CROSSING "THE PROBLEM OF THE COLOR LINE": WHITE MATHEMATICS TEACHERS AND BLACK STUDENTS

Carla R. Bidwell
Metropolitan Regional Educational Service Agency
carla.bidwell@mresa.org

David W. Stinson
Georgia State University
dstinson@gsu.edu

In this paper, the authors explore—within an eclectic theoretical framework of critical theory, critical race theory, and Whiteness studies—the life experiences of four White high school mathematics teachers who were "successful" with Black students. The data were collected through three, semi-structured interviews, conducted over a 5-month time period. Through a cross-case analysis of the data, three commonalities among the teachers were identified as being significant contributors to their success in teaching Black students. Two commonalities the participants themselves felt strongly about, and a third became apparent during the cross-case analysis: (a) forming meaningful relationships with students, (b) engaging students in racial conversations, and (c) reflecting both individually and collectively with colleagues on issues of race and racism. Implications for classroom practice and teacher education are discussed.

Keywords: Equity and Diversity, High School Education, Teacher Beliefs

Prologue

One of the most often cited passages from W. E. B. Du Bois's classic text *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903/1989) is the statement regarding the capital "T" problem of the twentieth century: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line,—the relations of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (p. 10). World and U.S. history make available numerous incidents that have transpired that validate this prophetic statement and illustrate how the color line was problematic for the twentieth century, and has continued to be problematic for the twenty-first century (Stinson, 2013). How might mathematics educators become knowledgeable of the ways in which they are implicated (or not) in (re)producing and regulating the problem of the color line? How might mathematics educators learn to reduce (if not eliminate) the problem of the color line, at least in mathematics classrooms (Stinson, 2013)?

Introduction

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine's 1990 book *Black Students and School Failure: Policies, Practices, and Prescriptions* has become somewhat of a classic for those who research issues of Black children and schooling. In many ways, Irvine's book can be thought of as a modern-day version of Carter G. Woodson's 1933 classic *The Mis-Education of the Negro.* What Irvine provided in her book is one of the initial counter-analyses—or counter-narratives, if you will—to the emergence and proliferation of the Black–White "achievement gap" analyses found in both the scholarly and the popular presses of the 1970s and 1980s (see, e.g., Bradley & Bradley, 1977; Maeroff, 1985).

One component of Irvine's (1990) analysis is the importance of "cultural synchronization" between Black children and teachers (and administrators) to Black students' school success. The concept of cultural synchronization, for Irvine, is based on anthropological and historical research that suggest "black Americans have a distinct culture founded on identifiable norms, language, behaviors, and attitudes from Africa" (p. 23; see also Hilliard, 1992). Irvine also provided an analysis of how a lack of cultural synchronization between Black children and teachers can contribute to Black students' school failure. Hilliard (1992) argued that cultural misunderstandings—or a lack of cultural synchronization, if you will—between Black children and (White) teachers

Wood, M. B., Turner, E. E., Civil, M., & Eli, J. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Proceedings of the 38th annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona.

> has been shown to lead to errors in the estimation of a student's or cultural group's: (1) intellectual potential (the consequences of which—mislabeling, misplacement, and mistreatment of children—are enormous); (2) learned abilities or achievement in academic subjects such as reading; and (3) language abilities. (p. 372)

In many ways, the enormous errors (and oftentimes harm) brought about by a lack of cultural synchronization begs the question: Do Black children need separate schools (i.e., schools with Black teachers, teaching Black children)? Du Bois (1935), more than 80 years ago, asked this very question. He concluded: With all things being equal, "the mixed school is the broader, more natural basis for education for all youth" (p. 335). But given that things are seldom (if ever) equal, the "Sympathy, Knowledge, and the Truth [about Black children's lives and academic abilities found in the segregated school] outweigh all that the mixed school can offer" (p. 335).

