Exploring the Effects of Art-Making on

Racial Climate in a Multicultural Classroom

A Master's Degree Proposal
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submitted to
Moore College of Art & Design
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of an
MA in Art Education with an Emphasis in Special Populations

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
August 2016

Accepted:

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to explore the effects of art-making on the racial climate of a multicultural classroom of 11th graders. Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Methodology laid the foundation for approaching the topic of racial climate in an academic setting. An emphasis was placed on analyzing the developments of the counternarratives of students engaged in a culturally-responsive curriculum. Over an eight week period, students participated in three art projects focused on identity and racial identity. Each art lesson was devised as a response to the strengths and needs of students as they created artwork. The case study focused on three 11th grade students that identify as African American: Shanice, Tonia and Dashawn. Private regard, cultural imagery and language, and emotional responses were observed daily during both the direct instruction and the independent art-making. Interviews were conducted with the three participants, while artifacts were collected from participants and their peers. Throughout the study, themes of isolation through the Binary Race Paradigm, emotional exhaustion, and racial stereotyping emerged in discussions and art-work. Subsequently, art-making proved to provide inclusion, self-expression for students, and an evolution of private regard for students who participated. Supplemental teacher reflections can be found in Data Analysis and Findings.

To my family: Emily, Theo, Momma and Pops, for giving unconditional love and support.

And to my A-SQUAD: J. Grier, T. Duke, R. Bailey-Brown and M. Black, for inspiring, encouraging, competing, and most importantly proving time and time again the power and strength of women.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Graduate Program Director Lauren Stitcher for the support and positivity she provided during this academic and professional challenge and for the unwavering enthusiasm for our professional and personal growth.

I would like to thank Mr. Kyle Black for being a mega-mind and inspiration and for reading through my research tirelessly. Your support and investment has helped me grow as a writer and educator.

I would like to thank Mr. Darren Lewis for his participation in this endeavor and for supporting a positive climate for our students.

And most importantly, I would like to thank my students who are the reason I rush to work in the morning and the reason I don't sleep at night. Thank you for participating, sharing your expertise, and volunteering to be a voice for young art-makers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In my undergraduate work, I began to explore my role as artist and art educator in

the recreation sites of North Philadelphia. It was during this time that I had my first

experience with otherness. Students expressed having being perceived or made to

perceive that their cultural experiences are abnormal and outside of the mainstream. As I

moved into my first full time art teacher position at an Alternative Education for

Disruptive Youth program, I witnessed my students expressing experiences of otherness

in other classrooms. My students shared experiences of being misunderstood, which often

manifested itself as condescension from their teachers. These conversations usually took

place as students were art-making. It seemed that the creative process promoted a sense

of community for students to share and listen. As a teacher, I would constructively

facilitate the conversations so students had an opportunity to speak and be heard, but

ultimately the students provided feedback and support to their peers who chose to share.

Without a doubt, my students' openness during art making about their experiences

of otherness illustrates the need for my students to share their narrative. I began to

incorporate narrative-based content and storytelling as a regular motivation for my

curriculum and lessons. Lee (2012) explains in an art classroom, a place where art,

identity and culture are inextricably linked, racially and culturally responsive teaching

play a critical role in how the teacher interacts with students and ultimately how students

come to understand cultural diversity, social inclusion and anti-racist behaviors. After a

dedicated effort to infuse cultural responsiveness into my curriculum, I observed a

growing strength in peer-to-peer relationships, a willingness to cooperate during conflict

and a growing confidence in my students. Their regard for themselves and education, in general, improved dramatically as a result of these efforts.

Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) define racial climate as the overall racial environment; understanding and analyzing the racial climate is important in examining access, persistence, and graduation for students of color. In other words, positive racial climate is void of racial conflict and there is purposeful attention paid to students' individual experiences. In supporting students of color, institutions should strive for positive racial climate to combat deficit thinking and racial microaggressions. Byrd & Chavous (2011) confirm that students who perceive positive attitudes around race and from teachers and their staff reported a higher intrinsic motivation and were more likely to succeed.

I used Critical Race Theory (CRT) to explore racial climate in my classroom and its effects on my students. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) define the CRT movement as a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power. Although CRT began as a movement in the law, it has rapidly spread beyond that discipline. Today, many educators consider themselves critical race theorists who use CRT's ideas to understand issues in school (p. 3). CRT calls for informed theory and practice in teaching students of color. I am looking to explore how CRT can be the theoretical backbone to my teaching practice as an art educator.

Problem Statement

According to Lee (2011), the student population is rapidly becoming more diverse. Lee (2011) also describes the shortage of diverse teacher role models for students of color as a large issue in American education. There exists a plethora of research that supports the notion that many white preservice teachers are not competent or comfortable teaching diverse populations (p. 50). It seems feasible that due to this disparity, students of color will continue to experience otherness and outcomes of racial climates that do not promote transformative or inclusive efforts.

The majority of my students in the Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth program identified as African American. I assumed that these conversations about race and otherness were due to the environment and experiences of being sent to a disciplinary setting. Today, however, at my current position at First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School, a Title I public charter, my multicultural classroom is comprised of an array of racial identities. My interest lies in how to create a positive racial climate amongst students with different cultural background and identities. Furthermore, in addressing racial climate in the art room with a Critical Race Theory-informed curriculum, I explored how art-making can help to facilitate challenging the dominant ideology, and create greater understanding of intersectionality in the student and teachers racial identities.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of my action research case study is to explore the effects of art-making in creating and supporting a positive racial climate in a multicultural classroom. My case study also aims to explore art-making as it contributes to the development of counternarratives and the understanding of intercentricity for students of color in my 11th grade homeroom.

Significance of Social Issues and Action

Grounded in Critical Race Theory, my study addresses racial climate as a means to examine true inclusivity in the art room. I used art-making to create counternarratives and provide insight into the attitudes and experiences of my students as they are participants in a multicultural classroom. Whether we refer to them as mono vocals, master narratives, standard stories, or majoritarian stories, it is important to recognize the power of White privilege in constructing stories about race (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). In using a CRT informed curriculum, an educator can provide students of color the means to construct their own stories of race and work towards developing a vision for new constructs.

Critical Race Theorists such as Solórazano, Yosso, and Ceja (2001) have discussed, through their research and literature, the significance of counter-storytelling and racial climate at universities. Art educators and teacher researchers such as Kraehe (2015), Lee (2012), and Donahue (2010) have discussed the importance of using identity, social justice and race as motivators in the classroom. There is little to no research on the strategies used by art educators on improving racial climate in a classroom. [Students] are discovering who they are, not only as individuals, but as members of communities

defined by race, gender and language (Donahue et al, 2010). Art-making is a creative process that requires problem-solving skills, and calls upon cultural inferences. Art educators Acuff and Pfeiler-Wunder (2015) call for a culturally responsive curriculum in the art room, while educators Hayes and Juárez (2012) call for a use of CRT in teacher pre-service. While all these commands support students of color, this study will show how the act of art-making supports racial discourse in a multicultural classroom.

Research Questions

The following questions guided my research and create the line of inquiry during this process.

Can art-making create a positive racial climate in a multicultural classroom?

    a.   What are the possibilities of a CRT informed art curriculum?

    b.   How does art-making support student's understanding of intercentricity of race?

    c.   In a multicultural classroom, how does a student's counternarrative effect racial climate?

    d. What is my role as a white art educator in creating a positive racial climate?

Limitations

My study has two glaring limitations. The first limitation is to make sure that my classroom had a positive racial climate in order to support counter-storytelling from students of color. Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2001) argue that "stereotype threat can affect the high-stakes game of college academic achievement in particular" (62). Although my study was conducted in a high school setting, differing from Solorzano, Cejas and Yosso's research at the collegiate level, I strove to create a positive racial

climate so that the counternarratives my students shared were developed without any majoritarian distortions (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). My intent was to keep students from conforming to negative stereotypes such as poor academic performance or violent outbursts. Solórzano, Ceja and Yosso (2001) determined that positive racial climate on a collegiate level involves at least four elements: (a) the inclusion of students, faculty and administrators of color; (b) a curriculum that reflects the historical and contemporary experiences of people of color; (c) programs to support the recruitment, retention and graduation of students of color; and (d) a college/university mission that reinforces the institution's commitment to pluralism (62).

First, although their prescribed elements are for a racial climate on a collegiate campus, the high school that will be the site for the study does have faculty and administrators of color that work directly with all students. Secondly, I also used an art curriculum that will align to the five basic tenets of Critical Race Theory framework described by Yosso (2005). The high school offers after school academic support like tutoring, clubs, and college application supports for all students. It is expected that all students will use the supports offered by teachers and counselors for academic support towards graduation, and procuring higher educational opportunities such as scholarships, grants, letter of recommendations and community service opportunities for resumé building. Lastly, the high school is a tuition-free public charter school open to all students residing in Philadelphia. The majority of the students serviced at the high school are from very diverse surrounding neighborhoods and families, therefore my classroom is both economically and culturally diverse. I will speak to this more in Chapter 2, which describes the sampling of my study.

