appearance and living situations (e.g., foster care, homelessness, incarceration) affect students and stakeholders (2016, p. 7).

This standard not only calls for multicultural considerations and social justice, but it also states “racial identity,” specifically, as an understanding in order to be effective in a counselor role.

Chao (2013) studied school counselors’ multicultural competence and provided two points for future considerations for school counseling programs. One suggestion was that programs need to better address training needs or issues of colorblind racial attitudes of students, as viewed through the student participants of this study on multicultural counseling competence. The other training suggestion is that programs should tailor their training specifically to the racial identity of each student. For example, instead of having a blanket curriculum of multicultural issues, white students could specifically be required to examine their own racial identity, including white privilege and whiteness.

Erford (2007) reported that most school counselors are white middle-class women. This data, along with the socialization into Whiteness as defined earlier, adds to the importance of examining racial and political identities. Parikh, Post, and Flowers (2011) examined social justice advocacy attitudes in school counselors. One suggestion they made for increasing these attitudes included incorporating more than just one multicultural counseling class in a program, which was mentioned above. These researchers believe all faculty should be responsible for “infusing multicultural awareness and knowledge in their courses” (p. 67).

Race in the Classroom

Many researchers reported on how race in the United States is discussed in social studies classes and written about in textbooks (Brown and Brown, 2010; Burrell & Walsh, 2001; Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Lintner, 2004; Loewen, 2007; Zimmerman, 2004;). Social studies was examined more than other subjects because, as most of the articles reported, social studies is a comprehensive class that is supposed to teach “citizenship responsibility, social justice, equality, dialogue, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Chandler & McKnight, 2009, p. 219). Social studies includes many topics, and is often a catch-all of many different topics.

Researchers pointed to the discrepancy between actual historical events and the ways in which history is taught and written about, especially regarding the topic of race (Brown and Brown, 2010; Burrell & Walsh, 2001; Lintner, 2004; Loewen, 2007; Zimmerman, 2004). This point is relevant to school counselors, particularly their understanding of the knowledge base students might have on topics like race. Chandler and McKnight (2009) reported, “a dearth of research into how race permeates how the national story is told in the curriculum and classroom” (p. 221). This tends to be the theme when regarding how race is discussed in schools.

Chandler and McKnight (2009) reported there seems to be a colorblind approach to teaching, instead of an approach that examines the centrality of race in education (e.g., critical race theory in education). Chandler and McKnight indicated that this is not only the case in K-12 classrooms, but in teacher preparation as well. Enough attention is not paid to race, which could help the development of the social conscience of K-12 students, who will soon be asked to vote, take part in, and be members of a democratic society.

Chandler and McKnight make a point to say that the democratic society they will be a part of may no longer be white someday. Reason and Evans (2007) made the argument that white people are insecure about examining racism, and may not even see the extent or implications of racism if they choose not to. They asserted that academic environments are somewhat to blame for white individuals being allowed to stay so blind to the topic of race. If white students are not equipped to handle a society that looks different from their own classroom, they may experience many difficulties, as well as project difficulties onto those individuals who do not look the same. According to these and other researchers, social studies education has failed to confront race, which has proven to be an incredibly momentous and complicated theme in the history of the United States. Ladson-Billings (1998) discussed the perils of using this colorblind approach because the curriculum is developed in a way to make it seem as if “we are *all* immigrants in some way” and leaves “African American, Indigenous, and Chicano students with the guilt of failing to rise above their immigrant status like ‘every other group’” (p. 18). A school counselor’s role is also involved in the social education and development of students. The school counselor may help remedy concerns about social education materials.

Burrell and Walsh (2001) agreed with Chandler and McKnight (2009) that many white students are not exposed to African-American history throughout schools. Because schools were segregated, this was, obviously, especially true throughout the Civil War and Jim Crow times. Black History Month was created after the Civil Rights Movement to try to counter this marginalization in our education system, and especially for teachers to help address issues hindering Black individuals from completing education and other

issues inhibiting them throughout their K-12 education. This, along with the Civil Rights movement, has helped to address issues, but has definitely not eliminated them. The researchers believed that racism will only begin to be eliminated with the understanding of African-American history, which will only happen through education. Since knowledge is gained through education, and many students do not experience or access this type of information on their own, the burden lies in the classroom and with the school personnel.

Burrell and Walsh also cited a poll completed at Harvard University that stated “large numbers of white Americans incorrectly believe that blacks are as well-off as whites in terms of their jobs, schooling, income, and health care” and that this “represents formidable obstacles to any government effort to equalize the social and economic standing of the races” (p. 31). In other words, if white people do not understand that there are problems facing Black individuals, and that these problems are unique to them, we will not be able to correct these problems and obstacles. The researchers stated that teaching white students Black history would be a good place to start in fixing this misunderstanding and ignorance. The same survey, taken in 2000, showed that white students thought racism, segregation, and discrimination did not exist, and that times were not as bad as Black Americans say they are. The researchers, along with others, are afraid that if white students do not learn more accurate African-American history, they will continue to believe these stereotypes and falsities when they enter “a more pluralistic society” (Burrell and Walsh, 2010, p. 31). This research helps to shed light on the misunderstandings of many individuals, and the harms that can come from this ignorance. As school counselors are supposed to be agents for social and political change, they can

take a more active role in advocating for K-12 schools in this area (Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007).

Further supporting the work of Burrell and Walsh (2001), Zimmerman (2004) discussed the “browning” of the American textbook. The author details the history of how textbooks slowly incorporate Black scientists, scholars, doctors, teachers, and businessmen. Many of the changes in textbooks have included celebrations of race and diversity; however these textbooks leave out discussions about the implications of racism. This is an example of the earlier discussion regarding the topic of multiculturalism being a less threatening alternative to conversations about social justice (Jay, 2003; Chung & Bemak, 2012). In the 1960s, many textbook publishers were afraid to include too much information to portray white people in a derogatory light, so facts were omitted as not to offend white egos. In the 1970s, the policy became to “offend no one” (Zimmerman, 2004, p. 66). Zimmerman reported that, through 2004, textbook companies still were unable to “bear the historic burden that Americans placed upon them” (p. 69). So, textbook revisions seemed to end with a focus on the inclusion of more dialogue about race but little discussion of problems still facing people of color. A textbook that could be used to correct for these omitted facts is titled *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (Loewen, 2007), which outlined facts, stories, and details that American history textbooks leave out. Some of the topics include Christopher Columbus, the first Thanksgiving, John Brown and Abraham Lincoln, the Federal Government, explanations of why history is taught in such a way and what this approach has done to our society.

Teaching Tolerance also has a publication of the same name that is sent to the principal at the researcher’s small, predominately white school. The Spring 2018 issue,

Issue 58, contains a piece about how to teach about slavery (Van der Valk, 2018). Van der Valk stated a similar belief to other researchers mentioned here: if the United States is ever to correct for racial differences and the difficulties associated with it, educators must start teaching about slavery and white supremacy in an open and honest way. Slavery, which represents “hundreds of years of institutionalized violence against millions of people,” is the foundation for the racism that perpetuates in the United States culture today (Van der Valk, 2018, p. 51). In other words, without a true understanding of this history, forward societal movement in this realm will be nonexistent. The *Teaching Hard History* article makes note of an important element for educators to keep in mind- the institutionalized violence of slavery is not just a phenomenon of the past that has no impact on the present or future- the descendants of these individuals, slaves and owners, are part of who make up our classrooms today. Van der Valk (2018) also noted the difficulty with finding research and resources to teach about these important topics. Some of the difficulties come from state standards and existing textbooks, a general lack of research, and the absence of advice from community-based, professional organizations.

Brown and Brown (2010) and Lintner (2004) believed that education is central to achieving social justice and equity. Without education on these topics, questioning existing conditions and making proposals for future social prospects are less likely. School counselors and teachers cannot expect their students to graduate and move on to be democratic individuals who use critical thinking and question the status quo if it is not taught to them in schools. In his writings, Lintner, relying on the works of W.E.B. DuBois, conveyed the idea that a racial color line has been socially constructed and has

no roots in empirical science. This color line is used to separate and alienate people of color, and to facilitate wealth and power accumulation among whites. Lintner also noted that without exposure to these concepts, the task of bridging the racial gap would be difficult or impossible. If people and students are not able to recognize the social construction of race and the social and political utility of the racial color line, and the implications of such a construction, it will be difficult or impossible for those same individuals to make any steps toward change.

Brown and Brown (2010) identified pressing problems with the current social studies curriculum. These included “relying on one dimensional heroification narratives, positioning race as an essentialized construct, presenting partial inaccurate and/or misrepresented stories” (p. 141). Simply put, African-American experiences and representations were usually overgeneralized and inaccurate in the social studies curriculum. At the time of their research, Brown and Brown reported, “legal changes to curriculum have failed to change the entrenched and institutional effects of race and racism in the US” (2010, p. 141). Chandler (2009) agreed that the education profession should make race and racism a more central part of the curriculum. Textbooks are not teaching about the structural and institutional nature and dynamics of racism. This leaves students with only enough knowledge to think that racism exists within only a few *bad* people, and that only the individuals these *bad* people come into contact with are affected by their acts (Brown & Brown, 2010; Crenshaw et al., 1995). Freeman (1995) wrote about this phenomenon when he explained, “the law views racial discrimination not as a social phenomenon but merely as the misguided conduct of particular actors” (p. 30). In this view, issues stemming from race and racism cannot be seen in the bigger picture and

their full impact is concealed. In other words, without structural and institutional knowledge regarding race and racism, it will be increasingly difficult to start a national dialogue on ways to advance the conversation and actions centered on race.

Without this type of structural and institutional critique, teachers and counselor biases can be perpetrators of biases and stereotyping. Lintner (2004) noted how these biases were put into practice and consciousness. Some of these methods include media; personal biases and perceptions; and even trainings, textbooks, and teaching. Examining this research helps to shed light on the importance and ethics of examining personal biases and personal awareness so as not to convey them onto students. “Awareness can help teachers construct a pedagogical philosophy and curriculum that is both empowering and inclusive” (Lintner, 2004, p. 29). While Lintner notes the importance of the selection of history textbooks, school counselors can find many resources to help advance this racially conscious curriculum.

The previously mentioned authors have all noted the importance of education regarding race and people of color (Brown & Brown, 2010; Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Loewen, 2007; Zimmerman, 2004; Lintner, 2004; Burrell & Walsh, 2001). Many authors (Brown & Brown, 2010; Lintner, 2004; Zimmerman, 2004) also identified key components missing from textbooks and the social curriculum that would do just that. Although this is a problem with teacher preparation, an argument could also be made that school counselors can identify this area of weakness in their schools, and offer a socially oriented curriculum to help correct for this omitted history. Covering this topic with the students, in some way, is important. “Without knowledge we cannot eradicate the

attitudes and beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation perpetuating racism and prejudice” (Burrell & Walsh, 2001, p. 32).

Whiteness

Roediger (1991) and Ladson-Billings (1998) both asserted that it is important for white people to understand their whiteness. Ladson-Billings proclaimed that Critical Race Theory, or CRT, is an important tool for “deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power” (p. 9). One of the principles of CRT is that racism is normal and interwoven throughout American society. In order for white people to claim and understand their whiteness and all that it entails, this concept is important to recognize. Avoidance of this principle, or of race, is not possible if one is to develop racial competence.

One important element in understanding the construction of whiteness is to understand the concept of “othering.” Ladson-Billings (1998) discusses the phenomenon of white people making themselves “exempt from racial designations” (p.11). So, instead of being “the white student” or “the white teacher” they are just “student” and “teacher.” Whereas, people of color are so often referred to as “the black student” or “the black teacher.” This is one way the dominant group maintains privilege over people of color. “Othering” is also researched and written about by Morrison (2017). She discusses this “color fetish” to extent in chapter 3 of her book “The Origin of Others.” She speaks of how whites have historically used these racial designations in literature and asks the important question of whether we really know more about a character in a book if we know their race.

Morrison (2017) writes about this othering principle from as far back as slavery, and into present day. This includes immigrants who must sever ties with their nationality in order to “become white” – or “be American.” She states, “The definition of ‘Americanness’ (sadly) remains color for many people” (p. 17). Because whites, who are of the dominant group, decided that American means white, it is almost impossible for anyone else who looks any differently to fit into that mold. Again, this is another way for white individuals to hold on to their privilege and oppress people of color. Morrison also mentions media’s role in this creation of the other. Media has a way of making people think we should all look or act a certain way, which causes stereotyping and false beliefs of about the stigmatized other. Ladson-Billings (1998) also talks about this “ultimate property” of whiteness in that “Blacks, aware they will never possess this ultimate property, are less sanguine about U. S. Citizenship” (p. 16). And, that the American Dream is more attainable for white citizens.

Another educational issue related to race is that of school funding (Ladson-Billings, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). As a result of institutional and structural racism, school funding is provided unequally because of property taxes. Ladson-Billings (1998) also writes about the long history of difficulty for African Americans to qualify for mortgages and jobs, which causes issues with unemployment and housing. This cycle of systemic racism keeps black individuals in certain areas where property taxes are much lower than in predominately white areas, leading to a much lower quality of education for students in these areas.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory was created as an extension of both critical legal scholarship and civil rights scholarship (Bell, 1995; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Many scholars discuss the phenomenon of racism as being understood by many as uncommon and not systematic and engrained in normal society (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Crenshaw et al. (1995) noted in this perspective that, "...the evil of racism exists when- and only when- one can point to specific, discrete acts of racial discrimination, which is in turn narrowly defined as decision-making based on the irrational and irrelevant attribute of race" (p. xv). Similarly, Freeman (1995) wrote about this narrow view of what racism means to many: "The perpetrator perspective sees racial discrimination not as conditions but as actions, or series of actions, inflicted on the victim by the perpetrator" (p. 29). Freeman says this view is detrimental in that it does not look at the overall condition of an entire class of people. Society has, therefore, put a high significance on the "color-blind" approach as a way to correct for these wrongdoings. Critical race theorists, however, argue that this color-blind approach is not enough in countering white supremacy (Crenshaw et al., 1998; Bell, 1995; Roediger, 1991). According to the law, in this colorblind view, only intentional acts of discrimination violate the principle set forth against antidiscrimination (Freeman, 1995). Day-Vines et al. (2007) specifically writes about this race avoidant approach in counselors in which they either show a this color-blind approach as "uncritical acceptance of White racism or blatant disregard of racial differences" (p. 406).

Critical Race Theory was developed due to the fact Critical Legal Studies (CLS) were not doing enough to look at race in the fight against discrimination. Many of these scholars make the argument that the problem with Civil Rights discourse is similar- it

does not do enough to fight racial inequality. The gains accomplished due to the Civil Rights movement were just enough to give American society the idea that race is no longer an issue (Bell, 1995). In discussing this occurrence, Bell wrote "...but few (whites) are willing to recognize that racial segregation is much more than a series of quaint customs that can be remedied effectively without altering the status of whites" (p. 22). This color-blind approach is beneficial to white Americans, as it does not require giving up any white privileges. Crenshaw (1995) noted, "creating a break from the past has formed the basis for the neoconservative claim that present inequities cannot be the result of discriminatory practices because this society no longer discriminated against blacks" (p. 107).

The issue of being afraid to give up white privileges is related to the principal of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). Freeman (1995) uses Critical Race Theory to describe this white fragility in that white individuals need to feel innocent of any wrongdoing or personal responsibility for any racial discrimination that exists. Because of the Civil Rights reform that made outright discrimination illegal, in the antidiscrimination principle, whites are able to hold on to this fragility in that they do not have to take responsibility for the wrongdoings of the few who are blatantly racist. And, therefore, they do not have to take part in any form of reparations or examine racism in any more depth. Roediger (1991) explained that this is the reason for the "outpouring of recent left and left-liberal arguments that the Black freedom movement must now couch its appeals in terms of class rather than race" (p. 7). Critical Legal Scholars, and many people in general, felt and voiced that since racism, to them, has now been taken care of legally, any discrimination must not come from race but from class. One premise of CRT

scholars is that it would be a mistake to give into this way of thinking and move away from race as a discourse in the conversation about discrimination (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Bell, 1995). Cook (1995) acquiesces “let us not fall victim to the paralysis of neutral analysis” (p. 101). In Martin Luther King Jr.’s (1963) “Letter from Birmingham Jail” he wrote about this dangerous phenomenon:

...almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Council or Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to “order” than to justice; ...I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice, and that when they fail to do this they become dangerously structured dams that block the flow of progress (para. 20).

