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Growing Pains: Reflections at the Intersection(s) of Pedagogy and Self-Study in Whiteness Research in Education

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Introduction

As a research assistant, I am called to reflect upon my own antiracist practices and beliefs as they shape and mold my perspective of the research I am doing. I come from a unique position in terms of antiracist pedagogy, which is why I offer my experiences as a way to introduce more white people into the dehumanizing realities students of color experience daily. I myself am a privileged, white female. Previously I have remained aloof to issues of race and silent to the racial inequities I witnessed around me. I have always been aware of racial tension but I have consistently failed to openly combat racial inequalities out of the mere discomfort it elicited in the people around me. However, I believe I am like so many people in the world who want to help end racial inequalities and mend racial strife resulting from systemic racism, but something stops us.

The quote above was written by Joyner, an undergraduate student at a highly selective residential liberal arts college in a large metropolitan city in the southern United States, as a reflection on the work she conducted with Casey, a professor of educational studies at the same institution. The work in question took up a set of interview data collected by Casey of eight white practicing P-12 teachers in a large metropolitan area in the midwestern United States, who spent the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years engaged in a monthly professional development seminar focused on white racial identity and antiracist pedagogies.[1] What neither of us expected coming into the work, however,

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became a central feature of both our method of analysis and our pedagogical relationship as professor and student: the experiences revealed by the teachers in their interviews paralleled experiences of Joyner in complex and generative ways. We thus came to recognize the wealth of possibilities for consciousness raising through the practice (and praxis) of qualitative data analysis for white social actors.

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[1] A detailed account of the professional development seminar itself is beyond the scope of the present article. A closer account of the scope, structure, and content of the seminar is currently under review (Casey & McManimon, under review).

As educators committed to the project of racial justice and combatting centuries of oppression through work with and for students in classrooms, we experience social and political challenges that hinder our ability to confidently participate in antiracist pedagogies. These challenges are often felt and experienced as personal costs to eliciting change in the people(s) and environment(s) around us. The costs of white supremacy and systemic racism for people of color are immediately recognizable in such forms as unequal wages, disproportionate incarceration, less access to affordable and safe housing, and many more that we could list here. However, our work to better understand the experiences of our participants led us to conclude that research on white teachers must also address the (relative) costs for white individuals engaged in antiracist praxis and the ways in which these costs can ultimately lead us to silence or to stifle ourselves as we seek to live out our political and pedagogical commitments.

As a research assistant, Joyner's primary relationship to the work was in transcribing, coding, and theorizing the data from the study; however, she quickly found herself not as merely an objective outside "observer" of these eight teachers, but rather saw herself in dialogic relation with them as an active participant in Race Work (the name of the professional development seminar). Her experiences of self-reflection and self-realization have had a profound impact on her interpretation of the data from the study and have placed her in a position that feels intimate and close to the participants. Through this work, she reflected, "I have come to the realization that I have always been an active participant in the grander social and political racial structures of our society despite previously avoiding all conversations about the racial inequalities around me and evading the pervasive shame I feel for my very own whiteness." The growth process in which she has come to recognize her own white racial identity and her own responsibility to challenge structural racism is characterized, she shared, by an initial inability to recognize race, particularly in a society where "white means normal."

In this paper we work to place Joyner's reflections in conversation with the interview data generated from white practicing teachers. We have made the choice to include partial vignettes drawn from the reflective writing Joyner did over the course of our work in order to engage what the praxis of pedagogical qualitative analysis, coupled with self-study, can offer other researchers. Our work in this paper thus has two primary aims: to investigate our research findings from the interview data and the teachers who participated in the professional development seminar, and to explore what such work makes available to us as researcher/practitioners. We move back and forth between both in the pages that follow, as we hope to showcase what becomes possible when we blur the lines between researcher and researched, and the implications in particular for white researchers/teachers committed to combatting racism in their practice(s).

I grew up in an environment in which white privilege is either taken for granted, ignored, or even rejected and race is a subject not broached even in my most intimate of circles. Color-blind ideology was a learned practice I carried with me into my twenties. The readings and the participant's firsthand accounts from the study introduced me to a whole new world in which race permeates all aspects of society, a world I was ignorantly blind to in my upper class, white society. I find my beliefs and the way I approach life completely altered. The personal growth I

experienced from the research has allowed me to better recognize race as a structural issue and now I see race and think in terms of race all the time.

The participants in the study expressed the same experiences of how their engagement with Race Work had "opened their eyes" to the constant pervasiveness of race. The participants described how their work had changed the ways they approach their curriculum, their relationships with others, and their pedagogies. For them, antiracism is no longer simply a practice, but a *belief* they work to live out everyday. In the study, the participants outlined their personal growth in opposition to the fears and challenges they have faced and continue to face as they have sought to actualize their antiracist commitments in their classrooms and school settings. In describing both the research participants, as well as Joyner's own experiences, we hope to provide a deeper explanation and understanding of the ways in which these teachers have come to better recognize race, how they have approached their work as antiracist pedagogues in their classroom and school settings, and the costs of engaging in such work. By doing so we work to show possibilities for new and contextually specific approaches to white racial identity and combatting white supremacy in educational settings based on both the data generated from the study as well as our self-reflection(s) on our own racialized identities, relative privilege, and spaces for antiracist structural change.