The second limitation is my own white privilege as a white female researcher and art teacher. It is my responsibility as a critical researcher and educator to consider that my own racial identity and cultural inferences will play a part in the multicultural classroom. It would be naive and ultimately uncharacteristic of a researcher using Critical Race Theory to suggest that my preservice teacher education has prepared me to teach all students, namely students of color (Hayes & Juárez, 2012; Lee, 2012). As a researcher, it was important that I remained reflective and objective in recording and interpreting students' experiences through their art-making. Solórzano and Yosso (2012) concur that when examining experiences of students of color, downplaying the intercentricity of race and racism in the discourse helps tell majoritarian stories about insignificance of race and the notion that racism is something of the past (p. 32). I will speak more to the limitations of my ethnic perspective and how I ensured that my students' counternarratives are their own in Chapter 2, "Methodology: Limitations."

LITERATURE REVIEW

Racial Microaggressions, Academic Climates, and Inclusivity

Educators affirm falsified racial consciousness with the misguided belief that teaching in a multicultural classroom automatically creates a culture of inclusivity for all students. One would think that educators working in classrooms with a wide racial or cultural demographic would promote inclusion for all cultures; however, educators often assume that schools work and that students, parents and community need to change to conform to this already effective and equitable system (Yosso, 2005). The reality is students of color experience microaggressions, subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color often automatically or unconsciously as a result of deficit thinking in administrators, teachers and peers (Yosso, 2001).

Delgado and Stefancic (2001) define the CRT movement as a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power; CRT questions the very foundations of the liberal order. CRT was born out of critical legal studies and radical feminism; it is explained by Delgado and Stefancic (2001) has been built upon legal indeterminacy and the relationship between power and social roles. This framework came about in the mid-1970s in response to the slowed progress of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Scholars, activists and lawyers realized that new theories and strategies would be required to challenge subtle forms of racism that were holding the movement back (Delgado et al, 2001).

One of the elements of Critical Race Theory is studying and interpreting the unique voice of students of color. Researchers use counter-storytelling to cast doubt on accepted myths or premises held by the majority, such as "student of color do not

encounter racism anymore" (Delgado 2001). CRT Researchers keep these five tenants in focus in order to create counternarratives,:

a.   the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination,

b.   to challenge the dominant ideology,

c.   the commitment to social justice, and

d.   the centrality of experiential knowledge, and

e.   the transdisciplinary perspective (Solórzano et al, 2001, p. 74).

Solórzano, Ceja and Yosso (2001) identified in their focus-group research that students encountered these micro aggressions when they were a numerical racial minority and when they experienced racial segregation during in-class study groups, even from their professors. Students also disclosed that they felt invisible and drained from being taught course curriculum that omitted, distorted, and stereotyped their experiences as an African American (p 65).

Daniel Solórzano, Miguel Ceja and Tara Yosso (2001) suggest that college and universities with "counter-spaces" can lessen the effects of racial microaggressions in academic settings for students of color. In their study, spaces such as "African American student organizations, organizations or offices that provide services to African American and other students, Black fraternities and sororities, peer groups, and Black student-organized academic study halls" were found to provide space to vent frustrations and find others who were experiencing microaggressions and/or overt discrimination (Solórzano et al, 2001).

The researchers for this study suggest that these spaces are there to counter the effects of microaggressions, thus challenging deficit thinking in students of color. However, I noticed that Yosso and her colleagues do not address how the racially prejudicial administrators, teachers, and students are not confronted. The creation of such counter-spaces is an important strategy for minority students' academic survival (Solórzano et al , 2001). The implications of this study seemed to be that students of color can find refuge in the counter-spaces, from being made to feel invisible or experience a distinct level of discomfort, which confirms negative racial climate experiences when they leave the counter-spaces. Although I understand the need to address feelings of isolation, students of color should be protected through racial discourse in the resounding voids outside of positive counter-spaces.

The authors of *Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate: The Experience of African American College Students* deduced in their research that "Whites are capable of such utterances because cognitive habit, history, and culture [have made them] unable to hear the range of relevant voices and grapple with the reasonably might be said in the voice of discrimination victims" (Solórzano et al, 2001). They then follow with a Black person "must be taught to recognize microaggressions and construct his future by taking appropriate action at each instance of recognition" (Solórzano et al, 2001). The research that follows this argument is meant to be transformative in understanding the racial discourse between the students of color. It does not address how administrators can ensure that there is the same discourse for promoting positive racial climate in the classroom.

Tara Yosso (2005) extends the topic of deficit thinking as a form of contemporary racism in schools in her article "Whose culture has capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth." She uses CRT to critique Bourdieu's deficit view of students of color not having cultural wealth, in suggesting that "cultural capital is not just inherited or possessed by the middle class"(p 76). The cultural wealth of students of color is an accumulation of knowledge, skills, and abilities that are often overlooked by the dominant culture, which in turn marginalizes students.

As art educators, we have a unique opportunity to discuss the ways we learn about the world using the student narratives to drive their artistic literacy. If educators are using Critical Race Theory as the framework for their pedagogy and curriculum mapping, we can layer our students' aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant forms of capital to have inclusive discourse in the classrooms. Yosso (2005) elaborates with the following:

> These forms of capital draw on the knowledges of students of color bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom. They are not conceptualized for the purpose of finding new ways to co-opt or exploit the strengths of communities of color. Instead, community cultural wealth involves a commitment to conduct research, teach and develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice (p. 70)

I agree that cultural capital of students should be recognized and validated in a classroom; however, I insist that there has to be a way to translate these theories into a comprehensive practice that will extend beyond inclusion in the classroom.

Striving for Inclusivity with Multiculturalism: A Fail?

Reich (2002), in his critique of multicultural education, explains that schools are a central vehicle of cultural transmission, perhaps the most important vehicle next to the

family. Beyond socialization within the home, schools play a crucial role in initiating children into the norms, beliefs and rites of the larger group, while forming and keeping their cultural identities in the process (57). As true as this may be, a concern I have is that in the "initiating" of students to the normative culture in a school there is no dialogue as to the reasoning and motives of the norms and how it may differ or coincide with cultural norms students might already follow. Jay (2003) refers to this as a "hidden curriculum," one where students are taught "valid knowledge, 'proper' behavior, acceptable levels of learning, differential power, and social evolution" (p. 6), proving to be continually oppressive and not in the least transformative. In my experience, discussing the logic or priorities of the professional normative culture in schools with students provides insight for how staff and students can relate to each other. Likewise, the multicultural perspective we use to teach different cultures as part of an academic curriculum is that of the "dominant group." Thus, the context for the culture being studied is altered, leading to limited understandings, misconceptions and perpetuating stereotypes.

While Jay (2003) writes to critique multiculturalism and how hegemony has tainted the inclusivity of multiculturalism, Bode (2005) speaks to the colonization of a culture when teaching with a multicultural pedagogy. She writes as an art teacher trying to expose her students to Puerto Rican culture and artifacts therein. Bode's goal was to contextualize all of the art lessons with the sociopolitical influences in which the art was made. She was finding that one lesson of the Puerto Rican culture was not reflective of the plurality in the rich Puerto Rican history and that her students walked away with limited insight to Puerto Rican identities. In turn, Bode counters this by building a curriculum around Puerto Rican art and culture. During art-making she read news articles

and literature from Puerto Rico to the students. She layers the art making with folk tales, narratives, and a lot of visuals for students. These practices helped build the context and an appropriate meaning of the artifacts the students were creating.

One art lesson is not enough, because in my experience teaching African American art began from the artist's perspective. Often times, the curriculum does not leave time for in depth and expansive exploration of one culture or perspective. Therefore, I often abandon recreating the culture; instead I use both the artist's perspective and student's voice to drive creativity and visual narrative. However, that this is a shortcut to inclusivity because the students learn the very primary themes of a culture or perspective and not how this perspective was shaped. Jay (2003) agrees that the problem is that in multicultural education, where the goal is to help students understand and appreciate cultural differences and similarities and to recognize the accomplishments of diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups, often times the goal is a mirage and true inclusivity is always out of reach (2003).

The problem is that in shifting from a multicultural education to a critical race theory framework, the powers that be must concede to the transformation, thus accepting individuals of non-mainstream cultures. For instance, Jay (2003) explains that transformative knowledge is dangerous because it threatens the dominant group who have had an interest in perpetuating the exclusivity of specific societal structures. In addition, the transformative knowledge would not only have to be shared out and used in classrooms but be used to transform educators' pedagogies in the institution that train educators. Consequently, transformative reform has been slow, as it must be cultivated from both sides, in classrooms with educators and students and from policy makers and

education theorists. Yet, there is a constant push for inclusivity. I believe there has been

a potential for transformative knowledge and pedagogy in the practices of art-making for

creating positive racial climate.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Methods

The function of a critical social science is to increase the awareness of social actors of the contradictory conditions of action which are distorted or hidden by everyday understandings. It is founded on the principle that all men and women are potentially active agents in the construction of their social world and their personal lives: that they can be the subjects, rather than the objects, of socio-historical processes. (Cornstock, 1982, p. 371)

Cornstock's illustration of Critical Race Theory Methodology supports a justification for using this methodology in researching inclusivity and racial climate in the art classroom. Malagon et al (2009) argue that the very act of centering CRT in the research process serves to transform higher education by disrupting the dominant ideologies traditionally embedded in the knowledge production process (p. 257-258). In order to research both the racial climate of the art room and the effect of art-making on developing positive racial climate, a CRT Methodology must be employed.