The detriment, here, is that racism has become synonymous, to so many, with the most abhorrent shows of cruelty. With this view, it is impossible to see, or admit, racism that is not so blatant.

Many CRT scholars also examine whiteness as property (Roediger, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Bell, 1992). Bell (1995) introduces the term *interest convergence*. He describes this term in the following way: “The interest of blacks achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites” (p. 22). Interest convergence is possible due to whiteness having meaning and being deemed as property. In another essay, Bell (1995a) wrote, “whites have come to expect and rely on these benefits and over time these expectations have been affirmed, legitimated, and protected by the law” (p. 906).

Race and Counseling at Racially Diverse Schools

The American School Counseling Association (2012) noted the importance for school counselors to have social justice as a key component of the school-counseling curriculum at his or her school. However, there is an absence of research on what this should look like in regards to conversations about race, especially in predominately white schools.

Racially diverse schools may offer an advantage to white individuals; exposure to cultures other than one's own is beneficial to all parties involved (Lintner, 2004; Uehara, 2005). However, there are still unique challenges that face racially diverse schools, as well as ones similar to predominately white schools, such as conversations about race. In these racially diverse schools, counselors work to facilitate interventions between groups of individuals from different backgrounds and cultures. Chao's (2011) research led the researcher to suggest that counselors reflect on their own cultural background, which can be of benefit to white counselors working with a diverse student population in their work with marginalized and discriminated groups. No matter the student body population, Grimes, Haskins, and Hasley (2013) called for all school counselors to go beyond the normal roles of consultation and counseling to serve as change agents for social justice change.

Nieto (1994) offered levels of multicultural education that help the schools and counselors navigate how to move beyond simply tolerating diversity, and into a place of affirming, solidarity, and open and informed critique. Table 1.1 is adapted from these levels and breaks down the differences in the four levels.

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<i>Tolerance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differences are not embraced, but endured - Accepts differences, while trying to modify them - Assimilation is ultimate goal - Not much understanding of institutional discrimination - Racism not tolerated - Not much professional preparation, regarding diversity, by staff - Teachers are “sensitive” to students - Acknowledge differences in diversity and culture, but still have not figured out why some students are more successful than others
<i>Acceptance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differences are acknowledged and found to be important - Professional development opportunities promoted to staff - Displayed information covers multiple languages, religions, etc. - Teachers include successful people of color in their lessons - Study of more than one language is encouraged - Flexible scheduling - Administration is beginning to face incidents of racism
<i>Respect</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admiration and high esteem for diversity - Differences are key to school happenings - Staff made up of diverse backgrounds - Printed and displayed materials represent all languages present in schools - Professional development is crucial; staff are allowed time off to take classes about diversity - Curriculum is changed to include immigration, individual and collective responsibility, and to be more honest and antiracist
<i>Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No ability grouping - Believe that the most powerful learning is fostered by students struggling with, and challenging, one another

- Students cultural backgrounds and families used for vehicles of learning
- Conflict, critique, and reflection is welcomed in an environment of respect and caring
- Equity and social justice are basic values of the learning system
- No tracking or special education
- Curriculum is interdisciplinary and many teachers team teach
- No “foreign languages” but entire school is multilingual
- Students are encouraged to be critical of books, curriculum, and information conveyed
- Multicultural education is not separate, but woven in throughout all education

In the first level, or the Tolerance level, teachers and staff deal with differences without necessarily embracing them. Differences between cultures and students are accepted as something that needs to be modified so that the student outside of mainstream will be assimilated into the dominant culture. In the Acceptance level, differences are seen as important and staff are encouraged to attend professional development opportunities about diversity and multicultural education. People of color are included in the lesson plans for teachers, there is flexible scheduling, and administration deals with racist incidents. Students are encouraged to study languages other than their own native language. Respect is the third tier of the multicultural education table and includes staff from diverse backgrounds, professional development that is seen as crucial, and even a change of curriculum to include more topics that were not taught before. In this level, differences are seen as important and key to make the school what it is. Finally, Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique is the highest level. At this level, the students experience no ability grouping or tracking, and the curriculum is interdisciplinary.

Instead of offering a foreign language, the whole school is multilingual. Staff also encourage students to critique books, lessons by always being critical of information and asking questions like: “Who wrote this book? Who is missing in the story? Why?” (p. 7).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Phenomenology is the approach to qualitative research that involves exploring a phenomenon with one individual or a group of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). In the case of this research study, teachers', staff, students', and counselors' perceptions of race at predominately white schools is being explored. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with school counselors in predominately white schools.

A qualitative approach to this research topic is the ideal methodology because there is a complex phenomenon that needs to be explored (Creswell, 2013). This research will aim to invite individuals to share their stories. The result of this research will help to lend itself to future theoretical development and can be explored using quantitative research. However, as there is very little research on the exact subject of the perception of race in predominately white schools, this research could be a starting point for other research studies to come. Largely, this research will help to explain the phenomenon of conversations regarding race being described by the participants of the study. These can be hard to capture with the use of a quantitative measure.

In this study I aim to answer the following questions: 1) How do school counselors perceive their cultural competence? 2) How do school counselors perceive cultural competence among students and staff? 3) What is the role of the school counselor in this discussion regarding race?

Research Design

As stated before, the phenomenon being explored in this research study is that of the nature of conversations regarding race in predominately white school, specifically counselor perceptions of these conversations. The questions and purpose of this research seem to best fit the interpretive framework of Critical Race Theory. Glesne (2016) stated that critical race theory deals with “detecting and unmasking of beliefs and practices that limit human freedom, justice, and democracy” (p. 10). As a result of this study, it is possible an uncovering beliefs and practices that might be adding to racial injustice will occur, and lend itself to future research to explore this phenomenon in more depth.

Patton (2015) discussed the concepts of breadth versus depth in the research design process. Qualitative studies usually go into more depth regarding the details and context of the topic at hand. Quantitative research practices usually study more participants; however there is normally less depth and breadth as standardized questions provide limited options for responses, and the categories are already determined (Patton, 2015). As race, specifically, as it relates to the counseling profession, in predominately white schools has rarely been examined in past research, it seems that more depth and breadth are required to discover more information about the topic. As there are hardly any predetermined analytical categories related to this topic, this qualitative study aims to discover and determine future areas of research possibilities. In this study, I took a middle ground approach in my design strategy regarding breadth and depth (Patton, 2015). This was decided on based upon time constraints, resources, and the purpose of the research. While this study is not a case study that incorporates more depth, the study also does not rely on a large sample, and one is not available, and resources do not allow

for a large sample. Therefore, a middle ground position, that has equal amounts depth and breadth, was taken.

Theoretical Sensitivity

My approach to this study is influenced by my personal and professional experience. I have experience with this topic having attended predominately white schools throughout my life. While my high school was not considered rural, and was situated in a semi-metropolitan area, it was 81.2% white at the time of my graduation. So, it would be considered predominately white by popular definition of the word (Merriam-Webster.com, 2018). As I reflect on my time in school, I do not feel that I ever received adequate racial or cultural competence training. At one point during my high school career, I even remember a race war that required police intervention at our school. I did not know specifics, other than a large group of white people were using derogatory terms to refer to black people, and were threatening to bring weapons to school to use against them. Currently, I am working as a school counselor in a predominately white, rural school in the Midwest. I still see and hear similar things as I did in my high school, like derogatory words being used to describe people of color, but with less of a filter because there are even fewer individuals of color. In the Junior-Senior High School where I work, white students make up 91.4% of the student body. Prior to working at my current school, I served as a school-based counselor in an urban school where the majority of the students (61%) identify as Black while 36.4% identifying as White. This stark contrast between my previous and current schools also helped to draw more of my attention to discussions regarding race.

During my time as a student of higher education, I have had numerous classes covering multicultural education, and more specifically, race. Additionally, I have been interested in topics regarding race, and the ways in which the topic is discussed, for quite some time. Hence, my experiences as both a student and professional in predominately white schools, in addition to my educational experiences related to multicultural education, shaped my interest to investigate the phenomenon.

The determining factor for my decision to select this topic was mostly related to where I live and work at the time of this writing. I am from a predominately white area where many people do not even know the term whiteness or accept that white privilege is real. However, I was still very surprised when moving to a small rural community about the severe lack of racial competence and the, sometimes blatant, racism present. I am unsure why I have always felt so passionate about racism, but throughout a lot of my life I have gotten in a lot of heated discussions with white people about this topic- mainly with family and friends. I do not believe that I know everything there is to know about racial competence. I am learning and growing every day, just the people in my study and those I enter into these discussions with may be doing. I am interested in this topic because I believe it is important to keep this curious and desire-to-learn attitude, and I feel frustrated when I see others not adopting the same mindset, especially about a topic I feel is so important. I am grateful that most of my family and friends are willing to learn and have discussions with me. However, I worry that that is not the case for too many white people.

Since moving to a small town, not only have I heard observed veiled racist remarks, but I have also heard professionals at my school use the N word, I have heard

and read multiple threats of violence directed toward black people, and I have observed an incredible amount of lack of knowledge and competence on the topic of race. I have personally heard multiple instances of vitriolic racism and specific threats of violence that have shocked me. I recognize that this shock is made possible by my whiteness in the fact that I have been able to ignore or have not personally experienced many of these instances throughout my life, and they definitely have never been directed at me. I used these experiences, and my desire to do more, to form this study topic and pursue this line of research. Not only because I want to continue to learn, but because I also have the desire to find the best ways to teach others and cultivate that desire to learn attitude in others.

Before, and throughout, this study, I have grappled with my own racial identity and my whiteness and white racial privilege. I wonder what my part is in this whole discussion, or if I even deserve to have a place. It is very important to me to not take a “white knight in shining armor” approach. I know that I have a lot to learn from people of color and I want to use my knowledge and skills in a way that is most beneficial to the cause of increasing racial competence. I constantly try to make sure I do not convey a savior-complex and consistently try to recognize my whiteness and privilege. I also grapple with the fact that I am, in fact, a white person. I live in a very rural area, I enjoy country music, I am surrounded by lots of white people personally and professionally, I was financially able to get married and build my own house at a young age, along with many other things. I recognize that a lot of these things come from the fact that I am a white person and I hold power because of this. Sometimes these things make me question whether I am an imposter while studying this topic, and always make me

question my role in maintaining the status quo. While I think I will constantly have these thoughts, I have decided that I can use some of this to my advantage and to the advantage of the research. I think these things make me relatable to the population I have been studying. When they are not being blatantly racist, I enjoy talking to and interacting with small town folk. I even recognize that, sometimes, I am complicit despite my best intentions. And, because of my background, I think I am good at it because I am able to make these people feel comfortable. I also think I have found a way to educate without humiliating. There are many times I have to ask myself whether I want to make someone feel dumb, or whether I just simply want them to learn. There are times it is hard to not pick the former, but then I have to remind myself that I have been where they are and I have probably said some pretty racially incompetent things in my life. I am grateful that I have learned and continued to grow in this area, and I want to help others to do the same. My whiteness can be used, in that way, to help people want to listen to me. While I think it is not fair that many of these people will not listen to those who do not look like them, I hope I am able to provide them with the tools they need to get to that point and recognize this behavior within them. And, while I know I will not be able to do this with very many people, I still have to try.

Recently, I read excerpts from Austin Channing Brown's (2018) book "I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness." In the book, she speaks to my heart when she says she has:

...Learned not to fear the death of hope. In order for me to stay in this work, hope must die... I cannot hope in whiteness, I cannot hope in white institutions or white America, I cannot hope in lawmakers or politicians. I cannot hope in

misquoted wisdom from MLK, superficial ethnic heritage celebrations or love that is aloof. I cannot even hope in myself. I am no one's savior" (p. 178).

Instead, she says, she is going to continue "working in the dark, not knowing if anything I do will ever make a difference." These are important words for me to hold onto. There have been so many days, working in a predominately white rural school and living in a rural community, where hope has escaped me. I know my whiteness and my privilege have allowed me to have the hope from the beginning, by being blind to the racist attitudes of so many people. I also recognize that my experiences and Brown's are not at all similar and that it may be offensive to even make the comparison here. While the author fears death, I am just inconvenienced by hearing conversations that are racist. These are things I am still grappling with, as I still have work to do myself in this area. I hope this work and this research can help even one person also desire to work on their racial competence and develop an understanding of his or her white identity. And if not, I will have to be okay with that too.

Additionally, I understand that my stance can be an unpopular one, especially in a predominately white rural area. Ladson-Billings (1998) states,

Adopting and adapting CRT as a framework for educational equity means we will have to expose racism in education and propose radical solutions for addressing it. We will have to take bold and sometimes unpopular positions. We may be pilloried figuratively or, at least, vilified for these stands (p. 17).

While I know this research and my stance can sometimes be unpopular, especially in my community, I hope to be even half as bold as Gloria Ladson-Billings, Austin Channing Brown, Toni Morrison, and many other authors and scholars mentioned throughout my

writing. When beginning this process, I had leaned toward using the words “cultural” or “multicultural” over “race.” Upon examination, this was probably in order to take a more gentle approach with the participants, as I imagined I would make them uncomfortable using the term “race.” However, with the help of my committee, I was able to be more bold and intentional and use the word “race” during interviews.

One week I struggled more than normal with an issue of race and intolerance from those I worked with. While I believe in keeping my clinical and personal lives separate, and welcome and celebrate others in having their own religious beliefs, I practice Catholicism. More so, I pray often and often feel very in sync with God much of the time. I have found myself turning to God throughout much of this research, asking if I am going in the right direction or if I am doing what I need to do. This difficult week in particular, there was much debate surrounding the kneeling of Colin Kaepernick, and individuals in my personal and professional life, even those I felt close to, were spewing ignorance and hate. I prayed a lot that week, even more than normal. Mostly, I prayed for God to let me know the right words to use and WHEN to use them—whatever would be the most helpful and make the most change. And I prayed to have peace within myself. At church that week I looked down at the pew in front of me, and the man’s hymnal was open to the hymn “Diverse in Culture, Nation, Race.” One of the lyrics included, “When chasms widen, storms arise, O Holy Spirit, make us wise. Let our resolve, like steel, be strong, to stand with those who suffer wrong.” While I understand that some people might believe this is a coincidence, it was a very powerful moment for me. This incident definitely informed how I approached and engaged the research from this point forward. I felt invigorated in my quest to learn and discover more, and to

continue to search for, and create tools and learning aids, for others. I hope this research is just the beginning for me in this subject matter.

Participants

Participants were seven school counselors recruited from seven different rural, predominately white Indiana schools. A rural area, for the purposes of this paper, is “all territory, population, and housing units located outside of urbanized areas and urban clusters” (Census.gov).. School demographic data was examined in order to ensure that all schools fit the criteria of having a predominately white student body. A predominately white school, in relation to this study, will be any school made up of 10 percent or less people of color. To be considered a Predominately White Institution, a school must be made up of greater than 50% white individuals (Brown & Dancy, 2010). Counselors were all white, with six females and one male. The purposeful sampling strategy used here is called group characteristic sampling. Patton (2015) described this strategy as “select cases to create a specific information-rich group that can reveal and illuminate important group patterns” (p. 267).