Theoretical Framing: Connecting to the Literature

In moments when race was the topic of conversation growing up, I recognized the extreme discomfort of the ones I loved around me; therefore, I quickly learned to avoid conversations of race and learned to be indifferent to the injustices around me. Through engaging in this work I was faced with the immense shame and burden for failing to recognize the inequalities people of color experience on a regular basis. Furthermore, by ignoring the deep shame I felt for the ways in which my whiteness deprived so many others of their humanity, I became deeply entrenched in my own white privilege.

We examine our research findings through the lens of critical whiteness studies (Du Bois, 1992; Jacobson, 1999; Jansen, 2008; Lensmire et al., 2013; Morrison, 1992; Roediger, 2007; Thandeka, 2006). In particular, the work of the Rev. Thandeka (2006) was extremely influential in the personal growth not only of our participants, but also to our collective work as researchers. Thandeka begins her work with stories of white adults recounting the moments when they first realized not only that they were white, but also that there were expectations of them from their parents to *be* in certain ways in order to keep their parents' love. An example is the story of Dan, a middle aged, white man who recalls his experience in college as a member of a fraternity that pledged a black student. However:

> When their chapter's national headquarters learned of this first step toward integration of its ranks, [they] threatened to revoke the chapter's charter unless the member was expelled…Dan was elected to tell the member that he would have to leave the fraternity. (p.1)

Dan recalled: "I felt so ashamed of what I did…I have carried this burden for forty years…I will carry it to my grave" (p. 1). Through this and other examples, Thandeka not only illustrates

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instances of white racism, but also illustrates moments of what she calls intrawhite racial abuse. This intraracial abuse is characterized by white adults—parents, guardians, and teachers, for instance—who demand that the young white people they are engaged with reject desires for racial inclusivity in order to maintain the love of the white adults. In other words, young white people are forced to choose: maintain the love and affection of their white adult caregivers, or risk losing it by placing themselves in solidarity with populations who the white adults in their life reject. For Thandeka, young white people *become* white through moments when they must choose to maintain their parents' and teachers' exclusions, or risk losing their own group memberships and feelings of belonging.

Thandeka's interpretation of intrawhite racial abuse became an animating force in Joyner's realization that her feelings of white shame stem from the portion of herself that is "not 'theoretically white," the portion of herself that has been abused and made white by "adult silence to racial abuse" (Thandeka, 2006, p. 75, p. 24). For example, in moments when race was the topic of conversation growing up, she recognized an extreme discomfort in the ones she loved, her family. She quickly learned to avoid conversations about race because such conversations created tension within her own social (family) group. Through engaging in Thandeka's work she was faced with the immense shame of failing to recognize the profoundly dehumanizing lived experiences of people of color, and such conversations were never made available to/for her either at home or at school. Furthermore, by ignoring the deep shame she felt for the ways in which her whiteness deprived so many others of their humanity, she became deeply entrenched, stuck, in her own white privilege. This feeling functions to limit our possibilities for socially just action, as white people are often asked to "disinvest" themselves from whiteness, yet such disinvestment, especially for young white people, means harming their existing relationships, or even removing their own proximity and love for the white adults around them. When confronted with such fears and feelings, Thandeka concludes, white people experience a form of white shame: not guilt, which would be feeling "bad" for something they have done in the past, but a feeling that something within themselves is fundamentally flawed.

In addition to Thandeka's conception of "white shame," we call upon Gloria Ladson-Billings' (2009, 2006) conception of culturally relevant pedagogy to further illustrate the ways in which our participants approached antiracist pedagogy in their classrooms. By explaining the ways in which our present educational system perceives African American children as "deficient white children," Ladson-Billings (2009) works to promote a model to "recognize African Americans as a distinct cultural group" (pp. 9-10). She calls upon educators to "capitalize on student's individual, group and cultural differences…[by] seeing the differences as strengths to base academic achievement on" (pp. 11-12). She provides examples of teachers practicing culturally relevant pedagogy by illustrating "how such teachers see themselves and others, how they structure social interactions, and how they conceive of knowledge" (pp. 28-29). Significantly, she "demonstrates that culturally relevant teaching is not a series of steps that teachers can follow or a recipe for being effective with African American students," but rather it is a

combination of pedagogical beliefs and behaviors that allow practicing teachers to "bring their own perspectives" to their work with and for students (p. 29). Paris (2012) has called for an extension of Ladson-Billings' conception of culturally relevant pedagogy toward a "culturally sustaining pedagogy" that works to resist efforts at monoculturalism and monolingualism. While the need to broaden and extend the terrain of culturally relevant pedagogy is clear, our mobilization of it here is intended to signal the close engagement of both the researchers and the participants in Race Work with Ladson-Billings' work. We draw upon Ladson-Billings' (2006) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy to provide a deeper understanding of the importance of *being* in culturally relevant ways as more important than *doing* culturally relevant pedagogy.

Methods and Data

The readings and the participant's firsthand accounts from the study introduced me to a whole new world in which race permeates all aspects of society, a world I was ignorantly blind to in my upper class, white society. I find my beliefs and the ways I approach life completely altered. The personal growth I experienced from the research has allowed me to better recognize race as a structural issue and now I see race and think in terms of race all the time.