As such, I used the five basic tenets of CRT as the framework for my action research design as a case study. To review, the five basic tenets are (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002):

a.   the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination

b.   to challenge the dominant ideology

c.   the commitment to social justice

d.   the centrality of experiential knowledge

e.   transdisciplinary perspective

The five tenets of CRT will be imperative in teaching a curriculum and lessons for art-making to give students of color voice uncorrupted by majoritarian stories. Cornstock

(1982) breaks down the methodology of critical research into seven steps. I used his steps as to insure that my methodology matches that of a Critical Race Theory lens. His first two steps are to identify the progressive group with which the critical studies will be for. Once identified, the researcher should "develop an interpretive understanding of the intersubjective meanings, values and motives held by all subjects" (p. 380). The third and fourth steps call for the researcher to study the historical development of these understandings and to investigate and describe the social process and structures that gave rise to particular understandings and that presently serve to reinforce meanings, values and motives. Continuing, Cornstock's (1982) fifth and sixth steps call for the researcher to search for fundamental contradictions in the social conditions of subjects and then to participate in the educations of subjects to see their conditions in a new way, either to "problematize certain meanings or values accepted by subjects or to respond to issues the subjects already find problematic" (p, 385). The key in ensuring that this is a critical research plan is to collect data that shows the new understandings and new actions are that of the subjects, and not the researcher. Lastly, the critical researcher is called to educate themselves for more enlightened and self-conscious political action (p. 387). To conclude, the critical researcher is meant to help interpret understandings by subjects, then help build a dialogue so as to hold a mirror that reflects and critiques the social constructs that both the subject and researcher are participating.

Methods

For my study, I used both Yosso's tenets for Critical Race Theory and Cornstock's steps for creating a CRT Methodology. The CRT methodology is reflected in both the curriculum and the data collection.

First, The CRT-informed curriculum will slowly unfold over 8 weeks. The first assignments for each lesson will include assignments that are directly tied to a specific skill or technique in art-making. Within each of these weeks, I introduced contemporary artists whose artwork is relevant to identity and the intersectionality of race and racism. Activities were included that support critiques of both the artwork and the ideology driving the artworks. The students were asked to identify values and meaning in art and their own counternarratives, and compare and contrast them against the artworks of artists in reference. When studying the artworks, the students read current events to study historical contexts of each artworks, and more specifically how that is relevant to their experiences and therefore their art-making. In all there were 3 projects, derived out of smaller skill building tasks. Students will created an artwork that is counternarrative driven and speaks to their personal experiences. I am looking to offer the students an opportunity to speak to any part of their vision, either of themselves or of the construct within which they live.

For this in-depth exploration of art-making to create and support a positive racial climate, this study will be completed as a case study. A case study will allow for the researcher to explore in depth a process or individual. It is bound by activity and time, and the researcher collects detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over sustained period of time (Creswell, 2014). The case study will take

place at First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter in Philadelphia, PA. The twenty-seven

11th graders have an 8 period day. The 11th graders are in my classroom for two hours a

day, one hour in the morning for first period Art, and an hour at the end of each day for

8th period social-emotional learning curriculum. I used first period for the whole class

discussions and art-making, and used 8th period for more in-depth individualized data

collection of the four students in my case study.

The first form of data collection will be formal and informal interviews with the

three students in the 11th grade class. I will attempt to interview each of the students in

depth in the beginning of the study with formal interviews, and use informal interviews

twice a week for the duration of the study. I will complete the study with formal

interviews to see how their understandings and the racial climate has changed in the

classroom. The informal interviews will take place during 8th period and will take place

for 15 minutes each. The interviews will be recorded as videos.

The interviews will be imperative for learning historical background and insight

into each students understandings beyond the class discussions (Creswell, 2014). In

interviewing the students at different points of art-making, I can control the questions

particularly concerning the internal dialogue each student is having during the art-making

process.

The second form of data collection that supports my inquiries into art-making and

racial climate will be qualitative observations. A qualitative observation is when the

researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research

site (Creswell, 2014). I observed how often students participate in conversations, who

students in the case study seem to respond to the strongest, and where the conversations

lead during class discussions and independent art-making. I was a participant observer as subscribed to the CRT methodology. I am a part of the classroom dynamic and therefore my interactions with students should be considered when observing the racial climate. The observations were recorded after each first period, as I have a prep during second period.

The third form of data collection was the artifacts or art-works created by the students in the case study. The artifacts speak to the processes of art-making in relation to the CRT-informed curriculum and the evolution of their attitude toward racial climate and their own identity. Each student will include the artist statements to reaffirm the intended interpretations of each artworks.

In using three forms of data collection, I was able to triangulate the data and explore the questions I was seeking about the specific experiences of my students.

Sampling

I taught the CRT-informed curriculum to all of the students, however, I focused the in-depth analysis of three students of color in my classroom, and how art-making can create positive racial climate as they are participants in the classroom. I intended on working closely two female students of color and two male students of color, to help eliminate gender-bias in my research.

An important element in researching the racial climate is considering the social setting in which my students participate. The students I sampled from are in my homeroom of 11th graders. The class consists of 27 students: 12 Black, 10 Hispanic, two White, and two Mixed. There are three international students, one of which is receiving English Language Learner accommodations. There are three students with IEPs, it is

important to denote that these students do not represent each of the populations. Considering the racial plurality of the classroom gave insight into the stories told and the discussions students chose to participate.

Data Analysis

As I was involved in the direct instruction of the class, notes were taken during the lesson and then organized to create concise narrative-based observations. Themes were identified in the observations and coding was used to analyze interviews after they were transcribed. In coding the interviews, I was able to identify, describe and ensure themes that are significant to the Critical Race Theory lens and methodology.

Ethics

As this study was conducted with 11th graders, informed consent from all parents or guardians of each participant was acquired in order to participate in the research, see Appendix B. Informed consent was also gathered from the Dean of Climate and Head of School, see Appendix A; in turn, all names of student and staff were changed for confidentiality. All data was collected and analyzed on a secure computer, and if at any point any participant did not want to contribute to the research, the data would have been destroyed. All participants volunteered without the expectation of compensation.

Limitations & Validity

Cornstock (1982) explains that the only legitimate activity of a critical social scientist is to engage in the collective enterprise of progressive enlightenment with the aim of showing how his or her ideas are valid in light of the subject's oppressive social

position and the specific values and actions possible in that position. As such, I returned

the analysis back to participants for member checking. Students reviewed the analysis

and interpretations made by the critical researcher. This was to ensure that the

counternarratives are their own and untainted by majoritarian stories. The interviews took

place during the 8th period free period in a private area so that students could answer and

reflect without influences from peers. Finally, the study is valid due to use of three types

of data collection for triangulation. According to Creswell (2014), triangulation is used to

build coherent justification for themes in the data collected (p. 201).

CHAPTER 3

DATA COLLECTION & FINDINGS

Research Question: *Can art-making create a positive racial climate in a multicultural classroom and how does art-making support students' understanding of intercentricity of race?*

DATA COLLECTIONS

For my action research project, data was collected in the form of observations, interviews, questionnaires, student art work, and discussion boards. Within the span of 8 weeks, participants engaged in three lessons pertaining to the discussion of identity and race through Critical Race Theory. Throughout the study, students' ideologies and revelations were documented through Do Now's, written reflections, discussion boards, and art work. To supplement, in-depth interviews were conducted and transcribed manually with three African American participants and the Dean of Climate. In addition to interviews and artifacts, I kept a daily observational journal from my perspective as teacher and researcher. The intent was to have four participants, two male and two female: however, no other males were willing to participate in the interviews. The observational journal documents my reflections on my role as teacher and researcher in a classroom of twenty-eight multicultural students and the overall racial climate of my art classroom.

Data collected records the attitudes and behaviors of students as they engage art-making and the concepts of race and identity. Continuing, the data represents student artists' motivations, reactions to peers' perception of race, and racial pride. The interview data reflects the experiences of three African American student artists' who volunteered to speak on their experiences in the art room and First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter

High School. In Figure 1 below, I have listed my research question and sub questions, data collection techniques and data analysis techniques.