The Indiana Department of Education releases data from previous years on school enrollment based on ethnicity. The 2016-2017 spreadsheet was used to determine which schools fit the criteria for this study. When this was determined, school counselors’ email addresses were obtained from these schools. Once these email addresses were obtained, the school counselors were contacted to assess interest in participating in this study. A follow-up phone call was also placed to the counselor. Initially, eleven counselors were emailed. Four of them either did not respond or declined to participate. I continued to

send out emails until seven different counselors eventually responded and agreed to participate in the study.

Data Collection

Data was gathered through interviews, participant journals, and observations. These steps can be seen in the conceptual diagram in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2

Stage One- Six Individual Interviews

Stage Two- Journals

Additionally, Table 1.1 was a topic of discussion during the interviews. The table, below was adapted from Nieto's (1994) work on multicultural education levels in schools. The use of this table represents a pilot study, as it has never been used before. Participants were asked to discuss which level their school exemplifies, and brainstorm ways to get to other levels. This table was also presented to a school counseling class at the University of Louisville. Feedback was encouraged and used to help the researcher prepare for

interviews using the table. Interview questions were asked in a standardized open-ended format and included the following:

- Please explain the nature of conversations about race that happen between students and staff at your school.
 - o To find out:
 - What was said?
 - Who was saying it? Why?
 - Was it derogatory?
 - Was it educational?
- Please explain your level of competence regarding racism. How do you define racism? Possible follow-up: Structural racism?
- How would you describe or define competence in understanding racism?
- How competent would you say your school's student body is when it comes to understanding racism?
- What contributes to the competency level?
- Please explain what you think the school counselor's role should be in encouraging or strengthening competence regarding racism.
- What types of activities do you utilize to talk about race with your students?
- What types of activities do you utilize to talk about race with staff?
- What factors do you think about when you are planning to incorporate conversations about race into your lessons/guidance throughout the year?
- Explain how helpful you feel cultural-awareness training, or training on competence to address racism, would be for students or staff?

- What do you feel is the school counselor's role in race discussions and cultural-awareness with students and staff?
- What do you believe are the biggest challenges to incorporating lessons on race into what you do as a school counselor?
- The table provided to you includes dynamic and interactive levels of support proposed by Nieto (1998). Please read the table and explain which level fits your school best.

Along with interviews, I asked participants to keep journals of all times race-related topics come up in the school (with fellow staff members and students alike). They were asked to journal details of the discussion, including origin, what was said, by whom (student, teacher, etc.), and how they responded. The participants were, however, instructed to keep identifying information private. These will be journals of observations.

I also took part in keeping a journal of observation at my school. I work as a school counselor at a predominately white, rural school. Interactions and observations in my work place have been the inspiration for my research interest. I am aware of the biases and initial assumptions I might possess and will work to control these biases through journaling and peer debriefing with colleagues. However, as the observable scenarios take place in a varied time, it would be impossible to take observations at all schools. Therefore, this is why I asked the participants to do this, and why I was only able to observe at my own school.

Strategies and Role Management

As the primary researcher, I played the part of participant observer. I was an active participant while doing my own observations and conducting individual

interviews. For entry, I sent emails and made phone calls to rural predominately white schools in Indiana. There was no physical monetary form of reciprocity offered.

Participants were willing to take part in the research due to good will and the desire to advance research. Ethics were covered with the participants in the form of an informed consent document. The full reasoning behind the study was disclosed from the start.

My plan was to attempt to obtain a minimum of six interviews. However, I exceeded this number and conducted seven interviews. For some interviews, I traveled to the participating school counselors' schools, as I did not require participants to use their resources to help with this study. For others, the participants desired phone interviews. Interviews were recorded and, to ensure privacy, stored on a password protected memory stick, and in a locked cabinet when not being used. A professional transcription service completed transcriptions of interviews.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Interviews were conducted in person and over the phone. The interviews were first transcribed verbatim by the transcription service Rev, and then sent to the participants to be checked for accuracy. This method, called member checks, will help ensure trustworthiness (Patton, 2015). Using an inductive approach, patterns or themes, were derived from the data during the process of coding interview responses (Patton, 2015). During the first round of coding, I paid attention to, and made note of, links in the codes and responses. Then, working back through the codes, in a deductive approach, I focused on the notes taken after the first round, in order to condense the variety of codes applied to the data. When it no longer seemed as if it was justifiable to condense the codes any further, main themes were identified. Subcoding was used to enrich the main

themes (Saldaña, 2016). This process can also be explained as first and second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2016). Examples of these different cycle codes can be seen in Appendix 2. Throughout the coding process, I made sure to maintain a thorough audit trail (Appendix 1). This is so other individuals and colleagues can see whether my inferences are reasonable.

To ensure trustworthiness and help control for researcher bias, peer debriefing with colleagues took place (Hunt, 2011). Additionally, I took part in journaling throughout the entire process of data collection and analysis in order to be aware of my own thoughts and biases that might arise that could potentially harm the trustworthiness, believability, and transferability of my research. This was helpful to me in bracketing my personal experiences so as to reduce their interference with the research and interpretation process (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation, the strategy for increasing trustworthiness through the use of multiple data points, including individual interviews and participant journals, were utilized. Additionally, peer debriefing with colleagues took place in order to account for researcher bias and trustworthiness.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research study is to answer the following questions: 1) How do school counselors perceive their cultural competence? 2) How do school counselors perceive cultural competence among students and staff? 3) What is the role of the school counselor in discussions regarding race? The information garnered from interviews and observations will be used to develop a deeper understanding of discussions and beliefs about race and racism that exist with school counselors in predominately white schools. More specifically, one aim of this study is to uncover beliefs and practices that might be adding to racial injustice.

Themes

Seven interviews were conducted and coded to identify common themes amongst interviewee responses. Codes were assigned and condensed until a point of saturation was reached. This was a two-step process. The first round of coding was to identify general themes in the data. The second round of coding helped group the data within the themes into smaller units of patterns, or sub-themes. Six broad themes were identified including: lack of knowledge, exposure, prevalence, avoidance, tolerance/competence, and counselor roles. Twenty-two sub-themes were identified for each broader theme. These themes were developed through a critical whiteness lens. As mentioned in chapter two, Ladson-Billings (1998) discussed the importance of deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction in a Critical Race Theory approach. The creation of these themes

represents a role in the “deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses” (p. 9).

*Note: “[]” indicates a word was omitted in order to keep identifying information confidential. Additionally, all counselors will be referred to as she/her/hers in order to protect identifying information.

Lack of knowledge. All of the interviewees made comments about lacking knowledge, in some way, about the issue of racism. Many of them remarked that asking them to even define the term “racism” was difficult for them. While all participants provided some type of definition, many were clearly lacking in profundity. All but one participant was either not aware, or had not heard, of the terms “structural racism” or “institutional racism.” All of the participants made comments about students lacking knowledge on this concept. Most of the participants said that they would not be able to lead a training or professional development exercise about this concept; while others said they possibly could with some more training of their own.

Definition of racism. After asking the participants to define racism, I received many answers like, “That’s a hard question.” Many remained on the surface level of understanding with their answers. They gave answers similar to “I guess I would describe it as students not, or a person not, being able or not tolerating or understanding another person who’s different than them” or, “an unfair attitude or grudge” against people who do not look the same. One participant gave the following answer:

Well, to my personal belief would be that racism is something that others treat people differently that look differently than themselves. Could be, when we think of race, we think of Black/White/Asian, those kinds of things. It could be simple things, though, even your hair. Like you’re tan but your hair has African

American tendencies whereas the real thick, the “fro,” those kind of things and you use that as a wedge, making that person feel inferior.

Because this answer mentioned characteristics of someone of a different race, and not just skin color, it can be conferred that, unlike other participants, this participant did not have a total lack of knowledge of the subject.

The participants were first asked to just define the term racism in order to gain an idea of their understanding of this complex phenomenon without any information that would help or provide bias to their answer. When the participants did not include concepts that would indicate a deeper understanding of racism, they were asked if they had ever heard the terms “structural racism” or “institutional racism.” Six out of the seven interviewees responded with answers of some form of “no.” Not only could they not define these terms, but they do not recall ever hearing them. “Gosh, I’m not sure if I’ve been...those terms don’t sound familiar to me,” said one counselor. However, one participant responded with, “To me, that’s more how it’s built into the system of... Let’s say there is an unsaid practice of not hiring minority faculty. Something like that, where it’s built into an institution of business...” This counselor felt this understanding came from having a broad range of life and work experiences. This was the only response received that showed some understanding of the concept.

Similarly to lacking knowledge of their own, most thought the students lacked knowledge on the topic as well. One participant said “I don’t feel like they’re educated enough to understand, I guess.” One counselor thought the students might have an understanding of racism. But, when following up on this, the counselor decided they still would probably not know the concepts of structural or institutional racism. Another

counselor offered the following statement on what he believed could help competency levels:

Well obviously life situations...but then also educational efforts. How much does the school really try to help students understand? Just like anything else. How many of our kids know trigonometry, or haven't seen it, you know? If you're not exposed to it, and no one talks to you about it then..."

This is really important to note because this is the only time any of the participants mentioned educational efforts in the importance of the understanding of race and racism. It is unclear whether the other counselors just thought this topic was a waste of time for their student population, whether they had not thought about the importance of it before, or whether they were afraid to talk badly about their school/the school system. It was made clear that many of them wanted to speak highly of their schools.

Training thoughts. Each participant was asked if he or she thought some kind of training on racial competence would be helpful at his or her school. They also were asked what the role of the counselor should be in ensuring the staff and student body was racially competent. Three of the counselors responded with answers that indicated someone with more knowledge than them would have to come to their school to give the training. For example, "I don't feel like we're necessarily educated enough to brief teacher and staff on that. We would probably get a guest speaker or someone more educated to educate our staff," was the response from one participant. Another articulated:

I would not personally do it, because I don't feel equipped and educated enough to do that. Unless they made me do that, that would not be something that I

would feel that, that would be in my wheelhouse to do. I feel like I would definitely want an expert in that.

One of the counselors said the training should come from the counselor, but that she did not possess the knowledge to do so at that moment. She offered, “We would have to probably get some training or knowledge from somewhere else to be able to do that.” She was the only counselor to express the importance of providing the training herself, even though she felt that she lacked the knowledge. Some of the counselors mentioned that trainings would be important to help build the knowledge base at their school, with staff and the student body. One articulated, “That way, if a situation arises, that everybody needs to know how to address, that they would have a better understanding of how to address it.” Another, “I mean I think any sort of knowledge like that would be beneficial.”

Exposure. Each of the seven counselors interviewed pointed to the concept of exposure to different races, ethnicities, and cultures, as being a necessary component to having racial competence. It is important to note the omission of understanding whiteness as a category, as this actually points to the whiteness and white fragility of the counselors. Each counselor believed the students at their school lacked exposure. Some pointed to the fact that when students graduate they will gain more exposure when (if) they leave their small town. Exposure post-graduation was also provided as a reason racial competence might be important for their students now, while still in school. Exposure also seemed to be a sort of “cure-all” answer for the participants. Their answers pointed to the fact they all thought the racial competence of their students or staff, or even themselves, would raise just by simply being around more people of

different races. Some answers presumed that, without exposure, deeper understanding of the concept just simply was not possible:

Well, I mean, we're not very culturally diverse here, so I haven't been exposed to it so much as a teacher or a counselor. It's just the community that we live in and the atmosphere that I work in, so I'm just not exposed to it. I suppose if I got an inner city job I would be, but I'm not exposed to it personally or professionally.

This exposure idea was not only thought of to help white counselors in predominately white schools by all counselors. One counselor mentioned,

I don't think someone that only works in an African American school would be any better off than me. I think you need that diversity of experiences and a school like this doesn't present a lot of opportunities for that.

Other counselors, when talking about exposure, made comments that extended ideas of *parading* other cultures in front of their students in order for them to have a better understanding of racism. As if learning about the stereotypes of other cultures would help them to become not racist.

Cure-all. Of interest is that every counselor talked about exposure in some way. Most of them put a very high importance on this phenomenon in order for students to have an understanding of racism. One counselor even suggested that this was *necessary* to understand racism. When asked about a training on competence for students or staff, she said:

I think honestly, it would probably be more beneficial to staff, only because they have life experiences to where they can take some of the information that they've gotten and be more aware of their biases. Where I think students at this age,

because they have not been anywhere for the most part, or have not even traveled, it's a different experience for them.

Another counselor expressed, "Once they grow up a little bit and they're a little wiser to that, for sure, they'll lose the stereotypes. She offered this as though exposure to other races is all that is needed to understand the deep and complex nature of racism. This points to a lack of competence on the part of the counselor in really understanding this topic. One counselor stated that the students at her school are not very competent because "they're not exposed to it very much." It would have been helpful to ask these counselors the follow up question of if they believe exposure is the only component necessary to understand racism. Similar to this, another counselor added "the minority levels are so low that you (pause), I don't see (pause), I've not had that firsthand experience very much, to feel like I'm totally competent." The phrase "totally competent," again, begs the question of whether this is all that is required to achieve full, or higher, competence of this complex term.

Students leave. This sub-theme covers two separate ideas: the idea that students leave, so this is important to know now, and the idea that students will leave and will then get the necessary exposure to understand the concepts of racism. Two counselors touched on this first point of the importance of understanding these concepts now, and how that could help transition them when they graduate and if or when they leave the town. One counselor said she would educate on the topic of racism (if she had the time) because:

I think especially because it's a predominately white school. I think, because they're not going to predominately white colleges, and predominately white jobs

(when they leave)...I mean some might... They're going to go where they can go, and where they want to go, and whatever fits them.

This counselor was touching on a point made earlier: that even if for no other reason, these students need to understand these concepts because they will not always only be asked to interact with people who look like themselves. Another counselor proffered that students who grow up in diverse schools have advantages when transitioning to college or the work place because "they've learned (pause), what not to say if nothing else." This wording can be dissected more, and offers an interesting take on the subject. The phrase will be dissected more fully in a later subject. For the purpose of this theme, however, it is just useful to recognize that the counselor realizes the students will not always be surrounded by white people. A third counselor offered "...they're all going to go off to other places and jobs, and experiences that it could benefit them. It could definitely benefit them." Each of these responses was offered organically.

Added competence. All of the counselors believed that either 1) more exposure would help add to their competence levels, 2) further exposure would add to the students' competence levels, or 3) ranked their competence higher than the other counselors and attributed this to more exposure. One and two were addressed in the "cure-all" section of this theme. A few responses addressed number three. One counselor seemed to have a better understanding of the concepts than the others. When asked what she thought contributed to this fuller understanding, she responded that the town where she went to college was more diverse and she took part in a lot of different life experiences: "There's a lot of diversity in [town]... Probably through experience, and work many years through Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and the YMCA, a lot of groups where you're dealing a lot

more with diversity than we do here.” Another counselor, the only one to rank herself as highly competent in issues of racism, offered this about her college experience:

We were just taught diversity just because my classmates were all, especially my master’s program, we were all from different areas, so it was just part of the curriculum. You had to be taught. I was probably the weakest link out of all of it because I am from an all-white area.

The statement of “you had to be taught” is interesting, as though you do not have to be taught these things until you are around other races. This same counselor also offered that her university had one of the highest international student ratios. “That helps me just to be exposed to, like a kid with a turban. I’d never seen that in person.” Additionally, she said, “My brother-in-law is [of a different nationality] so interacting with his whole family has helped that some.” Just simply having these interactions seemed to provide this counselor with a false sense of competence regarding race and racism. Again, as if exposure is enough to understand these complex issues.

Other counselors believed their competence regarding racism would be boosted with more exposure:

I’m aware of it, I’m sensitive to it, but I wouldn’t say I have a lot of experience with it because I don’t. I don’t have a lot of day-to-day interactions that would involve any type of racism.