Informed by the work of Trainor (2005) and McIntyre (1997), we used interviews to gain insight into the personal reflections and experiences of our participants: white practicing teachers. The first set of interviews was conducted following the first year of the professional development course, in the summer of 2013. These interviews focused on the teachers' "teaching story," their background in schools, how they came to teaching, and how they came to participate and persist in the professional development seminar. They were also asked to reflect upon the seminar itself, offering feedback on course materials, group discussions, and participant dynamics. From there the teachers talked about their unique experiences with the work they completed over the course, many touching on the personal growth they had experienced within as well as outside of their classrooms. The second set of interviews was conducted one year after the final meeting, in May of 2015. These interviews were focused on the perceived impacts of Race Work and the ways the teachers were continuing projects they began during the time of their participation in the monthly sessions. We asked participants how Race Work continues to impact their pedagogies and the ways in which they have been able to continue to engage in antiracist praxis in their personal lives, their classrooms, and in their broader school and district contexts.

After transcribing each interview (all participants agreed to be audio recorded), we mobilized a constant comparative method from which to elaborate themes (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). These themes were selected based on our engagements with the fields of critical whiteness studies (as mentioned above), multicultural teacher education (Casey, 2011; Lowenstein, 2009; Sleeter, 2001), and critical pedagogy (Freire, 2000; hooks, 1994; Shor, 1987). From there we separately coded the interviews for each theme, marking the places within the text that each one appeared. It was in the subsequent meetings, to compare how each of us had coded the various interviews, that a new methodological and pedagogical project emerged. We found that in working through why we had coded particular segments of the transcripts the way we had, new opportunities became available for teaching and learning. Joyner came to see herself in the interview data, and Casey came to better understand that what he had at first thought of as merely working with a

research assistant in order to support *his* research, became a powerful space of antiracist teaching and learning.

Thus, we also mobilize insights from teacher self-study (Casey, 2011; Dinkleman, 2003; Loughran, 2007) in order to honor the blurred lines, as they felt to us, between research, personal reflection, and scaffolding an antiracist consciousness. Coding the data became a pedagogical act, saturated in the Freirean (2000) notion of "praxis": action and reflection in equal measure on the world in order to transform it. We were learning about each other, sharing stories, and making connections between our own lived experiences of being white in the United States and the insights our participants shared with us in the interviews. It became clear to us, as is discussed in detail later, that such engagement with racially explicit data analysis can have profound impacts not only on the scholarly field for which the research is intended, but also on the researchers themselves. We were not merely *doing* the work of data analysis; we were *being* pedagogical in antiracist ways through the praxis of research.

Our final methodological source is that of Stake's (1995) conception of case study. Stake discusses the concept of an "*intrinsic case study*" [*sic*] as a case wherein "we are interested in it, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case" (p. 3). For the purposes of this research article, we focus on three particular teacher-cases, and do so based on the "intrinsic" connection between what these teachers shared in the interviews and the experiences of Joyner in listening, recording, and analyzing these data. The pedagogical character of our work together is complimented by Stake's unique conception of case study methodology, because of his insistence that the most crucial element in any such endeavor is to "maximize what we can learn" from the selected cases (p. 4). We selected these particular cases because they were the greatest sources of learning for Joyner, and thus became, for us, the most important areas to focus on in our work together to theorize and report on our findings.

We have organized the remainder of the paper thematically. The first three sections analyze examples from the interview data. First, "Seeing It and Getting It," engages the coded nature of racial discourse participants engaged in. Often this discourse manifested in relations to others who "didn't get it," where the "it" stands in for an antiracist approach or mindset. The second section, "Approaches and Beliefs," examines the ways these teachers came to embrace elements of culturally relevant pedagogy wherein they rejected notions of "best practices" or "checklists" that could work to guarantee socially just outcomes. Instead, we found recurring evidence for an emphasis on how these teachers reported approaching their work, and the beliefs that led to their actions; we theorize this in close proximity to Ladson-Billings' (2006) insistence that culturally relevant pedagogy be thought of as an approach to teaching and learning, rather than a set of "tried and true" practices or tools. The third section focuses on the "costs" of engaging in counterhegemonic work in classrooms and schools. These costs are often experienced in terms of a loss of status or standing and moments when these teachers reported sacrificing their relationships with adult colleagues in order to be more active antioppressive advocates for their students. We conclude with reflections on what our findings can offer others, working to weave together insights gleaned from our analysis of the interview data as well as our pedagogical relationship to one another and to the work of antiracist research more broadly.

Seeing It and Getting It

I was raised in an environment in which race is a subject not broached even in my most intimate of circles. Color-blind ideology was a learned practice I carried with me into my twenties, in which I actively worked to ignore the racial tensions around me and reject my own participation in their existence. However, I now not only see the immense prevalence of race in our society but also my own responsibility to address these racial inequities.