FIGURE 1. Research Questions, Data Collected, and Data Analysis Techniques

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTED	DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES
Can art-making create a positive racial climate in a multicultural classroom?	Observations Interviews Artifacts	Triangulation Check-ins Coding
What are the possible effects of a CRT informed art curriculum?	Observations Interviews Artifacts	Triangulation Coding
How does art-making support student's understanding of the pervasive and permanent nature of race?	Observations Questionnaires Interviews Artifacts	Triangulation Coding Constant Comparative Method
In a multicultural classroom, how does a student's counternarrative effect racial climate?	Observations Interviews Questionnaire Artifacts	Triangulation Coding Constant Comparative Method Check-ins
What is my role as a white art educator in creating a positive racial climate?	Observations Interviews Questionnaires	Triangulation Coding Check-ins

Participants in the Case Study

      Observations of student interactions and behavior allowed for an overall view of the climate of classroom, while private interviews allowed for students share their narrative as a participant of the classroom and artist. Moreover, the data shows the shared, contrasting and attitudes of participants towards race and art-making.
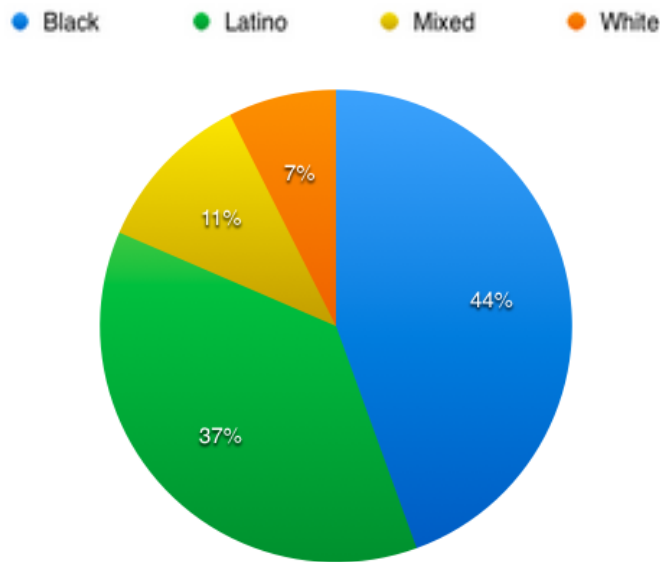
FIGURE 2: Racial Breakdown of Multicultural Classroom

The three participants, one male and two female, volunteered for the case study as prescribed by Critical Race Methodology. They were a part of a class of twenty-seven students comprised of twelve Black, ten Latino, two White, three Mixed Races students, all self-identified.

As art teacher and researcher, I am a 27 year old white female, who had been teaching in this multicultural classroom for six months prior to beginning my study. In addition to my observations, an interview with Mr. Lewis, Dean of Climate, provides insight into his perspective as an African American and an administrator of a diverse neighborhood high school.

Shanice is a 17 years old young woman. She has been attending First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter High School since 9th grade. Now in her junior year, this is her first art class since 8th grade. Shanice is strong willed, an influential voice in the classroom,

and well-respected by the majority of her peers. She has a high-interest in art and is one of the more-experienced artists in class. Shanice has a gift for peer mediation, and I often used her influence to manage and lead the class through discussions. She is a leader in her peer group of females, the data will show that this peer group dominates much of the attitude and focus of the classroom. Shanice identifies as a black gay female from North Philadelphia.

Tonia is a 17 year old young woman. She has been attending First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School since 9th grade. Now in her junior year, this is her first art class since 8th grade as well. Tonia is very vocal. She participates often in class discussions, sometimes being very honest about racial prejudices and stereotypes. In the data collected, Tonia has a few negative interactions with her peers in the classroom throughout the study. She, like Shanice, is strong willed; Tonia was suspended from school for the last two weeks of this study due to a conflict with a peer unrelated to this study. Her artwork and interviews leading up to the suspension are insightful and helped to guide my research with the other participants and classroom. Tonia identifies as a black heterosexual female from South Philadelphia.

Dashawn is a 17 year old young man. He has been attending First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School since 10th grade. Now in his junior year, this is his first art class since 8th grade. Dashawn is a poised individual, well-liked and a gentleman. He creates artwork and socializes with the group of young men in my classroom. Similar to Shanice, he is a leader in his peer group and has a high interest in race issues. Dashawn proves to have an open-mind set, with critical thinking skills best exhibited in interviews and his written work. The data provided by Dashawn helped to structure the content and

skill-building activities in chunks. Dashawn identifies as black male from North

Philadelphia.

Interviewing students privately and observing the participants amongst their peers

was beneficial in providing a context for their attitudes and behavior during art-making.

Shanice, Tonia, and Dashawn were asked to participate in group discussions with the

entire class based on defining identity, racial issues, and artwork. All students in the class

participated in the unit, providing opportunities to see how other minorities responded to

art-making in contrast to the three participants.

To preface the following unit summary, Critical Race Methodology was the

framework for this unit, see Appendix C, however these lessons include modifications

and accommodations that respond to the needs of students, and shifts in learning climate.

In the next section, the collected data through interviews and observations will

supplement the information interpreted through the artifacts and discussion boards. I

aimed to follow Cornstock's Critical Race Methodology, described in the second chapter,

and as such, the data will show that the lessons first aim to define and establish an

understanding of initial ideologies, then explore the intercentricity of race in identity, and

finally explore positive perspectives of racial identities. As data was collected, I reflected

on reactions and attitudes about discussions and art-making, looking for themes of racial

paradigms, pride and skill-building in art-making.

UNIT SUMMARY

Pre-Assessment and Introductory Interviews

Shanice, Tonia and Dashawn were asked a list of preliminary questions based on

art experience, impressions of First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter High School (FPP),

and Racial Pride. In Figure 4, the three participants show a strong comfortability with

their racial pride and discussing race, see Appendix F. When asked to define race and

culture and their differences, all three students referred to the "color of one's skin;"

however, it was only Tonia who considered the social constructs that shape the definition

of one's racial identity in American society.

Figure 3. Interview with Tonia

> Tonia elaborated, "It's what I've been taught, that race is your color and the
> past you have. Because every race has a past. Like black people have slavery"
> (*Interviews with Tonia, February 2016).*

Figure 4. First Impressions of First Philadelphia Prep, Racial Pride and Racial Climate

	Last Time Student was in an Art class	Student has positive overall impressions of FPP	Student feels they have strong sense of Racial Pride	Student feels FPP contributes positively to Racial Pride	Student feels FPP contributes negatively to Racial Pride	Student feels comfortable discussing Race and Race Issues
Shanice	8th grade	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Tonia	8th grade	Yes/No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Dashawn	8th grade	Indifferent	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Tonia had the strongest impressions of the racial climate of FPP. She describes

the topic of race as brushed off, that students are told that discussing race is not

appropriate. I would later learn that Tonia has strong prejudices against other races, I

considered that her impression of race being "brushed off" might be relative to the

timing, and the nature of her conversations.

Figure 5. Interview with Mr. Lewis

> In support of this thought, Mr. Lewis, Dean of Climate, confirmed "I think its a problem that they see it as them talking about race is inappropriate, instead of [an appropriate] time and place" (*Interview with Mr. Lewis, February 2016*).

Her opinion contrasted Dashawn's in that he felt FPP contributed "somewhat" to

his racial pride. When asked to elaborate he said, "I guess you could say there are a lot of

blacks. Everybody gets treated equally." Mr. Lewis agreed that FPP had a positive racial

climate.

Figure 6. Interview with Mr. Lewis

> When asked if he thought Students of Color felt comfortable at First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter, Mr. Lewis answered that "Yes.. Because of me, and the school is in their neighborhood" (*Interview with Mr. Lewis, February 2016*).

My initial observations of the racial climate in my classroom were superficial. I

noticed that both girls seemed to only socialize with students who shared their same

racial identity, whereas Dashawn socialized with a peer group of males who are more

diverse. Dashawns' best friend is a white male in the class. Dashawn would prove to be

integral in discussing racial identity later during class discussions.

Lesson 1: Concept Mapping our Identities

In reflecting on successful lessons prior to this study, I found that the majority of my students felt very comfortable with text in their artwork. The most natural way I felt my students would transition from text to images was with a concept map, see Curriculum Map in Appendix D. They could layer in images, and they could write out thoughts if a simple symbol did not suffice for larger ideas. Also, the unit began discussing identity as broader topic. My intent was to observe how many students would include race as part of their identity.

I gave all of the students a packet that included reflective questions and a schedule for that week's work, see Appendix E. It also included different examples of shapes and organizational styles of concept maps. I used Do Now's on the whiteboard to spark conversation leading into the different areas of identity.

Figure 7. Observational Journal

Do Now: What percentage of a person's identity is made up of their racial identity? One of the students shared, that it depended on the person. Shanice confirmed, "that it depended on the person and how they were raised. Some people aren't raised where race is important" (*Observation Journal of Attitudes towards Race and Art-Making*, February 2016-April 2016).

Another student answered to the same question, "It depends on how they were raised and if they had to think about it" (*Observation Journal of Attitudes towards Race and Art-Making, February 2016-April 2016).*

Thus, was the attitude reflected in the artifacts. Although I illustrated race in my identity concept map, I found that none of my African American students included any words or images about race, except for Dashawn. In his interview, Dashawn describes the negative space as representative of his racial identity.

Figure 8. Dashawn's Concept Map, Mixed Media

Figure 9. Interviews with Dashawn

> When asked why it does not look like a concept map, he says, "I just wanted to be unique. I thought I'm going to put my name in the middle and put Stop Teaching Us Violence. Make it Simple, not too much.. I used black like the black man" (*Interviews with Dashawn, February 2016-April 2016).*

Dashawn's decision to reflect, both a racial identity through color, then through the obscure acronym, was unique to the other black students. However, the Latino students seemed to understand and show that their race or culture was an important part of their racial identity.

When interviewed, Tonia said she did not include her racial identity in the concept map because it would go "unnoticed," she only wanted to put things that were important to her. Upon elaborating, Tonia had a nonchalant attitude about including race in her artwork. It's not that it wasn't important to her, it's just that she figured it wouldn't really elicit a response.