Many participants mentioned that the community, in general, is also not competent because of non-exposure. “Maybe some cultural passed down from generation to generation of hate towards other people,” is how one counselor described the issue of students not being competent regarding racism. Another said, “I don’t think

a lot of people in this town really ever leave this town. They're not subjected to anything other than that." Two counselors spoke specifically of the type of students and how this adds to their low competence levels. "It's uncomfortable only because it's different. That doesn't mean they're not welcoming to it, it's just different for them. They're farmers from Indiana." Another eloquently described the student population at her school as, "I don't want to say that we have a large redneck, hillbilly population, but we kind of do." Whether asked specifically about the community, or the answers came organically, each counselor agreed that the community in which their school was set would be considered to have low competence regarding issues of racism.

Parading. A term that can be used to describe some of the descriptions and data provided by participants is *parading*. For example, one counselor said, of students of color, "we need more to expose our kids to. So then we could talk about things as they come up." Another counselor, while brainstorming ways to educate the students at her school, mentioned that she could use Google Classroom to post a lesson on another culture once a month. Two other counselors had similar ideas about "culture night:"

(1) There needs to be awareness. I don't know if that could be orchestrated by ... I would say presentation, but I don't know. Ideally it would be nice if we probably had an ethnic group in, and you'd coordinate some kind of program like that just to be in it. I think telling people not to be racist is probably clearly the easiest thing to do. I think that probably the most effective thing to do would be able to provide some kind, and again and I've done it, but provide some kind of training and introduction to it. We do those kinds of things. It was in the classroom. They do the different cultures, the different foreign languages, do different activities

and stuff like embrace the cultures like that. And our Spanish teacher does a fantastic job with that, but you have to be in that class.

(2) My kids go to [school], and they have a culture night at the elementary school where my one daughter goes. And they have one at the middle school where my oldest two have been through. And they have loved it. I mean, they go in and it's not just cultures that they might see in their school, but cultures from around the world. And they enjoy the different ... the pictures they see and the food they have and the languages ... they have different words and stuff, and they teach ... they get to see small businesses and stuff and they've always enjoyed to go. So I think students overall would enjoy something like that.

Prevalence. Questions were asked, throughout the interview, to try to gauge the prevalence of conversations regarding race or racism heard at school by counselors. These conversations could be between students, staff, or a mixture. Some follow up questions were also asked about how often they have heard these conversations in the community or from parents. The overwhelming majority of statements indicated that the counselors just do not hear conversations about race, whether derogatory or educational. However, if a conversation was heard, it was usually derogatory and usually from students. A few counselors cite “jokes” as one way they heard race talked about with students.

Of importance to note is that two counselors mentioned students with immigrant Mexican parents. One said “When I talk to the kids whose parents are directly from Mexico, they don’t really want to talk much about their status (pause) and they’re concerned.” Another said, “I have a little girl that is Mexican who took (?) illegally, and

so I have had lots of conversations with her, but it's not been necessarily race related I guess. More so just about her status." It was interesting that they both noted these conversations when asked about how often they hear people talk about race. One even mentioned "but it's not been necessarily race related I guess," so it would be curious to know what the correlation was, for the counselor, between the question and response. A counselor said this is the first year her school has been asked to put a sixth grade information packet together in Spanish.

Not heard. Before prompting, most counselors responded to the interview questions by saying that they just do not hear race being talked about. One counselor said "We don't talk about race too much. I mean, if we do, it's just that we're predominately white." This is a curious statement and makes one wonder under what circumstances this conversation would be had. Another counselor said it is her first year back as a counselor, after many years off, so she does not feel that she has been around enough yet to witness many of these conversations. She says she at least has not heard any derogatory statements in the one-year that he has been employed at the school. She makes sure to note, "that does not mean they're not happening, but no I haven't heard them." Another counselor says, similarly, that she has not heard conversations regarding race in the current school year. While another counselor adds, "But I've not really had a lot of dealing with it myself, and I honestly haven't seen very much come through the discipline through our computer program or dealt with race or behaviors and stuff."

Five counselors remarked that they especially do not hear conversations regarding race from staff. "There aren't many conversations about race. I would say especially between adults necessarily." If they do hear the staff talk about it, added one counselor,

“they are talking about some things that the kids have said.” Another mentioned, “I’ve never been witness to a conversation between staff and students about race. I mean, I hear what rumors filter back to the office.”

Derogatory. If a counselor reported any conversations regarding race from a student, it was usually derogatory in nature. Of the incidents reported, almost all of them were name-calling by a white student. There were a couple statements reported by counselors that could be considered derogatory, but were not put in this category by the counselor. This could be due to the low competence levels of the counselors. One comment from a counselor was, “It’s just something that more along the lines, like if we go to a school, that there is a lot of diversity, they’re afraid like, “Oh, they must be really fast. Or they must be really good basketball players.” This counselor specifically said that she had not heard any derogatory remarks, but she did consider these remarks stereotyping in nature. Also, interesting to note, is the fact she used the word “afraid” when talking about how her white students react to students of other races. Along with confusion on whether or not these statements are, in fact, racist, a few counselors discussed jokes made by some students. It can be debated whether some of these comments are derogatory, but the counselors did not consider them as such, and so they have been put in a separate category.

Some counselors made broad statements about the prevalence of conversations regarding race. “I would say a lot of times with students, if you hear them talking about race, it’s a derogatory tone,” reported a counselor. Another said “I would say, if race is ever an issue, it usually is their freshman year.” This counselor also reported that during her first year working at the school, there was an incident with a student being “very

vocal about being racist.” Most of the counselors reported specific instances of hearing a white student call a black student “the N word.” One reported hearing the word “spic” used by students to refer to a Hispanic student. A participant also reported an incident with some students passing around a meme in a group-messaging app in which some students were referring to a black female student as a monkey.

Jokes. As mentioned previously, a few counselors make note that sometimes race is talked about in a “joking” way, and mainly by the student of color. One reported, “One of the Hispanic kids will say something about, ‘Make the brown guy do it.’ Or they’ll make jokes, kind of on themselves mostly is what I hear.” Another counselor offered a story about a student at her school who likes to make jokes about his race in multiple instances. In this instance, a presenter was in and was trying to figure out how to pick a student to help him with his presentation. This student said, “I have a way. Can you pick the most non-white kid in the room?” She also added, “He was laughing about that, but he does that a lot.” Another counselor said, “The most conversations I hear is if I have a multi student, it’s usually them making comments about themselves. I feel like they feel a bit like they’re an anomaly.” This last sentence touches on a phenomenon that could explain this entire category.

Avoidance. The general theme of avoidance was introduced in multiple ways throughout the interview process. Some counselors went to great lengths to avoid saying the word “race,” as if this was too uncomfortable; others insisted on focusing on issues other than race during our discussions. Additionally, a couple sub-themes that arose were for the counselors to introduce other problems in order to provide a reason to not address

racial competence, and for them to explain why racial competence is only important in other schools that are more diverse than their own.

Address when problem arises. Many counselors simply reported that they just do not utilize any activities or lessons to talk about race. Almost all of them answered “no” to this question, while some said they do not use anything other than simple one-on-one conversation when an issue is introduced. This theme, of race only being necessary to talk about when correcting a derogatory remark or when a problem arises, can be viewed throughout the interviews. Although, every one of the counselors reported that their student body was not competent in this area. The participants reported that it is only necessary to talk about when they see a problem. For example, one counselor said:

I think I'm in kind of a unique situation here. We don't ... I guess we don't really address it because it's not really identified as a big problem here.

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. So, it sounds like you think that maybe a school counselor's role would be addressing it when they see a problem arise?

Yeah, because we have so many other things going on. It's just hard to address every single thing and if it's not a problem at the time.

The following exchange depicts a similar belief by another counselor:

I guess if there was a need identified for the kids to know that, then the counselor could step in and do some education awareness on that. As you know, we do that all the time with all kinds of different topics and subjects ...

Researcher: Uh hum.

... if something pops up day to day. Can you say the question again?

Well, actually, let me ask ... so you said if there is a need identified, so, who identifies the need and what do you think would have to happen for that need to be identified?

I guess, it would have to have some kind of awareness brought to our attention via through a discipline referral or a kid upset or a parent upset.

Another counselor was observed as wanting to avoid discussing race. Follow up questions were asked multiple times before the counselor would disclose an incident of racism that she observed. A note was made about this because I, as the researcher, could feel the tension and desire to avoid the subject.

“Race” avoided. The participants were asked about their competence regarding racism, and, specifically “How do you define racism?” As the researcher, I felt that it was important to be explicit in my use of terms so that the participants would have less opportunity to avoid the, sometimes uncomfortable, subject of race. However, many were still able to do just that. One response to the question was, “I would say it’s the difference between different cultures and their backgrounds.” While another response looked like:

I look at it in the negative sense I guess, how people are treated differently because of their race, as a result of their race. Probably I look broader than that at ethnicity and some of the other generalizations too. More than just skin color, you know. It goes a little further to me. I know that's probably not racism in the terms of the true.

This counselor even made mention of the fact that what she was describing was not racism, but she still added extra information in order to not only focus on racism.

Another counselor said, “Racism is something that others treat differently that look differently than themselves.” Still another counselor said, “I think of things more as cultures,” instead of race. More responses still included, “I think definitely judgmental, based on their ethnicity;” “There’s a couple of students in mind that are not in the majority;” and “The kids, the multi-racial, the students that have come in that are (pause) not white.” This last statement shows that the counselor was finally able to use a racially categorizing term, but it took quite a bit of effort. One participant asked me, in the middle of the interview, “Oh, I do have a question. Are we just talking about ethnicity?” To which I responded, “Race. Just race.” A similar exchange occurred with a participant:

Researcher: Have you ever seen any of these issues stemming from his race or his background?

Counselor: I don't think so. Not his ethnic background

This counselor went to extreme lengths to avoid using the term “race” during the interview. One counselor even mentioned, “I’ve never thought about ‘race’ so separately.”

Neutral to avoid offending. The data that fit into this category took on a few different appearances. Some of the counselors took a colorblind approach in their responses in order to appear as non-offensive. One counselor reported, “I don’t use the color of their skin to even discuss. It’s either Jack or Jill that we talk about. I don’t see color. I see a student in front of me.” Another said, “My judgment is never what you look like or where you come from, but just how you treat others.” Another counselor reported, “I think no matter who comes into the school we need to make students feel

included. Regardless of their race, we need to make them feel welcome and a part of the community.”

Others spoke of the need for education on the topic to be neutral and non-offending. They took, what could best be described as a “typical multicultural course” approach to education (discussed in more depth in Chapter 5). The following is an example of what this course would look like:

If we were able, if we had the staff to offer a history course that just talked about different cultures, that would be awesome. I don't think kids would even sign up. Not because they weren't interested in it, but they would think of it more as, more of the word as race. I think of things more as cultures, but then kids don't have a good feel of what that is yet, I don't think. Anytime you offer a cultural class to anybody, no matter what your age or where you've been or how much experience you have, it can always be beneficial. There's always something to learn.

This counselor is saying that a class on different cultures would be good, as long as it does not offend anyone by actually talking about race or racism. Another counselor said that her school offers something similar to this description:

We don't do one (a training) that straight-on identifies race. But we start the year off, both of us do, with respect and self-respect lessons. And I know in mine ... I don't know if she does in hers ... But I know in mine, I don't ... I mean, we talk about not judging others based on appearance and race and sexuality, which I contend more with sexuality stuff than I think than with race stuff.

It is unclear what is meant by “I contend more with sexuality stuff than with race stuff.” It could be assumed that this means she either identifies with this topic more, or that she

discusses it with students at this training more. Either way, race is taken out to make the trainings and discussions more “neutral.” The most extreme depiction of this need to stay neutral can be seen in this response from one participant:

If I had somebody, I had student a few years ago who was just starting a LGBTQ club. They needed a club sponsor and they asked me. I was very close with him and still talk to him actually. He lives in Florida now. He asked me to head up the club. I told him I'm not able to that. Not because I don't support your club, that I have to be at the middle for everything. If I am vocal about supporting this or that, kids who don't support it don't feel like they can come to me and ask questions or say their feelings. I need to make sure that I'm advocate for all kids and even if I disagree with your opinion, it is not my place. I'm not right and you're wrong. I, as a counselor, try to give you a different perspective of a situation that you might be in. If somebody comes to me and has a question or a concern about a student with how they look or their life choices, it is my job to listen to them and not judge them because of their opinion, but better again, give them a different perspective and hopefully a better understanding of that culture and that race.

This is a very interesting perspective to take of the role of a counselor. Another counselor disclosed something similar:

...if we do try to do things even with the best intentions, those three kids that we're talking about, that can make them feel more targeted. The after part of us trying to make them culturally aware but all it did was make them feel different.

These counselors could be using this need for neutrality as an excuse to avoid having to discuss the topic of race, whether because they are unfamiliar, uncomfortable, or just do

not want to. Or, another explanation is that this could be stemming from lack of knowledge or competence. Additionally, the following exchange was had with another counselor:

Counselor: I think the biggest challenge is you have to approach it without offending somebody. I mean, you want every kid respected and just thinking about the variations that we have in our building. How do you make kids identify the fact that we can't ... you have to be aware of what this kid is doing based on his race, but then we're also mentioned there what this kid is dealing with because of the poverty level in the home or the sexuality the student is going through right now, the changes in sexuality that the students are going through. So trying to make sure that we don't put one thing above another in a sense of bringing across. To me, that's where I struggle the most. So when I feel like kids identify that these differences are there, but we have to respect those and but we also have to respect these differences, too. So trying to play off those differences without putting one above the other or offending somebody in the process of getting that information out.

Researcher: Okay. So offending ... I want to make sure I am clear about this. So offending a white kid because of explaining racial issues that are going on with a black or Latino kid at the school? Like that?

Counselor: Even the other direction, too. I don't want to offend one of our minority students by calling out a race issue that they don't want ... if you don't want to be identified ... I don't want to be put in front of a whole class because of what my color is. I don't want ... So just finding that balance.

Introducing other problems.

All of the counselors introduced other problems as a way to explain why they do not have the time or resources to focus on race. Other times, this was just a product of the counselor brainstorming reasons the topic of race is avoided at their school. These comments seemed to fit into two categories: socioeconomic issues or it is just not needed. Because these are all rural, low socioeconomic areas, a lot of the counselors mentioned this either because this meant lower education levels among the community members, or because this is a big focus for them in their school. For example:

We're from a poor culture, you know, rural community. We are given that to us in terms of kids that just don't have things, so I know it's not race. But socioeconomic, we're definitely. We definitely fall in that category. That part of my program I could relate to because of just seeing the poor, you know, white kids who didn't have things.

Another counselor had a similar sentiment. “Our barriers here probably come from more money than color because that is the probably in our area, just lack of funds.” Three offered that the community was probably very low ranking on racial competence. This is what one counselor offered as a possible reason for the low competence levels:

I think we have a lot of low socioeconomic situations in our community and I think that contributes to the attitude about race I think and what they grew up with and that's not (pause). I don't feel like they're educated enough to understand, I guess.

Many counselors provided responses that sounded as if they were saying, “training on racial competence and racism is just not needed at our school.” Specifically,

one counselor said “So, it would be, especially, if I tried to do that, take up the teachers time for that, here, I just don't know how well that would go over just because there's not really a need for that.” Another offered, “If it was a need that we thought that the kids needed, we would do it.” Upon follow up, this counselor offered that, in order for it to be a need, there would have to be more diversity and more incidents of racism to address. Specifically, she said:

Like I said, if the teachers hearing stuff in the classroom, if the kids are talking about stuff that's maybe not appropriate or not correct regarding other races.

Maybe if there had been a hate crime in the town or something like that. If we heard about a Ku Klux Klan meeting or something in the area we might...

Similar to this, another counselor said “Thank goodness it's not been a big issue that I've had negative experiences with, that I've had to seek out training or ideas for the student body, but we've probably been lucky.” One participant gave an example of training for earthquakes to compare to education on racial competence. “It would be like if I was going in to teach all the kids about what to do if we had an earthquake. Taking up all their time when we don't hardly ever have earthquakes here.” Interestingly, in 2016, Indiana Department of Education published a document titled “Indiana School Safety Guidelines for Emergency Response Systems.” In this document, it is stated, “Employees and students are encouraged to receive training for emergency situations by participating in emergency drills” (p. 9). In the list of encouraged emergency drills, “earthquake drill” can be found.