Within the context of mathematics education, Martin (2007) asked a similar question: Who should teach mathematics to Black children? Through a cautioning of missionaries and cannibals, Martin argued for an "experience lens" when thinking about who should teach mathematics to Black children. His experience lens argument—"that achievement outcomes among [Black] students are indictors of the way that they experience mathematics learning and participation as [Black students]" (p. 15)—is similar to Irvine's (1990) cultural synchronization. In that, the experience lens necessitates, among other things, that effective teachers of Black children possess (or have the desire to develop) in-depth knowledge of Black children's socio-cultural and -political life experiences and take seriously their role in positively shaping Black children's racial, academic, and mathematical identities. What might be learned from successful Black mathematics teachers, teaching Black children was the focus of Chazan, Brantlinger, Clark, and Edwards's (2013) extensive research project. Specifically, they challenged the taken-for-granted notions of the knowledge base and resources needed to be an effective mathematics teacher of Black children (p. 2). Similar to Martin, Chazan and colleagues (see also Johnson, Nyamekye, Chazan, & Rosenthal, 2013; Birky, Chazan, & Farlow Morris, 2013; Clarke, Badertscher, & Napp, 2013) suggested that it might be the in-depth knowledge of Black culture and the unwavering belief of the brilliance of Black children (see Leonard & Martin, 2012) that determine who is (or is not) an effective teacher of Black children.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Altogether, what Du Bois, Woodson, Irvine, Hilliard, Martin, and Chazan and colleagues have argued is the importance of having Black teachers, teach Black children. Or, more generally, they argued for teachers who are synced or responsive (see Gay, 2010) to Black children's culture and life experiences. They did not, however, argue that only Black teachers are effective with Black children. In fact, Irvine (1990) explicitly noted that the justifying of cultural synchronization does not "ignore the fact that some white teachers are excellent teachers of black children or that some black teachers are ineffective with black children, treating them with disdain and hostility" (p. 61). But these "some white teachers" who are "excellent teachers of black children," who are they? What makes them excellent? How are they different from other White teachers? Similar to Chazan and colleagues (2013), the purpose of this study was to determine what might be learned from well-respected mathematics teachers of Black children. But here, unlike Chazan and colleagues, our focus was on well-respected or "successful" White teachers. Three questions guided the study:

1. How do the life histories of successful White mathematics teachers of Black children influence their decision to teach Black children?
2. How do these life histories influence their pedagogical practices as successful White teachers of Black children?
3. How do successful White mathematics teachers of Black children view the role of their Whiteness in their teaching?

Wood, M. B., Turner, E. E., Civil, M., & Eli, J. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Proceedings of the 38th annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona.

Theoretical Framework

This project was framed within an eclectic theoretical framework (Stinson, 2009). Critical theory (e.g., Bronner, 2011) served as the overarching framework, while critical race theory (CRT; e.g., Tate, 1997) and Whiteness studies (e.g., Leonardo, 2002) brought the complexities of race and racism to the forefront (see Figure 1). In effect, we borrowed theoretical concepts and methodological procedures from different theoretical paradigms, which we used side by side throughout the research project. Similarly to Koro-Ljungberg (2004), we do not view qualitative research projects that contain elements from more than one theoretical paradigm as an ontological and epistemological failure, but rather as representing "a planned mixture of theoretical and philosophical assumptions, fluxing commonalties, and complicating rhizomatic (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) intersections of theoretical understandings" (p. 618).

Critical theory kept us focused on what it might mean to conduct "'good' education research" (Hostetler, 2005) in the public interest (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006); it made us think not about "how things [are] but how they might be and should be" (Bronner, 2011, p. 2). CRT and Whiteness studies allowed the participating teachers (and us) to challenge racial hierarchies; to reflect on and discuss the roles of race, racism, and White supremacy in schools and in society at large; to examine the racial dynamics between student and teacher; and to begin to understand how the teachers' racial experiences may have influenced their classroom practices. No study on race, particularly one focusing on the dynamic relationships formed between White teachers and Black students, should be absent of these theories. Given that we believe that racism and White supremacy are two sides of the same coin, an analysis of race and racism without a critical examination of the hegemony of White supremacy would be dangerously incomplete (see Hilliard, 2001).

Figure 1. Three theories intertwined.