Figure 10. Interview with Tonia

> "Yeah I just didn't think it was important to put in there. Like it would go unnoticed anyway… so what if I'm black" (*Interviews with Tonia, February 2016-April 2016).*

Figure 11. Artifact by African American Female   **Figure 12. Artifact by Puerto Rican Female**

Above are two examples from other students in the class, Figure 11 is by an African

American female, and she does not include race. However, similarly to other Latina girls

in the class, the artifact on the right, Figure 12, includes the Puerto Rican flag to reflect

the Latina artist's culture.

During these studio days, the students were asked to reflect on the aesthetic of the

concept maps. While observing, I noticed that students' attitudes during art-making

shifted quite a bit. There was a large rift between two peer groups in the class. During

Week 1 and 2, I observed students growing increasingly tense. Students were more

difficult to manage, and less willing to share about personal experiences. In the end of

Week 2 and beginning of Week 3 of my research, arguments came to a head. The

classroom dynamic changed and with it the academic rigor, when the opposing side of

the rift was suspended due to a long-standing issue between Tonia and Shanice's peer

group. Due to this shift in academic climate, Tonia and Shanice's written work suffered.

Lesson 2: Layering Identities with Race

After close scrutiny of their concept maps, I considered moving away from the 2-D materials; mannequin heads were chosen to create an emotional connection to the discussion of racial identity, hopefully furthering the analysis of cultural symbology. In support of this, I provided each student another packet where they were to reflect on stereotypes and the people that share their racial identity in a positive or negative way, see Appendix E for example. The racial climate began to shift as we looked at examples of artists who made art in response to Black Lives Matter movement. Students were to choose images either immediately relevant to them, or imagery of a universal experience.

Likewise, the students were to explore layering these images. I began the lesson with a demo day of papier-mâché. Students were exploring possibilities of contradictions between the images that society portrays of them. As student leafed through scraps of newspaper, students began collecting words and images that stood out to them about their own identities. This first day, the Black Lives Matter came into focus.

Figure 13. Student working with PaperMaché

Eventually, during the end of the third week into the fourth, students began to open up to the conversation about race.

As a result of students focusing in on Black Lives Matter movement, I chose to dive right into that as a gateway to a larger conversation. It was at the beginning of this lesson that I began using discussion boards, a large post-it paper on the whiteboard. The first discussion board asked the students "What do you know about Black Lives Matter?"

Despite their focus on their art-making, students were able to listen as I read out loud an article by Brittany Packnett of *Time Magazine*, "Black Lives Matter Isn't Just Our Cause-Its an American Cause.*"* Student artists listened and worked.

As I passed out the mannequin heads, there was a significant shift in academic and racial climate. Their interest in racial issues grew, and conversation was much more fluid.

Figure 14. Student using layered newspaper and paint to create effects on mannequin head

Figure 15. Observational Journal

Shanice dove right into art-making, she immediately began covering her mannequin in black paints. She also began wrapping the head with newspaper in the shape of a hijab, a garb worn by Muslim women around their head. (*Observation Journal of Attitudes towards Race and Art-Making*, February 2016-April 2016).

Figure 16. Shanice's Mannequin Head Figure 17. Student creating dreads out of pipe cleaners

As students were diligently experimenting with skin colors and the effects of paper mache, I continued to post discussion boards. Two of the questions I posted together and side by side. The first: When are you most proud of your racial identity? And the second: When are you most aware of the color of your skin? All students who posted on these questions were either black or latino.

For the first question, students listed positive events such as family occasions, and accomplishing goals. Conversely, when asked the second question only black students contributed to the discussion board. Students listed reactions to the police and being in a place they don't belong. Shanice contributed, "When I get called a N****". This elicited an emotional response from peers. Shanice was asked to elaborate.

Figure 18. Observation Journal

Shanice explained that her relationship with an individual who is not black has an effect on how comfortable she is hearing that individual use the N-word, even when used as a term of endearment. Pointing to two different peers, "_____ can say it, he's white, but it's different when she says it" (*Observation Journal of Attitudes towards Race and Art-Making*, February 2016-April 2016).

Following this comment during the class discussion, I asked Shanice during a private interview why she felt there was a difference between her peers. She commented that the one student has been known to make racial aggressions towards Shanice and her peers. Shanice continued that her friend did not make racial microaggressions, and so she felt that he was 'one of them' (*Interviews with Shanice*, February 2016-April 2016). Shanice was speaking to a closeness and authenticity of her friend. There was a strong consensus amongst the black students that this was true. Later in an interview, Shanice continued speaking on her impressions of the racial climate in the classrooms. She explained that it's good for all students to learn about it, but that some of them are uncomfortable.

Figure 19. Interview with Shanice

Ms. Davis: Do you think other people are uncomfortable being a part of the conversation about Black Lives Matter?
Shanice: Ehhm. (Affirms)
Ms. Davis: How do you know that?
Shanice: Like certain people, don't like hearing certains peoples opinions on black lives matter, you know cause some people let it come off bad like black people don't care about white people.
(Interviews with Shanice, February 2016-April 2016)

During this project I noticed a significant jump in students expressing discomfort in talking about race. One student mentioned that it was "tiring listening to all the stories about black people being mistreated." The images were growing more and more violent. Seven of the 16 completed heads had graphic bullet wounds, nearly 50% of the class chose to show black individuals as victims when illustrating the Black Lives Matter movement, and each of those seven artists were students of color. The following figures, Figures 20-22 are examples of student work showing the specific graphic imagery of that emerged during this lesson.
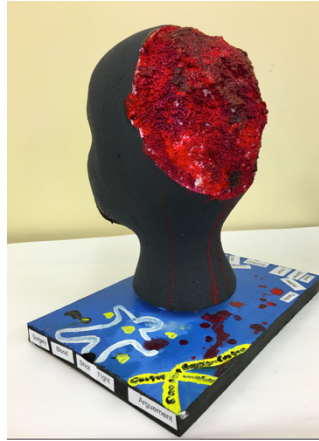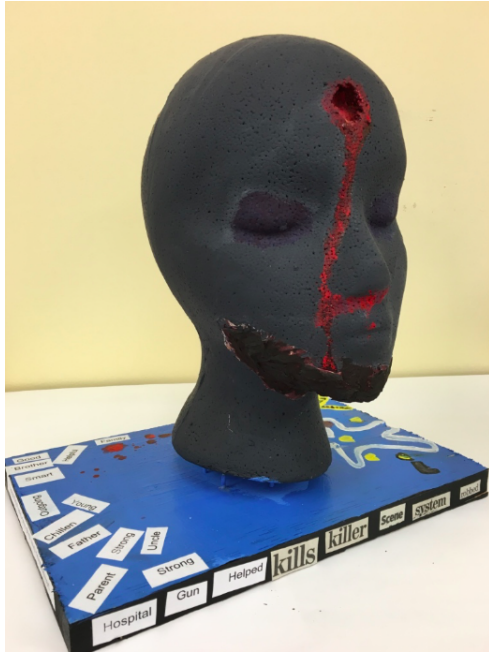
Figures 20, 21, 22. Student work showing Layering, Violence, & Victimization of Black Psyche

Lesson 3: Changing Perspectives with Portraits Inspired by Kehinde Wiley

In keeping in line with Critical Race Methodology, see Appendix C, there needed to be an evolution of perspectives in how students perceive their racial identity and possible outcomes for their position in society. And so, when looking at the number of students that created graphic sculptures, I decided to shift gears and push students to consider how Kehinde Wiley was addressing black males invisibility in art history as well as confronting the contemporary portrayal of black males and females. Wiley portrays his subjects as strong, proud, and with a royal-flare (Soloman 2015). To left is an example of his Wiley's work, entitled *Kancou Diaovo*, 30" x 40", oil on canvas, 2012.

To start the lesson, I showed a video called 'Economy of Grace' from PBS.org about the artist Kehinde Wiley and his artistic process, see Appendix D for the Curriculum Map. Students were intrigued by the subjects and the team of artists Wiley works with to make large oil paintings of Black subjects from America and across the diaspora.

I observed a heightened negative attitude towards the content of the lesson when the materials were not accessible to the students. I knew that my students needed color theory review and drawing skills. Therefore, I continued to chunk instruction. To start, I taught them how to grid a drawing and then practice following a grid to enlarge that image. Students also completed a 100 Color Challenge, where students had to mix at least 40 new and different colors just from the red, blue and yellow.

Figure 24 & 25
The 100 Color Challenge proved to be successful, and cathartic for many students.

Figure 26. Observational Journal

> Dashawn was mixing colors furiously and said, "Ms. Davis, I really like this. I never knew I could mix so many colors, and it feels good to just keep adding and adding." I replied, "That's awesome. Mixing paints is one of my favorite things to do as well. Do you remember the recipe for this color?" Dashawn was able to recall five recipes, and discern the difference between two very close colors. "Yea, I added blue to make it darker and colder." (*Observation Journal of Attitudes towards Race and Art-Making*, February 2016-April 2016).

On that same day, the discussion boards prompts were 'Is *mixed* a race? Why or Why not?' and 'Who is allowed to talk about race?' Their responses were limited but consistent.