Another participant expressed that there is a bigger need for education on other topics, like suicide awareness:

There seems to be such a big push for suicide awareness and depression and all that stuff right now because of all of the suicides in our county. That seems to be the big concern right now, is just making sure the kids are okay and able to function day to day.

One just simply stated, “It’s just not I guess a high priority thing here.” Along with this one counselor believed it would be necessary, first, for the students to show interest in learning about this topic before they would implement any kind of competence training on race.

But to me, I think it really has to come from the students. If the students show that we have an interest of learning about how do different people live and how do these different races do things and why they do things. As that would grow, then I think you would have teachers that would pick that up and support that. And then that would make that grow and the information would get out, and ... But that interest, I haven't seen that interest here.

Only useful if non-white. A topic that was recurring in the responses from counselors was the fact that the student body was predominately white and that this meant they did not have much use for education on racial competence or racism. Each of the participants was asked some version of the question: What would be needed at your school to make this topic important? The responses included “I think it would be helpful if our population of students begins to change a little bit. Just cultural diversity in general is helpful regardless”; “Then, the curriculum can be changed, but we just don't have that diversity here to change it for”; and “It's one percent of our population so there's not a lot for us to do.” One counselor said: “Just more differences to have. If we're talking race

and just color of the skin, we only really have about three or four kids so there's not much. It doesn't impact the study body because there's only a couple.” One exchange that could fit into this category and the previous was as follows:

Counselor: But they're white, so what do they really have to worry about?

Researcher: Right. So you feel like that the attitude of a lot of people: I'm white so why do I have to worry about racism?

Counselor: I don't think it's their attitude. I just think they are. They've never had to worry about it. Our diversity here is going to be socio-economic, not color of your skin. Their hardships come from income. Their hardships don't come from racial slurs or anything.

That statement is still unclear as to whether the counselor believes this does not need to be an issue for these students or whether she thinks this is the attitude of the students. It seems to be a little of both. Another racist remark made by a counselor was, “We are at a spot too where it's not like we have gangs or anything like that. We've got the good ole country boys that have poor choices, language, but don't necessarily have physical violence.” Not only, according to this counselor, do they not need to be educated about racism because they are all white, but this also makes them “good” and non-violent. One counselor thought a training would be good as long as it was not too imposing:

I mean, I don't think it ... I'm just speaking from this area. If it was an area that was more saturated with different cultures, I think that would have to definitely be more of a priority point. For this area ... I mean, I know we're growing with Hispanics moving more into the area, and ... I think it would be a good idea to

have an every-other-year refresher, or at least bring it back to the forefront type thing.

A couple counselors thought there would be push back from the community or staff. One said she thought the community would have the attitude, “You’re in America! Why are you doing this? They should learn...” Another said, “These rural, small schools, where we work, I don't know if the staff would be on board for another training for something like that just because of lack of use or the need for that.” Along the same lines, a counselor added, “It’s not that we’re against that kind of thing, but I don’t know how needed it would be especially for some of the smaller schools.” These counselors were clearly, by using the terms “smaller schools,” indicating that they are rural and predominately white.

Tolerance/Competence. Along with avoidance, tolerance/competence was the other topic that was brought up the most out of all of the counselors. This section will address counselor responses that deal with perceived racial competence of students; staff, including the counselor; and of the community in which their school was located. Many counselors also had stories about token non-white people, or people they could mention as friends or acquaintances that would make them seem less racist. Most counselors also offered responses that demonstrated their practices of perpetuating the phenomenon of “othering,” described below. Of significance to note, “tolerance” and “competence” are not the same terms and should not be confused for one another. However, it was clear throughout the interviews that the competence level of many of the counselors only really reached the tolerance stage of understanding.

Competence of students. Parts of the interview asked staff to elaborate on their perception of their student body's competence level regarding race and racism. While most said their student body was not very competent, some counselors wanted to give their students a little more benefit of the doubt. Answers like "I would say they're not competent, not calling them that the majority are uncomfortable with different races, they've just never experienced it," show that this counselor understands the competence level of the students but does not want the blame to be solely on them and does not want to cast them in a bad light.

Another counselor said the following about the student body at her school:

I think it's one of those, they'd know it if they saw it kind of thing. Honestly, I think ... what I've seen is younger students now are probably more educated than we were going through school. I think there's more ... There is more acceptance, there is more tolerance in younger groups.

One counselor reported that she thought the student body at her school was fairly competent. Following up on that, the researcher posed a question about more in-depth terms regarding racism. The following exchange occurred:

Researcher: What about concepts like structural and institutional racism? Do you think they have an understanding of things like that?

Counselor: Probably not, not very well. Now our minority students might, because they probably ... come in educated by their parents in situations and things that happen in their ... life experience, but. No, I wouldn't think that there's probably a lot of understanding of that.

Another counselor reported the student body's competence to be low and attributed that to the community and their parents. However, she purported that the students probably still had higher competence levels than their parents, but noted she did not know why and did not have any specific examples of this.

Competence of staff/counselor. A theme that was addressed across almost all of the interviews involved the counselor's perceived competence of the staff. Although this was not a direct question addressed, there was still an important place for it in this discussion. One direct question, however, did address the competence level of the counselor being interviewed. Almost all of the counselors reported that their competence levels were relatively low. Coming up with a definition for racism was somewhat of a struggle for many of them, and only one was able to offer a definition of structural racism. One counselor, however, ranked herself as having an "extremely high" competence level of racism. One of her comments entailed, "I think it's closed-minded around here. The other counselor and I, you know, we're open-minded. We have to be open-minded for a lot of things, you know?" Intriguingly, this counselor also offered some of the most racist responses of all the counselors. This will be examined in further depth later in the paper.

Counselor responses to the question of competency ranged from low to high, with most in the lower end. One counselor believed she was in the middle. "I think I'm okay. Obviously, I don't feel like I'm getting a lot of practice at dealing with issues of race. I still feel like I would handle those situations pretty well, I feel like ... Obviously I would do better the more exposure." Curiously, some of these counselors are relating how well they understand racism with how they are able to address racism. The argument could be

made that these are separate terms. However, many of the counselors interviewed mentioned this same phenomenon.

Separately, the counselors were asked to brainstorm what high competence regarding racism would look like. One counselor suggested:

I think they would have (pause) a broader knowledge of (pause) cultural differences, and expectations amongst cultures. Maybe a little more experience with (pause) just, better experience with the population. I don't think someone that only works in an African American school would be any better off than me. I think you need that diversity of experiences, and a school like this doesn't present a lot of opportunities for that. There are some, but. So yeah, someone that can relate and understand the different ... All of the factors that go into a culture and race, not just a perception. They really understand everything that involves that, they've been there long enough to really get it.

Another said:

They can maybe become aware of their own biases. If they do find themselves uncomfortable talking to somebody of different race, that they are able to be at least aware of that then try to work on it. Anything different than your own can make you uncomfortable and that doesn't automatically make you a racist. That just means that you don't have any experience with it. I think the racial competence

Many other responses spoke of exposure and experience being a necessary component of competence. Again, a lot of importance is put on experience in regards to developing competency as a counselor. The second response, however, touched on biases and the

ability to recognize and question them. This understanding of biases was not communicated by any of the other counselors. This could possibly imply that the counselor possessed a slightly better understanding of the concept than her counterparts. Another counselor responded in a way that would indicate she is at least aware that there are probably components to this subject that she does not even realize. “They (highly competent counselors) would pick up on those nuances that maybe I don't catch because I don't have that kind of level of training.”

All seven of the counselors reported attending no professional development opportunities related to this topic. Similarly, there were none provided by their schools for the entire staff. Most of the staff said, however, that their administration would probably support them in attending one if they asked. Only one of the counselors actually asked the researcher for suggestions or feedback on trainings offered that she could bring to the staff at the school. Curiously, all the other counselors agreed that this was an area of need at their school, but this was the only one to even begin to seek suggestions in order to possibly implement any kind of correction.

When asked to address where their school fit in the Nieto (1994) table, almost all of the counselors said they probably fit mostly in the “tolerance” category, but that they really did not like that term. Several tried to fit their schools into the “acceptance” category and reported that there were just a few exceptions keeping them from completely fitting here. The following example seemed to exemplify the consensus amongst most of the counselors interviewed:

I would say probably tolerant but I feel like that word it means that we tolerate what we've got to deal with as in we don't like it, but we put up with it. I don't feel

that describes us... I feel like we kind of fit in the characteristics of more tolerant but I just wouldn't call it that we tolerate it. Does that make sense?

Also, another said "It's definitely not tolerated, we just don't have a lot of it here." This attitude when presented with the word "tolerant" is very noteworthy, because that word also could describe many of the answers provided by these participants. For example, in describing racism one counselor explained, "That's a hard question. I guess I would describe it as students not, or a person not being able (pause) or not tolerating or understanding another person who's different than them." When discussing activities to address racial competence and racism, another counselor said, "I mean, we have an anti-bullying week the first week of October when we do Go Blue Day. And so we talk about tolerance, teaching tolerance during that week. But it's not race-specific." There are plenty examples of how this word "tolerance" is used often throughout these interviews.

Competence of community. A topic that came up multiple times was that of the competence of the community. A few counselors mentioned that they did not live in the community in which they worked so that did not feel that they could speculate on the level of competence displayed there. Others mentioned community as a way to describe why they felt the student body at their school was lacking in competence regarding racism. On speaking about the competence of the student body, one counselor mentioned, "I would say that would be low. I would say that because of the community part." Another counselor placed a lot of emphasis on home life in regards to this concept:

Tell you what, I think parents have the most influence. I think their kids grow up hearing positive or negative things. If they grow up hearing how tolerant the parents are, how respectful and understanding of different cultures, and how ...

Unless they even care about that. I think that by the time they get to us in middle school and high school, they probably have some pretty (pause) if nothing else, just norms and expectations of how you handle racist situations. When the mom says, ‘You can’t go downtown’ or whatever, and the kid is like well what are you talking about? They start to get that planted in them without any real knowledge or experience, just second-hand or third-hand warnings and concerns.

Another counselor spoke about competence in the community as lacking. “I would almost have to assume that a lot of our kids are learning stuff, it’s from schools, it’s from their teachers. Their foundation’s coming from our elementary school. It’s probably not coming from home.” This counselor believed, as many of the counselors stated, that the only way for most of the students to learn about racial competence would be at school and not at home.

Token non-white people. A few of the counselors made sure to mention individuals who are people of color in a couple different ways. One way was to mention the person of color in a positive light, as if to say “See I can say nice things about non-white people so I am not racist.” The other was in a way that would indicate friendship between the counselor and the person of color, as if to say “See, a person of color likes me so I am not racist.” A response that addresses this first point can be seen as follows: “We don’t have any real diversity in our faculty other than our Spanish teacher’s from Cuba. She’s fun, but she’s easy to get along with and play around with. Some people tease her, but not in a derogatory way.” To the second point, one counselor mentioned, “one of the people I’m talking about was one of my very best friends” when talking about non-

white people she went to school with. A counselor offered the following explanation of competence regarding the students at her school:

I would put us around a B. Somewhere, 80% probably. I watch the kids at lunch and stuff, and the minority kids ... they've got friend groups, and they're all mixed races, and ... Does that make sense? They're all different races in one group. I mean, I would put us ... a decently open-minded and understanding. I mean, we're not perfect, heaven knows.

Here the counselor seems to be insinuating that, because the white students are friends with the students of color, they are not racist.

Othering. *Othering* is a phenomenon researched and reported on by many researchers including Morrison (2017), Ladson-Billings (1998), and Day-Vines et al. (2007). *Othering* is the phenomenon of a white person describing oneself as normal, while anyone who is different is made to be the “other.” This phenomenon has been used, throughout history, by white people in order maintain status quo and privilege above all those who are not white. These behaviors can be seen throughout the interviews with my participants. The instances listed below are just a handful of examples in which this can be observed.

During the interviews, a counselor reported, “we only have two ethnicities here. We have black students and we have Hispanic students. This is a great depiction of this theme because this counselor clearly views whiteness as default and it is not even considered a race. This helps in the creation of the “other” because these black and Hispanic students are made to be different from white people simply because they “have race.” One counselor described one of her roles as ensuring awareness of the school

culture, especially for incoming students. “These are how we do things around here. These are our clubs. These are our sports, you know? These are rules... So, just awareness of how things are run in our building.” This shows the importance of eliminating the risk of the “other” by ensuring everyone is aware of, and fits into, the status quo. Another counselor puts this phenomenon into words quite nicely when speaking of the students at her school and how it seems as if they have come competence with racism:

I'm not honestly sure if it's 'cause they understand racism, or they've grown up with these certain groups of kids that they don't ... I don't want to say that they don't see them differently than they do, because I'm sure they do. But they're not like an outsider, so they're one of their peers. They've known them since kindergarten. So they don't look at them differently. It made me curious if somebody moved in who was a minority that they didn't know, if that would be treated differently.

Here she is showing that the students of color are not treated as “others” because they “fit in.” But she is also wondering if this would be the case if they had not assimilated to the group. She went on to say:

I mean, I only hear ... I mean, kids will make fun of somebody and say a racial slur, and we're like, "Hey, knock it off." They're like, "I know. I know. I'm teasing." So I mean, I think some of the behaviors are out there, but it's not a dominant thing in our building.

In this case, racial slurs have been made to seem normal to these students. This begs the question of whether the students of color put up with racism because that is what they

have always heard? Or possibly because they are afraid to speak out because they know this will make them an “other.” Another counselor talked about how kids now more competent because they are used to seeing things in different ways than traditionally seen in this culture. “The 21st century kids they're more open to a non-traditional, a kid who has a black mom and a white dad and also maybe with two moms. That's just more, that's the new traditional. Here, it is apparent that the counselor is saying non-white students are not traditional, but that the tolerance level of the students has been raised in recent years. Again, here is the use of the word “tolerant” that many of these counselors did not wish to identify. Another counselor illustrated this same phenomenon when saying, “The kids who are here that we do have a different race, they're all for the most part all involved, which helps. They're just one of the group. And they've been going here for years.” So, because these students are able to reduce their amount of “otherness,” this makes them acceptable to the student body. Similarly, another counselor said “for all of them (the students of color), they're well liked. They don't really put up a fight for anything. They get along well with everybody so it's not a big deal. This counselor specifically mentions that these “other” students “do not put up a fight.”

One counselor pronounced that, as long as a student fits in and does not stir the waters, people will like them.

Again, it goes more ... they don't seem to judge based off what you look like or where you come from but more of do you smile? Do you say hi? Are you nice? Are you involved? Do you do your homework? That's kind of where they find their group. Not based on what they look like.

So, students must fit into the culture and not too much of an “other” and then everything will be fine. It would be interesting to see what these counselors think about this interpretation of their responses. Another counselor mentioned,

It's odd, and this is in the personality, I'm sure, but the students that we have that I'm thinking about when you're talking about diversity, are the students that I would view to their advantage, and they're almost sought after.”

This counselor went on to mention two students, one Hispanic and one Asian, who make jokes of their race. She spoke of how they make sure they are normal and fit the status quo so that they can fit in. She even ponders if this could be a defense mechanism, but quickly moves past that thought. One response included, “The kids, the multi-racial ... the students that have come in that are not white, have been so open, and shared their differences with us. It hasn't scared the kids.” The statement “it hasn’t scared the kids” is not only remarkably racist in nature, but is used to explain this process of “othering” as if to say that the kids are not too ethnic, so they fit in okay.