Methods

Four teachers—Caroline, Carrie, Oliver, and Patt (pseudonyms)—were the participants of the study. Each teacher self-identified as White, taught high school mathematics (ranging from a low of 4 years to a high of 23 years), and each had experienced success in teaching Black children. (For complete details of participant selection and methods, see Bidwell, 2010). The data were collected through three, semi-structured interviews conducted and transcribed by the first author, over a 5-month time period. The first interview allowed participants the opportunity to (re)tell their stories, beginning with childhood and continuing on to the present as mathematics teachers of Black students. The conversations documented during the second round of interviews centered on Gary Howard's (2006) book *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*, which the participants were asked to read and reflect on prior to the second interview. (Engaging

Wood, M. B., Turner, E. E., Civil, M., & Eli, J. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Proceedings of the 38th annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona.

participants in literature prior to interviews has been proven beneficial in other studies; see Jett, 2009; Shildneck, 2009; Stinson, 2008.)

Reading Howard's (2006) book acted as a catalyst for engaging in complex discussions on race, White hegemony, color blindness, and the development of an anti-racist White identity. Howard's prose became somewhat of an invisible but participating third person during the interview. This invisible person, so to speak, assisted in making the often-difficult task of discussing race approachable, and gave both the participants and the interviewer a language to engage in "race talk" that permitted richer and more descriptive conversations. The third and final interview was followed by an opportunity for participants to critically read and provide feedback on the transcripts of their previous two interviews; it also served as a follow up to those conversations, a method of "member checking," so to speak. (This method of member checking has been effectively used in other studies with practicing mathematics teachers; see Wilson, Cooney, & Stinson, 2005.)

Findings

As the four participants shared their life stories, they often included intimate and uncomfortable details of their lives. They, however, led the discussions. They chose which stories to share and which would remain unspoken. Although most of these teachers had limited exposure to or knowledge about the theories that framed the study and guided data analysis, in their storytelling they all demonstrated tenets of critical pedagogy (see, e.g., Freire, 1970/2000, 1998). They were willing to be disruptive and were extremely reflective about every topic discussed. Not one of these teachers particpated in "dysconscious racism" (King, 1991); that is, they did not accept poor performance from their students as "just the way it is." They were so comfortable in their teaching, that they were willing to change a lesson while it was being taught for the benefit of their students. They questioned their own teaching as it happened just as they questioned the ideas discussed during the interviews. And as was somewhat hypothesized at the onset of the study, all four teachers employed, to some degree, culturally responsive (Gay, 2010) or relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1994) pedagogy in their classrooms. Similar to Ms. Rossi, the sixth-grade mathematics teacher in Ladson-Billings's (1994, 1995) study, these teachers (a) believed that all their students could succeed, (b) saw themselves as part of the community, (c) built strong relationships with students that often extended beyond the classroom, (d) encouraged students to work together collaboratively, and (e) were passionate about mathematics and were willing to scaffold content for students when gaps in their knowledge became apparent.

Through a cross-case analysis of the data, three commonalities among the teachers were identified as being significant contributors to their success in teaching Black children. Two commonalities the participants themselves felt strongly about, and a third became apparent during the cross-case analysis: (a) forming meaningful relationships with students, (b) engaging students in racial conversations, and (c) reflecting both individually and collectively with colleagues on issues of race and racism. Given the limitation of space, each commonality is discussed only briefly here.

Forming meaningful relationships with students. Caroline, Carrie, Oliver, and Patt all developed strong relationships with their students and viewed those teacher–student relationships as an essential part of their jobs. These relationships, however, were not superficial. Rather, they were genuine relationships developed out of these teachers' capacity to empathize with their students. All four teachers in this study subscribed to Ladson-Billings's (1997) belief that "we must come to develop caring and compassionate relationships with students—relationships born of informed empathy, not sympathy" (p. 706).