Throughout the interviews, participants reported that as a result of their work over the two years in the professional development course, they were now better able to recognize the ways in which race and racial inequality permeate so much of our contemporary reality. Repeatedly we found ourselves coding phrases such as "I see *it* in everything," "I get *it* now," and "they just don't get *it*." We were initially interested in the use of these phrases not only because of their striking continuity within each participant's interview, but also because of their use of racially ambiguous terminology. What is the "*it*"? The participants' continued articulation of their newfound ability to see racial disparities in the world around them felt important. When we started to theorize the significance of this code, the true gravity of what the participants were saying finally registered. In a society where so many people are hungry for change but frustrated by the lack of progress, we search for the root cause of our immobility, and for ways of simplifying this complexity.

For example, Amelia, who teaches chemistry at a large urban high school where the majority of students are people of color and qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, is currently experiencing tension with her colleagues surrounding the importance of their school's equity team. Their team's "primary goal has just been to have conversations around race," however, other members of the staff fail to see the relevance of equity work, claiming "we don't need to talk about white privilege, institutional racism isn't real." Amelia shared that her equity team's efforts to point out and address racial tensions within their school, primarily characterized by the overrepresentation of students of color being referred and suspended, are quickly disparaged because "it's hard to talk about the need for change when people don't see the need for change and when people don't think that they're a part of anything." Amelia felt the teachers who resisted such work from the equity team "didn't get it"—where the "it" is the ways the accepted norms and discourses of the school functioned on the side of maintaining disparate and inequitable treatment for students of color. Amelia was not alone in her frustration with colleagues and other staff members not seeing racial disparities within their classrooms.

Our participants further shared examples of ways that we/they, as white teachers, are often not well educated in the historical framework(s) that have led to the current structural and political inequities in schools. Charley, who teaches fourth grade at a first-ring suburban school serving primarily low-income students, explains that her initial reason for joining Race Work was a "personal kind of journey…to figure out the history." Charley spent much of her early educational years in Singapore, returning to the United States for high school and college before joining the Peace Corps, where she first began teaching. For her, not living in the United States for much of her life led her to feel she had "a lack of understanding of the history of the United States" and recognized "from what [she] did understand there was so much more that [she] didn't." Charley explained that understanding the historical context from which racial

inequalities originated is vital to her own conception of antiracist pedagogy because "to make something equitable you have to understand why it was inequitable to begin with." Charley shared that the most impactful element of her work in the professional development seminar was gaining a better sense of the history of white supremacy and its enduring legacies in schools; she felt she came to "get it" more as a result of her participation.

However, without this historical knowledge and understanding, many white teachers—the colleagues of the teachers in our study, in this case—struggle to recognize localized manifestations of structural inequities. For example, Morgan is a fifth grade teacher in a second-ring suburb who teaches primarily middle-income white students, though her school has experienced more than a three-fold increase in the number of students of color they serve, and these trends are estimated to grow rapidly based on present enrollments in the district. She reported that her colleagues regularly negate the existence of racial inequalities in their classrooms and in the larger school more broadly. She explained that she doesn't think "they want to admit that this is going on in [their] school." For these teachers, they cannot see racial disparities because it has never been required of them historically, given the racial makeup of the district in the past. Because they work in a "good" school, where test scores and making annual yearly progress have rarely been an "issue," recognizing the ways their practice(s) disproportionately harm students of color has not been a sustained focus of staff conversations and professional development.

Ignorance, as Morgan saw it, sustains itself among the teachers in her school in ways which allow prejudice to be mistaken for carelessness, bigotry for inactivity, and racism for passivity. Overwhelmingly, our participants reported a greater ability to recognize the ways race and racialized discourses impacted their work in schools and classrooms. This ability to see the injustices that exist in their classrooms as well as the world around them, while important and impactful, still feels to these teachers like a "small step" towards racial justice. Within the course of two years, these three teachers have learned how to better see race and racism as it permeates all facets of their lives, and consequently are working to help others around them "see it" as well. As Morgan put it, "I'm just so much more aware of where race lies…so I think through me being aware, the people around me are also being aware, and now we're all having a conversation together." This awareness is what Morgan, Charley, and Amelia all sought to support their colleagues in, but importantly they all felt that such work did not entail particular methods or recipes—instead, they shared ways that their ability to recognize and "see" race engendered newfound beliefs and approaches to engaging in such work, especially with white colleagues.

Approaches and Beliefs

I have come to accept that there is not one predetermined action or strategy that characterizes antiracist pedagogy. From their experiences with Race Work, the participants reported being better equipped with a set of beliefs which in turn gave them the ability to respond appropriately to each unique situation in antiracist ways. Similarly, I have come to find that there are no strategies that can replace the significance of truly being in antiracist ways, which in turn manifests daily in various antiracist actions.

Whether we are working primarily with students or with teachers, there must come a time when acknowledgment and recognition of racial inequity becomes engaged pedagogical responses. Our participants shared that the ability to recognize race and racial inequalities laid the foundation for their transition from "seeing" race to living out culturally relevant pedagogy. By being aware of racial disparities, they shared, one begins to see and think in terms of race, through a racialized lens. These teachers' ability to act in antiracist ways stems from a set of attitudes and beliefs gained from critical readings of structural racism as it impacts their lived reality inside and outside of their classrooms and schools. Importantly, these teachers came to see pedagogy not as knowing the exact steps to take in any and every situation, but rather as an ongoing practice of equipping ourselves with the knowledge to approach each unique situation with a set of antiracist beliefs and perspectives. We draw upon the participants' firsthand experiences and our knowledge of Ladson-Billings' (2006) conception of culturally relevant pedagogy to explain the ways in which we transition from an aim of *doing* culturally relevant pedagogy to actually *being* in culturally relevant ways. *Doing* culturally relevant pedagogy entails following a predetermined list of steps or strategies, created by others, to ensure one's actions are completely sanctioned as antiracist.