Two counselors also either specifically mentioned the term “playing the race card” or it was implied. The term “playing the race card” is usually a term used by a racist individual to say that someone is using his or her race (non-white) to his or her advantage or trying to use it as “an excuse” to get away with some act. For example, one counselor said:

I could see it being very different if the kids come in and wanted to say why they didn't make the track team. "Why? Is it because I'm not like you?" If they blamed the things on them, but that has not been ever, that I know of, has not been the case because of a grade or getting in trouble for something. Not one time have I

heard them trying to blame it on ... and one of the students does have some difficulties, but he's never blamed it on his color, race, or anything but his own behaviors.

This statement can be used to imply that, because the student has never drawn attention to discrimination, he is less of an “other” and can fit in better. Another counselor specifically discussed the term:

But every now and then, you'll hear a student try to ... sounds awful. I guess, try to play the race card. Try to draw sympathy because they are a minority. And the teachers are ... from what I understand, have been really good about when it's needed to be addressed, they do. And other times, they shut that down to where, "No, you're being treated just like the rest of the class is all being treated the same." So it varies a little bit. But I think that's ... yeah.

When asked to follow up on that, the following exchange occurred:

Researcher: Okay. Okay. Can you talk a little bit more about when you said "playing the race card", what that looks like and specific examples of that?

Counselor: I'm trying to think ... 'cause that one I didn't have to act on it. It was just, and then it got back to me from a teacher that ... It was one of our minority students, and they were trying to just draw something that somebody was being ... said somebody was being mean to them, and because of their color. And the teacher was like, "No. I was right there and heard the whole thing." So they were just trying to pick on her, some things that they didn't think they were gonna get unless they could use that.

This counselor even mentioned that what she was about to say “sounds awful,” but that did not keep her from saying it and explaining her point. As mentioned before, these schools probably do not have any occurrences of students calling out discrimination because so many people at their school are so clearly lacking in understanding of racism and mentioned things like “playing the race card” that they would most definitely be reprimanded for doing so. This counselor even mentioned how the situation was already “handled” by the teacher so she did not have to intervene. Another counselor subtly mentioned this “pulling the race card” belief:

Something can be made, but it may not be a racist comment or action, but because the person could be of a diverse ethnicity, it could be considered racism. Is that it? I'm looking at it could be deemed as racism when in fact it's not. I don't know.

Tolerance for racism. Most of the counselors made comments through their interviews that showed a tolerance, or complicity, for racism. This was shown in the way the counselor empathized or tried to explain away the actions of the racist students at their schools that they had encountered. The following is a lengthy exchange between the researcher and a counselor that shows this occurrence. The counselor was speaking about “hearing the N word” and was asked to elaborate.

Researcher: Yeah. So, can you talk a little more about that?

Counselor: Well, the student that was here for not very long, the kid that was black, he was thinking he was in this big gang or something. He was living in [town] so he obviously was not in a gang. But he was, I don't know how to explain he would talk about it in like gang-banger language. Like, bro and saying all of this stuff nobody understood and the other little kid he was in to it with was

trying to point that out. He had started it, or whatever and they just ... I don't know.

Researcher: Did the kid say he was in a gang?

Counselor: Yeah, he was acting like he was in the gang and going to start a gang here. I don't know, it just didn't go over very well, just because there are no gangs here.

Researcher: Uh hum

Counselor: I don't know, he was just using slang words and things that I didn't even know. I was like, well what does that even mean.

Researcher: Uh hum.

Counselor: Gang-banger terms, I didn't even know what they were. But yeah, there was a little bit of discord between those two but it worked out.

Counselor: So the kid who already goes to the school, what were his concerns? What was he saying?

Counselor: That he was coming in, trying to start trouble, acting like he was a big gang-banger, going to fight everybody and blah, blah, blah, on and on. Yeah, trying to act like he was cooler than everyone else there and that he'd been in gang fights and stuff like that and it was ...

Counselor: Okay. So what was the outcome of that whole thing? Was there any resolution to it?

Counselor: Yeah, I think so because they managed to get along for the remainder of the other kids stay. It took some coercing and some talking.

Researcher: Uh hum.

Counselor: The kid that dropped the N word, he was suspended for a day for that.

Researcher: Uh hum.

Counselor: Or, he went home for the rest of the remainder of the day. I can't really remember.

The counselor went on to say she did mediation between them to try to get them both to “see the other person’s side.” She said she also let the white student know they “they do not tolerate that kind of talk, that language” and that this was also explained to his parents. At one point, I even asked the question “Did the kid say he was in a gang?” I did this in order to try to decipher whether his language just made everyone in this small town *think* the kid was in a gang based on the stereotypes they have of black people, or whether he actually said he was in a gang. The answer to that question is still unclear. In many ways, it seemed as if this counselor was trying to explain away the actions of the white student by mentioning the character of the black student in a disapproving way.

Earlier, it was mentioned that one counselor spoke about students at her school stereotyping other students based on their race. For example, when they go to a school that is predominately black they talk about how fast they must be or how they must be really good at sports. This counselor also explained away this behavior by saying that these comments were “not derogatory.” Another counselor told a story of a student who called a student from another school a “colored boy.” She then went on to tell me, “he’s an honor student, he’s a good kid, he just (pause), that’s what he knew to say.” Another counselor said she does not hear “the N word or Spic...enough times to be concerned.” It would be interesting to know how many times she would need to hear the word to feel concerned. This same counselor mentioned that one of her students “called another

student the N word.” When she went on to explain this situation she said, of the white racist student, “After you talk to him, you actually feel bad for him. He was raised that way. I knew where he lived and his parents had a giant Confederate flag hanging on the front porch and things like that.”

One counselor explained away racist behavior by saying that, “if race is ever an issue, it usually is their freshman year because all freshman get picked on for something basically.” Another counselor discussed her practice of explaining away racist behavior to students of color who are the victims of this behavior.

Also giving them the other kids' perspective of this kid has never been taught that it is wrong. It was a learned trait, not necessarily getting mad. I couldn't imagine being the kid who is being made fun of just for the color of their skin, but trying to teach that kid. It could be things like the other kids aren't trying to be mean, they just said something that's inappropriate that they didn't know what inappropriate.

A noteworthy phrase in this explanation is “not necessarily getting mad.” This counselor believes it is her job to ensure the student of color understands and permits/excuses the racist behavior of the white student. As if the student of color should not be mad at a white student for saying something derogatory. Another counselor also offered that the white students are “always apologetic in the end.”

Counselor roles. Counselor roles is a major theme derived from the interviews that requires attention. Counselors talked about their roles in two main ways: their role in educating the students and staff at their school on the topic of racial competence, and their limited amount of extra time and being overworked.

Role in education on racial competence. Throughout the interviews, the counselors were asked multiple times about what role the counselor should play in educating on topics of race and racism. Answers were varied. Some counselors thought the entirety of providing this education would lie on the school counselor:

Ideally, the school counselor has the resources. I think it's an important role that they could play, I think the counselor can be ... keen to that education, and can provide something that other's can't, or don't, for the student. I think that about a lot of things, I think the school counselor is in a position to be able to address a lot of societal type of things if that have that ... If they're not coordinating testing for a month straight, and doing all of the other things that are required. But yeah, I think a counselor could play a really significant role in that if allowed.

Another said, "Here, our school counselor role is pretty significant. They're going to have to do that, organizing the head of it all, and probably doing lessons and (pause) probably all of it." In discussing this educational effort, one counselor mentioned, "I don't think the goal is to change everyone's opinion, but just to provide a different level of education and a different point of view." In agreement on this sensitive approach was another counselor, who mentioned,

So, not getting mad at them, but teaching them when it is right and when it is wrong to use different things. The white kid would never think of it because they don't understand that. Helping the kids to teach others as well.

Another counselor was more middle-of-the-road in her response:

Counselor: Probably we would be, kind of facilitators in that kind of training I would think. Of how ... what to look for and how to respond to things and things like that.

Researcher: Okay. So, the training is something that you would do? Would you have someone else come in?

Counselor: I think it would depend. I think it would depend on the need and ... I think if we knew what the need was, I think we would want to probably be the ones that presented it.

One participant did not believe she had the competence to offer any education on this topic, but still wanted to be involved. “Oh, no, no. No, I don't think I could lead the training, just because I don't (pause) that's not a strong point for me. But definitely the school counselor would need to be involved.” Others thought the teachers should have a bigger role in this education:

So I mean, I think we could definitely be a piece of the cog when it comes to working with students. Because we have that ability to bring up ... but I think part of it comes just through the teachers, too. I mean, since they're on the front lines with them, they see them way more than what we get to. So I think we have to be part of the team, but I don't think that we're going to be the front man when it comes to building that competence.

Three of the counselors mentioned activities that they already have in place that address this competence, or easy ways they could incorporate it into what they are already doing. One counselor mentioned a respect lesson in the beginning of the year and

how her and her counterpart like to remind the students of this lesson if they have to have a one-on-one discussion about racist remarks or attitudes:

They'd made a comment in class that was really derogatory, and so I just called them in and we just talked about, how would you feel if people spoke down to you? What if they called you names that you didn't appreciate? And it was kind of just a respect lesson reminder. We do a respect lessons, so it was a reminder on, we've talked about this, how to talk to your peers. And what you've done is unacceptable.

At a previous school, one counselor mentioned, "we would implement social skills curriculum which had a rich racial sensitivity component to it. It wasn't the whole thing, it wasn't the entire focus. But it was part of a social skills." Another was brainstorming where it would fit in the year when she said, "we do guidance lessons in the classroom every other month. And we do auditorium lessons with large groups the opposite month. So our kids are getting lessons."

Two counselors talked about the responsibility of the counselor in educating him or herself in this area. One said, "I mean, as a school counselor, we're always willing to learn and listen and go to trainings." Another counselor spoke more about the importance of this education and how it would be useful:

But no, definitely finding someone to come in and do the training, and definitely sitting through the training myself to get more ... That way when things do come up then then I've got a base to refer to and something to work off of. So no, definitely part of the team to make that happen.

Time. Every counselor in the study was asked a question about barriers to being able to provide education on racial competence to either their students or staff.

Overwhelmingly, every counselor but one mentioned having very limited time. Because these counselors were from small schools in low socioeconomic areas, many of them mentioned that they were the only person servicing many different grades or even an entire school. Finding time to fit in their required responsibilities, address pressing needs that pop up throughout the day or year, and adding extra duties and educational components regarding race just seemed like a hefty task to many.

Many counselors mentioned that they are asked to complete duties far and above what is usually included in a counselor's role. And, this cuts into the time they have to spend on anything.

Time. I know we're a small school and we do have two counselors, but we don't have the time. I mean, if something's not being demanded of us here, we supervise lunch. We cover classes. We have meetings at central office.

Another said,

We answer phones when the secretary is out. We wear all kinds of hats.

Unfortunately, we're needed in a lot of areas. We don't get a sub called in, or a sub doesn't show up we are the ones covering the class.

One talked about the workload due to being in charge of so many grade levels. "Being the first year here, and its seven grade levels. I'm just trying to stay afloat." She also mentioned this is why she has not attended any trainings or educational conferences on this topic. In talking about lack of time, another said

It tends to just be, not ignored, but not dealt with just because you have so many other things to do. You know what I mean. Because, you try to deal with what's at hand at the moment and go from there.

Two other counselors agreed: "We don't have time to do guidance lessons, especially at the high school level. If there was more than just me, maybe, but it's just me. So, it's impossible to incorporate those kinds of talks." The other said "It's just so hard because we're so pressed for time and we're so under the gun with everything else. The teachers are too."

Another mentioned requirements and expectations of them from administration:

My biggest challenge is the time, and having someone else that feels like it's a priority for me. Someone that tells me what to do with my time and ... would like to focus on that. I've got ideas and things I would like to do, but it's not always up to me. I think principals and staff would be supportive. I don't know that ... I think it would be if you can fit it in, go for it. They're not going to say, oh, well let me take this off your plate so you can do that, you know? So, supportive in the sense of not feeling negatively about it, but in terms of creating space for it, I don't know that that would happen. So maybe passively supportive.

Similarly, administration's main focus is usually on retention. And many small schools are struggling to keep students. One counselor mentioned, "Well, and as soon as the first family pulls out because you're doing this, then they're going to shut you down."

Field Notes

The participants were asked to write down any time they heard any discussion of race at their schools. None of them experienced any conversations after the interviews,

so they took no notes. However, since starting this process, I kept note of incidents or conversations I was privy to that had to do with race or racism. In the small, rural community in which I live, I have heard race spoken about in derogatory ways a number of times. Sometimes, people are not explicit in their hate. Other times, hate is extremely apparent.

This year there has been much debate over the NFL players kneeling during the National Anthem. Since the very beginning of this action, the conversation about how it is not appropriate and should not happen circulated around the office at the school in which I work. Multiple staff members would come in and voice their negative opinions about this in front of students. Not only did I hear much talk about it at school, but also social media was flooded with it. In the community in which I live, it is very obviously a prominent belief that kneeling is inappropriate. While many people did not make specific derogatory remarks about people of color during these discussions, it was sometimes implied. Even the presence of the discussion and unhappiness with this act, however, can be an indication of the lack of racial competence in the community.

I have lived in predominately white areas most of my life. Therefore, it has been a regular occurrence to hear “black” used as a descriptor for people in normal conversation, when it is not necessary and does not add any value to a conversation. Throughout my time doing this research, I have heard it at school and in the community. For example, I overheard a senior telling a group of his peers about being in New York for their senior trip and turning down an alley and seeing “six HUGE black dudes standing there.” “Huge” was used to intensify the dangerousness of their blackness already assumed by this student. He then proceeded to tell the group that he and the other

students who turned down that alley ran away. To my surprise, I heard one of the students he was talking to ask him why he needed to use the word “black” to describe these individuals. I then stepped in and asked him if he would have used the word “white” if these were white men. He did not answer that question, but he did add that he would have ran away all the same. Language like “huge” and “black” is often used in order to justify whatever defensive posture the white person takes against the person of color. A New York Times article in 1914, like many others, exemplifies this phenomenon by inciting fear in white individuals by weaponizing the bodies of black men by describing them as larger and scarier than others.

This is my second year working at the school in which I am the counselor. For the first time this year I have had someone actually report a derogatory racial remark made by a student. One of the staff members reported to me that a student was upset because someone else rudely commented about her and said that the “black girl won’t stop looking at me.” I first called the black student in and asked her what happened. I make it a practice to ask the students if they are okay with me talking to the student that they have an issue with, or at least warning them that I plan to do so. I also give them a chance to talk to the other student if they wish, with me in the room, in order to make them feel empowered and have a chance to confront the situation. In this instance, the next step was for me to talk to the white student who made the remark. She tried to explain herself and said she did not know how else to describe the girl and that that was the first thing to come to mind. I asked her to brainstorm other ways to describe people and asked her if she would have described a white person in the same way. We talked about the issues and problems with doing this and why it was upsetting to the other girl.

She was apologetic and said she would try describing people in different ways in the future. I left wondering if there were more things I should do or if I handled it in the right way. I also thought it was interesting that this was the first time an issue like this had been brought to my attention. Based on conversations I hear in the community and with staff, I would imagine this is not the first time something like this has happened.

Another incident I witnessed during the past year is almost too upsetting for me to want to discuss. I was with my in laws at a bonfire and there were discussions happening about areas of Louisville. One man was talking about “black guys sagging their pants to their knees.” I made a comment that I do not usually see that. I then added that I do not really care how people wear their clothing because it does not affect me. He said he should probably feel the same. I am unsure where the conversation turned after this, or how, but the man was then commenting on how these black people just need to be shot because that would fix a lot of problems. As an apparent product of my whiteness, I was shocked. I did not know what to do. My husband looked at me from across the fire and knew it was time to go. He motioned to me and I nodded that I agreed we should leave. We got up and said our goodbyes. On the way out, someone said to me “don’t go home and write about this!” because he knew I was doing research for my dissertation. I did a lot of writing and a lot of talking about this incident for quite a few days.