All four participants spoke extensively about their personal experiences in relationship building and reasons why they believed these relationships to be necessary. Carrie asserted that forming relationships (or not) with students could "make or break the deal" (Interview 1) in being able to connect with students. She emphasized the importance, for her, of extending those relationships

Wood, M. B., Turner, E. E., Civil, M., & Eli, J. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Proceedings of the 38th annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona.

beyond the classroom by attending extra-curricular events in which her students participate. Oliver desired to strengthen his relationships with students by living in the community with them rather than residing in a distant suburb. Caroline recognized the potential for her (especially as a White woman) to be a roadblock to her students' learning if she failed to connect with each of them individually. She acknowledged that her students already have many socio-cultural and -political barriers that can keep them from being successful but, as she stated, "If a student has an issue with the teacher, then nothing's going to be learned" (Interview 1). And Patt, who was known in her community for "taking in" troubled students in times of crisis, claimed, "I think addressing a child's affective domain is the most important thing to be able to teach them" (Interview 2). Unfortunately, as both Patt and Martin (2007) pointed out, there is widespread failure to recognize that there are different skills needed to be effective with non-White children and that one of those important skills is for a teacher to be able to connect with her (or his) individual students.

Engaging in racial conversations

Caroline, Patt, and Oliver strongly believed that their willingness and ability to engage in racial conversations with students allowed them to seem more "real" to their students and played a vital role in their overall success in teaching Black children. In fact, for these three teachers, avoiding race talk was simply not an option:

> If you like [your students], you'll find that it is your place to bring [race] up. I mean, if you're a White teacher, and especially in my situation where most of the kids live very insular lives and they don't deal with a lot of White people—it's their chance to know you. (Patt, Interview 2)

It is important to note, however, that in these teachers' classrooms, race was not discussed merely as a means of building relationships. They believed racial differences between teacher and student, as well as differences among students themselves, should not be ignored and that discussions about race, in general, were healthy discussions in which to engage. As Irvine (1990) claimed, "lack of synchronization *increases*, not decreases, when teachers and administrators pretend that they don't notice students' racial membership" (p. 26, emphasis added). Although race talk often naturally ensued from conversations among students, these teachers themselves, at times, initiated discussions about race and incorporated them into their mathematics lessons. These racial discussions provided not only an opportunity for students to grow and learn about racial differences but also allowed the teachers to grow as they moved forward (and sometimes backward) on a continuum of racial understandings (see G. Howard, 2006).

Reflecting both individually and collectively with colleagues on issues of race and racism

Through the course of the three interviews with each of the participants, Caroline, Carrie, Oliver, and Patt were all extremely reflective. Caroline, who was working in a racially and ethnically diverse urban school, shared that the faculty openly talked about race and discussed ways to facilitate these conversations with students. Carrie, on the other hand, taught in a similar school where race was never discussed among faculty; yet, she still reflected a great deal about the interactions among students and those between students and faculty of different races. All four teachers seemed to naturally take on the role of reflective practitioner (see Schön, 1983) and were willing to be disruptive with any issue that concerned the welfare of their students (see Freire, 1998).

The participants became particularly reflective during the conversations about G. Howard's (2006) book. On the topic of White dominance, Carrie reflected, "How do you ever break it and how does society ever break it when some people won't even admit that it exists or matters" (Interview 2)? And Caroline, reflecting on her own childhood where she was taught not to "see" color, admitted that she subscribed to a colorblind ideology when she began teaching. But during Interview 2, she shared, "I think it's just important not to think about them [students] as all being the same and also

Wood, M. B., Turner, E. E., Civil, M., & Eli, J. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Proceedings of the 38th annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona.

not to classify them in a certain way, but just to try to appreciate their cultures which I think is something that I'm still working on as a teacher." Three of the participants identified as being situated in the immersion/emersion stage of racial identity development (G. Howard, 2006), one stage prior to the autonomy stage, which G. Howard describes as a time when "we are engaged in activities to resist the many manifestations of oppression" (p.97). Caroline, Carrie, and Oliver all shared that they each do not do enough on a daily basis to fight racism. As Oliver stated, "It's not enough to just teach in this school, but I've got to be active or I'm not going to disrupt anything" (Interview 2).