Figure 27. Discussion #5: *Who is allowed to talk about race?*

> "Everyone is allowed to talk about race, because we need to know the different races, and what happened." -Student who identifies as mixed. *(Discussion Board #5, February 2016-February 2016).*

For this final project, Students were tasked to chose a person with whom they shared a racial identity. This person could be a positive or negative representation of the racial identity. Students would use a grid to draw, and tempera, or wax resist to finish a decorative portrait showing the subject to be strong, proud, and beautiful. Figures 27, 28 and 29 are student examples of their chosen subjects and the great care taken by students in this lesson to create successful artworks.

Figures 27, 28, & 29
Left: Student Artist chose Nicki Minaj, the rapper.
Center: Student Artist chose to do a self-portrait holding her niece.
Right: Shanice chose to paint her girlfriend.

Post-Assessment and Closing Interviews

On the final day of the unit, students were given a questionnaire; see Appendix G, to fill out asking about the impressions of art-making in discussing race. This questionnaire was met with a lot of anger and hostility. Students were still in the midst of working on their portraits. The data in the questionnaires and observational journal was coded heavily with emotional exhaustion. Several times students expressed being tired of talking about race. Some students felt it was irrelevant to them.

Dashawn and Shanice did a poor job writing their answers. I pulled them during 8th period to have a private conversation using the questions from the questionnaire. Dashawn pointed out that everyone in the class should be comfortable talking about it because this generation speaks about race all the time. He and Shanice both agreed that

making art differed greatly from their Diversity Issues class where they discussed the

racial history of America, in that, it was contemporary and personal.

Figure 30. Interview with Dashawn and Shanice

Ms Davis: So you liked that art-making allows you to talk about race without racism?
Dashawn: Yeah.
Shanice: It's like they are low-key trying to tell us that the white man controls everything, and we aren't gonna be anything him saying so.
Ms. Davis: Has art-making lessened that feeling of limitation?
Shanice: I think it's just a way for us to express how we feel about race instead of talking about racism.
Dashawn: Yeah, and that's the part I like. (Interview with Shanice and Dashawn, February 2016- April 2016).

Dashawn and Shanice also elaborated on it "feeling natural" to have a white

teacher discuss race with them. Of the nine students who turned in the questionnaire, four

had a positive impression, two had a negative impression, three were indifferent. The lack

of responses was result of vocalized frustrations. During the class period, I heard three

students vocalize that the topic of race was irrelevant to them.

Figure 31. Observation Journal

One student went as far as to say, "I don't care what you are, okay so you are Black, I'm Puerto Rican, who cares? Why do we always need to talk about this? Money is the most important thing at the end of the day. It all comes down to money" (*Observational Journal, February 2016-April 2016)*.

The post-assessment shows students attitudes improving during art-making,

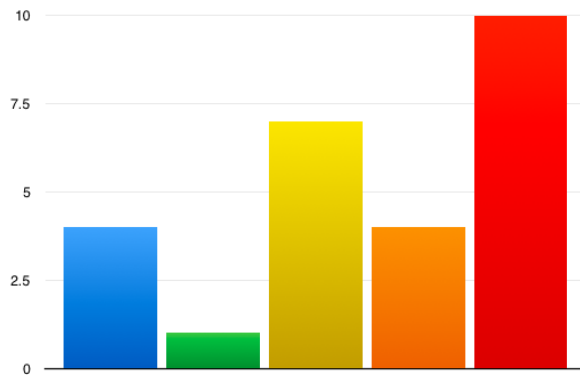however when confronted by frustrations in the art room, very vocal.

Figure #32 shows the subjects chosen for portraits showing a person with shared racial identity positively
10 chose Self Portraits
4 chose Family Members/Loved Ones
7 chose Celebrities
1 chose Person that Did Not Share Racial Identity
4 Did Not Complete Assignment due to Absence, Lack of Academic Rigor or Indecisions

As the students continued to work, I posted the final set of Discussion Boards, students answered accordingly.
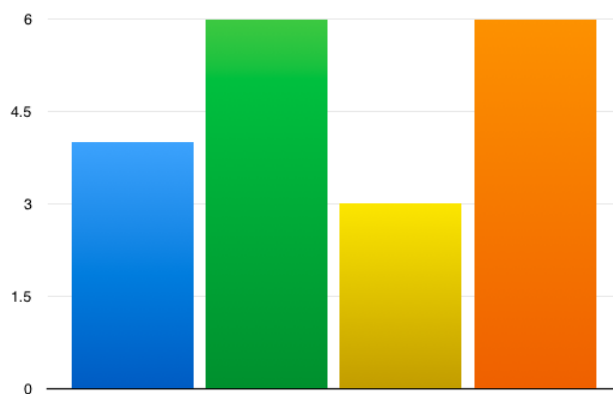

Figure #33
Discussion Board #9: Why is it important to create artwork about race?

Of the 17 responses, Racial Pride and Changing Perspectives were the most common. Students found that exhibiting pride about their racial identity or culture through artwork was as important as the ability to change audience's perspectives. The perspectives that student's wanted to change were their own, and the perspectives others had of them.
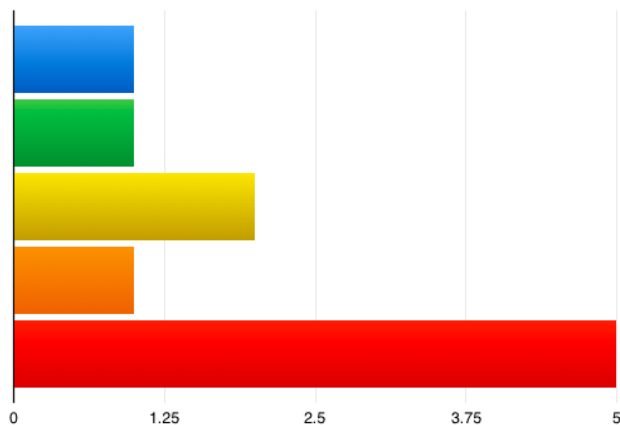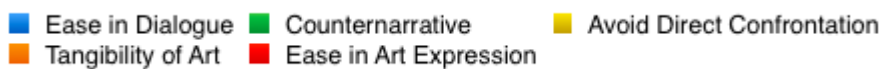
Figure #34
Discussion Board #11: What is the difference between *talking* about race and *making art* about race?

The most common response was an ease to express oneself beyond words. Students felt that self-expression was better achieved through art work. I found this consensus to be consistent with the emotional exhaustion, and frustrations students felt during the unit. Art-making created a non-confrontational avenue for addressing the content.

DATA ANALYSIS and FINDINGS

Emergent Themes

The collected data of interviews, observations, and artifacts suggests there are four main themes in my research. Moreover, the data shows the shared, contrasting and attitudes of participants towards race and art-making. There is an absence of race in their identity concept maps, a consistent undertone of the Binary Race Paradigm, the theme of emotional exhaustion and frustrations, and lastly there are findings that art-making eased racial tensions for students and supported a positive racial climate.

42

In Figure 32, I have organized the Research Questions, Data Analyzed and the Findings from my research.

Figure 32. Research Questions, Data Collected, and Findings

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTED	FINDINGS
Can art-making create a positive racial climate in a multicultural classroom?	The art room can be a counter-space when a culturally-responsive curriculum is applied.	Providing true counternarratives can support racial pride and art room citizenship.
What are the possible effects of a CRT informed art curriculum?	There are possibilities of isolation for students outside Binary Race Paradigm and improvement of racial pride.	Discussion Boards support classrooms with dominate peer groups. Prompts should be phrased for positive outcomes.
How does art-making support student's understanding of permanent and pervasive nature of race?	Art-making creates Personal connections, supports expression, and encourages dialogue beyond mainstream ideologies.	In a multicultural classroom, intercentricity is subliminal. Students are indifferent to racial diversity in multicultural environments.
In a multicultural classroom, how does a student's counternarrative effect racial climate?	Emotional exhaustion may be a reaction of students participating in class. Counternarratives are individualized.	Artwork should be a response, not description. Do not put value on one counter narrative over another. Adjust art-making process to be outlet for emotional exhaustion.
What is my role as a white art educator in creating a positive racial climate?	Sharing personal experiences does not always promote positive racial climate.	It is important to provide cultural symbology and imagery outside of the mainstream visuals. Use other artists to be voice for discussions.

Through analyzing the research, I found that possible effects of a Critical Race Theory informed art curriculum in a multicultural classroom was isolation for my Latino students or Mixed Students, as they did not contribute to discussion boards as often. The Binary Race Paradigm, defined by Delgado and Stefancic (2001) as patterns of framing race issues in terms of two categories, such as black and white, undertone was present in class discussions, and present in their artwork (p.142). Its white counterpart defined the black racial identity, however neither the white students nor the blacks students had images or text about race in their identity concept maps. It seemed that only Latinos had cultural symbols denoting pride to draw on as an illustration of their identities. In response to the isolation, the discussion boards and the sequence of questions I asked promoted dialogue that was inclusive. Asking questions like, "Is mixed a race? Why or Why not?" and discussing the importance of identifying as mixed allowed students to discuss family histories and misconceptions of identities based on appearance. I found that isolation for those students affected the racial climate negatively, while inclusion not only supported a positive racial climate but also eliminated tension from the binary race paradigm. Students did well writing their prior knowledge on the paper, it also created a space for my quieter less vocal students an opportunity to share their thoughts with the class without being in the spotlight. Students individual voices were heard and individualities accepted.