Similarly, an occurrence just as shocking and horrifying was one I came across on Facebook. An incident at a nearby school happened in which a girl threatened to bring guns to the school. The girl was black. This prompted one of my Facebook acquaintances, and someone I know in the community, to post:

Where the hell can a person join the KKK I'm over all the [N words] threatening my kid's life and destroying shit in this country. Don't want no Neo Nazi bullshit just looking for a good old good and rope and a strong tree.

Almost more shockingly to me was that 32 people either liked, loved, or laughed at this post. There were 36 comments and many of them were actually giving him suggestions of where he could join a KKK group! When I looked, only one person actually voiced that they disagreed with the post. I did not know what to do, so I reported it to Facebook for "displaying hate speech." It was removed shortly after and I have not seen him even have a social media profile after that. I am unsure if he just chose not to rejoin or if Facebook did not let him. I wondered if I should call the police. Like many other incidents regarding this topic, I wondered if I did everything I could do or if there could have been more.

The final incident that happened during this time that I took note of, is the enrollment of a new family into our school. The family lives in a different city, but decided to come to our school for many reasons, including basketball. I had heard rumors of the students coming for a couple weeks- the basketball coaches were really excited, and so were the teams. On the day the parents were coming to enroll the students, someone related to one of our basketball teams called the school. She told the secretary that she just wanted to make her aware that this family that was enrolling was black, and she wanted to make sure everyone would welcome them and be nice to them. The secretary felt offended that the person would think she would treat this family differently than any others. I was stuck between feeling surprised, sad, and also not that shocked. Overall, I thought it was sad that someone was so worried about how people

would react to a black family enrolling in our school. What does this say about the community? How will they treat this family? It made me sad and worried for the family. I still wonder what their experience will be like throughout the next year. And I wonder what my role should be and how I can be most helpful.

Summary

While working through themes and coding, six primary themes were identified through saturation and exhausting the data. These themes included lack of knowledge, exposure, prevalence, avoidance, tolerance/competence, and counselor roles. Numerous sub-themes were also identified within each of these larger themes.

Many of the counselors felt that they lacked knowledge on the topic of racial competence. This was made apparent throughout the entirety of the interviews. One counselor seemed to have slightly higher competence than the others. This is evident in her ability to define the term structural racism while all the other participants were not. She also gave a richer and more in-depth definition of race than the other counselors. Only one counselor considered herself as having “extremely high” competence regarding racism. This counselor also offered some of the most racist comments out of all the participants. This counselor believed her competence to be so high because of all the exposure she has had to those who are different than herself and her community. This belief that exposure is all that is needed, or at least a very important component, in understanding racial competence was clearly evident throughout the interview responses.

When asked to discuss prevalence, many counselors reported rarely hearing anyone talk about race, whether students or staff. This could be due to the next theme of avoidance, or other reasons. Many counselors wanted to avoid using even the word

“race” in the interviews and showed clear discomfort when discussing the topic. Consistent themes were also seen in counselors responding that they only address problems when they arise, the belief that they need to remain neutral in order to not offend anyone, and believing education on this topic would only be really important to non-white or more diverse schools. This last point speaks to the idea of “othering”, white being the default subject position, and white as a race-less condition. “Othering,” along with many other issues of competence and tolerance, were clear themes discussed throughout interviews. Finally, almost all of the counselors talked about their time commitments and other responsibilities- many of which are not typical “counselor” roles. They reported that this was a major barrier in being able to adequately address all issues that are presented to them. Due to this, educating about racial competence is not even close to being on the radars of most of these counselors.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Overview of Findings/Themes

Based on the interview data, the six broad themes that were reoccurring in the counselors' responses included lack of knowledge, exposure, prevalence, avoidance, tolerance/competence, and counselor roles. From this interview data, it seems as if most of these counselors know their student body is lacking in this area but they do not have plans or desires to remedy the situation, due to many different reasons that will be discussed below including time, lack of resources, lack of knowledge and competence on the part of the counselor, high importance on exposure, and many others. Below is a discussion and overview of the findings, including important literature that helps support the creation of the themes.

Lack of knowledge. Of concern in the findings is the fact that every one of the seven counselors reported lacking knowledge in the subject area of racism and racial competence. The majority of them also stated that they were so lacking in this area that they would not be able to lead educational efforts at their school on this topic, and that either an expert would need to be brought in to either train them or lead the effort with the staff and students. Fine, Powell, Weis, and Wong (1997) reported that one of the privileges afforded to white individuals is that they are able to have this lack of

knowledge without any severe effect on the person. This helps explain why this lack of knowledge exists among all of the participants in the study.

Each of these counselors either graduated before the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) took effect, or they were unsure if their master's programs were accredited. One part of CACREP (2016) competencies includes Social and Cultural Diversity. If none of these counselors graduated from accredited programs, this may also help explain their lack of knowledge regarding these subjects. Chandler (2009) also mentioned that structural and institutional racism is not covered in textbooks. This helps explain not only the students need for this education, but also the lack of knowledge reported by six counselors on this topic. Clearly this issue does not just exist in the social studies curriculum in K-12 education, but also among graduate school programs. Upon reviewing the findings, only one counselor actually asked if I knew of any trainings that she could attend or make available to her school. From this, we can speculate that none of the other counselors have any intention of gaining this knowledge or seeking this information for their students, unless they plan to pursue this on their own. CRT scholars would assert that, due to their whiteness, there is no obvious benefit to these counselors to engage in readings or discussions in order to gain knowledge on the topic of racism (Roediger, 1991; Bell, 1995, Bell, 1995a). Because there is no interest convergence, conversations and curriculum on race will probably not be implemented by these school counselors (Bell, 1995).

Additionally, only one counselor noted some displeasure with the fact that these subjects were not taught in classes. Numerous studies (Chandler & McKnight, 2009;

Burrell & Walsh, 2001; Zimmerman, 2004; Brown and Brown, 2010; Lintner, 2004; Loewen, 2007) reported on how race and racism are taught in social studies curriculum. All of the authors reported a severe lack in educational efforts based on this topic, and the issues that this causes. So, this participant's perspective has much basis in research and literature.

Exposure. Counselors in this study clearly placed a very high emphasis on the concept of exposure as an important, and even necessary, in becoming racially competent individuals and professionals. The high importance placed on the concept of exposure by all the counselors could lead the researcher or reader to wonder if it is the belief of the counselors that exposure to other races is all that is necessary to understand the concept of racism.

This importance placed on exposure has some basis in research. Uehara (2005) reported on anxiety that can come about when interacting with cultures other than one's own due to lack of knowledge, exposure, and deficiencies in awareness. However, while exposure certainly can help, this does not mean that, without it, competency is unattainable. Also of importance is that exposure does not automatically equal competence. One counselor in the study ranked herself as having "extremely high competence." However, this counselor was unfamiliar with the terms *structural* or *institutional racism*, and also provided some of the most racially incompetent responses to questions. She had enough knowledge from her programs to be able to feel competent and have slightly more knowledge than most people in her community, but she still took a very neutral and colorblind approach to most of her responses.

Five counselors also reported that, once students leave the community, whether for school or work, they will automatically have more competence regarding race and racism. This lends itself to the “exposure cure-all” belief that can be dangerous. A false sense of competence in this area can lead an individual to no longer seek information on the topic.

Another component of this exposure theme showed up in the idea that “parading” other cultures in front of their students would help them to have a higher competence level of race and racism. This idea of having “an ethnic group,” or groups of “different cultures,” in to parade in front of students in order to raise competence, is problematic in many ways. Brown and Brown (2010) discussed the deficits in social studies curriculum that include the fact that African American experiences are usually overgeneralized and misrepresented. Chandler (2009) also reported that it is not enough to simply talk about other cultures, but to be specific in addressing race and racism, including structural and institutional racism. This research is contradictory to the views of these counselors that exposing students to, essentially, stereotypes of other cultures would be helpful. Additionally, this practice is “othering” of these individuals who are not from the dominant culture. This creates a way for white individuals to be spectators of the lives of those individuals who are different from them, as if this is a spectacle that is to be consumed. Another is that activities like this do not get to the root of racism and all that it embodies. These concepts, especially the concept of *othering*, will be discussed in a later section of this paper.

Prevalence. It was made obvious, through the feedback from participants, that race and racism are seldom explicitly talked about. But, when students are explicit in

talking about race, it is almost always derogatory in nature. The fact that most counselors reported not hearing discussions of racism might mean that race is not talked about, or it could mean that they are so entrenched in the culture that they do not notice when it is talked about. Because I came from a program in which this subject has been covered in depth, and because I am surrounded by individuals who have conversations about these topics, it is very apparent when I hear racist remarks. However, when I am in these rural areas, I am also aware that I am usually the only one who is recognizing that these remarks are racist. I can also say that, before college, I would also probably have not picked up on these remarks. Therefore, I am curious to know if race is really not being talked about, or if these counselors are just unaware. For example, I often hear people using “black” as a descriptor when it is not beneficial or adding to the conversation in any way. These statements are like “this black guy came into the store,” etc. And, if talking about a white person, I know the person would not have said, “This white guy came into the store.” I am curious to know how often conversations like this are happening around these counselors without it coming in to the counselor’s awareness.

Two counselors talked about the use of jokes regarding race. Mainly, the students of color, they reported, were telling these jokes. Multiple comments were made by the counselors in this study that can be interpreted as them believing that being non-white makes a person automatically understand racism and all of its undertones. In addition to this, Freire (1970) reported on what he calls a culture of silence. In this phenomenon, due to powerlessness also discussed by Young (2004), oppressed people do not talk about their oppression. The oppressed people are silenced. I believe it is a very good chance that this is the case in many of these predominately white schools.

Avoidance. A plethora of responses garnered during these interviews had an undertone of avoidance regarding race. Not only did many counselors go to great lengths to avoid even just the term “race,” many also offered numerous reasons why race was not, or did not need to be, talked about at their schools. This raises the question: is it racist to not talk about racism? If nothing else, it most definitely is a privilege to not have to talk about racism. One counselor said it best when she said: “They are white, so what do they have to worry about?”

Bemak and Chung (2008) explained the avoidance portrayed by the school counselors in this study. Their research on the Nice Counselor Syndrome draws attention to the reasons many school counselors are afraid to act on multicultural and social justice advocacy in their schools including fear, anxiety, and guilt; not wanting to be viewed as a troublemaker; powerlessness and discomfort; not enough time; and job security. I would also add lack of knowledge to this list, because it seemed as if some of these counselors were simply not aware of the extreme deficit in competence at their schools. Reason and Evans (2007) further explained this last piece as their research helped to shed light on white individuals being insecure about examining racism and having the privilege to avoid doing so if they so choose.

Some of the responses provided by the counselors were similar to one participant’s who stated, “It’s just not, I guess, a high priority thing here.” One very thought-provoking statement in this section was that of one of the counselors who thought the interest in this topic needed to come from the students, although all counselors reported a low competence level among students. Due to low competence, students might have difficulty identifying that there is a need for this type of education.

Additionally, subjects like math are taught whether or not students ask for this education. All of the counselors also mentioned, or implied, that they are in predominately white schools so education on this topic is less important than other schools. ASCA (2012) suggests a key component of the school counselor's curriculum should be social justice advocacy. Therefore, whether or not these students are white, or they have other problems to worry about, all school counselors have a duty to keep this in mind. Research by Grimes, Haskins, and Hasley (2013) is supplemental to ASCA's competency in that it establishes an agenda for school counselors to move beyond normal roles and become change agents for social justice.

While the counselors believed the students and community members were not highly competent regarding racism, some of them believed either teachers were having these conversations with students or that they are the ones who should be leading this educational effort. Two of the counselors mentioned that they believed staff was having conversations about race in certain classes like sociology and ethnic studies. As discussed multiple times, Chandler and McKnight (2009), along with many other researchers (Burrell & Walsh, 2001; Zimmerman, 2004; Brown and Brown, 2010) report that, more often than not, teachers are taking a colorblind approach to teaching in these social studies classes. They all reported that many of the issues that need to be discussed, including structural and institutional racism, simply are not. Being unaware of this phenomenon could lead these school counselors to believe that someone else is taking care of this educational effort so they do not have to worry.

Another issue established in this section is that counselors are afraid that, if they do not remain neutral on the topic, they will offend someone. Based off of research from

the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2015) it could be extremely helpful for the development of racial competence of the students for them to have an adult role model who demonstrates high competence on this subject. This issue of needing to stay neutral sounds similar to the problem some individuals have with the Black Lives Matter movement. As if the movement is saying that other lives matter less than black lives. In actuality, these black individuals are already not provided the same safety and security as white individuals and are trying to fight for this. Day Vines et al. (2007) even reported, “the inability or refusal to address cultural factors can impede the therapeutic alliance and damage counseling outcomes” (p. 406). Clearly, as also discussed by CRT scholars (Crenshaw et al., 1998; Bell, 1995; Roediger, 1991; Freeman, 1995) taking this neutral approach is not only unhelpful, but could also be detrimental to students.

The school counselors in this study advocated for a typical multicultural class approach to education at their schools in order to not offend anyone. Ladson-Billings (1998) mentioned this approach as “superficial and trivial ‘celebrations of diversity’” (p. 22). Jay (2003) and Chung and Bemak (2012) both reported that this multicultural approach is much easier to discuss than one of social justice, because it covers surface level concepts. While these topics are similar in nature, multiculturalism focuses on plurality in society while social justice takes this a step further and actually advocates for reduction of inequality due to culture and race. While it is good to learn about other cultures, it is not enough to reduce racism. Similarly, a colorblind approach was explicitly taken by two counselors who mentioned things like they “do not see color” and they “see everyone the same regardless of race.” Chao (2013) reported on the importance

of addressing these colorblind attitudes with students in doctoral programs- something that was apparently not the case in the programs these counselors attended. Day-Vines et al. (2007) reported that taking a colorblind approach could even possibly be a way for counselors to hide their biases since it does not require them to address them.

Additionally, Ladson-Billings (1998) reported on the guilt this colorblind approach could make students of color feel because they were not able to overcome these obstacles of immigration like everyone else.

Tolerance/Competence. While overall competence of the counselors in the study was low, one counselor shared some insights that indicate a slightly higher level of competence than the other six. For example, this counselor was able to understand concepts about race that were more than just skin color, including other features and responses to stereotyping, and was able to provide a definition to structural racism. Being able to vocalize an instance of stereotyping from a parent was another way this counselor showed a level of understanding that was above the other participants. While this made me feel a little less hopeless about racial education in rural schools, six other participants still demonstrated very low competence. Additionally, many counselors used the word “tolerance” throughout their interviews as a skill that is important to have. The use of the word “tolerance” here is important to note, because all of the counselors did not like the term “tolerance” when looking at the Nieto table (1994) as a way to describe their school. Yet, you can see this word circulated throughout the interviews.

In the previous chapter, an exchange between the researcher and a counselor can be viewed in which the counselor is explaining an instance of racism at her school. She was talking about a white student using racial slurs against a “gang-banger” black

student. There is a lot to unpack in this exchange. We can see her making excuses for this behavior in the way she says she tried to explain to both parties the side of the other student. This means that she tried to explain to the black student the actions of the white student and actually tried to make excuses for his behavior. It can also be observed in this exchange the great length the counselor went to explain to me that the black student was a “gang banger” and it was very apparent that she did not approve. Most of this exchange consisted of this counselor, intentionally or not, trying to cast the black student in a negative light. Another counselor mentioned that she “actually felt bad” for a white student who was calling a black student a racial slur. It is curious to note that there was no mention of feeling empathy for the student who was called a derogatory name, but there was an excuse made for the one who did the name-calling. This counselor may or may not have felt bad for the student who was called a derogatory name, but it was not mentioned in this interview.