Discussion and Closing Thoughts

In the study described here, the lived experiences of four successful White mathematics teachers were examined within an eclectic theoretical framework—one that allowed these teachers to think critically about their own life histories, their pedagogical practices, and the role their own Whiteness plays in their teaching. The three commonalities that were identified during data collection and analysis assisted in painting a picture of what might be envisioned as a successful White mathematics teacher of Black children; one who crosses the problem of the color line so that she (or he) might be more culturally synced with her students. But where does this lead us, as educators, going forward? The answer lies in the practices of teacher educators charged with the initial preparation and the ongoing professional development of mathematics teachers, and in the many district and state leaders who support teachers' professional growth throughout their careers.

The traditional method of teaching pre- and in-service teachers about non-White cultures—too often a mere one semester "required" multicultural course—must be extinguished. Teacher educators must go beyond surface exposure of "other people's" (Delpit, 2006) cultures, what Ladson-Billings called a "foods-and-festivals" approach to culture (1994). They must delve deep beneath the surface to explore the complexities of both their own and their students' cultures through (continuous) multicultural, anti-racist education (Gay & T. Howard, 2000; G. Howard, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1994; McIntyre, 1997). Pre- and in-service teachers, especially those who are White (i.e., White folks too often avoid race talk), need safe spaces in which to discuss race, challenge White hegemony, and confront assumptions about their own and other's cultures. As G. Howard (2006) explained, "We cannot help our students overcome the negative repercussions of past and present racial dominance if we have not unraveled the remnants of dominance that still lingers in our minds, hearts, and habits" (p. 6). In these safe spaces, pre- and in-service teachers need to learn and engage in dialogue about social injustices while being provided "opportunities to critique the system in ways that will help them choose a role as either agent of change or defender of the status quo" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 133). And lastly, pre- and in-service mathematics teachers need to learn to "care with awareness" (Bartell, 2011) as they learn about and engage with culturally relevant mathematics pedagogy (e.g., Gutstein, Lipman, Hernandez, & de los Reyes, 1997; Waddell, 2014; Tate, 1995).

Many of the experiences and conversations that should take place in teacher preparation programs should also continue throughout a teacher's career. In multi-ethnic, -racial, and -cultural school settings, ongoing professional development needs to be provided to: (a) support teachers in understanding the importance of strong teacher–student relationships and teach strategies to help build those relationships; (b) assist teachers in making connections to the surrounding communities; (c) engage teachers in multicultural, anti-racist education; and (d) develop teachers as reflective practitioners. G. Howard (2006) asserted: "An unexamined life on the part of a White teacher is a danger to every student" (p. 127). But teachers cannot be expected to examine their own lives without some direction; they need safe spaces in which to dialogue with fellow teachers about race and White hegemony. It is the responsibility of building-level administrators to create these spaces and devote time for teachers to engage in racial dialogue. And in the end, it is the responsibility of *all* who support teachers to be committed to improving education for Black children by providing

Wood, M. B., Turner, E. E., Civil, M., & Eli, J. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Proceedings of the 38th annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona.

meaningful experiences that allow us *all* to examine ourselves, our children, and the racialized society in which we teach and learn.

References

Bidwell, C. R. (2010). *Successful White mathematics teachers of African American students*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.

Bartell, T. (2011). Caring, race, culture, and power: A research synthesis toward supporting mathematics teachers in caring with awareness. *Journal of Urban Mathematics Education*, *4*(1), 50–74.

Birky, G. D., Chazan, D., & Farlow Morris, K. (2013). In search of coherence and meaning: Madison Morgan's experiences and motivations as an African American learner and teacher. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(2), 1–42.

Bradley, L. A., & Bradley, G. W. (1977). The academic achievement of black students in desegregated schools: A critical review. *Review of Educational Research, 47*(3), 399–449.

Bronner, S. E. (2011). *Critical theory: A very short introduction*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Chazan, D., Brantlinger, A., Clark, L. M., & Edwards, A. R. (2013). What mathematics education might learn from the work of well-respected African American mathematics teachers in urban schools. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(2), 1–40.

Clark, L., Badertscher, E., & Napp, C. (2013). African American mathematics teachers as agents in their African American students' mathematics identity formation. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(2), 1–36.