However, following a list of specific strategies does not ensure antiracist outcomes in an environment that is as dynamic as a classroom, thus making the explicit following of strategies, as such, inappropriate and irrelevant. *Being* in culturally relevant ways is a pedagogical approach that encourages the flexibility and personal growth of teachers and students, allowing for practices that place context and specificity at the forefront of any and all antioppressive work (see Kumashiro, 2009, for more on this theoretical stance). For example, many of the participants' fellow teachers consistently expressed a need for specific strategies or tangible rules to follow when interacting with their students of color. Repeatedly, teachers in our study reported a desire on the part of their colleagues for them to be "given" specific strategies that would respond to student behavior issues (typically around how to "control" students of color, particularly young men). However, Ladson-Billings (2009) rejects these traditional forms of pedagogy by stating that "the pedagogical instruction that many teachers of African American students received—from their teacher preparation programs, from their administrators, and from 'conventional wisdom'—leads to an intellectual death" (p. 17). Teachers demanding to be given explicit strategies to follow are participating in an anti-intellectual project that diminishes the capacity of engaged pedagogues to create their own materials and lessons that are specifically designed for the students they are working with. While all three of the teachers in this study shared this commitment, they also struggled to communicate this to their colleagues, often facing resistance to the idea that one could not simply "tell them how to do it."

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For example, Morgan illustrated how her antiracist attitudes and beliefs changed the ways in which she approached having conversations about race. Morgan explained how her confidence in talking about race has extended into her pedagogical practices outside of her classroom and into the conversations and interactions she experiences with her close friends and family. Specifically, Morgan gave an example of when her antiracist pedagogy applied to her relationships outside of her classroom. Morgan and her roommate, Tonya, who was adopted from South Korea as an infant by a white family in the United States, share a close relationship in which the two of them have seemingly daily conversations about race, whiteness, and privilege. In comparison, Morgan rarely discusses race with her white childhood friend, Mary. One day, Mary "made what would seem to anybody else a really racist comment" about white privilege in front of Morgan and Tonya. Since Mary had rarely had (or, perhaps not chosen to have) the opportunity to openly discuss issues of race, she had difficulty accepting what Morgan and Tonya were saying and became defensive. Morgan was immediately surprised by the interaction because she "had experienced obviously push back from work about it but [she] had never really had a really open, honest conversation with anyone other than [her] roommate." Morgan had experienced tensions surrounding issues of racial inequities with her colleagues, but never with a close friend. Consequently, because of their close friendship she was able to pedagogically empathize with her friend, despite her white supremacist discourse, and realize that her friend equated white privilege to racism. Mary took the nature of the conversation as a personal attack, rather than as a structural critique of the ways social mechanisms are set up to maintain racial exclusions and privileges.

Morgan was able to recognize her friend's insecurities and aid her in understanding the true meaning of the conversation, that critiques of white privilege are aimed at the institutions and systems in society that protect and maintain such privileges, not (necessarily) the white people who experience the relative privilege(s) that result. Morgan concluded that eventually "Mary totally got what Tonya and I were talking about. In fact, she actually sent me some articles like 'look what I just found about this.'" Consequently, Morgan shared that as a result of the experience she is now better equipped with an empathetic understanding to approach similar conversations with her white teacher colleagues surrounding professional development within her school. She explained that previously:

> [She] couldn't understand [her] colleagues who weren't willing to engage [in equity work]…[but] after listening to Mary, who [she] knows really well, it made a lot more sense that, well, maybe they just don't have the skills and the knowledge to begin. We need to build those, that self-awareness.

The ways in which we approach issues of race have consequences and can either exclude or include others into the conversation on antiracist pedagogy. Morgan came to recognize the need for a pedagogical stance toward her white colleagues, allowing them the time needed to better understand what she was presenting, the same way that she approached Mary.

In comparison, Amelia discussed her own approaches and beliefs to antiracist praxis primarily at the level of her classroom. Amelia expressed the difficulty she has had over the past year with her ninth grade physical science class. She explained how she missed the support from the professional development group since she had never experienced teaching such "resistant

learners." For her, the theoretical insights, dispositions, and approaches she gained from Race Work helped her build meaningful relationships with her students to create a productive learning environment, although these relationships took several months to take shape. For example, her school is currently struggling with the overrepresentation of students of color being referred and suspended. Many of Amelia's colleagues express a need for strategies on how to "discipline" their students since they are at a loss on how to interact with them, as they regularly exhibit difficult behavior such as cursing and not engaging in their assigned schoolwork. Frequently, when traditional strategies of discipline fail, these teachers begin to criminalize their students, limiting possibilities for humanizing relationships across difference between teachers and students.