One of the most profound ways this low competence was demonstrated was in the counselor’s responses that clearly worked to advance an agenda of “othering.” Ladson-Billings (1998) wrote to this concept by discussing how whites are exempt from racial designations. These counselors made an abundance of comments about how the students of color at their school were “good” because they did not act differently than the white students. One counselor even went as far as to say that it might “scare” the students if they were too different. Two of the counselors even clearly stated that one of their roles, as counselor, is to make sure students “understand the culture” and act accordingly. Again, this begs the question of whether these students of color would even be able to speak out about racism or discrimination if they wanted to (Freire, 1970). Based on this,

these students most likely would not feel comfortable, or even safe, speaking out about about racism or discrimination. Peller (1995) wrote about this same issue when writing about school integration and the issues pertaining to that: “school integration meant the adaptation of blacks to white norms,” not the other way around (p. 139).

All of the counselors who had statements that fit this category made it obvious that the othered children had to meet these conditions for acceptance, set forth by the white people at the school and in society (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Young, 2004). When some counselors mentioned that these children were “almost sought after,” this shows that they thought of the other as an object of desire (Morrison, 2017). A condition of acceptance would be for the othered students to expect this behavior and attention from others. Based on counselor responses, the othered students are also expected to comport themselves as being open to questions and expected to self-disclose in a way that helps enlighten those white students and staff, or the ones in power (Young, 2004).

Lintner (2004) also discussed this issue of othering by explaining the color line. A line used to separate and alienate people of color. Further, Lintner added that without being able to recognize this color line, it will not be possible to make steps to move forward and make change. For the counselors at these schools, if they are unable to see this concept, they will not be able to recognize that they have such a deficit.

Additionally, the students at the school will suffer from their lack of competence in many different ways. If teachers and staff are unable to recognize their own biases, they will help to create a culture of biases and stereotypes at their schools that will be hard to correct. The Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies (MSJCC; Ratts, Singh, Butler, Nassar-McMillan, & McCullough, 2015) set forth a call to action for school

counselors to adopt this self-awareness, counseling advocacy, and understanding of a client or student's worldview.

Counselor Roles. The biggest issue counselors discussed relating to counselor roles is lack of time. Most of the issues these counselors discussed were also mentioned in the research of Bemak and Chung (2008). While they recognized that there were many issues facing these counselors, they also argued for the importance of moving beyond these excuses and putting social justice advocacy to work in their schools. A condensed list of their suggestions can be found in chapter two. Ratts, DeKruyf, and Chen-Hayes (2007) also argue for counselors to take a more active role in being social and political change agents.

Implications for School Counseling and Counselor Education

“Understand how prejudice, privilege and various forms of oppression based on ethnicity, racial identity...” is explicitly expected of school counselors by ASCA (2016, p. 7). While this is a key competency area for the governing body of the profession of school counselors, it is surprising how many of these school counselors are severely lacking in this area. Lacking knowledge and competence on racism is a very big problem to see from a school counselor, even in a predominately white school. As Chung and Bemak (2012) discussed in their research, lacking competence and knowledge in regards to social justice and racial competence has a huge impact on perpetuating oppression. This research makes it clear that it is important for school counseling programs to do a better job in educating students on these topics. Not only do they need the tools to be able to address issues of racism, but they first need the building blocks of knowledge to

even know where to start. Without realizing there is an issue, it will be difficult for these counselors to remedy the situation.

Additionally, school counselors should be made more aware of the deficiency of social studies curriculums. While this is also the problem of education departments, counselors and counselor educators, cannot solely rely on other disciplines to make these important changes. Although it is important to work with other disciplines in making them aware of the issues, counselor education also must be quick to take some responsibility and make changes to make up for this deficit. Holcomb-McCoy (2004) provides a checklist of areas in which counselors and counselor educators should direct their focus in terms of multicultural and racial competencies.

CACREP standards provide guidelines for Social and Cultural Diversity curriculum requirements in accredited programs. However, having one Multicultural Counseling class could satisfy this requirement. Professors and Counselor Education programs need to take these guidelines into consideration when making lesson plans and setting up their classes, curriculum, and programs. Education on social justice needs to be woven throughout the entire curriculum in order to make an impact on students. Suggestions like this one can also be viewed in research by Chao (2013) that calls for a less colorblind approach to training. Similarly, Parikh, Post, and Flowers (2011) reported that their findings suggested that all faculty be responsible for “infusing multicultural awareness and knowledge in their courses” (p. 67).

While researching this topic, it became apparent that there were very few resources to help counselors or teachers with this topic. Van der Valk (2018) also reported on this shortage of resources. If we are to expect counselors to teach about this

subject, not only should counselor education programs be providing them with the tools and knowledge to increase their own competence, but it is important to develop more programs and tools that they can take to their schools to educate students and staff.

In addition to making changes in school counseling and counselor education programs, this information is also important for teacher education programs. Many authors discussed the omission of critical details about race and racism in textbooks and in the classroom (Zimmerman, 2004; Burrell & Walsh, 2010; Chandler & McKnight, 2009). It does a great disservice to our schools to not cover these topics that look at race and problems in more depth. The textbook, *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (Loewen, 2007), or any like it, would be incredibly helpful to provide students in order to enlighten and provide knowledge on a largely ignored topic that can have so many implications in larger society. Lessons from the textbook could even be used by school counselors in groups specifically made for education on race and diversity.

Limitations

Some of the answers from the participants were obviously made in order for the school or the counselor to look desirable. However, I do not believe this negatively impacted the study. This wish to look desirable even lent itself to the codes very well because they would give answers like being “colorblind.” Additionally, as a white person conducting this study, I wonder if the participants felt more open to be honest with me in their responses. Many of them may have assumed that I held similar beliefs, and so they were able to provide honest answers.

One worry I had at about these interviews, and reported in the original limitations section, was that I had hoped to not take an educational approach with participants. I

worked to keep an open curious mind during the interviews so that I could ensure open and honest answers from participants. If they felt that I was judging them or trying to correct them, I was afraid this would not lend well to my findings. For the most part, I believe I was able to control for this. I took an approach of being curious and wanting to learn. And, when I was struggling with a response or feeling uncomfortable, I took a moment to pause and let the participant know I was just writing down their response. It also helped to have already constructed interview questions to read from. I took a semi-structured approach to the interviews. So, while I added some questions as they came up, it helped me to also be able to have a script to go to in order to keep me on task.

Another limitation of this study is that I did not have an external auditor or reviewer to check over my themes. While I did participate in peer debriefing with a colleague, this would not be qualified to be as extensive as using an external auditor. My colleague has had a course in qualitative methodologies and took part in orchestrating a qualitative study. This peer was available for me to debrief with throughout my coding process, and looked over codes when I was finished with my groupings. He did not make any suggestions for corrections or alterations. Additionally, I sent my interviews out for member checks and only heard back from four participants. I did not receive corrective feedback from anyone. This all could have the trustworthiness of my findings.

Finally, another limitation, or possible consideration for future research, is my lack of using the term “whiteness” in the interviews with participants. While the goal of this research was to examine responses through a whiteness lens, it might have been beneficial to ask participants about their perception of this term. This could have yielded many different answers than were received.

Suggestions for Further Research

While examining the data, it became apparent that exposure was a very important concept to these school counselors. Future research should address whether counselors actually believe that exposure is all that is needed for racial competence.

Additionally, while creating themes and grouping the data, I was curious about the lack of understanding about structural and institutional racism and how this impacted their answers. While I believe it was important to first allow them to naturally provide responses to the questions, I wonder how the data would change if they were given more information on these concepts. If they knew what structural racism looked like, would they be able to provide more examples of this as demonstrated at their schools. It would be very interesting to offer a quick course to participants on racism at the beginning of the school year and then ask these questions at the end of the year.

A focus group might have also helped to gain more in-depth and unique feedback. Future research should utilize this form of data gathering in order to provide even more rich data on the topic. I believe this would be helpful in garnering even more honest answers to questions.

Conclusion

Day-Vines et al. (2007) uses Helm's White Racial Identity Development Model to discuss counselors who are very avoidant of discussing racial identity, placing them in the contact status. The authors say that a white person "operating within this status generally remains oblivious to issues of racism and often adopt a color-blind perspective, vacillating between two extremes: uncritical acceptance of White racism or blatant disregard of racial differences" (p. 406). I believe this is a very fitting way of describing

the participants and responses garnered in this study. These responses help to describe how people of color continue to be subordinated in America. As mentioned before, Ladson-Billings (1998) reported that “CRT becomes an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses” (p. 9). Therefore, CRT was utilized in order to view the data through a lens of whiteness in order to categorize and understand the interview responses.

Among the seven counselors interviewed for the study, none of them provided many answers that would classify as highly racially competent. Only one was able to define structural racism, the other six were not even familiar with the phrase. All of the counselors gave responses that could be categorized as avoiding race or racism, which is made possible by the fact that each of the counselors is white. They hold this privilege of ignorance and avoidance due to their whiteness that most of them do not claim.

Each of them hold a master’s degree in school counseling. Counseling and Counselor Education programs have to do better. School counselors should not be graduating programs without even being able to recognize the term “structural racism,” let alone actual acts of racism. School counselors need to be able to be the catalyst for a social justice agenda at his or her schools. There is a clear deficit in regards to racial competence and understanding racism at each of the schools in the study. However, there are no plans in place to address these deficits. Counseling programs should be giving these school counselors the tools to be able to identify these deficits and make a plan of action to address them. And, school counselors should be taking initiative to find these deficits in their schools and working on ways to address them.

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Table 1.1

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<i>Tolerance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differences are not embraced, but endured - Accepts differences, while trying to modify them - Assimilation is ultimate goal - Not much understanding of institutional discrimination - Racism not tolerated - Not much professional preparation, regarding diversity, by staff - Teachers are “sensitive” to students - Acknowledge differences in diversity and culture, but still have not figured out why some students are more successful than others
<i>Acceptance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differences are acknowledged and found to be important - Professional development opportunities promoted to staff - Displayed information covers multiple languages, religions, etc. - Teachers include successful people of color in their lessons - Study of more than one language is encouraged - Flexible scheduling - Administration is beginning to face incidents of racism
<i>Respect</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admiration and high esteem for diversity - Differences are key to school happenings - Staff made up of diverse backgrounds - Printed and displayed materials represent all languages present in schools - Professional development is crucial; staff are allowed time off to take classes about diversity - Curriculum is changed to include immigration, individual and collective responsibility, and to be more honest and antiracist
<i>Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No ability grouping - Believe that the most powerful learning is fostered by students struggling with, and challenging, one another

- Students cultural backgrounds and families used for vehicles of learning
- Conflict, critique, and reflection is welcomed in an environment of respect and caring
- Equity and social justice are basic values of the learning system
- No tracking or special education
- Curriculum is interdisciplinary and many teachers team teach
- No “foreign languages” but entire school is multilingual
- Students are encouraged to be critical of books, curriculum, and information conveyed
- Multicultural education is not separate, but woven in throughout all education

Adapted from Nieto (1994)

Table 1.2

Stage One- Six Individual Interviews

Stage Two- Journals

Appendix 1

An audit trail, including interview transcripts, is available upon request.

Appendix 2

First Cycle Coding Second Cycle Coding

<i>Exposure/Reasons</i>	Exposure
<i>not to discuss</i>	Lack of knowledge
<i>Lack of knowledge</i>	Prevalence
<i>Prevalence</i>	Avoidance
<i>Avoidance</i>	--Introducing other
<i>Introducing other</i>	problems
<i>problems</i>	--Only useful if not
	white
Tolerance/Competence	Tolerance/Competence
Counselor roles	--Competence of
	staff/counselors
	--Othering
	--Token non-white
	people

CURRICULUM VITA

NAME: Katelyn Marie Gosnell Richey

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**Education
and Licensure**

Doctor of Philosophy, in progress, anticipated 2018
Counselor Education and Supervision
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

Licensed Professional Counselor Associate, August 2015
National Certified Counselor, May 2015

Master of Education, May 2015
Clinical Mental Health Counseling
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

Bachelor of Science, *magna cum laude*, May 2013
Major: **Psychology**
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

**Professional
Experience**

School Counselor (August 2016-present)
Crothersville Schools, Pre-K through 12

- Offer mental health services to students of all grade levels
- Assist with college and career planning for high school aged students
- Develop and implement classroom guidance and lesson plans

School Based Counselor and Supervisor (August 2015- May 2017)
Cardinal Success Program, Shawnee High School

- Provided individual, group, and crisis counseling services
- Served as individual supervisor to student interns, as well as on-site supervisor

	<p>Editorial Assistant (August 2014-present) Journal of Counseling and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist Journal Editor with administrative tasks • Help to prepare manuscripts for publication <p>Intern (July 2014- May 2015) Communicare, Inc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clinical therapeutic services to consumers • Actively listen and provide support and resources to clients in individual and group settings <p>Health Advocate Leader (August 2013- May 2014) Health Promotion Office at the University of Louisville</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide programming on the subject area of substance and alcohol abuse • Plan and promote Health Promotion Office activities <p>Health Educator (October 2013- June 2014) Carewise Health, Louisville, Kentucky</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsel individuals, over the phone, on tobacco cessation • Assist members with setting goals and creating a step-by-step plan to achieve them in a timely manner <p>Intern (March 2009 - May 2009) Mehta Behavioral Health Unit at Regional Hospital, Terre Haute, Indiana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted with various groups such as activities group and conversation group • Interacted with patients in the unit for more than 100 hours • Observed the head psychologist making rounds in the hospital and took part in discussions with patients
<p>Teaching Experience Assistant Assistant</p>	<p>Group Process and Practice, Fall 2015, Teaching Assistant Theories and Techniques of Counseling, Spring 2016, Teaching Assistant Program Evaluation and Consultation, Summer 2016, Teaching Assistant Group Process and Practice, Summer 2016, Teaching Assistant</p>
<p>Professional Organizations</p>	<p>American Counseling Association, student member Kentucky Counseling Association, student member Indiana School Counselor Association, student member</p>
<p>Certifications</p>	<p>TIPS, Training for Intervention Procedures</p>

Research & Scholarship

Publications

1. Balkin, R. S., Richey Gosnell, K. M., Holmgren, A., & Osborne, J. W. (2017). Nonlinear analysis in counseling research. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 50, 109-155.

Presentations

1. Richey, K., & Hunter, Q. (2017). Discussion of race in predominately white school settings: Implications for school counselors. Presented at the annual conference of the Indiana Counseling Association, Columbus, IN.
2. Balkin, R. S., Schmit, E., & Richey, K. (2017). Understanding counseling effects: Modeling what is really happening in counseling. Presented at the annual conference of the American Counseling Association, San Francisco, CA.
3. Sowell, S., Hunter, Q., & Richey, K. (2017). School counseling interns don't come with a manual? Tips and tools to enhance your comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program. Presented at the annual conference of the Kentucky School Counseling Association, Lexington, KY.
4. Sowell, S., Richey, K., & Hunter, Q. (2017). Road map: The roles and responsibilities of school counselors in the assessment and counseling of suicidal adolescents. Presented at the annual conference of the Kentucky School Counseling Association, Lexington, KY.
5. Balkin, R., Richey, K., & Schmit, E. (2016). Understanding relationships: Your superpower! Presented at the annual conference of the Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling, Fort Lauderdale, FL.
6. Sowell, S., Richey, K., & Hunter, Q. (2016). Assessment and counseling of adolescent suicidality. Presented at the annual conference of the Kentucky Counseling Association, Louisville, KY.
7. Balkin, R. S., & Richey, K. (2016). Understanding nonlinear relationships. Presented at the annual conference of the Kentucky Counseling Association, Louisville, KY.
8. Sowell, S., Gosnell, K., & Balkin, R. S. (2015). The power of SCRD and interventions that work. Presented at the annual conference of the Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling, Memphis, TN.
9. Balkin, R. Hunter, Q., & Gosnell, K. (2015). The counseling relationship in an era of accountability. Presented at the annual conference of the Kentucky Counseling Association, Louisville, KY.

Round-Table Discussions

1. Hunter, Q., Richey, K., & Washington, A. (2016). Are we doing this right? Doctoral students discuss co-facilitating an experiential group. Presented at the annual

conference of the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision,
New Orleans, LA.