Continuing, I found ensuring opportunities for counternarratives versus majoritarian storytelling was detrimental to racial climate and private regard. There was a theme during the Mannequin Sculptures of martyrs versus victims for African American students. Shanice described in an interview that she was frustrated seeing so

many bullet holes and blood to describe a movement promoting equality for Black Americans. In turn, the Kehinde Wiley inspired portraits provided students an opportunity to model individuals that share their racial identity differently than they were asked to before. I found a direct correlation of the racial climate improving when students were creating positive images. This was evident when students were asked to assess their emotions about race and racism through written word. During class discussions, students showed signs of understanding the permanence of racism, while expressing apathy towards differences between peers. This affected racial climate negatively. It could be observed that student's productivity increased, however verbalization decreased during these emotional conversations.

I found that these conversations led to lower productivity, unless I created very skill-based repetitive activities. Students were willing to cooperate and share when they were mixing paints, or directly engaged with an art-making process. Art-making activities were the buffer for discussions between students. For example, if tensions were too high, students could focus on materials, or if the climate was positive, students would support and share in their processes and personal experiences.

Lastly, my role as the white art teacher is to be very critical of every image I see of someone that looks like my students, find artists that use positive imagery and do not re-appropriate imagery from past racial movements. Trust between students and myself was an integral part of my research, especially during times to tell personal stories. The racial climate also could be observed improving when credit was given to students who shared honest and even challenging perspectives. Being aware of patterns in time spent

with individual students and fair assessments also encourages positive racial climate where students feel supported and deserving of their grades.

After close scrutiny, it seems clear that art-making can create a positive racial climate. In support of this are the interviews by Dashawn and Shanice. Dashawn struggled with art-making the entire unit. He was not very successful with any of the artworks; however, through being exposed to artists his perspective changed. Shanice, who always had an interest in art, found that art-making provided her an opportunity for self-expression and allowed her to create from her own perspective was a successful experience for her. Due to the opportunity for self-expression, Shanice and Dashawn expressed a confirmation of their racial pride.

Teacher Reflections

To start it is important to acknowledge the difficult nature of this conversation as the dialogue about race walks hand in hand with racism. Through years of teaching in urban education, I have witnessed this dialogue happen both subliminally and with avid focus. Sometimes I have played a role in the conversation and sometimes I have been a witness. Through all of these experiences, my privilege has been omnipresent and a constant lens. However, it is through these experiences that this privileged lens has become less foggy and my role as a white educator becomes clearer. I would suggest to all educators in pre-service or beyond who are taking the initiative to discuss race and racism with your students, or just teaching in a multicultural classroom, that you consider how to interrupt your own privilege. Whether you chose making yourself an other, focusing on academic endeavors in this field, or spend time looking into contemporary

artistic solutions about race, you must constantly critique your expectations and evolving perspective as flooded with majoritarian influences.

This larger conversation is weighted in history and in narrative, but most importantly in truths and reality. As such, it is important to remind yourself that although you are a seemingly passive and empathetic player, you are also on display. I found it easy to eliminate tension and create understanding for my students when I did not show surprise or any emotional reaction. I also found that students grew frustrated when I employed the Socratic method while leading discussion. Sometimes too many questions can lead to a defensive reaction in students. Passing the torch so to speak to a strong peer took the focus off me as the teacher and allowed students to take over. Students can be empathetic and resourceful when supporting their peers. My students expressed in their own way a certain gratitude towards me that I was unafraid of their emotionality. In being unafraid, I could be an ally to them; supporting them and showing them the value in their efforts.

Ultimately, this is one of the most relevant conversations I've ever had with my students, and by far one of the most difficult. Shame and guilt are inevitable, however I found that it did not support my students to avoid this conversation or their ideas on race and racism to avoid feeling uncomfortable myself. It is our responsibility to prepare our students. In turn, we must be prepared as well to meet this problem of cultural incompetence and prejudice in our classrooms and school cultures head-on. Reflection and openness with a large piece of humble pie is best practices.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Conclusion Summary

The action research case study that I conducted shows that art-making reinforces positive imagery and provides room for counternarrative supports in a positive racial climate. Students prefered to not be differentiated by racial differences, unless as a means to show pride. In teaching a Critical Race Theory informed curriculum (see Appendix C) the study showed possibilities for isolation for students not involved in the Binary Race Paradigm, while at the same time in promoting racial identity for all students provided room for students to show improved or changed perspectives of the intercentricity of racism. The study also shows that strategies such as public discussion boards, allowing students to be narrators in whole group discussions and as a white educator reflecting on small group discussions between peers of similar racial identities are strategies for improving understanding racial identity. Art-making can relieve tensions during discussions about race and provide opportunities for students to connect in a multicultural classroom.

As evidence in my Literature Review, researchers use counter-storytelling to cast doubt on accepted myths or premises held by the majority, such as: "student of color do not encounter racism anymore" (Delgado 2001). Creating counter-spaces, such as in my art classroom, teachers can lessen the effects of racial microaggressions in academic settings for students of color (Solorzano et al, 2001). There is extensive literature in the areas of Critical Race Theory and its effects in education, however, little to no research concerning the effects of art-making on positive racial climate in a multicultural

classroom. As a result of my study involving teaching a Critical Race Theory informed curriculum, art-making relieves emotional exhaustion and supports improved perspectives on racial identity, thus supporting positive racial climate.

Action Plan

Now that I have introduced opportunities for counternarratives in the classroom through Critical Race Theory informed curriculum, I wish to further explore the racial climate and the intercentricity of race for all students. I will present my research to colleagues, and administrators particularly those influencing curriculum where race and racism are in focus. I will support them in creating cross-curricular activities where art-making can support the emotional experiences of students. I would also like to continue my research in promoting positive attitudes towards discussing and examining race as a means of building community and strengthening communication skills. I believe it is important to create trust between students and teachers of different racial identities, especially when discussing race and racism. I would like examine how those positive relationships foster as a result of attitudes and reactions between teachers and students.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE

CONSENT FORMS
INSTITUTION SUPPORT FORM

First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter
4300 Tacony Street
Philadelphia, PA 19124
January 13, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I,_____, give permission to Samantha Davis to conduct an action research project in First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter during the spring 2016 semester in order to fulfill the requirements of her Master's thesis at Moore College of Art and Design. I understand that this project is intended to research the effects of art education on a positive racial climate for our multicultural classroom. I understand that Samantha Davis will be a teacher researcher that will be teaching art while gathering data during the regular school day. I understand she will be collecting data with various methods including observation, interviews, and artwork.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I give consent for my child _____ to
participate in the research titled, "Effects of Art Education on Positive Racial Climate in a
Multicultural Classroom," which is being conducted by Samantha Davis, Graduate
Student at Moore College of Art & Design. I understand that this participation is entirely
voluntary; I or my child can withdraw consent at any time without penalty, and have the
results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as my child's, returned to
me, removed from the records, or destroyed.
1. The reason for the research is to determine how an art space can encourage
positive racial climate in a multicultural classroom.
2. The benefits that my child may expect from the research are: a broader
understanding of race and identity, and how we converse, defend and relate to and
with other students of same and differing racial identities.
3. The procedures are as follows: The research will take place from January – May,
2016. During this time, I will be collecting data using observation, and interview
techniques, through class wide critiques and group interviews.
4. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen.
5. No risks are foreseen. My child's participation is voluntary. Non-participating
students will not be penalized in any way. Grades will not be affected if a
students elects to not participate.
6. Participant's identities are strictly confidential. Results will not be personally
identifiable. Data collected from the research will be kept secure, locked in a file
cabinet off site. Pseudonyms will be used when quotes from individual children
are transcribed into data.
7. If there are further questions now or during the research, I can be reached at
215-622-4253.

Please sign both copies of this form. A duplicate will be provided for you.
Signature of Researcher: _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Research at Moore College of Art & Design, that involves human participants, is
overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions regarding your rights as a
participant should be addressed to:
Lauren Stitcher
Moore College of Art & Design
20th and the Parkway, Phila., PA 19103
lstitcher@moore.edu

APPENDIX C

Emergent Critical Race Theory Tenants in Unit

Critical Race Theory Tenants					
Goals and Objectives	Intercentricity of Race and Racism	Critiquing the Dominant Ideology	Commitment to Social Justice	Centrality of Experiential Knowledge	Transdisciplinary Perspective
Lesson 1: Identity Concept Maps					
Defining Ideologies	X	X		X	X
Organizing Thoughts of Identity	X	X		X	
Cultural Symbology for Identity	X	X		X	X
Lesson 2: Mannequin Heads					
Responding to Art by Black Artists	X	X	X	X	X
Development of Narrative	X	X	X		
Discussing Contemporary Issues	X	X	X	X	X
Lesson 3: Portraits K. Wiley Portraits					
Cultural Symbology for Identity	X	X		X	X
Evolving Perspectives	X			X	X
Self-Expression	X	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX D

Curriculum Map			
Grade: 11th Grade	Subject: Art	Course: Race in Identity	Length of Unit: 8 weeks

Essential Questions
Communication: How do people communicate their ideas about race artistically? How does art about race impact a viewer? How does art about race change perspectives? *Creativity:* How does creativity support counternarratives? How does creativity create dialogues between artists? *Historical:* What evidence of historical influence is found in the artwork? How do artistic solutions change as artists merge contemporary narrative with its historical context?