Nevertheless, Amelia explained how she quickly had to change the way she approaches her interactions with her students. Amelia's antiracist pedagogy manifested in her "newfound depths of patience and flexibility" that she learned from/with her students over their first semester of work together. For example, when her students would curse at her, instead of kicking them out of her class she would "try to give them more chances while at the same time letting them know that [they] can't really talk like that." By doing so, Amelia kept her students in the classroom and involved in the work while also responding in a pedagogical way. She explained that there are no concrete, immutable, or perfect strategies for teaching students of color, but rather "the 'strategy' is love your kids…just love your kids." To her, living out antiracist pedagogy means approaching her students based on the belief that they are honest and understanding. Her beliefs have allowed her to be more explicit with her students by explaining the reasons for why they are doing something or why certain behavior is not acceptable, an instance of modeling what Delpit (2006) has called making the "culture of power" explicit to students who do not arrive at school already possessing such cultural capital. Amelia explained that by "just being more honest with them I think has also helped our cause because I do feel like I have [students'] support." Amelia's experiences model how she came to reject traditional notions of teacher strategies for classroom management in order to live out her beliefs of culturally relevant pedagogy.

For Charley, the assigned readings in Race Work provided her with "a totally different way to approach race and racism" by explaining the history behind the social structure of race. Similar to Amelia, Charley explained the importance of "caring about individual kids" and "being more aware of those cultural differences that help you become more patient and outgoing." Charley believes in the importance of cultural differences as they impact each student's individual success. She explains that by "understanding the identity of where people of all colors come from and where we came from and why we have this discrepancy," we can educate ourselves and "focus on what action we can take." According to Charley, recognizing cultural differences (and shared experiences) equips teachers to meet the multicultural needs of students. This belief manifests throughout Charley's pedagogy, and is a central component to her own sense of what it means to engage students in meaningful culturally relevant classroom experiences. For example, Charley has become increasingly aware of her classroom's reading curriculum in order to bring in other voices and perspectives that represent those of her students. Rather than merely settling for texts that depict students of color as such, she has focused on cultivating texts from communities and cultures that are shared by her students. She has worked to find texts that speak directly to the experiences of, for instance, immigrant students, Muslim students, African American students living in the northern United States, and Latino/a students.

In addition, Charley works to build relationships with students' families through home visits. Charley believes in the importance of individual cultures; therefore, she makes it a priority to learn about the unique attributes of each particular student in hopes of integrating their knowledge back into the classroom. Charley characterizes her own sense of an antiracist pedagogy as being based on reflexivity, since she is constantly adapting her approaches to make sure they accurately reflect her antiracist beliefs, as well as incorporating the "funds of knowledge" her students bring with them to work in her class (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002). Charley rejects notions of strategies because "you might have to switch it from year to year; it's not always going to work for every kid and every classroom, but just having…something that you can adapt" to fit the needs of each student is significant. This adapting of past practices is central to Charley's larger project of knowing, as fully as she can, who her students are and imbedding this knowledge in what students learn and are asked to do.

For these three teachers, antiracist pedagogies manifest in a multitude of terrains and forms. What they share in common can be characterized as a constantly evolving framework of beliefs and approaches grounded in the lived experiences of students-as-learners. Increasingly, these teachers believe that their antiracist dispositions are extending beyond their work in classrooms to their own personal lives, impacting the ways they speak with others, and the kinds of relationships they cultivate. While we wish to applaud such transformative praxis, we must also concede that there are costs associated with counterhegemonic work, and next turn to what our participants shared around what they view as the personal and professional feelings of loss that also characterize their experiences of engaging in antioppressive work in their classrooms and schools.

Costs

Sharing this type of work with the people closest to me was extremely difficult and revealed the irrefutable costs that go along with race work. Frequently, my opinions were condescended and it was challenging to confidently assert my antiracist beliefs and actively combat inequities, especially those of the people I love. I felt alone in my antiracist beliefs; consequently, I was hindered to actively participate in antiracist pedagogies. However, through the research process I came to recognize the immense solidarity involved in antiracist pedagogy. The participants' stories and experiences closely mirrored those of my own, and from their experiences I was empowered to confidently engage in my own antiracist pedagogies.

While thus far we have focused almost exclusively on the positive outcomes for teachers and students that resulted from participating in Race Work, we cannot work to explain the successes of these practicing teachers in their struggle for antiracist pedagogies without acknowledging the immense growing pains, feelings of hurt and loss, that they also shared with us. Our aim in recognizing and theorizing the costs of antiracist work on white teachers is to acknowledge the inevitable challenges of taking up this work while illustrating our simultaneous responsibility to do so. We seek to model ways for practicing white teachers to take up this work in spite of the potential loss of relationships with other white adults. We must acknowledge the ways in which fear of harming existing relationships can often stifle antiracist dispositions and actions by white teachers. There are costs to engaging in such praxis, and these costs often force us to (re)confront

our sense of white shame, even as we are actively seeking to combat structural inequities (Thandeka, 2006).