Delpit, L. D. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1935). Does the Negro need separate schools? *Journal of Negro Education, IV*(3), 328–335.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1989). The souls of Black folk (Bantam classic ed.). New York, NY: Bantam Books. (Original work published 1903)

Freire, P. (1998). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach* (D. Macedo, D. Koike, & A. Oliveira, Trans.). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans. 30th anniversary ed.). New York, NY: Continuum. (Original work published 1970)

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gay, G., & Howard, T. C. (2000). Multicultural teacher education for the 21st century. *The Teacher Educator*, *36*(1), 1–16.

Gutstein, E., Lipman, P., Hernandez, P., & de los Reyes, R. (1997). Culturally relevant mathematics teaching in a Mexican American context. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 28*(6), 709–737.

Hilliard, A. G., III (1992). Behavioral style, culture, and teaching and learning. *Journal of Negro Education, 61*(3), 370–377.

Hilliard, A. G., III (2001). "Race," identity, hegemony, and education: What do we need to know now? In W. H. Watkins, J. H. Lewis, & V. Chou (Eds.), *Race and education: The roles of history and society in educating African American students* (pp. 7–33). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Hostetler, K. (2005). What is "good" education research? *Educational Researcher, 34*(6), 16–21.

Howard, G. R. (2006). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Irvine, J. J. (1990). *Black students and school failure: Policies, practices, and prescriptions*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Jett, C., C. (2009). *African American men and college mathematics: Gaining access and attaining success*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia State University. Atlanta, GA.

Johnson, W., Nyamekye, F., Chazan, D., & Rosenthal, B. (2013). Teaching with speeches: A Black teacher who uses the mathematics classroom to prepare students for life. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(2), 1–26.

King, J. E. (1991). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. *The Journal of Negro Education, 60*(2), 133–146.

Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2004). Impossibilities of reconciliation: Validity in mixed theory projects. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10*(4), 601–624.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Making mathematics meaningful in multicultural context. In W. G. Secada, E. Fennema, & L. B. Adajian (Eds.), *New directions for equity in mathematics education* (pp. 126–145). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, M. B., Turner, E. E., Civil, M., & Eli, J. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Proceedings of the 38th annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (Eds.). (2006). *Education research in the public interest: Social justice, action, and policy*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Leonard, J., & Martin, D. B. (Eds.). (2013). *The brilliance of Black children in mathematics: Beyond the numbers and toward new discourse*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Leonardo, Z. (2002). The souls of white folk: Critical pedagogy, whiteness studies, and globalization discourse. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *5*(1), 29–50.

Maeroff, G. I. (1985, June 11). Despite Head Start, achievement gap persists for poor. *The New York Times.*

Martin, D. B. (2007). Beyond missionaries or cannibals: Who should teach mathematics to African American children?. *The High School Journal*, *91*(1), 6–28.

Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Shildneck, B. P. (2009). *Female students and achievement in secondary school mathematics*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Georgia State University. Atlanta, GA.

Stinson, D. W. (2008). Negotiating sociocultural discourses: The counter-storytelling of academically (and mathematically) successful African American male students. *American Educational Research Journal*, *45*(4), 975–1010.

Stinson, D. W. (2009). The proliferation of theoretical paradigms quandary: How one novice researcher used eclecticism as a solution. *The Qualitative Report*, *14*(3), 498–523.

Stinson, D. W. (2013). Negotiating the "white male math myth": African American male students and success in school mathematics [Special issue]. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, *44*(1), 69–99.

Tate, W. F. (1995). Returning to the root: A culturally relevant approach to mathematics pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice*, *34*(3), 166–173.

Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. In M. Apple (Ed.), *Review of Research in Education* (Vol. 22, pp. 195–247). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Waddell, L. R. (2014). Using culturally ambitious teaching practices to support urban mathematics teaching and learning. *Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education*, *8*(2), 1–21.

Wilson, P. S., Cooney, T. J., & Stinson, D. W. (2005). What constitutes good mathematics teaching and how it develops: Nine high school teachers' perspectives. *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*, *8*(1), 83–111.

Woodson, C. G. (1990). *The mis-education of the Negro*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press. (Original work published 1933).