National Core Arts Standards	Lessons & Objectives SEE APPENDIX C	Vocabulary & Resources

VA:Re7.1.HSII Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments. *VA:Cn10.1.HSI* Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas. *VA:Cn10.1.HSIII* Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.	1. Concept Maps
	  a. Define Ideologies about race and identity
	  b. Construct images and words to express larger ideas
	  c. Prioritize and organize images and words to show significance
	  d. Show evidence of understanding of identity
	  e. Create a concept map of identity using the interplay of text & image
		Identity
		Racial Identity
		Concept Map
		Symbology
		Typography
		
		See Appendix E for Resources

VA:Re7.2.HSII Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences. *VA:Re9.1.HSII* Determine the relevance of criteria used by others to evaluate a work of art or collection of works. *VA:Cn11.1.HSIII* Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society.	2. Layering Identity with Mannequins
	  a. Defining stereotypes and contradictions
	  b. Identifying and analyzing the significance of cultural imagery through artists in the Black Lives Matter Movement
	  c. Differentiate between societal norms and personal narratives
	  d. Create imagery to reflect on contemporary race issues
	  e. Layering images with paper mache and symbols to change impact of image
		Black Lives Matter Movement
		Stereotypes
		Contradictions
		Paper Mache
		Layering
		Narrative
		
		Sider, S., & Simon, M. (2015, December 28). The Rise of Black Lives Matter: Trying to Break the Cycle of Violence and Silence. CNN. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/28/us/black-lives-matter-evolution/

VA:Cr2.1.HSIII Experiment, plan, and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea, or concept. *VA:Cr1.2.HSII* Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design. *VA:Cr2.2.HSII* Demonstrate awareness of ethical implications of making and distributing creative work.	3. Changing Perspectives with Portraits
	  a. Define desired perspective of viewers
	  b. Compare artwork of Kehinde Wiley to artists from the Black Lives Matter Movement
	  c. Assess the effects of positive cultural imagery
	  d. Create a portrait of person with shared racial identity using a grid
	  e. Design a background for portrait to illustrate strength, and beauty
		Kehinde Wiley
		Portraiture
		Complementary Color Scheme
		Analogous Color Scheme
		Proportions
		Counternarrative
		
		Dupre, J. (Director), & Johnson, L. (Producer). (2014, September 05). The Economy of Grace [Video file]. In The Economy of Grace. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/video/2365311240/

Accommodations
-Easy-Grip Manipulatives -Hand over hand -Tactile examples for feeling -Visual examples and samples -Assisted Set-up and Break down -Isolated Work Area Students will be prompted to complete each task. Students will communicate by using nonverbal cues, pointing, and nodding.

Assessments
Performance Task: Pre-Assessments Prior to Lesson Self Assessments & Reflections in Packets (See APPENDIX E for Sample) Teacher Assessments: Rubrics Discussion Boards and Small Group Discussions Post-Assessment

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EXAMPLE: Lesson Packet

NAME: _____   WEEK 1

In the next 8 weeks, we are going to embark on a journey of discovering identity and how we express it as artists.

We are all really good at writing so far. We all have handwriting that is unique and identifiable. The goal of this week is to create concept maps using our own handwriting and 1 other medium to create a concept map of our own identity. These 5 questions will inform your concept map!

TUESDAY:
Answer the following questions, you may answer in fragments sentences, however please include a justification. Answer ALL for 20 points.

1. What is identity to you?
2. How does your identity form?
3. Who informs your identity?
4. Who should inform your identity? Why?
5. Can we have more than one identity? Why or why not?
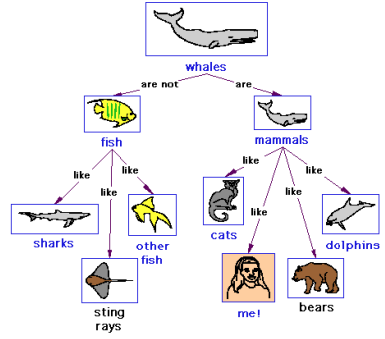
Answer here:

1. _____
    _____
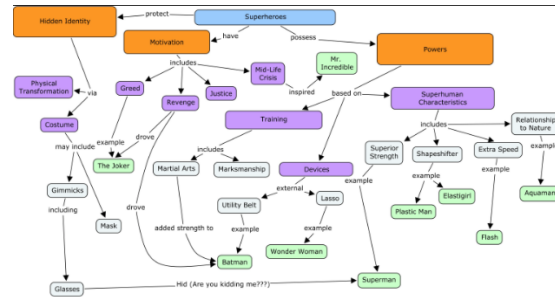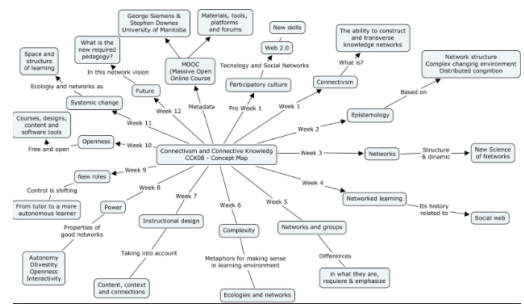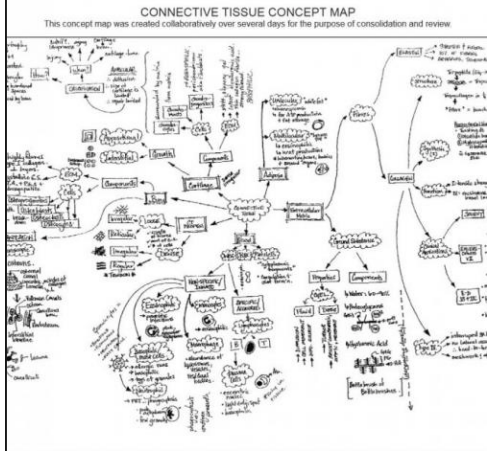2. _____
    _____
3. _____
    _____
4. _____
    _____
5. _____
    _____

Schedule for this week:
Tuesday: Brainstorming for concept map, what are we going to have a conversation about? Word connectivity activity about concept maps.
Wednesday: Begin major parts of concept map. Are you color coordinating it? Are you using line? Are you going to have shapes or islands for bigger ideas? Will the most

CONNECTIVE TISSUE CONCEPT MAP
This concept map was created collaboratively over several days for the purpose of consolidation and review.

important aspects of your identity be larger? Will it include pictures?
Thursday: Construct concept maps. What medium will you use?
Friday: Critique work, self reflections, gallery walk.

WEDNESDAY:
Begin major parts of concept map. ANSWER All for 10 pts

 Are you color coordinating it? Yes or No, WHY?

_____

_____

 Are you using line? Yes or NO, Why?

_____

_____

Are you going to have shapes or islands for bigger ideas? Yes or No, WHY?

_____

_____

 Will the most important aspects of your identity be larger? Yes or No, WHY?

_____

_____

 Will it include pictures? Yes or No, WHY?

_____

_____

THURSDAY:
WORK DAY. Begin filling the concept map with words and images. What will make your concept map different than others?

FRIDAY:
WORK DAY, self-reflection.
Do you use the space well? Yes or No, WHY?

_____

_____

Is it too crowded? Yes or No, WHY?

_____

_____

Do you like your concept map as a portrait? Yes or No, WHY?

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

Pre-Unit Interview

Introduce yourself
Who do you live with?
Where do you live?
What language do you speak at home?
How old are you?
What grade are you in?
When was the last time you had art?
How long have you been at First Philly?
What is your overall impression of First Philadelphia?
Do you know what this process is all about?
In your own words, define race. Consider lessons that you've been taught, but also your own personal experiences.
In your own words, define culture. Consider lessons that you've been taught, and your own personal experiences?
Is there a difference between race and culture?
What are those differences, if any?
What do you think of when I say racial identity?
What is your racial identity?
How do you identify?
Do you feel pride in your racial identity?
Does First Philly contribute to your pride?
How does First Philly contribute to your pride?
Do you feel pride amongst your peers or just in general?
Do you feel pride in the art room? Especially when making art?

APPENDIX F

Post-Unit Interview

Please answer as honestly and realistically as possible. You are not being graded on your answers. This is to better understand your perspectives as artists and individuals with racial identities in America.

Which of the projects did you enjoy the most? Concept Map, the Heads, or the Portraits? Please describe with as much detail as possible why.

Did you at any point feel uncomfortable talking about race while making art? Why or Why not?

Describe a time that you felt uncomfortable discussing or making art about race during the last three projects?

Describe a time you felt good about discussing or making art about race during the last three projects.

In your own words, why is race so important to your identity? Especially in America.

What was it like having a white teacher encourage conversations about race? Please describe as much as possible about your experience.

What feelings come up as you are making art about race?

Did it differ from project to project?

How and Why does your art support your race?

What was the biggest lesson learned from making art about race?

How did it feel talking about race with other students of other races?

What about art-making or the process of art-making has made this dialogue about race easier or more difficult?

Which project are you most proud?

What were your impressions of Ms. Davis's thoughts about race?

How has your impressions of Ms. Davis's art class or art-making in general changed because of the discussion about race?

Is there anything you would like Ms. Davis to know about your experience making these pieces of artwork? Extra comments?

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