An illustrative example comes from Charley's experience of recognizing a colleague's racist presumptions about one of her students and the tremendous difficulty she had with finding the courage to say something about it. Charley's colleague, Mr. Blumenbach, was an older, more experienced, white male teacher who had a "reputation of being a bit of a racist." However, Charley maintained a professional, "good personal relationship with him." That year she had an African American male student in her third grade class who had significantly struggled academically in second grade and had developed a "reputation of being a troublemaker." One day, early in the school year, Charley had given the student permission to excuse himself to use the restroom, and not long after, Mr. Blumenbach returned the boy to her classroom, scolding her for letting him walk down the hallway alone. The teacher believed that since the student was touching the lockers as he walked, he was trying to steal from them. The student did not have anything in his pockets, and had not taken anything that did not belong to him; he had merely been brushing his hand on the lockers as he walked down the hallway. Since the student had not stolen anything in the past, and according to Charley had always admitted when he'd transgressed the boundaries of the school rules, she felt a strong need to trust the student that he hadn't intended to take anything from the lockers. Mr. Blumenbach waited for Charley to punish the student, and when no such punishment was forthcoming, he left the room.

Charley later explained the impact the interaction had on her, as she remembers shaking and crying afterwards because she felt so "nervous to have this interaction with a senior teacher." Charley's tears not only came from the fear she felt for standing up to a senior teacher, but also the immense pain and sadness she felt for her student who was noticeably upset. She explained that the interaction reminded her of the importance of advocating for her students in antiracist ways, even when such advocating might cost her relationships with her colleagues. After the teacher left, Charley talked to her student alone, assuring him that she trusted that he did not steal anything. From then on the two of them "had a great relationship…[and] he was always honest." Charley stressed the importance of "trusting kids, giving them a clean slate, because you can have a reputation from second grade and people are like, 'he's really hard,' 'he's a really tough kid,' and he ended up being like a gem." Engaging in antiracist advocacy by standing up to her senior colleague was challenging for Charley and illustrates the difficulties of engaging in antiracist action for and with students of color. Moreover, Charley's experience also alludes to the ways in which thinking and holding antioppressive beliefs can translate into antiracist pedagogical responses. Charley believed in the innocence of her student as she aimed to live out her antiracist commitments by standing up for him, even if it meant, as it did in this case, that the senior teacher would no longer trust her.

Similarly, Morgan consistently faced challenges engaging in antiracist pedagogies with her staff, working in an environment in which "some people are totally on board with [equity work] and a lot of people are really, really resistant to it." In her examples she illustrated the social costs of leading professional development work within her building and the tensions she experienced with other staff members. Morgan expressed moments when her colleagues treated her differently because of her (actual and perceived) beliefs about race and racism as it impacts the realities of their school. She told us a story of how at a recent professional development meeting

a colleague of hers, recognizing where Morgan was going to be sitting, gathered her things and moved from the table "because they don't want to be around [her] because [she] has so much passion about [race]." In this example, Morgan recognized one of the most challenging costs of participating in antiracist work, noting that by "having that lens that you view things through, how it can change how people treat you in your building, especially if they're not as comfortable talking about it as you are." The costs of losing the acceptance of the people around her is a heavy price to pay as it makes antiracist work isolating—it thwarts authentic desires to work across difference and in solidarity to achieve shared aims. Morgan's ability to sacrifice the acceptance of her colleagues in order to express her opinions and beliefs freely is an isolating act that requires courage and dedication. For her, she is willing to take on such a role, if it means that her colleagues are better able to understand the ways that their school works to systematically disadvantage students of color.

Furthermore, Morgan expresses the ways in which antiracist pedagogies require constant evolution, personal growth, and self-reflexivity. Despite her ability to express her opinions openly, she shared:

> Personally, in the future I need to get more comfortable…talking about race or talking about immediate discrepancies that I see happening in my building. I need to have the courage to go and talk to those teachers about not only what I'm noticing but what my kids are saying to me about it, and right now I'm just not there yet…I know I need to get there, not for myself but for my kids.

The transition from thinking and believing in antiracist ways to actually living out antiracist pedagogies is often negated by fear. For Morgan, fear of conflict with other staff members, at times, hinders her ability to combat racial disparities within her building. Despite her fears, Morgan claims she just needs "to get over it and engage whether it goes well or not." For many practicing teachers, fear can be the determining factor that stifles our ability to live out our antiracist beliefs.

Participants reported with great frequency that fear is one of the most crippling costs of engaging in antiracist pedagogies and praxis in their school contexts. Amelia's first interview is distinguished by her fear of "being wrong" in her antiracist beliefs; however, Amelia explained her personal growth within her newfound courage and confidence in articulating her own sense of antiracist pedagogy. Amelia was almost unrecognizable from the first interview to the second. In the first interview, Amelia's opinions on race were stifled by her complete fear of being "jaded or overly critical," of seeing racial disparities that other teachers believed "do not exist." She expressed how the fear is "paralyzing" because it "makes you stop from saying things…if you feel uncomfortable." Throughout the entire interview, Amelia was unsure of her ability to recognize racial inequalities and to live out her own (partial, fragmented) vision of antiracist pedagogy. She explained how the scope of her antioppressive action needed to remain within her classroom, because that is where she felt she had a more authentic sense of control. She felt immobilized outside of her classroom, in terms of working with other staff, because she did not see herself as a leader or advocate. She stated: "I don't have this big vision of myself of being a change maker or really influential." Amelia remained unassertive and unsure of her own opinions, which allowed her the opportunity to evade her fears and the costs of participating in

antiracist work. Amelia's fear and lack of confidence hindered her from actively participating in antiracist pedagogies outside of her classroom; however, her desire for continual growth and reflexivity continued to fuel her confidence and sense of self. This desire had been realized in powerful ways by the time of the second interview.

After a year away from the monthly meetings of Race Work, Amelia reported taking the lead on numerous professional development sessions within her school as a part of her role as one of the leaders of her school equity team. In the second round of interviews Amelia had found confidence in her voice and opinions and "feels affirmed that some of the things [she's] doing really are helping kids." While gaining confidence in her own abilities, and finding her voice as a "leader" within her own building, Amelia still worries about her abilities to communicate her antiracist commitments to the white people in her life outside of work. She remains wary of harming her existing relationships, and such wariness can stifle the critical kinds of consciousness raising that are so essential for mobilizing more white social actors to combat white supremacy in their own contexts. Recognizing that there are costs to this work, and creating spaces to name and exist in the fissures that such costs create, is a critical step in ongoing reflection on the ways one can combat structural and systemic racism in our daily lives. Making space available for such work is a critical step to sustaining such critical praxis, and represents a generative arena for taking up the question of "what next" that many white people feel after coming to understand their own complicity and relative privilege.

Conclusion

By witnessing these remarkable teachers face their fears and the costs of engaging in such work, I have a newfound awareness of my responsibility to at least acknowledge the solidarity within our fears and antiracist practices. The fears are real and immobilizing. The pain and discomfort we feel seeing the ways in which our whiteness deprives others of their own humanity, and ourselves, is a frightening truth that causes many of us to get lost in our conceived notions of guilt and reject our responsibility in the active participation of racial inequalities.

The costs of engaging in antioppressive work were also felt by Joyner over the course of our data analysis and interpretation of our research findings. She felt the measured silences, the wounds made by way of ignoring what has been said, as she talked about this work with friends and family. Our relationship, as professor and student but also as co-researchers, became all the more important for Joyner, because the space of our work became one for personal reflection and articulating the challenges of naming white supremacy and working to better understand how white practicing teachers can and are combatting it in their schools and classrooms. We conclude with insights drawn from this personal engagement, and what we learned from our own engagement with these ideas and with these teachers.

Returning to Thandeka (2006), for many young white people, those born in the 1990s and more recently in particular, stories of people of color being barred from membership in a fraternity, or parents explicitly banning their children from bringing people of color to their home to play with, feel antiquated and removed from lived experience. They are relics of a more racist past, too far gone to have explanatory power for so-called "millennials" whose parents' racism feels, if it is felt at all, far more hidden and concealed. What we came to understand working together,

however, was that while the examples of white racism may well have shifted; the experiences and relations they produce persist.

We must take seriously the role of silences, and especially silences to racial abuse, that produce white subjectivities in our white supremacist society. When white parents scold their white toddlers for asking questions about a person of color's skin color and hair texture, they are communicating that such differences are not to be acknowledged, that noticing such things is wrong. This has an educative quality, because it teaches young white children the exact opposite of what multiculturalism espouses: to not recognize difference. These white children internalize further that such questions cause their parents anxiety; they might even become upset with their child, and this is recorded and retained in white children, and can persist well into adulthood. When white people recognize these feelings and experiences, the resulting outcome is shame, a feeling of being flawed, of being broken. Allowing ourselves to experience and excavate this brokenness, to mine its depths and to chart its contours, is a social praxis too few white people, educators and others, have engaged fully with. It is, however complex, difficult, and fraught, precisely what white people who have come to understand their own relative racial privilege must take up as the "next step" of antiracist praxis.

We see this work as contributing directly not only to the growing body of research on white teachers and white teacher candidates, but also to the literature on qualitative inquiry and practitioner research seeking to imbed antiracist and antioppressive dispositions and commitments in the research itself. Engaging in such work can have transformational outcomes not only for participants in intentional professional development, but also for novice researchers seeking to better understand their own relative positionality within larger intersectional systems of privilege and oppression.

Our own findings reveal to us that one such way of engaging in this work is through the praxis of qualitative data analysis of racially explicit data. Reading the words of these teachers generated images, memories, and past struggles in ways that placed us, as researchers, in closer solidarity with those we sought to better understand through research. At times, the words of others can help us more than any self-reflection exercise to fully understand the wildly dehumanizing outcomes of participation in our present oppressive social order. We thus wish to conclude our work with a call for others, particularly other educational researchers concerned with questions of racial identity and antiracism, to investigate the ways in which their own subjectivities come into contact with their research participants and findings. Further, we call for such work to take seriously how the praxis of research is itself a generative vehicle for better honing and articulating antiracist dispositions and commitments. That our research can impact us, can change us, may not appear to be an especially novel finding. However, given the ongoing realities of white supremacy in our society and in our schools, we believe that any and all means of combatting oppression can and should be mobilized. This includes research, and we invite others, hopefully with help from what we have developed here, to carve out their own spaces of resistance and to theorize this powerfully as a practice of both antiracism and research, so as to blur the lines between the two, to create new possibilities for justice.

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